



The Montag

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- The format of the submission should be Microsoft Word format, 12-point font, Times New Roman
- Citations should be formatted in the accepted professional format of the related field. Submissions can be essays, poetry, plays, Short stories, artwork, photographs, musical scores, translations. If the submission exceeds twenty pages, its likelihood of being published diminishes. Additionally, if your submission to the journal is chosen by our editorial board, you may be asked to work with an editor to perform revisions or alter formatting.

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Cover Art

The front cover of this edition of *The Montag* showcases original artwork by Kody Kitchener.



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Editor's Note

The following works will show that interpreting the past is paramount to understanding the future. Whether through reexamination, uncovering history once remembered through the eyes of oppressors, as you may notice in bookended essays the "Forgotten Pageant" and "Women in Iran," or, through rediscovery, examining our history to find new insight, as in the essay "The Spectre of Oedipus." The work included in this edition of *The Montag* moves through time with an active eye, at once aware of the past as a reminder of humanity's darkness, but also considering its jarring capacity for growth. The research included in these pages seeks the moments of our past that highlight the worst of us, while also capturing the slivers of change amongst those desolate times.

This collection of undergraduate work, due to the limitless dedication of this year's authors, editors, and staff, exemplifies UNR College of Liberal Arts research that engages thoughtfully with past, present, and future issues in the pressing dialect of the twenty-first century.

Sidney Thomas
Editor-in-Chief
The Montag

Poetry

Stomach

Nick Jacobs

Eat the Core of your Apple
Let it Bloom in your Belly
Veins will become unmoving Roots
Seething into a True Nature

In time new Fruit peers through
With leaves Fluxing along the seasons
Motionless as the Veins
Suspended from Fingertips and Tulip toes

A Fearful Mold may eat some of the Bounty
Others will Shriveled from Doubt
But deep in your Stomach
The seed is Still

If a Fire Flares upon the Branches
Do not Extinguish
The Tree ashes away
And the Fruit will Remain

Another Tree can Grow if needed
There is Fruit all within you
With seeds of Birth
And Cores of Peace

The Protest of Miss America and Integrating the “Forgotten Pageant” of 1968

Natalie Ferguson

1968 was a lot of things to a lot of different American organizations. The Black Power, Chicano, and Native American movements were emerging, the Vietnam War was underway, and feminism was taking off making the latter end of the 1960's electric in regard to reframing human rights. Utilizing non-violent tactics borrowed from the preceding Civil Rights Movement, the radical feminist group, New York Radical Women (NYRW), made a public debut by organizing a protest against the widely publicized Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City. This protest, which is now known as a cornerstone event for second wave feminism, sparked a lot of positive and negative attention and marked how the Women's Liberation Movement came to be viewed among a broader audience on a national and global scale. A much lesser known counter-pageant that happened the exact same day, Miss Black America, also struck a chord amongst both Americans and the Miss America Pageant protestors. While both of these protests aimed at a specific agenda, many people had questions behind the protesters' motives. Why

was there a need for a protest against a beauty pageant? If radical feminists included lack of racial diversity within the Miss America Pageant as something they were protesting, then why was there a need for a separate Miss Black America counter-pageant? While looking at both protests and exploring these questions, we see both connection and separation between the groups as well as the flaws that were exposed within them. Both Miss America Pageant protests in 1968 sparked a huge breakthrough on the way racism and sexism were discussed in mainstream media. In addition, the discussion surrounding these protests framed our popular memory in the way we observe not only second wave feminism, but what we believe happened that day.

Atlantic City, New Jersey had long been the city that held the infamous Miss America Pageant that Americans had come to know and love. With the pageant taking place at the same venue for forty-seven years prior to the NYRW protest, it was already considered to be a well-established event in the city's repertoire. Originally aimed at attracting tourists to the boardwalk during the beginning of the off-season, hosting the Miss America Pageant was an enormous money-maker for the city. Professor Beth Kreydatus from Virginia Commonwealth University explains that when she tries to describe the magnitude of popularity surrounding the pageant to her present-day students, she reminds them that, "...the pageant had a live audience of 25,000 in Atlantic City, and more importantly, as many as 27 million television viewers... During the 1960's, the pageant was ranked as either the first or second most popular broadcast in the nation..." (493). With the Women's Liberation Movement really gaining traction in 1968, the radical feminists of NYRW knew that a pageant that exemplified both patriarchy and sexism (principles they were fiercely trying to combat) was a perfect target. Along with targeting an institution that single-handedly went against many radical feminists' core

principles, they also knew that their voices would be heard with the immense amount of media coverage already surrounding the event. With these moving parts beginning to mesh together, head protest organizer Robin Morgan, organizer Florynce “Flo” Kennedy, and others knew that the time had come to provide the world with both civil disobedience and a ten-point platform that outlined exactly what they thought was wrong with the seemingly benign and patriotic Miss America pageant.

There were two feminist movements pioneering the late 1960’s in America: women’s rights and women’s liberation. Both groups consisted largely of white, professional, middle class women but their ideology differed significantly. Women’s rights, which eventually adopted the National Organization for Women (NOW), focused on legislation and the presence of women in typically male-dominated work-fields (De Hart, 215). The aim for women’s rights advocates was to place women into the system as it was already structured. On the other end, women’s liberationists fought to dismantle the current social structure and radically reframe it in order to advance women’s positions within it. Women within the Women’s Liberation Movement were slightly younger than women within groups like NOW and many were veterans to previous civil rights social movements such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (De Hart, 216). When women’s liberationist Robin Morgan decided to join the women’s liberation group New York Radical Women in 1967, she was already well-seasoned in the student left/antiwar movement (Berkeley, 45). Embracing the notion that change needed to occur by calling attention to oppressive structures and drastically redefining them, the NYRW collectively decided to create a platform that outlined the areas in which they would call out the Miss America pageant and what it stood for.

“The Ten Points” as described by the Miss America Pageant Protest organizers, very much mimicked the Black Panther’s “What We Want, What We Believe” 10-Point Platform. With the organizers utilizing their previous knowledge of social activism and borrowing frameworks from militant Black Power movements, they decided to combine these tactics to outline their own concerns. The pageant protest organizers highlighted their opposition to the “Mindless-Boobie-Girlie Symbol” linking ties to women being chained to an unrealistic and narrowly scoped beauty standard (Morgan, 224). Other points presented were “Racism with Roses” addressing the lack of diversity among the contestants, “Mascots of Murder” where pageant contestants were “cheerleaders” for war to the troops overseas in Vietnam, and the “Madonna-Whore Combination” where it was expected that women be both sexually appealing (physically and mentally) to men while simultaneously being wholesome enough to be a nurturing mother and respectable wife (Morgan, 225). Corporations and consumerism were also large targets as well as the claim that the Miss America Pageant was a “Throne of Mediocrity.” It was clear that men could compete for real agency within the world that surrounded them, such as competition for political positions, prestigious colleges, and other high-paying jobs, while women were encouraged to compete for small sums of money based on appearance alone. To highlight the importance of appearance amongst the judges and spectators, pageant announcers would proudly read off contestant’s hip, waist, and bust measurements as if they were County Fair livestock. The “Throne of Mediocrity” notion stated that, “Miss America represents what women are supposed to be: unoffensive, bland, apolitical. ...Conformity is the key to the crown—and, by extension, to success in our society” (Morgan, 225). After devising a detailed outline highlighting exactly what aspects about the

pageant were being protested, the women were ready to show the world what women's liberation was all about.

On September 7th, 1968, NYRW and other feminists came prepared to protest what they considered to be both a demeaning and oppressive event in front of the Atlantic City Conventional Hall on the Boardwalk in New Jersey. Not only was sexual separatism a tactic used within the protest itself, but as an attempt to give women more opportunities in their fields, the protesters stated that they would only give interviews to female journalists and, if need be, arrested by female law enforcement (Kreydatus, 498). There was a huge puppet on display with blonde hair and large breasts that Flo Kennedy and other women chained themselves to representing women's "enslavement" to unachievable beauty standards (Welch, 71). In the documentary film, *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*, Carol Giardina reflects back on the day recalling that there was a large "Freedom Trashcan" used for women to throw out "instruments of torture." These items included (but were not limited to) bras, eyelash curlers, girdles, and copies of Cosmopolitan magazine. Robin Morgan had originally discussed the intent to burn the contents within the "Freedom Trashcan" to a New York Post reporter a few days prior to the event (Dow, 131). However, being that the protest was to take place on a wooden boardwalk, this was not within fire-safety protocol and Atlantic City did not issue the protestors a burn-permit which resulted in no items actually being set aflame. Utilizing a tactic that had been used earlier at the Democratic National Convention where a pig was nominated for president, the protesters crowned a live sheep as their "Miss America" winner (Morgan, 223). As depicted within *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*, a few of the protestors were able to sneak inside of the event and when Miss America was about to be crowned, the women unveiled a huge banner over the balcony that simply read, "Women's Liberation."

Among the picketing, there were images of nude women “outlined” similar to cattle displaying where their best “cuts of meat” would be on their body along with signs that had statements such as, “Miss America Sells It.” The Ten Point platform was distributed amongst onlookers stating their purpose, and all the while the women continued to be chained to the puppet and the sheep waltzed around with her own sash. With the amount of media-coverage the women received from the already widely televised pageant, the world got to catch a glimpse of what the Women’s Liberation Movement was striving towards for the first time.

It is true that the protest of the 1968 Miss America pageant certainly helped call attention to the demands of the Women’s Liberation Movement, but that is not to say that the protest went without its drawbacks as well. When thinking about popular memory and how we reflect back on radical feminists of the 1960’s, one of the most common terms used is “bra-burner.” Indeed, the media, which deemed this particular aspect of the protest incredibly newsworthy, took the notion that women might burn their bras and ran with it. When reflecting back on the bra-burning trope, Bonnie J. Dow acknowledges how the mantra of second wave feminism, “the personal is political,” was completely reversed by the media’s interpretation of the protest. Within Dow’s analysis, she reflects back to historian Ruth Rosen who stated that “in a breast-obsessed society, ‘bra-burning’ became a symbolic way of sexualizing—and thereby trivializing—women’s struggle for emancipation” (Dow, 130). The notion behind the “Freedom Trashcan” and the burning of its contents originally stemmed from men burning their draft-cards; a risky yet deeply symbolic gesture in a critique to the military industrial complex and opposition to the war in Vietnam. The link between idealizing a masculine item, such as a draft-card, and trivializing a feminine item, such as a bra, was not a new notion. If one draws a

comparison to “canon arguments”, or rather what type of literature is considered “revered”, what is considered to be important authorship mimics that of the white men that have become canonized in the past. The flipside to this is that women’s authorship and experiences are trivialized due to having no “revered” example to look-up to in the first-place due to lack of women authors present within the literary canon. Bras were considered to be so trivial in fact that people even interpreted the act as women having it so good, with such little to complain about, that they had to mention a slightly uncomfortable undergarment as a means of oppression, which completely took away from the deeper meaning, a stab at the hegemony of patriarchy.

Along with thinking of the trivialization of bras being an item intended to be burned that day, the media also weirdly sexualized this gesture, further emphasizing the power of the “male gaze.” Dow looks to feminist columnist Susan Douglass in her analysis and points to her quote, “women who threw their bras away may have said they were challenging sexism, but the media, with a wink, hinted that these women’s motives were not at all political but rather personal: to be trendy, and to attract men” (130). Once again, this turned the importance of this symbolic gesture back into a means of the protestors simply seeking male attention, therefore dismantling the political meaning behind the protest (and arguably the feminist movement) entirely. Taking this thought one step further, some people saw the protest as unattractive women trying to gain attention. People referred to the protestors as just being jealous because they would never be beautiful enough to ever compete in the Miss America Pageant itself. Spectators referred to the “bra-burners” as ugly witches and/or lesbians as attempts to discredit the meaning behind the movement, along with having nothing better to do with their time than complain about their undergarments. Summing up how the media

shaped our popular memory regarding this unfortunate misconception, Dow states "...the feminists were little different from the women parading down the runway: they were simply less attractive" (134).

The bra-burning myth that was later engraved into popular memory was not the only pitfall of this particular protest. Some people began to think that the protesters seemed to be targeting the actual contestants within the Miss America pageant rather than aiming at patriarchy as a social construct. By crowning a live sheep, some insisted that the protestors were insinuating that all pageant competitors, or even more broadly, beautiful women embracing femininity, lacked any type of intelligence to analyze their own oppressed position within society. Feminism, which sought to dismantle barriers and social structures hindering all women, instead came off to some as a catfight between different types of women (Dow 137). A retort to the protesters' notion that all beauty pageants are oppressive was that the pageant itself was actually a form of agency for many women. By being able to receive scholarship money, contestants argued the pageant was helping them break through barriers toward a higher education. The odds were still largely set against women, so aspiring to be Miss America and receive a decent scholarship while doing it seemed to be a high aspiration for many. Retorting this argument, Dow points out, "What gets lost here, obviously, is the possibility that continued feminist activism dedicated to expanding women's opportunities might be a better solution to this problem than the perpetuation of the pageant system" (Dow, 142). Without a doubt, the Miss America pageant gave many women an opportunity to advance their position in society, but that position in society would only take them so far. While men were granted with the notion that they could one day become President, women were left to hope that, one day, they could be granted a false sense of

agency and aspire to become Miss America (for one year).

In addition to the “types” of women the movement was representing, there was an obvious lack of diversity within not only the protest itself, but the Women’s Liberation Movement as a whole. African American lawyer and abortion-rights activist, Florynce “Flo” Kennedy, played a key role in this particular protest, but often times her role gets overshadowed or in many cases, ignored. While giving the participants legal advice in case of altercations with law enforcement as well as offering street-theater ideas like being chained to a visual representation of beauty standards, Flo Kennedy is merely an afterthought with many historians interpreting the events of the actual protest. As Welch reflects, “The exclusion of Kennedy, her political perspective, and her mutual association with Black Power and feminism allowed the media to effectively segregate Black activism from feminism, and racism from sexism” (90). Historian Sharon De Hart noted that the two competing sides of feminism (women’s rights and women’s liberation) both only consisted of white, middle-class women, leaving out women of color’s participation entirely. Even within the documentary, *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry*, there was a deliberate glimpse of an African American woman dancing at the pageant protest when in reality, she was actually one of very few women of color present that day. While it was a goal to use “feminism” as an umbrella term to encompass all women’s societal hindrances, the narrow scope of white voices fell short for many women of color who were trying to understand how their own intersectionality contributed to their oppression differently. Professor Georgia Paige Welch argues that while attempting to tackle issues of race, the women’s movement simultaneously, albeit unwillingly, reproduced racism within it (70). The realization of this discrepancy looked at the intersectionality of not only being a woman, but a woman of color. Stemming from this

realization sparked a much lesser known counter-pageant that also took place on September 7, 1968: Miss Black America.

Miss Black America was a protest all of its own, but in contrast to targeting all beauty pageants, the organizers of this event, J. Morris Anderson and Phillip Savage, used their own separate beauty pageant held at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Atlantic City as a strategy aimed at reshaping white-normative beauty ideals. J. Morris Anderson, a Philadelphian entrepreneur, was the lead organizer and founder of the Miss Black America beauty pageant. Having two daughters of his own, Anderson was frustrated and angered by the fact that his daughters could not feel beautiful in their own skin by looking up to a Miss America winner that did not resemble their own features. Co-organizer, Phillip Savage, was an official for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Regardless of his affiliation, the well-known civil rights organization did not give any actual sponsorship or endorsement for the counter-pageant (Welch, 77). Even though the media falsely stated that the counter-pageant was an NAACP protest, the mere mentioning of the organization in the newspapers provided the Miss Black America pageant with a sense of legitimacy and helped to acquire even more press coverage (Welch, 77). Journalist Judy Klemesrud wrote in her *New York Times* article, "There's Now Miss Black America," that the winner of this counter-pageant was nineteen-year-old Sandra Williams (54). This primary source is careful to depict Williams as a respectable, college-educated, middle class, Philadelphian native. The details of her appearance point to her "untreated, natural" hair, as well as her hobby of choice being traditional African dance. Williams stated within her interview that, "Miss America does not represent us because there has never been a black girl in the pageant. With my title, I can show black women that they too are beautiful, even if they have large

noses and thick lips” (Klemesrud, 54). Klemesrud was also careful to mention that Williams was a member of the NAACP further shaping the media’s false assumption that the civil rights organization was responsible for organizing the event. Although the media gave some attention to the Miss Black America counter-pageant, the counter-pageant itself seemed to be an acceptable, segregated alternative for many Americans. Welch states, “Newspapers suggested the first Miss Black America was an acceptable substitute for the first Black Miss America” (87).

The tension between the two protests was not something new as feminists of the 1960’s tried to find a middle ground between race, class, and gender. Dating back to the Suffrage Movement, many white southern feminists were staunchly opposed to extending a woman’s right to vote over to women of color. In fact, many African American feminists became increasingly aware that their race contributed to their oppression just as much, if not more, than their gender and also became skeptical behind the motives of women-based movements (Berkeley, 10). Growing tired of failed attempts to integrate contestants from all races into the mainstream Miss America pageant, the organizers of the Miss Black America pageant knew that a political statement was being made when they embraced a cultural nationalist tactic which stemmed from the Black Power movement. By making the pageant a “black women only” event, Georgia Welch acknowledges that, “...the purpose of the pageant...was to celebrate Black beauty and culture on their own terms, claiming that they were, in fact, representative of the nation” (Welch, 86). Although the thought of protesting narrow beauty standards sounds strikingly similar to the same concepts radical feminists were also protesting, there was a divide between the two organizations’ thoughts on the matter. Professor Beth Kreydatus highlights a point where Robin Morgan stated,

“basically, we’re against all beauty contests...We deplore Miss Black America as much as Miss White America but we understand the black issues involved” (Kreydatus, 491). This statement given by Morgan exemplifies the divide of values in regard to certain aspects of the Women’s Liberation Movement’s aim. Sure, it is simple to understand that the liberationists were fighting for the fact that women deserved a chance at real agency, but many women of color distanced themselves from feminism recognizing that their race and gender were intertwined and simultaneously worked against their own oppression. In spite of this, not all members within the African American community joined in solidarity embracing the significance of having a Miss Black America counter-pageant either. Poet Askia Touré had a different take on the validity behind the protest. In his poem titled, “Poem for “Miss Black America,” Touré writes, “A nation of Archie Bunkers programmed to liquidate the Disco: reefer smoking bloods slowing down production equals an iconography for fascist repression- and there’ll be no “Miss Black America” titles in the concentration camps” (44). Although his references to pop-culture were a few years after 1968, his stance was that white dominance within society was so prominent, that mimicking a beauty pageant to instigate real change was not only trivial, but suicidal.

Regardless of the rocky foundation, Saundra Williams made sure to still recognize the need to embrace feminist principles within the black community. Williams mentioned while she was competing that, “husbands and wives should share the same amount of housework” (Klemesrud, 54). Writer Michelle Wallace was another example of someone who did not want to completely abandon feminist ideology while still embracing her black identity. Grappling with her own struggle of proudly embracing both Black Power and feminism during the late 1960’s onward, she rejected the notion that a black woman was thought to be “brainwashed”

by white culture if she even thought of lumping the two movements together (Wallace, 426). Wallace acknowledged that being a black woman could not simply dismiss the fact that an immense amount of sexism was happening within their own social justice movements, and not only did they need to dismantle racial injustice, but they must call for a rise in equality amongst the sexes as well. While reflecting back to the matter, Wallace acknowledged that, "...no matter how you slice it, humanity still has a lot of fixing to do...I continue to believe that feminism, in all its myriad and contentious incarnations, will always be part of, although not the only, prescription until somebody comes up with a cure" (Wallace, 442). Embracing a beauty pageant may not have been the most fundamental social movement that helped to dismount racial oppression, but it was certainly a move that refused to be unheard. By exploiting the racist and conservative foundation within the Miss America pageant, the Miss Black America pageant proved that beauty and femininity did not need to be isolated to white women.

Both 1968 pageant protests undoubtedly framed our popular memory on how we reflect back to both second wave feminism and the budding notion of intersectionality. Between myths of bras being burned to grappling with the struggle of addressing diversity within social movements, fighting for women's rights burst into the limelight when radical feminists decided to gather that day. Women all across the nation, hearing these ideas for the first time, decided that they would join the fight and stand behind the Women's Liberation Movement. At the same time, women of color across the nation knew that they, too, were beautiful, regardless of the Miss America pageant beauty standards attempting to tell them otherwise. The problems both organizations faced in executing their protests point to how difficult it is to dismantle systematic oppression. With fundamental ideologies so deeply engrained within society,

picking them apart one by one is an overwhelmingly daunting task. However, observing the strategies utilized in past movements and analyzing both their gains and shortcomings paves way for future organizations and movements and helps to get us one step closer to achieving liberation.

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English

The Spectre of Oedipus: Marx, Engels and the Neutered Oedipus Complex

Tanner Lyon

All forms of social organization reflect the structure of the unconscious. When read through a psychoanalytic lens, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* details an arbitrary conflict between the natural world, the ruling class and the workers; acknowledging the interconnection between these three characters allows for a radical re-envisioning of civilization. Although the concept of the "Oedipus Complex" is inherently patriarchal, a queer reinterpretation of this idea makes a neutered utilization of the theory possible. However, abstracted theory is limited in its capability, and must therefore be joined with a material equivalent to maximize its significance. The power structure that continues to dominate the organization of humanity is clearly illustrated by economists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and a thorough analysis of the "proletarian" unconscious will allow humanity to establish the conditions that will ensure its inevitable collapse.

Commonly referred to as "the father of psychology,"

Sigmund Freud established the practice of psychoanalysis from his study of the human “unconscious.” He asserts that the mental processes that humans can identify within themselves pertain to their “conscious” mind. Consciousness represents a minority of the human’s complexity, with the majority being unconscious. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud divides the unconscious into three constituents: the id, ego, and super-ego. Instincts aligned with pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, dubbed “the pleasure principle,” can be attributed to the id (Freud 3). The ego is housed within the id, but it is distinguished by what Freud terms the “reality principle,” which translates the passions of the id into a form that is acceptable to the external world (Freud 3). External rules and customs have a faculty within the unconscious, known as the super-ego; the super-ego is responsible for punishing the ego in its pursuit of its passions, which surfaces as guilt. Conflicts within the unconscious can be traced to the development of children’s sexual-instincts.

In his magnum opus, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud establishes one of his most controversial ideas, the “Oedipus Complex.” The Oedipus Complex derives its name from Sophocles’ tragedy, *Oedipus the King*, which details the life of a man that is destined to kill his father and marry his mother. From this work of literature, Freud proposes that the fate of Oedipus represents the formulation of sexual desire, hatred and authority in every child, including women and non-binary individuals, as he states, “Being in love with the one parent and hating the other are among the essential constituents of the stock of psychical impulses which is formed at the time and which is of such importance in determining the symptoms of the later neurosis” (Freud 814). Freud argues that loving one’s mother and hating their father is a crucial component in the child’s psychosexual

development. As the original sex-object, the child's mother assists in the unconscious's generation of desire, while the father teaches the child that they should be guilty for said desire, resulting in an antagonism for property rights. Essential to the Oedipus Complex is the idea of "castration anxiety," or the fear associated with losing one's penis upon discovering that their mother does not have a penis herself (Freud 953). The only logical conclusion is that the father castrated the mother for her incestuous relationship with her child. By asserting his disapproval of this relationship via castration of the mother, the father solidifies his position of authority to the child.

Clinical psychoanalyst and poststructuralist philosopher Jacques Lacan expands on the Oedipus Complex and the father's lasting effects on the child. Concerning castration anxiety, Lacan describes the father's position as the authoritative patriarch of the family, asserting that the recognition of the father's authority remains in the unconscious throughout the rest of the child's life: "The Oedipus complex means that the imaginary, in itself an incestuous and conflictual relation, is doomed to conflict and ruin. In order for the human being to be able to establish the most natural of relations, that between male and female, a third party has to intervene, one that is the image of something successful, the model of some harmony" (Lacan 93). In the preceding passage, Lacan argues that the incestuous relationship between mother and child is predetermined to fail. An idea or individual outside of this relationship must involve themselves to ensure that the failure of this relationship does not influence future sexual relationships. He continues, "This does not go far enough – there has to be a law, a chain, a symbolic order, the intervention of the order of speech, that is, of the father. Not

the natural father, but what is called the father. The order that prevents the collision and explosion of the situation as a whole is founded on the existence of this name of the father" (Lacan 93). For the child to have healthy sexual relationships in the future, the father must further assert that incest is wrong by means of establishing a law, in addition to castrating the mother. This unspoken rule creates the child's conception of the "symbolic order," a realm of societal laws and rules by which the superego abides. The symbolic order is represented by the name of the father. From the creation of the name-of-the-father, the superego now signifies the father of the unconscious, punishing the individual for any violations of the symbolic order by threatening castration. To appease the father and avoid castration anxiety, the unconscious will either repress or displace its instinctual desires by forming fetishes or displacing its desire for its mother onto other non-blood-related women or men.

Although the concept of the Oedipus Complex appears male-specific, Freud rejected Carl Jung's proposition of the "Electra Complex," an inversion of the Oedipus Complex. Freud argued that the Oedipus Complex applies to women as well, as a "negative" or "feminine" Oedipus Complex. This disagreement illustrates a fundamental problem in Freud's phallogocentric theory; women and non-binary individuals are either excluded or inserted as an afterthought. This unfortunate reality drives many individuals away from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. However, this analysis maintains that the Oedipus Complex remains a useful analytical concept in a neutered form. The "mother" represents the instinctual object of desire, the "father" symbolizes the symbolic order and the superego that enforces it, and "castration anxiety" signifies the threat of violence for defying the name-of-the-father.

With these concepts stripped of their gender, this analysis will utilize psychoanalysis to discern the struggle between the symbolic laws of the dominant economy and the instincts of the collective unconscious as detailed in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' classic work, *The Communist Manifesto*.

Before the establishment of truly centralized civilization, humanity consumed resources exclusively to satisfy their own basic needs. This epistemological regime is referred to, by historians and Marxists, as "primitive communism." Engels offers a brief explanation of this time in history when he states, "Hauxthausen discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and by and by village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland" (Marx and Engels 3). Because primitive land lacked a centralized owner, the resources provided by nature were of common "ownership." Primitive communes were the dominant organizations of society before the symbolic separation of classes and the alienation of workers from nature. Workers, known collectively as the "proletariat," their families and the greater community had equal access to all of their necessary resources without mediation by a "bourgeois," a noun Marx and Engels use to denote the owners of capital private property. Communism is characterized by a collective ownership of the means of production; as resources in pre-civilized society were solely produced by nature, and no owner of nature was named, this era can be noted as an early example of communism.

When considered in the context of Freud's Oedipus Complex, the proletarian-child developed its instinctual and incestuous desire towards its nature-mother in their early, unalienated union before the establishment of the symbolic

order. Literary theorist Stacy Alaimo details the inherent interconnection, or the neutered Freudian sexual relationship between mother and child, in her book *Bodily Natures*. In her concept of “trans-corporeality,” Alaimo declares that nature runs through the human’s material body indefinitely; nature is inseparable from material reality, and, moreover, from individuals themselves (Alaimo 11). Continuing her argument, Alaimo utilizes Emma Goldman’s description of the sexual nature-mother to illustrate the intimate relationship between individuals and nature, stating, “Interestingly, Mother Earth’s ‘ample bosom’ and ‘inciting and hospitable arms’ pose her body as the locus of her riches and generosity” (Alaimo 34-35). The myriad resources provided by nature establish “her” as a generous figure, equipped with the means to sustain life. The providing character of nature is analogous to the mother-child relationship, insofar as motherly archetype is perceived have a sexual foundation behind her unconditional care. After the production of a child, the mother’s function centralizes around the need to satisfy the needs of the child, negating the previously crucial role of the father in the production of the child.

Given the father’s lack of a function, the new intimate relationship between mother and child creates a sense of alienation in the father, resulting in a retaliation to reassert its significance. The father thus deems the mother-child relationship “immoral,” and “castrates” the mother by establishing a symbolic “ownership” over her. The mother necessarily becomes incapable of reproduction, giving the father authoritative control over the means of re/production via material nature. The bourgeois control of nature allows it to be exploited for the generation of profit, demanding the subordinated proletariat to carry out this exploitation. While

discussing the relationship between industry and nature, Alaimo asserts how the father, “[A]llies nature and the working class only to ultimately reduce nature to a raw material for the heroic labors of nation building” (Alaimo 48). While exploiting the relationship between nature and worker, the father seizes control over child and mother by minimizing nature to an object with use-value, while the proletarian is demanded to assume the responsibility of extracting profit from the nature-mother-object. By creating a hierarchy that makes the ruling class superior to the proletarian-child and nature-mother, the bourgeois-father has the ability to organize society in a way that protects his private property and authority. This revolution on the behalf of the father begins class antagonism and the oppression of the symbolic order.

With the relationship between mother and child successfully mediated, the bourgeoisie solidified their societal supremacy. To support their authority, the bourgeoisie creates an ever-changing hierarchy of classes, as Marx and Engels describe, “In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank [...] in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations” (Marx and Engels 4). In the preceding examples, the bourgeois-father has further alienated the proletariat-children from their nature-mother by forcing them into weaker classes that are enforced by the laws of the symbolic order. The father establishes an aristocracy in their own name; the nation and the nature within fall under the name-of-the-father, hegemonically secured by the symbolic order. Proletarians will not dare to challenge the authority of their father, for opposing the symbolic order will result in the same castration that was imposed upon nature: hyper-

exploitation, direct ownership, or a castration from the society itself. From herein, the proletariat will remain loyal to the name-of-the-father, fearful of the bourgeoisie's power.

The nation, or the name-of-the-father, and its supporting State keep the proletariat and nature subordinate by means of socioeconomic, symbolic laws. Not only does the father use the State to enforce his own written laws, he also uses culture to create a social atmosphere that coerces the proletariat to enforce the name-of-the-father's symbolic laws amongst themselves. By keeping the proletariat compliant by means of castration anxiety, the only threat to the name-of-the-father are opposing fathers that seek to expand their ownership, as Marx and Engels confirm, "The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part" (Marx and Engels 8). Thus, the symbolic order of any given era tends to be replaced by a new father and his name; ownership is transferred, while the composite children and mother remain the same. The mode of production and its inherent exploitation remain as excess from the previous father's negation, with the only difference being an arbitrary change in the name of the father, but not the symbolic order that the name-of-the-father entails. The primary task of the proletariat remains as a constant displacing of their desire for nature into their exploited labor and antagonizing other classes. However, their collective instincts as children remain, and this unconscious instinct will inevitably displace their aggression towards the owning class.

The repressed desire of the proletariat is a desire for communism, as early humans once incestuously embraced. The power of the given father alienates the proletariat from their instinctual desire, who continues to threaten the workers with symbolic and systemic violence enacted by the expansive name-of-the-father. These repressed instincts have

a growing potential to erupt in a violent proletarian revolution, as Marx and Engels declare, "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class" (Marx and Engels 25). Once the repressed desire of the proletariat arises from the collective unconscious and materialize in the greater societal consciousness, the workers will demand to be reunited with nature without the presence of the bourgeoisie, which can only be brought about via communism and the abolition of private property. Only when the symbolic father is murdered can the children demolish the rift between nature and humanity, or rather mother and child.

In conclusion, the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be traced to the initial conflict occurring within the individual's unconscious. Although scientifically disavowed, psychoanalysis remains a powerful tool to analyze the material conditions that structure the external world. Primitive communism represents an instinctual relationship between humans and nature, similar to the incest between child and mother in Freud's Oedipus Complex. In order to interrupt this relationship and hoard nature for themselves, the bourgeoisie, the signifier of the father, creates a nation and a State that allows nature to be "owned." To protect their private property, the bourgeoisie creates a symbolic order in their name, which perpetuates laws that favor the bourgeoisie, allowing them to exploit nature and proletarians alike. The workers, however, have always held an unconscious resentment towards the bourgeoisie, and once they organize and revolt against the status quo, the name-of-the-father will be destroyed. Working children of the world, unite!

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Music

***Dunkirk*: A Review on Instrumentation, Sound, and Emotion**

Ben Torvinen

Picture a boat floating silently. A breeze gently blows across the deck, as it rocks with each passing wave. Suddenly a distant sound of an engine appears. After a minute you can make out what it is. An enemy bomber. A feeling of dread washes over you and every man aboard, as the ship awaits its destiny on a cold unforgiving sea. Now picture this scene with music. A ticking clock, a heartbeat, and a slow dissonantly ominous string section. Scenes can be powerful and they can conjure up emotions to make the viewer feel a certain way. But a scene with music has a way of reaching an audience and tapping into an even deeper set of emotions, a reaction that the viewer has no control over. The more charged a scene is the more terracing of unusual noises are engineered to cultivate, in an audience, the same amount of fear as the characters are experiencing at any given moment. Through unconventional, postmodern instrumentation and technique that varies from the opening scene to the first dogfighting scene, Zimmer constructs a wall of tension that is not broken down until the end of the film.

Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* (2017) is a prime example of this tension building technique at work. The film was a departure from the norm for the director. It was his first war epic, first historical drama, first film based solely in reality. One aspect that remained a constant through his previous endeavors to this film was working with composer Hans Zimmer. Throughout many of Nolan's films, Zimmer has been an integral part of the storytelling process that Nolan is so famous for. They have worked together on almost everything since *Batman Begins* in 2005. The pair goes together just as well as the likes of Alfred Hitchcock and Bernard Herrmann. With a history that has lasted over ten years, it was no surprise when it was announced that Zimmer was going to be the composer for *Dunkirk* as well. The film details a seemingly hopeless situation in need of a miracle during the early years of the Second World War. Creating this type of film in this day and age is somewhat risky as not many have been made as of late. In the past 20 years no film detailing World War II has seen as much box office success as *Dunkirk*. The closest two would be *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) and *Pearl Harbor* (2001, for which Zimmer also wrote the score), respectively. To the general public, the success of a film of this caliber rests on the shoulders of the director and the director alone, but few give recognitions to the person who erects the feelings stirring inside of someone as they view it. This person is the composer. They have the power to keep a viewer on the edge of their seats, cry, smile, or jump from the moment the movie starts to the moment the screen goes black. The music is mutually implicated with the visuals and when that is done well, the success of a film is imminent, *Dunkirk* being a prime example of this.

Hans Zimmer was born in Germany in 1957 with an engineer/inventor as a father and a musician as a mother.

Having a passion for music he was a self-taught keyboardist/synthesizer player and made his way onto the music scene. His first big credit came in the form of an appearance in the “Video Killed the Radio Star” music video as he played on the synthesizers. Not four years later he had his first film credit in 1984 for a small indie film. His first big break came in 1988 with *Rain Man* which did extremely well both with audiences and critically, much due to Zimmer’s ability to suggest a mood with music alone. He channeled the mood of the decade and the movie creating an instant classic in the process. Throughout the nineties he continued to grow his reputation as a serious film composer and even won an Academy Award for best original score for *The Lion King* in 1995. This was his second nomination, first and only win. Something that all Zimmer scores contain are elements of postmodernism. He mixes and matches different sounding or unconventional instruments to create something old but familiar. In the process of this he blends genres helping to promote the equality of borrowing. In *Rain Man* for example he uses what sounds like bongos mixed with a wind flute. This combination is unusual but works for the context of the film, and the emotions that he is trying to stir. It borrows from other cultures and doesn’t make an attempt to give it a sense of being highbrow or lowbrow. Later in his career, for *The Dark Knight* in 2008, he used a familiar orchestral instrument in a new and interesting way. He made the theme for the Joker just one long held out note on the cello, which was a leitmotif of sorts but a leitmotif that had never been done before.

The score for *Dunkirk* takes all of these strategies and turns them up a notch in arguably Zimmer’s most thought-provoking score to date. The film opens with soft music and an explanatory frame. From this moment on the music

almost never stops, it may get quieter, louder, or there will be less layers. There is almost never a break without non-diegetic music. There are scenes where the observer can't hear the music but it is still there, it's just being drowned out by the loud diegetic noises. The only spot in the entire movie where there is no music is at the end when Harry Styles' character says something very insolently and there is complete silence for a split second. The decision to never break the non-diegetic music is very much like a score that Max Steiner would have written for one of his films, minus the small diegetic silence. Steiner was very central to his films, much like Zimmer is to *Dunkirk*. This move seems to be a nod to not only Steiner but the original generation of film composers. He borrows an approach at film scoring but makes it new and exciting.

Zimmer stated when speaking to the *New York Times* that Nolan told him while writing the film that he "wanted to use the Shephard Technique." This technique is just a gradual rise in pitch which is the same technique Zimmer used on *The Dark Knight* for the Joker theme. This captivates the audience with a sense of tension and anxiety that will never break, but it will rise and fall with the action of the film. It is especially evident in the first scene of the movie when we meet the main character, Tommy. String instruments can be heard very softly in the background but there is no melody and no sense of a classic heroic theme that you would get from a traditional war movie. *Dambusters* is such a film where there is a heroic brass heavy theme that plays throughout the movie. This movie, much like *Dunkirk*, was based on true events that happened during the Second World War. Having a war movie without a grandiose heroic theme seems questionable only because the men are real life heroes, but it creates a more accurate portrayal of the events that occurred.

During the opening scene the use of the soft cello strings continues through gunshots and people dying, there is not even a single drop of a heroic theme planted. Even when it seems Tommy has made it to safety, the suspenseful nature of the music never hesitates, still slowly rising and speeding up. The purpose of this is to tell the audience that this particular scene was only setting the tone of the film. This trend continues throughout the entire movie off and on until the soldiers get to safety across the Channel and back into England.

After the film uses the Shepard Technique for awhile, a different technique is deployed to continue to heighten the tension so there is no chance of the audience ever being relieved throughout the entire film. The strings cut out and there is just the sound of pounding that remains. It is very reminiscent of a train as it is leaving a station. The pounding starts slowly at first but then continues while gradually speeding up the entire time. This causes slight disjunction as the viewer never knows what is going to happen when. The music could change dramatically from one second to another, giving no indication of a change before it happens. A very postmodern sentiment. With this film score being such an interesting example of postmodernism, it can't help but lead to Adorno and Eisler's critique. When thinking of this era, possibly the most postmodern you can get is *Punch-Drunk Love* (2002). By being so postmodern it answered every criticism that the two composers had with film scores in their time. *Dunkirk* however does not carry that same title. The main difference in scores between *Punch-Drunk Love* and *Dunkirk* through the lens of Adorno and Eisler is unobtrusiveness. Music is "tolerated as an outsider" but "regarded as...indispensable" according to the two philosophers and *Dunkirk* holds up these old-fashioned ideas

by keeping the music relatively unobtrusive and even letting diegetic sound overwhelm the non-diegetic sound. Music is used as a bridge to guide the audience into the right place at the right time. Even with this very small role it still has extensive power over the film. *Punch-Drunk Love* on the other hand lets the music completely overwhelm the diegetic sound in the exact opposite fashion. While using Adorno and Eisler's critique, however, it is important to note that they do not prototypically define postmodernism. By being unobtrusive *Dunkirk* was able to build up and never release its tension without sacrificing its postmodern and other important qualities such as its realism. It is not any less postmodern; it is merely postmodern in a different way. This era of filmmaking uses borrowing to capture the old nostalgic feeling of films from the past which so happens to be another characteristic of a postmodern film.

There is quite a bit of very interesting instrumentation throughout the score as well. The most interesting being the sound of a ticking clock. This decision is very reminiscent of The BBC Radiophonic Workshop where they would take every day sounds and create music from them. With that said, there are only two very significant differences between the two. One being that in the Workshop they would take a sound and manipulate it to get different pitches and notes and from that create a song. The second being that this is a postmodern film score whereas the BBC Radiophonic Workshop would be considered as a modern musical approach. Zimmer uses the clock in a very different manner and it is a nostalgic technique referencing the past specifically modernism where toying with new sounds was in that vein. This is quintessentially postmodern because it borrows from the past and creates a something new. Referring again to the ticking clock there is little to no

manipulation to it. It just ticks and ticks at a rather quick pace. The purpose of this is to create a sense of unease and urgency. In most movies audiences have been trained to perceive the ticking clock as urgency. That urgency can manifest itself in many different ways. For example, a kid waiting for school to be over, or a time bomb about to go off, to name a few. In this score it creates so much anxiety in the audience because they have a sense of urgency but there is nothing that the characters can do to get out of their predicaments. A very intriguing and nerve-racking scene is when viewers are taken into the first dogfight. This scene contains the ticking clock but not until the end when one of the pilots has his gas gauge malfunction. This scene, before the clock comes in, also brings in another new and different sound. This sound seems to be suggestive of a beating heart. Often, if a beating heart is used, it represents fear in a character. When people are scared heart rates go up, which helps to create quick reactions that could save your life in a life or death situation. By putting a sound like this into the score of a movie people don't know what to think because they are filled with anxiety at the prospect of the danger in what they are watching. At times it sounds like a helicopter with beating propellers. Considering that there are propellers on the planes, it seems to be Zimmer and Nolan's idea to have the noise function as both a diegetic and non-diegetic sound piece.

When the ticking clock and the heartbeat eventually mix, they trigger even more fear and anxiety in the audience. They are mostly used in conjunction with one another as viewers have the opportunity to soar above the English Channel with the pilots. The dogfight starts with the ever-so-slowly ascending cellos and the heartbeat. As the pilots are flying through the air they are spotted by a few German

gunners which cues the intensity and increased speed of the music. As the fight goes on, viewers are provided with a sense of relief (visually not musically) when the German plane is shot down, only to realize afterward that one of the Spitfires went down and the gage doesn't work on one of the remaining planes. The pilot, who has the broken gauge, brings out a watch to keep track of fuel loss, which brings the ticking into the score; it is used to represent the pilots and their time, or rather their lack thereof.

The nature of making a film like Dunkirk requires a particular skill set on the part of a composer to generate the necessary feelings of an audience as they view the film. If music was neglected, the film would suffer as a whole. Music has the unique ability to make people excited, sad, or afraid. Although instruments and sounds can change from scene to scene, they can still conjure the same emotions. Sometimes the purpose is to increase or decrease the intensity of the feeling but that feeling never needs to change. These sentiments, which are echoed perfectly by Zimmer's score, helped carry this movie into box office success.

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English

Washing the Sins of Our Mothers

Lauren Greb

“Do you go out with friends?”

“A Boy’s best friend is his mother”

--from the film *Psycho* (1960)

Sociologists have found time and time again that the strongest influence affecting us is our family, particularly our parents. Depending upon how one views their parents, this can be a good or bad thing. And while not as extreme as the psychological horror film *Psycho*, there is a concern embedded within us that we are turning into mere replicas of our parents. A valid concern, as we almost always are carrying on and extending the viewpoints and characteristics taught to us by our parents into our own lives.

Familial indoctrination is how our society is shaped, and how our culture is perpetuated. This is problematic when the culture and beliefs being indoctrinated are biased and harmful, as seen in the cases of the short stories “Recitatif” by Toni Morrison and “Everything That Rises Must Converge” by Flannery O’Connor. Each story focuses on the characters’ rejection of their mothers, with emphasis

on the racial tensions that exist within their respective realities. The racism within the stories serves primarily as a conduit to express the internal conflict that the characters feel when confronted with the issues they have regarding their relationships with their mothers, and how these relationships have shaped them as people.

In "Recitatif," Morrison follows the interactions of two women, Twyla and Roberta, from age eight to their early thirties. The story is told in first person from Twyla's perspective, and Morrison makes a point to omit any racial markers for these characters. All the reader knows is that one is black and the other white. Race, though a driving force behind the various conflicts that occur as these women continue to encounter one another, is not the main focus of their interactions. Rather, each interaction between them represents the steps they have taken to avoid becoming like their mothers; the racial aspect of these encounters serves to highlight the ways in which they have succeeded and failed in accomplishing this.

No example illustrates this more clearly than the recurring question of what happened to Maggie, the cook in the orphanage where Twyla and Roberta first meet. She is described as "old and sandy-colored" (Morrison 447). On the occasion that Morrison repeatedly revisits as the story progresses, she is pushed over and tormented by teenage girls as the younger Twyla and Roberta look on. Each time the incident is brought up, discrepancies in how the women remember it occurring are brought to light; Twyla initially thinks that Maggie has just fallen, not been pushed as Roberta tells her. The next time it is discussed, Roberta says that Maggie is black, and that she and Twyla had joined the older girls in kicking her as she lay on the ground. The final time it's brought up, a tipsy Roberta tells Twyla:

Listen to me. I really did think she was black. I didn't make that up. I really thought so. But now I can't be sure. I just remember her as old, so old. And because she couldn't talk—well, you know, I thought she was crazy. She'd been brought up in an institution like my mother was and like I thought I would be too. And you were right. We didn't kick her. It was the gar girls. Only them. But, well, I wanted to. I really wanted them to hurt her. I said we did it, too. You and me, but that's not true. And I don't want you to carry that around. It was just that I wanted to do it so bad that day—wanting to is doing it. (464)

This is strikingly similar to Twyla's own revelation on the incident that Morrison reveals slightly earlier in the story:

What I remember was the kiddie hat, and the semicircle legs. I tried to reassure myself about the race thing for a long time until it dawned on me that the truth was already there, and Roberta knew it. I didn't kick her; I didn't join in with the gar girls and kick that lady, but I sure did want to. We watched and never tried to help her and never called for help. Maggie was my dancing mother. Deaf, I thought, and dumb. Nobody inside. Nobody who would hear you if you cried in the night. Nobody who could tell you anything important that you could use. Rocking, dancing, swaying as she walked. And when the gar girls pushed her down, and started roughhousing, I knew she wouldn't scream, couldn't—just like me—and I was glad about that. (462)

Twyla didn't think that Maggie was black, but that wasn't the characteristic that she was concerned with. She focuses on Maggie's clothes, and how she perceives Maggie's behavior to be. This is similar to the focus on her mother in an earlier scene that causes Twyla great embarrassment, when her mother visits and they go to church: "Why did I think she would come there and act right? Slacks. No hat like the grandmothers and viewers, and groaning all the while...All I could think was that she really needed to be killed" (450). And Roberta does the same; racially ambiguous and mute, Maggie is a literal blank canvas upon which the girls project their hatred for their mothers and subsequently themselves. It is only as these women age, become mothers themselves, and reflect upon this experience that they realize this.

Unlike her mother who "danced all night," (Morrison 445) Twyla has a job as a teenager; she settles down and marries a man with a big family with ties to their community. Roberta, similarly, has a family and stable place to live; the main conflict between the two women occurs because of these roles they have grown into. They clash over the integration of their children's school, but this race-based event is about the characters' internal conflict. After seeing Roberta protesting the integration and being told by her that Maggie was black and that she had kicked her, Twyla feels betrayed by her childhood friend. Her participation in counter-protests is driven not by a desire to enact racial progress by integrating her child's school, but by her distress at what her former friend has told her. Roberta forced her to analyze the memory, which made her confront painful feelings towards her mother and herself.

Unlike the main characters of "Recitatif," whose respective abandonments were the sources of their maternal

resentments, the protagonist of "Everything That Rises Must Converge," Julian, has been treated with utmost care by his mother. This creates guilt and resentment within him, so much so that he thinks, "he could have stood his lot better if she had been selfish, if she had been an old hag who drank and screamed at him" (O'Connor 274). Julian's guilt and feelings of indebtedness to his mother drive the plot of the story, in which he is accompanying her on the bus to her weight-reducing class at the Y; she refuses to ride alone at night since the buses have been integrated. O'Connor, unlike Morrison, makes the races of the characters in the story very clear and prominent. She also makes their racism plain; throughout the story Julian's mother talks about the superiority of white people to black. To rebel against his mother, Julian makes an effort to reject her deeply ingrained racism. But though he sees himself as more enlightened, his efforts are superficial and without any true meaning. O'Connor writes on page 277, "When he got on the bus by himself, he made it a point to sit down beside a Negro, in reparation as it were for his mother's sins." Julian also fantasizes about meeting a respectable black intellectual and befriending them, as we see when he fumblingly tries to make small talk with the well-dressed black man beside him on the bus.

Julian's actions and fantasies involving black people are ironic in two ways: Firstly, in that Julian is being just as racist as his mother by reducing black people only into tools he might use to cause her distress at his acquaintanceship with them. This is made plain by his desire to only associate with black people whom he deems to be worthy, a sentiment that is mirrored by his mother's actions. Additionally, Julian likes to think of himself as not "being blinded by love for [his mother] as she was for him, he had cut himself emotionally

free of her and could see her with complete clarity. He was not dominated by his mother," (O'Connor 281). This is contradicted by his actions, words, and thoughts. Even when he is being directly rude to her, he still cares deeply about her: "'Some day I'll start making money,' Julian said gloomily—he knew he never would—'and you can have one of those jokes whenever you take the fit.' But first they would move. He visualized a place where the nearest neighbors would be three miles away on either side" (O'Connor 274). Though in that moment on the way to the bus he is annoyed and argumentative, he still includes her in his plans for the future. The love he feels for her is most clearly shown after his mother is truck by a black woman for trying to give the woman's son a penny after getting off of the bus. She collapses after walking a few blocks down the street towards their home:

A tide of darkness seemed to be sweeping her away from him. "Mother!" he cried. "Darling, sweetheart, wait!" Crumpling, she fell to the pavement. He dashed forward and fell at her side, crying, 'Mamma, Mamma!' He turned her over. Her face was fiercely distorted. One eye, large and staring, moved slightly to the left as if it had become unmoored. The other remained fixed on him, raked his face again, found nothing and closed. (291)

Despite professing to loathe all that she is and all that she stands for, when he is faced with the real threat of losing her, his nature changes dramatically. He goes from a cold, self-pitying college graduate, who sees himself as logical and enlightened beyond maternal attachment, to a frightened little boy in a matter of minutes. He is lost without her, and

despite her obvious flaws, he loves her deeply.

O'Connor makes the influence of a mother on her child much more obvious in "Everything That Rises Must Converge" than Morrison's "Recitatif," but unlike Twyla and Roberta, Julian never fully realizes how much like his mother he is; also, unlike Morrison's characters, he doesn't take any true measures to prevent from becoming like his mother. What each of these characters has in common, however, is that despite being framed in racial situations, all of their actions are more in response to their mothers and their own feelings and issues than the issue of racism. Twyla isn't picketing because she really cares about where her child goes to school and who he goes to school with; she's picketing because she feels betrayed by Roberta, who was the only person in the orphanage who understood what it was like to have a mother who wasn't "a beautiful dead one in the sky," (Morrison 449), but who was also there for her child. Likewise, Julian doesn't sit next to black people on the bus and dream about befriending them because he genuinely wants to; he merely wants to elicit a response from his mother.

The insight of Morrison and O'Connor's stories is important because they illustrate that the conflicts in our lives are seldom easily divided into those that are deeply personal and those that involve all of society. Because just like in life, there is no real resolution or right or wrong answer in these stories. While as a society we agree that racism is wrong, or at least not socially acceptable, what happens when it gets tied up with feelings of love and resentment that we might have for our mothers or ourselves? Are we truly good people if the good actions we take are simply out of spite, as Julian's are? And can we ever reach inner peace if we cannot resolve the traumas of our pasts, as

Twyla and Roberta seem unable to? We as readers are forced to confront these questions in "Recitatif" and "Everything That Rises Must Converge," and though it can be an unpleasant task we are the better for it. Because by questioning ourselves and what has shaped us, we can see more clearly what has shaped and led to the troubles such as racism that plague our society. We are not fated to turn out as Bates-like replicants. By questioning and knowing who we are, we can wash away the sins of our mothers.

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Core Humanities

Harriet Jacobs and Black Womanhood in Slavery

Charlotte Ebner

Harriet Ann Jacobs, who lived from 1813 to 1897, was a formerly-enslaved black author, abolitionist and activist to whom we are indebted for one of the most comprehensive accounts of what life was like for black women under the institution of American chattel slavery. Her 1861 autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* speaks to the diffuse dehumanizing violence of slavery, as well as the specific violences faced by enslaved women, such as sexual abuse and separation from their children. Jacobs' work is also a testament to her incredible resilience and determination, as well as the means by which enslaved people supported one another through their suffering. Although *Incidents* languished in obscurity for a long time, it has now begun to regain its place as a work essential to a thorough understanding of our nation's brutal past and continually-violent present.

Harriet Jacobs was born into the system of racialized American chattel slavery, which began when the first enslaved Africans were brought to what would become the

U.S. in 1619; throughout the centuries that ensued, chattel slavery developed into a fundamental American institution, necessary to the establishment and prosperity of the nation (*National Geographic*). By 1860, the population of enslaved people had reached 3.9 million, and these millions of people were forced to work on Southern farms, plantations (mainly producing tobacco, cotton and sugar) and in homes, as well as being hired out in trades and laboring in factories (Gates). Emphasis is often put upon the degrading and violent material conditions that enslaved people experienced – the atrocious violence inflicted upon enslaved people should not be ignored, but it is also important to note that regardless of the variables of their material realities, they lived lives in which they were commoditized and not viewed as fully human; where all control over their lives was owned by another human being.

It is important to recognize that black women experienced a number of specific forms of violence within American slavery. Racialized and gendered ideological violence, in which black women were hypersexualized and dehumanized, underpinned racism from the beginning and served as a chief means of justifying slavery and the use of reproductive violence within it: the goal was to “inscribe enslaved women as racially and culturally different while creating an economic and moral environment in which the appropriation of a woman’s children as well as her childbearing potential became rational and, indeed, natural” (Morgan 7). In bondage women faced routine sexual violence, which was commonly seen as a convenient means of increasing the number of enslaved people a master owned, and for which enslaved women were usually blamed due to the way in which they had been hypersexualized (Gaspar and Hine 24). Black women lived in constant fear of being

separated from their families, as it was a common practice to separate enslaved family members through sale (Gaspar and Hine 16). Contrary to notions which paint white mistresses as “secret abolitionists” who were little better than slaves themselves, we know that in reality mistresses inflicted their own forms of violence upon enslaved black women, often in jealous response to their husbands raping them (Glymph 4).

It is within this horrific context that Harriet Jacobs was born in 1813 in Edenton, a small town on the North Carolinian coast (Yellin 7). Her mother was an enslaved woman named Delilah, belonging to Matilda Horniblow, and her father was Elijah, a carpenter who was permitted to hire out his work in town and live in a home with his family (Yellin 8). Harriet’s early years were remarkably privileged for an enslaved person of the time: she lived in a comfortable home surrounded by a complete family and was eventually taught to read by her mother’s mistress, which was extremely uncommon (Jacobs 8-9). Of this period, she later wrote that she “was so fondly shielded that [she] never knew [she] was a piece of merchandise” (Jacobs 8). Her early contentment was soon shattered, however. Her mother died when she was six, and her mother’s mistress when she was eleven (Jacobs 10).

Because Horniblow had bestowed rare indulgences such as literacy and had allowed Delilah to live with her family, Harriet could not help but hope that she would be freed upon Horniblow’s death (Jacobs 11). These hopes were crushed, however, when Harriet was bequeathed to Horniblow’s young niece, the daughter of Dr. James Norcrom (Yellin15). Her life changed drastically then – separated from all of her family except her brother John, Harriet was now subject to the whims and abuses of a master and mistress who were changeable, vindictive and viewed

their slaves with the utmost contempt (Jacobs 14). In the course of a few years, she began to face sexual harassment from Dr. Norcrom, and quickly gained the obsessive hatred of her mistress as well (Jacobs 27). She later spoke passionately of the pervasive sexual abuse that black women experienced in slavery:

...there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by fiends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage... Everywhere the years bring to all enough sin and sorrow, but in slavery the very dawn of life is darkened by these shadows. (Jacobs 26)

Harriet was determined to find a way to escape Dr. Norcrom's violence, and realized that, given the system she lived in, the only way to be protected from one powerful white man was to gain the protection of another powerful white man, an act she described as "a plunge into the abyss" (Jacobs 47). At sixteen she entered a sexual relationship with Samuel Sawyer, a young lawyer who was a neighbor of the Norcroms (Yellin 26). She became pregnant and both the Norcroms were enraged when they found out, Mrs. Norcrom because she thought the child was Dr. Norcrom's and Dr. Norcrom because Harriet had slept with another man instead of acceding to him (Jacobs 50). Though still enslaved, she was forced out of their home and went to live with her beloved, freed grandmother Molly (Jacobs 50). Her children Joseph and Louisa were born to Samuel Sawyer in 1829 and 1833, respectively, and she later spoke of the many wildly contrasting emotions that gripped her as she became a

mother: love for her children, shame that they had been conceived out of wedlock, and sorrow at the lives of hardship they would know (Jacobs 54). During these years she continued to live with her grandmother, with Dr. Norcrom's perpetual abusive invasions disturbing the life she created for herself and her children (Jacobs 67).

During this period Samuel Sawyer attempted to buy Harriet and their children from Norcrom, but he continually refused to sell them and relinquish his control over them (Jacobs 70). Norcrom gave Harriet an ultimatum when her children were a few years old: either agree to be his mistress and have her children be freed or refuse and be sent to work on his son's nearby plantation (Jacobs 72). Jacobs knew that Norcrom would never truly free her children, refused him, and was sent to the plantation (Jacobs 73). There, she grew ever more determined that her children would not lead the kind of life that she had, and began to plan:

...it was more for my helpless children than for myself that I longed for freedom...every trial I endured, every sacrifice I made for their sakes, drew them closer to my heart, and gave me fresh courage to beat back the dark waves that rolled and rolled over me in a seemingly endless night of storms. (Jacobs 77)

Just as she had decided to become Sawyer's mistress, Harriet made another pivotal decision borne out of her determination to fight against her enslavers: she would run away, in the hopes that, with her out of the picture, Norcrom would no longer see her children as bargaining chips in his constant psychological warfare against her and would sell them so that Sawyer could buy them (Jacobs 77). She hid in friends' houses and a nearby swamp until a tiny garret

hiding space, 7 by 9 feet wide and 3 feet tall, was created for her at her grandmother's house (Jacobs 96). She would remain there for almost seven years, watching the outside world through a tiny peephole, reading as much as she could, speaking to only a few people and leaving only occasionally to exercise her limbs (Jacobs 122).

After an initial period of time where Norcrom had Jacobs' children and brother imprisoned in an attempt to draw her out, Harriet's plan worked: Norcrom sold Joseph and Louisa to a third party who had been hired by Samuel Sawyer, and the children were brought to live with their grandmother (Jacobs 89). The children did not know that their mother hid above them, suffering acute psychological and physical distress in her confinement; added to her distress was the fact that although her family repeatedly implored Sawyer to free his children, he never did (Jacobs 114). Eventually Sawyer did decide to send Louisa north, and an opportunity arose in 1842 for Harriet to follow; she escaped Edenton by ship in the middle of the night but never revealed more details than that out of fear that any more specifics would hurt those who had helped her escape or would block a similar path of escape for other enslaved people fleeing to the North (Jacobs 131).

In the North, she was reunited with her brother John (who had escaped from Norcrom several years earlier) and both her children, when Sawyer sent Joseph to the North after her escape (Jacobs 142). Life settled into a semblance of normalcy, as she worked as a seamstress and nursemaid in Boston and New York and was introduced to world of abolitionism and new friendships, particularly with feminist and abolitionist Amy Post, through her brother's involvement with activists such as Frederick Douglass (Yellin 77). However, Harriet knew that she was still in danger,

reflecting later that “I called myself free, and sometimes felt so; but I knew I was insecure” (Jacobs 166).

Indeed, Norcrom continued to search for her up until his death in 1852, and she was forced to move and hide several times to avoid him (Yellin 116). After his death, his son-in-law (the wife of her true owner) came to New York to retrieve her once and for all, and it was then that a well-off white friend purchased her freedom from him (Jacobs 163). Her feelings upon emerging from hiding and hearing this news were understandably mixed: she said that “I am deeply grateful to the generous friend who procured [her freedom] but I despise the miscreant who demanded payment for what never rightfully belonged to him or his” (Jacobs 163).

Her freedom, and her news of her grandmother’s death in 1853 (meaning that she had no surviving family in Edenton) cemented her determination to overcome her deep shame about her sexual history and write about her experiences in slavery (Yellin 119). Jacobs struggled to find time to write after working during the day and faced trial after trial in attempting to publish – Harriet Beecher Stowe would not agree to write the preface required by one publisher, two more went out of business before printing, and the *New York Tribune* agreed to print only the portions that did not feature an open discussion of sexual violence (Yellin 146). Then Harriet met the abolitionist Lydia Marie Child, who agreed to write the preface and help publish the book. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was published in 1860 under the pseudonym Linda Brent (Andrews).

Incidents was the first published and most widely read American slave narrative written by a woman, illuminating the experiences of a population that was often overlooked, and has continued to be in the historication of slavery (Nakao). The novel can be understood as an early example of

black feminist thought, it made it clear that black women's experiences of oppression were distinct from black men's and white women's; it also insisted again and again that black women were to be seen "not as objects but as human subjects" while "depictions of personal trauma and racialized violence operate[d] with distinct socio-political agendas that attempt[ed] to re-narrate both personal as well as collective racial identity" (Tweedy 20). It was a groundbreaking work that openly emphasized the sexual abuse that was inherent to enslaved women's lives but avoided the sensationalism that surrounded this taboo subject. Instead, it focused on the power dynamics that made it nearly impossible to escape. Jacobs emphasized how slavery destroyed enslaved women's abilities to truly experience motherhood, sexual "virtue," and home-making in the ways that free women did, which would have resonated strongly with her principally white female audience.

Soon after her book was published, the Civil War began and Jacobs went to Washington, Alexandria and Savannah, where she worked tirelessly to improve the deplorable conditions of black refugees and, after the war, the newly-freed (Yellin 158). She nursed the ill, collected money and supplies, organized and distributed resources, challenged the corruption and racism of government appointed officials, and found homes for orphaned children (Yellin 160). Her celebrity grew as she steadily reported on her work and the conditions of the freed people in Garrison's *The Liberator*, among other publications; she also used her authorial platform to raise funds from her Northern audience (Korb). She helped free black communities organize and contributed to the building of schools, hospitals, churches and homes – of particular note was the Jacobs Free School in Alexandria, established in 1863 (Yellin 176). She eventually

returned to Edenton and helped the newly freed there, before an increase in racist violence, impossible Reconstruction policies, and growing indifference upon the part of Northerners drove her to return to the North in 1870 (Andrews). Her later years were marked by a decrease in political activity and repeated struggles to open a boarding house until her death in 1897 at the age of 84.

Incidents fell into obscurity and when it was rediscovered in the 1960s was assumed to be a fictional account by its preface author, the white abolitionist Lydia Marie Child (Yellin xx). Then historian Jean Fagan Yellin's work in the 1980s brought to light that the work was not fictional and was written by Harriet Jacobs, whose activist work/biographical details she also brought to light (Yellin xx). In the current day, Jacobs' autobiography has regained prominence and is now considered a key American work—the first and most widely-known female slave narrative and an enduring testament to the experiences of those who experienced American slavery in both their suffering and their resilience. She remains the only formerly enslaved woman known to have left behind self-written papers about her life (Nakao)

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The Only Thing to Fear is VR Itself

Maya Delgado-Almada

Every year some fancy new technology that our grandparents would never have thought possible hits the market. The up-and-coming tech of virtual reality (VR) is only one of the current crazes, and it is making great strides in its ability to immerse users in 3D worlds, both real and fantasy. As VR expands, the possibilities are endless for its impact on education, medicine, military, and many other fields. One area that will be discussed at large in this essay is the entertainment industry, specifically, the horror industry. There is great potential for VR in the market that has been well fostered throughout the centuries with scary stories, haunted houses, and horror movies. If VR wants to thrive as an immersive and horrifying experience, then it will need to incorporate many of the psychological aspects of fear as well as exploit today's ever-growing technology.

Before diving into what VR can be, let us first take a look at the horror industry itself. The earliest form of human engagement with the terrifying can be found in mythology and legends: ghosts, demons, witches, and monsters. These creatures are found in many different cultures from the Minotaur of the Greeks to the seven monsters of the Guaraní

people. Eventually, they made their way into the scary stories told around a campfire or published into novels like the vampires of *Dracula* or the *Twilight* saga. With the invention of film and television, horror has hit the big screen. The famous 1970s movie *The Exorcist* had an unexpected and long-lasting effect. When moviegoers saw the graphic images of a possessed girl, they “fainted, threw up, went into hysterics or fled the theatre. With figures adjusted for inflation, [the movie] ranks as the ninth-highest grossing film of all time” (Arlington, 2014). Now it seems that a new scary movie hits the theater each month: *Paranormal Activity*, *The Ring*, and *Ouija*. Then these movies experience their yearly promotional period during that dark and sweet holiday of Halloween when haunted houses, adults in costumes, candy splurges, and 31 days of Halloween can add up to billions of dollars spent by Americans (Farber). All this excitement pertaining to fear leads to one simple question: why?

Fear has its roots in both the physiology of how the body reacts to fear, and the psychology of how people perceive something as frightening. Understanding and utilizing the two components of fear can make for a very immersive and scary VR experience. Scare tactics are an interaction of tension buildup and then release that is “essentially playing with our neurochemical systems” (Arlington). Fear triggers a “high” that results from the “neurochemicals like dopamine [that] flood through different parts of the brain” (Arlington). This rush generates the flight-or-fight response, and a chill ensues as blood leaves the skin to prepare the muscles (Kerr, 111). Both real fear and simulated fear prompt the same physical reaction, but once our mind remembers we are in a false, safe environment “we can interpret the fear as enjoyable rather than threatening” (Wikiel). This process explains why, when walking through a

haunted house, a person may start laughing when they reach the exit sign. Essentially, “scaring ourselves is a way of hijacking our threat response and experiencing heightened emotion” (Wikiel). Not only does a person get non-evasive bodily stimulation, but studies done at haunted houses show fear can actually decrease stress because during a fearful experience “executive functioning [takes] a back seat to our limbic system” (Drevitch, 25). Rational thought is not possible because the brain is more preoccupied with getting itself out of danger than it is in determining what exactly is going on. This typically leads to a “stress recalibration,” which makes a person let go of negative thoughts because there are more important things in life to worry about (not being eaten is one of the big ones) (Drevitch, 25).

Currently, there has been some headway in horror VR apps. As mentioned before, movies have been terrifying audiences for decades. To promote its release of *Insidious: Chapter 3*, Universal Focus Features launched a Google Cardboard app where “viewers sit in a haunted house across from a psychic. Various scares appear from the right and left and, in the end, there is a close-up encounter with an undead serial killer known as the Bride in Black” (Nakshima). In their reviews on the app, many of the users state that the experience is both frightening and amazing. A slightly different approach comes through the work of Joel Zika and his Dark Rides Project. The project is “an initiative that captures the world’s indoor amusements in VR, bringing attention to their history to promote and save them.” Zika is attempting to preserve the educational and historical impact that old ghost trains and other spooky amusement rides had on past generations. He and his team capture the 360 degree video using “multiple passes of the ride using ultra low light cameras...[They] also capture the fully lit ride for

photogrammetry and store accelerometer data so no element of the ride is left in the dark” (Zika). The aim is that the videos will give people the experience of these terror rides long after the rides themselves have closed down or been destroyed.

Horror VR appears to be coming along nicely, but what elements make a virtual experience scary rather than funny, or worse, boring? To properly instill fear in the gamer, an app will need to appeal to the sensory organs as well as the mind. While wearing a headset, the user is visually and aurally cut off from the real world, giving that person the perception that they are in a frightening place rather than in a safe, real environment. In establishing the necessary immersion, the location and set up of the game needs to be given careful consideration. There are many places that can be considered “scary.” The most well-known are insane asylums, prisons, and cemeteries. In her book *Scream: Chilling Adventures in the Science of Fear*, Margee Kerr categorizes the most effective places under the term “confinement” (53). The idea of being trapped with a malevolent creature is far worse than knowing you can leave any time you want. Essentially, it adds a certain level of helplessness to the atmosphere, which is further amplified with spooky sights and sounds. For example, if an app wants to replicate a haunted house, it can display an abandoned building with holes in the floors and walls, rot and decay, and, for a more compelling sinister aura, dark rooms. These components are common to the horror genre and used in many movies, stories, and attractions, but that does not make them essential. Bright places and tidy rooms can also tingle the spine with the right sound cues: bangs, scratches, high-pitched screams, growls, and hissing. Specific sounds can be used for certain themes, such as a hospital with coughing and beeping or a lake house

with gurgling and splashing. Even in daylight, a person can experience a startle if the timing is perfect. Fear is “all about manipulating and violating prediction systems,” for example, if one scare comes from above, then the next one should come from below (Drevitch, 25). Besides alternating the scare’s location, interchange the types of scares themselves. For example, after flashing bright lights throw in a loud sound to “mix up the types of startles so that they tap into different senses” (Wikiel).

Besides the given visual and aural senses, one chief aspect of the VR game is locomotion. The method of locomotion the developer chooses to use in his or her game is extremely important in maintaining the fear sensations. Again, fear is only thrilling if there is a big enough sense of danger to unleash the neurochemicals, followed by the realization that everything is false and, in fact, safe. Locomotion can either add to or destroy the feeling of eminent danger. A VR experience relying solely on teleportation will not be able to reach the necessary immersion level to keep the experience scary. A real-world horror experience relies on the buildup of dread that comes when you walk towards the closet or down the echoing stone hallway. For instance, the user experiences the buildup of dread when they walk towards the sound of running footsteps through the damp underground tunnels of a penitentiary where thirteen children were killed during satanic rituals. As they walk towards the footsteps, the perceived fear builds up with the anticipation of something bad about to happen. This fear would also occur for those not-so-brave horror gamers who would never walk *towards* something, but flee for their life, as the thought of something awful behind them sends their flight response into overdrive. Teleportation in a VR game would disrupt this fear buildup.

Potentially, the ability to remain engrossed in a scary scene could be removed, and teleportation could also serve as a “chicken” escape for those who are faint of heart who, rather than face the virtual monsters, teleport away from the scene at every scary sound. Another important question for locomotion is whether the user will be following a predetermined path or allowed to roam about the virtual world. Haunted houses are typically constructed in a maze-like fashion wherein a person travels through various rooms along one passageway. Every person going through the haunted house will walk down the same corridor and experience the same jump-scares in specific orders. On the other side of the spectrum is a free-range gamer who has a greater focus on the exploration of the virtual world. This could be a ghost town experience where the user wanders the derelict wooden buildings from saloon to cemetery to jail, in each place experiencing a scare related to the people who virtually lived and died there.

All things considered, a locomotion system that requires body tracking rather than just teleportation seems the best option for a horror experience. YouTube user Bumble displays a broad range of locomotion methods in his video “Locomotion in VR: Overview of different locomotion methods on HTC Vive.” Seven minutes into the video, he demonstrates an arm-swinging motion that virtually propels users forward while they stand in place. There is great potential in this method as a means of allowing running because a gamer can safely remain in one location, but still get the sensory feedback that they are frantically pumping their arms. (VR sickness will likely be problematic with this method, but different people will always have different reactions to any locomotion). Other techniques track a person’s real-world movement and simulate it into the game,

but for horror VR this could be real world dangerous for a person who accidentally runs into their living room wall. It is possible to use the walk-in-place locomotion method for a run-in-place alternative; however, this could potentially be tiring to the user. One possible issue that can arise with locomotion, but not due to any fault of the technology, is a user may run *towards* the danger. A monstrous, ugly, foul creature with sharp teeth and black claws may jump at the user from behind a doorway. Instead of using locomotion to run away, the user may, for whatever reason, decide to use locomotion to confront the monster. This is particularly disheartening, especially in a real haunted house, because the person is consciously aware of the level of safety in the situation, or they just want to ruin the overall effect. Nevertheless, in the real world, the actor behind the scary make-up will need to keep their distance from the customer, but in a virtual world, the monster can complete the interaction by virtually ripping the user apart. The user can then return to the start of the game. Regardless of how the user responds, an interesting and perhaps the best locomotion method would be that used by the VR app *Unseen Diplomacy*, demonstrated by Bumble at 11:50. As he explains, the game “guides you around your room by creating hallways and whenever you reach a boundary [in the real world] it turns you into another hallway and basically it just has you move all around your room” (2016). This unique method could have great potential if paired with the Winchester Mystery House, with its numerous rooms and winding hallways. If combined with Joel Zika’s aim to capture history through VR, a Mystery House VR tour could appeal to both history and horror fanatics.

The success of VR stems not just from locomotion or sensory hijacking, but also how the various components

work together to affect the gamer's mind. Everyone is afraid of something, but the degree of that fear differs between individuals. Two people may both be afraid of spiders, but one may panic at seeing a tarantula in a cage while the other is capable of holding the cage so long as the creature is securely inside it. A VR app can exploit the fears already established within a person to further the fear and thrills. Additional creatures like snakes, bats, and black cats, or, if going for a mad scientist theme, genetically engineered monsters, can all make the experience more frightening. But once more, these are only suggestions, not requirements. Even a fluffy bunny can raise goosebumps, as the Little Albert experiments clearly, and unethically, demonstrated when an infant was conditioned to experience fear under certain circumstances (Watson). In her book, Margee Kerr relates a moment in her childhood when she told her friends a scary story about a wax figurine, and then she observed their reactions when she introduced them to the subject. While he was not "scary" in the sense of a bloody face or fangs, but normal compared to the average wax person, her friends were immediately on edge (193-95). A more mundane example is a quaint little house in a modern suburb. The backyard is a lush green with a small flowerbed, but there are a few small patches of dryness throughout. Inside the living room, there is the faint smell of Lysol and summer sunshine spilling through the window to cast a golden tone on the beige carpeting. A fireplace is surrounded by the proudly displayed crinkled kindergarten drawings of a rainbow-obsessed child. Harmless enough, that is, until you learn a mother had drowned her child in the bathtub ten years ago and burned the body in the fireplace. And twenty years ago an old woman had fallen down the stairs and broken her neck, and her husband buried her in the backyard

to keep her close. How about a century ago when a small inn had occupied the land, and it used to be the meeting place of murderous outlaws who all died during a bloody bar fight? The lawn does not look so pretty now, and that fireplace is a bit more menacing.

A VR application can take advantage of this fear planting by beginning its experience with a few sentences of background information or incorporating this information through certain mediums. The VR app *Chair in a Room: Greenwater* uses posters, newspapers, and postcards to add to the mental patient experience. "HORROR in VR! – *Chair in a Room: Greenwater* (Part 1 of 3)" is a YouTube video posted by GTLive about the game. Fellow gamer Matt can be seen going through the first two game chapters, both in the real world setting as well as the virtual setting, screaming and squealing through various environments as he pieces together the puzzle of why he (virtually) ended up in an insane asylum. An hour and 17 minutes into the video, Matt remarks that, "unlike a traditional movie or a game where you can look away or move away, you have to fight [the fear]. There is no escape in VR. You're surrounded by it" (2016). One thing that must be addressed is that *Chair in a Room: Greenwater* was not a perfect specimen of VR horror. Throughout the YouTube video there were system glitches where Matt's display went entirely black, an occurrence that he nicknamed "the void." The virtual hands that tracked the position of the Vive controllers sometimes went through what was supposed to be a virtually solid object, or the grabbing mechanism would shoot the virtual objects clear across the room or drop them prematurely. While certainly annoying, Matt did not appear to have a difficult time re-immersing himself in the game.

Many of the problems and conflicts encountered in a

VR systems have yet to be fully solved, but some glitches can work well with a scary VR app. The Uncanny Valley is a phenomenon where the more real VR looks, the more uncomfortable the user becomes (LaValle, 223). This is similar to how dolls, especially those with “friendly” smiles, are capable of frightening adults. This uneasiness is intentional with horror and can generate that inescapable dread that drove Matt to scream. Fear can be further amplified through the game’s refresh rate. The lower the pixel refresh rate of the display, the more likely a “flicker” can be perceived, especially in the peripheral vision (LaValle, 161). In a regular VR game, this flicker distracts from the scene, but under the building tension of an ominous atmosphere, this flicker can pique the user’s awareness of the darkness and generate a feeling akin to a sixth-sense. Imagine shuffling through the echoing corridors of an old, destitute mansion and something flickers at the corner of the user’s eye. The person turns to look and sees there is nothing but darkness. The flicker can be accepted as an unexpected bonus to the game or it can be intentionally added, but if the user is fully immersed in the experience, movement at his or her periphery can add an element of dreaded anticipation. Finally, the darkness of the scene, if darkness is part of the app, can make rendering simpler. In chapter two of *Chair in a Room: Greenwater*, the user is in a white boat on a foggy day. While not exactly dark, it has the same effect in that nothing is easily discernable and there is the creeping sensation that a jump-scare is only seconds away. There is no demand on fine detail because the aim is to disorientate and unnerve the user. What the user thinks *may* happen can be just as powerful as what *does* happen.

Throughout this discussion on fear and virtual reality, one thing has yet to be addressed, and that is the social

implications of a horror VR experience. Social interactions have huge potential in VR, but it also has major impacts in fear. Margee Kerr says that when she asked subjects what they feared the most, solitary confinement was a common response (56). She later discusses how solitary confinement has been used in penitentiaries as punishment and could very well be a form of torture as it “takes the lifeline of human interaction away” (62). The effectiveness of this isolation can be seen in how well the dreadful “corner” can (momentarily) curb a child’s misbehavior. Children, much like adults, crave human contact and experiencing a fearful event in the company of friends reinforces the feeling of safety that establishes the enjoyment of fear. Many people will not enter a haunted house alone (unless on a dare), and most scary stories are told in the company of others. Facing scary events is much easier when it is done with others, whether seen in a child holding her daddy’s hand at the dentist, or a teenager only going on a rollercoaster if friends go with. The presence of others offers the sense of safety as well as the sense of creating memories to be told and laughed at days later. With VR, friends miles apart can scream and laugh together in a haunted virtual world. It is possible that strangers from around the world can come together to interact in an environment where the monsters that jump out are actually other VR users. A VR server can combine those who want to get scared with those who want to do the scaring, thereby appealing to two separate ends of the fear-entertainment spectrum.

Within the next few decades, as technology continues to grow beyond what we think possible, VR will continue incorporating the various elements found in the current horror industry. Haunted houses will no longer be confined to only houses, but to entire worlds full of horrible and

ghoulish creatures. Stories will unfold through displays rather than pages, and our senses will deceive us into believing we are going to die even as our real bodies are in the safety of our homes. And as more horror movies continue to hit the big screens, theatergoers may very well be receiving the trailers through interactive VR experiences. Additionally, just like Creepypasta sites and forums gave life to the Internet icons of Slender Man and Jeff the Killer, novel monsters can be created and popularized through VR and set the stage for fear-filled thrills for generations to come. But whereas the Creepypasta killers were created on the Internet, the increased immersion of VR can give life to an entirely new species of horror. Besides giving rise to goosebumps, screams, and flailing hands, VR can revolutionize the horror industry.

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English

Do Yahoos Dream of Electric Sheep?: Dehumanization in Jonathan Swift

Matt Cotter

In Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, she seems to attempt to humanize the African protagonist by comparing his features to that of a white European man, "humanizing" him in a way that her white, middle-to-upper-class European readers would comprehend. This is archaic by today's standards, but for the time it was probably quite progressive, as colonial literature and attitudes usually seem to dehumanize the natives of a place being settled as though to justify their subjugation. Jonathan Swift, being the master of satire that he was, brilliantly turned these ideas on their head in his fantasy-adventure novel *Gulliver's Travels* and his parody essay "A Modest Proposal." In both, Swift takes ideas related to colonialism—the white European male, both travelling abroad to report to the government on possible new lands to settle in, as well as commenting on what is to be done with the people who have already been conquered—and does not merely settle for satirizing them, but actually uses the tropes

of colonial literature against themselves, taking the dehumanization device and exaggerating it to its logical extreme “A Modest Proposal” or deliberately muddying the waters of what makes something humane (*Gulliver’s Travels*).

Gulliver’s Travels is littered with satire of the British government and the current events of Swift’s day, but Swift never has Gulliver really question the humanity of the Lilliputians or the giants of Brobdignag, aside from some funny scenarios relating to his relative size to them (such as him finding an appropriate place to sleep in Lilliput without crushing something, or acting as the doll of Glumdalclitch, the giant farmer’s daughter). It isn’t until he arrives in the Land of the Houyhnhnms that the story shifts focus to this dissonance between humanity and debauchery. Upon arriving and discovering that the talking horses are not merely magicians disguised as horses, but genuinely intelligent creatures, he is taken into their home and examined. His Houyhnhnm (their word for what they are) master “spent many hours of his leisure to instruct me. He was convinced (as he afterwards told me) that I must be a Yahoo, but my teachableness, civility, and cleanliness astonished him; which were qualities altogether so opposite to those animals” (Swift 1162). Gulliver continues to hear this term thrown around which he struggles to pronounce, and eventually comes to learn it is the name of a savage race of creatures outside of the Houyhnhnm’s perfect society that resemble humans incredibly but are practically mindless and impulsive animals.

Upon revealing that in his native land Yahoos ride Houyhnhnms for sport and travel, Gulliver’s master is indignant and cannot fathom a Yahoo daring to ride a stronger and sturdier creature, “for he was sure, that the weakest servant in his house would be able to shake off the

strongest Yahoo" (Swift 1166). Gulliver eventually explains how his native country, England, operates and the systems of government and religion, etc. As he explains, Gulliver seems to realize how flawed his society is, particularly when describing lawyers. When his master cannot understand why such intelligent people would not dedicate themselves to instructing others, Gulliver reassures him that lawyers are the "most ignorant and stupid generation among us" when dealing with anything outside their own profession (Swift 1172).

Gulliver eventually accepts after living among the Yahoos that they are "unteachable" and are incredibly violent and penchant for greed and gluttony, uprooting fields and scarfing down whatever vegetation or rodents they can find, whereas the Houyhnhnms are educated and civil, appreciating arts and discourse (Swift 1181-1183). During this time, the Houyhnhnm master of Gulliver remarks that maybe the Yahoos and Gulliver's people aren't as different as they seem, and Gulliver takes this to heart, developing into a misanthrope.

Gulliver is eventually sent away, after the Houyhnhnms see him as a threat for being an educated Yahoo, something prevalent in colonial attitudes – the intelligent "other." But before he does, he is able to sit in on a grand assembly, where the Houyhnhnms discuss the possible eradication of the Yahoos, who could not be aborigines as all the animals bare an instinctive hatred towards them. Gulliver's master then proposes, taking a page from the Europeans' book, that they castrate the Yahoos at a young age and breed them to be tame, eventually breeding them out in favor of asses as service animals (Swift 1184-1185). This indicates that Gulliver's presence there has perhaps turned the Houyhnhnms for the worse, or perhaps

they weren't so above it all in the end, as castrating an entire race and letting them die off seems rather diabolical, especially since it was Gulliver's master who seemed disgusted by Gulliver's home country's society to begin with. But now he hypocritically uses one of humanity's most abhorrent aspects (our penchant for domination and complete subjugation of a species for our own gain) because it is convenient. Perhaps Gulliver was correct that humanity is a poison—whether it be Yahoos infesting the Houyhnhnms' lands or the colonists conquering yet another indigenous tribe, or even Gulliver himself accidentally giving the Houyhnhnms some pretty toxic ideas, humanity seems to leave an ugly mark wherever we go.

However, the bigger question Swift seems to be proposing, with respect to both colonial literary tropes as well as society as a whole, is when does humanity begin and end? Gulliver, over time, becomes far fonder of the Houyhnhnms compared to humanity because of their wit, intelligence, and gentle nature; however, he probably would never have really respected them unless they displayed human-like characteristics to begin with (intelligence, hierarchy, appreciation for arts and sciences, etc.).

Swift also seems to take a jab at his own society and colonial expansionist attitudes, by implying that even the savage Yahoos settled from elsewhere, perhaps implying that humanity is only a few generations away from the debauchery and violence of the Yahoos, and that to forcibly settle in other, peaceful lands is in itself a brutish, barbaric act. When discussing his government and systems of law and order, the latter in particular, is when Gulliver seems to have his initial start of misanthropy, as he realizes that even if the Yahoos were to be educated and civilized, their instincts towards greed, violence, and treachery would still be there,

as they are present in a majority of humans. Hence why, when Gulliver returns, even to his family and even when encountering a kind Portuguese ship captain, he cannot shake his disgust at their apparent Yahoo stench and appearance, and he would prefer to fraternize with stable horses (1193-1194, 1199).

Not only that, but despite the Houynhnms being gentle and intelligent, they still have a serious debate over eradicating an entire species of animals because they find them irritating, rationalizing that the Yahoos are not indigenous and therefore have no claim to the land, despite there being rather little evidence to support that theory. They then decide that neutering and enslaving them as the people of Gulliver's half of the world practice is the more humane and intelligent thing to do, to buy time until they can breed donkeys for work. This further muddies the water: Has Gulliver's presence and stories of humanity's insidious cleverness corrupted the Houyhnhnms, or have they always had the inclination towards this and Gulliver was too enamored to see this? Are they merely the good and bad aspects of humanity wrapped in an Equus skin?

Later, in his essay "A Modest Proposal," Swift, himself an Irishman, uses graphic imagery to further ridicule the dehumanization of the "other" in English literature and discourse, as England at the time was still an imperial powerhouse of colonization. The speaker, upon seeing so many mothers wasting their time begging on the street to feed their children instead of being able to find work, and hearing of many mothers forced to get abortions or smother their own children, opts for what he sees as a practical solution: that the surplus of Irish babies will be divided, 100,000 to be fattened and served as a delicacy, and the other 20,000 to be spared to prevent the Irish from dying out

completely. However, like a livestock farmer, the speaker opts that only $\frac{1}{4}$ of these spared children will be male, as “these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females.” Swift insists it will be served as a delicacy to landlords, taking an effective shot at them using wordplay, considering that landlords “have already devoured most of the parents, [they] seem to have the best title to the children.” (Swift 1201)

Swift also mentions how it would be a political and religious victory for the largely Protestant English, as the number of “Papists,” or Catholics, would reduce, and the economy would rise due to the appeal of a new dish, and relieve parents’ liabilities and allow them to get real jobs and not waste so much money on the burden of feeding infants, rather putting it back into circulation by paying their landlords (Swift 1203).

Swift seems to expand on some ideas set forth during *Gulliver’s Travels*, namely the dehumanization of humanity in the Yahoos and the “humane” proposal to have them castrated and bred as tamed animals. Here, Swift puts this twisting of colonial literary tropes into overdrive, and applies it to the real world, completely stripping away the thin shield of fantasy and unabashedly mocking the English’s disdain for their Irish neighbors, still at this time under England’s thumb completely. Everything Swift outlines in this essay is written in this matter-of-fact, logical manner while never coming off as clinical or detached, in fact seeming to be kind of pleased with his own idea a little too much. The graphic descriptions of the methods of cooking, particularly the noteworthy line “a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled” (Swift 1201) are

lines that get a shock laugh at best and come off as disgusting and abhorrent to most readers, especially considers its chipper tone. Here comes again Swift's question: why is this so disturbing to hear? The English seem to have no problem bullying the Irish, turning them into caricatures of drunken, simple-minded, violent buffoons, much like the Yahoos, in order to justify their mistreatment. And yet, even an English lord or lady reading this would be repulsed by the descriptions of babies being butchered and stewed and fed to landlords.

Swift's point seems to be that if the Irish are indeed lesser than other humans (particularly the English) and deserve to be mistreated, what makes them above being served as cuisine in a way that cattle and game are not? Swift is merely taking the dehumanization prevalent in European colonial literature and, like any great satirist, taking it to an extreme to outline its inherent stupidity.

Swift's sharp criticisms are not merely exclusive to colonial literature of the Western European countries, but colonial attitudes overall, from England to the Eastern Asia. Swift seems to only restrict himself to parodying tropes common in colonial stories because it is the most immediately relevant to him, being an author. However, by twisting these ideas into the fantastical as with the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos to make them easier to digest, or the insane and extreme as eating Irish babies to stimulate the economy to make the ideas even harder to digest (no pun intended), Swift is able to make an overall commentary on our willingness to disregard the humanity in other societies if it benefits our goals and preset mindsets, as well as exposing the hypocrisy in dehumanizing a group while also having reservations about what is and isn't going to far (Again, why treat the Irish like animals and not eat them when you eat

every other type of animal?). His satire may be specific to his time and region, but its message (like all good satire and parody) is universal and accessible in any time, because, unfortunately, humanity has done a lot of surface-level evolution, but like the Yahoos, our base instincts and flaws seems to always be there.

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Women in Iran: Historically Repressed by the State, Not Religion

Katie Worrall

In 2011, a German human rights campaign depicted a Muslim woman in a burqa next to bags of trash with the caption: “Oppressed women are easily overlooked. Please support us in the fight for their rights.”¹ This a common depiction often presented by activists and politicians in the West who view Muslim women living in ‘backward’ countries as “needing to be saved” or oppressed by Islam.² There is much rhetoric among non-Muslim feminists bolstering the notion that religion is the ultimate suppressor of women in the Middle East. Activists and feminists who are part of the so-called Western tradition have a misconception of Islam (granted, many others do as well) and believe it to be intrinsically patriarchal and oppressive. However, when Islam is compared to other monotheistic religions like Christianity, this propagated narrative of Islam does not look

¹Lila Abu-Lughod, “Introduction,” in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 9.

² *Ibid.*, 14.

unique. Christianity has historically been used in the United States to deny women and other minorities civil rights and liberties, and it is often used as a tool to legitimize unjust laws. In the Middle East, though it may seem surprising because of its theocratic and clerical regimes, there is a clear distinction between the state and religion. Religion can be a prescription for social ills and moral ambiguities, but it can also unleash a plague in society depending on the healer or perpetrator. Generalizing worshipers of religions has failed us; we cannot continue to lump individuals into macro-categories and assume they all believe the same interpretations of religious texts.

This essay simultaneously critiques and defends religion, but this is not what it's about nor its sole purpose. As I am living in a world of continuing degradations of human rights, living in a country that has both directly and indirectly maintained these degradations, and finding myself in a feminist bubble of increasing ignorance and absence of intersectionality, I feel I must help bring awareness and honesty into these circles about the Middle East, especially about Middle Eastern women. Thus, in a flailing attempt to overturn the dangerous stereotypes surrounding Muslim women, I have begun looking at the history of the Iranian Women's Movement, which can be divided into five phases, as an entrance point for dissecting the distinction between state and religion in the Middle East.

The women's movements in Iran have all been directed at the oppression they have experienced from the state in the form of state-sponsored feminism, dissolution of women's associations, and forced dress codes. Despite the Western media and political arena portraying women in the Middle East as oppressed by religion, women's movements have formed in retaliation to a repressive, and at times

fascist, state government that has been upheld by Western imperialism.

The history of women's movements in Iran is diverse, and involves women from a variety of political affiliations, socioeconomic statuses, and ideologies. The first modern-day proclaimed Iranian Women's Movement can be traced back to the late nineteenth century during the protests against the Qajar Dynasty.³ Although women's rights were not at the center of these protests, women had an important role in the success and influence of these protests that contributed to the eventual 1911 Constitutional Revolution. Starting in the early 1900s, urban elite men, bazaar merchants, and the *ulama* (meaning clergy in Persian language and Shi'i tradition) started to call for a constitutional monarchy. Women existed in these upper-class social strata and were not isolated from powerful, elitist characteristics, however their expectations and goals of the revolution varied greatly from their male counterparts.⁴ Whereas for both men and women the revolution was against westernization and imperialism under the Qajars, additionally for women, the revolution provided them with an opening to express their opinions and have some influence in the political process. Unfortunately, political rights and the status of women in society did not significantly progress after the Constitutional Revolution. Women's political organizations were forcibly disbanded and repressed by the Qajars, whose fears of opposition were heightened because of growing revolutionary pressure.⁵ In retaliation, women sought other ways to be involved in the

³ Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Women's Movement: A Century Long Struggle," *The Muslim World* 94, no. 4 (October 2004): 427-448.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

civil society.⁶ Because of the repressiveness of the state towards political organizations, the women's movements started to infiltrate other areas of society- education, public health, and other social and economic aspects of their life.

Just when women's movements and civil society started to emerge again after the Qajar King's brief period of tolerance in the 1920s, Reza Shah overthrew the monarchy in a coup and established the Pahlavi Dynasty. Reza Shah was a ruthless leader, and started banning women's associations, while further pushing back the progress of women's rights.⁷ However, to continue strumming the strings of modernity and westernization under the foothold of imperialist Britain, Reza Shah created a government-led women's organization called *Kaanoon-e Baanovaaan* (The Ladies Center in Persian).⁸ A strict secularist, Reza Shah also attempted to curtail religious rights by banning the hijab in public spaces, hurting and repressing Muslim women.⁹ Even though these decrees were mandated by the Shah himself, the *ulama* blamed the women. Women's movements were mostly seen by the *ulama* as influenced by western and liberal ideas, claiming that the women's movements only purpose were to allow women to show "their bodies in public".¹⁰ The Shah's actions delegitimized the women's movement in the eyes of the powerful clerics by making them wrongly think women's protests were against religion. Extreme repression of political opposition groups and women's rights activists existed right up until the day the British replaced him for his close relationship with Nazi Germany (Reza Shah changed the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

country's name from Persia to Iran meaning the "Aryan" land).¹¹

With the replacement of Reza Shah with his own son, there was a brief period when the state lacked strong structures and authority. Thus, women's organizations were able to form again, and also connect with political parties.¹² However, in the aftermath of the 1953 coup, the Shah was left vulnerable and needed a show of authority. He started to consolidate his power by wiping out any opposition to the regime, especially those who were connected to the communist Tudeh party. Women's political movements were once again suppressed, and all other women's associations were forced to be apolitical and under the direct jurisdiction of the government.¹³ Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Shah began making massive reforms in land redistribution and state bureaucracy in what was called "The White Revolution." Some of these reforms also included advancements for women in education, employment opportunities, and political positions.¹⁴ However, the regime only created an illusion of empowerment and equality of women to gain support from the public in the midst of the Shah's weakness. As historical scholar of Iranian Women's movements Mahdi fashions it, the appointments of Iranian women to various governmental positions were "symbolic and minuscule in their scope."¹⁵ Progress occurring in the shadows of the Iranian Revolution was an attempt to show

¹¹"When 'Persia' became 'Iran,'" Geography of Iran, Iran Chamber Society, accessed December 11, 2017,

http://www.iranchamber.com/geography/articles/persia_became_iran.php

¹² Mahdi, "The Iranian."

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

the Shah's willingness to democracy, however, as history shows us, these were not successful.

As with the Constitutional Revolution in 1905, the Iranian Revolution in 1979 opened up a new medium for women to voice their concerns and shape their government. Women protested alongside men in the fight against the Shah's secularist policies and Western imperialism.¹⁶ They were women from all ideologies, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and regions.¹⁷ Even though the revolution was founded in religion, many women came together in solidarity against a repressive state. However, the extent to which religious Muslim women contributed in the revolution cannot be underplayed. Women who typically steered away from politics were inspired by the *ulama* and Ayatollah Khomeini to participate in the revolution.¹⁸ The Iranian Revolution is an anomaly in the history of revolutions as it was the sole masses of the people, much of which were women, that became a major factor in the toppling of the Shah. While political, economic, and social concerns did play a small part, this was a revolution against the Shah's lack of religious authority and his suppression of religious activities. Iranian people had just experienced nearly 50 years of religious intolerance towards Islam (also Babism, Bahatism, and Christianity to name a few more), and as a result, there was a strong desire among revolutionary victors to establish Islamic law and the rule of the jurists. Again, as seen after the Constitutional Revolution, women's rights and equality was rolled back decades- gender segregation, forced veiling, and firing women from their jobs all became common practice.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Iranian women struggled at the hands of another repressive state, but they were not giving up and their will was only growing.

After the election of reformist Mohammad Khatami in 1997, women began to see improvements in education, the labor force, the media, and the arts.²⁰ Women started to question and protest discriminatory laws that focused on divorce, child custody, and other “tangible issues.”²¹ No longer did women rely on the state for change, they went directly to the political arena and demanded it. In the past, women had to rely mostly on men for any kind of progress in gender equality, however during this reform movement women started to rely on themselves.²² These blossoming political activities in the Khatami years are evident in the launch of the One Million Signatures Campaign in 2006 which petitioned for a change in gender discriminatory laws.²³ The Reform Movement brought substantial changes to women’s organizations and their position in society, but after the election of the far-right populist Ahmadinejad in 2005, much of this progress has been redacted, and women are once again trying to recover the rights they were once given and have long deserved.

Through this dissection of the five phases of the history of Iranian women’s movements, there appears to be several types of feminisms that have arose from a variety of different conditions. The first brand of feminism was created during the Qajar Dynasty and is what scholars refer to as

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Launching of the One Million Signatures Campaign Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws,” The Feminist School, last modified July 15, 2008, <http://www.feministschool.com/english/spip.php?article7>.

secular feminism.²⁴ According to scholar Margot Badran, “secular feminism draws on and is constituted by multiple discourses including secular nationalist, Islamic modernist, humanitarian/human rights, and democratic.”²⁵ The Qajar kings enveloped themselves in a religious aura, and gave Shia clergymen great autonomy over jurisprudence of laws, thus much of society was controlled by the *ulama*. Secular feminism in Iran grew out of this period of intense nationalistic fervor, and disenchantment with the clergy ruling elite and encroaching westernization.

The second brand of feminism is what scholars call Islamic feminism, which “is expressed in a single paramount religiously grounded discourse taking the Qur’an as its central text.”²⁶ Islamic feminism most certainly arose from the Iranian Revolution in 1979, however the seeds had been sown long before during the secular rule of the Shah. Islamic feminism strives for social justice and gender equality in the name of Islam, and stresses the need for a reinterpretation of the Qur’an by women since a majority of Iranian theologians are men.²⁷ Islamic feminism is prominent in the Islamic Republic where women’s organizations have become involved in politics and have challenged discriminatory laws about divorce, child custody, and other personal status laws.²⁸ There has been scholarly discourse on the women’s movements in Iran as being propelled by women for women, and not relying on men. This is the core principle that Islamic

²⁴ Margot Badran, “Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond,” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 6-28, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40326847>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

feminism is driven by: women have a voice in the interpretations of the Qur'an and Islamic law.

The last brand of feminism is relatively contradictory as it was not propelled or started by women, rather by the state. Arguably, state-sponsored feminism is not feminism at all, merely a facade. Scholar Lisa Pollard stresses on this idea saying that "women's fortunes were linked to the promotion of the state's needs and agendas," rather than women being consulted about what was on a woman's agenda.²⁹ State-sponsored feminism is most evident during the Pahlavi dynasty towards the end of both kings' reign. Especially during Mohammad Reza Shah's White Revolution women were only propped up in times when the Shah's power was weak. In addition, the state used women as a symbol for nationalism whereas "feminist virtues" were often linked "with the emerging national projects."³⁰ Similar to the United States' use of Lady Liberty, during the Constitutional Revolution, "an image of 'mother Iran' was shown protecting the infant *majles* [Iran's form of parliament] from its enemies" only furthering maternal gender roles.³¹ State-sponsored feminism can be seen in many different countries around the world, even today in the United States, and it is not a unique feature of Iran or the Middle East. Often times leaders will frame themselves as champions of feminism and reform to appease opposition and gain temporary support.

Western imperialism and influence is a key factor in formulating and affecting these different feminisms. As Badran emphasizes, it is important to remember that

²⁹ Lisa Pollard, "The Role of Women," in *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, ed. Jillian Schwedler (Boulder, CO: 2013), 345-375.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

feminism existing in Iran and the Middle East today was not been brought from other places; it was born in the region from the personal experiences of diverse women.³² Contrary to the widely-believed assumptions that the United States is the sole-bearer of democratic ideals, egalitarian values exist in the Middle East. Ending gender discrimination has been and is an important aspect of Middle Eastern societies. As this paper has attempted to show through the analysis of the history of the Iranian Women's Movement, Islamic and Secular feminisms have long fought to end gender discrimination in the Middle East. The "fantastical perceptions" of repressed Muslim women who need to be saved has unfortunately been used by powerful Western states "to justify colonial incursions."³³ These justifications come from countries, like the United State and Great Britain, that have practiced little gender equality themselves. Imperialism and war hurt women and children, and thus interventions abroad on behalf of furthering human rights are actually contradictory to feminism. The heavy Western influence of the Shah's regime was not viewed positively by Iranians and was actually used as a rallying cry for the fall of his government. The West has done more in supporting authoritarian regimes that discriminate women than they have to try to dismantle gender inequality around the world.

There is a popular sentiment in the West that "Muslim women need saving."³⁴ These sentiments are not only concerning because they are used to rectify imperialist and self-interested exploits, but also because of the grave generalities they assign to numerous women all over the

³² Badran, "Between Secularism," 12-13.

³³ Pollard, "The Role of Women."

³⁴ Lila Abu-Lughod, "Introduction," in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 1-17.

world.³⁵ According to scholar Abu-Lughod, compartmentalizing women into any label greatly reduces the individual experiences of every woman in the world. It is important when talking about women's movements in Iran to remember the diversity of the millions that have witnessed the oppression and discrimination. As she says, "intimate familiarity with individuals anywhere makes it hard to be satisfied with sweeping generalizations about cultures, religions, or regions."³⁶ Condensing women in the Middle East, and subsequently Iran, into a category of Muslim women not only neglects the Kurdish, Christian, Jewish, and many other religious populations who live there, but also forgets about the varying religiosity, secularism, and ideologies among them. The idea of Muslim women needing saving propagates from the notion that the entity oppressing women in the Middle East is religion. However, the history of Iranian women's movements shows that religion is far from the epicenter of oppression.

In every period of the women's movements of Iran the state and societal structure were the most prominent forces of discrimination and oppression. Although religion can influence both these factors, religion has not been the culprit nor have considerable women living in Iran under the Islamic Republic named it as one. There are numerous women's rights magazines and newspapers coming out of Iran during the twentieth century, but many have been recently shut down by the regime. In a statement released by editor-in-chief of Zanan-e Emrooz (*Women Today*), Shahla Sherkat, after the magazine was shut down, explains that the focus of the magazine is "mainly on issues and problems pertaining to women inside and outside Iran" with sections

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

including “society, art, literature, theoretical discussion, mind and body.”³⁷ There is not one mention of religion in the statement. She does mention the patriarchal culture in Iran, however patriarchal rhetoric exists in other religions around the world as well. Although these examples exist in the other religions, the problem with patriarchy in Iran is that the perpetrators continue to stay in control of the state. The government actors justify themselves in the name of Islam, however this tainted version of Islam is exactly what Islamic feminists are working to dismantle. Imagine if more women were included in theological discussions, in parliament, or in other top positions of the state?

Another women’s rights newspaper called *The Feminist School*, which is run by the base of the women who started the “One Million Signatures Campaign” against discriminatory laws, was also closed down recently. In one of their articles, they explain the campaign as petitioning for a change in penal codes like the minimum age for marriage (nine years at the time), value of testimony when witnessing crime, and many other laws.³⁸ These calls for changes are brought against the state, not against Islam. When women take to the streets and advocate for reform, they are not trying to eradicate Islam or demean Islam as a religion, they are trying to eradicate what many scholars consider to be fascist dictators.

³⁷ “Iran: Women’s Rights Activists Treated as “Enemies of the State’ in Renewed Crackdown,” Amnesty International, last modified April 10, 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/08/iran-womens-rights-activists-treated-as-enemies-of-the-state-in-renewed-crackdown/>. And Shahla Sherkat, “Zanan-e Emrooz,” ed. by Frances Hasso, trans. Nazanin Shahrokni, *Journal of Middle Eastern Women’s Studies* v. 11, no. 3 (November 2015): 376-379, <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-3142625>

³⁸ “Launching of the One Million Signatures Campaign Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws,” *The Feminist School*, last modified July 15, 2008, <http://www.feministschool.com/english/spip.php?article7>.

Many around the world would jump to say that in the theocracy of Iran, religion is integrated in the state. However, Iran is far from a theocracy, and that is only the first misconception. There has been much scholarly debate on the classification of Iran's political institutions, but the term clerical fascism coined by Luigi Sturzo seems to be best fitting the political situation.³⁹ The Shi'ism practiced by Khamenei and Khomeini and all the others is far from orthodoxy and traditional Shi'ism. The religion practiced by the Islamic Republic is a form of political religion where religious ideas and institutions are used as a means for political outcomes. The line between religion and politics is blurry in the Islamic Republic, and the mesh of the two has only made the state stronger and have more control. People who propagate the idea that women in Iran are oppressed by religion do so under the assumption that the Islamic Republic is a religious state; however, the religious state, similar to state-sponsored feminism, is only a facade used to legitimize their authority and actions. There is the abstract and difficult question then of whether the Islamic Republic's Shi'ism is true Shi'ism. This question is broad and has to be argued in an entirely different essay devoted to it. However, based solely on the core principle of Islamic feminism, that social justice is evident in the Qur'an and needs to be interpreted as such, the answer is no.

Contrary to prevalent western beliefs, the repression of Iranian women since the start of the women's movements has predominantly been at the hands of the state and its agents. Whether through outright suppression of women's

³⁹ John Pollard, "Clerical Fascism': Context, Overview and Conclusion," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 2 (May 2007): 433-446, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760701321528>.

political organizations, forced veiling or unveiling, discriminatory laws based on patriarchal readings of the Qur'an, or a facade of nationalistic reform—all have been used as an instrument of oppression. Not only is the belief that women are oppressed by Islam false and perpetuated by Western fallacies and their savior-like, obligatory protection of Muslim women, it also shows the wide misconceptions people have about life in the Middle East and the nature of Islam. Just as analyzing Iran's history of feminist movements has worked to destabilize perceptions of Muslim women, working to form better understandings of the history of other countries in the region will help us formulate better opinions and conceptions of the diverse individuals that call this region home.

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Poetry

A Day Is Night

Nick Jacobs

I found the island,
A landscape that thrives with life.
There could be water,
But I haven't seen the coast.
No spark to see past my dark hands.

I wait for day to break past murky trees,
And winds to carry me to distant mirror streams.
I fear that reflection behind stagnant sunlight.
Hopefully the river beasts will pass through my image.
Content to feed on others until night shows again.

My thirst comes and goes in sporadic direction,
No way of knowing where,
No way of finding goal.
The future is too far ahead of me.
Light becomes the commodity water cannot fulfill.

Then a flare is shot high,
And no one arrives with notes of approval.
An arm closes each hour.
I wait camped between the descent and rise.
Whatever the time, daylight is still far from breach.