

# OUR Journal

Oregon Undergraduate Research

Volume 14, Issue 1, Winter 2019



i-AM



Volume 14, Issue 1, Winter 2019

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## Cover Art—“Ancestry”

Elexus Greene, Advertising\*

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Ancestry is a representation of being torn between wisdom and desire, where her youth screams for her to be hip, urban, and carefree while her inheritance keeps her grounded and resilient. Her vision has been replaced by the strength of her ancestors, and she is hypnotized by their ancient tongues guiding her through her wrapped hair. This highlights the role heritage, unconsciously, plays in our everyday lives. The uniqueness of the fabric background and her attire unveils the beauty found within cultural inheritance on all scales. Her inherited wisdom helps her prevail, and make sure she never fails.

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\* Although born and raised in San Francisco, painter and digital artist Elexus Greene is a Vallejo native. Her art mixes Black heritage with urban elements to create visuals of inherited history seen amongst millennials today. When Elexus started the Gateway to Media sequence in the School of Journalism and Communication, she became obsessed with creating and publishing her own passion projects. As she transitions into her senior year of college, she is a student by day and a creator by night. She is learning the essentials of balancing academics, work, and artistry. In the future, Elexus plans to use her Advertising degree and skill to push her growing entrepreneurship and brand i-AMbitious, as well as to spark a career in creative directing.



## Letter from the Editor

Joshua Pearman, Psychology\*

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Dear readers,

Our inspiration to conduct research can come from anywhere. For some, it might be an interesting idea from a lecture, or a unique detail from a research article. For others, it could be an observation of the world around us, whether it is of the behavior of people or the inner workings of nature. Each day we are all struck by this inspiration, as our surroundings are rich with the potential to draw out our latent curiosity. One of the rewarding qualities of research is when we become curious enough to pursue this inspiration, wherever it might take us. The OURJ exists to celebrate this curiosity, as each of these works reflect their author's passion to follow their questions to a logical end.

I first joined OURJ my freshman year, and have had the privilege of working alongside an ever-evolving editorial board. With each completed issue, I've learned more about the high quality of research that undergraduates conduct. As Editor-in-Chief, I hope that OURJ can serve as another source of inspiration for undergraduate research. To carry out this mission, the OURJ editorial board is composed of student editors who are also passionate about undergraduate research. In the past year, our board said goodbye to Allison Zhou, our previous Editor-in-Chief, along with Grieta King, Doug Sam, and Amber Shackelford. We thank them for their numerous contributions, and wish them the best as they go on to do bigger and better things.

The following issue presents undergraduate research from a rich diversity of academic disciplines that reflect the world we live in. This research examines a philosophy of emotions, analyses of Jamaican poetry and feminist literature, observations of gender and class in Beirut, and reports on how heat and precipitation can influence plant life. In this issue, I would like to particularly highlight the numerous types of methods used for research, from careful textual analysis to behavioral observations and interviews to experimental manipulation. These authors not only pursued their research questions, but put careful thought into how they would answer these questions.

Finally, I want to thank the current editorial board, as this issue is only possible through their unwavering commitment to undergraduate research. The words you see are the product of their countless hours of work. I also want to thank Barbara Jenkins of UO Libraries, as her role as faculty advisor has been crucial to this time of transition.

At long last, please enjoy our 14<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal*!

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## Guest Editorial—“Obstacles and Opportunities in Undergraduate Research”

Vera Keller, Associate Professor of History and Historian of Science

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A week and a half ago, I turned in a six-hundred-page manuscript to a press for peer review. It began its journey seventeen years ago as my undergraduate thesis. In fact, it is the second book to grow out of my thesis. Who knows how many more will come out of it? I will never be done with my undergraduate research.

The reason my undergraduate research has generated so much scholarship, I believe, is that its path was littered with obstacles. I had at first wanted to write on another topic, a more predictable one, and, I now believe, a far less interesting one than the books I eventually wrote. I had applied for funding to go to Europe the summer before my senior year and do archival research. I wanted to explore the technology used in stage machinery for plays at Versailles in 17th-century France. But my application was denied. I was crushed! That summer, I moped around, frustrated that I did not have the opportunity to pursue the ideal sources for my wished-for subject.

At last, I decided that if I couldn't get to Europe, then I needed to find a topic where I wouldn't be at a disadvantage in terms of sources. I had to get creative. I looked for a topic for which archival sources were not known to exist, but which were abundant in more legendary and fictional accounts that I could access. Instead of the rather mundane technology I longed to work on, I wrote about dreams for impossible, wished-for, non-existent technology. That led to my first book, a history of wish lists, a fascinating genre that, I was amazed to discover, had never before been researched. It also, eventually, led to many, many archival trips where I uncovered, not actual machinery - but actual lists full of wishes from centuries past. It has been a thrilling journey that has not yet ended.

Undergraduate research is hard. You run into many roadblocks along the way: Sources you cannot access. Languages you cannot read. Skills you lack. Writer's block. No funds for travel. Not enough time. Talk to anyone working on their senior thesis and they can tell you about these, and more. But, each of those obstacles is a chance for you to strengthen your tenacity and challenge your creativity. That denial of funding my senior year has since opened many, many doors, offering me the opportunities to exercise those crucial skills that the challenges of my senior thesis developed. Those two skills - grit and creativity- are the real prize you win from undergraduate research. They will take you very far.



## Meet the Editorial Board

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### STARLA CHAMBROSE

Starla is a sophomore in the Clark Honors College majoring in biology and history. She is interested in attending graduate school to study how the human genome can shed light on a variety of historical and demographic questions. She holds a black belt in Taekwondo and has completed the Oregon Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus program “With Distinction.” In her free time, Starla enjoys going to sporting events, travelling, and watching Disney movies with friends.

### EMMA DORINSON

Emma is a junior in the Clark Honors College majoring in math and minoring in Spanish and economics. In terms of research, Emma is interested in studying math education in the secondary level and plans to pursue this topic for her CHC thesis. Besides her editorial position for the journal, Emma works in the library as a writing tutor. Emma’s other interests include music, art history, films and traveling.

### JAMIE REHLAENDER

Jamie is a senior majoring in English with a minor in business. Her interests lie primarily in reading, writing, and editing, which she pursues as an avid reader, a writing tutor, and a poetry editor. She is also largely passionate about music, and hosts a show as a DJ for KWVA Eugene.

### AMBER SHACKELFORD

Amber Shackelford is a senior majoring in planning, public policy, and management, with minors in environmental studies and political science. On campus, she also serves as a Peer Advisor in the Office of Academic Advising. After graduation, Amber plans on pursuing a master’s degree in urban planning and dreams of being a city planner in Portland, her hometown. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, aerial arts, and planning vacations to faraway places.

## **SRAVYA TADEPALLI**

Sravya is a senior in the Clark Honors College studying political science and journalism with a minor in Middle East and North Africa Studies. Her research interests are primarily in U.S. foreign policy, particularly in the areas of democracy promotion and human rights. She hopes to pursue a career in foreign policy or serve in public office in the future. Outside the journal, Sravya serves as the president of the UO Foreign Policy Forum, reports on politics for KWVA Radio, and coaches debate for the Corvallis School District.



# A Monstrous Philosophy of Emotions

Luke Currie\*, Philosophy

## ABSTRACT

Through an analysis of Søren Kierkegaard's *Diapsalmata* from the first volume of *Either/Or*, a work which exhibits strikingly contemporary ways of thinking, this paper seeks to uncover the complex and paradoxical ways in which emotions inhabit a person. The urge to explicate the complexity of emotions arose from the author's dissatisfaction with the rudimentary schematic used in daily life wherein emotions are categorized and hastily rationalized, misconstruing their greater complexity. Emotions are often irrational, contradictory, etc., and must be considered on those terms. Thus, concession of paradox is vital in order to think through contradictory states of emotions. An aphorism from Pascal states that we are *nothing but* "lies, duplicity, and contradiction." With this idea in mind, the essay proceeds to argue that the use of pseudonyms to create contradictions within Kierkegaard's *Diapsalmata* show the *Diapsalmata* functioning as a "monstrous" philosophy of emotions. What is meant by "monstrous" differs from the colloquial use of the term and the essay's particular usage is discussed with reference to Socrates and Typhon in Plato's *Phaedrus*. The paper claims that Kierkegaard's thought as a whole is "monstrous" in the dissonance of the religious, comedic, ethical, ironic, and aesthetic stages he constructs in his broader philosophy. The monstrous philosophy of emotions developed from the *Diapsalmata* is argued to have a "prefatory weight" on the question of Being, i.e. "why are there beings instead of nothing?" The way in which different emotions preface this question is briefly discussed. The conclusion emphasizes the importance of understanding the complexity of emotions philosophically.

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*"Talk about humility gives occasion for pride to the proud and humility to the humble. Similarly, skeptical arguments allow the positive to be positive. Few speak humbly of humility, chastely of chastity, dubiously of skepticism. We are nothing but lies, duplicity, contradiction, and we hide and disguise ourselves from ourselves"* (Pascal, 240).

\* Luke Currie is a junior philosophy major. His particular interests in philosophy concern questions in the subfields of ontology and ethics. After completing his undergraduate studies, Luke hopes to attend a graduate school that shares his research interests. Along with his fondness for philosophy, he listens to, plays, and writes music. He also enjoys experimental comedy, and draws in his spare time. Please direct correspondence to [lcurrie7@uoregon.edu](mailto:lcurrie7@uoregon.edu).

Despite the radical tone of Pascal's claim that we solely consist of "lies, duplicity, and contradiction," his hyperbolic insistence that we are *nothing but* is a poetic device indicating his claim should not be taken literally. One might then dismiss this as one of Pascal's characteristically gloomy formulations and deem it unworthy of being taken seriously. Yet to do this would evade the very real force of his claim: to what degree do I disguise myself from myself? Am I merely a sum of contradictions masquerading as a quasi-coherent self? Is not the self which I present to the world ever-changing, duplicitous, multiplicitous? Is not this self, too, a fiction? One created out of an inability to account for my contradictions? The range of questions which erupt from Pascal's aphorism must be circumscribed if one wishes to attain anything like an answer to them. One way in which we most overtly contradict ourselves is in and through our emotions. Such contradictions are *monstrous* insofar as the self which experiences these contradictory emotions is a whole self-made of discordant parts, namely differing emotional states, rather than a whole comprised of harmonious, non-contradictory parts. Pascal addresses the issue of a contradictory self succinctly in his aphorism while Søren Kierkegaard "performs" it in his *Diapsalmata* and in his works in general. This preliminary reflection inspired by Pascal's aphorism leads me to consider Kierkegaard's *Diapsalmata* as a monstrous philosophy of emotions. Before addressing the relationship between the different moods which appear in the *Diapsalmata*, I shall provide some context for that work.

The authorship of Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* is obfuscated by pseudonyms. *Either/Or* is, as discussed in its preface by Victor Eremita, Kierkegaard's first pseudonym, a collection of essays, letters, and fragments from two authors whom Eremita discovered. He names them A and B, respectively. Author A's writings are inclined toward the "aesthetic" while Author B is inclined toward the "ethical." *Either/Or* is principally a work which attempts to put these two authors and the aesthetic and ethical they represent in dialectical tension. Along with these three pseudonyms, Author A discovers a diary of a man named Johannes, giving us a fourth pseudonym. Eremita embeds this diary within A's own works, seeing that Johannes' diary shares a similar aesthetic compartment to A's own writings and believing Author A and Johannes to be the same person. Yet, of course, all of these authors are just Kierkegaard playing different roles. Through the power of the pseudonym and the obfuscation of authorship, Kierkegaard takes on the roles of a discoverer and editor of unknown works, an aesthetic writer of melancholic poetry and philosophy, a judge who rebuts the aesthetic writer's stance in favor of the ethical, and so on. While Pascal uses poetic hyperbole to confront man's contradictions, Kierkegaard textually "performs" these contradictions through the writings of the pseudonyms. These contradictions only begin to show when considering Kierkegaard's pseudonyms in relation to each other—any particular pseudonym's writing is self-consistent.

The internal conflict of *Either/Or* gives rise to dialogical relationships between its fictional authors. As mentioned above, Author A and Author B represent a tension between the aesthetic and the ethical. Author B is a judge whose writings are largely clinically written moral condemnations of the amoral, existential, and emotional writings of Author A, who claims to be a poet. The two authors' writings support worldviews which are in tension with one another. Kierkegaard's different "stages of experience" (namely the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious

stages) operate with a similarly crucial tension: *the aesthetic is always in conflict with the ethical as the ethical is always in conflict with the religious*. The distinctions between these stages, however, are not entirely rigid as they inhere in one another to varying degrees. The tension of the three stages gives rise to two liminal stages: The *ironic* stage arises between the tension of the *aesthetic* and the *ethical*, and the *comedic* stage arises between the *ethical* and the *religious*. One does not solely occupy distinct stages at distinct times but rather bleeds between them and often occupies various stages simultaneously. Thus, like Pascal's conception of the contradictory, self-deceiving self, Kierkegaard presents a self in contradiction with itself, a self which can occupy and experience stages of experience which are at odds with one another.

Kierkegaard seems to have intended the whole of *Either/Or* to act as an extensive thought experiment. It places the different authors' writings in tension with one another and refuses to resolve the tension, inviting engaged readers to reconcile the views in tension and seek their own conclusion. Given the structure of the text, Kierkegaard shows himself as a contradictory self by occupying these different stages through the pseudonyms. This calls into question the degree to which Kierkegaard himself embodies each of the authors of the text and, furthermore, which authors originated from his own genuine experience and which, though still originating from him, are the product of ingenious artifice. Around the time he was writing *Either/Or* and had a falling out with the love of his life, Regine, he declared that the aesthetic was ultimately his "element." In a letter to his friend Boesen, he said, "This matter [between Regine and I] ... has two sides, an ethical and an aesthetic... The aesthetic is above all my element. As soon as the ethical asserts itself, it easily gains power over me. I become a quite different person, I know no bounds for what my duties may be, et cetera" (Garff, 205). With this in mind, one approaches *Either/Or* differently, particularly Author A's aesthetic writings. Of A's writings, the *Diapsalmata* are perhaps the most affecting and devastating. The work is a brief collection of disordered aphorisms, which are pithy statements that exist somewhere between the concision of an axiom or maxim and the evocative immediacy of a poem. Kierkegaard could not have created the aphorisms in the *Diapsalmata* solely through artifice—these aphorisms must have come from lived experience. With this initial impression of the work and the fact that Kierkegaard himself, at least around the time of *Either/Or's* genesis, claimed he favored the aesthetic above all else, one can say with some confidence that the *Diapsalmata* is more or less directly *from* Kierkegaard himself, masked by the pseudonym attached to it and a product of the pseudonym which gives way to the very expression of his experiences. *A pseudonym both obscures and makes clear*. From here it would be best to interrogate the relationship between the aphorisms in the work and begin to develop a philosophy of emotions.

The moods of the *Diapsalmata* oscillate from bored to ecstatic; from melancholic to comedic; from nihilistic to life-affirming. The contradictory nature of the work initially confuses the reader. Author A himself occasionally thematizes contradiction in the *Diapsalmata*. In one instance, A says, "There are, as is known, insects that die in the moment of fertilization. So, it is with all joy: life's highest, most splendid moment of enjoyment is accompanied by death" (Kierkegaard, 20). Here the highest experiences in life are met with their contrary, if taken literally. This may also be taken metaphorically. One does not usually die after experiencing the enjoyment A alludes to, but

perhaps one feels as though one had died in the fallout of this moment of supreme joy—that a supreme melancholy appears in the passing moment of supreme joy is undeniable, and that these opposites result from the same experience and differ only in temporal succession is crucial. On a particular experience, which showcases this general emotional *movement*, in Kierkegaard's notes for *Either/Or*, he says, "I have just now come from a gathering where I was the life of the party; witticisms flowed out of my mouth; everybody laughed, admired me-----but I left, yes, the dash ought to be as long as the radii of the earth's orbit and wanted to shoot myself" (Kierkegaard, 460). The experience of an extreme high at a party followed by intense, suicidal misery seems akin to the metaphor of the insect that dies after fertilization. The retrospection used in recalling this emotionally high and low event thus form a third emotion regarding the event, one which is predominantly sardonic, looking back at the event with irony and general distaste which results in mockery. This emotion does not only mock the party, though there is an almost tangible contempt in his recalling of it, but also mocks the despair that followed the event with its joke about the long dash, making the despair seem almost puerile. Thus, within this isolated event, these different emotions oppose each other as they occurred in a linear succession: joy is opposed by despair; the joy and despair are opposed by the comic.

One more example of the thematization of contradiction in the text: Author A says, "Generally speaking, the imperfection in everything human is that its aspirations are achieved only by way of their opposites... (the melancholy have the best sense of the comic, the most opulent often the best sense of the rustic, the dissolute often the best sense of the moral, the doubter often the best sense of the religious) ..." (Kierkegaard, 20). Here Kierkegaard presents different examples of particulars who are composed of inherent, diametrically opposed traits that define characteristics of the individual by their internal contradictions. To stick with the theme of emotions, take the example of the melancholic having the best sense of the comic. Some people suppose "the outer" to be "the inner." A person who holds this supposition would assume a comedian is, in some way, always joking, laughing, and living within the comic. To those who suppose the inner and outer to be synonymous, the irony in the likelihood that the comic may, in fact, be melancholy outside of his comedic routine may be a befuddling truth. Yet such a contradiction is often the case! Internal contradiction of emotion does not solely negate the contradicting emotions, but rather constitutes the person of both disparate emotions. Internal contradiction makes one *both* and *neither*—the comic-melancholic, the *something other* which arises out of the contradiction.

With this in mind, emotions do not necessarily contradict *only* as time carries onward and experiences settle and change through their repetition in our memories. The generally accepted schematic of emotions suggests they function as discrete categories which rarely overlap and are easily definable (e.g., one can be happy, sad, angry, etc.). Yet this view appears to be mistaken, as it is possible to be stuck between contradictory states simultaneously in one experience. Author A provides a poetic image for this distinct experience: "I seem destined to have to suffer through all possible moods, to be required to have experiences of all kinds. At every moment I lie out in the middle of the ocean like a child who is supposed to learn to swim. I scream... it is an appalling way to gain experience" (Kierkegaard, 31-32). There is a kind of terror in being subject to all possible moods, as if one were always at risk of drowning. The experience of all possible moods goes

beyond the internal contradiction met with two opposing moods, such that one does not merely experience sadness within happiness, anger within laughter, or the comic within the melancholic. One experiences any and all of these contradictory emotional states simultaneously to varying degrees of severity and is always subject to this fluctuating multiplicity of moods.

These moods need not be diametrically opposed to contradict one another, either: the various moods experienced merely need to be different from one another in order for this experience of an internal conflict of emotions to arise, for *within difference arises contradiction*. To be able to distinguish between two things requires that one seek out a contradiction in their relation to one another, however alike they may be. Thus, much as melancholy and joy oppose one another, melancholy and sadness oppose one another, though this opposition is subtler and requires additional explication. I wish to use the color wheel and the primary colors as an analogy to this understanding of difference. Consider how blue is opposed to yellow and red on a color wheel. Such contradiction is obvious, but in such contradictions arise new colors rather than a negation of the opposed terms. Further, given the color palette is something like a continuum, distinguishing any one color from another requires a recognition of the *difference* between the two which seeks out the ways in which the two respective colors may not fully cohere, ways in which the two are *not* one another. If one were to compare two greens and discovered one green had more blue in its composition than the other, which, say, happens to be composed more of yellow, the contradiction is found between the two—that one is composed more of blue while the other more of yellow, despite the colors both being green. This maps directly onto emotions if we are to concede that emotions, too, are more akin to a continuum than a rigid schematic composed solely of primary emotions. Author A, like Pascal, shows us that the “lie” which we are *nothing but* is not deliberately a lie, but a consequence of the complexity of emotions which are compounded by contradiction. Kierkegaard illustrates how Pascal’s “lie” is a result of the presentation of ourselves to the world, our hasty resolution of the complexity of our emotions, our *pseudonyms*. To return to the juxtaposition of melancholy and sadness, one finds their difference in the fact that sadness is, tautologically, simply the state of being sad (a kind of primary or *fundamental* emotion) while melancholy is a more complex iteration of the fundamental sadness from which it emerges; the former is a primary color as the latter is a secondary (or tertiary, etc.) color. Each emotion would require particular relationally derived definitions that distinguish them from one another in order to properly make these contradictions clear.

The text of the *Diapsalmata* performs this multitude of emotional contradictions through its disordered aphorisms. In one aphorism, A is lamenting; in the next, he is intoxicated with joy from the sounds of a reed-pipe in the street (Kierkegaard, 41-42). This contradiction between emotions also occurs within the aphorisms themselves. In one aphorism, Author A is briefly in a state of contentedness until he is disturbed by a sense of longing: “The sun is shining brilliantly and beautifully into my room; the window in the next room is open... The air is so warm, and yet the whole city is as if deserted. —Then I call to mind my youth and my first love—when I was filled with longing; now I long only for my first longing” (Kierkegaard, 42). Not only are two different emotions experienced here, but the way in which they emerge from one another provides further insight into their relationship. While the contentedness experienced prior to the longing

is more implicitly expressed than the longing which follows it, it acts as a *grounding in the present* which provides a ground for the wandering thought which leads A from contentedness to longing for his first longing. If, in the context of the quote, A were solely longing for his first longing, the way in which the emotion arose would be unknown. However, given the contentedness which preceded it, the longing, in its difference from contentedness as a perturbing desire and its emergence *from* contentedness, is *grounded* in contentedness. It contradicts the contentedness from which it emerges, yet in it inheres an element of contentedness, in that it is partially constituted by a privation of the contentedness which preceded it. This movement also adds to the definition of contentedness in this context insofar as it is defined, in part, by what is *not* longing, so long as we know that longing is what emerged from it. Thus, in their contradiction, and in any contradiction of emotions, the difference of the two terms also gives rise to the way in which each respective term inheres in the other as its negated opposite.

From here I should wish to explain how this philosophy of emotions, as it is “performed” in the *Diapsalmata*, is a *monstrous* philosophy. It is monstrous in the same way Socrates suggests he may be monstrous in Plato’s *Phaedrus*. Socrates says, “[I] accept the current beliefs... and direct my inquiries, as I have just said, rather to myself, to discover whether I really am a more complex creature and more puffed up with pride than Typhon, or a simpler, gentler being whom heaven has blessed with a quiet, un-Typhonic nature” (*Phaedrus*, 230a-b). To be monstrous is to be comprised of discordant parts. Typhon is a chimera composed of disparate parts from a disparate assortment of animals, not himself any one thing but a conglomerate of these disparate parts. Unlike Socrates, who may be more monstrous than Typhon or gentler and un-Typhonic, the way emotions arise and contradict each other in the *Diapsalmata* are as monstrous as Typhon himself insofar as the work is comprised of utterly disparate emotional states which cohere only in their very incoherence. Along with any one emotion which makes itself present in the *Diapsalmata*, therein resides all of the emotions it is not, and so the disparate parts are relationally defined by their not-being emotions other than the ones which they are—They are defined, in part, by what they are not. The multiplicity of these emotions also coheres into a singular unified subject insofar as they are all emotions experienced by Author A and are thus grounded in the experience of that particular subject. This amorphous self is, at least in part, comprised of a multitude of contradictory emotions.

Furthermore, this monstrous philosophy of emotions acts as a prefatory philosophy for the question of Being. In Kierkegaard’s preface to *Prefaces*, through the pseudonym Nicolaus Notabene, he provides a long list of what a preface *is*. In an excerpt from this list, he says, “A preface is a mood. Writing a preface is like sharpening a scythe, like tuning a guitar, like talking with a child, like spitting out the window” (Kierkegaard, *Prefaces*, 5). This is to say that a preface is potential, anticipatory, and that it delimits whatever *it* prefaces. A mood, or an amalgam of moods, certainly delimit the way in which one acts in a given situation and the way in which one perceives the world. In Martin Heidegger’s book entitled the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he suggests the fundamental question of Being, “why are there beings instead of nothing?” arises through different moods. He picks three general moods from which this question arises: joy, despair, and boredom. He says, “In great despair, for example, when all weight tends to dwindle

away from things and the sense of things grows dark, the question looms. Perhaps it strikes only once, like the muffled tolling bell that resounds into Dasein and gradually fades away” (Heidegger, 1-2). As this question looms during a fit of despair, the way in which the question is taken may vary. In the *Diapsalmata*, when such despair overcomes Author A, he makes recourse to a kind of nihilism. For example, in a particularly suicidal despair, Author A says, “How empty and meaningless life is. —We bury a man; we accompany him to the grave... we ride out in a carriage... we find consolation in the thought that we have a long life ahead of us... Why not settle it all at once, why not stay out there and go along down into the grave...?” (Kierkegaard, 29). This meditation on the burial of a man is haunted by an utterly defeated, despairing mood. As the question of Being looms over the situation, Author A resolves, in his despair, that life is empty and without meaning. This is not to dismiss Author A’s conclusion as being *merely* derived from an unsavory mood and thus not worthy of serious consideration, but rather to show that the question of Being, as it arises from despair, is easily resolved as being empty regardless of whether it may actually be so. That the mood, as preface, delimits the possible answers to the question of Being should be of utmost concern and addressed more fully at another time.

The *Diapsalmata* is a text which acts as a performative philosophy of emotions and is monstrous in the contradictory emotions of which it is composed. The relations between each emotional state, as they emerge within different aphorisms and, on occasion, emerge from within the same aphorism, are related by the contradiction in their very difference. It is therefore possible to be constituted of a plethora of contradictory emotions at any given time. In these differences, particular emotions resemble what their emotional *other* is not, such that they resemble the negation of their other as well as the features which positively define themselves. Thus, there is a coherence in the incoherence of the disparate emotions presented in the *Diapsalmata*. This philosophy also has prefatory weight on the question of Being, insofar as the question of Being and perception of Being itself can be delimited by the mood through which one experiences an awareness of the nakedness of Being. Pascal’s formulation that “we are nothing but lies, duplicity, and contradiction” carries more weight than we may wish to concede.

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## “Bannabees,” Bananas, and Sweet Potatoes: Claude McKay’s *Songs of Jamaica* and Traditional Jamaican Foodways as a Nationalist Expression

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### ABSTRACT

Jamaican poet Claude McKay is largely anthologized for a handful of poems he contributed to the Harlem Renaissance, but his early work authored in Jamaica has long been dismissed for a variety of racist and xenophobic reasons. This overlooked material includes his first two poetry collections, *Songs of Jamaica* and *Constab Ballads*, both authored in Jamaica before he moved to New York. His friend, benefactor, and mentor Walter Jekyll even characterized these early collections as “naive.” However, these two collections, which mix traditional English forms with Jamaican peasant dialect, constitute vital parts of McKay’s oeuvre. *Songs of Jamaica* in particular exhibits a mastery of Jamaican peasant dialect in combination with extensive allusions to traditional folkways in order to make an anti-colonialist, nationalist assertion about Jamaica, the country McKay so loved. I will analyze the role of Jamaican peasant dialect and foodways in making this nationalist assertion in order to advance my claim that McKay’s early poetry is at least as sophisticated and versatile as his subsequent collections authored in the States. By turns, McKay praises native Jamaican crops such as the banana, sweet potato, and Bonavist bean for their gustatory, nutritional, and economic superiority to crops imported by colonialism.

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Jamaican poet Claude McKay is most commonly known as a prominent figure in the Harlem Renaissance, with the rather unfortunate effect that his diverse oeuvre has been reduced to his 1919 sonnet “If We Must Die,” which protests the social inequality of black people in America. He penned this poem after he moved from Jamaica to New York. In light of this poem and his collection *Harlem Shadows*, critics often consider his poetry produced in America as the beginning of his serious writing career. They tend to dismiss his two previous poetry collections, *Songs of Jamaica* and *Constab Ballads*, both authored in Jamaica, as immature works. Even his friend, benefactor, and mentor Walter Jekyll characterized *Songs of Jamaica* as stylistically “naive” in his introduction to the volume (McKay 284). However, these two collections, which mix

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traditional English forms with Jamaican peasant dialect, constitute vital parts of McKay's oeuvre. *Songs of Jamaica* exhibits a mastery of Jamaican peasant dialect in combination with extensive allusions to Jamaican folk culture in order to make an anti-colonialist, nationalist assertion about Jamaica, the country McKay so loved. In particular, the role of Jamaican peasant foodways in *Songs of Jamaica* makes a nationalist assertion that advances the claim that McKay's early poetry is at least as sophisticated as and more versatile than his subsequent collections authored in the States. Foodways serve as a subtle, credible way for McKay to center indigenous ways of knowing and non-colonial crops as superior.

In comparison to "If We Must Die," which is widely anthologized, McKay's Jamaican poetry remains overlooked. Decades later, McKay scholars continue to mischaracterize the Jamaican poems as "sentimental," even as "genre studies" of peasant life (Hansell 123). In fact, William Hansell divides the Jamaican poetry into three categories: slice-of-life commonplace, love poems, and poems that "portray the peasant mind," in his words (124-125). Such categorizations come across as reductive and condescending, collapsing the political dimensions of the early poetry. After all, McKay's Jamaican years remain understudied and poorly understood, obscuring their significance to his artistic oeuvre (James, "Becoming the People's Poet" 19). Due to both these misperceptions represented by Hansell and the lack of sustained academic inquiry described by James, the subtle, sophisticated poetic style and the emphatically nationalist content of *Songs of Jamaica* have been downplayed in most existing scholarship. But McKay's support of the black oppressed and his trenchant critique of racist social structures emerges in *Songs of Jamaica* through various expressions of anti-colonialist nationalism, such as his focus on native crops.

Due to a variety of social constraints, McKay's anti-colonial nationalism in his early poetry often proves measured and subtle. For instance, McKay's 1912 poem "De Gubnor's Salary" critiques Sir Sydney Olivier for taxing the Jamaican people in order to pay his salary, despite the fact that the English rule Olivier represented had accomplished nothing but the oppression of the Jamaican people (Rosenberg 94). McKay agreed to leave the poem out of *Songs of Jamaica* and *Constab Ballads*, as Olivier demanded. He even dedicated the former volume to the governor, who was also his benefactor. His poetry often constituted "acts of dexterity" within a system in which "oppositional views could be expressed primarily from within colonial institutions" (Rosenberg 93-94). However, his selection of the Jamaican crops that represent traditional foodways in *Songs of Jamaica*, such as the Bonavist bean, the sweet potato, or the banana, bespeak an anti-colonialist nationalism he could not explicitly include in his poems at the time while living in Jamaica.

The most prominent example of McKay's nationalism in his early poetry manifests in his constant use of Jamaican peasant dialect. This tactic negotiates thickets of politics around the use of dialect in writing, with various critics decrying McKay as racist for the thick Jamaican peasant dialect in which he wrote his first two collections. As Jamaican magazines and newspapers opened the subject for discussion, the controversy heightened given the cultural moment, one which "presented Jamaica as progressing toward enlightenment and morality" (Rosenberg 40). The Jamaican Local Literary Association published an anonymous 1913 essay "On Dialect" that championed the use of Jamaican dialect in literature, arguing, "Dialect tells the story of

colonisation, of slavery and its villainies, of the Emancipation won for the downtrodden negro” (Rosenberg 40). The article even goes so far as to suggest, “Had we a Claude McKay, one genius at least, for every decade since 1800 ... the pride of Jamaica in things Jamaican would today be a fixed quantity” (Rosenberg 40). An inquiry into the possibility of McKay himself penning this eloquent missive, given his penchant for reputation-burnishing, might prove interesting. Regardless, the nationalist potential of McKay’s use of dialect serves as a way of proposing a linguistic distinctiveness and unity, rich with a history of struggle and perseverance under colonization. Conversely, other critics, such as the lawyer and writer James Weldon Johnson, argued that “acting modern meant not writing or speaking ‘too black’ because African-American dialect had been so tarred and tarnished by its historical associations with minstrelsy and racism” (Peppis 38). And thus McKay found himself navigating cultural and literary critics in addition to the colonial institutions in which he lived, complicating yet another intended anti-colonialist nationalist assertion.

Given the complexities surrounding these expressions of McKay’s nationalism, his use of traditional Jamaican foodways in *Songs of Jamaica* emerges as a means of making an anti-colonialist, pro-Jamaican claim that centers his authority. Thomas Francis and Ann Elizabeth McKay brought up McKay, the former being a farmer who “coaxed” cacao, coffee, bananas, sugar cane, and tropical fruits from the “difficult soil” of the country; thus, McKay grew up acquainted with farming and Jamaican foodways (Tillery 4). Upon arriving in the United States, he even intended to study agronomy at the Tuskegee Institute in South Carolina (21). McKay’s love for the island originated in part from his image of its soil as containing plentitude for all of its black inhabitants (James, “Jamaican Nationalism and Its Limits” 91). As McKay stipulates in “My Native Land, My Home” from *Songs of Jamaica*, “De time when I’ll tu’n ‘gains’ you is/When you can’t give me grub” (*Complete Poems*, 58). Therefore, McKay possesses an intimate knowledge of Jamaican agriculture, its hardships and its rewards, and links the bounty of the land to a conditional nationalism, making peasant foodways inextricable to any nationalist assertion he would level in his collections of Jamaican dialect poetry.

For example, in the poem “Me Bannabees” from *Songs of Jamaica*, McKay elevates traditional folk foodways through the speaker’s celebration of bannabees, or the Bonavist bean. He clearly demonstrates this celebration when he concludes the poem with the preferential declaration “Caan’ talk about gungu,/Fe me it is no peas;/Cockstone might do fe you,/Me want me bannabees,” which carries additional weight as the final stanza in the poem (20). The stanza juxtaposes “gungu” and “cockstone,” or Congo peas and red kidney beans, with the bannabees -- the other legumes might do for others, but not for the speaker, who wants his bannabees. Likewise, in the opening stanza, the bannabees “Run ober mango trees,” suggesting that the bannabees are more desirable than lush mangos, with the bannabees hierarchically positioned over them. Tellingly, “bannabees” is assonant with “want” and “wanna,” underscoring the speaker’s desire for the bannabees, the traditional Jamaican crop. Thus, the bannabees represent the superiority of Jamaican folk culture and foodways, which the speaker can appreciate above all else, but colonial outsiders cannot.

Cross-referencing McKay's selected crops with other works on Jamaican culture and agriculture demonstrates the deliberate choices McKay made of non-colonial crops with particular cultural connotations, such as sweet potatoes and bananas. In his 2008 book *Jamaican Food: History, Biology, Culture*, Jamaican studies scholar B. W. Higman traces the histories of various Jamaican crops, illuminating their cultural connotations at the time of McKay's writing. Higman writes, "Relating the colourfully descriptive common names [of all the beans] to the correct scientific names is often a puzzle" (254). He does provide enriching details on the Bonavist bean, which "[flourishes] all year," reinforcing the image of its lush growth over the mangos in "Me Bannabees" (256). Furthermore, he claims that bannabees are "cultivated by most of the inhabitants in the country parts of Jamaica," associating the crop not only with Jamaican national identity, but specifically with rural Jamaican national identity, the peasant farmer class with whom McKay aligned himself in his early work (256). Interestingly, Higman's entry on bannabees cites McKay's poem itself as "[extolling the bean's] virtues," alongside the Jamaican proverb "Time neber too long fe the Bannabis bear bean" (257). Therefore, McKay's usage of traditional Jamaican foodways in his early poetry has been noted by scholars of Jamaican foodways, bolstering its credibility as a prevalent theme and nationalist claim.

"Me Bannabees" proudly proclaims the superiority of the bannabees over Congo peas and kidney beans, implying the speaker's affinity with the beans is at the exclusion of a colonial outsider. At the same time, it does not engage in explicit racial claims, unlike the poem "Quashie to Buccra." The title positions two individuals identified by racial group in dialogue with each other, the "quashie," or black man, addressing the "buccra," or white man. Caroline Sullivan's 1893 *Jamaica Cookery Book* records the process of cassava being made into wafer-like "lace cakes," which were commercially marketed in the 1950s as "bammy chips, thin as paper -- not made by Quashie" (Higman 67). Therefore, race played a role in conceptions of the quality of crops, dishes, and cooking processes, if the fact the cassava cakes were not made by Quashie, or a black man, was considered a selling point. However, in "Quashie to Buccra," the Quashie speaker addresses the white man in order to assert not only that his methods of growing "petaters" is superior, but that the Quashie, or laboring class, has developed a more acute palate for the potatoes through maintaining them than the Buccra could ever understand.

In "Quashie to Buccra," the speaker describes the myriad hardships of working the soil to produce sweet potatoes, which elevates his enjoyment of the crop's ultimate reward, as a way to exalt the Jamaican farmer class. "De fiel' pretty? It couldn't less 'an dat," the speaker jeers, mocking the presumed Buccra for admiring the field's clean appearance and even lines, when its beauty is an incidental byproduct of the hard labor that goes into maintaining it. McKay's lines perfectly mirror the sentiment that Jamaicans' attachment to their fields "was not only spiritual; the grounds were also containers of stored resources, long-term investments of labor and time" (Higman 60). Therein, the sweet potato fields house value that the Buccra, the colonial outsiders, cannot decipher. Throughout the poem, the speaker juxtaposes monetary value with toil's physical and psychological value: "You want a basketful fe quattiewut,/ 'Cause you no know how 'tiff de bush fe cut," in which the Buccra only thinks of the sixpence he can earn from selling the crop, rather than the labor that produced the crop. Thus, the colonizer lacks the capacity to appreciate

the crop's true sweetness, which the Quashie savors "Wheneber it come roun' to reapin' day." McKay advocates the peasant Quashie's way of knowing over the colonial Buccra's limited perception.

In addition to the sweet potato's significance as an embodiment of peasant labor and ways of knowing, it retains a special status as a native plant with particular nutritional and symbolic value in Jamaica. The collection's footnotes define the "petater" in "Quashie to Buccra" as sweet potato, befitting the claim that in Jamaica "the generic potato is the sweet potato," while what Americans think of as a generic potato is referred to as the "Irish potato" (Higman 87). The sweet potato confers further cultural significance in light of the fact that Jamaicans often used the word "food" to specifically refer to starchy carbohydrates (Higman 55). This food also gained the designation of "ground provisions," which denotes "locally produced" Jamaican crops such as yam, coco, cassava, banana, plantain, and potato in contrast to "mostly imported" starchy crops such as wheat, corn, and rice (Higman 56). Therefore, potatoes embody a true Jamaican character, rather than a crop introduced by colonists. After all, Peter Martyr, who served as Abbot of Jamaica and guided construction of the first stone church on the island, recorded eight varieties of "patatas" in Jamaica prior to 1520, confirming that "no doubt the species was indigenous to the island", and not a colonial transmission (Higman 88). As a native plant and cornerstone provision, the sweet potato proves itself a vehicle for a nationalist celebration, no doubt deliberately selected by McKay.

Likewise, "King Banana" reproduces this dialogue with a colonial Buccra and makes more explicit the gaps in colonial knowledge. "Wha' lef fe buccra teach again/Dis time about plantation?/Dere's not'in that can beat de plain/Good ole-time cultivation" the speaker posits that the buccra has nothing left to teach the cultivators, presumably Quashies. "Plantation" denotes the act of planting in the poem, about which the white man has nothing to teach the black man, while also alluding to Jamaica's colonial history of sugar plantations in which white men dominated black men. The colonists lack the knowledge of "good ole-time cultivation," which is the province of the Quashie. Unlike the speaker in "Quashie to Buccra," the speaker in "King Banana" concerns himself with the banana's monetary value as well, peddling them in the marketplace: "We re'ch: banana finish sell," after which "Some hab money in t'read-bag well,/Some spen' all in a rum." However, McKay constructs the banana's economic value differently than the Buccra figure in the previous poem. The speaker seems more concerned with the rhythms of life (arriving in a group at the marketplace, spending the money earned on rum) which serves as a sort of glue to relationships in McKay's other works, such as *Banjo*. Finally, the poem culminates in an unequivocally nationalist assertion that the banana "mek" the black man, that the banana is absolutely conflated with Jamaica's national identity as "banana lan'," and that the banana "car' de sway," both economically and culturally.

Like the sweet potato, the banana was not a colonial transmission to Jamaica, although it remained less popular than the plantain into the late nineteenth century. In addition to the factor of the plantain being edible at all stages of ripeness, whereas the banana typically is only edible in its ripe form, only a limited selection of types of banana were available before the abolition of slavery in Jamaica. The Gros Michel variety from Martinique was not introduced to Jamaica until

after abolition. It is also known as “green mancha” of “King Banana,” the title of McKay’s 1912 poem. Despite its prior obscurity, the banana rose as a new and profitable export crop for the island, rejuvenating the “languishing export economy” of the 1870s (Higman 140). On top of becoming a valuable trade commodity, the banana simultaneously adopted a new status domestically as a staple in the Jamaican diet. Higman’s entry on the banana cites McKay’s “King Banana” as an example of the “newfound enthusiasm” the banana enjoyed after its renewed importance in Jamaica’s market (141). Additionally, its role in Jamaica’s market underscores McKay’s inclusion of a marketplace setting in “King Banana.” Once again, Higman’s text mutually reinforces McKay’s contributions to the culture around various Jamaican crops, and those crops’ significance in McKay’s work.

Ultimately, McKay’s Jamaican dialect poetry deserves more scholarly attention than it has received, given the complexity and subtlety of his nationalism in these texts. McKay is forced to navigate the colonial institutions of his home. He even negotiates his own role in these institutions, such as the constabulary, yet finds ways to assert an anti-colonialist stance. His employment of Jamaican dialect served this purpose, but fell prey to controversy due to conflicting attitudes about dialect usage, i.e. whether dialect celebrated Jamaican history and unity, or paraded a caricature for a white colonial gaze that wanted to exoticize its speakers. However, McKay utilizes his knowledge of Jamaican foods and foodways to build an anti-colonialist case. He centers peasant foodways as a superior way of knowing to the white colonists’ commodification of the crops that the Jamaican peasant class has lovingly cared for and grown. He selects crops that do not possess a solely colonial history, such as the indigenous sweet potato, the banana introduced alongside the plantain before the arrival of Europeans, and the Bonavist bean of African origins. Furthermore, he conflates these crops with Jamaican identity, championing their gastronomic, nutritional, and economic worth above crops introduced by colonists, such as the mango. In this way, McKay centers non-colonial fruits, beans, and roots in order to cement a Jamaican superiority, one that extends to the black rural peasant class’s ways of knowing that give them the ability to work the land and enhance their enjoyment of its fruits, a subtle and deft poetic maneuver that calls for scholars to recharacterize McKay’s early dialect poetry.

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# Before the Spectacle: Shaping Gender and Class in Beirut's Beauty Salons

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## ABSTRACT

“Beirut, in the words of one designer, is like a third world city that’s put on some makeup” writes Rima Suqi in the *New York Times* (2016). Indeed, scholars worldwide have coined Beirut the trendsetting beauty city and nightlife capital of the Middle East. My ethnographic fieldwork in Beirut in July and August 2016 examined the construction of women’s beauty work in salons and how it affected gender and class performances in nightlife venues. Contemporary discourses on the popularity of beauty work and nightlife consumption in Beirut are often explained by the reaction to the Lebanese Civil War, and by postmodern, individualistic attitudes celebrating life, glamour, and living in the moment. However, such assumptions overlook the extent to which social and familial networks constitute women’s bodies in Beirut’s small, interconnected and highly visual upper-middle and upper class society.

In my research, I ask: Why are so many young Lebanese women willing to undergo extensive beauty work and engage in opulent nightlife agendas? How do social and familial pressures motivate women’s desire for beauty work? How do women envision and construct gender and class as an outcome of beauty work? How and why do women further class distinctions using beauty work? How do women foster solidarity in the salon space? How do men and women display and perform gender and class in nightlife venues? How do preparation rituals in beauty salons influence women’s performances in nightlife venues and vice versa?

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## INTRODUCTION

Beauty ideals are historically contingent. They not only vary according to time, place and context but also carry heavy cultural baggage. They can generate conflicts, they intervene in power relations, and they are embedded in the commercialization of our daily lives. Beauty is not superficial, not merely skin-deep. It is closely linked to racial and social hierarchies, to gender roles and ideological and religious imperatives, to questions of individual and collective identities. This is why beauty is highly fluid, ambiguous and contested, and why its study is promising and rewarding. (Berghoff and Kühne, 2013, p. 16)

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As a University of Oregon Undergraduate Fellowship recipient, I conducted ethnographic research during July and August, 2016 in Beirut, Lebanon. My fieldwork examined the construction of women's beauty work in one salon and how it affected gender and class performances in one nightlife venue. In the first chapter, I present a number of socio-cultural perspectives explaining the surge of women's beauty work in Lebanon. I provide a historical and political background and demonstrate how consumerism, post-war anxieties and the local media have all contributed to this surge. I also argue that social pressure from close-knit, familial relationships motivate women's desire for beauty work. Chapter two documents my experience participating in and studying Beirut's beauty salon culture. I examine how women envision and construct gender and class as an outcome of beauty work. I also examine how the beauty salon in Beirut serves as a space in which women's solidarity and pleasure coincides with their subordination. Chapter three recounts my experience participating in and studying Beirut's nightlife. I study how male and female clients display and perform gender and class in a nightclub, arguing that in high-end venues, women assimilate dominant models of beauty and demeanor.

## BEAUTY IN BEIRUT: SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Lebanon is one of the most intersected crossroads of the world (Joseph, 1999, p. 166). In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Beirut's mountainous hinterlands became a key site of silk production and an important supplier to the French textile industry (Nagel, 2002, p. 718). Thereafter, the city gained its reputation as a prosperous, cosmopolitan hub. The presence of a strong merchant class, which perceived itself as a community bound by common economic interests, ensured a degree of social tolerance among the city's innumerable ethnic and sectarian groups (Shiites, Sunnis, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Maronite Catholics, Druzes, and Jews) (p. 719).

Some of Lebanon's instabilities leading to the civil war (1975-1990), however, can be traced back to this period. European powers cultivated relationships with individual sectarian groups as a means of gaining a foothold in the region (Nagel, 2002, 719). As it happens, the area of Lebanon was created by France to be a 'safe haven' for the Christian Maronite population settled on Mount Lebanon (Rabin, 2011, p.11). When Lebanon was finally granted independence in 1943, the system of governance that emerged was unjust. Top government posts were assigned to the three major sects (Maronite, Sunni, and Shiite), with the top position of President reserved for a Maronite (Nagel, 2002, p. 720).

Events evolving in Israel and Palestine further burdened the situation. The Lebanese government (and its citizens) were deeply divided over how to treat the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). In the early 1970s, the PLO used Beirut's Palestinian refugee camps as bases of operations (Nagel, 2002, p. 720). While many Muslims openly supported the PLO, many Christians feared Israeli retaliation and further embroilment in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Right-wing Christian militias armed themselves to drive the PLO from Lebanon, incurring the hostility of many Muslims (p. 720). Inter-sectarian violence between Muslims, Christians, and

Druzes flared up throughout the country. By the 1980s, Beirut was in a full-blown civil war that lasted for 15 years.

The most potent symbol of social polarization during the war was the infamous Green Line – a no-man’s land of war-damaged and gutted buildings dividing the Muslim West Beirut from the Christian East Beirut. The population became increasingly segregated by religious sect within these two halves of the city (p. 721).

In the early 1990s, Lebanon’s civil war ended more from exhaustion than from the clear victory of any one group. The Ta’if Accord, the 1989 peace agreement put in place after the war, further institutionalized sectarian divisions by introducing a new agreement where power was equally shared between Christian and Muslim communities based on their demographic distribution (Ghosn & Khoury 2011, p. 383). While the Ta’if Accord redistributed power in a more equitable manner, it did so in a way that reinforced sectarianism in Lebanon. In other words, it reinforced loyalty to the sect or sectarian political leader and not to the country.

After the civil war, other political conflicts ensued, the most salient of which are the 33-day Israel-Hezbollah in 2006, the violent clashes between Rafic Hariri’s supporters and Hezbollah in 2008 and most recently, the political unrest brought over by the Syrian Civil War (Bonte, 2016, p. 1). The Syrian conflict has also contributed to the resurgence of sectarian disputes in Lebanon. Many of Lebanon’s Sunni Muslims support the rebels in Syria, while many Shiites support Bashar Al-Assad, whose Alawite minority is usually described as an offshoot of Shi’a Islam (Holmes, 2013).

New forms of sectarianism dominate much of contemporary Lebanon’s social and political landscape. Political leaders and spokesmen from various factions capitalize on and invoke communal identifications in their rhetoric. Territorial and sectarian and/or ethnic identities have been and continue to be converged. All the above information brought me to ask: how are Lebanese youth reacting to the conflicts of the past, present and possible future? Is it conceivable to restore trust, dialogue and hope among youth in a country characterized by continuous political instability? Clearly, many youth are disenchanted and long to disengage themselves from the conflictual history of the country (R. Khalaf, 2011).

To cope with these conditions, my contributors engaged in a “politics of fun” (Garcia, 2011, p. 12; also see Bayat, 2007), or rather, reacted to the country’s political instabilities by creating a space for social agency in leisure activities. I should emphasize that I conducted research exclusively with upper-middle class and upper-class Lebanese youth. My contributors wanted to remove themselves from the dominant political discourses of the country. In doing so, they searched for “third spaces” (Bhabha 1993) in which cultures of hybridity, mixture and solidarity were developed.

Several of the beauty salons I frequented in Beirut may be called third spaces. As Suad Joseph (1999), a cultural anthropologist, put it, “while the state formally and legally structured a fragmented, [sectarian] nation...the lived reality of the nation’s people was far more complex than the state definition” (p. 176). For example, in the beauty salon I studied, religion was only

one of the many factors that shaped identity and channeled social behavior. As I will elaborate in the next chapter, a long-existent shared interest in beauty practices brought the women in the salon together, even if only in a transient manner.

In the last two decades Beirut has been known, amongst other denominations, as the nightlife capital, hedonistic playground, and cosmetic surgery capital of the Middle East (S. Khalaf 2012, p. 116). This image embeds the city in a globalized, late-capitalist, post-modern culture (S. Khalaf 2012, p. 116). In the past years, the demand for image-enhancing procedures has risen 10 to 20 percent, and many surgeons claim that they are seeing 50 percent more patients per day than they did in the 1990s (Doherty, 2008, p. 28). Samir Khalaf (2012), a Lebanese sociologist, argued these consumer choices are part of an attempt to find meaning, status and identity in a post-war, uncertain landscape. This surge in consumerism has had some unfavorable consequences for women. While men use a myriad of outlets (such as the cars they drive) to express their family status and wealth, women primarily resort to their bodies to express their social status.

Illustrative of this phenomenon is what occurred in the Spring of 2007. The billboards of Beirut and its suburbs became flooded with 900 replications of the close-up picture of a blonde, blue-eyed beauty with typically “Western” features (Mallat, 2011, p. 2-3). However, this picture was not a regular fragrance or cigarette advertisement. It announced the first-ever cosmetic surgery loan in the country by the First National Bank of Lebanon. “In both Arabic and English, the message was the same: ‘Have the life you have always wanted via plastic surgery’” (p. 3).

Contemporary explanations on the popularity of beauty work are often explained by the reaction to the Lebanese Civil War, which created individualistic attitudes celebrating life, glamour, and living in the moment. This anguished desire to live in the moment and enjoy the “good life” reflects “a post-war society desperately trying, during brief peaceful interludes, to make up for lost time” (Mallat, 2011, p. 177). On a similar note, Liliane Ghazale (2007) expressed that because of the country’s conflictual past, the Lebanese “...feel great uncertainty about the future. They feel they are not in control of their own fate. There is an exaggerated emphasis on external appearance because that is the one area in which people can assert control” (as cited in Biedermann 2007, p. 10).

Another explanation on the popularity of beauty work consigns responsibility to the local media. As Khalaf (2012) noted, “the influence and stature of Lebanon’s aggressive and fairly autonomous media, particularly its press and, more recently, its transnational satellite broadcasting...have always been disproportionate to its size” (p. 168). According to Doherty (2008), “the photos [in local society magazines like *Mondanité* and *Noun*] work to create an overarching beauty aesthetic for Lebanese women of certain social strata” (p. 28). Moreover, in the last decade (and especially in the last five years) the scale, rate and access to these photos has proliferated due to social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. In Beirut’s small, interconnected and highly visual upper-middle and upper class society, women feel they need to compete by showcasing their beauty, both virtually and face-to-face.

However, post-war anxieties and the influence of the media cannot be the only factors explaining the surge of beauty work in Lebanon. The causes for the growing popularity of beauty procedures lie much deeper, in the very nature of a woman's role within Lebanon's patriarchal social and familial structure. "If there ever has been a culture with an exclusive kinship orientation, Lebanon comes close to being such...The extended and patriarchal family all other evidences to the contrary, has demonstrated remarkable resiliency as a pervasive social institution" (S. Khalaf 1971, p. 236). Within this institution, patriarchal customs, networks and structures have greatly disadvantaged women. In my research, I ask why and, most importantly, *for whom* beauty work in Beirut is being performed.

Although Lebanese women put a high value on their career development and education, they put a greater priority on marriage and motherhood because it falls in line with their family's expectations. In this perspective, I argue that beauty work, and its respective exhibition in nightlife contexts, plays a key role in increasing a family's potential for their daughter's social mobility and marriage prospects.

In her ethnography of Fijian society, Becker (1995) raised questions and arguments similar to mine:

In Fiji, the cultivation of one's own body is not socially legitimated as a means of distinguishing oneself. Still...commentary on body shape - how one is formed, whether one has lost or gained weight - is central to everyday discourse in Fijian villages. ...This unremitting attention to body shape and to appetite is a master idiom of care and nurturance within a social network. What is thereby encoded in and read from the form and changes of the body is the social positioning of individuals, consequent to how each has been nurtured or neglected in his or her social universe. Collective care, then, is recognized in the body's physical form (p. 56).

In a similar manner to Fijian's collective care of the body, beauty work in Beirut displays a family's social standing and investment in its women. This "collective display" of beauty points to the central role of women in Lebanon's patriarchal social and familial structure: that of a wife and mother. As one salon worker expressed, "Beauty for me is a duty, not pleasure - it's to respect others, to have a good presence. It's for our family and friends - that's why it is very important" (Celine, personal communication, August 26, 2016).

Four of my six key informants experienced parental pressures for beauty work, from mothers urging them to wear makeup in all public occasions, to fathers and siblings explicitly encouraging them to undergo rhinoplasty. Similar expectations and pressures appeared in choosing relationships with friends and acquaintances. As a consequence, Beirut women associated with friends that had equally enhanced bodies in order to confirm and enhance their social prestige.

Mallat's (2011) research, which examined the growing trend of cosmetic surgery among middle to upper class female youth Beirut, supports my findings. When asked how common it is for mothers to bring in their daughters for procedures, both plastic surgeons Mallat interviewed commented that it accounted for anywhere between 15 to 35 percent of their patients, with higher frequency in the weeks leading up to and during summer and winter vacations (p. 68). One doctor commented that he often sees mothers pushing their daughters to do some procedure or other, even if the girls themselves are not fully convinced (p. 68).

## THE BACK STAGE: PREPARATION PRACTICES IN CHERRY BEAUTY LOUNGE

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1973) defined the back stage as a place where the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking in his lines, and step out of character (p. 112). The backstage is where performers are present but audience is not; it is where facts suppressed in the front stage and various kinds of informal actions may appear (Goffman, 1973, p. 112). In my analysis, I define Cherry Beauty Lounge, the salon I studied, as the "back stage" and White, the nightlife venue, as the "front stage". When preparing for the "spectacle" of night life (i.e. a 7:00 PM hair brushing or eye brow tweeze), I argue women had a "masculine" front stage in mind. As I claim in Chapter Four, the nightlife venue I studied was architecturally built and economically mediated for the performance of heteronormative behavior, and, above all, for the assertion of masculine identity. In this perspective, the beauty salon in Beirut, especially when women "prepare their beauty" (Robinson 2013) before a night out, is a feminine "back stage" to a predominantly "masculine front stage".

Cherry Beauty Lounge is located in the Hamra<sup>2</sup> district. Nestled between a mini food market and a small electronics kiosk, its compressed façade conveyed unimportance, but after asking around, I soon realized that Cherry was one of the most popular beauty shops in Beirut. The salon's strategic location in front of the Lebanese American University (LAU) and a ten-minute walk from the American University of Beirut (AUB) made it especially popular among young Beirut female students (ages 18-23). Despite the salon's affordable, student-friendly prices, most clients who frequented Cherry were from the Beirut upper-middle and upper class; both LAU and AUB are private institutions boasting the most expensive tuitions in the country. Due to its location in quasi non-sectarian<sup>3</sup> Hamra, the salon's employees and clients were both Christian and Muslim.

Whereas Lebanese beauty salons promoted an agenda of self-improvement, the American salons I frequent back home emphasize leisure (Miller 2010, p. 35). American beauty centers often combine the words "salon" and "spa" in their name (p. 35). The salon I frequent in Eugene, Oregon is named "Gervais Salon and Spa". This salon, typical of the American beauty industry, has an "earthy" tone to its interior design, plays soothing "tropical" music and operates at a relaxed, drawn-out pace. A visit to Gervais implies relaxation, involving resting periods between beauty treatments and complementary hand or facial massages. Salon workers are asked to display a "fully-polished" look at work, including full hair and makeup and stylish, all-black outfits.

In contrast, Cherry did not have extended spa facilities. The main purpose of the Beirut salon experience was not to pamper the client, but to actively “work on” and “correct” her body (Miller, 2010, p. 36). Body parts, beauty treatments, and salon workers alike were precisely divided into fixed spaces and hierarchies. Cherry’s spatial and rhythmic analysis clearly reveals this.

Cherry was composed of two floors. Its main entrance extended into a small hairdressing area. The hairdressers were all male; the aestheticians were all female, reflecting a gendered division of labor within the salon. The manicure and pedicure area was located after the hairdressing area beyond the reception desk. Cherry’s basement floor was composed of the makeup, hair removal, tanning and skin rejuvenation areas. Here, the spaces for facial hair removal and makeup application were combined into a single area. Body waxing and skin rejuvenation treatments were performed in separate, specialized rooms on this floor. The male hairdressers were strictly forbidden to enter this privatized, female-only floor. In fact, most salon workers rarely moved from their assigned spot.

Cherry’s clients, on the other hand, were allowed to move from section to section as they wished. In this way, women appeared to “float” through the different spaces and workers to “correct” each part of their body. It was common for women to undergo as many as four treatments per visit. In this analysis, we can see how the “salon delivers a forensic documentation of beauty: the body is divided into individual parts or elements that are minutely scrutinized and traced” (Miller, 2010, p. 41). Beauty, in this perspective, is no longer amorphous but instead is rather predictable and controllable by the woman and her beauty specialists (Miller, 2010, p. 56).

Cherry’s modern, “high-tech” interior decoration with bright lighting, all-white painting and sleek, glossy furniture and the salon workers’ white, nurse-like uniforms redefined “the formerly slippery and subjective concept of beauty...as being specific, concrete, and measurable, and therefore subject to the applications of science and technology” (Miller 2010, p. 56).

Women mostly frequented Cherry alone, booking appointments during their work break or between university lectures. When women visited the salon in pairs or in larger groups, they usually attended a wedding or important event together after the appointments. Nadine, one of my salon client interviewees, explained: “I go to the salon alone and my other friends go alone too. My mom, my sister and I actually go to the same salon, but we never go together, we all have our own schedules.” (Nadine, personal communication, August 15, 2016). The fact that women mostly went to Cherry alone is yet another indication that beauty work in Beirut is considered actual work, sometimes comparable to a part and/or full time job.

Even though I observed little to no competition between women within Cherry, clients furthered class distinctions through various strategies. These included selecting high-end salons and/or increasing the number of and price of treatments and prolonging the amount of time spent in the salon.

In Beirut's eclectic beauty industry, salons are partly segmented by class. In my research, I classify beauty salons as either "low-end", "mid-end" or "high-end" spaces. Some beauty shops also segment their clientele by age, such as student friendly salons<sup>44</sup> or child and tween salons (which provide services for girls ages three to twelve) (Yazbeck 2009). Although more segmentations exist, class is the most relevant in my research. Ossman (2001) classified beauty salons in a similar method to mine: "Proximate" salons, "Made to Order" salons and "Something Special" salons (p. 100, 112, 121). Although I did not regularly frequent "high-end" (or "Something Special") salons, in Beirut's particularly small, visual upper-middle and upper class, frequenting "high-end" and "Something Special" salons earned women a significant sense of distinction. At high-end nightclubs, women often shared where they had gotten their hair or makeup done. Mentioning a name such as Tony El Mendelek<sup>55</sup> richly enhanced their aesthetic capital and class status.

Two additional aspects stimulating class distinctions include the number of and price of treatments and the amount of time spent in the salon. As Veblen (1899) pointed out in his "trickle-down model," the new bourgeoisie is the point of origin for all consumer goods and leisure practices (p. 77). In this perspective, salon visits and beauty treatments become an expression of distance from the world of work (p. 124). Indeed, most of my upper-middle and upper class contributors frequented the salon two to three times per week for three to four hours per visit.

Veblen (1899) also pointed out that the lower classes envy and emulate the bourgeoisie (p. 26). In his trickle-down model, "workers and lower-class groups come under attack because, in their emulation of the upper and leisure classes, they are impelled to consume items not on the basis of legitimate needs but for their symbolic status distinction" (S. Khalaf, 2012, p. 120).

I also found this to be the case in my fieldwork. One client's background is particularly telling. Amal was a hostess at Crown Plaza Hotel, a hotel near the salon. She made appointments three times per week for nail upkeep, hair blowouts and waxing treatments during her work breaks. Although she was a single mother with a relatively low income (700 dollars per month), Amal prioritized spending money on beauty, even over other appearance-oriented consumptions, such as clothing. In our interview, she expressed how much she enjoyed these treatments, but also how important it was for a woman regardless of her income to be, as she put it, "perfect." Thus, for the lower class, going to the salon three times per week can "lend someone class" because it communicates the ability to have the time and money to become beautiful (Lenehan, 2013, p. 241). The main purpose of the Beirut salon experience, though, is not to pamper the client but to actively "work on" and "correct" her body. Thus, for many Beirut women going to the salon may *symbolize* leisure to the outside world, but does *not constitute* real leisure.

Beauty salons occupy a problematic space in the feminist imaginary. Several feminist scholars view beauty salon cultures as too disciplinary, thereby contributing to women's subordination. Bartky (1997) was one of these feminists, arguing that femininity is something in which virtually every woman is required to participate in and that "...a woman must master the

disciplinary practices in pursuit of a body of the right size and shape that also displays the proper styles of feminine motility” (p. 31). She added, “...a woman’s body is an ornamented surface too, and there is much discipline in this production as well” (p. 31). In this perspective, Bartky (1997) argued that the preservation of women’s femininity is *incompatible* with their struggle for liberation (p. 39-40).

Although I value Bartky’s (1997) foundational contributions to feminism and the body, I feel that some of her contentions are outdated. Using a combination of my own fieldwork and several nuanced feminist studies of beauty and the body, I argue that Cherry served as a space in which women’s solidarity and pleasure coincided with their subordination. As Nadine, a salon client, noted, “In all of its lightness [referring to beauty], it’s the only thing that brings us together” (Nadine, personal communication, August 15, 2016).

Women in Cherry also fostered solidarity by temporarily bridging differences of social class (Scanlon 2007, p. 323). In the previous section, I explained how women furthered class distinctions by selecting high-end salons and increasing the number of and price of treatments and prolonging the amount of time spent in the salon. These forms of distinction then turned into subtle forms of competition in the front stage. However, I did not witness clients explicitly competing over beauty work *within* the salon space. While small comparisons (i.e. judgmental, comparing glances or comments) occurred, in reality, class distinctions were temporarily dismissed in the salon space. Paradoxically, women “prepared their beauty” together in the “back stage” in a mutually supportive way to then compete in the “front stage”.

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One example of solidarity among women that transcended religion and class was gossip about male figures. These included boyfriends, husbands, sons and other close or distant relatives. Gossip varied from surface-level inquiries and responses to intimate information about a client’s husband’s sexual preferences (i.e. whether he fancied little or no pubic hair). This type of talk mostly involved the private life of the client. Sometimes, however, I witnessed reciprocal gossip where clients asked questions about the salon worker’s love and family life.

## THE FRONT STAGE: PERFORMANCE PRACTICES IN “WHITE”

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1973) defined the front stage, in comparison to the back stage, as that part of the individual’s performance which regularly

functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. Front, then, is the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance (p. 22). As I mentioned previously, when preparing for the “spectacle” of nightlife in beauty salons, women had a “masculine” front stage in mind. White, the nightlife venue I studied, was architecturally built and economically mediated for the performance of heteronormative behavior, and, above all, for the assertion of masculine identity. In this perspective, nightlife in Beirut is a masculine “front stage” to a predominantly “feminine back stage.”

In 2011, an advertising panel encircling the construction site of Zeituna Bay, the new waterfront bordering Beirut’s downtown, proudly displayed the slogan “The world is Beirut again” (Bonte, 2016, p. 1). This expression reflects what many travel magazines and fashion weeklies have described as the “rebirth of city”, or rather, the rebirth of “the Paris of the Middle East” (p. 1). Apart from several conflicts<sup>66</sup>, “relative political and economic stability over most of the 2000s prompted Beirut to recover its strong and diversified nightlife” (p. 1). Now completed, the redevelopment of the waterfront where endless yachts, luxurious restaurants and pubs add to the numerous bars and nightclubs of the city embody the idea that Beirut is a “playground” (p. 1).

“At first glance, Beirut’s high-end, ‘mainstream’ nightlife looks like that found in any Western city: it inhabits spaces where the rules of daily life don’t apply, where social and moral restrictions vanish and make room for an attitude of ‘anything goes’” (Kegels, 2007, p. 88). As Kegels (2007) observed, the reality is quite different: “the nightlife of the Lebanese upper class is the one place where strict boundaries are set and carefully maintained” (p. 88). She continued, “this turns the night and nightlife into a space where [the Lebanese] can ‘perform upper class’, where they can reinforce social boundaries and ascertain their inclusion in this life that seems so far away from the out-of-control reality of...daily life” (p. 92).

My fieldwork at White, revealed similar findings to Kegels’ (2007) research. I argue that high-end venues are spaces where pre-existing identities of gender and class<sup>77</sup> are reinforced. These venues also serve as spaces where patriarchal kinship customs and networks are strengthened. In these venues, women assimilated and defended traditional cultural expectations. By displaying a “fully-polished look,” they increased their (and their family’s) potential for social mobility and marriage prospects.

White is owned by Addmind, an entertainment company that owns many other bars and nightclubs in Beirut, including Caprice, Toy Room and Mad, as well as White’s duplicate in Dubai (“Addmind Group”, n.d.). Ever since its opening, White has been the vanguard of Beirut’s high-end nightlife. A night out at White must be planned; it is very difficult to gain entrance if one is alone and lacking a table reservation.

White’s website provides an optimal description of the venue:

Start by imagining a pure white open space that fits 1200 people. You stand, cocktail in hand, and let yourself be seduced by the dancing crowd, the tinkling of champagne

glasses, the wondrous lights, the sea breeze, and the crystal-clear beats. The White experience is famous for allowing everyone to see everyone else from any corner of the venue. While keeping this playful spirit, it recently upgraded the location and enhanced the design with a more progressive feel. As a result, White now features one big central bar, a small VIP and a dedicated VIP section, which in other words “makes you feel like you own the place (“White Beirut”, n. d.).

As the sensation-filled passage shows, White is an enclosed space where upper class Beirutis (and occasional foreigners such as wealthy Gulf Arab spenders) “perform upper class” and reinforce preexisting social boundaries (Kegels, 2007, p. 92).

In the following paragraphs, I will describe and analyze a typical night out at White. I mostly frequented White with a group of friends, including two Christian-Lebanese male bankers and a Christian-Armenian female AUB recent graduate, Dina. The arrangements for a night out began two to three days in advance. Reservations were usually booked by my male friends under one of their last names. The one time Dina called to make a reservation, she still booked the table under one of our male friends’ last names.

After three hours of preparation at Cherry, I got picked up at around 10:00 PM by one of the bankers and we drove to White together. The actual arrival to the nightclub was very important. Clients, especially men first displayed their class, and most importantly, their *wasta*<sup>88</sup>, with the car they arrived with. My two male friends arrived with new Mercedes and Audi models; they did not refrain from showcasing them.

Beyond the brand and quality of the car, license plates were yet another way by which partygoers displayed their class. My consultants informed me that the numbers listed on a license plate showed whether a partygoer possessed *wasta* or not. Simply put, if a license plate displayed three or less digits (and even better if the all digits were the same number), the car owner was either well connected and/or paid a large sum of money to buy it. If the license plate had four or more digits, the car owner was not well connected and/or couldn’t afford to (or didn’t want to) pay for an “upgraded” license plate.

The valets parked the clients’ cars in a hierarchical order, where the most expensive cars, such as Ferraris and Lamborghinis (and especially the ones with the “right” license plates), were parked at the front of the line or in closest proximity to the nightclub. Sometimes guests even paid up to \$100 for their car to be in front of the line. Thereby, the importance attributed to cars upon arrival to high-end nightclubs provided patrons a multitude of ways for displaying their class and encouraged a culture of exhibitionism from the very beginning of the club experience. Moreover, it established high-end nightclubs as masculine front stages because constructions of masculinity are central to Beirut’s car culture.

After the valets parked our car, we walked to the entrance of the nightclub and skipped the line of people trying to gain entrance without table reservations. My male friend announced his last name and a hostess took us inside and led us to our table. My friends and I were seated at a large VIP table at one of the corners of the nightclub’s lower level. The table was shared with

another group of partygoers; the low volume and slow pace of the music encouraged initial exchanges between our two groups.

These initial exchanges were crucial processes for placing a person in his or her social category. First, my friends and I scrutinized and evaluated the other group's clothing, shoes, jewelry, watches and makeup. Once their attractiveness had been determined, we inquired about their first and last name, occupation, age and religious<sup>99</sup> and political affiliations. We also evaluated the guests at nearby tables; we commented on what they were wearing, who they were with and whether my friends knew them or any of their extended family and friends. In fact, initial exchanges revealed the importance assigned to family and friend ties both in and outside Beirut's high-end nightlife. This was well demonstrated in the linguistic conventions used in making the acquaintance of a stranger. In Lebanon, an individual introduces himself as *Ibn' Ayleh* ('son of family'), which "prompts one to bypass any other attribute that he may possess" (S. Khalaf 1971, p. 236).

As we can begin to assume, throughout the night, I observed how male and female clients displayed their gender and class in different and/or similar ways. Male clients employed style and grooming to display their class no less than the female guests. They slicked back their hair using an abundant amount of gel, wore dry-cleaned, colorful button-ups and sported polished leather shoes or expensive sneakers. They also proudly showcased costly, trademark watches. One night a collaborator informed me that the watch was the primary way in which he evaluated other men:

"If I want to approach a guy and talk to him, I will first look at his watch. If his watch is the price of mine (\$10,000), that means he is on my level and I can go talk to him. If the price is lower, then I won't go talk to him." "What if its higher than that? Like what if it's 30,000 dollars?" I interjected. He replied, "Then he is out of my league! No, just kidding, of course I can go talk to him! (Youssef, personal communication, July 30, 2016)

The layout of the venue also contributed to the exhibition of the male guests' class. The spatial demarcations were gradational; the "ultra-VIP" area was located on the upper tier of the venue, allowing its guests to look down upon all the revelers on the ground floor. The tables nearest to the DJ's booth were also considered ultra-VIP; these were the two most expensive options. The VIP table area was composed of small bar tables and lower lounge-like tables adjacent to the bar area and larger tables at two of the nightclub's corners. The central bar was where, as the bankers worded it, "the cheap people partied." These spatial demarcations exhibited how much a table (a male or a group of males)<sup>1010</sup> spent for the night.

The amount and brand of alcohol each table purchased further exhibited male clients' class. To assess this exhibition, I observed how a man's purchase of alcohol interacted with the nightclub's spatial demarcations. I noticed that when a wealthy man ordered a bottle of champagne with a price of \$1,000, the attention of the entire club was redirected to his table – the bottle was delivered to the client accompanied by the DJ's drum roll and followed by a spotlight of no less than three waiters walking from the bar all the way to his table.

Moreover, alcohol consumption informed binary gender performances. Drinking in high-end nightclubs often involved remaining “in control” (i.e. relatively sober) for both men and women. Remaining in control was essential, partly because guests often knew each other or were related in a certain way (Bonte 2016, p. 11). However, women were *especially* subject to maintaining a certain image. Similar to what De Visser and McDonnell found in their own research, public intoxication in Beirut is considered masculine (and as such not participating in ‘feminine’ behavior) and a way for men to achieve and perform ideal masculine identities within the night-time environment (Ross-Houle et al. 2015, p. 32). I vividly remember both the women at our table consuming fewer drinks than our male counterparts.

Female guests displayed their class status by way of their beauty<sup>1115</sup>. Before leaving for the nightclub, I spent two to three hours getting a manicure, pedicure and a hair blowout. I usually got my makeup done professionally. I spent another 30 minutes getting dressed, applying more hairspray, lotions and oils and fixing my makeup at my apartment. My attention to detail was not out of the ordinary. Although women’s dress styles varied – from street style jeans and crop tops to elegant maxi dresses – our professionally done hair and makeup and overall “fully-polished look” homogenized us. To a certain extent, we contributed to the cost and ambience of the evening by preparing our beauty.

Our beauty not only enhanced our personal wealth, but also enhanced the class status of our male counterparts. Beautiful women and money were intrinsically connected in Beirut’s high-end nightlife: both stood for and structured the recreation men pursued while partying (Allison, 1994, p. 126; also see Yoda, 1981). I soon came to understand that, the prettier and classier the woman, the better she reflected a man’s status (p. 126). In other words, women and their beauty were never meant to directly affect the outcome of a night, but were inserted into the front stage as a way of supporting male performances (Mulvey, 1999).

In this context, female clients not only subdued to “the male gaze,” but also looked at themselves and other women through eyes of men (Mulvey, 1999). As such, I noticed many women competing by way of and for the male gaze. For example, female clients competed by dancing “atop bars and tables, appropriating these surfaces as their impromptu stage, and increasing their visibility” (Mallat, 2011, p. 71).

At around 3:00 AM the moment came to leave White. The table’s bill was paid by one of my male friends. Before handing over a credit card to the waiter, my friends bickered over the bill. Interestingly, they were not arguing about the high cost of the bill, but rather, because both wanted to pay for it. It was uncommon for a group of males to split the cost of an evening. Instead, an individual male in a group paid the entire night’s bill. In this way, the male who paid individually showcased his class and overall masculine performance.

## CONCLUSION

As a University of Oregon Undergraduate Fellowship recipient, I conducted ethnographic research during July and August 2016 in Beirut, Lebanon. My fieldwork examined the

construction of women's beauty work in salons and how it affected gender and class performances in nightlife venues. Contemporary explanations on the popularity of beauty work are often explained by the reaction to the Lebanese Civil War, and by individualistic attitudes celebrating life, glamour, and living in the moment. This anguished desire to enjoy the "good life" reflects "a post-war society desperately trying, during brief peaceful interludes, to make up for lost time" (Mallat, 2011, p. 177). However, post-war anxieties and the influence of the media cannot be the only factors explaining the surge of beauty work. The causes for the growing popularity of beauty procedures lie much deeper: in the very nature of a woman's role within Lebanon's patriarchal kinship structure. In Lebanon, the family is the most pervasive and important social institution. Although Lebanese women put a high value on their career development and education, they put a greater priority on marriage and motherhood because it falls in line with the family's expectations. In this perspective, I argued that beauty work (and its respective exhibition in nightlife contexts) plays a key role in increasing a family's potential for their daughter's social mobility and marriage prospects.

I documented my experience participating in and studying Beirut's beauty salon culture. Women furthered class distinctions using various strategies in beauty work and beauty salons. One strategy included choosing to frequent high-end salons. At exclusive nightclubs, women often shared where they had gotten their hair or makeup done. Mentioning a high-end salon richly enhanced their class status. Women also furthered class distinctions by increasing the number and price of beauty treatments and prolonging the amount of time they spent at the salon. Most upper-middle and upper class women frequented the salon two to three times per week for three to four hours each time. Lower class women emulated the upper classes; they too frequented the salon abundantly, sometimes sacrificing valuable time and other expenses in order to get by.

Although these forms of distinction in beauty work and beauty salons may have turned into subtle forms of competition in nightlife venues, I never witnessed women explicitly competing *within* the salon space. In fact, through their reciprocal participation in beauty work, women in Cherry (temporarily) bridged class and religious differences that existed outside the salon. Paradoxically enough, women "prepared their beauty" together in the "back stage" in a mutually supportive way to then compete in the "front stage." For this reason, I argue that beauty salons in Beirut serve as "third spaces" (Bhabha, 1993), in which women's solidarity and pleasure temporally coincide with their subordination.

In my paper, I recounted my experience participating in and studying Beirut's nightlife. Nightlife plays an essential role in the formation of young Beirutis' social identity. My collaborators frequented specific venues to consolidate traditional identities of age, gender and class and/or to contest these very identities. On the one hand, I argued that high-end venues are spaces where pre-existing identities of gender and class are reinforced. High-end venues also serve as spaces where patriarchal kinship customs and networks are strengthened. Specifically, they are architecturally built and economically mediated for the performance of heteronormative behavior, and, above all, for the assertion of masculine identity. In these venues, women assimilated dominant models of beauty and demeanor. By "preparing their

beauty” in the back stage and displaying a “fully-polished look” in the front stage, they increased their (and their family’s) potential for social mobility and marriage prospects.

The two original contributions of my research to the study of Lebanese women’s beauty work concern both my methodological choices as well as the actual results of my field work. First, by using the framework of Erving Goffman’s “back stage” and “front stage” theory, I linked women’s preparation practices in beauty salons with their performance practices in nightlife venues. Although I considered the space of beauty’s construction to be distinct from the space of its exhibition, I also recognized Beirut women’s engagement in beauty work as processual – both within and between these settings. Seeing beauty as a process through the lens of dramaturgical and performance theory not only highlighted the extensive energy, time, and money Beirut women dedicated to their self-beautification in the “back stage,” but also called attention to the emotional labor they underwent to parallelly femininize their tact, demeanor and poise in the “front stage.”

Second, by disputing Lebanon’s post-war interlude as the main explanation for the current wave of escapism, consumerism, and exhibitionism, I complicated accepted anthropological and sociological assumptions for why Beirut women engage in extensive beauty work. Instead, I analyzed the country’s deeply rooted patriarchal and familial structure; my findings revealed that women’s extensive and consistent participation in beauty work primarily enhanced the social and class status of both the nuclear and extended family. As one elderly salon worker told me, Beirut women beautified themselves long before the civil war and the proliferation of invasive media and cosmetic surgery. I invite researchers interested in Lebanese women’s beauty and consumer practices – as well as in their cultural, social economic and political status – to not merely rely on post-war theory, but to embed women’s behavior in the context of the country’s deeply rooted familial and collective past, present and, most likely, future.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Hariri was a Lebanese business tycoon and the Prime Minister of Lebanon from 1992 to 1998 and again from 2000 until his resignation on 20 October 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Hamra is a central district and economic hub of Beirut.

<sup>3</sup> *Los Angeles Times* journalist Borzou Daragahi describes the street as a bastion of liberalism [that] embraces multiple religions and political views; Hamra Street is an amalgam of all of Lebanon's religious groups, including Sunnis, Maronites, Melkites, Greek Orthodox Christians, and Shias. Hamra remains Lebanon's secular haven, melting pot for free thinkers and the least religiously affiliated area around Beirut (Daragahi 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Salons that cater to university students are usually near universities and have special student discounts.

<sup>5</sup> A celebrity hair-stylist in Beirut.

<sup>6</sup> These conflicts include 33-day Israeli war on Hezbollah in 2006, the crisis in 2008 during which Hezbollah militia clashed with the government and seized control of a part of Beirut, and Lebanon's involvement in the Syrian civil war.

<sup>7</sup> Ethnic, religious and political identities are also reinforced.

<sup>8</sup> Wasta "refers to connections people have and use in order to obtain various kinds of benefits for themselves or someone else. ...As a type of favoritism based primarily on kinship ties, wasta resembles other

<sup>9</sup> If not already evident from religious symbols worn as jewelry.

<sup>10</sup> A table at White was usually bought by a single man in a group of two to ten clients of mixed sexes. Women in these groups almost never contributed to the cost of the table. All-male groups were also common; a single man in the group would buy the table. All-female groups were less common but still existed. I do not have sufficient data to know how all-female groups bought tables.

<sup>11</sup> The brand and style of clothing also had important implications for the display of wealth but this is not the focus of my research.



# The Impacts of Increased Heat and Precipitation on Plant Phenology and Demography in Pacific Northwest Prairies

Ben Avis, Allie Ludden, Hunter Mackin, Andreas Martinez, Sean Petitt, Elizabeth Porter, Emma Rasmussen, and Miles Steele\*

## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand the implications that projected climate change will have on the phenology of seven prairie grass and forb species, such as disruptions in species interactions and native biodiversity loss. Data were collected at Willow Creek, an upland prairie in the city of Eugene. To assess the possible effects of climate change on plant survival rate and vigor, the experiment was designed to manipulate temperature and precipitation with four treatments (control, drought, heat, heat plus precipitation), and to measure the phenological and reproductive variables of the planted focal species. Experimental parameters were consistent with average predictions for changes in temperature and precipitation for the area. Phenological, demographic, and normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) data were collected over an eight-week period. This study found warming treatments advance phenology for the forb species *Plectritis congesta* and *Sidalcea malviflora*. In addition, the grass species *Festuca roemerii* was found to have higher spikelet abundance in drought and control treatments, but no significant change to phenology. These results indicate that as temperatures rise with climate change, plant phenologies may shift, potentially reducing the reproductive fitness of certain plants.

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## INTRODUCTION

The current global accumulation of greenhouse gases is higher today than it has been in the last ~800,000 years (NOAA, 2018). Accompanying the current increase in greenhouse gas

\* Through the Environmental Leadership Program (ELP) within the Environmental Studies Program, eight undergraduate students prepared, performed, and completed a study over the course of two terms, with some work into the summer. In the first term, most of the background information necessary was learned, methods were developed, and a lengthy monitoring proposal was produced. In the second term, all the data was collected and analyzed and the results were discussed. Finally, all the work was compiled into a final report, which was presented at the 2018 ELP symposium. Now it is being put forth for a broader audience. From hardly knowing each other in the beginning, the eight students grew into a tight-knit team, with many long nights of work and many long laughs. The Climate and Phenology Team hopes people find their project as interesting as they did, and if there are any questions, emails are encouraged. They can be reached at [huntecmackin@gmail.com](mailto:huntecmackin@gmail.com), and their faculty sponsors, Laura McCullough and Peg Boulay, can be reached respectively at [lmccull2@uoregon.edu](mailto:lmccull2@uoregon.edu) and [boulay@uoregon.edu](mailto:boulay@uoregon.edu).

emissions, global precipitation and air temperature increased by 1.37mm/yr and 0.024°C/yr respectively between 1981 and 2000 (Tian et al., 2015). This warming trend is expected to continue, with mean global air temperature forecasted to rise another 1.8 - 4.08°C by 2100 (Dunne, Harte, & Taylor, 2003). Considering that newer predictions anticipate a rise of 1.67 - 3.89°C by 2050 and 2.78 - 6.11°C on average by 2080 in Oregon, understanding the impacts of warming on local plant phenology, the study of seasonal and cyclic natural phenomena, has never been more imperative (Oregon Climate Assessment Report, 2017; Calado & Leal, 2012). There is significant evidence that species' ranges, or geographical distributions, have been altered by climate change; if this trend continues, it could have substantial implications for native vegetation (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2013; Bachelet et al., 2011).

Over the past twenty years, the impacts of climate warming on natural systems have been recorded across the globe using phenological data (Khanduri, 2008). It has been determined that autumn and spring phenologies have shifted, causing growing seasons to start later (Ibanez et al., 2010). Researchers have concluded that for many plant species, higher spring temperatures affect phenology by advancing the rate at which plants come to reproductive maturity in the spring; however, this differs depending on the plant species (Fitter, Fitter, Harrels, & Williamson, 2002). Despite this variation, flowering rates have advanced up to four days per degree Celsius on average, when plants are subjected to higher temperatures shortly before flowering (Fitter et al., 2002). When warming occurs four to six months prior to flowering, this temperature change delays phenology (Fitter et al., 2002).

The Pacific Northwest is located within a Mediterranean climate zone, which has hot, dry summers, and wet, mild winters. The drier summers mean climate change effects in the area are expected to be even more drastic than in other locations. The projected increase in temperature could affect plant community composition, decrease native diversity, and increase total cover, especially in an area where there has been significant habitat fragmentation and proliferation of invasive species (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2013). Thus, researchers predict that the loss of biodiversity will be greater here than in other types of biomes (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2013).

Many experiments have been done to determine the future of prairie productivity under different climate change projections. Through these experiments, researchers have concluded that, in addition to a decrease in biodiversity, warming has a high likelihood of causing shifts in vegetation ranges and community populations (Bachelet et al., 2011). In a 2013 study examining how increased temperatures could affect vegetation ranges, added heat improved the recruitment, or the successful reproduction, of species that were moved north of their current range, indicating that species might be able to thrive if they disperse northwards as conditions change (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2013). However, such areas are often already occupied by other species, which might increase competition for space and nutrients.

In a warming-induced study carried out by Whittington et al. (2015), flowering and senescence timing at the individual level also experienced significant shifts. For individuals, budding occurred approximately seven days earlier, and flowering onset approximately seven to eight days earlier, with the most significant effects occurring under increased warming conditions of 3°C.

Competition and phenological shifts like these may cause asynchronicities between plants and pollinators, which could result in a decline in the fitness of prairie ecosystems as temperatures continue to rise (Whittington et al., 2015).

In a study by Pfeifer-Meister et al. (2013), an increase in temperature was shown to reduce overall survivorship as southern species were moved northward. Interestingly, increased biomass and seed production were correlated with increased temperature and precipitation regardless of geographic distribution, both independently and together. Nutrient availability also increased with temperature, although this was likely an indirect effect of heating on the nutrients (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2013). Overall, these positive effects were outweighed by the negative effects of lowered germination rates and survivorship. This suggests that climate change could hinder the ability of native plants to survive in their current ranges (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2013).

With warmer temperatures, native plants may face the threat of competition from other plants, especially non-native annual grasses (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2015). Under experimental conditions of warming, annual plant species began emerging earlier, and competed more heavily against perennial species. Among the three sites tested, the northernmost site had the lowest proportion of annuals, the central site had an intermediate proportion, and the southernmost site had the highest proportion (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2015). Overall biodiversity also decreased over time under all treatments, with Simpson's index of diversity (which is a calculation of species richness and evenness) dropping, and species richness dropping even further (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2015). In addition, invasive species tended to adapt the best to drought conditions, as they are more effective competitors for nitrogen (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2015). The carbon content of the soil was also affected with an average loss of 40 Mg ha<sup>-1</sup> in soil carbon attributed to the invasion (Pfeifer-Meister et al., 2015).

By using the results from current experiments and analyzing phenological data from past studies, it is possible to get an even clearer look at the short- and long-term effects of climate change on plants within the scarce prairie regions of the Pacific Northwest. There is a prevailing sense that climate change will negatively impact plant phenology and cause species to shift their ranges, but further studies are needed to improve the understanding of the issue. The analysis of data collected from these studies could also help inform decisions pertaining to future restoration projects and policies.

There were three goals for our study: to recognize and interpret the impacts that varying "climate treatments" have on A) the phenology of several species, B) the overall greenness and biomass accumulation of species, and C) the reproductive fitness of species. Our hypotheses are as follows:

**H1) Warming treatments (heat and heat plus precipitation) will result in an advancement in phenology of forbs and grasses.** This is because prairie plants time their reproductive cycles in response to seasonal temperature changes.

**H2) Using a normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI), warming treatments (heat and heat plus precipitation) will result in a higher amount**

**of biomass as well as an earlier peak in biomass.** This is expected from a larger/earlier nutrient uptake associated with warming.

**H3) Drought treatments will result in a fewer number of total flowers/spikelets and flowering plants/plants with spikelets than that of the control treatments due to a reduction of soil moisture.** This is expected due to reduced water availability for roots.

## METHODS

### STUDY SITE

The experiment took place at Willow Creek Preserve, which consists of 519 acres of protected native habitat located in West Eugene, Oregon. The preserve contains a wide variety of vegetative communities including upland prairie, wetland prairie, forested wetland, riparian forest, and oak woodland. The study site was located in an upland prairie on the southwest side of The Nature Conservancy's Willow Creek Preserve.

### EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Four climatic manipulations were embedded throughout 20 numbered plots. Each plot was randomly assigned one of four climate treatments: drought (-40% precipitation), heat (+2.5°C), heat plus precipitation, and control. Due to the decline in soil moisture caused by heating alone, heat plus precipitation treatments were included to ameliorate the effects of soil drying. In total, there were five replicate plots for each treatment. In order to ensure species location consistency, all plots were designed to be 3m in diameter with PVC rings placed in each plot. Rings were arranged using an x,y grid coordinate system that contained 8 PVC rings for each of the 12 species per plot, with 25 seeds planted within each PVC ring. Species' positions were consistent at each plot, but a different ring was used each year. In each control plot, imitation wooden heaters were constructed to mimic the shading effect of the electrical equipment used in the heated plots.

### DATA COLLECTION

From April 13 through May 25 of 2018, our team traveled to the Willow Creek site to make observations and record data pertaining to the 12 grass and forb species each Friday. We broke up into teams of two, and half of each team made observations while the other half recorded data gathered by the observer. We collected three categories of data: NDVI data, essentially a measure of greenness to calculate overall vegetative canopy cover, phenological data consisting of budding, flowering, and senescence, and demographic census data to assess overall plant reproduction.

NDVI data were gathered weekly by using a GeoSCOUT GLS-400, a handheld remote sensing device capable of measuring the canopy reflectance of vegetation in any lighting. The plots at Willow Creek were monitored in an identical way every week. Six measurements were taken at

each plot per week, with each measurement taken at waist level and facing a different direction: northwest (starting location), west, southwest, southeast, east, and northeast.

The second weekly protocol was to collect phenological data for all present focal species. In order to maintain uniformity, every Friday at 11 a.m., each team systematically recorded data for all species. Because time of day can affect phenology, each week a new, randomly-selected starting plot was chosen. With one measurer and one recorder, team members worked together to collect data in all 20 plots, alternating roles between each plot. For forb species, the number of plants exhibiting flowers with visible reproductive organs were counted, as well as the total number of flowers in each plot. Additionally, we counted the total number of plants with buds showing petals and total number of buds in each plot. Data on the grasses were collected by counting the number of flowering stalks. For all focal species, the presence of senescence was noted. We also recorded any observations, variables, deviations from protocol, or other details that could have potentially affected experimental outcomes.

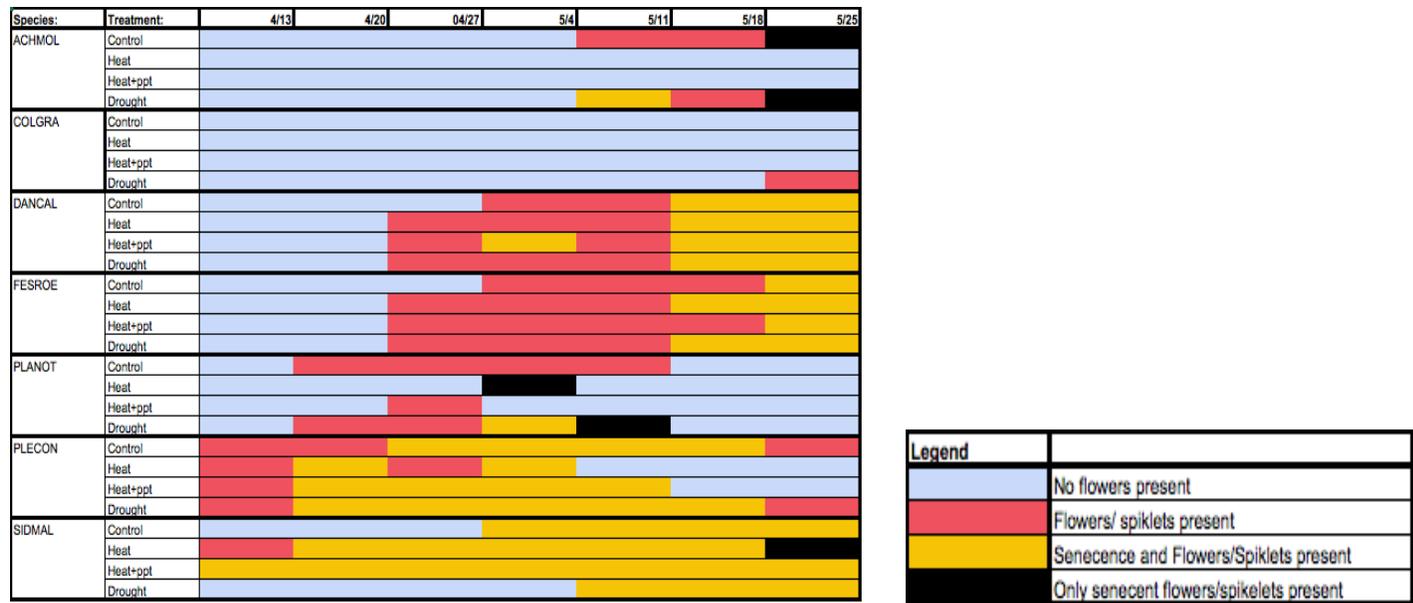
## DATA ANALYSIS

There were a number of variables that measured the progress of phenology under different treatments. The variables, unlike the treatments, differed between grass and forb species. For native forb species, indicator variables consisted of the number of plants with buds, the number of buds per plot, the number of plants with flowers, and the number of flowers per plot. For native grass species, the indicator variables were the number of plants with spikelets and the number of flowering stalks per plot. The one common indicator was whether senescence was present or absent. This form of analysis showed first flowering, peak flowering times, and senescence timing for each climate treatment. Data analysis was not performed for the NDVI data collected on April 27 due to a data entry error.

The final analysis was conducted using the statistical software SPSS. Descriptive statistics and homogeneity of variance were checked first. Then, an analysis of variance, or ANOVA, was used to test the significance (standardized at the 5% level) of each treatment on every phenological variable measured, for every species. If the ANOVA was significant, Tukey's post-hoc test, which identifies significant differences between means, was performed to identify which treatments were significantly different from each other. NDVI was also analyzed by treatment for each day data were collected using ANOVA and Tukey's test.

## RESULTS

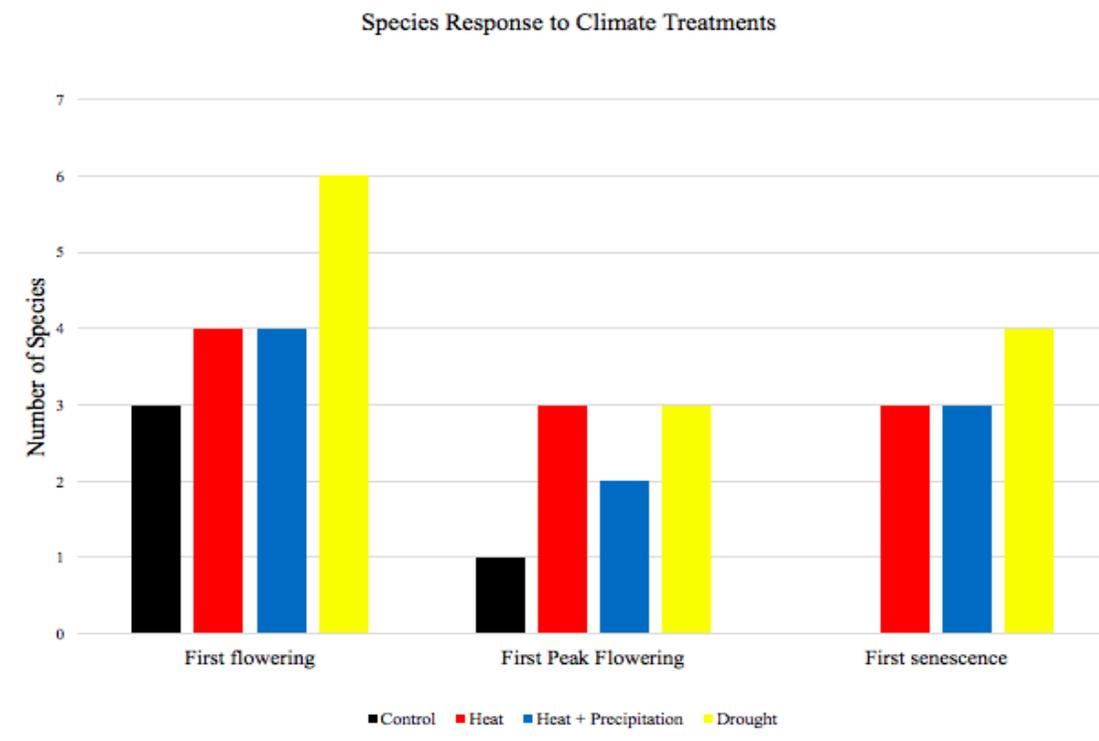
During the study period, we were able to measure variables for seven focal species, specifically five forbes and two grasses. The relevant forbs were *Sidalcea malviflora*, *Plectritis congesta*, *Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*, *Achyrachaena mollis*, and *Collinsia grandiflora*, and the relevant grasses were *Festuca roemerii* and *Danthonia californica*.



**Figure 1:** Timing of phenological markers across climate treatments for seven focal species (ACHMOL: *Achyrachaena mollis*, COLGRA: *Collinsia grandiflora*, DANCAL: *Danthonia californica*, FESROE: *Festuca roemerii*, PLANOT: *Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*, PLECON: *Plectritis congesta*, SIDMAL: *Sidalcea malviflora*)

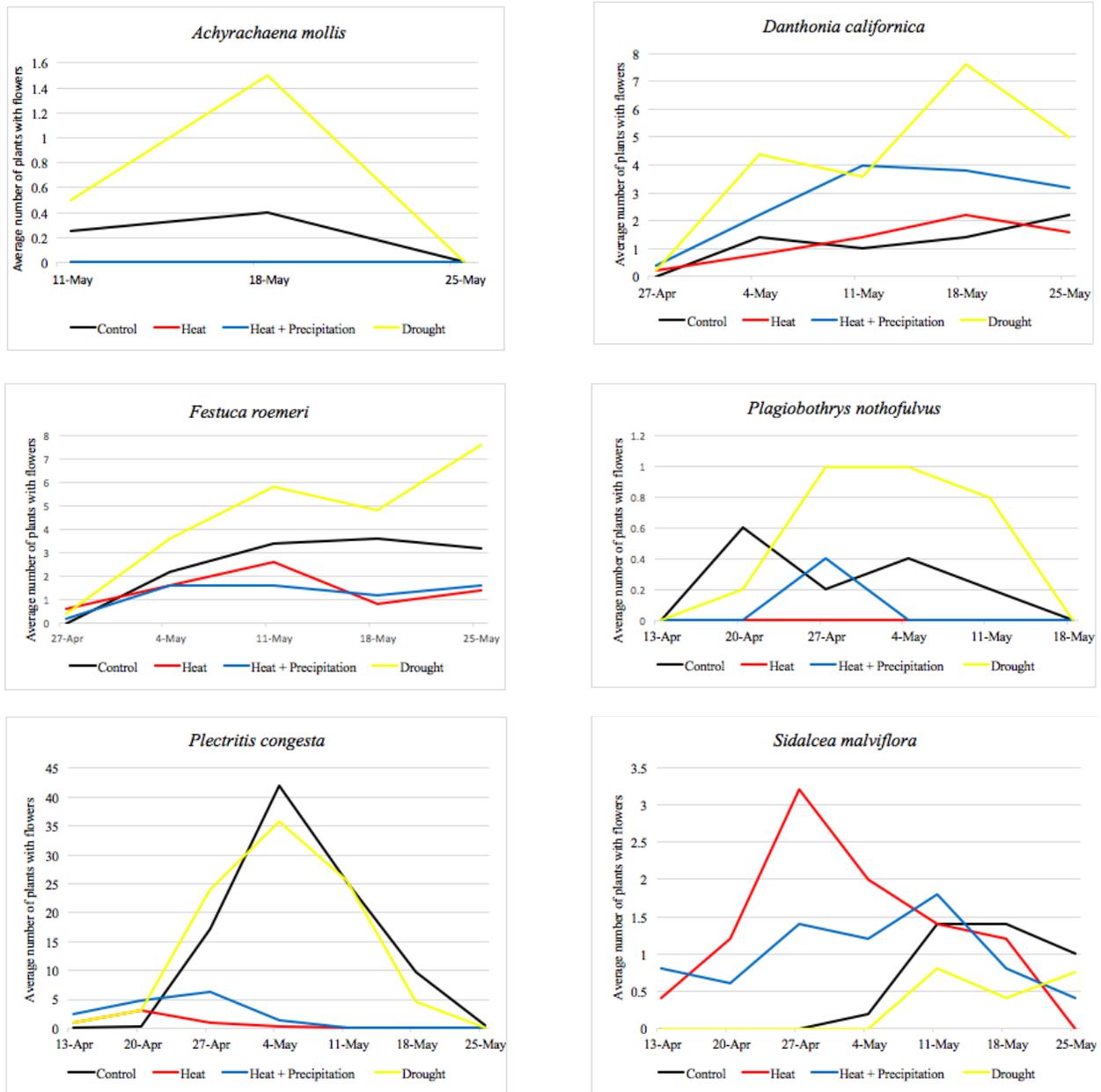
### PHENOLOGY AMONG SPECIES

Earlier flowering times were predicted for all species in response to warming, in both heat and heat plus precipitation treatments. However, only two species, *P. congesta* and *S. malviflora*, had significantly earlier flowering times. *F. roemerii* also exhibited a significant trend in spikelet abundance, with highest abundance in control and drought treatments. Most species' first flowering occurred in drought plots (Fig. 2). However, several species flowered first in the heat, heat and precipitation, and control conditions (Fig. 2). Control plots were the least eventful, with no senescence and only one peak flowering occurring first in this treatment (Fig. 2). First peak flowering was observed in all treatments (Fig. 2). Two species, *P. congesta* and *S. malviflora*, were already flowering on the first day of data collection (Fig. 1).



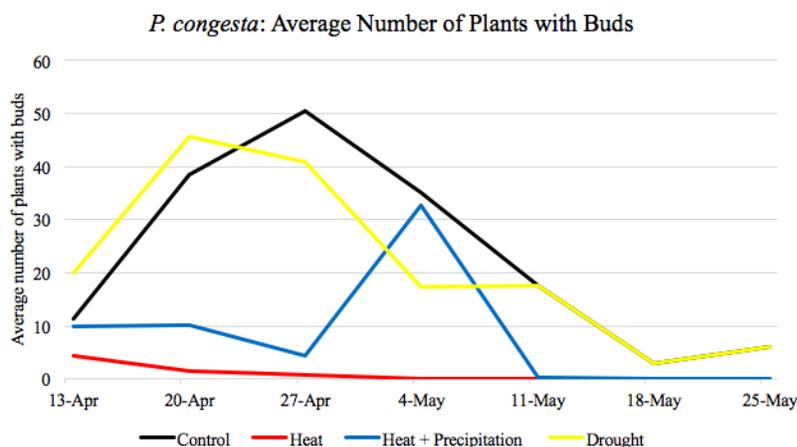
**Figure 2:** The treatment where first flowering, first peak flowering, and first senescence occurred was totaled across species. If a phenological event occurred first in more than one treatment, all applicable treatments were tallied.

The majority of species observed had the highest peak of average plants with flowers in the drought and control treatments, with the exception of *S. malviflora*, where heat and heat plus precipitation produced the highest average of plants with flowers. The abundance of plants with flowers tended to aggregate between drought and control treatments, and heat and heat plus precipitation treatments, with the exception of *D. californica* (Fig. 3). For *A. mollis*, only drought and control treatments had flowering plants during data collection.



**Figure 3:** Average number of plants with flowers per treatment over time for species: *Achyrrachaena mollis*, *Danthonia californica*, *Festuca roemeri*, *Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*, *Plectritis congesta*, *Sidalcea malviflora*.

## SPECIES-SPECIFIC PHENOLOGY

*PLECTRITIS CONGESTA*

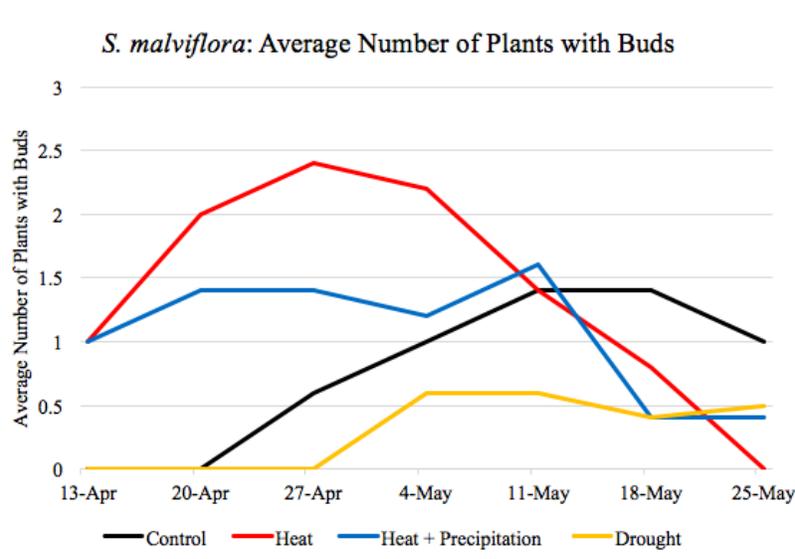
**Figure 4:** Number of *Plectritis congesta* with buds present across the different treatments.

The average number of plants with buds of *P. congesta* peaked earliest in the heat treatment plots on April 13 (Fig. 4). The peak average number of plants with buds in drought occurred the following week on April 20, and control followed the week after on April 27 (Fig. 4). For the heat plus precipitation treatment, the peak average number of plants with buds did not follow the same bell curve trend. Instead, it experienced a decrease in the average number of plants with buds between April 20 and April 27, then reached its peak the latest of all treatments, on May 4 (Fig. 4).

For *P. congesta*, the average number of plants with buds yielded significant differences between drought and heat on April 27 ( $p = 0.002$ ), May 4 ( $p < 0.001$ ), and May 11 ( $p = 0.031$ ) (Fig. 5). Between drought and heat plus precipitation, significant difference occurred on April 27 ( $p = 0.018$ ), May 4 ( $p < 0.001$ ), and May 11 ( $p = 0.032$ ) (Fig. 4). The difference between control and heat plus precipitation was significant on May 4 ( $p < 0.001$ ), May 11 ( $p = 0.034$ ), and May 18 ( $p = 0.003$ ). Control and heat were significantly different on April 27 ( $p = 0.033$ ), May 4 ( $p < 0.001$ ), May 11 ( $p = 0.032$ ), and May 18 ( $p = 0.003$ ).

Similar to the average of plants with buds, heated plots experienced the earliest phenology, with a peak in the average of plants with flowers occurring on April 20 (Fig. 3). The heat plus precipitation treatment reached the peak of average plants with flowers on April 27, followed by a steady decline. Both drought and control plots experienced a peak in average plants with flowers on May 4. Senescence in *P. Congesta* was first recorded on April 20 in heat, drought, and heat plus precipitation treatments.

*SIDALCEA MALVIFLORA*



**Figure 5:** Number of *Sidalcea malviflora* with buds present across the different treatments.

*S. malviflora* exhibited advanced phenology in the heat treatments compared to the control and drought treatments. The peak of average number of plants with buds occurred earliest in the heat treatment on April 27, then on May 4 for drought, May 11 for heat plus precipitation, and between May 11 and 18 for control (Fig. 5). For the average number of plants with buds, significant differences were found on April 20 between control and heat ( $p = 0.015$ ) and between drought and heat ( $p = 0.015$ ) (Fig. 5).

This trend continued for the average number of plants with flowers, with heat peaking on April 27, while control and drought both peaked later on May 11 (Fig. 5). Heat plus precipitation had an overall maximum average number of plants with flowers on May 11, but a secondary peak was observed on April 27 (Fig. 5). Senescence across all treatments was first observed in heat plus precipitation on April 13, and in heat on April 20 (Fig. 1). Both control and drought experienced later first senescences on May 4 and May 11 respectively (Fig. 1). Heat was the only treatment to have full senescence during data collection, occurring on May 25 (Fig. 1).

For the average number of plants with flowers, *S. malviflora* was significantly different between control and heat ( $p = 0.015$ ), and drought and heat ( $p = 0.015$ ) on April 27 (Fig. 3).

### **FESTUCA ROEMERI**

*F. roemerii* had more average plants with spikelets in drought and control treatments than in heat plus precipitation and heat treatments across the entire data collection period (Fig. 3). Drought and heat plus precipitation treatments were found to be significantly different on May 11 ( $p=0.021$ ), May 18 ( $p=0.021$ ), and May 25 ( $p=0.015$ ) (Fig. 3). Drought and heat treatments were significantly different on May 18 ( $p=0.005$ ) and May 25 ( $p=0.011$ ) (Fig. 3). Total spikelets per plot for *F. roemerii* was significantly different on May 18 between drought and heat (0.033) and between drought and heat plus precipitation ( $p=0.016$ ) (Fig. 3). Spikelets for *F. roemerii* were first found on April 27 in heat, heat plus precipitation, and drought treatments (Fig. 1). Senescence

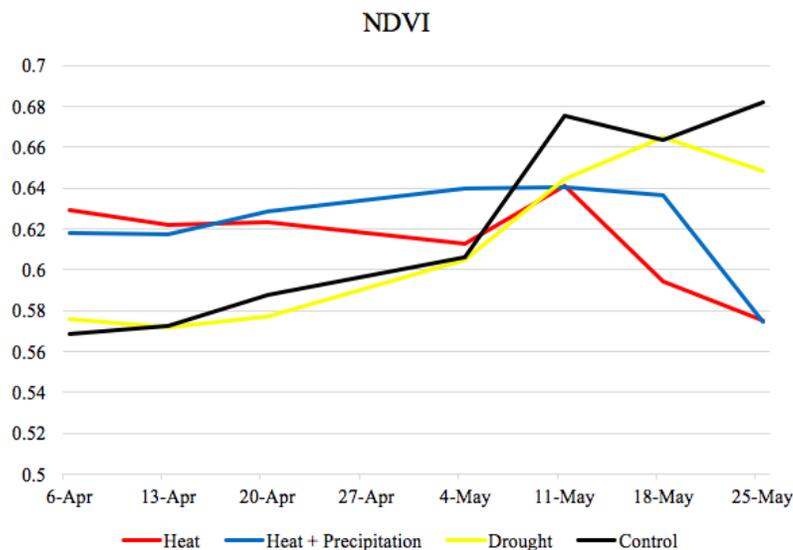
was first noted on May 18 in both heat and drought treatments (Fig. 1). Phenology for control treatments followed a different trend, with spikelets occurring first on May 4 and senescence first noted May 25 (Fig. 1).

### *ACHYRACHAENA MOLLIS*, *DANTHONIA CALIFORNICA*, *PLAGIOBOTHRYUS NOTHOFULVUS*

*A. mollis* only flowered in control and drought treatments during data collection. For average plants with flowers, *A. mollis* yielded significant differences on May 18 between drought and heat treatments ( $p=0.038$ ) and between drought and heat plus precipitation treatments ( $p=0.038$ ) (Fig. 3). *P. nothofulvus* also flowered earlier in control and heat, with first peak flowering occurring in control (Fig. 3). *D. californica* was the only species where control and drought did not follow similar trends; instead, drought and heat plus precipitation treatments were similar, with both exhibiting the most flowering plants during the data collection period (Fig. 3).

### NORMALIZED DIFFERENCE VEGETATION INDEX

Across all treatments, plot productivity was measured by NDVI throughout the eight weeks. Through this data, no significant interaction between the average NDVI value and type of climate treatment was observed. Differences were observed, but these were not significant for the alpha level selected. However, the heat and heat plus precipitation treatments experienced an earlier peak in NDVI than the drought and control treatments.



**Figure 6:** Averaged normalized difference vegetation index for the four treatments over time.

## DISCUSSION

## SIGNIFICANCE

*P. congesta* had a peak average flowering time under the heat treatment on April 13 (Fig. 4). This indicates that the true peak in the average number of plants with buds either occurred before data collection or that the species didn't germinate much at all within the heat treatment. The average number of plants with buds in heat and heat plus precipitation treatments proved significantly lower than drought and control treatments on multiple dates: April 27 and May 4, May 11 for heat only, and April 27 and May 4 for heat plus precipitation only. Control and drought treatments appeared to foster higher numbers and rates of reproduction of this species the most frequently, though not for every date. This indicates that rising temperatures may reduce the fitness of *P. congesta*.

*F. roemerii* generally proved much more plentiful and reproductive within the drought and control treatments than within the heat and heat plus precipitation treatments. Drought treatments produced on average the most plants with spikelets, while heat treatments generally produced the least. While drought conditions don't appear to be a threat to the fitness of this species, warming conditions do appear to be a threat.

Hypothesis 1 (H1), which predicted that warming treatments would advance the phenology of forbs and grasses, appeared to hold for at least one forb, *S. malviflora*, with warming treatments advancing its phenology relative to control and drought treatments (Fig. 1). However, drought conditions appeared to advance phenology as quickly or more quickly than any other treatment for every other focal species (Fig. 1). First flowering occurred in four of the focal species for both heat and heat plus precipitation treatments, with only three observed in control. Yet drought had the highest, with the first flowering of six species observed within respective plots. The second hypothesis (H2), which stated that heating treatments would result in a higher amount and earlier peak in biomass, did not have any significant evidence indicating it should be rejected or failed to be rejected. There was no significant difference in timing of peak biomass. The third hypothesis (H3), which stated that drought treatments would result in the lowest number of flowers/spikelets and flowering plants/plants with spikelets, was rejected, especially for grasses, where drought treatments generally produced the most spikelets.

## PLANTS AND POLLINATORS

Pollinators play a pivotal role in plant reproduction, and the trends observed under heat treatments could disrupt this role. There is evidence that suggests climate change does not alter the duration of flowering or fruiting (Price & Waser, 1998), yet in our study, abbreviated flowering times were observed under heat treatments, perhaps most notably for *P. congesta* and *P. nothofulvus* (Fig. 4). The aforementioned research did find evidence that warming advances the timing of reproduction (Price & Waser, 1998). Our experiment corroborates that finding, with first flowering and first senescence occurring earlier for more species in both heat and heat plus precipitation plots than control plots (Fig. 2). However, drought plots appeared to advance the phenology of the most plants across the board (Fig. 2). With phenology advanced in most focal species for every experimental treatment, it may be posited that pollinators, many of which

coevolved with some focal species, could arrive late under future climate change scenarios. In turn, they might be absent during peak flowering times, which could reduce the fitness of both species.

## NORMALIZED DIFFERENCE VEGETATION INDEX

NDVI had no statistically significant differences across treatments. As for any observable trend, the index appeared fairly the same for drought and control (Fig. 6). Additionally, heat seemed analogous to heat plus precipitation, apart from relatively large rises and falls in heated plots date to date in the latter half of the data collection period (Fig. 6). Throughout the study, similar effects were often observed between control and drought treatments, as well as between heat and heat plus precipitation treatments. This indicates that heat may be more affecting than precipitation for many species. Compared to heat and heat plus precipitation plots, control and drought plots had lower biomass at the start. However, by May 11, both had achieved higher NDVI values than heat and heat plus precipitation (Fig. 6). On May 25, control had the highest peak biomass, while heat and heat plus precipitation both had relatively low biomass, in addition to a much lower peak biomass overall (Fig. 6). This indicates that biomass may decline more quickly as summer progresses under future climate change, and may even be lower altogether. Consequently, ecosystems might be disrupted and lose a significant amount of life.

## INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive plant species create more competition for native plant species for vital resources, such as sunlight, water, and space. Should an invasive species come from a naturally warmer and/or drier climate, they would likely be better suited to exist in the conditions of projected climate change. This might significantly impair the survivability of smaller forbs, such as *P. nothofulvus* and *A. mollis*, which were never observed to grow under grass cover, likely due to getting shaded out.

## METHOD ERRORS

The total number of *S. malviflora* plants may have been over-counted, as many plants that appeared to be spaced far away from each other turned out to be the same plant under closer examination. This fact was disseminated at the start of data collection, but errors could have occurred regardless, and may have given an upward bias to plants with buds and plants with flowers.

*P. nothofulvus* and *A. mollis* were very small and hard to find, often requiring data collectors to brush aside other plants and use magnifying glasses to determine whether they were present. While extra time was devoted to finding these plants and checking every relevant ring thoroughly, there still may have been plants that were missed, which may have biased all dependent variables downward.

One drought plot was missed for *A. mollis* on May 18, and another drought plot was missed for *S. malviflora* on May 25. These were excluded from analysis, but certainly decreased the power of the analysis conducted for these species on both of these dates.

## CONCLUSION

Our results showed that the warming treatments generally resulted in earlier senescence of plants and forbs. If this trend is upheld with predicted temperature increase, it could decrease length of flowering time and cause asynchronicities between local species and their pollinators, which could result in reduced fitness for both species. Since many native prairie species may be at risk of experiencing these detrimental effects, it is imperative that conservation efforts are made on existing prairies. In future studies, researchers could test the significance of flowering time and senescence in plant/pollinator interactions, now that there are evidenced differences across climate variations. This would provide us with a better idea of how prairie systems might be affected by climate variations. Further conversations are necessary to determine what steps must be taken in order to mitigate the effects climate change may have on endemic prairie systems. These may include the possibility of forced migration of species who will no longer be able to thrive at their current ranges. While our study has by no means determined what is necessary to the survival of prairie systems, we hope that our findings will benefit future studies and conversations.

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## Reconceptualizing Feminist Utopias: Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone*

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### ABSTRACT

Theories of feminist utopia tend to focus on its presence within science/speculative fiction, upholding works like Marge Piercy's 1976 novel *Woman on the Edge of Time* as exemplars of the genre. Literary critics typically designate this novel's vision of the future, the community of Mattapoisett, as a source of radical, mobilizing inspiration for feminists. I will argue against this reading by attesting that Mattapoisett presents a regressive model of feminism in its failure to permit women the choice of (traditional) maternity and, moreover, does not sufficiently distance itself from that which is condemned in the novel's dystopian present - the stripping of women's reproductive agency. Mattapoisett thus fails to fulfill half of Sally Miller Gearhart's essential criteria for the identification of feminist utopia. By contrast, I argue that Margaret Drabble's 1965 novel, *The Millstone*, presents a radical vision of maternity, as divorced from patriarchy, that aligns with threads of the feminist movement yet to come at the time of its publication, and that this, under Gearhart's framework, strongly suggests the presence of a feminist utopia. This is striking in that the novel is categorized as a work of realism, rather than science fiction. By revealing the vision of feminism within a speculative fiction novel to be retrograde in comparison with that of a realistic novel, I argue that feminism unyokes realism from the present, thus collapsing boundaries between genres, and making a case for the study of the feminist utopia in realms beyond science fiction.

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### INTRODUCTION

The feminist movement, like all movements promoting social change, is principally characterized by its forward trajectory: it presents a vision (or rather, visions) for a future in which women and men are "equal." In the 1960s and 1970s, its prevailing vision was one of sexual freedom(s), with the incipient Sexual Revolution promoting contraception and, when necessary,

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abortion, as tools for diminishing the power of patriarchal, moralizing institutions. The movement touted women's freedom to engage in casual sex, out of wedlock and without pregnancy as a consequence, as a means of patriarchal liberation. In practice, such behavior furthered women's access to the workplace by enabling them to forgo maternal duties, and, moreover, challenged existing norms that equated female sexual license with broader immorality. This iteration of feminism did not account for the entirety of the second-wave feminist movement of which it was a part, though it is the most frequently historicized, perhaps due to its novelty in the context of past feminist movements, which focused more on public enfranchisement of women than on private-sphere liberties. Sexual Revolution-era conceptions of feminism are also often present in novelistic conceptions of feminist utopias, which acclaimed scholar-author Sally Miller Gearhart<sup>1</sup> characterizes with the following attributes: "contrasts the present with an envisioned idealized society (separated from the present by time or space)," "offers a comprehensive critique of present values/conditions," "sees men or male institutions as a major cause of present social ills," and "presents women not only as at least the equal of men but also as the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions" (Gearhart 296). Given that the tenets of the Sexual Revolution could be described with the three latter traits outlined here, it seems apt that authors of feminist utopian fiction would write from this specific feminist framework.

Sexual Revolution-era values are certainly evident in Marge Piercy's 1976 speculative fiction novel *Woman on the Edge of Time*, which presents the community of Mattapoissett, situated in the 22nd century, as its utopian vision. Mattapoissett represents a radical departure from modern society in a number of ways, but perhaps its most notable deviances pertain to gender, sexuality, and maternity – precisely the reason why this novel is usually considered a prototypical example of feminist utopia. Piercy depicts a world in which a feminist form of social anarchism prevails, as represented by gender fluidity, the encouragement of total sexual license, pregnancy and childbirth via artificial (external) womb, and a genderless, community-based conception of motherhood that extends only until children reach puberty. These cultural practices are strongly reminiscent of those advocated by Sexual Revolution-affiliated feminists, as they are centered around liberation from patriarchal structures via the estrangement of maternity from womanhood. However, this novel was written about ten years after the peak of the Sexual Revolution (in the 1970s rather than the 1960s), and it seems unusual for a purported utopia to hearken back to past visions of the progressive. It is this surprisingly regressive approach to motherhood that has compelled me to study *Woman on the Edge of Time* in conjunction with a novel borne of the 1960s, the very time in which the ideals set forth by Piercy flourished.

*The Millstone*, written by Margaret Drabble in 1965, is not a work of science fiction or speculative fiction, but rather one of realism; yet, like *Woman on the Edge of Time*, it contends with motherhood in a radical way. Its protagonist, Rosamund, is sexually disinterested – perhaps what we would now term asexual – but chooses to have sexual relations once, resulting in an

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<sup>1</sup> I have chosen to work with Gearhart's definition for pragmatic reasons – in particular, its clarity, its concision, and its authority. Gearhart both theorizes and writes feminist utopian fiction, which gives her unique credibility in the appraisal of the genre's vital attributes.

unexpected pregnancy. Though she is encouraged to abort the fetus by family members and friends (representative of the same Sexual Revolution-era values that Piercy promotes), Rosamund chooses to have her child, and finds the experience to be edifying and purpose-giving. Drabble positions Rosamund's refusal to conform to the norms of the contemporaneous Sexual Revolution as a matter of radicalism, of choice, freedom, and self-determination. By the end of the novel, Rosamund is continuing her work in academia while maintaining her role as a mother, unfettered by men and surrounded by a community of supportive women. I will argue that the idealized results of Rosamund's choice to become a mother contradict prevailing feminist thought of the era, thus rendering Drabble's conception of feminism progressive, and enabling *The Millstone* to function as a feminist utopia by Gearhart's definition. Alongside this claim, I will contend that, as Mattapoisett's women are unable to choose to have the experience of maternity, *Woman on the Edge of Time* fails to fully realize a feminist utopia, as women are not "the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions" (Gearhart 296). By revealing the vision of feminism within a speculative fiction novel to be retrograde in comparison with that of a realistic novel, I argue that feminism unyokes realism from the present, thus encouraging the study of the feminist utopia beyond the realm of speculative fiction and, ultimately, collapsing boundaries between genres.

## THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT: 1960-1980

I will first outline the prevailing threads of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, thus establishing the temporal contexts of both *The Millstone*, which was written amidst the milieu of the Sexual Revolution, and *Woman on the Edge of Time*, which was published a decade later, when total faith in a hypersexualized vision of feminism was beginning to subside. In their book *American Women in the 1960s: Changing the Future*, Blanche Linden-Ward and Carol Hurd Green, in part citing historians John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, describe the advent of the Sexual Revolution in the 1960s as follows: "the dominant meaning of sexuality' in America continued to change 'from [...] reproduction within families to [...] emotional intimacy and physical pleasure for individuals.' [...]" (Linden-Ward and Green 369). This change was licensed by the newly widespread availability of contraceptives, which enabled the severance of sex from procreation, thus destabilizing traditional discourse limiting sexual activity to marriage and allowing for sex to become a tool of social deconstruction. Thinking of this nascent conception of sexuality as such a tool positions it within the context of other, contemporaneous movements to dismantle existing systems – for example, the Civil Rights Movement and pacifist activism during the Vietnam War – hence such a name as the "Sexual Revolution." As Linden-Ward and Green note, though, "Some proclaimed a 'sexual revolution,' but it was unclear that it benefitted women as much as men. Women heard that the only way to prove that they were truly 'liberated' was to 'put out,' to be sexually available" (Linden-Ward and Green 369). This is the context within which *The Millstone* was written, one in which the prevailing image of feminist liberation entailed sexual promiscuity without consequences or guilt, as well as, in some conceptions, the denial of motherhood as an integral part of the female experience (or condemnation of motherhood as symptomatic of patriarchal pressures). Famed early second-wave feminist Simone de Beauvoir – whose thought

proved a critical touchstone for feminists of the 1960s – even claimed that “maternity prevents women from finding her own identity” because “the woman is too much of a slave” (Beauvoir, qtd. in Allen 232).

On the contrary, *Woman on the Edge of Time* was borne of the 1970s, a period of changing attitudes in feminism, framed by a nascent antifeminist movement and shaped by dwindling faith in the Sexual Revolution as a tool of patriarchal destruction. This is the decade in which second-wave feminism fractured, yielding, among other sub-movements, socialist feminism and cultural feminism.<sup>2</sup> It is thus difficult to characterize the feminism of this decade with any succinct philosophy, though in general it was marked by a radical approach that eschewed the cultural necessity of men. Here I will focus on the emergence of the view that motherhood could form part of a radical resistance movement. In her book *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe 1890-1970: The Maternal Dilemma*, Ann Taylor Allen writes,

Some decided that a radical critique of male supremacy could only come from an oppositional position – a positive female identity. In 1970, the Italian group *Rivolta Femminile* reclaimed motherhood as a distinctive aspect of that identity: ‘The transmission of life, respect for life, awareness of life are intense experiences for woman and values that she claims as her own’ (Allen 233).

The perspective expressed here, while equally centered around the liberation of women from societal constructs designed to restrict them, is quite oppositional to that of de Beauvoir, in that it views motherhood not as a symptom of oppression, but as a uniquely feminine experience that could be fostered to empower women.

The advent of this conception of feminism represented an expanded consciousness as to what constituted radical womanhood – no longer was it purely a matter of sexual license, but of building a distinct feminine identity, and this was to become the defining feature of 1970s feminism. One of the most dominant splinters of the feminist movement during this decade was that which is now called cultural feminism, which “focused on creating a ‘women’s culture’ including art, music, and a variety of woman-run institutions [...] [and aimed to] revalue and reaffirm the female, in contrast to the earliest expressions of women’s liberation that rejected the idea that there was anything ‘essential’ about being a woman” (Evans 143-144). To reiterate, this philosophy was certainly not held by all 1970s feminists, but instead represents a key faction of post-Sexual Revolution feminist thought, as well as the overall evolution of second-wave feminism beyond a single constraining viewpoint – rather more toward a proliferation of potential feminisms that emphasized the value of individual choice and feminine identity.

## WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME

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<sup>2</sup> I would recommend Sara M. Evans’ monograph *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century’s End* for a much more detailed survey of feminist movements in the latter half of the 20th century.

Using the brief history of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s given above, I assess the traditional reading of Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* as a novel with a feminist utopian vision, issued by way of the future community of Mattapoisett. I argue that this novel's iteration of feminism is most clearly an outgrowth of 1960s, Sexual Revolution-era feminism that prized women's sexual freedom above all and often eschewed the idea that motherhood is essential to womanhood. In doing so, I claim that this novel takes a regressive perspective that somewhat negates its radical potential, and moreover, calls into question its validity as a presentation of feminist utopia: the inability of women to (choose to) have a traditional maternal experience means that Mattapoisett fails to fulfill Gearhart's fourth characteristic of feminist utopia, "presents women not only as at least the equal of men but also as the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions" (Gearhart 296). At present, there are few, if any, essays arguing that *Woman on the Edge of Time* does not truly present a feminist utopia – most essays argue that it presents a radical mode of resistance against patriarchal systems, as does Vara Neverow's essay "The Politics of Incorporation and Embodiment: *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *He, She and It* as Feminist Epistemologies of Resistance." These essays often treat the novel as a model for feminist resistance for its readers. Many, like M. Keith Booker's "Woman on the Edge of a Genre: The Feminist Dystopias of Marge Piercy," render Piercy's modern United States as a sort of feminist dystopia, compared to which Mattapoisett certainly looks utopian, but takes the utopia itself for granted, without dissecting the ways in which it is and isn't feminist.

Piercy's 20th-century, New Yorker protagonist, Connie, certainly lives in a dystopian world, if we are to characterize dystopia as the opposite of utopia – a world in which, in the words of John Stuart Mill, "what they appear to favour is too bad to be practicable" (Oxford English Dictionary). This is a world in which Connie's agency is totally stripped from her, most notably in her capacity as a woman: her daughter is taken from her by Child Protective Services, and she is held in a mental hospital against her will due to her brother's insistence that she is mentally ill. Perhaps the most striking example of Connie's lack of autonomy comes in a scene in which she is subjected to brain surgery, without consenting to it. Piercy writes, "First Dr. Redding drilled on her skull [...] she could feel the pressure, she could feel the bone giving way, she could hear the drill entering. Then she saw them take up a needle to insert something [...] [into] her penetrated brain" (Piercy 281). As Anna Gilarek points out in her essay "Marginalization of 'the Other': Gender Discrimination in Dystopian Visions by Feminist Science Fiction Authors," this scene is awfully reminiscent of rape in its language of penetration: "This mental and medical rape is one of many references to this manner of domination in the text. In fact, rape can be seen as a 'prevalent metaphor to describe society's violent manipulation of those it considers marginal'" (Gilarek 227). Gilarek notes that Piercy's version of the contemporary United States is more broadly rife with violation of the female body by drawing parallels between this scene and others in the novel that portray Connie's experiences with domestic abuse and involuntary hysterectomy. I agree with this reading of Piercy's literary present, and find it useful in contending that Connie's world is not merely a dystopia, but a feminist dystopia: though Connie is the victim of a number of systems of oppression as an overweight, unemployed, (ostensibly) mentally-ill Chicana woman, it is her womanhood (in the sense of her sexual body) that renders her most helpless to the powers that be, her womanhood that licenses rape as metaphor for more general violation.

While I concur with the critical consensus that Piercy's depiction of the present is dystopian, and push on this to contend that it is more specifically dystopian from a feminist perspective, I diverge from others by contending that Mattapoissett, the vision of the future which Connie uses as a means of escapism, is not strictly a feminist utopia. Though Mattapoissett is certainly a more idealized world than *Woman on the Edge of Time's* present, its model of maternity embodies a regressive vision of feminism that leaves women without total reproductive freedom. The most striking example of this model of maternity comes in Chapter 5 of the novel, when Connie is taken on a tour of Mattapoissett's "brooder, where our genetic material is stored. Where the embryos grow" (Piercy 106). Piercy writes, "He pressed a panel and a door slid aside, revealing seven human babies joggling slowly upside down, each in a sac of its own inside a large fluid receptacle. Connie gaped, her stomach also turning upside down. All in a sluggish row, babies bobbed. Mother the machine. Like fish in the aquarium at Coney Island" (Piercy 107). This passage summarizes Mattapoissett's mode of pregnancy: all babies gestate within a single artificial womb, rather than within women's individual bodies. Here the estrangement of the female body from reproduction is encapsulated with the quixotic line "Mother the machine," which seems to imply that mothering is merely a matter of mechanics, of unfeeling creation, of input and output (though, given the lack of comma in the quotation, this reading is certainly open to interpretation).

There are stark differences between this conception of reproduction and that which was constructed by feminists of the 1970s: in Mattapoissett, women are utterly unable to experience pregnancy and childbirth as formative processes, which negates the importance of maternity as a part of womanhood and, moreover, eliminates freedom of choice. Of note, though, is that Piercy's depiction of the brooder, though it forms part of her utopian vision, is hardly positive. The babies are described as "sluggish" and compared to "fish in the aquarium at Coney Island," a simile which strips the babies of individual identity and belonging. Even Connie, who comes from a world that Piercy portrays as rife with power imbalance and discrimination, is horrified by the sight: "her stomach [...] turn[s] upside down," (Piercy 107) suggesting discomfort. Perhaps this contradiction within the text suggests that, at the time of writing, Piercy believed that escaping the power imbalances of traditional family structure might entail some aspects that women would not initially be comfortable with, though it certainly seems that she changed her mind about this later, as in her 2016 introduction to the novel, she writes, "If I had the book to write over again, I would include a group that chose to give birth live" (Piercy ix). Regardless, the exclusive model included in the book is that of the brooder, and this reflects a vision of feminism more in alignment with values of the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s than with those of separatist feminist groups of the 1970s, as it suggests that womanhood need not include motherhood, particularly when that permits sexual license (which, as a practice, is actively encouraged in Mattapoissett). As such it is evident that Mattapoissett's mode of feminism is one borne of a bygone era, one that had already been implemented and deemed insufficient at the time of the novel's publication. Thus, it hardly offers a radical vision for women's futures. By robbing women of the choice to gestate children traditionally, Mattapoissett not only fails to present contemporary or progressive feminist thought, but also blatantly limits women's powers of self-determination. By this token, *Woman on the Edge of Time* does not thoroughly "critique [...] present values/conditions," (Gearhart 296) as in

its purportedly utopian future just as in its dystopian present, women are not “the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions” (Gearhart 296). Though Piercy’s utopia does critique a number of aspects of the society in which Connie lived, like consumerism and environmental mismanagement, it fails to adequately address the condition that Piercy most condemns in her literary present. Mattapoissett’s women suffer from a form of bodily oppression that may appear more benign – one that certainly is not characterized by metaphors of violent penetration – but which ultimately yields the same effect: the stripping of women’s reproductive agency. The novel thus fails to fulfill half of Gearhart’s criteria for feminist utopia, and can no longer be considered a paragon of the genre.

## THE MILLSTONE

While *Woman on the Edge of Time*’s model of maternity hearkens back to Sexual Revolution-era feminist philosophies of the 1960s, and, moreover, fails to present a feminist utopia in spite of its aspirations, Margaret Drabble’s 1965 novel *The Millstone* exhibits a model of bodily self-determination that did not enter mainstream feminism until the 1970s, which renders the novel a radical feminist framework and, by Gearhart’s criteria, a feminist utopia.

The very small handful of articles that focus on *The Millstone* or Drabble’s works alone largely approach the novel from a feminist stance, just as I do here, but many of these contend that *The Millstone* is not a feminist manual, nor is Rosamund a feminist character.<sup>3</sup> Both “Fate and Feminism in the Novels of Margaret Drabble” by Marion Vlastos Libby and “Fantasy and Femaleness in Margaret Drabble’s *The Millstone*” by Susan Spitzer fall into this category, arguing alternately that Rosamund is a victim of fate or self-deception, though the latter diverges by taking more of a genre-based approach. Spitzer argues that *The Millstone* transcends its realist genre in its focus on dreams and fantasies. However, she undercuts this claim of innovation by alleging that Rosamund’s fantasies of independence and motherhood prove shallow and immature, and that the theme of self-deception is more prominent than that of self-knowledge. My argument follows the same train of thought as Spitzer’s, in claiming that the novel does indeed transcend its genre by presenting an idealized, perhaps fantastical vision of motherhood and womanhood, but diverges from her accusation of infantility or impracticality in attesting that the realization of Rosamund’s fantasies is representative of a feminist utopia.

Perhaps prior critics can be forgiven for their hesitation to read Rosamund as a feminist character; after all, her lifestyle hardly appears radical. Rosamund is an upper-middle-class University of Cambridge graduate student, researching sonnets and going through the most fundamentally human of processes, pregnancy and childbirth. However, this novel was written amidst the milieu of the Sexual Revolution, which, as I have established, viewed sexual license as the only valid form of feminist womanhood and, at extremes, conceived of motherhood as a consequence of patriarchal enforcement and thus as a part of the female experience that would

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<sup>3</sup> A notable exception is “Feminist Ideology of an Academic Woman in Margaret Drabble’s *The Millstone*” by Sümeyra Buran Yilmaz.

necessarily be eradicated or at least fundamentally altered in order to attain true equality of the sexes. I argue that, in this context, Rosamund's choice of motherhood is radical, particularly given her self-actualization achieved through the process, and her ability to sustain her academic work alongside her mothering duties.

Rosamund's intentionality – her dedication to and realization of a goal – is critical to this reading of radicalism in that it suggests that she is in fact consciously defying the norms of contemporary feminists, and thus carving out a feminist utopia of her own. However, Marion Vlastos Libby claims that “Rosamund continues her pregnancy not because she consciously refuses to conform to social expectations but because she is *unable* to make a serious choice about her life” (Libby 181). I wholeheartedly disagree with this claim. Though Rosamund does not fall pregnant by choice, and though, at one point, she even attempts to induce miscarriage, she carries through her pregnancy (and thus her choice to be both mother and academic) with a clear sense of conviction. When Rosamund receives a letter from her sister, Beatrice, expressing disapproval of her decision to pursue the pregnancy and suggesting adoption as an alternative, she finds herself defiant: “it revealed to me the depth of my determination to keep the baby. The determination at this stage cannot have been based, as it later was, on love, for I felt no love and little hope of feeling it: it was rather based on an extraordinary confidence in myself” (Drabble 88-89). Here, Beatrice's opinion is representative of centuries of traditional, family-oriented conceptions of reproduction: unmarried single mothers like Rosamund challenge both church doctrine, which condemns reproduction outside of marriage, and conventional mores, which sustains that two parents are necessary to successfully raise a child. Beatrice's advice is intended to protect Rosamund – both in terms of reputation and career – thus Rosamund's resolve to defy her is a conscious choice to defy long-standing social norms.

It is important to add that Rosamund does not merely defy traditional mores, but moreover, the prevailing mode of 1960s feminism, which viewed contraception and abortion as critical tools for prolonging women's careers and asserting bodily independence. Such a perspective is evident in Drabble's portrayal of Lydia, Rosamund's friend and fellow academic, who sought out an abortion on the grounds that she “was determined not to have [a child],” (Drabble 71) and, as such, demonstrated total control over her own reproduction. However, the ostensibly radical school of thought to which she subscribes aligns in uncomfortable ways with the viewpoint espoused by Beatrice, as both prescribe one-size-fits-all treatments for unmarried single mothers: adoption or abortion. Though mainstream feminists of the 1960s sought to promote bodily independence via access to safe, legal abortions, they failed to recognize the pursuit of pregnancy as a feminist choice, thus, ironically, limiting reproductive independence. By actively choosing to continue her pregnancy while maintaining her career, Rosamund resists both traditional and purportedly progressive schools of thought about motherhood, and asserts true independence over her body and mind.

The result of Rosamund's abject defiance is an idealized world, separate from men, grounded in love between women, and notable for its successful balance between single motherhood and academia, a duality that incarnates a rejection of the patriarchy. Rosamund's child is a daughter, Octavia, whom she raises without a father, in the apartment that she shares with Lydia. Though

at the beginning of the novel Rosamund is simultaneously dating two men and then has sex with a third (George, Octavia's biological father), by its end, there are no men in her life, save from an absentee brother and father – and this dearth seems quite intentional on Drabble's behalf. Rosamund's relationships with men are performative, in that she feels she must date and have sex in order to hide what she imagines as "a scarlet letter embroidered upon [her] bosom, [...] but the A stood for Abstinence, not for Adultery," (Drabble 21) and thus restrictive, merely symptomatic of societal dictates rather than representative of her own free will. On the contrary, Rosamund's relationship with her daughter is natural and actively freeing. Drabble writes, "[Octavia's] great wide blue eyes looked at me with seeming recognition, and what I felt is pointless to try to describe. Love, I suppose one might call it, and the first of my life" (Drabble 114) and later, "It was no longer in me to feel for anyone what I felt for my child; compared with the perplexed fitful illuminations of George, Octavia shone there with a faint, constant and pearly brightness quite strong enough to eclipse any more garish future blaze" (Drabble 191). Here, it is evident that maternal love gives Rosamund a sense of purpose as a woman that she could not find by attempting to abide by feminist mores of the 1960s – though she had "fitful" feelings for George, with whom her sex out of wedlock represents the Sexual Revolution's image of feminine freedom, she is only able to find true love through her experience of maternity, and this discovery gives her a sense of place.

Rosamund's discovery of her identity as a woman via maternity, rather than sexual license, suggests feminist thought of the 1970s, like that presented in the manifesto of *Rivolta Femminile*, as she finds "the transmission of life" to be an "intense experienc[e] [...] that she claims as her own" (Allen 233). Though it might be argued that maternity is a far more traditional option than sexual license, and hence less radical (and this is certainly the opinion most evident in Sexual Revolution-era feminist thought), Rosamund ultimately rejects George as a father, which implies that she rejects the narrative that the nuclear family is the only valid family, and, more importantly, suggests that she believes that motherhood is possible in an all-female context. Rosamund's choice of single motherhood only serves to compound her radical womanhood, for, as an academic, Rosamund is also redefining a traditionally masculine landscape. Cambridge did not confer undergraduate degrees to female students until 1948, less than two decades before the publication of *The Millstone*, and Rosamund is pursuing a doctorate. It is this doubly radical identity that I believe positions Rosamund as a feminist in her own right, and her ability to self-actualize despite this radicalism that I believe positions *The Millstone's* London as a feminist utopia. Gearhart's definition certainly supports this reading. The novel critiques its era's inability to perceive motherhood as a valid feminist choice, draws contrasts between Rosamund's lifestyle and those of other women whose lives typify Sexual Revolution-era ideals, suggests that Rosamund is a happier person when she is not existing in relation to men, and, most importantly, positions women as "the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions:" Rosamund's choice to pursue her pregnancy is an utterly independent decision. In doing so, *The Millstone*, though not a work of science or speculative fiction, fulfills all of Gearhart's criteria for feminist utopias other than a separation of her idealized society "from the present by time or space" (Gearhart 296). However, Drabble's radical feminist vision unyokes her realistic text from the present, in that it

heralds prevailing feminist thought of the future, and thus calls into question whether such distance must be explicitly denoted after all.

## CONCLUSION

Theories of feminist utopia tend to focus on their presence within science fiction and speculative fiction, upholding Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* as a critical exemplar, yet this novel's imagining of the future community of Mattapoissett does not truly present a feminist utopia. Though the novel is feminist, it adheres to a mode of feminism that prevailed during the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s, rather than to a contemporaneous or forward-looking mode, and its adherence to this feminist vision renders it incomplete as a feminist utopia. Mattapoissett fails to permit women the choice of traditional maternity, thus infringing upon their agency as reproductive arbiters, as does the novel's dystopian present, a world rife with the violent abuse of female bodies. As such, *Woman on the Edge of Time* fails two of Sally Miller Gearhart's criteria for feminist utopia, "offers a comprehensive critique of present values/conditions" and "presents women not only as at least the equal of men but also as the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions" (Gearhart 296).

On the contrary, Margaret Drabble's realistic novel *The Millstone* presents a radical vision of maternity divorced from patriarchy that aligns with future threads of the feminist movement, and strongly suggests a feminist utopia, despite its categorization as a work of realism, rather than science fiction. Rosamund's discovery of a sense of purpose through her maternal love for Octavia defies the Sexual Revolution's dictate that feminist womanhood could not include motherhood; as a successful career-woman in a fully female community, divorced from any dependence on men, Rosamund is undeniably a feminist, even as her lifestyle alters to accommodate motherly duties. Drabble thus represents a vision of feminism that would not flourish until the 1970s, a decade after *The Millstone* was published, with the emergence of movements that advocated separatist female communities and privileged motherhood as an integral part of the unique female experience. In its radical imagination of a new version of feminist womanhood, *The Millstone* unhinges itself from its era and its genre, and fulfills the spirit of Gearhart's four criteria for a feminist utopia that *Woman on the Edge of Time* fails to fully bring to fruition. The realization that the vision of feminism within a speculative fiction novel is retrograde in comparison to that within a realistic novel encourages the search for and study of the feminist utopia in genres beyond just science and speculative fiction. Drabble's situation of a feminist utopia within her own time period in *The Millstone* moreover makes evident that this search must not be limited to works that present dramatically futuristic scenarios, but must rather include works of all temporal focuses, as it is evident that feminism is capable of unmooring literature from the present. In light of these revelations, I urge the radical revision of Gearhart's definition of feminist utopia, and thus, the reconceptualization of the feminist utopia itself.

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