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Editor's Note

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Editing this issue of Atlantis has been an adventure for me. It has been an opportunity that feels much as I imagine it would to glide beneath the surface and find a lost, underwater city. In our Open Journal System, I found a treasure trove of submissions, with widely ranging themes, methodologies, and approaches. The one misfortune I felt was the necessity to pick and choose, to not be able to publish everything. Notwithstanding, I am very pleased with the collection of submissions that are curated in this volume and anticipate you will find the diversity of writing enriching. In subsequent issues, others will have the opportunity I have enjoyed: Atlantis is moving to a new practice of engaging a new content editor for each issue of the journal. I have had the privilege, with this issue, to be the first.

With this shift to new editorial practices, *Atlantis* is also changing its format. Commencing with this issue, the journal will be comprised of three sections: research, where scholarly contributions will be featured; conversation, which will consist of essays and book reviews; and creation, a section featuring poetry, fiction, and other creative written work related to the fields of critical studies.

This issue, 39.1, is characterized by an eclectic variety of contributions, all of which are situated within the interdisciplinary study of gender, culture, and social justice. In keeping with the journal's traditions, this issue brings forward a multiplicity of knowledges that reflect up-to-date scholarship. It incorporates diverse approaches to critical studies, including feminist, anti-racist, critical identity, intersectional, transnational, and cultural studies. For example, "Beyond Aesthetics: A Femme Manifesto" by Hoskins and Hirschfeld, is the first poem to be published in *Atlantis* in some time. Meg Lonergan's research paper offers critical

analysis and commentary that considers men's rights discourses in the context of the Ghomeshi trial and *Kafka*'s The Trial. And Andrea Davis provides reflexive consideration of her own experiences as a "Black female professor" working in Toronto.

This issue also foregrounds a special section on the "intersectionality of hate," honing in on far-right affinity politics from a critical perspective. In our contemporary social and political moment, with the rise and re-legitimization of the politics of hate, this particular focus is timely indeed.

Atlantis remains dedicated to the ongoing growth of knowledge in the field of critical studies, as well as to critical reflections on the field itself. I have been grateful for the opportunity, through this issue, to have played a role in the emergence of this work.

Sexualized Violence is a Citizenly Issue: Neoliberalism, the Affective Economy of Fear and Fighting Approaches to Sexualized Violence Prevention

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Abstract: This paper investigates how Western forms of citizenship, formed and informed by (neo)liberal ideologies of governance, mediate strategies for sexualized violence prevention. Focusing on one sexualized violence prevention strategy, what I term "the fighting approach," I argue that the successes and failures of sexualized violence prevention are contingent upon their commensurability with, and amenability to, the goals of broader sociopolitical systems and discourses of belonging: namely, classical liberal and neoliberal ideals of the citizen.

Sexualized violence is a citizenly[1] issue. It is a sociopolitical ill that affects, and is perpetuated by, individual citizens of a sociopolitical community. Yet, citizens' experiences of sexualized violence represent only part of the interrelation between sexualized violence and community. To be sure, sexualized violence and citizenship inform each other on an epistemological, definitional basis; their relation is foundational to conceptualizations of what these phenomena "are." As scholars have demonstrated, citizenship shapes and regulates sexual conduct (Foucault 1990; Berlant 1997; Phelan 2001; Plummer 2003). The formal and informal rules and regulations of a sociopolitical community work to produce understandings of certain sexual practices and behaviours as normative and (re)productive, beneficial to the maintenance of the nation-state, or as abnormal and deviant, potentially threatening to a community (Cossman 2007; Puar 2007; Richardson 2000).

However, just as citizenship depends upon and shapes understandings of acceptable and unacceptable sexual practices, discourses regarding sex and sexuality also inform the creation and maintenance of the sociopolitical body to which citizens belong. For example, scholars like Melissa Matthes (2000) and Tanya Horeck (2004) demonstrate how foundational myths of several modern republics rest upon stories of sexualized violence to explain or justify their formation or reformation. Relatedly, but in a more material sense, Sunera Thobani (2007) and Andrea Smith (2005) discuss how sexualized violence was and is used in Canada and the United States as a strategy of settler-colonial domination, "critical to the success of economic, cultural, and political colonization" (Smith 2005, 15). Therefore, citizenship and sexualized violence should be understood in a relation of

contingency, for the ways we understand citizenship and sexualized violence rest upon how each phenomenon regulates and is regulated by the other.

Sexualized violence is thus more than just another kind of violence threatening the body politic and the bodies that form that "politic." Although often framed as an abhorrent crime diminishing the integrity of the nation-state and the safety of its citizens, sexualized violence also aids in the symbolical and material creation of the very communities it threatens. Yet, precisely because sexualized violence does not just inform, but is also informed by citizenship, it is crucial to consider how discourses of citizenly belonging contribute to the perpetuation of sexualized violence, and, therefore, might also be an important site to consider strategies for its prevention. The postulation that "sexualized violence is a citizenly issue" is thus taken up in this paper to argue that sexualized violence is a sociopolitical problem exacerbated by the very ideals of citizenship that also purport to protect one from such instances of violence. Bearing out of this claim, the central argument of this paper is that in order to make sexualized violence no longer a possibility, there must be a consideration of how Western (read: Canadian and American) ideals of citizenship, formed and informed by ideologies of governance, mediate ways of imagining sexualized violence prevention strategies and the efficacy of such strategies.

To work through this connection between sexualized violence and citizenship, in this paper I investigate how one strategy of sexualized violence prevention, what I term "the fighting approach," (re)produces some particularly concerning aspects of neoliberal ideology and governmentality, whether or not this is intentional. Specifically, it attempts to disrupt normative understandings of who threatens others, and who is threatened by sexualized violence. Fighting approaches inadvertently mobilize the neoliberal assumption of one's fellow citizen as primarily self-interested, and thus always already threatening one's autonomy. This amenability of

neoliberal ideologies and governmentality to sexualized violence prevention is especially problematic because, as I will suggest, perpetrators are already responding to a perceived threat in the form of the feminine other. In this sense, prevention strategies that aim to prevent sexualized violence through producing threats could function to exacerbate instances of sexualized violence. I thus argue that it is necessary to rethink sexualized violence prevention strategies by considering how they might be premised upon Butlerian notions of the self that modify neoliberal understandings of the citizen to include how one is constituted in and through their relations with others. Put differently, to truly prevent sexualized violence, strategies must not only critique and re-imagine current approaches, but radically rethink notions of the "citizen" and the premises that underpin "belonging" in sociopolitical communities.

A Fighting Approach

The fighting approach to sexualized violence prevention, popularized in 1960s early 1970s second-wave feminist movement, bore out of the theory that sexualized violence is caused by the gendered, racialized, and classed discourses that position certain persons as always already vulnerable to experiencing, and others as always already capable of perpetrating, sexualized violence. A reactionary phenomenon, the fighting approach responds not only to the prevalence of sexualized violence in Western sociopolitical communities, but to other sexualized violence prevention strategies understood by fighting-approach proponents, such as Sharon Marcus, to merely "persuade men not to rape" (1992, 388, emphasis original).[2] Indeed, from the fighting approach perspective, other prevention strategies, such as enforcing the importance of consent or creating stricter legislation for sexual offences, actually function to uphold rather than challenge the idea of sexualized violence as a "fact of life," problematically positioning sexualized violence as a disagreeable "choice," and always already a possibility. The fighting approach thus posits that "women," under a system of white-supremacist, capitalist, hetero-patriarchy, "will be waiting a very long time […] for men to decide not to

rape" (Marcus 1992, 400). Rather than seeking the cooperation of would-be perpetrators (mostly men) in an effort to end sexualized violence, fighting approach advocates therefore propose that persons vulnerable to sexualized violence (mostly women-identifying persons) must fight sexualized violence themselves. That is, in order to reclaim their sociocultural and embodied power towards the goal of making sexualized violence no longer a possibility, vulnerable persons must fight sexualized violence both in a literal physical and a metaphoric symbolic sense. Although competing with other prevention theories and discourses, such as consent discourse and contemporary bystander prevention theories, the fighting approach to sexualized violence continues to be taken up as a subversive, but purportedly effective, means of preventing sexualized violence.

The term "fighting approach" thus signifies a kind of anti-sexualized violence prevention strategy that takes the fear of injury, or injury itself, as a crucial factor in ending sexualized violence. However, there are important differences among the individual strategies that form the general discourse of the fighting approach. Specifically, there are two distinct but related fighting strategies that work on two interrelated but distinguishable levels.

The first of these strategies involves teaching persons vulnerable to sexualized violence self-defence techniques, such as Wen-Do, to physically fend-off would-be attackers. A unique tactic within the larger category of the fighting approach, the self-defence strategy is the only strategy that operates on the material level of sexualized violence prevention. The self-defence strategy attempts to alter the embodied relation between would-be victims and perpetrators. However, the self-defence approach is not just invested in a literal physical prevention, but also aims to modify a symbolic economy that situates men as active, aggressive, and violent, and women as passive, weak, and peacekeeping. Here, proponents of the fighting approach argue that women-identifying folks who learn self-defence also perform an ideological function by (re)situating women as aggressive/active

subjects/citizens.[3] In other words, proponents of the self-defence approach believe that if would-be perpetrators knew that an attempted sexualized assault were likely to result in their own injury, persons would be less likely to engage in sexually violent acts. Significantly, then, the self-defence strategy operates on both levels of sexualized violence prevention: the material and the symbolic.

The idea of fighting sexualized violence on the symbolic or discursive level informs another strategy of sexualized violence prevention, that of cultural production. This strategy involves the production of cultural objects that portray persons vulnerable to sexualized violence as using violence towards its prevention. Rather than advocating a kind of material violence (or threat of violence) directly, the cultural production fighting approach works to disseminate what J. Halberstam terms "an imagined violence" occurring on the level of representation. Here, representations of women-identifying folks "fighting" their abusers work to counter dominant discourses and stereotypes regarding who enacts and who experiences various kinds of violence (1993, 187). In such cultural representations, potential victims are portrayed as fighting or killing those responsible for their sexualized abuse, as in a variety of "rape-revenge" films such as *I Spit on Your Grave* (2010), *Ms. 45* (1981), *Teeth* (2007), *The Woman* (2011) and *American Mary* (2012). Although not all such productions were created with the purposes of prevention, the influx[4] of representations of women-identifying folks harming their abusers function to alter the cultural imagination by creating the possibility that persons who harm women-identifying subjects could themselves be harmed. Cultural approaches to fighting sexualized violence thus work to re-write what Marcus calls the "gendered grammar of violence," where potential victims are represented as subjects to be feared rather than as fearful subjects, or subjects of violence rather than objects of violence (1996, 400).

From this summary, I recognize that these two fighting strategies might seem quite diverse, perhaps even oppositional. Most significant are the seemingly differing ideas of fighting imbued in the cultural

production approach, as opposed to the idea self-defence. Specifically, considering that self-defence strategies most often aim to stop a conflict, whereas fighting aims to defeat an opponent, it is questionable as to whether the self-defence strategy can truly be called a *fighting* approach if the intention is one of conflict de-escalation, as opposed to one of injury or harm. Moreover, there are significant differences amongst self-defence prevention strategies where some approaches take up a more militaristic approach to physical training, emphasizing the inevitability of sexualized assault (McCaughey 1997, xi, 96), whereas others focus upon embodied empowerment where the possibility of assault, although prevalent, is not eminent (Rentschler 1999, 160). Further, it is doubtful that *all* cultural productions that portray "fighting women" are created with the intention of sexualized violence prevention, thus making it questionable as to why one would include it as a prevention strategy if certain cultural productions were never intended to act as such.

While the approaches and uses of "violence" in these two understandings of "fighting" are different and important to acknowledge, this paper is not focused on debating or espousing a moral or ethical rhetoric of violence from a feminist perspective (i.e. Are there ethical forms of violence from a feminist perspective? Is self-defence an ethical form of violence?).[5] Nor am I interested in rehashing debates regarding the import —or lack thereof—of author's/creator's intentions in relation to the cultural-political effects and reception of their works. Instead, I am interested in the way these phenomena, although inciting or encouraging injury of fear of injury differently, use the production of threat to induce fear as a means to alter the material realities and sociocultural imagination surrounding sexualized violence. Specifically, what I argue allows the cultural production and self-defence approaches to be considered together within a fighting approach. They similarly adhere to the idea of using the threat of injury to produce fear in an effort to end sexualized violence. To be sure, I will suggest that both approaches' analogous reliance upon the production of threat and fear results in similar problems.

Fighting Issues with Fighting Sexualized Violence

In recent years, fighting approach strategies have been increasingly mobilized to prevent sexualized violence and to acknowledge its existence as a sociopolitical ill. Canadian and American universities are increasingly offering free self-defence classes to students (Senn 2015); rape crisis centres continue to offer self-defence classes framed as a means to heal from sexualized abuse and to prevent future abuse (Toronto Rape Crisis Centre); and the rape-revenge narrative has been revitalized with the popularity of films such as *Return to Sender* (2015) and *Even Lambs Have Teeth* (2015) and television programs such as *Jessica Jones* (2015). Considering, however, the numerous critiques of fighting approaches, often made and/or recognized by fighting-approach advocates themselves, its current popularity as a sexualized violence prevention strategy is concerning. For instance, Ann Cahill, a feminist theorist that advocates the self-defence approach, acknowledges that self-defence can only ever do part of the work of changing a dualistic and toxic gendered binary that upholds the possibility of sexualized violence (2001, 207). Such a criticism arises from the acknowledgment that fighting approaches disproportionately rest the responsibility for sexualized violence prevention upon potential victims by suggesting prevention is dependent (largely) upon their actions and (re)actions (Cahill 2001, 206-7; Gavey 2009, 115; Marcus 1992, 400). Relatedly, scholars have also acknowledged that the fighting approach, although potentially addressing would-be perpetrators, does not do enough to directly acknowledge their role in perpetuating sexualized violence (Cahill 2001, 207; Gavey 2009, 114; Marcus 1992, 400). Finally, scholars such as Rachel Hall censure fighting approaches for their tendency to articulate sexualized violence "as an impossible problem" which often deflects the question of how we might stop it from flipping "back onto individual women as vulnerable subjects" (2004, 6). For these

reasons, Cahill, Marcus, Hall and Gavey assert that fighting approaches only provide short-term solutions in relation to the larger project of ending sexualized violence. However, in the absence of other strategies that challenge gendered hierarchies that cause sexualized violence in the first instance, the fighting approach figures as an important stepping-stone in the journey towards a society without sexualized violence (Cahill 2001, 207; Gavey 2009, 115; Marcus 1992, 400).

Building upon aforementioned critiques, I am interested in a specific problematic of the fighting approach: the tendency of fighting strategies to herald the productive potential of fear towards ending sexualized violence, an idea imbued in fighting-approach strategies. Proponents support these strategies partially based upon their potential ability to cause perpetrators to fear potential retaliation from would-be victims, (potentially) preventing them from committing acts of sexualized violence. For example, in her discussion of the self-defence approach, Cahill states that "self-defence training challenges the discourses of a rape culture by giving would-be rapists good reason to fear women" (2001, 204). Similarly, through the production of cultural representations of fighting sexualized violence, Marcus argues that "we can begin to imagine the female body as a subject of change, as a potential object of fear and agent of violence" (1992, 400). Part of the goals of both the self-defence and cultural production strategies of the fighting approach, then, is an affective transformation whereby the fearful "object" of sexualized violence (traditionally women-identifying folk) becomes the feared "subject" of sexualized violence prevention.

To be clear, however, my interrogation of the use of and/or threat of violence in the fighting approach does not aim to question the efficacy of the fighting approach in quantitatively reducing instances of sexualized violence.[6] Nor is it my intention to pass judgement upon individuals who engage in violence to prevent sexualized violence, or to (re)present a kind of maternal feminine/feminist ideal that ignores or denies the capacity or righteousness for women and women-identifying persons to (ever) act violently or aggressively. Rather, this critical interrogation of the fighting approach focuses upon the conceptual contradiction of using fear of injury to prevent other subjects from feeling fear and/or experiencing injury. Towards this kind of analysis, I thus posit that there is theoretical value in pursuing the question of what, exactly, enables feminist thinkers dedicated to a project of ending sexualized violence (and fear of sexualized violence) to turn to the promotion of fear through the threat of violence as a potential prevention strategy?

To answer this question, I turn now to a consideration of how broader sociopolitical factors and conditions that structure the ways in which persons relate to one another—concepts of citizenship—might render the fighting approach to sexualized violence prevention palatable in Western sociopolitical communities, and to its proponents. I suggest that to begin addressing the question of the use of fear and violence in fighting strategies, it is important to take into consideration how ideals of citizenship, and the modes of governance that mediate such ideals, influence the creation and continual mobilization of the fighting approach, despite its limitations.

Neoliberalism and the Affective Economy of Fear

A significant consideration regarding how citizenship mediates what can be conceptualized as a successful sexualized violence prevention strategy is how the popularization of fighting strategies roughly coincide with the rise of neoliberal forms of governance. Emerging in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Western sociopolitical communities, neoliberalism provides a new perspective on older liberal ideologies of governance that stress the importance of freedom, autonomy, and limited government towards the maintenance of a successful sociopolitical community. Such liberal and neoliberal ideologies thus conceive of its ideal citizen as rational, self-interested, and, above all, autonomous. Although couched in seemingly neutral adjectives, this ideal liberal and neoliberal

citizen notably caters to the white, male, straight, cis, able-bodied, middle-upper-class citizen: one who is able to enact (or at least convincingly perform) an individualistic, self-interested autonomy. Significantly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the heralded qualities of the classical liberal citizen are epitomized in the ideal of the *homo economicus*, a figure that Michel Foucault describes as a "man of exchange or a man the consumer; he [sic] is the man of enterprise and production" (2010, 147). The new approach, however, that neoliberalism brings to classical ideals of the citizen and, relatedly, the *homo economicus*, is the idea of the responsible citizen who engages in risk-averting behaviours in order to promote a kind of self-care that contributes to the greater good of the community. Neoliberalism therefore distinguishes itself from classical liberalism in extending market-rationale to all domains of life and responsibilizing the subject by, in the words of Anne-Marie Fortier, "centr[ing] on individual agency rather than structures of inequality as the primary mechanism for overcoming social problems" (2010, 19). It is this over-burdened, responsibilized, rational, and calculating figure that has come to represent the ideal neoliberal citizen.

In relation to sexualized violence prevention, it is unclear if fighting approaches appeal to or aim to produce this rational, responsibilized, neoliberal citizen that is unencumbered by various kinds of systemic oppression. Although fighting approaches might (re)produce neoliberal ideals, such as rational, calculating pre-emption or responsible risk-aversion, fighting approaches are not only attentive to identity politics, but also work from and appeal to feelings, such as anger, outrage, fear and anxiety. As such, although fighting strategies might (re)produce some neoliberal ideologies of governance, it is questionable as to whether it functions as or with neoliberal forms of governmentality that seemingly focus on management of material conditions, and the promotion / production of the "neutral" individual. Aiming to pre-emptively stop sexualized violence prior to its occurrence and create a discourse of responsibility surrounding would-be victims' role in

preventing sexualized violence, I ask: Do fighting approaches work to regulate the behaviours (which undoubtedly are linked to feelings) of citizenly subjects? How can fighting approaches employ a neoliberal rationale when their theoretical basis is a fundamental challenging of systemic oppression?

In considering these questions, it is important to acknowledge that scholars working on ideas of neoliberal citizenship and governance have recently recognized that neoliberalism does not only address and produce the rational, calculating, and responsible subject, but what Engin Isin calls "the neurotic citizen." For Isin, the neurotic citizen is one whose conduct arises from and responds to fears, anxieties, and insecurities that are addressed and managed by systems of governance, rather than remedied (2004, 217). Perceptible in Isin's understanding of the affective neoliberal citizen as "neurotic," and important to the connection between fighting approaches and neoliberalism, is a specific kind of affect often targeted by neoliberal forms of governance: fear. Significantly, the role of fear in constructing and maintaining sociopolitical communities is quite well established (Ahmed 2004; Bauman 2006; Glowacka 2009). Although not necessarily disagreeing with this proposition, Sara Ahmed challenges the assumption of the role of fear in government as a technology, suggesting instead that fear functions more like an economy, not residing "positively in the sign or commodity" but rather arising as a product "of its circulation" (2004, 45). Fear, however, is not something that can necessarily be wielded to control or produce a citizenly body but is an effect of certain practices imbued in the citizenly body.

For Ahmed, what makes fear so conducive to liberal, and now neoliberal, forms of governance, is how such forms of governance establish and maintain themselves through a process of identifying potential sources of fear, better known as threats. Importantly, however, neoliberal governance does not necessarily seek to eradicate the threats that work to produce fear. Indeed, if the aim of neoliberalism was to destroy the threats that produce fear, such a project would undoubtedly

work to unravel the nation-state that is dependent upon the threatening other for a binaristic conception of itself as "unique" and "good." Instead, neoliberal forms of government aim to manage threats, limiting but not erasing the perceived harm threats may cause to the community. In this sense, fear does not "create" neoliberal communities but is *an effect of* neoliberalism as an ideology of governance and form of governmentality that posits the primary relation between citizens as one based upon the threat of the citizen and non-citizen other.

From such an understanding of neoliberal governance as affective as well as rational, fighting approaches to sexualized violence prevention now seem more consistent with neoliberal ideas of belonging and forms of governmentality. Due to their calculated incitement of fear through an identification of various threats (patriarchy, racism, colonialism, capitalism, and perpetrators), followed by proposals to remedy sources of fear (specifically, sexualized violence), fighting approaches work to regulate the conduct of subjects through both rational calculation and affective management. Significantly, in working with neoliberal ideologies, fighting approaches are able to articulate a radical claim, that sexualized violence bears out of the very (oppressive) structures that maintain a community, in a language comprehensible to a broader sociopolitical community—the language of threat. Yet, despite this collusion with a neoliberal affective economy of fear, fighting strategies often prove limited. Whilst speaking the language of threat, their suggestions to alter gendered hierarchies are appropriated to reinforce the neoliberal status quo of producing self-efficient, rational, and responsible citizens, causing the strategies to operate in a way different from their feminist inceptors' intentions.

Troublingly, such a derailing of challenges to systemic forms of oppression is evident in many recent deployments of fighting strategies. In regard to the cultural fighting strategy, the initial goal of demonstrating the prevalence of sexualized violence in (and due to) a patriarchal society actually functioned to "provoke deep-seated animosities and stimulate incomprehensibility" about sexualized violence (Bumiller 2008, 16). Here, rather than challenging gendered, classed, and raced stereotypes regarding who perpetuates sexualized violence (systems of oppression that are in fact vital to the reproduction of the neoliberal citizenly body), cultural fighting strategies are re-interpreted in media representations and in anti-crime governmental campaigns. These fighting strategies locate a different origin of sexualized violence: in the behaviours of those deemed less-than-ideal citizens, namely racialized and lower-class citizens. Such transformative appropriations of fighting strategies can be perceived, for example, in media attention given to stories of sexualized violence where the perpetrator is a person of colour or where the victim is white (Moorti 2002; Projansky 2001). Moreover, cultural productions adhering to the fighting approach most often portray the heroine killing or injuring a perpetrator who struggles with mental wellness issues (*Jessica Jones* 2015) or is of a lower socioeconomic position (*I Spit on Your Grave* 2010; *Avenged* 2013).[7]

Relatedly, such a de-radicalization of fighting approaches also appears in current mobilizations of the self-defence strategy. Here, fighting sexualized violence through self-defence is appropriated to reinforce neoliberal ideals through institutionalization. Rather than mobilizing self-defence approaches to challenge a gendered grammar of violence that situates women as vulnerable and passive, self-defence strategies are reinterpreted as a neoliberal practice of self-protection. For example, the self-defence training program created and analyzed by Charlene Y. Senn et al. to discern the efficacy of rape-prevention technique, two out of four units focussed upon helping women to assess "the risk of sexual assault," "develop problem-solving strategies to reduce perpetrator advantages" (Unit 1), and assist "women to more quickly acknowledge the danger in situation that have turned coercive" (Unit 2) (2015, 2328). Only Unit 3 provided Wen-Do self-defence training, and its relation to gendered norms were only discussed in terms of overcoming "emotional barriers to forceful physical defence against male acquaintances

when the threat demands it" (2013, 7). Articulated through the neoliberal rhetoric of threat, the underlying goal of the fighting approach to alter gendered sociopolitical norms is transformed into a project that reinforces the ideal citizenly subject.

The use of a language of fear and threat characteristic of the fighting approach might disseminate a message of anti-sexualized violence on a broad scale. Fighting approaches, precisely because of their amenability to neoliberal ideologies of governance and governmentality, cannot do enough to challenge the gendered, classed, and racialized hierarchies that make sexualized violence a possibility in the first place. To be sure, the aspects of the fighting approach that challenge the ideals upholding neoliberal sociopolitical communities (for example, gender norms of active masculinity and passive femininity) are incommensurable with a broader neoliberal project that seeks to manage and control systems of domination, rather than eliminate them. In using the language of fear, threat, and crisis characteristic of neoliberal logic, fighting strategies to sexualized violence prevention are more readily appropriated by a state-project that is less interested in changing the fundamental structure of citizenship as a mode of belonging. Rather, such a project is more concerned with merely managing sexualized violence in a way that maintains current ideals and modes of belonging —one that understands the citizen as primarily autonomous, related to other citizens through a relation of threat and fear.

Threatening Citizenly Ideals

Fighting strategies not only continue to be popular but also are also effective because they arise from, and are received within, a broader sociopolitical context that positions a citizen's relation to other citizens as one primarily based upon threat. Although conceptually paradoxical in their proposal to prevent violence with violence or threats of violence, fighting strategies may then seem effective and even justifiable because of the neoliberal political climate in which they are created. A good question, however, that arises from such observations is why, exactly, do neoliberal ideologies of governance promote relations of threat?

To answer this question, one needs to return to the liberal origins of neoliberal ideology. Significantly, many neoliberal ideologies of citizenship derive from liberal ideas regarding the inherent nature of the human as presented in social contract theory. Popularized during the sixteenth to eighteenth century in Western Europe by theorists such as Hobbes, social contract theory attempts to explain why forms of rule and governance are justifiable despite political postulations that "individuals" within a body politic are "free and equal." As feminist political scholar Carole Pateman notes, many social contract theories rely upon the construction of a fictitious, pre-political "state of nature" to imagine how persons came together to form political communities (1988, 39-40). In these political thought experiments, the human-citizen is regarded as inherently self-interested, more specifically, interested in physically sustaining oneself and protecting one's autonomy. This autonomy, also termed property-in-person, is identified as that which is constantly threatened with violation through one's interaction with other self-interested beings. The function of a socio-political community, at least from the social contract perspective, is to mitigate the threat that others pose to one's autonomy by contracting together to form a society where a system of law and governance protects one's property-in-person (Pateman 1988, 55-6).[8]

Borrowing their understanding of the citizen from early liberal theories of contract, neoliberal ideologies of governance thus promote relations of threat because they are built upon a fundamental understanding in liberal theory of the human as always already threatened by other humans in respect to one's happiness, autonomy, and survival. Combined with a neoliberal impetus that renders the citizen as human capital, the foundational premise of citizenly relations as based upon threat functions to justify kinds of protectionist ideologies. Such ideologies mobilize to mitigate that which is threatening to the individual but

an "individual-as-idealized-subject" rendered crucial to the maintenance of the neoliberal nation-state.

Acknowledging a tendency towards self-interest and a desire for autonomy, however, is not what causes the problematic of threat characteristic of liberal and neoliberal political communities; rather, it is the understanding of humans as primarily self-interested and autonomous that fosters a community based upon relations of threat. For feminist theorist Judith Butler, the problem with the liberal conception of the human is twofold. In the first instance, the understanding of the subject as inherently under threat impedes the possibility of that subject understanding its relation to others as anything other than threatening. As Butler explains:

> If a particular subject considers her- or himself to be by definition injured or indeed persecuted, then whatever acts of violence such a subject commits cannot register as 'doing injury,' since the subject who does them is, by definition, precluded from doing anything but suffering injury. As a result, the production of the subject on the basis of its injured status then produces a permanent ground for legitimating (and disavowing) its own violent actions. (2010, 179)

Butler's first critique of the primacy of ideas of autonomy in liberal and neoliberal conceptions of the human thus rest on the idea that positioning humans as always already under threat creates a moral ground for justifying one's own threatening or violent reactions. Second, however, Butler notes that such liberal and neoliberal conceptions of the human also fail to account for the ways in which the other does not just threaten life but helps sustain life. Better known in her work as a theory of precarity, this idea posits that there is a fundamental sociality about humans that is intimately linked to survival. This sociality helps sustain one physically but also forms the very notion of the self as subject within a given sociopolitical community (2004, 26-7).

Taken together, Butler's critiques reveal the subordinating ways in which persons within a sociopolitical community are fundamentally dependent upon each other in order to "live" (in terms of providing the material conditions necessary to keep one alive: food, water, shelter, and social supports such as rights) and to "be" (in terms of subjectification). In viewing the citizen as always already threatened by the other (fellow citizen), neoliberal doctrine works to produce a sociopolitical community where injury and harm are cyclically disseminated due to a conception of violence as an always already (threatening) possibility. Choosing to understand citizenly relations based upon the capacity for persons to lose something (their autonomy, their freedom) as opposed to gain something (a better quality of life, social support), neoliberal forms of governmentality function to produce the conditions upon which fighting approaches can be interpreted as rational and just. Thus, these forms of governmentality contribute to their continual mobilizations of fighting approaches, despite their limitations. However, it is not just the fact that neoliberalism produces the conditions upon which potentially ill-advised sexualized violence prevention strategies are conceived that such an analysis of neoliberalism reveals, but it also gestures towards how neoliberalism and its investment in producing an affective economy of fear might actually contribute to the perpetuation of sexualized violence.

In her 2009 essay, "Rethinking the Social Contract: Masochism and Masculinist Violence," feminist theorist Renée Heberle argues that, contrary to traditional understandings of sexualized violence as a result of entitlement or domination, "sexualized violence can be interpreted as a reactive response to the radical decentering of the subject of power in modernity" (2009, 125). Surveying recent scholarship that documents the rationales most commonly given by men for their sexually violent actions, Heberle posits that perpetrators are acting out their failure to uphold the tenets of masculinity, an important tenet being the "having" of one's (feminine) object of desire. Men attempting to perform an idealized masculinity

who also commit acts of sexualized violence understand their acts as reactions responding to the feminine figure who threatens their subjectivity through a "masculine" performance. Such a performance signals "her" unwillingness to be "had," but she is also necessary for the constitution of the masculine self as its binary pair. Thus, for the would-be perpetrator, "the feminine threat must be punished" through sexualized violence (Heberle 2009, 143). However, this punishment does "not necessarily [bear] out of a righteous sense of dominance . . . but out of a reactive and persistent fear of self-dissolution" (Heberle 2009, 143). Although there must be some care taken here to avoid excusing sexualized violence, or positioning perpetrators as victims, Heberle's work is important for understanding the limitations of fighting strategies and as a general sociopolitical discourse that posits a conception of the human as inherently threatening. Specifically, Heberle's study demonstrates that fear and threat are not just the results of, or strategies towards, preventing sexualized violence but are also potential motivations for engaging in sexualized violence. If sexualized violence is, at least in some cases, the result of fear produced through binaristic understandings of the other, and the other as primarily threatening, it would seem that overly general attempts to prevent sexualized violence with further threats aimed to incite fears are not only conceptually but potentially quite dangerous.

From this analysis, I thus venture to argue that the resilience of a proponent's adherence to fighting strategies, despite awareness of their flaws, can be attributed to the way in which forms of governance (specifically, neoliberal forms of governance) mediate perceptions of the conditions of possibility regarding the kind and type of effective citizenly relations. Specifically, I argue that it is difficult to imagine remedies to sexualized violence that do not, in some way, work within an affective economy of fear based upon the creation of threats when one of the broadest relational structures, citizenship, is premised upon an understanding of the citizen as inherently threatened by their fellow compatriot. This is not to say,

however, that fighting approach advocates should escape accountability for promoting a strategy that may function to create fear and potentially violent relations. Rather, I suggest that there needs to be consideration of how strategies for remedying sexualized violence, and the persons that create them, are always already implicated in the broader sociopolitical discourses. These discourses frame the terms upon which relations between citizens can be imagined, and by extension, how problems regarding citizenly relations can be effectively addressed. In this sense, sexualized violence should not only be theorized amongst anti-sexualized violence proponents but also discussed amongst those working on and with larger sociopolitical discourses regarding belonging. Such a broadening of the conversation regarding sexualized violence is imperative in order to consider the ways in which the very terms of citizenly belonging impinge upon strategies to promote more ethical and safer inter-citizenly relations.

Conclusion: The Possibility of Non-Violence

In conclusion, it is extremely pertinent to re-iterate that although this analysis is critical of the fighting approach, by no means do I wish to suggest that anti-sexualized violence scholars and activists should completely abandon such strategies. Writing first drafts of this paper before the 2016 American election, I truly feel that it is perhaps more important than ever to have strategies to help persons vulnerable to sexualized violence prevent harm and/or injury. Indeed, considering the efficacy of fighting strategies for some persons and communities, it would be foolish not to take a closer look at how and why these approaches work, and work for whom. In this sense, I understand the above analysis as functioning not so much as a critique of fighting approaches but as a questioning of their long-term efficacy: How, especially in our most desperate moments, do the strategies we employ as anti-sexualized violence prevention function to (re)produce – albeit, inadvertently – the very conditions that allow sexualized violence to exist in the first instance?

Answering this question, this paper has suggested that in order to imagine different sexualized violence prevention strategies, there must be a jamming of the affective economy of fear by challenging the primacy of the notion of the autonomous, self-interested individual at the heart of neoliberal conceptions of the citizen. As a sexualized violence prevention strategy, such a call might involve continuing to recognize and address instances of sexualized violence and doing so in a way that renders other subjects as not just threats to one's autonomy but as beings that are fundamental to a sense of who one is as citizen. Such a rethinking plays an important role (but a role that one might not be immediately aware of) in fostering the conditions that contribute to one's survival specifically by creating and maintaining a robust sociopolitical community. Instead of rendering perpetrators as extraneous to sociopolitical community, as violent threats to be expelled or immobilized through the threat of violence, it is, therefore, crucial to recognize that it is their actions, and not their being, that is threatening to others, and that their violent actions are made possible through the very sociopolitical systems to which activists and scholars appeal for protection, retribution and prevention strategies. Long-term sexualized violence prevention strategies must therefore work against the urge to "fight" sexualized violence, and work on the dichotomizing subjectivities that position the citizenly other as a threatening source of fear.

Endnotes

1. I use the adjective "citizenly" here, as opposed to other words (e.g., the noun "citizenry") to gesture towards how the individual citizen of Canada and the U.S is implicated in the perpetuation of sexualized violence by virtue of living (read: working, loving, producing, (re)producing, etc.) in the sociocultural and political conditions that allow for the continuation of sexualized violence. In using an adjective that describes the issue of sexualized violence as inherently related to the citizen (i.e. sexualized violence is a citizenly issue), I attempt to complicate an understanding of sexualized violence as a problem of "the body politic" (i.e. citizenry—a noun describing a collective). To be sure, the term citizenry potentially glosses over the individual implicated in the reproduction of sexualized violence by attributing the problem of sexualized violence to "the collective" as an entity in and of itself.

2. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer who reminded me here that Marcus' understanding of "non-fighting" strategies of sexualized violence prevention as working only to "persuade men not to rape" is reminiscent of current prevention strategies, such as "Man Up," and the prevention theories of Jackson Katz. From my definition of fighting strategies, proponents of this approach would undoubtedly regard these aforementioned examples as Band-aid solutions that ultimately work to reinforce, rather than tear down, the white supremacist hetero-patriarchal ideologies that allow sexualized violence to continue.

3. It is important to note here that the stereotype of "women as passive" is an overgeneralization that is inattentive to race and class politics. As scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw argue, some women of colour —such as black women and indigenous women—are stereotyped as aggressive and overly assertive (Crenshaw 1989, 155-6). I would also argue that poor women, and potentially women of the working class, are similarly attributed a kind of "unfeminine" aggressiveness that goes against the truism of "women as passive." Through an intersectional lens, then, the argument that self-defence lessons function to subvert gendered ideologies is perhaps only a truism for some women. Thus, another problem with theories regarding the possibilities of self-defence for preventing sexualized violence is the way they tend to gloss over the ways "women" experience gendered stereotypes alongside those of race and class.

4. For some, the discussion of the "rape-revenge" narrative might seem obscure, given the way it is commonly linked with amateur horror films. However, as film theorists Jacinda Read and Claire Henry

acknowledge, rape revenge can be considered as not just a (sub)genre of horror but a kind of narrative structure that appears in a wide variety of cinematic genres (action, thriller, western, drama) and also literary cultural productions (Henry 2014, 1-2; Read 2000, 6-8). Understood in this broad sense, rape-revenge is a term that describes the narrative structure of a cultural production where sexualized violence is integral, rather than incidental, to the narrative progression of the work in question. As per the cultural examples I cite, this definition of rape-revenge encompasses a broad range of popular (i.e. mass-screened) and niche visual works.

5. For further discussion on the feminist ethics of violence, see Hutchings, 2007.

6. A recent sociological study by Senn et al. (2015) surveys the impact of self-defence classes in reducing instances of sexualized assault and attempted sexual assault. Results demonstrated a significant decrease in likelihood of experiencing sexualized violence for the self-defence group as compared to the control group. This paper does not aim to challenge such findings but rather the larger sociopolitical environment that allows or fosters an advocacy of such fighting strategies.

7. Importantly, the "villains" of fighting-approach cultural productions are rarely persons of colour. Instead, such villains—who are often white—are racialized through other signifiers (e.g., markers of low-class status, different kinds of illness).

8. Important to understanding the problem of the liberal, and now neoliberal, conception of the human-citizen, is that subjects are regarded as equal only insofar as they are endowed with the same right to contract their property-in-person. As scholars critical of the ideals imbedded in liberal social contract theory have demonstrated (Mills 1997; Nichols 2014; Pateman 1988), the notion of the self-interested, autonomous human-citizen functions to conceal how not all "property-in-person" is regarded

as equally valuable in gendered, racialized, and classed discourses. Moreover, such scholars also acknowledge how contracts, although perhaps entered into "freely" in some cases, are not necessarily void of coercion based on pre-existing relations of domination. In conjunction with an idea that persons are inherently threatening to one another, it becomes perceptible how certain persons and bodies, always already disadvantaged by a system of contract based upon pre-existing gender, racial, and class hierarchies, are more readily identified as "threats" to a neoliberal community.

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The Surrealism of Men's Rights Discourses on Sexual Assault Allegations: A Feminist Reading of Kafka's *The Trial*

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Abstract: Being a feminist in the contemporary Canadian context, post-Ghomeshi, can lead to existential crises. In this paper I investigate this relationship of feminist activism and reality, men's rights activism (MRA) and surrealism, and the Absurd via the work of surrealist novelist Franz Kafka. While Kafka's *The Trial* is popularly understood as an allegory for the alienation and pains of bureaucracy and modernity, I posit a new interpretation of the story as a men's rights perspective of sexual assault allegations. I use Shoshana Felman's theory of integrated literary and legal visions to read Kafka's *The Trial* against men's rights discourses regarding sexual assault allegations. I find this theory of evidence and repetitions across the disciplines of art (Kafka) and law (the Ghomeshi trial) useful as analytical sites for critically engaging with men's rights discourses about sexual assault allegations. I demonstrate how *The Trial* can be interpreted as a representation of the phenomenon of sexual assault allegations according to men's rights discourses, and demonstrate how these discourses are just as surreal as Kafka's story. Through the Ghomeshi verdict I will demonstrate how these surrealist fantasies impact real-world sexual assault accusations, trials, and court decisions.

Keywords: feminism; interdisciplinary law; Kafka; literature; sexual assault

If men define situations as real,
They are real in their consequences
　　　　—W. I. Thomas (in Goffman 1974, 1)

Introduction

Being a feminist in the contemporary Canadian context, after the sexual assault trial of the popular radio host Jian Ghomeshi, can lead to existential crises. To be a feminist has always necessitated an intimate connection to the Absurd; that is, engaging with patriarchal logics and justifications for oppression is to engage with bizarre understandings of the causes and realities of violence against women. In this paper, I investigate this relationship of feminist activism and reality, men's rights activism (MRA) and surrealism, and the Absurd via the work of the surrealist novelist Franz Kafka.

Kafka's work permeates Western literature and cultural memory to the point where even those who have not read Kafka are familiar with the themes and style of his writings. Franz Kafka's contribution to literature, discourse and theory, and popular culture is clearly demonstrated with the adjective *Kafkaïen* (Kafkaesque), which has permeated the cultural lexicon to take on meaning "the pejorative connotation of describing an absurd situation in general" (Bogaerts 2014, 70). Kafka's novel *The Trial* (1968) is a work of narrative fiction that documents the surrealist journey of Joseph K., a man accused of and charged with an unknown crime. Joseph K. (also written simply as "K.") must navigate a labyrinthine criminal justice system, and is eventually executed for whatever it is he may or may not have done. In Kafka's infamous style the temporality, context, and meaning of the plot is purposefully vague and has been widely interpreted since its original publication in 1925 (with

the first English translation appearing in 1937).

While the story is popularly understood as an allegory for the alienation and pains of bureaucracy and modernity, I posit a new interpretation of *The Trial* as a men's rights perspective of sexual assault allegations. There are few feminist or gendered readings of Kafka's stories, let alone of *The Trial* and "Before the Law." I argue that the discourse put forth by men's rights activists[1] regarding the reality of sexual assault allegations is not grounded in reality; it is a fantasy and also absurd. I utilize Shoshana Felman's theory of integrated literary and legal visions to read Kafka's *The Trial* against men's rights discourses regarding sexual assault allegations. I conclude with the court decision for the Ghomeshi trial to demonstrate the surrealism not only of the novel but also of the socio-legal status of sexual violence in the contemporary Canadian context.

On October 14, 2014, Jian Ghomeshi, the prominent host of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) radio show on popular culture called *Q*, publicly announced he was taking a leave. Two days later the CBC terminated his employment. On October 27, Ghomeshi responded by filing a $50 million wrongful dismissal lawsuit, claiming discrimination based on his private sexual practices and false allegations by an ex-partner (Coulling & Johnston 2017, 2). More public accusations by other women followed and Ghomeshi dropped his lawsuit against the CBC on November 25. On November 26, the police laid four charges of sexual assault and one count of overcoming resistance by choking (Coulling & Johnston 2017, 2). Later, police would lay three more charges of sexual assault; the Crown would drop two of those charges (Coulling & Johnston 2017, 2). Ghomeshi entered a plea of not guilty for all six charges. On March 24, 2016, Jian Ghomeshi was acquitted of all charges. In their research on public discourses surrounding the trial, Ryan Coulling and Mathew Johnston note that there were largely two camps of commentators on the Ghomeshi trial: one believed the victims to be women who had survived sexual assault and the other

believed the women were jilted lovers looking for revenge (Coulling & Johnston 2017, 3). Indeed, the Ghomeshi trial seemed to be particularly open to diverse readings, in part because there were a number of issues regarding lack of evidence and inconsistences in testimony by the victims—all of which were given as reasons for the judge's finding in the case (Coulling & Johnston 2017, 3).

Theory

This paper, borrowing from the work of Shoshana Felman on narrative and legal repetitions, reads narrative fiction through and across a legal court decision. Felman proposes a theory of legal repetition and "integrate[s] a literary vision with a legal vision, with the intention of confronting evidence in law and evidence in art" (2002, 54). Specifically, Felmen uses the O.J. Simpson trial and Tolstoy's novella *The Kreutzer Sonata*, read in conversation, as the site of this integrated literary and legal vision. She notes:

> The dialogue between the disciplines of law and literature has so far been primarily thematic . . . when not borrowing the tools of literature to analyze (rhetorically) legal opinions, scholars in the field of law and literature most often deal with the explicit, thematized reflection (or 'representation') of the institutions of the law in works of the imagination, focusing on the analysis of fictional trials in a literary plot and on the psychology or sociology of literature characters whose fate or whose profession ties them to the law. (Felman 2002, 55)

Felman's approach breaks from this tradition by analyzing both real and comparable impacts and historical reception of the real court trial and the fictional trial, a juxtaposition she admits is quite bold (Felman 2002, 55). Felman proposes a theory of "the phenomenality of structural juridical repetitions as internal to the logic of specific legal cases, or as a legal outcome of the (literary/psychoanalytic principle of the) traumatic narratives that constitute . . . at once the story and the actual criminal case" (Felman 2002, 56).

Felman takes seriously both the narratives of the fictional and non-fictional trial while simultaneously examining the cultural impact of both texts without privileging law over literature or vice versa.

This theory of evidence and repetitions across the disciplines of art (Kafka) and law (the Ghomeshi trial) presents useful analytical sites for critically engaging with men's rights discourses about sexual assault allegations. Through this theoretical framework, *The Trial* can be interpreted as a representation of the phenomenon of sexual assault allegations according to men's rights discourses and demonstrate how these discourses are equally as surreal as Kafka's story. Through the Ghomeshi verdict, I assert how these surrealist fantasies influence real-world sexual assault accusations, trials, and court decisions.

Truth and Narrative Fiction

A significant contribution to the vast amount of writing about and analysis of Kafka's stories can be attributed to what has been called the "universal appeal" of his work—the vagueness of the characters, context, and plot that allows readers to easily identify with and project their own self, feelings, or fantasies into/onto the story. However, there is something to be said of analyzing Kafka in context:

> Kafka is more valuable when we look at him in his multiple ties and connections. I insist that if we truly want to consider Kafka a writer of a somewhat universal appeal, and not merely a provincial product of a certain time and place than we must look carefully at these ties and at these contexts. Parallels with other writers, movements, techniques do not diminish Kafka, on the contrary, they emphasize his value and his merits for a significant diversity of readers in a significant diversity of manners. (Virgil 2005, 370)

Thus, while Kafka is a useful case study for examining the socio-political context of early twentieth century Prague, of the Jewish diaspora, or of the complexities of a Jew writing in German in Prague during the interwar period, the timeless feel of his stories manages to speak to readers across contexts. This text may speak to some readers of alienation and the pains of state bureaucracies, but it speaks to me as a narrative about sexual assault, of a cultural misunderstanding of who constitutes the "victim" of sexual violence and any resulting interactions with the criminal justice system, especially the victimhood narratives of men's rights activism.

Men's Rights Discourses: Surrealism & Reality

Men's gendered activism originally rose out of the feminist movement in the 1960s, but eventually succumbed to internal tensions and split into two separate branches over internal tensions in the 1970s. The first branch, men's liberation[2] discourses, "acknowledged that sexism had been a problem for women and that feminism was a necessary social movement to address gender inequalities," and stressed how patriarchy also harmed men's emotional lives, health, and relationships (Messener 1998, 256). The other branch was an overtly anti-feminist men's rights movement. This second kind of movement, which includes "men's rights activists" (MRAs),[3] focuses on hegemonic understandings of masculinity and disputed or denied feminist claims that patriarchy privileged men via the systemic oppression of women (Messener 1998, 256). In this paper, my historical context is limited to this second branch of men's gendered activism as it is central to MRA discourses of sexual assault allegations as represented both in Kafka and the Ghomeshi trial.

By the 1980s, MRA discourse had become increasingly and overtly angry and anti-feminist. Feminism came to be viewed as "women's plot to cover up the reality that it is actually women who have the power and men who are most oppressed by current gender arrangements," as was exemplified by men's lower life span, health problems, military conscription, divorce and custody laws (Messener 1998, 266). This decade

of men's rights activism was marked by claims that "men are the true victims of prostitution, pornography, dating rituals, sexist media conventions, divorce settlements, false rape accusations, sexual harassment, and even domestic violence" (Messener 1998, 266). MRA discourse occupies a fantasy space of victimhood for men; women are systemically privileged at the expense of men—claims that are not reflected in research. MRA discourse is often criticized for displaying a blatant disregard for widely accepted and supported sociological, economic, and psychological studies that dispute its claims (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 66). Instead of relying on data to support its claims, MRA discourse is built largely upon anecdotal stories—or personal narratives—as well as with scientifically flawed studies (Messener 1998; Allan 2015).

In additional to personal narratives, men's rights activists sometimes invoke colourful metaphors to support their claims. For example, MRA leader Rich Doyle said:

> Divorce courts are frequently like slaughter-houses, with about as much compassion and talent. They function as collection agencies for lawyer fees, however outrageous, stealing children and extorting money from men in ways blatantly unconstitutional. . . . Men are regarded as mere guests in their own homes, evictable any time at the whims of wives and judges. Men are driven from home and children against their wills; then when unable to stretch paychecks far enough to support two households are termed 'runaway fathers.' Contrary to all principles of justice, men are thrown in prison for inability to pay alimony and support, however unreasonable or unfair the 'Obligation.' (in Messener 1998, 267-268).

This narrative is Kafkaesque in its use of exaggerated imagery that seeks to affect the reader and garner emotional support for men's rights activists; it is more metaphorical than reflective of reality.

Men's Right's Discourses on Sexual Assault & Sexual Assault Allegations

I focus here on MRA discourses of sexual assault and sexual assault allegations partially due to the political climate proceeding the Ghomeshi court decision (i.e., before 2016), the lack-lustre mandated sexual assault policies that Ontario universities adopted in January 2017 (Wronko 2016), and my own experiences with sexual assault, popular discourses of assault, and men's rights activists.

Indeed, other feminist scholars have noted that the issue of sexual assault has re-emerged (if it ever really went away) with public allegations against well-known media personalities such as Ghomeshi and with publicized sexual assault scandals at several universities,[4] such as Dalhousie, the University of Ottawa, York University, Queen's University, and the University of British Columbia to name only a few within the Canadian context (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 66).

Despite the prominence of MRA discourse and activism, there is scarce literature available on the subject, particularly regarding sexual violence. In their study using discourse analysis of popular MRA websites, Lise Gotell and Emily Dutton state:

> The only explorations of MRA activism surrounding sexual violence, to date, have been journalistic accounts. Here we examine popular MRA websites to reveal a set of interrelated claims about sexual violence, including: that sexual violence, like domestic violence, is a gender-neutral problem; that feminists are responsible for erasing men's experiences of sexual assault; that false allegations of sexual assault against men are widespread; and that rape culture is a feminist-produced moral panic. (2016, 66)

Gotell and Dutton also rightly assess that this kind of research is challenging for feminist scholars and activists due to the misogynist content and need for self-care (2016, 66), and risk to personal safety (see Matak 2014). While it is important to conduct research on MRA discourses and activism, it seems unjust that this should predominately fall to feminist and gender scholars, whose political positions will likely be seen as biasing the research, and that feminists not only have to prove their own theories but be responsible for disproving counter-claims that often have no methodological rigor themselves.

MRA discourses try to reduce feminist critiques of rape culture to so-called political correctness. This discourse understands anti-rape feminism as attempting to conflate bad sex as rape and inciting a moral panic, as Gotell and Dunton write:

> They criticized a sexually correct form of feminism that they saw as convincing women to redefine bad sex as rape, in the process manufacturing a crisis. These polemical claims took the form of an ideological battle waged through the media and were eagerly taken up in a cultural context by those anxious to put to rest the troubling claims of anti-rape feminists. (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 68)

To reiterate these authors' last point, cultural hegemony needs to *believe* that rape is not a regular occurrence for a significant portion of women in Canada, however, a woman in Canada is likely to be sexually assaulted at least once in their life. There is a wilful cultural ignorance to sexual violence in Canada and has become clear following the Ghomeshi trial.

Realities of Sexual Assault

In Canada, largely due to feminist law reform and litigation, there is an affirmative consent standard: "There is no implied consent in Canadian law; silence and ambiguity cannot be taken as indicating agreement to engage in sex; and consent must be active through the sexual encounter" (Gotell &

Dutton 2016, 66). Thus, the legal definition of sexual assault is any sexual contact in which someone is not freely agreeing to engage in the activity. On the other hand, false accusations of sexual assault are very rare (Ferguson & Malouff 2016). There are high prevalence rates of sexual assault, high rates of under-reporting, high rates of police un-founding accusations, and low conviction rates of those that do end up going to trial, resulting in what is known as the "justice gap" (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 67). Those who experience sexual assault are unlikely to come forward precisely because they will be accused of making false allegations, not being believed, stigmatized and vilified.

Official government statistics and social science data demonstrate the "pervasiveness of sexual violence, as well as the gendered character of the crimes of rape and sexual assault" (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 73). However, MRAs tend to "cherry-pick findings" out of research in order to depoliticize and portray sexual violence as a gender-neutral issue (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 73). What is perhaps most frightening about MRA discourses on sexual assault is how it attempts to minimize and deny the pervasiveness and gendered realities of sexual violence; their justifications for why assault happens are similar to the denials and justifications deployed by abusive men (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 73). Just as Joseph K. rationalizes his behaviour and deflects any accountability in his arrest, MRA discourses resist pro-active approaches to end sexual violence in favour of reactive and defensive politics (Allan 2015, 25).

Analysis of The Trial

Franz Kafka
Literary scholars have noted that Kafka was not primarily an author of the absurd and bizarre but of writing about the fear of the absurd and bizarre (Nasir 2012; Virgil 2005, 364). Because of outspoken philosophical interest in Kafka, many scholars have misappropriated and interpreted his work as "a

universal expression of the 'human condition'" (Bogaerts 2014, 71). Similarly, MRAs are popularly interpreted as marginalized men who feel that they have not or cannot obtain the power and prestige associated with hegemonic understandings of masculinity. In his biographical information about Kafka, Malcolm Warner notes that Kafka had been the victim of "'Angst' for many years, as well as 'stress' and even 'pain'" (2007, 1020). It is not a leap to assume that Kafka would have probably felt alienated as a German-speaking Jew living in interwar Prague (Steiner 1968, x). In the introduction to the 1968 edition of the novel, George Steiner describes Kafka: "In respect, both of Jewish ideals and of his father's brutally voiced expectations, Kafka pronounced himself an abject failure, a deserter. . . . Franz existed shadowlike. His vehemently gnarled relationships with women—the lengthy engagement to Felicie Bauer, his love for Milena—aborted (1968, x)."

Thus, we can see how Kafka himself can be read as a man failing to meet the impossible expectations of the patriarchal ideals of masculinity. Of particular interest to my analysis are his two notable failed relationships with women; his engagement, while lengthy, never culminated in marriage and his love for Milena is described with the heavy adjective "aborted." While I am not claiming that Kafka would be an MRA if he were living in the contemporary context, I am suggesting that his biography can be read as similarly and sympathetically to those who are involved in anti-feminist activisms.

Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) has been popularly interpreted as an allegory for modern state power and alienation (Potter 2000, 253). The interpretation of *The Trial* that I find most compelling and useful is that of Jacques Derrida. As Potter notes:

> Derrida, like the prison chaplain in The Trial, argues that the way we stand before the Law is similar to the way we stand before a text. Both demand to be interpreted, but both actually do not refer to anything beyond themselves. Rather than mediating a relationship to some

prior moral or ethical code, our singular relationship to the structure or idiom of the Law is that ethical code. (2000, 254)

Scholars of various fields stand before *The Trial* and with whatever background and baggage they bring with them, they try to assemble a great truth or meaning. Certainly, Kafka never intended to tell a satirical story of men's rights activism (nor could he have probably imagined the second wave feminism which would pre-empt it). However, I take Potter's reading of Derrida as permission to use this text to tell a story that serves my purposes. Potter suggests that rather than seeing the confrontation within the story as containing "the conditions of ethical knowledge, then, this encounter might more importantly be about a struggle for recognition, in which the law is not something to be discovered, but might also be that which needs to be changed" (2000, 254). Subsequently, I contend that not only does *The Trial* reveal the surrealism of MRA discourses, but also the need for cultural recognition of the epidemic of gendered sexual violence.

Rachel Potter notes that this parable can also "be seen as the starting point for other kinds of reflections, about the different kinds of law and reason which seem to be referred to in the story, and about the relationship between modernist writing and the Law" (2000, 254). I agree with Potter on this suggestion and indeed see *The Trial* as about sexual assault/rape law and as an allegory of the complex discourses which inform ones position on sexual assault as a social issue.

Joseph K.
Whether a reader embraces Joseph K. as the protagonist or antagonist of *The Trial* depends on whether one believes him to be innocent or guilty. Indeed, as Goodhart and Ward note, what is most unclear is the degree to which Joseph K. is a victim. This is because "In the case of *The Trial*, what is most unclear is precisely the degree to which Joseph K. is really a victim. The fundamental ambiguity of this novel pervaded by ambiguity has to do with the

innocence of the protagonist" (Goodhart & Ward 2004, 65). In a book where nearly everything is unclear or ambiguous, the greatest mystery of all is not *what* he might have done, but *whether or not he really did it*, as this profoundly changes the affect and interpretation of the novel.

One clue to the innocence or guilt of Joseph K. is in the translation of *The Trial* from its original German into English. Goodhart and Ward note that, "those able to read the original German text would notice that the word *'muste'* . . . more probably indicates that this is the speculation [as to his innocence] of the character rather than the narrator, and therefore possibly self-serving" (Goodhart and Ward 2004, 66). Indeed, many literary critics have argued that it would be naïve of the reader to agree with K. that he is in fact innocent (Goodhart & Ward 2004, 66). Would The Trial be sufficiently Kafkaesque if the narrator was indeed reliable? Or is it a question of authenticity wherein Joseph K. believes himself to be innocent regardless of whether he truly is? Is Kafka trying to con the reader with a con-artist protagonist? If K. is guilty, as I suggest, there exists a possible reading where he is in fact guilty of sexual assault. The basis of this literary accusation draws on Joseph K.'s interactions with female characters in the story, and particularly with Fräulein Bürstner.

What is striking about all of the female characters in *The Trial* is that they are in love with or at least extraordinarily endeared to Joseph K. Young or old married or single, all women adore K. and will do anything for him. The one possible exception to this is Fräulein Bürstner,[5] a young neighbouring tenant in the boarding house where Joseph K. resides. Fräulein Bürstner only appears at the beginning and (potentially) at the very end of the novel. Like K. himself, Fräulein Bürstner is a character about which little is known. For example in this passage, K. claims to both intimately know the inside of her bedroom and yet barely know the woman: "This room, as K. knew quite well, had recently been taken by a Fräulein Bürstner, a typist, who went very early to work, came home late, and with whom he had exchanged little more than a few words in passing" (Kafka 1968, 10). While this could be potentially attribute to K.'s knowledge of the room via a previous tenant or its presumed similarity to his own, it is odd that in a single sentence he claims to be intimately familiar with a room belonging to a woman, but not the woman herself.

Joseph K. asks their landlady whether Fräulein Bürstner is home under the premise he wants to apologize that the police-like people who came to inform him of his arrest did so in her room (for an unknown reason). His reaction to the landlady's response—that Fräulein Bürstner is in fact out at the theatre—is also peculiar: "'It's of no consequence,' said K., turning to the door, his head sunk on his breast. 'I only wanted to apologize to her for having borrowed her room today" (Kafka 1968, 20-21). The description of Joseph K. dropping his head to his breast suggests significant disappointment at Fräulein Bürstner being out. If he barely knows this woman and only wants to apologize for an inconvenience she knows nothing about, why would he be so disappointed? I argue that this is additional evidence that suggests K. is not honest with the reader about his relationship to/with Fräulein Bürstner or his intentions with her. Additionally, when the landlady raises concerns about the respectability of Fräulein Bürstner regarding her late hours and outings with multiple men, K. defends her honour with an intensity that would be unusual for a near-stranger:

> 'I have no wish to speak ill of Fräulein Bürstner, she is a dear, good girl, kind, decent, punctual, industrious, I admire all these qualities in her, but one thing is undeniable, she should have more pride, should keep more to herself. This month I have met her twice already on outlying streets, and each time with a different gentleman.' . . . 'You're quite on the wrong track, said K., with a sudden fury which he was scarcely able to hide. . . . I know Fräulein Bürstner very well, there isn't a word of truth in what you say.' (Kafka 1968, 21-22)

I argue that this passage demonstrates that Joseph K. is more attached or invested in Fräulein Bürstner than he has given the reader any reason to believe. Indeed, he spends the next two hours staying awake just waiting for her to come home so he can approach her and talk to her and even then he is not honest about this with the reader:

> Until about eleven he lay quietly on the sofa smoking a cigar. But then he could not endure lying there any longer and took a step or two into the entrance hall, as if that would make Fräulein Bürstner come all the sooner. *He felt no special desire to see her, he could not even remember exactly how she looked but he wanted to talk to her now*, and he was exasperated that her being so late should further disturb and derange the end of such a day. *She was to blame, too, for the fact that he had not eaten any supper and that he had put off the visit to Elsa* he had proposed making that evening. (Kafka 1968, 22-23; emphasis added)

It may strike the reader as strange that K. claims no special desire to see Fräulein Bürstner and yet has reorganized his evening around the possibility of it occurring. It is unsettling that he goes so far as to blame her for his not eating and putting off what can be presumed to be a sexual rendezvous with Elsa,[6] as if she unknowingly has immense influence over his actions and decisions.

When Fräulein Bürstner eventually returns home, she makes up excuses to not have to talk to Joseph K., but eventually gives into his persistence and lets him into her apartment (Kafka 1968, 24). After listening to his retelling of the events from that morning and asking whether she believes he is guilty or not she says to K. that she does not know if he is innocent and, further, that she does not really know him (Kafka 1968, 25). While the text provides several suggestions that Joseph K. is perhaps an unreliable narrator, there is no indication to the reader about Fräulein Bürstner, and thus we can safely deduce that she and Joseph K. barely know each other.

While Joseph K. is in Fräulein Bürstner's apartment it appears that K. is comfortable and that Fräulein Bürstner is uncomfortable, and despite it being her apartment, K. is in a position of power or control over the situation. This particular passage demonstrates this tension: "He wanted to move about and yet he did not want to leave. 'I'm tired,' said Fräulein Bürstner. 'You come home so late,' said K. 'So you've gone the length of reproaching me, and I deserve it, too, for I should never have let you in. And there was no need for it, either, that's evident'" (Kafka 1968, 26).

Instead of perceiving that perhaps he should retire to his own room at such a late hour when a lady is tired (and perhaps that he gained entry under misleading pretenses) he forces himself on her:

> "I'm coming," K. said, rushed out, seized her, and kissed her first on the lips, then all over the face, like some thirsty animal lapping greedily at the spring of long-sought fresh water. Finally, he kissed her on the neck, right on the throat, and kept his lips there for a long time. . . . He wanted to call Fräulein Bürstner by her first name, but he did not know what it was. (Kafka 1968, 29)

Not only is the description of his scene wholly unromantic, but also wholly nonconsensual. Not only is her reaction not described, as though it was inconsequential, the animalistic quality of the attack is frightening. The detail that K. wanted to call Fräulein Bürstner by her first name, but he did not know what it was, again speaks to the unfamiliarity of their relationship and Joseph K.'s for intimacy with Fräulein Bürstner that clearly is not there. A majority of sexual assaults are not committed by strangers prowling in the bushes but, as in my reading of *The Trial*, are actually committed by people known to the victim (McDaniel & Rodriguez 2017; Pazzani 2007). If we are to address sexual violence, then we must take seriously the complexities of assault that include misunderstandings of how is granted consent and what

constitutes consent (Decker & Baroni 2011).

Men's rights activist discourses claim that most men understand rape to be a horrible crime. However, as Gotell and Dutton note, "the issue underlying this emphasis on rape as a widely condemned crime is not really whether people view rape as right or wrong. Instead, it is that rape is not seen as rape" (2016, 75). Without reinforcing a hierarchy of sexual violence, I want to be clear that I am not alleging K.'s described behaviour as rape but as sexual assault (or given the context in which the book was written, if not assault, something that was inappropriate). Further, Joseph K. does not seem to understand his actions as such. This MRA discourse has the effect of narrowing the category of "real rape" (or real sexual assault) to violent stranger rape; despite knowing that acquaintance sexual violence is significantly more common: "The effect is to draw a clear line between rapists and ordinary men and between everyday heterosexuality and rape" (Gotell & Dutton 2016, 75). When K. talks his way into Fräulein Bürstner's apartment, ignores her suggestions that he return to his own room and let her sleep, and then forces himself upon her, K. is committing sexual assault.

After K. assaults Fräulein Bürstner and returns to his own room, he reflects on what he has just done, but does not have regrets about his conduct. Rather, he is pleased with himself: "Shortly afterwards K. was in his bed. He fell asleep almost at once, but before doing so he thought a little about his behaviors, he was pleased with it, yet surprised that he was not still more pleased; he was seriously concerned for Fräulein Bürstner because of the Captain (Kafka 1968, 30)." The only concern K. has for Fräulein Bürstner is that if the Captain in the adjoining room had heard a man in her room, he would inform the landlady, which could potentially lead to her eviction based on the immorality of an unmarried woman with a man in her room. He has no concern for how Fräulein Bürstner may have felt about being sexually assaulted or may be feeling after the fact.

As K. is being lead to the place where he is to be executed for his (unknown) crime he thinks that he sees Fräulein Bürstner in the distance:

> And then before them Fräulein Bürstner appeared, mounting a small flight of steps leading into the square from a low-lying side-street. It was not quite certain that it was she, but the resemblance was close enough. Whether it were really Fräulein Bürstner or not, however, did not matter to K.; the important thing as that he suddenly realized the futility of his resistance. (Kafka 1968, 225)

It is striking that it is this sudden reappearance of Fräulein Bürstner that makes Joseph K. suddenly realize that his struggle against the Law and his executioners is futile. I suggest that Fräulein Bürstner returns as the specter of Joseph K.'s guilt and that perhaps this guilt is rooted in his sexual assaults against women.[7]

The Trial and the Ghomeshi Verdict

The non-guilty verdict of the Ghomeshi trial and the resulting dismissal of charges may have felt very Kafkaesque for many feminists, anti-sexual violence activists, and women across Canada. Despite the seriousness and number of the allegations (four counts of sexual assault and one count of choking to overcome resistance) that were against the former CBC radio host, many commentators have been steadfast in their assertions that "the case does not indicate that anything is 'broken' in our criminal justice system. Instead, they say, it's a great system—possibly the best in the world. It just doesn't work that well for sexual assault, they acknowledge" (Crew et al. 2016, 1). If the criminal justice system does not work well for dealing with serious violent crimes that effect 39% of women at least once in their lifetime (Crew et al. 2016, 1), how can it be said to be anything but broken?

MRA discourses about sexual assault, as discussed above, are largely rooted in the argument that sexual assault is rare, false allegations are common, that women should be more pro-active in avoiding being

assaulted, or in some combination of these positions. Indeed, if "we know that 997 of 1,000 men who commit this crime can expect to be unsanctioned what do we tell men? Surely not 'don't rape'" (Crew et al. 2016, 1). In *The Trial*, if the reader is of the perspective I am suggesting, and Joseph K. has been unknowingly accused of sexually assaulting a woman and blindly convicted based on the allegation, the opposite is true in reality, where women can formally charge and face her perpetrator in court and he still may not be found guilty. The court is interested in decisions and not justice: just because someone is not found guilty in a court of law does not mean a sexual assault did not take place. A court decision is based upon the rules of the game of law and who can construct (or deconstruct as was the case with the women's testimonies against Ghomeshi) a narrative.

The Ghomeshi judgment does not cite any case law on the meaning of consent or how to assess credibility of consent (Crew et al. 2016, 1). Justice William Horkin's reasoning has been critiqued as "heavy on an assessment of the three complainants behavior after the fact, 'but light on the law'" (Crew et al. 2016, 2). There are a number of concerning and surreal aspects to Justice Horkin's decision on the Ghomeshi case, which I argue are both analogous to MRA discourses and surrealist in their seeming removal from reality.

The first page of the Ghomeshi decision includes a bold warning. Although a content warning may have been appropriate, the warning pertains to a publication ban regarding the identities of the victims of sexual assault (R. v. Ghomeshi 2016, 1). That the publication ban would somehow protect the victims seems misguided. Given the sheer intensity of the media attention on this case and the fact that the victims who came forward were open about their identities with the media before going to the police, the media and the public knew their identities already.

Justice Horkin's focus on the so-called celebrity status of Ghomeshi (R. v. Ghomeshi 2016, 2-3) is both

reminiscent of MRA discourses about how women seek out influential men both for sexual partners and for victims to extort and blackmail. Justice Horkin's comments imply a reverse onus: that women would somehow be in a position of power to exploit men's vulnerability as a celebrity for her own gain, as opposed to a celebrity being able to use their influence and public image to potentially increase the difficulty of levying accusations against them. Similarly, the Justice's reference to "flirtatious emails" (R. v. Ghomeshi 2016, 7-8) implies that this was somehow uncommon despite Ghomeshi's celebrity status and carries an innuendo that suggests the victims invited both sexual attention and potential violence.

Perhaps the most Kafkaesque element of the Ghomeshi decision is the Justice's condemnation and articulation of the female accusers as a "team" and of their "possible collusion" (R. v. Ghomeshi 2016, 15, 18). Just as Joseph K. demonstrates severe paranoia that everyone is somehow involved in his case and/or out to condemn him, and as MRAs believe women to be orchestrating a conspiracy against men via feminist ideologies, Justice Horkin's articulation of solidarity between female survivors of the same violent perpetrator suggests neither a team-building exercise nor collusion. If someone does not understand their behaviour as sexual assault, violent, or problematic then how can they be expected to stop or change their pattern of behaviours? Following this logic, should it not be surprising that multiple victims came forward with similar allegations?

Finally, in his conclusion of the Ghomeshi verdict, Justice Horkin reiterates MRA discourse that the courts must be "very cautious in assessing the evidence of complainants in sexual assault and abuse cases" (R. v. Ghomeshi 2016, 23), even though the evidence required to move a complaint from the police report to the trial was not already required to be more significant than is available for most accusations of sexual assault. This rhetoric suggests that perhaps false allegations are commonplace, or at least common enough to be an issue that judges must be actively conscious of when making their decisions. Justice

Horkin summarizes: "Courts must guard against applying false stereotypes concerning the expected conduct of complainants. I have a firm understanding that the reasonableness of reactive human behavior in the dynamics of a relationship can be variable and unpredictable. However, the twists and turns of the complainant's evidence in this trial, illustrate the need to be vigilant in avoiding the equally dangerous false assumption that sexual assault complainants are always truthful" (R. v. Ghomeshi 2016, 23-24).

Perhaps Justice Horkin is unknowingly engaging in "double-think":[8] despite his assertion that courts must not apply false stereotypes of victims expected behaviours, he does just that throughout his decision. In a culture where victims of sexual assault are rarely believed at any level (from the public to the police to judges), does anyone need to be vigilant against assuming complainants are always truthful? Or rather, do we need to be vigilant against understanding real complaints as false accusations?

Conclusion

Felman sought to inspire a new model to perceive legal events and an analytical tool that that serves "not just to rethink the meaning of a legal case but to displace the very terms and the very questions through which we interpret cases, both in fiction and in the reality of legal life" (2002, 56). She did this by demonstrating the traumatic repetition in between and across Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* and the O. J Simpson trial. In this paper, I have adapted her work to read a new interpretation of Kafka's *The Trial* via men's right activist discourses on sexual assault allegations and the Ghomeshi verdict. I have demonstrated the usefulness of Felman's approach and continued efforts to the "destabilization of the boundaries that epistemologically define and separate the territory of the Law from that of Literature" (Felman 2002, 56). While law and literature do not aim for the same conclusion nor effect, both are premised on the search for meaning and symbolic understanding as a useful tool for

imagining different (and hopefully better) futures (Felman 2002, 54-55). If Canada is going to adequately address its contemporary context of sexual violence and realise its substantive equality, then the surrealism of MRA discourses of sexual assault and assault allegations need to be deconstructed and revealed as the fantasies they are.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

1. To recognise both feminism men's rights as complex and diverse social movements, and to pre-empt criticism from MRAs, the discourses examined in this paper predominantly came from the Canadian Association for Equality (CAFE), Coalition of Free Men, and the National Congress for Men, and span from the 1960s to present day.

2. Men's liberation remains a pro-feminist or anti-sexist men's movement that emphasizes, as it did then, the importance of joining women to address institutionalized privileges and patriarchy (Messener 1998, 256).

3. Within the MRA movement, Herb Goldberg figures prominently and directly asserts that not only is male privilege a myth, men are actually the systemically oppressed gender "because the male role is far more rigid than the female role, and women have created a movement through which they can now transcend the limits of culturally imposed femininity" (Messener 1998, 265).

4. Gotell and Dutton further note that "Efforts to respond to sexual violence on university campuses have been condemned as abuses of due process that stigmatize innocent young men" (Gotell & Dutton

2016, 69).

5. While I acknowledge "Fräulein" is a title or courtesy, it is at least curious that her only known initials would then be F.B., which would be the same as Kafka's long-term fiancée Felicie Bauer.

6. Elsa is described in the following sentence, "And once a week K. visited a girl called Elsa, who was on duty all night till early morning as a waitress in a cabaret and during the day received her visitors in bed" (Kafka 1968, 17).

7. Goodhart and Ward note that feminist criticism of K. tends to focus on his commitment to a bachelorhood that tends to exploit women for his own gratification: "in this regard, again, his habitual attitude towards women mimics the behavior of the Court officials" (2004, 66).

8. "Double-think" is a term coined by George Orwell in his book 1984 (1949), which means to simultaneously think *what you are told to think* and *what you know to be true*.

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Older LGBT Adults' End-of-Life Conversations: Findings from Nova Scotia, Canada

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Abstract: Although increasing research attention in North America is being paid to the health and social disparities experienced among older lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations, end-of-life (EOL) preparations among these populations are not yet well understood. This study explored older LGBT individuals' EOL preparations and service providers' perceptions of such provisions. In this qualitative study, we conducted three focus groups with 15 LGBT adults aged 60 and older who have at least one chronic health condition and live in Nova Scotia. We also conducted one focus group with four service providers. We identified four themes: (a) LGBT communities of care have changed over time, (b) difficulties in asking others for help, (c) hesitancy in thinking about end-of-life, and (d) varying views on the helpfulness of internet technology. The findings illustrate ongoing tensions between being "out" about one's sexual orientation or gender identity and being able to engage with social and health care providers in determining EOL planning.

Keywords: aging; bisexual; end-of-life concerns; gay; lesbian; qualitative methods; transgender

Introduction

The health and social needs of older lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations are increasingly becoming the focus of social and health care policies and programs. However, the end-of-life (EOL) preparedness of LGBT persons is less well understood. Recent data from Canada, the UK, and the US indicate that many older LGBT adults are insufficiently prepared for EOL decision-making due, in part, to perceived or actual homophobia or transphobia experienced in interactions with health and social care providers. Given this, and the fact that many older LGBT adults do not have a primary health care provider, and even where they do, they are often reluctant to "come out" to them about their sexual orientation or gender identity, discussions of EOL needs are often stymied (Brotman, Ryan, and Cormier 2003; de Vries 2017; Murray et al. 2012).

Additionally, current research indicates that many older LGBT adults experience social isolation, are more likely to be single, not have children or close relatives they can turn to for EOL needs, and not be "out" to their neighbours (Brotman et al. 2007; Colpitts and Gahagan 2016; de Vries 2013). These factors all serve to reduce the likelihood that older LGBT adults will have made EOL preparations such as drafting or updating a will, completing a medical directive, developing an emergency contact list, or having an LGBT-friendly online "community" to turn to for EOL information. However, few studies (see Wilson, Kortes-Miller, and Stinchcombe 2018 for an example) have actually addressed these issues in the Canadian context. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which a sample of older LGBT adults had undertaken formal EOL preparations, such as medical directives, wills, power of attorney, and advance care directives, or had engaged in more informal preparation (e.g., held conversations about who might provide care). Given the high usage of social media sites by LGBT persons (of all ages) (Pew Research Center 2013), this study also explored the role that internet-based technology plays in helping to advance such conversations.

Methods

Our study was part of a larger national qualitative study that utilized a focus group methodology (Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Morgan 1997) in five Canadian provinces (Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia). Qualitative studies are "particularly relevant in exploring and explaining meaning of sexual- and gender-minority status in specific, local, and historical contexts of lived experience" (Institutes of Medicine 2011, para 82). We used focus groups to collect data because these groups are appropriate for exploratory research (Stalmeijer, McNaughton, and Van Mook 2014) and for research with hard-to-reach populations (Bonevski et al. 2014). Moreover, we also viewed this approach as key to the very topic being studied—the importance of talking about EOL issues with populations who are often absent from such discussions. This is particularly relevant to the Nova Scotia context given the dearth of LGBT-specific research and health-related policies and programming focused on the unique needs of LGBT populations (Colpitts and Gahagan 2016). In lieu of these LGBT-specific elements, access to and utilization of web-based social media and information resources can provide a means of connecting with the broader socio-political aspects of LGBT aging discourse and these were queried in our focus group discussions (Kia 2015; Paterson 2017).

We conducted focus group discussions with each of the following groups: (a) gay and bisexual men (referred to as the Men's Group), (b) lesbians and bisexual women (referred to as the Women's Group), (c) transgender individuals (referred to as the Transgender Group), and (d) local service providers (the Service Provider Group). The four focus groups were held separately (rather than having all participants in the same group) given that focus group research has emphasized the need for homogeneity in group background (Morgan 1997). Such homogeneity can help people to feel more comfortable and safe with each other, "facilitating open communication and exchange of ideas" among participants (Stalmeijer,

McNaughton and Van Mook 2014, 928). Furthermore, these different focus groups provided an intersectional approach to our study, which was particularly relevant when exploring the lived experiences of those who have been historically absent from health equity-related research (Bauer 2014).

For the first three groups listed above, participants were eligible if they: (a) identified with the sexual orientation or gender identity for each group, (b) were 60 years or older, (c) had two or more chronic health conditions or were caring for an LGBT person with two or more chronic health conditions, and (d) had some experience with using internet-based technology (e.g., email). The age threshold of 60 was based on literature about "accelerated aging" experiences within the LGBT community (de Vries and Herdt 2012) and the World Health Organization's (n.d.) definition of aging populations. Caregivers, however, could be as young as 50 years of age, while service providers were required to be 18 years or older and from an agency providing services to older adults, including LGBT individuals.

The research protocol for this study was approved by the research ethics boards of each of the research team members' respective academic institutions in advance of any data collection. We screened all participants for eligibility over the telephone prior to their participation. Informed consent was obtained through the telephone screening procedure and again before the start of the focus group discussions, when all participants signed a hard copy of an informed consent form and agreed to the focus groups being audio-recorded. Once recorded, the discussions were transcribed verbatim, with identifying information removed and pseudonyms used in place of participants' real names; these pseudonyms are used below when participant quotes are included. All electronic and hard copy materials from the Nova Scotia portion of this study were password protected and stored in a secure, locked cabinet at the researchers' offices.

This article focuses specifically on the data from four focus group discussions held in Halifax, Nova Scotia (the largest city in the Atlantic region of Canada), which took place between October 2014 and February 2015. We used various methods to recruit participants, including the distribution of emails and social media announcements by LGBT community partners focusing on health and advocacy issues.

Prior to beginning the focus groups, participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire that included questions about what kind of EOL preparation they had engaged in and the extent of their use and level of comfort with internet-based technology. The focus group discussion questions centered on three key topics of interest to the national research team, and were in keeping with the mandate of the funding agency. First, we asked the individuals about their perceptions of the problems that older LGBT individuals face with regard to EOL care. Second, we asked them to discuss the roles that community and internet-based technology does and could play in EOL care preparation. We then carried out open coding with the assistance of MAXQDA software (a data management software for qualitative and mixed-methods research) and identified themes based on a review of the open coding.

Sample

The Nova Scotia participants included: (a) 8 cisgender men, all of whom identified as gay; (b) 6 women (5 identified as cisgender; 4 identified as lesbian; one identified as bisexual; one transgender woman identified as lesbian); (c) 2 transgender women (both with female partners; one identified as lesbian, the other as heterosexual); and (d) 4 service providers.

The following paragraph applies to the first three groups of participants only. Ages ranged from 59-69 (Women's Group), 63-82 (Men's Group), and 61-74 (Transgender Group). Forty-four percent reported their relationship status as single (and lived alone), 13% were in registered domestic partnerships, and 38% were in other types of unspecified relationships.

Of the 13 participants who were in relationships, 2 of them were in relationships of less than two years. The remaining 11 participants were in relationships that ranged in duration from 6 to 66 years, with an average duration of 15 years. Close to one-third of participants had children (one woman, two men, and the two transgender women in the Transgender Group were all parents). Overall, participants were well educated and had a high level of being out to others as indicated in the self-reported measures in the demographic survey. There was a range of EOL preparation (e.g., 75% had prepared a will but only 25% had made any informal caregiving arrangements), and 86% reported being mostly or completely comfortable with using a computer.

The service providers' focus group consisted of one lesbian, one bisexual woman, and two heterosexual women. As a group, they estimated that between 7% and 60% of their clients were LGBT.

Findings

Our research team identified four key themes in the focus group data: (a) communities of care change over time, (b) LGBT individuals feel that it is difficult to ask people for help, (c) LBGT individuals are hesitant to think about EOL issues, and (d) LGBT individuals hold varying views on the efficacy of internet technology. The following section offers a summary of our key finding as well as methodological limitations and recommendations. Each theme is described below, with illustrative quotes.

Communities of Care are Changing over Time

Acknowledging that communities of care (ways in which care is organized or offered within LGBT contexts) are not static but rather are formed and reshaped over time through a variety of life changes was a pivotal aspect of both LGBT social lives and EOL decision-making. For example, our participants noted that the person being cared for and the types of care they received yielded a certain configuration of "communities of care" that may not be related to families of origin. Being "out" about one's sexual orientation or gender identity further complicated and negotiated these situations. Factors such as relocation, retirement, and death of a partner often resulted in a reshaping of friendship networks. Specifically, the failing health of friends was seen to have a significant impact on reshaping communities of care. For example, the Men's Group noted that some of the friends they might have been able to rely on as part of their care community later in life had died of AIDS years earlier.

Participants described how the landscape of their care communities was changing at both the individual and broader structural levels. This was seen as bringing about some positive changes over time, however, there were also "*institutional biases [care workers are] going to have to work through*" and acknowledgement that "*it's just going to take some hard work to change attitudes*" about LGBT persons (Men's Group, Mitchell). It is noteworthy that one of the two participants in the Transgender Group expressed that they were not fearful of discrimination and stated, "*I don't feel we're as discriminated against as much as perhaps even 10 years ago or 5 years ago. Then I'll say to healthcare workers and healthcare agencies, if they have a healthcare worker that has a problem, then they shouldn't be a healthcare worker with their agency*" (Transgender Group, Cecile). This particular participant referred to herself as having an "*awful optimism*" due, in part, to transitioning later in life and the relief associated with shedding the burden of her earlier identity.

While there was a general acknowledgement among all participants that LGBT communities of care had changed over time, the Men's and Service Provider Groups talked more about this than the other two groups. A shift away from the urgency of the HIV health crisis experienced in the LGBT community in the 1980s resulted in a perceived lack of current flashpoints to mobilize the community. For example, Bianca (Service Provider Group) said: "*When I began working in HIV/AIDS it was just before the really strong antiretrovirals came in . . . and I really witnessed levels of*

care, community care teams, working together. People from the community mobilizing . . . Gay men and lesbians coming together to care for people from their community . . . I've seen less and less of that.

In the Men's Group, Kurt noted, "*We don't have a voice. A unified voice is what we need.*" He further lamented the fact that the "*younger generations are not prepared to, I don't think, to do the same thing that we were prepared to do.*" Brad agreed, saying, "*It's a different generation.*"

Difficulty Asking People for Help

Although asking for help can be challenging for many older adults, our participants talked about not wanting to be a burden on others, particularly friends, neighbours, and family to whom they were not "out." Additionally, our participants distinguished between personal care tasks and functional tasks. In the Women's Group, for example, Nancy said, "*If someone had to wipe my butt that's a different question but if they only had to drive me and take me home.* " Sharon agreed, saying, "*Yah, that's just a drive, that's an errand.*" Carol similarly noted that she would feel comfortable asking a man to drive her to an appointment, but not to come to her house to do more personal tasks for her. The functional tasks were seen as easier to ask other people to carry out.

Participants stated that having someone to rely on for help was also easier if they had a partner. For example, Cecile (Transgender Group), said: "*I'm fortunate in that having a somewhat younger wife who, statistically, we hope she would outlive me. So if I was to expire, I would expect her to take care of business, shall we say. . . . We have discussed it a little bit more.*"

However, many participants reported feeling anxious about relying on others, and some felt very alone. In some cases, this anxiety stemmed from fear of involving biological family members in EOL decision-making and personal care: "*We've done the paperwork but our main concern is how invasive is my*

family going to be?" (Men's Group, Kurt). Keith talked about one friend that he could potentially rely on, but said that the friend was already very involved in caring for someone. He added, "*So in this city of 185,000 or whatever it is, I know one person—who's up to his neck as it is*" (Men's Group). Women appeared sensitive to the gendered contexts of caregiving in their lives and reported being "*more hesitant to ask other women to help us because we understand the financial inequalities*" (Women's Group, Susan). In terms of paid care, the Service Provider Group discussed the distrust the LGBT community has regarding the healthcare system: "*LGBTIQ folks tend to have much less trust of healthcare. Whether it's home care or whatever it is, healthcare in general, if you don't trust that system, why would you want them in your home?*" (Bianca).

Hesitancy in Thinking about End of Life Issues

Many participants stated that they did not want to think about EOL issues. In the past, many had rallied around their friends and lovers to help them during the HIV/AIDS crisis. Currently, participants state that there is either an absence of EOL discussions ("*There's tons of fear around it . . . I have no plan*"; Men's Group, Owen) or end of life is seen as something far in the distance ("*I'd like to think that the end of life is fairly far away for me*"; Men's Group, Nicolas), both of which were justifications for a delay in EOL preparations. As noted earlier, participants generally felt more willing to have plans in place if they had a partner because they were attentive to the caregiving and related demands that might be placed on their partner.

Service providers reflected on the fact that, in their experience, many LGBT individuals are not comfortable talking about their health with health care providers. HIV diagnoses were mentioned, as well as how the stigma associated with various physical or mental health issues could make it difficult to talk about EOL issues: "*If somebody has overlying depression or anxiety then those decisions are probably much harder to grasp*" (Service Provider Group, Krista).

Additionally, both the Service Provider and the

Transgender Group commented that transgender individuals might have different priorities later in life: "*In the trans community . . . they're just trying to feel okay about where they're at now. . . . Thinking about death and dying, they're thinking about trying to live*" (Service Provider Group, Bianca). This focus on trying to live appears to be associated with the point in life where an individual "comes out" or transitions. Both of the Transgender Group participants were transwomen who had transitioned later in life (in their late fifties and mid to late sixties). Cecile said, "*It has been the furthest thing from my mind. I realize that at seventy-five, I perhaps should be prepared or thinking about EOL situations but, to be honest, I just don't. I feel good*" (Transgender Group).

Varying Views on the Efficacy of Internet Technology

As part of this study, we asked if and how internet technology could serve to bridge information gaps and needs in relation to EOL preparedness among older LGBT adults. Participants reported using internet technology in various ways to try to connect with others, seek out information, and stay in touch with family. In keeping with the work of Kia (2015), use of the internet can serve dual purposes in helping to render the needs and issues of older LGBT persons visible while at the same time allowing for greater surveillance of these populations. On the positive side of internet-based technology, Cecile (Transgender Group) said, "*The internet is fantastic. It is my social circle, almost.*" Similarly, Nicholas (Men's Group) said, "*I've used the technology to make a lot of new friends and to broaden my own perspective. And feel comfortable in my own skin. And to be around other gay men, which is not always easy to find, even in this relatively large city.*"

In terms of perceptions of potential negative elements, participants' perceptions and experiences with internet technology were, in many instances, related to privacy issues. For example, several participants commented on how they preferred to know someone in person before revealing private things to them through the internet. Nicholas (Men's

Group), for example, stated: "*I would do it face-to-face first and then maybe follow up online.*" Members of the Transgender Group, in particular, mentioned the fear of losing control over privacy: "*I would never get into a social media situation where you're communicating in [sic] the masses . . . anywhere where your information is shared and you've got no control over it, I don't like that. I'll stay away from that*" (Pamela).

Regarding EOL preparations and the internet specifically, a number of participants from each of the focus groups reported that it would be helpful to have EOL information that was concise, accurate, and available for LGBT individuals in one location on the internet. For example, Mitchell (Men's Group) said, "*I belong to a website . . . for people who are living with chronic conditions . . . but [one that was LGBT-focused] would also be a good site to chat about some of those EOL decisions as well.*" Members of the Service Provider Group noted that such web-based resources needed to be culturally competent: "*What is 'power of attorney?' What is that? So that people have that sense. And definitions of terms. What are some of kind of things you might want to consider? I think that would be great. I think that if it was in one place that was credible information that also was LGBTIQ-focused so that it was culturally competent, it spoke to the people*" (Service Provider Group, Bianca).

The perceived utility of seeking online EOL information varied among participants, with trust being a key factor. While there is a growing literature in relation to online communities in general, this topic is beyond the scope of this paper. However, as Kia (2015) and Paterson (2017) suggest, and as indicated by our participants, the potential for unwanted or unintended consequences associated with the use of internet technologies, including the potential for "outing" and the fear of retaliation where one's gender non-conforming identity intersects with more heteronormative organizations or services, has created caution around the ways in which information is exchanged.

Recommendations

Additional supports are required to meet the complex and often unique needs of older LGBT populations as they explore their EOL requirements. Recommendations to emerge from the data include the need to evaluate how well existing health and social care policies are working for LGBT populations, particularly as these individuals age (Auldridge, Espinosa, and SAGE 2013). Current provincial policies and programming directions on healthy aging and EOL do not specifically include LGBT populations despite the ongoing stigma and discrimination these populations face in accessing health and social care. As such, all government-funded health and social programs should undergo sex- and gender-based analyses to determine if and how they are meeting the needs of LGBT populations. Although general information is available to those on limited incomes, access to legal information and resources that speak to the unique considerations of EOL planning for LGBT populations is needed. This information needs to be readily accessible in web-based formats as well as paper-based or hard copy formats in health and social care facilities to ensure EOL preparations occur in a timely and nonjudgmental manner. In addition, training of the next generation of health care providers in culturally competent and gender-appropriate care for older LGBT populations is warranted (Beagan, Fredericks, and Bryson 2015; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. 2015; Gahagan and Colpitts 2016). This training ideally requires "mainstreaming" both the EOL and LGBT health content into all core curricula rather than being offered as an elective.

Further, although not the focus of this paper, the gendered nature of caregiving emerged from the focus groups in that the gender normative expectations for caregiving remains largely on the shoulders of women. In particular, this sentiment was reflected in comments made by cisgender women who did not want to burden other women with their care needs at end-of-life. This has important implications for the ways in which health and social

care providers or caregiving support services may for example, assign particular EOL caregiving roles to older lesbians without fully appreciating their unique and oftentimes isolated contexts.

Limitations

Although we made efforts to ensure a diverse sample of participants from the LGBT communities in Nova Scotia, the issue of willingness to "be out" about one's sexual orientation or gender identity may mean that those who were less "out" would not self-select to attend the focus group discussions. This is not only a limitation of this study, but it is also an important factor to consider for future research related to older LGBT adults. For instance, we did not have any female-to-male transgender participants, and only one bisexual person and one woman of colour participated in our Nova Scotia-based focus groups.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to draw awareness to EOL issues faced by a sample of older LGBT individuals living in Nova Scotia, Canada. While the complex issues faced by older adults may intersect across all individuals who are faced with EOL decisions, the unique experiences of our participants, which are shaped by stigma and discrimination and their effects on social networks, suggest that more needs to be done to ensure that health and social care policies and programs meet the needs of these communities. This is particularly important in the smaller, under-resourced and less LGBT-friendly regions of Canada such as those in Nova Scotia (Colpitts and Gahagan, 2016; Gahagan and Colpitts, 2016; Gahagan and Subriana-Malaret, 2018). Although there is increasing mainstream awareness of "healthy aging" and "adding life to years" among health-research funding bodies, the actual supports needed by older LGBT individuals are, as was pointed out by our participants, largely absent. In addition to understanding overall offloading of health and social care responsibilities to LGBT communities, more research is needed to address gaps in existing

approaches to EOL decision-making based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This work is currently championed in the US by research and health services organizations such as the Fenway Institute and SAGE (Auldridge, Espinosa and SAGE 2013; Reisner et al. 2015). In Canada, we see the rights and needs of LGBT individuals gradually being recognized in provincial policy and programs. In the Nova Scotia context, some advances have been made in relation to LGBT-specific structures within the existing public health system, such as PrideHealth (Capital Health District). However, Nova Scotia's 2008 Personal Directives Act is based on heteronormative assumptions about caregiving, and fails to acknowledge intentional "fictive kin" (chosen families) (Nelson 2015).

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Editorial: The Intersectionality of Hate

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In the late summer of 2017, we released a call for interest in a thematic cluster in Atlantis that addresses the rise of "alt-right" discourse, the attendant backlash against social justice movements, and resistances. Aiming to take up the formation of alt-right movements from a social justice perspective, we sought contributions that theorized the "intersectionality of hate." In a *Daily Intelligencer* article dated November 6, 2016, Rembert Browne coined this term as a way to frame and analyze how the alt-right drew together various populist hatreds in support of then-Presidential candidate Donald J. Trump. Browne's piece was published the day after Trump's election. Now, almost two years into a Trump administration, Browne's observations remain prescient: hatreds are neither developed, nor expressed, as isolated happenings attributed to the actions of the few. Indeed, the ontology of hate feeds on and into the very structures and systems of institutional power that interpellate the citizen subject of the nation.

What does it mean, then, to think about the "intersectionality of hate" with regard to the political work of theorizing what Puar (2012) calls the "mutually co-constitutive forces of race, class, sex, gender and nation" (49)? One approach is to analyse how far-right affinity politics work the energies, synergies, and discourses of social justice politics but for opposite interests and inverted motivations. Since the US election, the North American alt-right movement continues to provide a politics of shared identity to White Supremacists/Nationalists and others who identify racial justice as reverse-racism; to Men's Rights Activists (MRAs) who understand feminisms as an endangerment to men; to precarious workers sold on the false consciousness of "immigrants taking their jobs"; and to old-school gamers who encounter the "new games journalism" and female-identified

designers as a conspiracy to "ruin gaming." The rise of the far-right—re-packaged, rebranded, and sanitized as the alt-right—is backlash politics writ large. It is what happens when ensconced privilege is displaced and traditional power is questioned or eroded.

Since our original call for papers, much has occurred in the Canadian context to concretize and perpetuate the intersectionality of hate. The conditions for queer, non-binary, and racialized scholars in our shared communities are acute. In the face of this structural, symbolic, and subjective violence, it may be that an expectation for scholarly analysis is too soon. It is also the case, in the current violence of the public sphere, that to risk resistance is to risk one's physical, intellectual, and emotional being in very real ways. We are nevertheless pleased to present, in this issue of Atlantis, two papers that respond to our theme.

Rabia Mir's creative submission takes the form of a personal address—directly to her professors. It is a searing critique of the ways in which the academy reproduces hatreds through its structures, processes, and actors. Indeed, the institution of the neoliberal academy is deeply embedded in both the founding and contemporary myths of the Canadian settler nation, including those of imperialism, white supremacy, and Islamophobia. Mir's choice to adapt the genre of the letter as critique is astute. Written from the perspective of a student to her teachers, it is an address that cannot be refused because it places a demand upon the recipient to listen and respond. This insistence calls for more than just an answer but rather a recognition of what is written and by whom. Further, it demands an ethics of witnessing, which includes the responsibility to understand oneself as implicated in how the pedagogical dynamics between teachers and students might both express and repeat the institutionalization of social hatreds within the academy. While her letter draws on the personal, Mir's narrative expresses subjectivity as embedded within the systemic, symbolic, and subjective violences of the nation state in its reproduction of the normative citizen subject. The university, she maintains, is not outside of these relations and her

insistence is that those who benefit from its structures recognize this fact and work toward a critical conscientiousness rather than toward innocence. Only then, she implies, can the work of education take place.

Tanner Mirrlees focuses his analysis on the discourse of so-called cultural Marxism, asking how it is articulated and adapted by the alt-right for various political purposes. To do so, he investigates the ways in which the alt-right produces and circulates cultural Marxism as a "conspiratorial discourse" that binds together various populist and fascist factions into what he names as an ordered "instrument of intersectional hate." Building on Rembert Browne's argument that a Trump victory was achieved by making hate intersectional, Mirrlees examines the ways in which "the alt-right wields 'cultural Marxism' to advance a white, patriarchal, and Christian conservative vision of America and foment a racist, sexist, classist, xenophobic, and violent backlash against gains made by the individuals and groups it constructs as cultural-Marxist threats to and enemies to its 'alt-America.'" Mirrlees' intellectual work is invaluable to a contemporary understanding of how the alt-right works —both from the macro-level understanding of its key underpinnings and convergences as well as the micro-level of its use as a tool of intersectional hate in specific national contexts. One of Mirrlees' key insights is his articulation of cultural Marxism as a conspiracy theory of power that, although totalizing in its attempt to pigeonhole social movements that challenge white conservative Christian Americans, can nevertheless be easily debunked. Mirrlees concludes his article with a tandem appeal to that made by Mir: the "mirror" held up by the alt-right offers social movement activists, Marxists, and scholars an opportunity to counter the projection of intersectional hatreds and move towards new forms of resistance and sociality.

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A Muslim Student's Letter

Rabia Mir is a graduate student in Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia.

My Dear Professors:

I write to you today from the traditional, ancestral, unceded lands of the Musqueam people. You have taught me to reflect on this land acknowledgement. I am now aware of the coloniality (Quijano 1999) within my own education, the erasure of histories, the omission of narratives, and the dismissal of experiences. It has humbled me, as I now understand that I profit from a settler community. I am an insignificant and unwilling cog in colonial machinery —machinery that I do not know how to halt on my own.

I write to you today out of choice, out of an eagerness to learn, and out of hope that I will find ways of making my anger intelligible. Allow me to display the identity symbols I wear. I am a racialized Muslim mother. My citizenship is not from a North American or European country. I am Pakistani, and while I have lived, studied, and worked in the global North for over fifteen years, I remain Pakistani. This is important for you to remember because you are oblivious to the criminality my citizenship awards me. I am a security threat until proven otherwise. I had assumed that the privilege of a Harvard undergraduate education would grant me the right to not be treated like a security threat, but it does not.

When applying to undertake graduate education in Canada, I had to go through a medical exam for my study permit to prove that I did not carry "third-world" diseases to your country. I sat like cattle in forty-degree heat, in an outdoor compound of the International Organisation of Migration with my one-year-old daughter, waiting to go through our medical exams. It was Ramadan and I was fasting but the heat

did not deter me from proving that I am physically worthy of entering your territory. People were waiting outside in the heat, were yelled at and were asked to provide multiple urine samples and x-rays, in order to prove their fitness. That was humiliation at its best. If I had any doubt in my mind of being human enough, the visa process guaranteed to break that illusion.

I was asked to submit police certificates or intelligence agency clearance from all countries that I had lived in since the age of eighteen. This is a practice usually reserved for those applying for permanent residency within Canada. However, as I said earlier, my citizenship alone merits criminality unless proven otherwise. When the Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada (IRCC) denied my study permit the first time (due to a clerical error), I applied again because my eagerness to learn outweighed my unwillingness to bear humiliation. I applied again to prove my worth. I have applied for visas to visit, work, or study more than thirty-two times in approximately twenty countries. My loss of dignity when obtaining a Canadian study permit, however, was most distinct. University administrations seek international students through disingenuous advertising in the hopes of improving finances. What kind of inclusivity can an educational institute promise international students?

I have worked for corporations that were willing to provide resources for me to obtain the proper work permit, thus minimising any humiliation on my part. I have not seen the same from universities. Please do not tell me you understand the bureaucracy of the visa system because you had to apply for that one Chinese or Indian visa to conduct research overseas. You do not acknowledge the privilege of your citizenship.

Now that I am here in Canada, allow me to do the work I came to do. Please do not tell me to stand in solidarity with those affected by the US travel ban (initially proposed in February 2017 and upheld by the US Supreme Court in June 2018) by not going to

academic conferences in the US. My mobility to travel has come at a huge cost. The travel ban by the Trump administration was the best thing that has happened to me in that regard. It shows why it is difficult for people who do not have the right passport to attend workshops and conferences in North America and Western Europe. The problem has always existed; you seem to be outraged only now.

Please do not just "acknowledge" your privilege, truly recognize it. Embed that recognition in all your actions as a teacher. When you choose the syllabus, do not gravitate only towards white men for theory; understand that "modernity" and "enlightenment" are not concepts to aspire to but reasons nations were colonized around the world. If students do not connect to the work of those theorists, it is because their lived experiences are not accounted for. That "research," as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) said, "will always sound like a dirty word to many"; not just to those indigenous to Turtle Island, or to what we know as New Zealand or Australia, but to many marginalized communities who were "empirically" deemed to be less human. Orientalism (Said 1978) and eurocentrism are alive and thriving in the syllabi I come across today. I do not need white guilt. I need white conscientiousness or, as Friere (1983) said, "critical conscientiousness."

You have students who have burned every bridge to get to your classroom. They truly have nowhere to go because they have risked finances, family, and more to learn from you. Recognize that when you schedule classes outside working hours you make it harder for single parents as they have to make tough decisions. Should they go to the class, even though it is outside regular hours, and pay tuition fees, daycare fees, and additional childcare fees? Should they sacrifice seeing their child for the whole day? Or should they just not go to the class? Sometimes the latter is not even an option because the class is mandatory. Do you really know how much you disadvantage students who must choose among tuition, groceries, and childcare costs to attend your class?

When I hear about the struggles of my indigenous colleagues, I wonder why do we not better support each other. There is a false sense of "post" coloniality among those from or living in ex-European colonies around the world. The fact that many nations have an "Independence Day" does not mean that decolonization has occurred. Coloniality in this context is reduced to the presence of colonial administrators (Grosfoguel 2007). Just as Bonilla-Silva (2010) makes a case for racism without racists, the ex-colonies need to introspect and address coloniality without the colonial bodies. In the context of higher education, the views of Thomas Macaulay, Head of the Committee of Public Instruction for the Indian Subcontinent in 1835, are still valid today:

> It is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

Our curriculum, language preference, university rankings, bureaucracy, legal codes, ideals of knowledge, standards of beauty—all of these uphold coloniality and ensure continued epistemicide (Santos 2013). We, as scholars, are to blame for that. Am I, as Macaulay stated in 1835, still "Indian in blood and color but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect"? Especially in intellect? As universities throughout Canada commit themselves to the goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, how do you as teachers commit to decolonizing knowledge? How do you partake in the practice of "epistemic disobedience" that breaks the

illusion of neutral education (Mignolo 2009)?

I never know which resistance to support. Maybe Black Lives Matter because I can relate to the violence of the police state and because I want to challenge the racism towards black Muslims within diverse Muslim communities? Or can I relate most to the struggles of undocumented workers and immigrants whose worth is measured by how much they contribute to the economy? Or maybe I should support the women's march? But then again, I do not like white celebrities speaking for my experiences when they continuously perpetuate the harmful stereotypes they seem so outraged by. Or maybe I should support those working against anti-Muslim racism? You might know this as Islamophobia but I do not like that word. The violence against Muslim bodies happens because they are deemed criminal—not human. It is not caused by fear. It is caused by hate. This accompanies a conviction of superiority amongst those who are not Muslim. While Muslims are not a race, it is the systemic nature of racism that I think is applicable (Müller-Uri and Opratko 2016). What is race, if not an ever-arbitrary and shifting concept in our imaginations?

To my professors who teach Islam (theologically, socially, anthropologically, and legally), I do not feel part of the *ummah* but I do feel that you carry the conflicting burden of trying to be a critical voice in the discourse of Islam while spending most of your energies addressing the harmful stereotypes. You are far fewer on campus than I would have hoped. Sometimes, you are on campuses in parts of North America or Western Europe where I am too afraid to study. I am afraid because I feel my daughter will be bullied at school or will have to explain a religion before she even understands what religion is. That she will have to pay for crimes she does not yet comprehend. How do I learn from you, my professors of Islam? How do we engage Muslim communities in an introspective, critical struggle to address the systems of oppression within us? How do we decolonise our own consciousness? Is the concept of an *ummah* an unrealisable dream? Will the *ajmi* and *ar'bi* ever have

the same rights? Why is there a stronger outcry for what is happening to American-Muslims but relative silence over Rohingya-Muslims or Uyghurs-Muslims or South-Asian working-class Muslims in Arab gulf states? And please let the women speak. I do not need validation from Muslim men to make my argument worthwhile. Oh yes, and if you stick me at the back of a room or in a corner and have *khutbahs* that only speak from your perspective or from the illusion of a Muslim *ummah*, I am not likely to show up for Friday prayers. Why do we talk about our experiences in Western Europe and North America but not about *riya* or *taqlid* or the hatred within our own communities? Trust me, I do not wish to undermine those experiences, but I also have no wish to undermine the experience of religious minorities in Muslim-majority countries. We should be just as outraged about that.

To those who hear me at academic conferences, please ask me questions or offer critique about my work. But do not ask me about Afghanistan because you consulted for the US State Department. Do not assume that I study radicalisation because I study *madaris*. Look at methodological and peer-review failures in the academic research on *madaris*, failures which equate all *madaris* to militant training camps without ever providing evidence for this generalisation. Do not sympathise with me afterwards because you think this all started because Donald Trump was elected President and Prime Minister Trudeau is the epitome of Canadian exceptionalism. Do not avoid eye contact as if you are afraid of offending me by looking at me. Please do not ask me how bad it is at airports, to relive stories of discrimination as you sympathise with phrases of "Oh no!" and "Oh dear!" and then run off to your next session. My misery is not for your intellectual entertainment.

People sometimes walk up to me and ask where I teach. When I say I am a master's student, the response is: "You're not even PhD?" I guess the value of my work is measured by my job title or my program and not by the merit of my work. Inside universities, graduate students exchange looks when we hear professors refer to us as "cheap labour." You know we can hear you, right? How is this different from the corporate cultures you deplore? One of my fellow students commented, "It's like they have two ears, one to listen to us and others for their esteemed colleagues." All of this gives me some appreciation for the transparency of alt-right discourse. Its hate and superiority are out in the open. I can adjust my expectations of an author after reading their alt-right discourse, whereas in academia I walk away disoriented and disenchanted.

I would like to conduct my research but instead of pursuing my interests, I work to satisfy curiosity and address misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. When will the emotional and intellectual labour of anti-oppressive work shift to those who are privileged by the systemic discrimination in our societies? I have received feedback on papers by professors who are unable to differentiate between Islam and Islamism or Islamic and Islamist. You are surprised that there are 1.8 billion Muslims in the world who embody all markers of diversity and struggle with multiple systems of oppression. You ask me, kindly, if I speak to my daughter in Arabic. I used to be confused but now I understand: because I am Muslim, I must speak Arabic. I do not. Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria's Muslim populations contribute most to the 1.8 billion. Please reflect on that.

Professors, you, more so than the alt-right you are so eager to bash, are crippling me. You make me so physically and emotionally drained after class that I feel my head is filled with lead. I expect you to recognise, analyse, dissect, critique, deconstruct, and cite what you are doing wrong. Yet you do not.

I am here, present in body, mind, and soul. Ready to learn and contribute. Do you want to teach me?

Sincerely,

Rabia Mir

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The Alt-Right's Discourse of "Cultural Marxism": A Political Instrument of Intersectional Hate

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Abstract: This article analyzes the history, production, circulation, and political uses of the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism in the context of the right-wing populist Trump presidency, the rise of fascist movements in the United States and worldwide, and the politics of intersectional hate.

Introduction: Alt-Right Terror and "Cultural Marxism"

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik car-bombed a government building in Oslo, Norway, killing eight people; he then infiltrated the Norway Labour Party's Worker's Youth League camp and murdered sixty-nine more people. Breivik, a white supremacist, says he committed this terrorism as a way to publicize his 1,500-page manifesto "2083: A European Declaration of Independence." In it, he (under the alias Andrew Berwick) called on white people everywhere to take up arms against "cultural Marxists," a group he frames as the "enemy" of "Western civilization" (Berwick 2011). Breivik's fascist manifesto was full of factual errors and gaps in reasoning, but the story it told about cultural Marxism was much more commonly told and believed than one might expect, especially in the United States. In fact, Breivik's manifesto took a page from the American far right's "culture war" playbook (Boston 2011; Jamin 2018). For almost three decades, everyone from paleo-conservatives to neo-Nazis has used the phrase "cultural Marxism" as a shorthand for an anti-American bogeyman, a symbol for every liberal or left-leaning group the right defined itself against, and an epithet for progressive identities, values, ideas, and practices that reactionaries believe have made America worse than before. As Beirich and Hicks (2009, 118) explain, "many white nationalists see the changes in American society, particularly since the heated decade of the 1960s, as the result of an orchestrated plan —called cultural Marxism—by leftist intellectuals to destroy the American way of life as established by whites."

During Donald Trump's 2016 "Make America Great Again" campaign, talk of a cultural Marxist plot to ruin America moved from the fringes of right-wing

extremism to the mainstream. Using the moniker of the "alt-right," a new generation of Internet-savvy white supremacists supported Trump's race to the White House, whipping up fears about cultural Marxism's threat to America (Wilson 2015; 2016). Those in positions of political power also talked up this supposed threat to America. Steven Bannon, Trump's Chief Strategist at the time, portrayed conservatives as under siege by cultural Marxism (Coaston 2018). In the first year of Trump's presidency, Rich Higgins, the US National Security Council's (NSC) former director for strategic-planning, bemoaned a cultural Marxist plot to turn public opinion against Trump's presidency. In a memo entitled "POTUS & Political Warfare," Higgins explained Trump's unpopularity as the effect of "withering information campaigns" that "serve as the non-violent line of effort of a wider movement" to "execute political warfare agendas that reflect cultural Marxist outcomes" (Smith 2017).

A discourse "is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about—i.e. a way of representing—a particular kind of knowledge about a topic" (Hall 1992, 201). Social science and humanities scholars recognize a heterogeneous Marxist cultural studies tradition, and some utilize Marxist concepts when analyzing culture and society (Dworkin 1997; Kellner 2013). But researchers are only beginning to acknowledge and interrogate the far right's production, circulation, and political uses of its own discourse about "cultural Marxism" (Beirich and Hicks 2009; Jamin 2014; 2018; SPLC 2003; Wilson 2015; 2016). How does the alt-right talk about "cultural Marxism"? What statements do alt-right authors make about the history, identity, goals, and impacts of "cultural Marxism" in the US? What media outlets, sites, and platforms circulate this discourse of cultural Marxism, and what political uses does the alt-right make of it in its struggle for power?

To answer these questions and establish some foundations for further and more focused critical studies of the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism, this article interrogates the alt-right's production, circulation, and political uses of a conspiratorial discourse about cultural Marxism in the context of the right-wing populist Trump presidency and the rise of fascist ideologies and movements around the world. The alt-right represents cultural Marxism in partial and selective ways and makes claims about what it is, has done, and is doing to "America" and "the West." The alt-right's aim is to try to get large numbers of people to think about and perceive cultural Marxism and the identities, values, and goals of all of the individuals and groups it frames as cultural Marxists in hateful ways. Overall, I argue that the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is an instrument of intersectional hate. While "Trump won the presidency by making hate intersectional" (Browne 2016), the alt-right wields "cultural Marxism" to advance a white, patriarchal, and Christian conservative vision of America and foment a racist, sexist, classist, xenophobic, and violent backlash against the gains made by the individuals and groups it constructs as cultural Marxist threats and enemies to its "alt-America." In this regard, the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism is a means by which it constructs a patriarchal, white, and Christian supremacist notion of America in response to the destabilization of this order by the ongoing pursuit of social justice and broader societal changes linked to multi-national capitalism and progressive neoliberalism (Fraser 2017).

This argument develops in this paper through four interrelated sections. The first section is a macro-level overview of the alt-right hate movement: its key figures, ideology, hegemonic strategy, media fronts, and convergence with and divergence from the Trump Administration. Having contextualized the alt-right's hate, the second section presents a synoptic overview of the alt-right's hateful discourse on cultural Marxism, tracking its historical emergence, narrative claims, organizational production sources, and widespread circulation. The third section shows the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism to be an easily debunked and empirically groundless "conspiracy theory of power." The fourth section highlights the alt-right's political uses of this conspiracy theory as a tool

of intersectional hate. The conclusion briefly discusses the cross-border movement and noxious permutations of the American alt-right's conspiracy of cultural Marxism in Canada.

The Alt-Right: White Supremacy in the Age of Trump

In the same month that Trump announced his run for the US presidency and kicked off a right-wing populist election campaign, Panitch and Albo (2016, x) observed: "We are at one of those historical moments that compel socialists to undertake a serious calibration of the political forces amassing on the right. . . . Across the globe, the far right is on the move." Hateful right-wing populist leaders, movements, and parties have grown over the past two decades. Such groups ascended in popularity in the wake of the 2008-2009 world capitalist slump and were emboldened by Trump's presidency (Norris 2006; 2016). Today, it is incumbent upon everyone on the left to try to understand the "far right's social base," its "organizational strength and range," its power to "influence mainstream parties and opinion," and its march into "state institutions" (Panitch and Albo 2016, x). The goal of this section, then, is to present a macro-level overview of the alt-right hate movement: its key figures, ideology, hegemonic strategy, media, and convergence with and divergence from the Trump Administration.

In the US, the "alt-right" is a heterogeneous assemblage of far right groups, but the most significant expression of the alt-right today are the youthful, white nationalists that reject mainstream conservatism and neoliberalism, wish to dismantle the Republican and Democratic "establishment," and seek to build a white ethno-State that compels all of society's institutions to protect and promote the values of an idealized white European culture (Hawley 2017; Neiwert 2017; SPLC 2017). Identity Evropa, Proud Boys, and The Traditionalist Workers Party are a few such alt-right groups, and these may link with longstanding hate groups such as the Aryan Nations, Blood and Honor, Stormfront, and the Klu

Klux Klan (SPLC 2017). Some of these groups call for the removal of non-white people from the US; others call for the genocide of all non-white people. Some want to build a world of race-people separated into territorial ethno-States; others see themselves in a race war, believing that "white genocide" will happen if they fail to exterminate non-whites. Some perceive themselves to be racially superior to non-white people, a super-race in a world of clashing races whose destiny is to dominate the globe's inferior races; others frame themselves as racial segregationists wanting to live amongst "folk and families" that look like, talk like, shop like, and pray like them. There are subtle differences between alt-right groups, but all extol the protection and promotion of a specious "white culture" and engage in a struggle to build an authoritarian territorial ethno-State that secures the dominance of white people and culture across every institution.

Apropos Gramsci (1971), the alt-right's intersecting hate groups can be conceptualized as a political bloc or network of groups that struggle for moral leadership (hegemony) in the trenches of American civil society (war of position) while setting their sights on the institutional heights of State power (war of maneuver) using strategies and tactics that combine tools of persuasion and coercion. In civil society, the alt-right is rapidly building up its persuasive powers. It owns publishing houses such as Radix and Washington Summit Publishers (run by Richard B. Spencer) and Counter Currents Publishing (run by Greg Johnson). Steve Bannon's Breitbart News is at the centre of an expansive alt-right media ecology while alt-right sites such as The Alternative Right, American Renaissance, The Daily Stormer, The Occidental Observer, Radical Agenda, and the Right Stuff proliferate (ADL 2018). The alt-right's many groups and culture warriors use the Internet, World Wide Web, and social media platforms to spread their hate ideology, recruit members, and attack opponents. The alt-right's social media presence is significant, and the "Gramscians of the alt-right" have had "remarkable success in spreading their ideas through their own alternative and almost exclusively online media content" (Nagle 2017,

53). The alt-right also uses violence to achieve its political goals; it has terrorized, injured, or killed more than one hundred people over the past few years (Hankes and Amend 2018; Miller 2016).

During the 2016 US presidential election campaign race between Hillary Clinton and Trump, the alt-right rallied for Trump. This was unsurprising given Trump fashioned himself as an authoritarian populist champion of white, conservative, working class, and petite bourgeois American men and women (Berlet 2015). Trump's populist campaign channelled these people's angst toward Clinton Democrats and his election was a "white-lash" against the modest social gains made by racialized minority groups (CBC 2017). As Trump battled for the presidency, the alt-right crossed over from marginal websites on the political fringe into "mainstream public and political life" (Nagle 2017, 27). Trump's campaign resonated with Richard Spencer, Andrew Anglin, and Nathan Damigo, and these alt-right figureheads entered the media fold in a struggle to speak with and appeal to Trump's base. They imagined that if Trump were elected, Trump might use his presidential powers to "make America great again" by making their racist dream of a white ethno-State come true.

Spencer, head of the National Policy Institute, which is "dedicated to the heritage, identity, and future of people of European descent in the United States, and around the world" and pushes "peaceful ethnic cleansing" in hopes of transforming the US into a white ethno-State, saw Trump as a leader who would support his racist cause (National Policy Institute 2017). At the 2016 Republican National Convention, Spencer said, "Trust me. Trump thinks like me." Harkening back to Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi-era propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* (1935), Spencer called Trump's win the "victory of the will" and wrapped up a racist speech at a November 19, 2016, meeting of the National Policy Institute by shouting: "Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!" (J. Goldstein 2016). Spencer's crowd responded with a standing ovation, cheers, and Nazi salutes. Anglin, the neo-Nazi publisher of The Daily

Stormer, which describes itself as "The World's Most-Genocidal Republican Website," encouraged his anonymous followers and alt-right trolls to "vote for the first time in our lives for the one man who actually represents our interests" (Anglin 2015). After Trump won, Anglin called upon his legion of hate trolls to use the social media to intimidate "brown people" and harass non-Trump supporters until they "killed themselves" (Westcott 2016). Damigo, former leader of the skinhead National Youth Front and now head of Evropa, a group for "a generation of awakened Europeans" who supposedly hail from "the great peoples, history and civilization that flowed from the European continent" (Evropa 2017), rallied neo-fascists to Trump as well. When Trump won the White House, Damigo enthused from his "Fashy Haircut" (@NathanDamigo) Twitter pedestal: "Everything that has happened since @realDonaldTrump was declared the future president shows that we are engaged in total war . . . Trump is the only candidate whose policies would make America Whiter" (Branson-Potts 2016). Jared Taylor, a white nationalist, board member of the Council for Conservative Citizens, and editor of American Renaissance, campaigned for Trump too. He interpreted Trump's inauguration as "a sign of rising white consciousness" and said he supported Trump "because the effects of his policy would be to reduce the dispossession of Whites, that is, to slow the process whereby Whites become the minority in the United-States" (Taylor 2017).

Evidently, Trump's right-wing populist campaign and election energized the alt-right's ideologues of hate. They rode Trump's Twitter-tales to the White House and moved the hearts and minds of many Trump voters to the idea that making America great again meant making white supremacy normal again. As Spencer put it: "We've been legitimized by this election" (Posner 2016). For a time, the alt-right and Trump converged but lately they are diverging (*The New York Times* 2016; Vegas 2017). The alt-right chastised Trump for removing Steve Bannon from the NSC (R. Roberts 2017); complained that the US-Mexico border wall is really just a fence (Nguyen

2017b); and criticized Trump for being too friendly in international relations with the Islamophobic and anti-Semitic alt-right's top two global enemies—Saudi Arabia (a symbol for the collective Muslim) and Israel (a symbol for the collective Jew). Furthermore, the alt-right is against Trump's war in Syria and opposed to Trump's militaristic sabre-rattling with Russia (Nguyen 2017a). AltRight.com articles such as "The Trump Betrayal" (Wallace 2017a) and "How the Alt-Right Broke up With Donald Trump" (Wallace 2017b) indicate that the alt-right has parted ways with Trump. In a recent interview with *Vanity Fair*, Spencer remarked: "A lot of us feel disillusioned and even burned by Trump. In a sense we thought that the alt-right could be Trump's brain, but now he has Ivanka, and Jared and Paul Ryan for that. Basically people who aren't me" (Vegas 2017). While the Republican and Democratic "establishment" that Trump initially campaigned against tries to bring Trump in line with the neoliberal geopolitical and economic framework of the US Empire, alt-right icon Spencer denounces Trump as a "cuckservative" (Vegas 2017).

In sum, although the alt-right supported Trump's "Make America Great" campaign for the US presidency, it has not won a "war of maneuver" for State power. Currently, the alt-right remains engaged in a "war of position" in civil society and is fighting neoconservative and mainstream Republicans, as well as neoliberal Democrats and the socialist left. Over the past year, the march of the alt-right has been setback by "lawsuits and arrests, fundraising difficulties, tepid recruitment, widespread infighting, fierce [anti-fascist] counter-protests, and banishment from social media platforms" (McCoy 2018). Nonetheless, the alt-right is regrouping and continuing to battle for hearts and minds. A conspiratorial discourse of cultural Marxism is a significant weapon of its hate.

The Alt-Right's Discourse on Cultural Marxism: From Nazism to Breitbart and Beyond

This section is a synoptic overview of the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism; it describes this discourse's origins, narrative claims, production sources, and widespread circulation in society.

In Nazi Germany, Adolph Hitler and Joseph Goebbels used the term "cultural Bolshevism" as an anti-Semitic epithet and as cudgel for attacking any group of people or modernist cultural trend that they perceived to be corrupting or leading to the degeneracy of traditional German society. In post-Cold War America, paleo-conservative think-tanks and white nationalist organizations resurrected the Nazi idea of "cultural Bolshevism" but renamed it "cultural Marxism" (Jamin 2018, 5). One might assume that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the neoliberal "end of history" would subdue conservative anxieties about the spectre of Communism materializing in America, but this was not the case. In the mid-1990s, authors associated with far-right organizations—the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), the Free Congress Foundation, the American Legislative Exchange Council, the Christian Coalition, the Foundation for Cultural Review—started producing a discourse about cultural Marxism in America. Some of the key texts of this discourse include Michael Minnicino's (1992, 1994) "The Frankfurt School and Political Correctness" and "Freud and the Frankfurt School"; Gerald Atkinson's (1999) "What is the Frankfurt School"; James Thornton's (1999) "Gramsci's Grand Plan"; Chuck Morse's (2002) "Enthralled by Cultural Marxism: Four Horsemen of the Frankfurt School"; and William Lind's (2004) *Political Correctness: A Short History of an Ideology* (Jamin 2018, 5). This discourse about cultural Marxism is not produced by scholars or activists with specialized knowledge about Marxism, but instead by far-right thinkers with no record of accomplishment or experience in this area. What story do right-wing authors tell about cultural Marxism?

The far right's story about cultural Marxism in America usually begins with Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Communist who fought against the fascist Benito Mussolini. According to this alt-right narrative, in prison, Gramsci wrote the *Prison Notebooks* to re-think socialist strategy. Observing how the working

class was not spontaneously organizing itself to overthrow capitalism or committing to building Communism, and recognizing that the coercive imposition of Communism upon working people was a recipe for tyranny (Stalinism) and mass resistance (anti-Stalinism), Gramsci devised a plan for winning the working class voluntarily to socialism called "cultural Marxism." To translate Marxism from "economic into cultural terms" (Lind 2004, 5), continues the alt-right narrative, Gramsci urged Marxists to gain "control of the organs of culture: churches, education, newspapers, magazines, the electronic media, serious literature, music, the visual arts and so on" (Thornton 1999). The alt-right says Gramsci's cultural Marxist seed was planted in America when, in 1934, Jewish Marxist intellectuals —Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Wilhelm Reich and Eric Fromm—fled Nazi Germany to the US and built a new research institute at Columbia University, New York City. There, the Frankfurt School Institute for Social Research supposedly achieved "destructive criticism of all the main elements of Western culture, including Christianity, capitalism, authority, the family, patriarchy, hierarchy, morality, tradition, sexual restraint, loyalty, patriotism, nationalism, heredity, convention and conservatism" (Morse 2002). According to the alt-right, from 1934 onwards, the Frankfurt School and its disciples influenced generations of Americans. The alt-right depicts the New Left social movements of the 1960s—feminism, LGTBQ rights, black power, anti-colonial liberation, environmentalism, and pacifism—as the effect of the Frankfurt School's cultural Marxist ideology (Atkinson 1999; 2000; Lind 2000; 2001; 2004; Morse 2002; Thornton 1999).

By the early 1980s, neoliberal parties had defeated much of the organized left. Yet, the far-right's story about cultural Marxism represents the New Left as history's victor. By the early twenty-first century, cultural Marxists had supposedly built their hegemony in civil society and taken control of the Federal government, the public education system, and the media and cultural industries (Atkinson 1999; 2000; Baehr 2007; Buchanan 2002; Glazov 2004; Hultberg 2010; Kimball 2007; Lind 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005; MacDonald 2011; Minnicino 1992; 1994; Morse 2002; Thornton 1999; Wenzel 2013). Once in power, this cultural Marxist elite sided with "virtuous" non-white people and minority groups in a battle against "evil" white conservative men. For example, the alt-right says cultural Marxists now use the US Federal Government and the courts to establish social policies and redistributive programs that favour non-white people. They use the education system to build social justice curricula to indoctrinate white students with the ideology of "political correctness" while censoring these students' freedom to speak in oppressive ways. They push affirmative action policy in the workplace to undermine white people's chance at climbing a meritocratic social ladder. They promote open immigration to instigate a demographic shift toward multiculturalism that makes it tough for white people to be proud of their racial heritage. Furthermore, cultural Marxists rule the media and cultural industries, and this control enables them to spread their politically correct ideology through news and entertainment content.

The right-wing authors responsible for this tall tale about cultural Marxism in America are not experts, make no reference to canonical scholarly works on the actual history of Marxism (and socialism) in America (Buhle 2013; Nichols 2015), and fail to substantiate their claims with research. Nonetheless, the story they tell about cultural Marxism in America has made a mark on the public mind. Since the turn of the millennium, derivative retellings, creative adaptations, and contingent remixes of this story about the history of cultural Marxism in America have proliferated.

The far right agitated against cultural Marxism during George W. Bush's two-term presidency (Buchanan 2002; Kimball 2007; Lind 2004; 2005; Morse 2002; Horowitz 2007) and continued its war against cultural Marxism throughout the Obama years (Rogér 2010). Tea Party activists claimed that the election of Barack Obama represented a coup for cultural Marxism (Left-Wing Noise Machine 2011) while "birthers" framed

Obama as a foreign-born Muslim who was building a cultural Marxist dictatorship (aided by the Jewish-Marxist banker, George Soros) (Kapner 2009). Right-wing shock jocks (Rush Limbaugh) and Fox News pundits (Glenn Beck) echoed and amplified notions of Obama being a "cultural Marxist" (Beck 2010; Wenzel 2013), as did new alt-right info-tainment sites like Breitbart News. In *Righteous Indignation: Excuse Me While I Save the World*, Andrew Breitbart (2011) described his "discovery" of cultural Marxism as his "red pill" and, between 2009 and 2017, Breitbart News pandered to the ideology of an alt-right audience too extremist for Fox News's ad clients by publishing numerous stories about cultural Marxism with titles like "Political Correctness = Cultural Marxism" (Big Hollywood 2009), "Cultural Marxism is the Enemy" (Ruse 2015a), and "Even Little Girls Can be Cultural Marxists" (Ruse 2015b).

From the 2008 election of Obama to the 2016 election of Trump, alt-right stories about cultural Marxism circulated far and wide. A Google Trends (2018) data visualization of American search interest in "cultural Marxism" from November 2008 to November 2016 shows interest in "cultural Marxism" increasing; it trends upwards during the 2016 election campaign and spikes in the aftermath of Trump's victory. Before and after Trump took the White House, the alt-right's culture warriors of hate produced, consumed, added to, remixed, and reproduced articles, memes, hashtags, tweets and videos that together constitute a digital discourse about cultural Marxism. An April 1, 2018, Google search for "cultural Marxism" returned 1,490,000 results in .37 seconds. A glut of content about cultural Marxism now circulates through the Internet and World Wide Web, and much of it stems from alt-right media sources—websites, magazines, and blogs.

Spencer, who co-edits Altright.com and *Radix*, promulgates stories such as *"Ghostbusters* and the Suicide of Cultural Marxism" (Forney 2016), "#3 - Sweden: The World Capital of Cultural Marxism" (Right on Radio 2016), and "Beta Leftists,

Cultural Marxism and Self-Entitlement" (Follin 2015). Anglin's *The Daily Storme*r publishes stories like "Jewish Cultural Marxism is Destroying Abercrombie & Fitch" (Farben 2017) and "Hollywood Strikes Again: Cultural Marxism through the Medium of Big Box-Office Movies" (Murray 2016) and "The Left-Center-Right Political Spectrum of Immigration = Cultural Marxism" (Duchesne 2015). Damigo's Evropa website features a video called "What is Cultural Marxism?" On vdare.com, the alt-right's intellectual hero Paul Gottfried (2017) bemoans conservatism's capitulation to LGTBQ rights and says its cultural Marxism's fault in a piece titled "Yes, Virginia (Dare) There Is A Cultural Marxism—And It's Taking Over Conservatism Inc." Jared Taylor's *American Renaissance* runs stories like "Cultural Marxism in Action: Media Matters Engineers Cancellation of Vdare.com Conference" (Brimelow 2017). Before his downfall, the alt-right's clown prince Milo Yiannopoulos satirized cultural Marxism in articles such as "I've Been Censored, And It's Getting Dark: How Cultural Marxism Locked me Out of My Car," among others. When Twitter suspended Milo's account, his fans blamed cultural Marxism (Rudd-o 2016).

Yet, the freedom to hate is given more protection in the US than those who wish to live free from hate (Volokh 2015) and alt-right invectives against cultural Marxism freely flow across social media platforms (BBC Trending 2018). On Facebook, a "Stop Cultural Marxism" page describes cultural Marxists as "people who are cancer in human form"; an "Ending Cultural Marxism" group says its mission is "to right what has gone wrong, to stand against the oppression of those who would be enemies to traditional cultures, races, religions, and creeds"; a "Stop the New World Order & Agenda 21" page describes Cultural Marxism as "the Left Wing tactic of brainwashing youth into living a sick decaying and perverted lifestyle where everything once beautiful and sacred is replaced with sick acts of public degeneracy." Alt-right Twitter trolls "call out" cultural Marxism. For example, Cultural Marxism (@culturalmarxis) describes itself as a "group dedicated to spread the word about Cultural Marxism.

Exposing the progressives for what they really are: a bunch of totalitarian control freaks!" The handle @ViscountTroll says, "Trigger-extraordinaire, smash Cultural Marxism, bring forth freedom and strength, Nationalist, exiled Rhodesian."

As of April 1, 2018, the video-sharing site YouTube streamed almost 174,000 videos about cultural Marxism. Some of these included "Cultural Marxism: The Corruption of America" (starring the paleo-conservative Pat Buchanan and the Tea Party libertarian, Ron Paul); "Nazi Rubber Duck Explains Cultural Marxism"; and "The History of Marxist Infiltration and Subversion of Culture." YouTube hate influencers run cultural Marxist conspiracy channels: The European Awakening channel circulates a video called "Destroy Cultural Marxism"; The American Patriot channel runs "Cultural Marxism: The Ideological Disease Destroying America and Western Civilization"; and Chad Jackson's channel spreads "Cultural Marxism - Antonio Gramsci Effect on American Culture." Amazon.com meanwhile retails books about the "corrupting" influence of cultural Marxism as well. Michael Walsh's (2017) *The Devil's Palace: The Cult of Critical Theory and the Subversion of the West*, for example, claims that cultural Marxism "released a horde of demons into the American psyche" that has "affected nearly every aspect of American life and society." For an anti-Semitic twist, Kevin MacDonald's (2017) *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth Century Intellectual and Political Movements* reduces cultural Marxism to an all-encompassing Jewish conspiracy to de-Christianize America.

The Alt-Right's Discourse of Cultural Marxism: A Conspiracy Theory of Power

Evidently, the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism in America is massive, and it spreads around the world in a range of non-commercial and commercial forms and across numerous platforms, shaping what people think about cultural Marxism and the impact of cultural Marxism in America and elsewhere. However, far from being an honest or accurate depiction of cultural Marxism in America, this alt-right story about cultural Marxism is an all-encompassing conspiracy theory of power (Berlet 2009; Jamin 2018). Indeed, the alt-right's story about cultural Marxism in America represents cultural Marxists as a malicious elite that is consolidating its power over America and controlling the Federal government, the media and cultural industries, the higher education system, public discourse and opinion at the expense of white conservatives. The conspiracy theorist might address its audience like this: "Hey white person! Look at all the social changes in America. To understand these, you need to first understand that a secretive cultural Marxist cabal rules the Federal Government, the cultural industries, and the education system. The plot to rule America began in the 1930s, when Gramsci developed it, and after World War II, when Jewish academic Marxists implemented it. Foreigners, not Americans, are responsible for producing and putting Marxist ideology in the heads of all of those politically correct social justice warriors (PC-SJWs). In fact, these poor Americans are dupes of cultural Marxist ideology."

The alt-right represents cultural Marxism as responsible for or equivalent to every idea, value, person, group, organization, product and, practice that purportedly offends, challenges, or afflicts the identities of white conservative Christian Americans. Indeed, cultural Marxism is said to be the cause and effect of: social justice (Kirschner 2017); feminism, gender equality, and women's right to get an abortion or a divorce (Atkinson 1999; 2000; Muehlenberg 2016; Smith 2015); gay, lesbian, and trans people and their rights (Kuhner 2013); racial equality, multiculturalism, and race-mixing (Lind 2000; 2001; 2004; 2005; Storms 2017); affirmative action and "cultural sensitivity training" at Starbucks (Founder 2018); "Big Government" social welfare programs and "gun control" policies (Biver 2014; Torcer 2017); the United Nations' supposed "New World Order" agenda (Hopkins-Cavanagh 2017); liberal organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Moveon.org; social movements: Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter (BLM), ANTIFA and #MeToo

(Hopkins-Cavanagh 2017, Smith 2015; Storms 2017; The Taoist Conservative 2017); Colin Kaepernick and the NFL players who took the knee in solidarity with BLM (Canzoneri 2017); Hollywood films such as *Elysium* (2013) (because of its critique of dystopian capitalism) and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015) (because of its multi-gendered and multi-cultural casts) (Forney 2016; Murray 2016; Right On 2015); and academic trends such as postmodern and post-structuralist theory (Apostaticus 2016; Peterson 2017; 2018; Salerno 2016). Evidently, the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism is a totalizing or global conspiracy theory, as it attempts to identify or explain the historical origin or motor force behind innumerable phenomena that its ideologues dislike, disapprove of, or even hate.

The alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory is totalizing and global, but it can be easily debunked. Bluntly, there is no empirical ground beneath the idea that Marxists rule the big institutions of American society. At present, Trump (a billionaire) presides over the most powerful government in the world and Trump's Cabinet is full of millionaires, not Marxists. The Trump White House and the Republican-controlled Congress and Senate are in no way in league with Marxists and the US State is more supportive of trans-national corporations than it is of the Democratic Socialists of America. After all, Senator Bernie Sanders' reformist social democratic proposals are too radical for the Democratic Party's leadership (and the moneyed interests that back it). Far from being overrun by red-tenured radicals, the higher education system is big business; high-salaried business administrators frequently run universities and colleges. Sure, some social science and humanities professors teach Marx (a canonical thinker), but Marxism's influence is marginal in academia—and the wider society—as compared to the Chicago School's neoliberal orthodoxy. No current studies of media ownership in America support the claim that Marxists have seized control of the means of intellectual production. Millionaires and billionaires such as News Corp's Rupert Murdoch and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg own the US-based ICT and cultural industries.

While Marxist theory has inspired the formation of some intellectuals, social movements, and parties in the US, none have ever achieved a substantive hegemony at any level of US society. No Marxist has presided over the Federal government, the media and cultural industries, the education system, or the nation's dominant common sense. Moreover, the most powerful institutions of American society—the US government, the military, and the corporate sector—have mostly been unfriendly to Marxists, and Marxism has long been America's unofficial "anti-ideology" (Herman and Chomsky 1988). The two dominant political parties are anti-Marxist and, in some instances, they have directly repressed Marxist-minded citizens and social movements (R. Goldstein 1978; 2016; Schultz 2001). In 1919-1920, the Lusk Committee investigated Americans that held Marxist views for sedition; in 1939, the Hatch Act attempted to remove Marxist-minded workers from the public sector; in 1941, Public Law 125 enabled security agencies to investigate public sector workers suspected of being Marxists and fire them if they were. In the early Cold War, Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy framed liberals as Marxist "pinkos" and "dupes"; the House Committee on Un-American Activities targeted, investigated and then blacklisted many Hollywood liberals (and Marxists) (R. Goldstein 1978, 2016). In the twenty-first century, right-wing politicians and pundits promulgate brazenly anti-Marxist ideology to the public while alt-right hate campaigns against cultural Marxists go viral. For more than one hundred years, some US citizens have embraced Marxist, Communist, and socialist ideas, and US State agencies, corporations, and right-wing movements have flacked and demobilized them. In sum, the alt-right's notion that a cultural Marxist elite is ruling over America is ludicrous, and the idea that America's big institutions are backed by cultural Marxist ideology is absurd.

The alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy is easily put to the lie, but why might this conspiracy theory

resonate with those who produce, consume and seem to believe so many of the circulating versions of it? Analyzed as a subcultural phenomenon, the alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory might be redeemed as a "problem-solving" device, a creative yet confused symbolic response to real social antagonisms and conflicts rooted in a fundamentally hierarchical and systematically unequal capitalism system. As a radically simplistic explanatory mode, the cultural Marxist conspiracy theory might provide the alt-right subjects that digitally prosume it with a way of feeling "in the know," of having special insight into the truth of society, and of being perceptive about the elite. Like all conspiracy theories, the alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory enables its alt-right prosumers to gaze behind appearances and reveal what they hide or distort. For example, for the alt-right, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015) has a multi-gendered and multi-cultural cast, not because Hollywood seeks to turn a profit by producing globally popular films that target a diverse American and trans-national audience, but because cultural Marxists are pulling Hollywood's strings! For the alt-right, Starbucks is educating its employees about cultural diversity, not because of a brand equity crisis that emerged after a racist store manager called the police on black consumers, but because cultural Marxism has corrupted the way Starbucks runs its business! And so on. Like most conspiracy theories, the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism enables its prosumers to imagine themselves as an intellectual vanguard—enlightened people who possess special knowledge about how the world works and therefore have a responsibility to enlighten the ignorant or "duped" masses.

However, this assessment of the alt-right's cultural Marxist conspiracy theory as a subcultural problem-solving device is misguided and far too charitable to those responsible for propagating it. Far from being a subculture, the alt-right is a well-resourced and well-organized neo-fascist hate movement that is struggling to win mainstream power in the streets, and through the Internet and World Wide Web. As the next section shows, the alt-right makes many political uses of its discourse of cultural Marxism, and all are actionable to alt-right's mobilization of intersectional hate.

The Alt-Right's Political Uses of the Discourse of Cultural Marxism: Intersectional Hate

This section identifies and discusses seven political-rhetorical uses of the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism.

First, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism as a "culture war" strategy for constructing an American self in its hateful image. The US is a sovereign territorial state, but the meaning of America is a terrain of struggle between political blocs that vie for hegemony over civil society and the US State. The longstanding American "culture wars" express deep disagreements about the essence of "America" (Hunter 1992). The alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is one tool in its battle to construct the meaning of what America essentially is and is not, to draw definitional boundaries—territorial and imagined—around who Americans truly are and are not, and to delineate who naturally belongs to the national community and who is an outsider. Using the discourse of cultural Marxism, the alt-right constructs America as constituted by selective ethno-racial, sexual, religious, and economic characteristics. America's ethno-racial composition is "white," "Anglo-Saxon," and "European"; America's gender-sex regime is patriarchal, heteronormative, and centred around the nuclear family; its religious order is Christian; its economic structure is capitalist; the values of individualism, meritocracy, and private property are sacrosanct. For the alt-right, this is the essential America, an alt-American imagined community.

Second, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to construct an anti- or un-American other, a foil for its alt-American self. The alt-right labels non-conformers to its white, patriarchal, Christian capitalist alt-American ideal—liberals, white social justice activists, non-white people, feminists, LGTBQ

people, immigrants, atheists, Muslims, Jews, socialists and so on—as "cultural Marxists." The alt-right also represents politicians, business elites, and celebrities who are not Marxists, as Marxists. A website called "Cultural Marxism: The Decline of Western Civilization," for example, lumps together Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama, Justin Trudeau, Mark Zuckerberg, Eric Schmidt, George Soros, Pope Francis, George Clooney, Oprah Winfrey, and Rachel Maddow, depicting them all as cultural Marxists. For the alt-right, it would seem that behind every liberal is a cunning Marxist, plotting against alt-America. In sum, the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism constructs individuals and groups in the US that do not conform with or express the characteristics of the alt-American Self as an un-American cultural Marxist Other.

Third, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to construct the people it depicts as "others" to alt-America as not only un-American, but also, as enemy threats to America. For example, T.J. Roberts (2017) declares cultural Marxism to be the greatest threat to liberty in America. Ron Paul (2017, 53) says that cultural Marxism is "a form of cultural terrorism" against America and the West. Western Mastery (2017) maligns cultural Marxism as the #1 enemy of the West. For the alt-right, cultural Marxists are waging war against and destroying America; these anti-Americans trash the First Amendment, wreck the nuclear family, deprive people of jobs, destroy communities, corrupt culture, overturn Christianity, and set back America's military victory in the Global War on Terror (Breitbart 2009; Glazov 2002; Lind 2000; Minnicino 1992; 1994; Yeager 2003). Sometimes, cultural Marxism and "Islamic terrorism" are depicted as in cahoots, as growing and global-local threats to American security (Joondeph 2017; Lind 2001). By depicting people it labels as cultural Marxists and enemy threats to alt-America, the alt-right sews fear, suspicion, and paranoia about its opponents and ignites hatred for a wide range of people that are not anti-American, and most often, not even Marxists.

Fourth, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to agitate for violence against the people it constructs as cultural Marxists and enemy threats to alt-America. In a context where real and imagined threats to America are frequently responded to by the State with police and military violence, and war without territorial and temporal boundaries has been part of the American way of life since 9/11, the alt-right provokes its followers to see cultural Marxists as enemies and to perceive the use of violence as a way to neutralize this supposed enemy threat as legitimate, even necessary. For example, Blahut (2011) invites readers to wage a "war" against the cultural Marxist "enemy": "The hour grows late. We must identify the enemy and fight him, even when that means punishment by the powers-that-be." A "smashculturalmarxism.com" website depicts a white man using a sledgehammer to demolish a symbol of the hammer and sickle. The site's disclaimer states: "We believe that White Europeans have a moral obligation to stand up for their own people and their nations and to oppose this Genocidal system which is destroying us all" (Smash Cultural Marxism 2017). The alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism agitates for violence against the people it constructs as cultural Marxists and represents violence as a way to "defend" and "secure" America from this threat. Given the flexibility of the alt-right's epithetical label of cultural Marxism, anyone who does not fit into alt-America is vulnerable to being smeared as a cultural Marxist, and everyone the alt-right demonizes as a cultural Marxist and enemy threat to alt-America is a potential target of a violent hate movement to "smash" cultural Marxism, online and off.

Fifth, the alt-right uses the discourse on cultural Marxism as a tool of right-wing populism, as a political strategy that "pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice" (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, 3). The alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to construct non-white people and minority groups, as

well as their allies, as cultural Marxist elitists, overlords, snobs, villains, snowflakes, and so on that use "political correctness" to undermine or oppress virtuous alt-American people. The alt-right's discourse produces alt-American people as victims of cultural Marxism, as people oppressed in some way by this cultural Marxist elite and its ideology of "political correctness." By constructing cultural Marxists as bad un-American elites and alt-Americans as a virtuous yet victimized people, the alt-right casts itself as a populist vanguard of a people's national liberation movement. While left-wing populism is forward-leaning, and agitates for an intersectional social movement capable of overcoming racism and sexism, winning better jobs, higher wages, and more control over the labour process, and establishing strong public systems for provisioning healthcare, welfare, and education systems to all, the alt-right's populism is backward-looking. It promises to bring its people back to a time when a patriarchal, white, and Christian-supremacist notion of American nationhood had not been unsettled by social justice movements or challenged by economic changes linked to multi-national capitalism and the multicultural meritocratic superstructure of "progressive neoliberalism" (Fraser 2017). As a tool of populism, the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is fundamentally regressive.

Sixth, the alt-right uses the discourse on cultural Marxism to deny the reality of sexism, racism, and classism in the US. The alt right's discourse represents historically marginalized groups and their allies as a cultural Marxist elite and frames ideas, movements, practices, and policies that seek to counter and eliminate racism, sexism, and classism as the result of a cultural Marxist elite, not people's struggles. The alt-right's discourse makes it seem as though people who call out and struggle to curb inequality and oppression are cultural Marxist ideologues and portray talk of inequality and oppression as little more than delusions suffered by cultural Marxist dupes. It makes social justice appear to be a top-down cultural Marxist conspiracy as opposed to a bottom-up community response to the existing

problems of racism, sexism, and classism. In effect, the alt-right's discourse denies the historical and contemporary social facts of sexism, racism, and classism in the US, invalidates the lived experiences of those people who live with oppression each day, and downplays the agency of these people and their allies to challenge and transform oppressive conditions. In this regard, the alt-right's discourse about cultural Marxism denies and whitewashes reality.

Seventh, the alt-right uses the discourse of cultural Marxism to obscure the essence of the actual elite groups in positions of structural and institutional decision-making power in the US economy and State. While actual Marxist scholars point to the billionaires and owners of big corporations such as The Bank of America Corporation, Raytheon, and Exxon-Mobil as society's "ruling class," the alt-right depicts everyone from Rachel Maddow to George Clooney as cultural Marxist elites. For the alt-right, it seems that being an elite means holding certain liberal ideas as opposed to holding capital. By channelling alt-America's anger toward people who supposedly hold cultural Marxist ideas instead of the people who actually hold concentrated economic and political power, the alt-right's discourse masks and distracts people from the corporate elites that exercise real power in the US. Thus, this discourse enables these elites to proceed with business as usual, securing their profits with help from two compliant parties. The alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism is an ignorant alternative to the substantive Marxist praxis of trying to theorize and concretely analyze the complexities, conflicts, and contradictions of capitalism with the goal of moving beyond it. It is undoubtedly easier to rage against non-existent cultural Marxist elites from the comfort of one's smartphone than it is to build organizations and movements capable of taking on real social power. Clearly, the alt-right's discourse is compliant with the capitalist status quo.

Conclusion: The Alt-Right's Discourse of Cultural Marxism Goes Global

Since emerging on the extremist fringes of the

American Right in the 1990s, the discourse of cultural Marxism has gone global and has been locally adapted by right-wing thinkers and groups around the world. In the United Kingdom, the British National Party (BNP) depicts cultural Marxism as a "pernicious, destructive ideology that involves importing millions of immigrants from all around the world, particularly the Third World, along with their cultures and religions" and frames cultural Marxism as a form of "enforced multiculturalism" that is a "crime against humanity" (Green 2017). In Australia, the Australian Tea Party figure David Truman says cultural Marxism is a plot to destroy Western Culture, "including Christianity, Capitalism, Authority, The Family, Patriarchy, Morality, Tradition, Sexual Restraint, Loyalty, Patriotism, Nationalism, Heredity, Ethnocentrism, and Conservatism" (Jamin 2018, 8). In Hungary, Dr. Anca-Maria Cernea (2016) says cultural Marxism threatens the patriarchal nuclear Judeo-Christian family by supporting "abortion," "divorce," "homosexuality," "radical sex education," and "hatred of God and the entire human race."

Canada is a multicultural polity with a progressive liberal brand, but right-wing extremism is a problem (Perry and Scrivens 2015) and the American alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism has been gaining ground. For example, the landslide 2018 election of Trump supporter Doug Ford as Premier of Ontario (Mulligan 2016) suggests that Canada's liberal brand may belie growing alt-right sentiment. Following the election of Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper as the Prime Minister of Canada in 2006, the American New Right figurehead Paul Weyrich (2005) sent Harper a congratulatory message advising Harper to liquidate Canada's "cultural Marxist" ideology (CBC 2006). The Rebel Media, a far-right news organization, published articles by Canadian alt-right propagandists such as: "Want to sop cultural Marxist indoctrination? Cut public funding of universities" (Nicholas 2017); "Social justice is socialism in disguise" (Goldy 2016); and "How progressives use our kids for Marxist social experiments" (Goldy 2017). The *Canada Free Press*

circulates articles such as "Newspeak and Cultural Marxism" (Mann 2009). The Council of European Canadians (led by the white nationalist professor Ricardo Duchesne), has published articles such as "Cultural Marxism = Everything That's Wrong with the West" (Goodchild 2017). *Your Ward News* (edited by the leader of the neo-Nazi New Constitution Party of Canada, James Sears) is an overtly anti-Semitic, racist, homophobic, and misogynistic propaganda outlet that has regularly perpetuated the lie of cultural Marxism (and it recently organized an anti-Marxist book burning in the East End of Toronto, Canada) (Balgord 2017). In Whitby, Ontario, the ultra-conservative Campaign Life Coalition recorded and uploaded rants like "Radical sex-ed, transgender ideology, and cultural Marxism" to YouTube (Fonseca 2018).

The most high-profile anti-cultural Marxist in Canada is Jordan Peterson, a clinical psychologist at the University of Toronto who has not published peer-reviewed research on Marxism. Peterson became an alt-right idol when publicly challenging Bill C-16, a change to the Canadian Human Rights Act that aims to prohibit discrimination based on gender expression (Cumming 2016). Appearing in videos such as "Identity Politics & the Marxist Lie of White Privilege" (Peterson 2018) and "Postmodernism and Cultural Marxism" (Peterson 2017), Peterson has tapped into the alt-right's discourse of cultural Marxism and cashed in on the anxiety and anger of a large and growing alt-right fan base (Southey 2017). Peterson is not a fascist and he often says he hates Nazis, but Peterson's deployment of "cultural Marxism" as a term of opprobrium when ranting against "political correctness" and "social justice" in Canada appeals to reactionaries worldwide. Every usage of "cultural Marxism" is not essentially fascist, but this phrase is used by contemporary fascists as an ideological weapon. When Peterson berates "cultural Marxism," he may be helping the alt-right bring its conspiracy theory of hate into the mainstream (Berlatsky 2018).

Currently, the meaning of cultural Marxism is

embattled and articulated for different political and ideological projects by the alt-left and alt-right, progressive and reactionary, socialist and fascist. The alt-right has constructed the meaning of cultural Marxism in a struggle to organize trans-national consent to fascism, and the alt-right's meaning of Marxism is making an impression upon the minds of many. It is incumbent upon actual Marxists to look in the mirror held to them by the alt-right, and begin to counter the image and fascist movement behind it. This cognitive mapping of the alt-right's discourse on cultural Marxism is a small gesture to that end.

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The Black Woman Native Speaking Subject: Reflections of a Black Female Professor in Canada

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Abstract: This paper interweaves literary and feminist theories alongside personal life stories to demonstrate the collapse of the boundaries of the personal and the intellectual in the pedagogical practices of Black female professors. The paper suggests that acknowledging the precariousness of performing one's Blackness in university classrooms presents new possibilities for shared learning.

Keywords: Blacks in Canada; Caribbean diaspora; gender representations

This article offers a self-reflexive analysis of my position as a Black, Jamaican, Canadian, woman professor, teaching courses about the African Diaspora in the Americas in Toronto, Canada. As a diasporic city, Toronto functions as an important crossroads of Black cultures from the Caribbean, the Horn of Africa and West Africa, the United States and Europe, challenging assumptions of a homogenizing Blackness and complicating questions of national be/longing. In this article, I draw on my own shifting geographical and class positions as a Black woman born into the Jamaican working class, and now teaching and researching in one of Canada's largest universities, as an important perspective from which to reflect on Canada's relationship to its raced, classed, and gendered subjects. I frame this intertextual conversation about Black women's complex location in the nation and academy around three sets of narratives that detail my own lived experiences in diaspora —stories of arrival, being, and becoming. These stories interweave my personal biography with feminist and literary theory. Tracing my historical trajectory from Jamaica to Canada as a graduate student and later a university professor, I use these journeys as a theoretical lens through which to examine the function of Caribbean women's fiction in the articulation of diaspora dislocation. The article acknowledges, in particular, the ways in which the Jamaican writer Erna Brodber and Trinidadian-Canadian Dionne Brand have helped to shape my understanding of my location in the world by providing the critical, poetic, and theoretical language I need to make sense of my multiple and evolving positions in Canadian society.

As a reflection on anti-racist pedagogy, this paper also argues that being Black and female and Caribbean in Canadian university classrooms—spaces of whiteness and male authority—represents a distinct kind of

precariousness, a vulnerability this article models deliberately in its risky exposure of an individual Black woman through the retelling of her personal and communal histories.

Second- and third-wave feminists, including anti-racist feminists, have consistently identified the retelling of personal stories as a critical component of feminist research methodology in that such stories carry meaning beyond the individual narrator and play an important role in the critique of political and social relationships (Combahee River Collective 1978; Cotterill and Letherby 1993; Fine 1992; Hanisch 2000; Lorde 1984; MacKinnon 1983). Cotterill and Letherby (1993), for example, insist that "all research contains elements of autobiography and biography, both intellectual and personal" (68). Magda Lewis (2005) further explains that "it is not the idiosyncratic aspects of a story that make it interesting and, more importantly, relevant, but rather the fact that all personal experiences have their genesis in the ideologies and practices that drive the larger political, social and economic structures" (Lewis, under "On Being Startled"). Rather than existing as "pure or special knowledge," individual experiences, then, arise from and are produced within political relations (Swan 2008, 390). "The social," Swan (2008) argues, "is not collapsed into the self but rather the self is a social and historic event" (396). Understood in this way, personal reflection can allow for moments of powerful intervention, in which critical reflection takes the form of "speaking with experience and speaking with the self in ways that point to our social location, positioning and classed resources" (396). Indeed, according to Lewis (2005), "a retrospective is not a bad idea so long as we understand that the power of looking back lies in the way it helps us understand the present and possibly imagine a future with more clarity" (Lewis, under "Conceptual Framework").

I understand my own acts of retelling and of retrospection as both critical reflection and commitment to preserving Black women's presences in those spaces where they are most threatened —where their bodies and voices seem most out of place. "If you want to remain," bell hooks argues in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), "you've got, in a sense, to remember yourself—because to remember yourself is to see yourself always as a body in a system that has not become accustomed to your presence or to your physicality" (135). To remember myself within the context of a shared history with other Black women in Jamaica and racialized immigrants in Canada is to insist on my and our right "to remain" in a collective consciousness on which our presence is still being written. Despite the danger involved in the remembering, it is the hope of this article that going to the place of our fear in ways that are self-reflexive and honest will offer an opportunity for intervention in our shared learning about ourselves (as women, Black people, immigrants, university teachers, and students) and the world.

Stories of Arrival

I came to Canada in my early twenties as a graduate student with a Canadian Commonwealth scholarship that funded most of my education for an MA and then PhD in English. My schooling in Jamaica had provided me with a solidly British education at one of the country's top all-girl schools and the University of the West Indies, Mona (UWI). I had been trained in the arts, in literature, and the major European languages to take my place as a respectable, accomplished, polished, somebody's wife, and member of the Jamaican middle class. The deep irony in all of this was that I was not born into the Jamaican middle classes. My family was very poor. I remember sitting through many high school classes hungry, and in the evenings when there was no electricity I studied deep into the night with a kerosene lamp. But, I was also what we call in Jamaica "bright." That and my complete investment in the process of education allowed my facilitation across the Jamaican class lines and eventually on to a first-class flight to Canada.

My education at the University of the West Indies had already, however, begun to unravel the hypocrisy of the Jamaican class system as well as de-romanticize my

British education. It was at UWI that I was first introduced to the formal study of Caribbean Literature and to two writers: the historian and poet Kamau Brathwaite (after whom I later named my son) and Erna Brodber, a historian, sociologist, and anthropologist who also writes fiction. These writers transformed my thinking about literature, the Caribbean, and myself.

I arrived in Canada in the early 1990s, unsure of the future but armed with a copy of Broder's first novel, *Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home* (1980). I knew I was going to study this novel; I wasn't sure how. One of the first courses I selected as a graduate student at York University was a course in Postcolonial Caribbean Literature, but the course had only one Caribbean woman writer on its reading list, and it was not Brodber. Neither my professor nor any of the students in the class had ever heard of her. I must have been braver than I realized because I insisted that *Jane and Louisa* be added to the course. Moreover, I volunteered to lead its discussion, taking on the role of cultural, linguistic, and literary interpreter as a first-year MA student in a class that included upper-level PhDs. My experiences as a graduate student brought into sharp focus what it meant to be a Black/African Jamaican woman living in Canada. My increasing exposure to Black women's fiction—the works of Brobder, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Paule Marshall, Dionne Brand—and to Black feminist theory became lifelines for me. This was no longer just about getting an education to make something of oneself; this was about finding myself, about making sense of my precarious and shifting realities in a country I was only beginning to understand.

Erna Brodber's work had particular meaning in this process not only because she is Jamaican but because of her approach to literature: not as art-for-art's sake but as recovery of Black people's beings. As a historian, sociologist, and social anthropologist, Erna Brodber sees her fiction as an extension of a larger project of the recovery of African people's fragmented histories. Problematizing her own position as both

participant and observer in her research about Black Caribbean peoples, Brodber discovered that she had to challenge the academic discourse and practice of the disciplines in which she was trained to make sense of her relationship with the communities in which she laboured:

> I felt that my examination of Jamaican society could not be written from the standpoint of the objective outside observer communicating to disinterested scholars. It had to incorporate my "I" and to be presented in such a way that the social workers I was training saw their own "I" in the work, making this culture-in-personality study a personal and possibly transforming work. (Brodber 1990, 166)

Brodber sees her role as an applied anthropologist who can write meaningful narratives about Jamaican peoples' beings and cultural presences that can ultimately lead to transformative social action and change. For her, there is little difference, in this regard, between the fiction she writes and the historical, sociological, and ethnographic data she gathers. In the same way that Brodber challenges the geographic, national, and cultural boundaries erected across the African diaspora, her Black female body as writing subject upsets the "sacred"—often patriarchal and racist — assumptions of academia and the literary canon. It was this understanding of Brodber's intellectual activism that illuminated my awareness of my own disruptive body as speaking subject in Canadian university classrooms and pushed me to explore practices of critical and transformative pedagogy.

Stories of Being

Every September as I stand before a new set of two hundred students in Cultures of Resistance in the Americas, my largest undergraduate course, I am made aware of the power and limits of my Black female body as signifier and my voice as conveyor of knowledge. My body and voice upset patriarchal and racist assumptions of academia, but because I am teaching something understood as Black Studies, my

presence is also weirdly comforting. It reinforces stereotypical and racist assumptions about who has the right to speak in particular spaces about particular kinds of experiences. Malinda Smith et al. (2017) rightly identify the right to speak as a function of unconscious/implicit biases in Canadian classrooms where the voices and viewpoints of white male professors and students are generally privileged over all others (269-70). My university classrooms, constructed as special or unique minority spaces, therefore, are simultaneously valued and undervalued. On the one hand, I am incredibly aware of the power of my voice and presence. When a Black woman signals her desire to speak, everyone is afraid because they never know in any given moment who or what she will indict: racism, sexism, classism, child abuse, or police violence. Precisely, because there is so much pain scripted onto the Black female body, Black women's voices and bodies are always accusatory. On the other hand, that voice is allowed only within certain carefully demarcated spaces, often dismissed as irrelevant and tangential to the larger, more "serious" business of the academy. In this regard, the act of writing for Black women writers and the act of teaching/speaking for Black female professors is fraught with multiple dangers.

Despite the dangers inherent in the endeavours, the act of writing or speaking, of naming the self, are important acts of self-definition and self-healing for Black women in the Americas. As Audre Lorde explains, "I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect" (Lorde 1984, 56). If only out of this need to save the self, Black women, Lorde insists, "share a commitment to language and to the power of language, and to the reclaiming of that language which has been made to work against us" (43). Similarly, the act of teaching for and by Black women can be a critical "counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization" (hooks 1994, 2). But because Black women's research and pedagogy can be

both transgressive and liberatory, they are also acts of courage. The anguish that lies at the heart of writing, speaking, or performing an engaged pedagogy for Black women is precisely the knowing how to tell the deepest parts of ourselves.

When I stand in front of a classroom to talk about what it means to be Black or Caribbean in Canada, my body and the history that frames it necessarily betray me, enter the room before me, and position me always as a translator of cultural meaning (Brand 2001, 25). I am involved, whether I want to or not, in the project of translating my own embodied experiences within Canadian classrooms where those experiences have largely been erased. This knowledge raises many difficult questions. What happens when the professor is a Black woman native speaking subject? How does she detach herself from the physical and imaginative body she speaks in and is called on to translate? bell hooks (1994) argues that this intellectual detachment, this separation of the mind and body is actually impossible:

> The arrangement of the body we are talking about deemphasizes the reality that professors are in the classroom to offer something of ourselves to the students. The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral, objective facts, facts that are not particular to who is sharing the information. We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies. Significantly, those of us who are trying to critique biases in the classroom have been compelled to return to the body to speak about ourselves as subjects in history. We are all subjects in history. (1994, 139)

"Black experiences in any modern city or town," Dionne Brand agrees, "is a haunting. One enters a room and history follows; one enters a room and history precedes. History is already seated in the chair in the empty room when one arrives" (Brand 2001, 25). To position my Black female imagined body as speaking subject in Canadian university classrooms, I

argue then, demands that I account for who I am, how I come to occupy space. It is a deliberate and critical act of courage through which I seek to reshape and rework colonial, patriarchal knowledges, but also to complicate the telling and reading of Black women's and my own stories, always aware that there is no end to the telling because the learning is ongoing; it is incomplete and it is shared. Accepting that I am, in fact, like Brodber insists, part of the polity being studied, rather than creating a space of authority and silence, allows me to encourage a learning space where students understand that mine is a particular story coming from a particular speaker out of a particular history, and that their voices add to the telling of that story and the shaping and reshaping of the knowledges that are shared.

But, if I want students to write their own stories about being in and in relation to the world, what might those stories say? More than anything else, I want my students to see beyond their own singular oppression to understand how oppressions intersect and that each student in a shared classroom brings her or his own struggles, histories, and stories to the texts we read and to our conversations. This kind of realization can actually be very difficult for students who have historically been silenced and minoritized, but find themselves in majority Black classrooms such as mine for the first time. Students enter these classes often focusing so much on "race" that they initially ignore the differences of class, gender, age, religion, sexuality, language, and nationality operating in the classroom. As Lorde cautions, it is tempting for those of us who stand outside of the parameters of power within our societies to identify one singular way in which we are different and to "assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions of difference, some of which we ourselves may be practicing" (Lorde 1984, 116). It is important to me, therefore, that I encourage students to be sensitive to and self-reflexive of the ways in which they may be perpetuating various forms of oppression. In their focus on their racialized identities, it is easy for students, for example, to erect and privilege hegemonic voices and positions (that

may be disallowed elsewhere) and to re-inscribe notions about who is and is not authorized to speak. For this reason, I begin the class, Cultures of Resistance, each year by challenging my own and students' understanding of race and cultural identities, as well as my own authority to speak. I believe very firmly, as Manning Marable argues, that it is "our ability to transcend racial chauvinism and inter-ethnic hatred and the old definitions of 'race,' to recognize the class commonalities and joint social-justice interests of all groups in the restructuring of . . . economy and social order," that "will be key to constructing a nonracist democracy, transcending ancient walls of white violence, corporate power and class" (Marable 1995, 201). By understanding this, students are empowered ultimately to do what I hope they will, which is to transform the world. As Freire also insists, "The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy" must first allow the oppressed to "unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation" (Freire 2000, 54). "The insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation," he adds, "is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection —leads to action" (66).

Stories of Becoming

I conclude this article by offering one story from my concrete position situated in Canada as a point from which we might begin to develop such a praxis of transformation. This is one of my many reflections about what it means to be a Black woman, alienated from continental Africa and physically removed from Jamaica, living in diaspora. This reflection again begins with Erna Brodber.

In the three summers of 2010 to 2012, I attended Emancipation celebrations in Woodside, St. Mary, the small village in deep rural Jamaica in which Brodber lives. I found the reasoning sessions at Blackspace, the remembrance of the ancestors at Daddy Rock, the vigil and the reenactment, to be powerful performances of not only history, but also community. Woodside is not

an ordinary village. It is a village set apart—in "mossy coverts, dim and cool"—mostly far away from the heat and troubles of Jamaica's largest capital city, Kingston (Brodber 1980, 9). Its history is officially recorded, and farmers have been known to gather here for informal lectures in history, philosophy, and politics (Brodber 2004). While it is a village that is set apart, it is not parochial. The outside world routinely travels to Woodside from the United States, Canada, and Europe. Woodside, in fact, has for many years practiced a model of educo-tourism in which visitors stay in the homes of local villagers. As a kind of modern village, it is in many ways the creation of Brodber herself. As a scholar and respected Caribbean author, she has travelled across the African continent, taught in university classes in the United States, Britain, and at the University of the West Indies, and contributed to an impressive body of research. She has her feet, like the protagonist in her novel, *Louisiana* (1994), on the shores of the Caribbean, the United States, and Africa, joining her small village to the rest of the world. Miss Lixie, as the villagers call her, is both iconic and ordinary. One need only read her novels to get a sense of how much she has contributed to an understanding of Jamaican society, but there is nothing pretentious about her. I have seen her sit on a rock on a rural hillside with her "people" and eat roast plantain and saltfish.

I begin with this long description of Woodside because although I was born in Jamaica, I have no such place of my own. I have no village like Woodside or any other village for that matter. My grandmother, who had already escaped her own rural village and her first unhappy marriage to try life again, raised me in Kingston. For most of my life, she constituted the farthest reaches of my personal history. My skin colour—the throwback brown of some long-lost ancestor—marked me as special in her eyes and worthy of particular care. I recognize the history out of which her colour prejudice emerged and the "privilege" it afforded me in a poor, working-class Black family, but I do not blame her for it. In many ways my grandmother saved my life. She cultivated in me a love of reading and gave me the

freedom to live in my imagination. She died three months after I moved to Canada on my coveted Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship. She had not been sick. Everyone said she died of a broken heart. *Chagrin* is what Edwidge Danticat's protagonist, Sophie, calls this dis-ease in Danticat's novel, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994). I went home, a young woman in my early twenties, to bury the first love of my life and to cry. She was a casualty of my desire to move up in life.

In the intervening years that I have lived in Canada, I have come to think of myself as a child of diaspora. Like Dionne Brand explains in her memoir *Map to the Door of No Return* (2001), "I feel bereft. I feel abandoned . . . to city squares and windows and public spaces where I am on display and must make a display, like exotica" (211). I have long been disconnected from any discernible roots: "Marooned, tenantless, deserted. Desolation castaway, abandoned in the world. [We] was, is, wandered, wanders as spirits who dead cut, banished, seclude, refuse, shut the door, derelict, relinquished, apart" (Brand 2000, 213). I cannot help but think that if this describes my sense of reality, how much more it is reflective of my students who are largely second- and third-generation Caribbean and continental African immigrants in Canada: cut off from the Caribbean, cut off from Africa, cut off from even recent memories, homeless, villageless, nationless. What does it mean for these generations to live as Black people in Canada?

Ioan Davies in "Theorizing Toronto" summarizes a number of theoretical conversations about the city circulating in the mid- to late-twentieth century: "Central features of these debates involved the notions of culture, communication, and the 'character' of the city, issues which have become common to all cities in the process of transformation, but perhaps in the case of Toronto strikingly pertinent because of the national discussions within Canada of bilingualism and multiculturalism, of federalism and provincialism . . . " (Davies 2000, 15). While Davies rightly identifies multiculturalism as key to a national discourse of Canada, Black Canadian identities are absented from

the Toronto his theorists describe. What is privileged, rather, are the city's Scottish, English, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Anglican "roots" (18). Contests between the city's "ideal" past preserved in memories of "Toronto the Good" or "Toronto the British" and the city's technologically and architecturally changing future are fought only between its political elite—the "old" and cosmopolitan bourgeoisie (20-21). The problem for the "old" bourgeoisie is the fear "that a proud city with its Presbyterian and Anglican heritage was being dragged into the maelstrom of the 'modern,' with buildings and art that would change it beyond recognition" (20-21). In these debates, struggles over the city are really struggles over larger questions of origin, cultural authority, and class privilege fueled by a desire for a discernible hegemonic nationalism. In this sense, the notion of roots, as in origin and right of place, demarcates fixed boundaries of political and cultural power and class privilege. For Davies, the usefulness of these theories is in helping us demarcate the boundaries of "the habitable city," as it is constructed "both in the imagination and in the everyday" (31). Toronto must be imagined, invented, before it can be inhabited.

What I find useful in Davies theories is precisely this idea that it is possible to construct, to imagine the boundaries of a habitable city, a city in which Black people might live. Hirmani Bannerji (2000) takes this further by envisaging the possibilities of a "habitable" Toronto in its "encroaching" diversity:

> The possibilities for constructing a radically different Canada emerge only from those who have been 'othered' as the insider-outsiders of the nation. It is their standpoints which, oppositionally politicized, can take us beyond the confines of gender and race and enable us to challenge class through a critical and liberating vision. . . . They serve to remind us of the Canada that could exist." (Bannerji 2000, 81)

For Caribbean diasporic communities residing in Toronto, where, as Clifford notes, much of diaspora living "involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home," there is an imperative to construct, to invent, "alternate public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity" that can "maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference" (Clifford 1997, 251). Is this kind of radical subversion possible for second- and third-generation Caribbean and African immigrants in Toronto? How do we move displaced Caribbean and African people from the margins into a "habitable" city where Black bodies can "live inside, with a difference"? M. NourbeSe Philip, a Trinidadian Canadian poet, succeeds precisely in subverting the meaning of the word margin, locating in it a more radical possibility, born out of the specific history of the Americas:

> To think of ourselves as marginal or marginalized is to put us forever at the edge and not center stage. The word margin, however, has another meaning, which I prefer to think of when it is used as a descriptive term for managed peoples—it also means frontier. And when we think of ourselves as being on the frontier, our perspective immediately changes. Our position is no longer one in relation to the managers, but we now face outward, away from them, to the undiscovered space and place up ahead which we are about to discover. (Philip 1997, 300)

By contesting the historical terms of discovery and colonization in the Americas, Philip rewrites the perspective of the marginalized and the oppressed as essential, and not peripheral, to an entire region's history and future.

It has been my goal in this article to register the varying and complex experiences of living as a Black Caribbean woman in diaspora. I embarked on its writing, terrified by how much it required me to reveal about myself, and the ways in which it would invariably leave me exposed and vulnerable. And yet, I decided that the memories it made me confront held meaning not only for me but for my students—many of whom belong to second or third generations of

immigrant communities in Canada and are still trying to navigate the competing narratives of hope in education that their parents have sold to them and disillusion or distrust in a Canadian Dream. As someone who was born in urban Jamaica and who has lived in Canada for half of her life, I am awed by the sense of community in the village of Woodside —the surety of it—but I have come to embody in many ways a deep understanding of my own diasporic displacement. Like Brand's character, Eula, in *At the Full and Change of the Moon* (2000): "I would like a village where I might remain and not a village I would leave. A village with tin shacks and flame trees. A village like the one you used to tell us about, where great Mama Bola once lived. A village that I long for, with a light in a wooden house" (247). Brodber's ability to claim a village, to stand by an ancestral altar and name each person's line, in some cases as far back as Africa, lies outside of my own range of thinking about myself in history. Like Eula, I have no village to return to, no village "where I might remain" (Brand 2000, 247). As a naturalized Canadian citizen, I am involved self-consciously and out of necessity in a project of reimagining a more habitable Toronto (and Canada) where Black women can be more comfortably located. As an educator, I am committed to the exploration of Black people's multiple subjectivities, the recognition of our various crossings, and the honouring of the personal truths voiced at the crossroads of our interconnected lives. Our journeys will look different from each other's, as will our stories, but we have the potential to write an incredible narrative that just may transform the world.

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Book Review: Gender, Health and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives

Rhea Ashley Hoskin is a CGS-SSHRC doctoral student at Queen's University in the Department of Sociology. Theorizing femme identities and systemic forms of feminine devaluation, her work focuses on perceived femininity and its impact on the experiences of marginalization and oppression among sexual and gender minorities. Within this framework, Rhea applies feminist and femme theory to the study of femme identities, femmephobia, social prejudices, and the links between gender, gender expression, health, and fitness

Book under review: Warsh, Cheryl Krasnick, ed. 2011. *Gender, Health and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Keywords: gender representation; health; popular culture; social determinants of health

The connections among gender, popular culture, and health may not be immediately apparent. At best, this overlap is intriguing; at worst it seems unrelated or at odds. Yet, as demonstrated in Gender, Health, and Popular Culture, popular culture is a medium through which gender constructions of health are disseminated, discursively produced, and maintained.

This edited collection is organized into two sections: the transmission of health information; and popular representations of the body in sickness and health. Both themes are viewed through the lens of popular culture. The thirteen chapters bring together interdisciplinary scholars across Canada, Australia, and the United States, who cover a wide range of topics, such as reproduction, medical technologies, and displays of the body. Taken together, the overarching themes demonstrate the role of popular cultural and medical texts in not only translating knowledge, but also regulating bodies in ways that maintain the normative body as the healthy ideal, and non-normative bodies as models of sickness.

While medical authorities claim objectivity, medical and popular texts maintain a pervasive hold on the dissemination and transmission of health information and the subsequent production of a healthy, normative, gendered body. The value-laden nature of medical texts and artifacts weaves throughout this collection, demonstrating how these documents are imbued with cultural norms. For example, as described by Annette Burfoot, representations of the anatomical body draw on cultural signifiers of race, sexuality, and lifestyle to produce and delineate what constitutes a healthy, normal body.

The cultural values embedded within medical

discourse are also exemplified by Lisa Forman Cody, whose chapter illustrates how the prenatal nutrition advice and guidelines given to expectant mothers shift over time to reflect broader cultural beliefs about women's bodies and beauty. Similarly, in their role as dominant commentators of the body, doctors define womanhood in terms of pathology. For example, Lisa Featherstone discusses how medical discourse constructs womanhood as disease and disorder—and how womanhood is predominantly defined by deviation from the male norm. Femininity, in these texts, is vulnerable, sick, and sickening. Masculinity is independent and defined by its repudiation of the feminine. To be ill, to be disordered or disorderly, is to be feminine or feminized.

Yet while prescriptive literature and advertisements function as regulatory and norm-producing technologies, popular culture can also reclaim body authority. For example, as discussed in Mandy Hadenko's chapter, by publishing women's personal testimonies, which removed issues such as cervical cancer from the lens of regulating authorities and placed them in the forefront of public discussion, the Canadian magazine Chatelaine allowed women to claim ownership and expertise over their own bodies.

The first section of the book illustrates how the body is a battleground upon which regulating authorities lay claim over the contested territories of sexuality, reproduction, and sex education. While contraceptive technologies are often equated with women's sexual liberation, 1970s advertisements for the birth control pill played an equal role in the maintenance of normative feminine scripts. Specifically, as discussed by Heather Molyneaux, these advertisements depicted their consumer as moral, white, middle-class, and married, while emphasizing the pill as another part of a woman's "cycle" that included motherhood. By using "symbols of morality" to quell public fears surrounding the pill and female promiscuity, Molyneaux shows how advertisements discursively maintained the parameters of appropriate female sexuality and sexual behaviour. Similarly, according to Sharra L. Vostral, the "prescriptive literature" of

menstrual education films illustrates how regulating authorities provide specific rules and instructions for how to act, think, and behave. As Vostral argues, these behavioural dictates script pathways to attain ideal femininity, while reinforcing the expectations of motherhood.

Through such texts, feminine scripts remain firmly anchored in motherhood. As such, abortion and the willful termination of a pregnancy challenge ideal feminine norms. For example, Lisa Forman Cody explains that while Canadian women have gained the legal right to terminate pregnancy, they are nonetheless beholden to standards of femininity and motherhood that necessitate self-sacrifice and a moral obligation to the unborn. Self-sacrifice, Forman Cody argues, is a feminine imperative, and an ideology exemplified by the cultural demand that a mother put aside her own desires because "baby comes first." Yet, Christabelle Sethna's chapter exposes the whiteness embedded in the self-sacrificing feminine ideal through the paradoxical stigmatization of abortions, juxtaposed by the forced sterilization of women of colour. This work demonstrates how medical and legal regulations of women's bodies are anchored in racist, sexist ideologies.

As a whole, the second section of the book outlines how popular cultural representations conflate beauty and health, whereby health is promoted as the retention of youth and is achieved through capitalist pursuits of idealized feminine norms of beauty. For example, the chapter by Christina Burr looks at how films circulate cultural ideals about the feminine body, and thus demonstrate how the "star body," as exemplified by Jamie Lee Curtis, functions as a normalizing standard against which other bodies are measured and disciplined (i.e. racialized, queer, fat, and AIDS bodies). In contrast to Burr's "star body," or Burfoot's discussion of the normalizing visual display of anatomical models, Heather Murry's chapter discusses how the display of the AIDS body can reclaim the visual occupancy and cultural spaces withheld from non-normative subjects. For example, by requesting his funeral be made into a public display

and subsequent advertisement for ACT UP, Mark Lowe Fisher forced the public to "bear witness" to the reality of death from AIDS. In this way, while representations of the body in sickness and in health uphold concepts of gender, race, and normative beauty, the visibility of non-normative bodies can serve as a counter-discourse. Similarly, Jenny Ellis' chapter illustrates how the fat-centric aerobics classes "Large as Life" demonstrate the counter-discourse produced through visibility. For the members of LAL, aerobics was a form of self-expression that facilitated both individual growth and a re-articulation of fatness. The LAL classes pushed-back against the "star body," to carve out a space within 1980s popular culture wherein fat bodies could be celebrated and enjoyed, while challenging norms of what it means to be fit.

Tensions between body authorities and subjectivity weave throughout Gender, Health and Popular Culture. Over the course of the collection, the reader begins to re-evaluate the self-proclaimed objectivity of medical or other regulating authorities, and understand the role of popular cultural texts in translating knowledge and regulating embodied norms. As a result of the collection's focus on popular representations of health, marginalized identities remain somewhat at the peripheries. By centering this collection on popular representations, the collection facilitates a discussion surrounding marginalized identities but does little in the way of contributing to the conversation. Consequently, the collection does not sufficiently push the boundaries of "womanhood" or "motherhood" in terms of race, sex, or sexuality. Possible sites to push motherhood beyond cisgender whiteness include the historical and contemporary depictions of the mammie versus the jezebel, childbearing transmen, chestfeeding, or depictions of same-sex parents in popular culture. By focusing on the production of gender norms, the varied embodiments of pregnancy, gestation, and parenthood beyond cisgender motherhood remain absent in this otherwise insightful collection.

Book Review: Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship

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Shapeshifters is a masterfully written urban ethnography that explores how Black girls living in a Detroit homeless shelter navigate experiences of racism, poverty, and gender-based violence; how they talk back against stereotypes and controlling images; and how they highlight their right to citizenship. Aimee Meredith Cox, a cultural anthropologist and associate professor of Anthropology and African American Studies at Yale University, also has experience as a contributing editor for the website *The Feminist Wire* and for the Association of Black Anthropologists' journal *Transforming Anthropology*. Throughout *Shapeshifters*, Cox centers (1) "the theories and methods Black girls use to shift the shape of spaces" they occupy and (2) how "Black girls establish their own politics of the body" (26-27).

The text is based on eight years (2000-2008) of fieldwork that centered the lived experiences of residents of Fresh Start, a shelter program housed within Give Girls a Chance (GGC), which is a gender-focused, community-based social service organization in Southeast Detroit. Fresh Start aims to serve girls between fifteen and twenty-two years old by "provid[ing] support, training, and guidance" (21) as they try to secure housing and jobs that will enable them to transition out of homelessness. The book is divided into three parts with five chapters.

"Part One: Terrain" includes the introduction and the first chapter. In the introduction, the author highlights the dearth of knowledge about the experiences of Black girls and women, who have been sidelined in favour of understanding the plights that Black boys and men face. One of the author's many strengths is her keen attention to language. For example, in the introduction, Cox unpacks the meaning behind the title and centres shapeshifting—how Black girls shift

the spaces they occupy—and choreography—the process through which Black girls understand their social location(s) and its impact on how they are seen and appraised by others—as essential terms for understanding the book.

The first chapter provides readers with the opportunity to interrogate Detroit as the sociohistorical geographical context that has shaped the experiences of her participants. Detroit is positioned as a context in which Black women and girls simultaneously experience "bodily and geographic devaluation" (44). Cox aptly points out that Black women and girls have all of the "responsibilities of citizenship without the corresponding rights" (68). Readers learn about Janice, a third-generation Detroit girl from the Brown family, who actively critiques institutional spaces that fail "to educate and afford opportunities free of class- and gender-based exclusions" (74). Here, the reader sees that Janice has a sense of *entitlement* whereby she demands that institutions meet their requirements as she simultaneously rejects the expectations that she will shift her way of being in order to be properly serviced.

"Part Two: Scripts" illuminates the role of controlling images and expectations that are placed on Black women and girls. The second chapter describes the physical renovation of the GGC space that serves as a metaphor for the "renovation" the program hopes its participants will undergo. Camille, the program director of GGC, embodies the desire to propagate respectability politics rooted in norms of white femininity. This chapter problematizes common notions of success, which typically suggest that Black girls and women leave their hometowns and develop a sense of uncharacteristic individualism that is in opposition to the collective nature of the Black community. The third chapter emphasizes the role of self-authored narratives, storytelling, and performance as freeing practices for Black women and girls. While narratives can be liberating, they can also be a vehicle for performing identities deemed acceptable by the larger society. In particular, Sharita's

story encourages the reader to understand that Black girls' victimhood is often tokenized and a Black girl's ability to transcend these experiences thus deems her worthy of attention. Importantly, Cox also addresses the ways in which Black women and girls learn to police their own bodies according to what broader society deems acceptable. The author connects this internal policing to our lost sense of freedom and youth, stating that some of us have "lost the ability to play, even if [we appear] to be mastering the game" (144). The author brilliantly connects respectability politics with the (in)visibility that Black women and girls face. Ultimately, Part Two is concerned with problematizing the scripts that have been imposed upon Black women and girls and using counter-narratives as a way to push back against these expectations.

"Part Three: Bodies" addresses the two-fold nature of performance, in terms of the "continual performance of self" and the "artistic expression aimed at a specific audience" (199). In the fourth chapter, Cox discusses sexual desire and gender performance. Readers learn about LaToya, a pregnant woman who expresses her sexual desires at an "open mic" night in a way that many render unacceptable behaviour. LaToya aptly rejects respectability politics and the societal expectation that people like her would tamper down expressions of sexual desire. Importantly, Cox continues to discuss internal policing that happens along gendered and class lines. For example, the author describes how Black women police each other, such as when LaToya's friends evoked "maleness as a threat" (163) by suggesting that her boyfriend likely would not approve of her behaviour. LaToya provides an excellent example of the tension between trying to uplift Black women and girls in a way that rejects historical tropes of Black femininity, while also making space for open expression of sexual desire. Summer and Dominique's experiences as masculine-presenting Black girls serve as a vehicle through which to explore gender performance. Throughout the ethnography, Cox alludes to characters who evoke masculine-like qualities in order to get ahead, whether in the workplace or in personal interactions. Cox suggests

that Summer and Dominique embody masculinity as a strategic mechanism that can provide them with the opportunity to reject the objectified and subjugated nature of Black femininity. The author brings to bear questions of (in)visibility, power, and performance as essential mechanisms for understanding Black girlhood.

The fifth chapter describes the process of artistic performance as a tool for Black women and girls to save themselves from the limiting tropes attributed to them and the sexual violence they face. Performance becomes a medium for the girls in Fresh Start to engage in a process of self-definition although, admittedly, performance is not a mechanism that can disrupt the systematic oppression that the girls at Fresh Start face. Nonetheless, it provides the participants with a way to command that spaces shift to accommodate them and encourages a form of self-love as "a practice essential to collective liberation" (232). Ultimately, the author posits that Black girls continuously (re)shape the institutional and social spaces they occupy by the very virtue of their presence.

Overall, Cox demonstrates a command of language as a symbolic tool. Her description of key terms such as *play*, *choreography*, *entitlement*, and *shapeshifting* push the reader to consider the multiple meanings of these words and the implications they have on Black women and girls. Additionally, academic literature about programming for "at-risk" youth of colour is often focused on changing the individual and void of attention to the impact of structural inequity (Clonan-Roy, Jacobs and Nakkula 2016). Cox does refreshingly well at attending to the notion that programming is inadequate in dealing with the larger issues plaguing Black girls and women. One shortcoming of the book, however, is Cox's limited attention to her own positionality and its impact on her interactions with her participants. In choice sections, the author highlights how her position as a highly educated Black woman influenced her interactions with both the GGC staff and participants. She also mentions that she had found

herself perpetuating norms that she aimed to disrupt when interacting with the girls. Yet, more information about her experience with the project and her transition from volunteering for to directing the Fresh Start program would have been helpful to address and acknowledge the power dynamics that influenced her interactions with the participants.

Ultimately, *Shapeshifters* provides a much-needed look into the experiences of Black women and girls as they navigate structural inequity, controlling images, and a quest for self-authorship. This book is well-suited for a range of individuals interested in learning more about how Black girls navigate everyday life. In particular, "researchers, policymakers, educators, elected officials, creative artists, and Black girls themselves" (ix) may benefit most from reading *Shapeshifters*.

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Creation

Beyond Aesthetics: A Femme Manifesto

We are Femme—not (just) feminine—Femme.
We are femininity's rebellious sibling.
Fiercely un-compromising and unapologetically all encompassing.

Femmes are the abnormal occupation of normalcy.
We are feminine, but not necessarily female.
We are men and women.
We were assigned the wrong sex at birth.
We reject systems of sex classification altogether.
My 'sex' does not define my gender.
My gender is not a reflection of my (a)sexuality,
Sexual availability and desire.
We like it rough, we like it soft. We rock on bottom and on top.
We call compulsory sexualities into question—
Our bodies. Our sexualities. Our choices.

Whether we wear them or not,
Femmes understand that short skirts and high heels are not an invitation.
Stiletto, noun | sti * let * to | \ste- 'le- (,) to\: a short dagger with a tapered blade used to abolish one's opponent.
Wielding femme weapons and bright red lipstick to colour outside the lines of heteronormativity,
Femmes destroy rape culture that assumes masculine right over the feminine.

We are proud of our unruly bodies,
And take pride in our uncontained Femme expressions.
We will not strive to fit in with ableist, racist, or sexist beauty ideals.
We challenge them:
Our queer bodies, black and brown bodies, fat and disabled bodies disrupt your notions of what it means to be "properly feminine."

Femmes traverse a diverse landscape of feminine multiplicities.
While we do not occupy a communal terrain, we unanimously rewrite and reclaim what it means to be feminine in our own way, with our own voice.
Femmes are astronomers of the feminine galaxy, ever expanding the universe of femininities and what it means to be feminine.

Femmes cannot and will not fit into patriarchal molds of femininity.
We bust out of your normative confines
To rip open your assumption that femininity is the exclusive property of straight, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual, nice, white ladies.

We turn your assumptions on their head.
Femmes do not equate femininity with fragility,
Nor femininity with passivity and powerlessness.
We are not mindless recipients of patriarchal beauty standards
And we are *not* just an aesthetic.
We derive power from what the world has deemed inferior.
And in a world that privileges masculinity
We *are* the resistance.

Femmes are not invisible because we hide.
We are invisible because we are ignored.
Erased.
Femmes are a reminder of the possibilities that exist beyond systems of oppression.
We will not compromise our appearance or flamboyancy to be the type of queer you find acceptable,
And we will not make ourselves more palatable for a queer, homonormative, or male gaze.
No, we're not invisible. You're just not looking.

Femmes take up space.
If we're at the gym, we're training for the resistance.
If we lift heavy, we're not afraid of bulk or of taking up too much space.
Femmes don't train to trim into your mould; we train to burst out of it.
We will stop eating when we're full,
Not when society thinks we've had enough!
We will not suppress our appetites, our bodies, desires, or our voices.
Nor will we be shamed.
We locate sites of resistance in what has been culturally shamed: our fat, queer, crip, racialized, poor, feminine bodies.
We overflow with possibility and we refuse to be contained.

Femmes will not be pitted against one another.
Femmes will not tear each other down, but will help each other grow.
We are not in competition. We are not jealous.
We come together in solidarity
To resist and to reclaim.

We are the failures of patriarchal femininity
Refusing your standards
And carving out a space for empowered and diverse expressions of femininity.

Femmes are Nasty Women. Femmes are valiant "Sissies."
Binary Breakers.
Decolonizers.
A threat to the cis-tem.
Femme is a radical invocation of femininity.
And in a masculinist white cis heteropatriarchy,
Femmes *are* the resistance.

Rhea Ashley Hoskin is a CGS-SSHRC doctoral student at Queen's University in the Department of Sociology. Theorizing femme identities and systemic forms of feminine devaluation, her work focuses on perceived femininity and its impact on the experiences of marginalization and oppression among sexual and gender minorities. Within this framework, Rhea applies feminist and femme theory to the study of femme identities, femmephobia, social prejudices, and the links between gender, gender expression, health, and fitness.

Katerina Hirschfeld is an incoming graduate student at Acadia University in the Department of English. Katerina's proposed research examines temporal influences on the nature of queer autobiography. Her areas of interest include femme theory, queer theory, and interdisciplinary feminist approaches to understanding self-narratives.