



WITNESS TO HUMANITY



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear readers,

We've come a long way since 2019! When the SFU Humanities Student Union (HUMSU) re-launched, our goals were simple: increase the public's awareness of humanities as a critical subject of study and build community. I'm so proud to have seen that manifest into an undergraduate writing/art contest with dozens of entries, and now a journal!

The array of essays, creative writing pieces, and art you'll find here represent the interdisciplinary, synergetic view of "witnessing humanity." Subjects vary, but the concern over individual and collective wellbeing works as a common thread. We hope you take something away from all these different perspectives.

This publication, and the contest it was predicated on, would not have been possible without the following people:

Jason Brown, Alessandra Capperdoni, Sabrina Higgins, Elina Jin, Eirini Kotsovili, Caedyn Lennox, David Mirhady, and Geoffrey Nilson — our contest judges.

SFU's English and History Student Unions, for being superb collaborators.

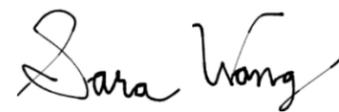
The Simon Fraser Student Society, for providing us with grant funding.

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And, of course, my fellow HUMSU executives — Lauren Thomson, Athena Samonte, Ashlee Tam, Samuel Adam, and Brandon Chen — I couldn't have asked for a better team.

Thank you everyone!



Sara Wong
President, SFU HUMSU

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ACADEMIC ESSAYS



First Place

FUTURES FOR THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AS ENVISIONED BY YUSUF AKÇURA AND HALIDE EDIB

Written by Noah Jozic

Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935) and Halide Edib (1884-1964) were both politically active Turkish intellectuals who had nationalist beliefs. However, their approaches to nationalism and their vision for the future of the Ottoman Empire were different. The differences between their thinking can be seen in Akçura's *Three Kinds of Politics* (1904), a piece published in *Türk* magazine, and Edib's *How I Went To Syria*, a chapter from her memoir *House with Wisteria* (1926) recounting events from 1916. These pieces have differences that stem from their contrasting genres, but also come from different periods. In 1904 Akçura writes with academic detachment, but by 1916 Edib is forced to reckon with hard truths in response to the suffering she witnessed during wartime. Akçura investigates the merits of three political doctrines, including Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, and Pan-Turkism, displaying a preference for Pan Turkism based on the strength he perceives in racial bonds. In contrast, Edib shows more sympathy to Ottomanism than Akçura. Simultaneously, she acknowledges Arab independence as a legitimate and probable future. Her views of Arabs and other ethnic groups are informed by racial essentialism, falling in line with what Akçura calls "a trend of our era," yet Edib cares for the needs of disadvantaged groups and sees humanity as unified by certain experiences, notably suffering. Akçura, on the other hand, sees racial and religious differences as a key source of division, and writes from a theoretical point of view that is concerned with global politics rather than the suffering of individual Ottoman subjects.

Both authors are invested in the preservation of the Ottoman Empire, but they expect transformation: in order to survive, the state would require changes in its ideological foundations.

Akçura envisions different roles for minority religious and ethnic groups in the contexts of Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, and Pan-Turkism. Often, they present an obstacle for a unified nation. Theoretically, Ottomanism would promote the merging of all Ottoman subjects into one national identity. However, Akçura believes most groups would not commit to this ideology, as it would contradict their interests: he claims Muslim Turks would lose social dominance, Islamic institutions would not support equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, and non-Turks would resent historic Turkish Ottoman imperialism and seek independence. Though an Islamic nation united through common religion would be "closer-knit" than an Ottoman nation based around civic identity, Akçura holds concerns that "racial influences" would undermine the political potential of Pan-Islamism. He interprets the Sunni-Shi'i split as an example of racial differences leading to disunity within the Muslim world. Though he supports Pan-Turkism, he regrets the separation of Turkish from non-Turkish Muslims. Furthermore, he thinks that an Ottoman Empire based around Pan-Islamism would be weakened by "enmity among Ottoman subjects, the loss of non-Muslim subjects and parts of the country occupied predominantly by them."

Akçura sees race as a unifying force that makes Pan-Turkism stronger than the other ideologies under study. He finds that Pan-Turkism has potential because it is based primarily on racial bonds with the support of religion, in contrast to Pan-Islamism, which is based on religion alone. Religion has weaknesses for Akçura: he thinks that religious institutions are waning in influence in the modern age, but “through the union of religions with race [...] they can preserve their political and societal importance.” Since not all Turks are Muslims, he fears that the “brotherhood of race would be fractured” in a Pan-Islamist movement, but recognizes that Islam could be a useful tool for unifying the majority of Turks who are Muslim.

For Akçura, race prevails as the definitive aspect of one's identity. It has the power to connect people from great geographic distances —

he manages to connect figures as disparate as Chinggis Khan and Ibn Sina. Yet through her travels, Edib leaves the impression that people can be united by a larger force: she observes that “suffering has no race, sex, and class, and that the appeasing of it is the only human act which brings a lasting satisfaction.” A prominent difference between Edib and Akçura's thinking is that Edib shows more humanity towards people regardless of ethnicity, as she recognizes that everyone suffered during the Great War. Despite racial stereotyping, she is generally sympathetic towards Arabs, Armenians, Kurds, and Turks, especially the poor. We see this difference in part because of genre: Edib wrote prose with room for emotional passages, whereas Akçura wrote an analytical political treatise. Still, while Edib evidently wishes to help others and hear their opinions, Akçura views minority groups mainly as internal obstacles. Akçura is concerned with the practicalities of the three ideologies, the external and internal obstacles. External obstacles include the interests of European powers: Russia's desire to control Ottoman territories and England's access to India, for example. Internal obstacles are often rooted in the perceived divisive nature of a multiethnic, multireligious empire. Akçura sees fracturing the Muslim or Turkish community as a problem. Ironically, the ideologies he supports (Pan-Turkism and, to a lesser degree, Pan-Islamism) would

exacerbate that division. Ottomanism, the ideology he sees as the least desirable, is the most inclusive.

Edib evokes the idea of cosmopolitan Ottoman identity when she suggests that a Turkish muezzin and an Armenian cook long equally for Constantinople. Here, cosmopolitanism is tied to urban life in the capital, not the provincial life Edib witnesses in Syria. But we also see governors like Rahmi Bey refuse to deport Christians, as he sees them as an integral part of his province; Djemal Pasha is also sympathetic to Armenians. Edib and her companions show attempts to communicate across cultures using multiple languages. Similarly, Edib thinks that state education in Syria should include Arabic, Turkish, and French. Multiethnic, multireligious, multilingual Ottomanism looks desirable and even realistic in Edib's narrative.

Edib does not see race or religion as divisively as Akçura, though she does recognize their importance in Ottoman society. She takes a paternalistic attitude towards minority ethnic groups that is often seen from colonizing states. She sees Arabs as passionate: they have a primal “force of life which no amount of European clothes or lack of paint could disguise” and a “life substance” that is warm and aggressive. Given that they are supposedly driven by emotion rather than reason, “Turkey must help the Arabs to develop a national spirit and personality, teach them to love their own national culture more than any foreign one.” Edib expects that after the Turks have instilled a sense of nationalism in the Arabs, the Arabs will seek independence. This is not a problem for Edib, as she thinks Turkey's attempts at dominating the Arab world have been costly and risky. Instead, she envisions a future of cooperation, wherein the Arabs realize that they have “more common ties and interests with the Turks than with the foreigners” such as the French. The Ottomans occupy an awkward position here, as they are a force of imperial domination, yet they are not “foreigners.” Finally, though Edib sees Turkish imperialism in the Arab world as a “useless struggle,” she seems to think the Ottomans are better for the Arabs than the French. “The defense and maintenance of the Arab lands by the Turks was not what the Arabs wanted; they wanted the French. They repented this wish soon enough though,” she writes, suggesting that the Turks know what the Arabs need better than the Arabs themselves.

In contrast to the “passionate” and “aggressive” Arabs, Edib presents the Turks as stoic, mild and kindly, but when roused to anger they are a force to be reckoned with. They are supposedly pragmatic and impartial in stopping conflict among the people of Jerusalem. This characterization makes Turks into benevolent, responsible imperialists. Despite ample evidence that Edib harbours paternalistic, imperialist sentiments and would believe that Turks know better than the conquered peoples, she goes to Syria so that she may “talk with enough Arabs to understand the needs of the country,” allowing Arabs to speak for themselves.

For Edib, nationalism contributes to the quality of life of Ottoman subjects. Not only does she promote the nurturing of Arab nationalism, but she is horrified to see Armenian Christian children placed in Muslim orphanages. She leaves the reader to ponder whether preserving nationality is more important than preserving life: excerpts describing the Protestant-Armenian Sister Anna, who recognizes that “suffering has no race,” and Djemal Pasha, who accepts the enrolment of Armenians in the orphanage support the latter. He asks scornfully, “Do you believe that by turning a few hundred Armenian boys and girls Moslem I think I benefit my race?” above all wishing to keep the children alive. But Colonel Fuad

YUSUF AKÇURA AND HALIDE EDIB IMAGINE A DIFFERENT FUTURE FOR THEIR SOCIETY IN PRECARIOUS TIMES.

Bey's view of an Arab nationalist who was hanged illustrates that nationalism was a noble cause which many would die for in the Ottoman Empire. Though Akçura and Edib both hold nationalist beliefs, they envision different futures for the Ottoman Empire. Akçura proposes that Turks unite based on racial ties, supported by shared religion, and assimilate partial or non-Turkish elements where possible. He thinks that ethnic and religious conflict within the Ottoman Empire and opposition from European powers make Ottomanism unrealistic. At the time of writing, Akçura's Pan-Turkist ideology was not popular, but became highly influential in the following years and is thus historically significant. Edib exhibits many racist and imperialist views common in this period, but her memoirs are a valuable first-hand account of life in the late Ottoman Empire and the attitudes held by its subjects. Her sympathy for marginalized people led her to imagine a multiethnic, multireligious, and multilingual Ottoman state. She believes that nationalism is a good cause and expects groups like Arabs to seek independence. Though she aimed to better integrate Syria into the Ottoman state, she thinks Ottomans should cooperate with rather than dominate a prospective independent Arab state. Edib's depiction of Syria during wartime demonstrates that the Ottoman reality did not fit neatly into one of Akçura's three politics.

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RECOGNIZING THE CYCLE WITH LITERATURE: A REFLECTION ON POST-MEMORY

Written by Mattea Cijrek

Introduction

I always loved listening to my mother's memories in Zagreb during its Yugoslav-communist era. My mother's stories felt like I was there, living through what she was telling me. These simple memories of bittersweet stories and nostalgia are forever enjoyable to listen to. When I was younger, I did not know this was a form of intergenerational trauma through post-memory. In this essay, I will explore my understanding of how post-memory affects me and how literature helps to understand this notion. By doing so, I will incorporate two literary memoirs, "The Lucky Child" by Marianne Apostolides and "The Book of Revenge: A Blues for Yugoslavia" by Dragan Todorovic. I will begin the discussion by defining "post-memory" with the help of these two memoirs, and I will discuss the impact of World War Two as a political post-memory. With this subject, I aim to understand the collective and cultural trauma many Croats endured before and after the Independence wars in the 1990s. This trauma continues to impact Croats both in Croatia and abroad. As so, I will examine three generations—my grandma, my parents, and myself—to observe the continuity of political post-memory. Thus, I aim to interpret how this political post memory affects me personally and in the broader context of my understanding as a Croatian Canadian. This narrative would also include my experience within the Croatian community in Vancouver. As philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre mentioned: "existence precedes essence" (Kotsovili, 2022b). By observing post-memory brought down by my family and others, I can value the person I am now and after through the help of literature.

For this essay, I define "post-memory" as a reflection of cultural and collective trauma brought down from one generation to the next (Kotsovili, 2022a). When the author, Marianne Apostolides, wrote "The Lucky Child" about her father, Taki, and his upbringing, she showcased how World War Two and the Greek Civil War took a toll on his family and those around him. In "The Book of Revenge: A Blues for Yugoslavia" by Dragan Todorovic, he uses his memories to understand trauma and find closure about his previous identity as a Yugoslav. Both "The Lucky Child" and "The Book of Revenge: A Blues for Yugoslavia" are books based on post-memory and thus applicable to this essay. These two memoirs share the importance of how tragedy affects culture and the collective and how they aim to teach their readers how to be at peace with their post-memories. Thus, these reasons are essential for the rest of this essay.

Micro-symbolic events of World War Two

Both literary memoirs reflect a figure close to them whose life was taken away due to World War Two politics. Apostolides writes about Agamemnon, Taki's father, who was killed and hanged for his political beliefs as an anti-communist during the Greek Civil War (Apostolides, 2010, p. 195). In comparison, Todorovic mentioned his Uncle, Dusan Ilic, whom the Chetnik monarchists had mobilized in Serbia during World War Two, and was never seen again (Todorovic, 2006, p. 10). Here I see a connection between literature and my family history. My grandma spoke about her father, who was taken away by the Partizane, a group that also forcefully mobilized individuals throughout Croatia. She mentioned that she never saw her father again, and despite my grandma only being around three years old, the event significantly impacted her life and how she viewed communism. Both Todorovic's family and my grandma never saw an investigation take place to find out the location of their bodies (Todorovic, 2006,

p. 10). Apostolides' family was lucky to know where and how Agamemnon was killed (Apostolides, 2010, pp. 195–196). Through literature, I can understand the impact this may have caused and how it might have affected behaviour and political identity.

Apostolides and Todorovic write about an individual with whom the author had little personal connection but felt the need to incorporate them to reflect on the cultural and collective trauma. The disappearance of Todorovic's uncle, Dusan Ilic, could suggest why Todorovic's parents were involved with the Yugoslav communist party rather than the Chetniks (Todorovic, 2006, pp. 110–111). In contrast, the death of Agamemnon could indicate why Taki had left Greece to escape communism and Agamemnon's murderers (Apostolides, 2010, p. 201). One could see how much political post-memory of this kind follows onto the next generation. Although my grandma's memory of her father was short, she never let go of him and the assumed group behind his death. Thus, Apostolides' and Todorovic's memoirs help the reader understand the behaviour and mindsets of World War Two narratives that my grandma, and an entire collective, are still affected by in the present.

World War Two politics in collective identity and culture

The political symbolism of World War Two continued to inflict ongoing cultural and collective trauma through post-memory throughout Yugoslavia and after. Josip Broz Tito's vision of a pan Yugoslav identity was only conditional, and the aftermath of his death was felt economically and politically (Todorovic, 2006, p. 235). I never understood who Tito was as a political figure when I was young, but I understood that many Croats hated Yugoslavia. Apostolides describes a similar approach to this understanding through Loukia, Taki's sister. During Loukia's folklore performance on the "platia," she understood that the "beauty of tragic death" was for the Greek victims of "Turkish oppression" (Apostolides, 2010, pp. 98–100). This performance suggests that while Loukia was not alive during the Greco-Turkish war, she embraced the political narratives of the Greek discourse—a post-memory of the cultural and collective trauma now embedded in her. I can relate to Loukia because when I was young, I was part of a folklore commemoration—

Deseti Travanj (April tenth)—about the short-lived Croatian independence during World War Two and its Ustasa leader, Ante Pavelic. Since World War Two, Croats, who fled from war and then later communism, have celebrated this event ever since they arrived in Canada—and now I understand how this celebration was an act of defiance against the pan-Yugoslav identity Tito tried to form. Nonetheless, I did not participate in this event again because I did not understand why Deseti Travanj was celebrated many years after 1991, when Croatia claimed independence. This is where literature, such as Apostolides' and Todorovic's memoirs, facilitates comprehension of this discourse.

With the help of these two memoirs, I realized that collective political identity helped to shape ethnic nationalism throughout Croatia during the end of Yugoslavia. When the War of Independence broke out throughout Yugoslavia, Todorovic mentions that Slobodan Milosevic's political agendas awakened "old phobias in people born before or during World War [Two]" (Todorovic, 2006, p. 262). This mindset continues in the present, and this is often hard to dismiss, no matter how much I disagree with the hatred produced by this history. With the generations born or alive during World War Two, while they lived, political tensions became unavoidable and only fuelled as time passed. Thus, this form of political post-memory affected an entire generation's identity during the War of Independence and, later, my generation.

Reflection of the 1990s Independence Wars

Through my parents' memories, I saw the significance of how war changes individuals. Todorovic indicates that "disgust made us immune to the virus of hatred" (Todorovic, 2006, p. 340). I agree that this statement continues to affect the identity of many Croats living outside the Balkan diaspora today. On account of collective war trauma in the form of political post-memory, I also understand what Todorovic meant by that this was "his war" and it was "his turn" (Todorovic, 2006, p. 303). Todorovic's sentiment points out that each generation loses its previous self individuality due to war. Apostolides reflects on this trauma with Taki's uncle, Philip, who was a victim of World War Two and lost the essence of himself from fighting in the war (Apostolides, 2010, p. 143). Sometimes I wonder how different my

parents' lives would have been had the Croatian Independence War never occurred. At around twenty years old, my father was a soldier, and my mother was a nurse in Zagreb during the peak of the war. While reading Apostolides' book, I often associated my father with Uncle Philip and Loukia (who became a nurse during World War Two) with my mother; both the characters and my parents had taken mature responsibilities and seen things many young individuals do not see today. The memories I hear and listen to of my parents' young adult years before the war, I find myself longing and feeling emotional for a past I never experienced. This empathy could suggest post-memory at the center of its core meaning.

Literature confirms that no matter how many biases we hear and listen to, one must understand the importance of political consciousness. As I infer throughout this essay, I grew up listening to biased opinions from World War Two through political post-memory and how it affected the Independence Wars in the 1990s. I must note that my parents never expressed hostility against Serbians and only shared their war experience solely as it was for them. Nevertheless, with factors such as the Croatian community I associated with, and combined memories from my parents and grandma, it would have seemed inescapable to have hatred against a group if I embraced those narratives. When I learned through Todorovic's memoir about a Serbian protest against Milosevic (Todorovic, 2006, p. 262), I did not know how to feel about this in the broader context. As so, Todorovic's memoir felt like a personal book where I could relate to many cultural elements because of all the stories I have heard since I was young, but through a different perspective. Thus, his story became a meaningful memoir for me to think about what happens after the book is closed and the relationship between Croats and Serbs, and by default, the contemporary Balkan diaspora.

Conclusion

As I look back at my memories, I remember when I stood with my father in front of a friend's grave at the Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb. I now think about those unspoken words when I remember how he and I stood there and how difficult it was to be in front of his friend's grave. I also wonder what else may have been inside this grave that I could not see. A piece of who my father was before the war? Or a

memory forcefully forgotten? Just as Apostolides had reflected when writing about her father's life: "That night I wept for his lost freedom...this was not my book. It was his life" (Apostolides, 2010, p. 201). These post-memories that turn into stories remind me they were real at one point, and I have cried and laughed at all those sad and beautiful moments of someone else's past. When my father stared at his friend's grave, I remember looking at the other graves marked with the same year of death. This war continues to showcase its memory all around them, both physically and mentally. With the help of Apostolides' "The Lucky Child" and Todorovic's "The Book of Revenge: A Blues for Yugoslavia," I see a continuous generational cycle and the question of what to do next with these post-memories.

As I reflect, I can only hope to honour these memories and learn from their importance rather than continue a trauma cycle embedded in me, whether intentional or not.

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Honourable Mention

HUMANIZING THROUGH DRAG: HOW DRAG PERFORMANCE IS COMBATING ANTI-EAST ASIAN AND ANTI-SOUTHEAST ASIAN RACISM

Written by Kitty Cheung

During the summer of 2020, I attended a digital drag show performed by the House of Rice, a queer Asian drag family based in Vancouver. Figure 1 shows a partial family portrait by photographer Chris Reed which was published in the Canadian Theatre Review (2020). The show, aptly named House of Rice: In-Riceolation, was created in response to the rise in anti-East Asian and anti-Southeast Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a writer who also identifies as queer and Asian, it felt comforting to see how these drag performers used their art as a form of intersectional protest. In the essay "Marching Together: What Feminism Can Learn from Black Lives Matter" published in Canadian feminist magazine Herizons, writer Cicely-Belle Blain explains intersectionality as the overlapping parts of a person's

identity, such as race, gender, and sexuality, and how movements that aim to protect marginalized peoples need to account for this overlap (Blain, 2019, p. 19). From upbeat pop ballads to heavy metal, the House of Rice's lip-sync performances emulated a range of experiences and emotions within the queer Asian identity. I wrote a review after the show which was published in The Peak, SFU's student newspaper, stating "In Rice-olation highlighted the importance of queer family and community support, while also illuminating the political power of drag" (Cheung, 2020, para. 9). This show is a prime example of how drag can be used as political protest, especially in this historical context where misinformation about COVID-19 is exacerbating racism against East Asian and Southeast Asian communities.



Figure 1. The House of Rice, an all-Asian drag family based in Vancouver. Not all members are pictured here. From House of Rice (l-r): Back row: Valak, Shay Dior, Nikita; Front row: MaryKol Whip and Maiden China. By Chris Reed, 2020, <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/783075>. Copyright 2020 by Chris Reed.

Drag is a form of performance art that stems from queer culture. In his paper, “BODY POLITIX: QTIBPOC/NB Drag Revolutions in Vancouver” published in the *Canadian Theatre Review* (2020), theatre artist Davey Samuel Calderón describes drag as “performance art that relies on costume and makeup as modes of transformation in creating queer fantasy and fluid gender expression” (Calderón, 2020, p. 57). In the era of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, an American reality television show where drag queens compete for a cash prize, mainstream understandings of drag might involve drag queens as cisgender gay men donning feminine personas. However, Calderón stresses the diversity and inclusivity possible within drag, where non-binary or genderqueer performers can also stretch the bounds of gender performance (Calderón, 2020, p. 56). It is this understanding of drag that will be used throughout the following argument: because of drag’s ability to humanize groups of people in an entertaining and educational way, I argue that this art form plays

an important role in combating anti-East Asian and anti-Southeast Asian racism, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Racism exists within the queer community, so members of this community should look to anti-racist drag performers to combat their own prejudice. For those outside the queer community or those who are new to drag cultures, this art form can be so much more than mainstream representations of drag queens. There is incredible potential for diversity, inclusivity, and activism within the world of drag.

One example of misinformation is the blaming of the coronavirus on people of Chinese descent. In their paper “The COVID-19 Misinfodemic: Moving Beyond Fact-Checking” (2020), researchers Wen-Ying Sylvia Chou, Anna Gaysynsky, and Robin C. Vanderpool examine strategies to clarify misinformation related to COVID-19. In describing the xenophobia and racism circulating during the pandemic, they cite *Rolling Stone* staff writer EJ Dickson when providing examples of stigmatizing phrases such as “Chinese virus” and “bat soup” (Chou et al., 2020, p. 11). Figure 2 shows one of the tabloids mentioned by Dickson in her article “Coronavirus Is Spreading — And So Are the Hoaxes and Conspiracy Theories Around It” (2020). The tabloid headline “Is this objectively disgusting soup what’s causing the coronavirus outbreak?” (Dickson, 2020, para. 10) is paired with an image of the dish that might intentionally elicit shocking and visceral responses from Western audiences. This kind of language is harmful because it associates people of Chinese descent with disease, directs xenophobia against non-Eurocentric foods, and assigns blame by generalizing an entire group of people. Chou et al. suggest that “messages that highlight common ground and humanize those who are being affected by the disease around the world can help reduce susceptibility to misinformation that plays on fear of the ‘other’” (Chou et al., 2020, p. 11). The misinformation blaming people of Chinese descent for the coronavirus is rooted in this fear of the “other.” Bringing Chou et al.’s idea about humanizing into the context of drag, this queer performance art can be a vehicle for humanizing messages.

The racism and misinformation described by Chou et al. can be connected to a rise in hate crimes against people of East Asian and Southeast Asian descent. Criminologists Angela R. Gover,

WORLD

Is This Objectively Disgusting Soup What’s Causing China’s Disease Outbreak?

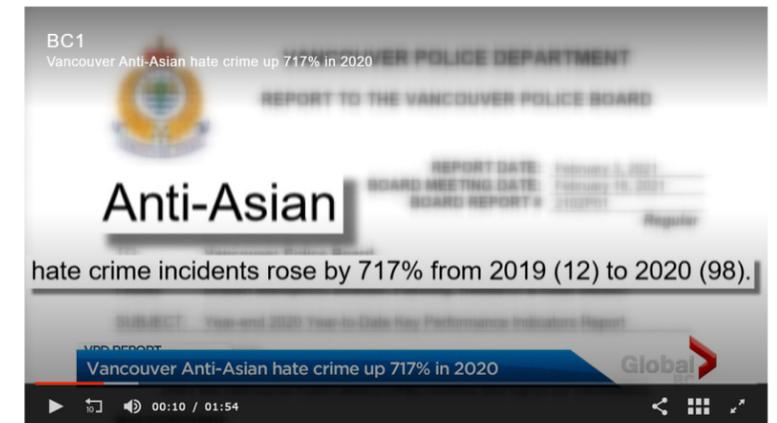


Screenshot Twitter Old Row, @OldRowOfficial

Figure 2. Screen capture of a Daily Caller article associating the coronavirus with bat soup. I have chosen to blur the image of bat soup as it might be considered shocking. From *Is This Objectively Disgusting Soup What’s Causing China’s Disease Outbreak?*, by Shelby Talcott, 2020, <https://dailycaller.com/2020/01/23/bat-soup-china-coronavirus-cause/>. Copyright 2020 by Shelby Talcott/Daily Caller.

"BAT SOUP"

"CHINESE VIRUS"



Vancouver Anti-Asian hate crime up 717% in 2020

Posted February 18 2021 11:31 am

While most crimes in Vancouver were relatively stable over the past year, there’s one area where they’ve shown a shocking increase. According to a report to be presented to the police board Thursday, Anti-Asian hate crimes jumped more than 700 percent in 2020. And as Grace Ke reports, that has the premier highlighting the need for new legislation.

Figure 3. Screen capture of a Global News report. The Vancouver Police Department reported a 717% increase in anti-Asian hate crimes, from 12 incidents in 2019 to 98 incidents in 2020. From *Vancouver Anti-Asian hate crime up 717% in 2020*, by Grace Ke, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/video/7648754/vancouver-anti-asian-hate-crime-up-717-in-2020/>. Copyright 2021 by Grace Ke/Global News.

Shannon B. Harper, and Lynn Langton study hate crimes directed against Asian Americans in their paper “Anti-Asian Hate Crime During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploring the Reproduction of Inequality” (2020). These researchers look at how anti-Asian racism has been embedded into American history, starting with racism against Chinese immigrants during the mid-1800s California Gold Rush and moving up to the 2002-2004 SARS outbreak which aggravated anti-East Asian stigma (Gover et al., 2020, p. 650-653). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Gover et al. connect accounts of beatings, stabbings, spitting, and even an acid attack to COVID-fuelled racism and misinformation, where perpetrators have blamed people of Asian descent for the virus (Gover et al., 2020, p. 659). In a *Global News* report titled “Vancouver Anti-Asian hate crime up 717% in 2020” (2020), journalist Grace Ke reveals an increase in these crimes from 2019 to 2020. Ke’s report, shown in Figure 3, indicates the severity of racism during the pandemic. Considering these hate crimes and the environment of fear that is produced, it becomes even more dangerous for Asian artists to make themselves visible in the public eye. However, this danger also further highlights the need for activism and change. Therefore protest performed in whatever ways possible, including drag art, is paramount.

Returning to my experience with *House of Rice: In Rice-olation*, the strength of Asian art and resilience is emphasized given this historical context of heightened racism and hate crimes. By performing, members of this drag family expose themselves as hypervisible members of the queer and Asian communities. As I describe in *The Peak* article “House of Rice: In Rice-olation illuminates the intersectional and political scope of digital drag” (2020), musical lip sync performances were spliced between videos of the artists speaking candidly about their lived experiences. These artists gave anecdotes about coming out given the cultural nuances of their families, responding to being fetishized and emasculated, and finding self-love despite Eurocentric, patriarchal beauty standards (Cheung, 2020, para. 6). They tell their own stories, showing vulnerability when describing their intersectional experiences. They also refuse to be othered, where “othering” refers to when one powerful group makes a less powerful group feel marginalized and excluded for their differences (Gover et al., 2020, p. 649-650). Instead of allowing

themselves to be painted as flat caricatures by systems of racism, homophobia, and transphobia, these drag artists show their multidimensionality; they combat misinformation by sharing their own complex human stories with the audience. This humanizing quality of art is a tool against racism.

However, racism also exists within the queer community. Shay Dior is a genderfluid drag artist serving as the leader, or drag mother, of the House of Rice. They are featured as part of the CBC documentary series, *Canada’s a Drag*, which highlights Canadian drag artists. In the episode “Meet drag mother Shay Dior and her growing family of queer Asian kids,” Dior begins by reading a series of profiles they found on Grindr, a mobile dating app used by queer and trans people.

Quotes such as “Vanilla or spice, no chocolate or rice” and “I’ve blocked more Asians than the Great Wall of China” (CBC Arts, 2020, 0:03) reveal racism in the devaluing of Black and Asian users.

By implying that these people are unwanted, the queer community becomes a hostile space for those at the intersections of queerness and racialization. With the House of Rice, Dior uses drag to create a safe community for queer Asian people. Both artists within this drag family and audience members at shows can find comfort in the bold and unapologetically queer Asian representation embodied by the House of Rice. In this case, drag is being used to fight racism within the queer community itself by providing racial and cultural visibility for Asian people.

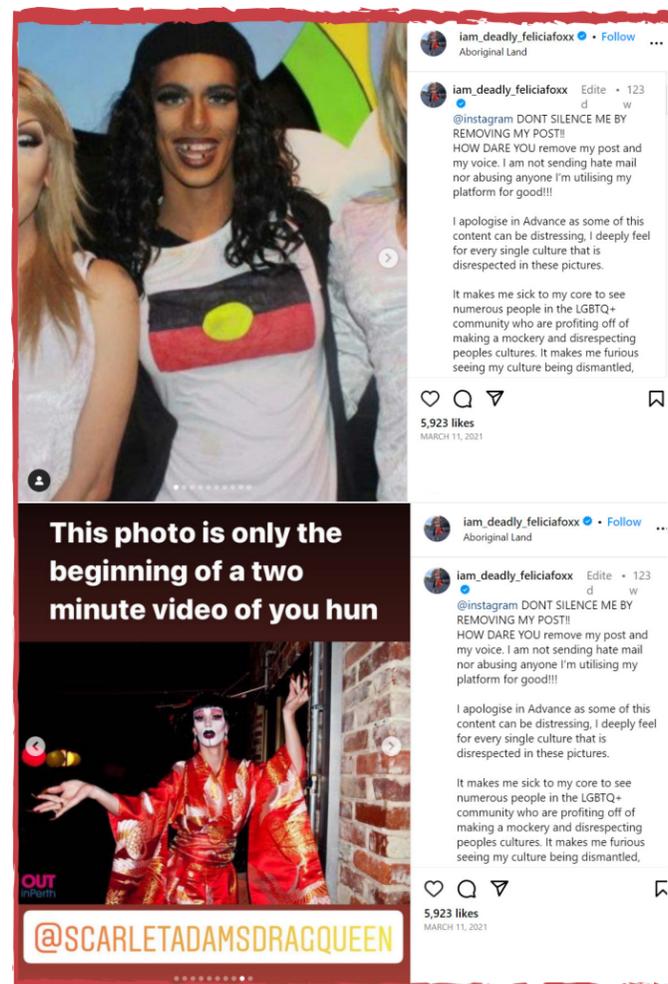
While the COVID-19 pandemic has increased public perception of anti-Asian racism, drag performers have been using their art to protest racism long before this pandemic started. In an essay for arts and culture magazine *AnOther* titled “How Uniting Queer Asians Through Nightlife Became a Global Movement” (2021), queer Chinese American journalist Arthur Tam outlines five nightlife events organized to create safe spaces for the queer Asian diaspora in cities such as Toronto, New York, and



Figures 4.1 (top) and 4.2 (bottom). Drag and burlesque performer Lilly SnatchDragon rising out of a Chinese laundry bag during a performance. Screen captures from a YouTube video uploaded by drag artist Lolo Brow. From *Lilly SnatchDragon - Thai Beginnings*, by Lolo Brow, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOVrQ7LRqVE&ab_channel=LoloBrow. Copyright 2013 by Lilly SnatchDragon and Lolo Brow.

Sydney. When interviewing London drag artist and burlesque performer *Lilly SnatchDragon*, Tam describes a performance where SnatchDragon rises out of a Chinese laundry bag and proceeds to lip sync to fellow drag artist Alaska Thunderfuck's song "Nails" spliced with audio clips of comedian Anjelah Johnson's "notorious" impression of a Vietnamese nail technician (Tam, 2021, para. 25-26). Images of SnatchDragon appearing out of a laundry bag can be seen in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. These stills were taken from a recorded performance that was uploaded to the video sharing platform YouTube by fellow drag performer Lolo Brow (2013). SnatchDragon relies on satire to disrupt stereotypes of Southeast Asian women as submissive and fetishized. For example, the laundry bag act mocks the mail-order bride stereotype (Tam, 2021, para. 26) where these women are seen as exotic objects to be bought and delivered. This performance is one example of how drag artists of Asian descent have been challenging racist misconceptions since before the COVID-19 pandemic. The nightlife events described by Tam have also transitioned during the pandemic to an online format, even using the teleconferencing software Zoom to host 2021 Lunar New Year parties (Tam, 2021, para. 34). With COVID-19 now exacerbating anti-East Asian and anti-Southeast Asian racism, the need for the public to listen to Asian storytellers and support safe spaces for Asian communities becomes more urgent.

Countering the idea of drag being an anti-racist tool, drag has also been used to perpetuate racist stereotypes and caricatures. *The Guardian* reporter Matilda Boseley explains how Indigenous Australian drag artist Wendell French critiques fellow performers for relying on racist stereotypes to entertain (Boseley, 2021, para. 3-6). In the article "RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under contestant apologises for past performances in blackface" (2021), Boseley describes a series of Instagram images shared by French, also known by their drag name Felicia Foxx, which depicts various Australian drag performers in racist costumes (Boseley, 2021, para.3-4). For example, Figure 5.1 shows drag artist Anthony Price, also known as Scarlet Adams, performing in blackface with a shirt showing the Indigenous Australian flag and a few teeth coloured black (Boseley, 2021, para. 2-3). French criticizes Price for mocking Indigenous Peoples and using harmful stereotypes for comedy (2021). Another image in the series, shown in Figure



Figures 5.1 (top) and 5.2 (bottom). Screen captures of an Instagram post by drag artist Wendell French (aka Felicia Foxx), showing fellow drag artist Anthony Price (aka Scarlet Adams) performing in Indigenous Australian and East Asian caricatures [[@iam_deadly_feliciafoxx](https://www.instagram.com/p/CMTntvSBOqD/)]. (2021, March 11). [@instagram DONT SILENCE ME BY REMOVING MY POST!! \[Instagram photograph\]](https://www.instagram.com/p/CMTntvSBOqD/). Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/CMTntvSBOqD/>.

5.2, features Price performing a caricature of East Asian culture (2021), an exoticized depiction of Asian womanhood that a performer like SnatchDragon might protest against. In Price's case, drag is being used as a tool to spread racism through cultural appropriation. These performances are harmful because they reduce entire groups of people to stereotypes, a form of misinformation which makes it easier to ridicule and commit violence against these communities. However, the strength of drag is still in its political activism. Even though Price is contributing to the devaluing of Indigenous Australians and East Asian women through drag, this example also makes drag activism more prominent. It widens the scope of what drag is capable of, from harming to healing communities, and generates more demand for anti-racism within drag.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified racism against the East Asian and Southeast Asian communities, drag artists who belong to these communities have used their art to fight back and create safe spaces for themselves. Drag performance can be used to humanize, reveal vulnerability, and promote empathy between artists and audiences. It challenges prejudice and misinformation by providing a space for resilient groups of people to sincerely and creatively tell their own stories, resisting any misinformation that seeks to "other" them. Those within the queer community can look to intersectional drag activists for guidance and commit to doing the

work to help dispel racism within this community. Meanwhile, those outside the queer community can realize that drag can be so much more than drag queens as cisgender gay men in female-presenting costumes. Drag can be a container for humanizing stories and anti-racism lessons. This art form is about playing around with and stretching the bounds of gender expression, where nonbinary, gender non-conforming, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) performers can all succeed. The constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic have only revealed the strength, adaptability, and political power of the drag community.

DRAG CHALLENGES PREJUDICE AND MISINFORMATION BY BEING A MEDIUM FOR ARTISTS TO SINCERELY SHARE THEIR STORIES, SHOW THEIR HUMANITY, AND PROMOTE EMPATHY.

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Honourable Mention

"MOTHER, CAN I KNOW MY INHERITANCE NOW?": INDIGENOUS TESTIMONY IN TERESE MARIE MAILHOT'S HEART BERRIES

Written by Cassie Drieschner

Terese Marie Mailhot's memoir, *Heart Berries*, grapples with gender-based abuse and mental illness through an epistolary format. *Heart Berries* employs the testimonio genre to challenge the dominant colonial narrative of the white, male addressee. Working within testimonial life writing and connecting the marginalized speaker's experiences to collective issues, the text explores how the speaker relates to her community and cultural history as an Indigenous woman. The text further attends to testimonial writing through the speaker's experience with racial and gender constructs. By alternating between addressing Casey and describing her relationship with her ex-husband in "Little Mountain Woman," the speaker analyzes her relationships through the lens of racial and gender stereotypes. The speaker's realization that she was sexually abused by her father as a child cements the text in relation to the speaker's experience with sexual assault. This realization also positions gender-based violence within Indigenous communities as the result of colonial interference, heightened because a large portion of the text is addressed to a white man. However, the first and last chapter of the book centre the speaker's dedication to Indigenous women through her exploration of her relationship with her grandmother in the first chapter and by placing her mother as the final addressee. Mailhot's *Heart Berries* utilizes the culture and gender differences between the speaker and the memoir's main addressee to expose communal experiences of Indigenous women through a testimonial mode of writing.

The mode of writing in the text forefronts a conflict between the speaker and the addressee. *Heart Berries*' testimonial writing functions as "alternative truth" (Million 67) to challenge the colonial narrative of the white, male addressee. Testimonial life writing focuses on the power inherent to an individual's experience. The speaker realizes the power of testimonial writing, explaining, "I learned how story was always meant to be for an Indian woman: immediate and necessary and fearless" (Mailhot 3). The speaker argues the necessity of testimonial narrative explicitly before delving into the testimonial genre throughout the text. By focusing on the necessity of Indigenous, female narratives, the text highlights the presence of antagonistic forces and alludes to the erasure of Indigenous stories from overpowering colonial narratives. Dian Million illustrates the importance of Indigenous testimonial writing in *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights*. In the chapter, "Felt Theory," she argues, "One of the most important features of [Indigenous] stories is their existence as alternative truths, as alternate historical views" (67). Functioning as an "alternative truth," *Heart Berries*' testimonial format challenges the dominant colonial narrative by speaking to Casey directly: a white, male addressee. Casey's addressee position is crucial to the format of the testimonio genre. In Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé definition of "testimonio," he explains:

[T]he final product of testimonio is the result of a... collaboration among a scholar... variously known as the author of the text... a speaking subject, or testimonialista, who is the direct, personal witness of a collective traumatic condition or event; and an addressee... who is considered metropolitan, middle class, and racially and ethnically different from the testimonial subject. (229)

In *Heart Berries*, the speaker fulfills the role of the "scholar" and the "testimonialista," while Casey takes up the position of the "racially and ethnically different" addressee. Through this format, the speaker exposes specific plights of Indigenous women to an exterior audience. *Heart Berries*' exploration of "alternate history" within the testimonial genre usurps Casey's colonial narrative.

The testimonial genre also positions the collective in relation to the individual. *Heart Berries* functions within the testimonial genre through the text's focus on the ways in which the speaker's experience reflects collective issues plaguing Indigenous women. The speaker often relates individual conflicts to cultural history. After admitting herself to the "behaviour health service building" (15), the speaker explains, "I woke up... inside of something feminine and ancestral in its misery" (17). Working within the testimonial genre, this passage illustrates the presence of the historical and cultural collective inside the individual's experiences. The quote also forefronts the femininity inherent to the speaker's perspective, attending to the specifics of female centric issues inside a larger cultural outlook. The text re-emphasizes the tactic of situating Indigenous women's issues inside a larger cultural perspective when the speaker explains that her mother "knew women need their power honed early, before it's beaten out of them by the world" (29). The passage situates feminine power within Indigenous spaces against a threatening environment. In the

testimonial fashion, the speaker's conflicts reflect the problems facing her cultural lineage. In "Felt Theory" from *Therapeutic Nations*, Million also focuses on the power of the experiential to cultural groups: testimonial works "denote the affectively charged experiential that became available to individuals, families, and sometimes communities but that did not always 'translate' into any direct political statement" (67). In relating the individual to direct familial history and broader cultural history, *Heart Berries* demonstrates the ways in which discussing trauma furthers the speaker and the addressee's understanding of culture and history without subscribing to "direct political statement[s]". Instead, *Heart Berries*' use of the white, male addressee positions the speaker's experiential in dialogue with a colonial presence to consistently highlight the disparity between the two perspectives.

The text also illustrates the speaker's specific experiences with gender and racial discrimination through the testimonial genre. By alternating between addressing Casey and reflecting on the speaker's experiences with her ex-husband, the chapter "Little Mountain Woman" explores the speaker's experience with gender and racial constraints. In "Little Mountain Woman," the narrative focus alternates between addressing Casey directly and reflecting on the speaker's relationship and custody battle with her ex-husband. One section in the chapter begins with, "The things you said to your white woman—I wanted that" (97), before shifting to the speaker explaining, "I went into labor alone in the hospital" (97) in the following paragraph. The contrast between the two sections highlights the speaker's unease with her Indigeneity when compared to white women and the speaker's trauma from her custody battle. During two other paralleled sections, the speaker exposes her feelings of inadequacy and contextualizes her perceived shortcomings as a mother. The speaker depicts an interaction between her lawyer and herself:

"You were in foster care?" my lawyer asked.
"Yes. Can they use that against me?" I asked.
"Everything is fair game." (95)

The interaction illustrates the intersection of misogyny and racism that create the lofty standards applied to Indigenous women, specifically to mothers. By alternating the juxtaposing sections, the text calls

attention to the ways in which misogyny and racism interact during the speaker's current romantic relationship and her child custody battle. Leigh Gilmore attends to the representation of misogyny and racism in "#MeToo and the Memoir Boom: The Year in the US." Reflecting on the nuances of testimony, Gilmore argues, "Mailhot encapsulates the dilemma of representing ongoing misogyny" (165). "Little Mountain Woman" unravels the paradox of testimonial writing by illustrating a previous interaction of racial and sexual discrimination within the speaker's child custody battle and the speaker's recent interactions with Casey. Attending to past and present situations forefronts the ways in which racism and misogyny evolve over time and within different settings. Gilmore acknowledges the text's proficiency at discussing these issues within the testimonial genre, verifying that "the survivor is knowing and wary about the limits of testimony even as she demonstrate its necessity" (165). By addressing Casey intermittently in "Little Mountain Woman," *Heart Berries* contends with racial discrimination and misogyny through an interweaving narrative.

The speaker's newfound memories heighten the prevalence of racial and gender discrimination in the text. The reveal of the speaker's sexual abuse at the hands of her father in "Thunder Being Honey Bear" forefronts the prevalence of sexual violence through a lens that holds colonial infrastructures, including the residential school system, accountable. Working within testimonial writing, the speaker processes the memories of her father's abuse by positioning them in relation to cultural history. After the realization, the speaker acknowledges, "I felt connected to a lineage of women who had illustrated their bodies and felt liberated by them" (116). By relating to a "lineage" of women, the speaker highlights the shared experiences of sexual violence through the testimonial genre, but also specifies her understanding of sexual violence in relation to Indigeneity. Throughout "Thunder Being Honey Bear," the speaker further conceptualizes her epiphany through the continuing effects of the Canadian residential school system, admitting, "I was the third generation of the thing we didn't talk about" (113). The speaker presents the familial trauma extending from the residential school system in parallel with her sexual assault. By doing so, the speaker's sexual assault recalls the sexual violence

inflicted by colonizers onto Indigenous people in residential schools. Andrea Smith explores the direct connection between colonial sexual violence and sexual violence within Indigenous communities in "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change." Describing the logic behind the connection, Smith argues:

[O]ne of the harms suffered by Native peoples through state policy was sexual violence perpetrated by boarding school officials. The continuing effect of this human rights violation has been the internalization of sexual and other forms of gender violence within Native American communities. (126)

Heart Berries affirms Smith's argument by discussing the suffering brought on by the residential school system during the speaker's analysis of her experience with sexual assault in a familial setting. Smith and *Heart Berries* both discuss sexual violence within Indigenous communities through the lens of colonial violence. Gesturing towards the historical and cultural implications of sexual assault within her community, *Heart Berries*' testimonial format tends to the experience of the collective within the speaker's specific realization, heightened by the continuous presence of the white, male addressee.

Despite the text's depiction of sexual assault, *Heart Berries* also centres Indigenous women. The opening chapter, "Indian Condition," attends to the female centric aim of the text, despite the text's overall dedication to Casey. *Heart Berries* begins by referencing an exterior audience. Despite acknowledging that her story's "words were too wrong and ugly to speak" (1), the speaker admits, "Women asked for my story" (1). The opening chapter focuses on a female audience before delving into the speaker's personal relationship with Casey. *Heart Berries* acknowledges the importance of testimonial life writing to Indigenous women and does not shed the significance of representation as it enters the remainder of the narrative. The speaker

also explores her relationship to women through her experiences with her mother and grandmother. Focusing on her grandmother, the speaker argues, "The Indian condition is my grandmother" (5), explaining the ways in which she would "[deworm] children" (5) using a technique she "learned... in residential schools-where parasites and nuns and priests contaminated generations of... people" (5). The text exposes the direct familial history of the speaker through the grandmother figure, before relating the speaker's grandmother to the larger community. Exploring an avenue of testimony, Laura Beard depicts the function of testimonial life writing that grapples with residential school narratives in "Part of Surviving Is Through Remembering": The Ethics and Politics of Life Narratives about Indian Residential School Experiences." Beard argues that the Indigenous testimonial life writing that centres the residential school system can "summon truth in the cause of denouncing the situation of exploitation and oppression in the Indian residential schools" (142). The text features the grandmother's experiences with the residential school system; moreover, the speaker's experience with her grandmother illustrate the continuous effect of residential schools while also creating the opportunity for the disruption of the dominant colonial narrative. *Heart Berries*' acknowledgment of women, specifically familial women in the community, illustrates the importance of Indigenous women to the entirety of the narrative, threaded throughout the sections addressed to Casey.

"Better Parts," reaffirms the importance of Indigenous women through the speaker's embodiment of her maternal lineage. This furthers *Heart Berries*' attention to Indigenous women, despite Casey's large role in the narrative. Although a large portion of the text is addressed to Casey, "Better Parts" begins by addressing the speaker's mother (124), changing the narrative's direction for the concluding section. Heavily focused around her relationship to her female ancestry, the speaker asks, "Mother, can I know my inheritance now?" (125). The speaker's "inheritance" of history and culture reaffirms the testimonial genre within *Heart Berries*, continuously connecting the collective experiences to the speaker's present issues. The text's attention to culture and family in the last chapter emphasize the speaker's experience through the contrast between the speaker and the white, male addressee. The speaker also attends to the embodiment

of her maternal lineage, expressing, "But, still, your pine and winter willow are in my body. As are my grandmother's olive seed and red hill earth" (128). The speaker acknowledges the physical continuation of her maternal ancestry within her body as her mother and grandmother's descendent, while alluding to the embodiment of intergenerational traumas. Beard further explores the physical inhabitation of cultural traumas in her text. When describing the catharsis of residential school narratives, Beard argues, "The emotions are felt not as past, but as present ones, as trauma makes itself felt on and through the body long after the original incident has happened" (Beard 140). Although *Heart Berries* does not narrate the speaker's experiences in a residential school, the text focuses on the reverberating trauma from the residential school system. Through the speaker's embodiment of her maternal lineage, the narrative's conclusion emphasizes the continuation of colonial violence upon Indigenous women.

Heart Berries' testimonial format highlights the speaker's experiences with familial history and cultural trauma. By challenging the colonial narrative of the addressee, the text advocates for the literary representation of Indigenous women through the testimonial genre. The text presents the speaker's experiences with sexual assault within the parameters of testimonial life writing, focusing on the individual's experiences as representative of a collective problem. Although the narrative foregrounds Casey through the testimonial format, the first and last chapter demonstrate the centrality of Indigenous women to the narrative and continue to bolster the power of the testimonial by directly addressing members of the speaker's community. *Heart Berries* goes beyond the demand of the memoir genre by attending to the placement of the individual in relation to other characters and cultural groups in the text. By constantly relating the individual to a cultural collective, the text concentrates on the speaker's empathy to the experiences of others. *Heart Berries* actively tends to the needs of a broader community, despite the text's intimate lens.

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CREATIVE WRITING



EVERLASTING, ELEMENTAL FORM

First Place

Written by Dominic Wong

Stand here tall
Rise from moving currents deep and crested in sunbeams
and over valleys
Take up space and use your words to take up more.
Move earth; understand that it exhales dead things to make
way for alive things,
and it spins idly so in hopes that you reconsider your words
to God every night.
That it grieves for your body
and aches all the same.
That it worries over those who beg age with young palms.
Those without human attachments
to things that make the human heart beat hard.
Let them poke and stir, for nothing can come between you
and how you've learned to love the
eyes we all look into while our hand shakes cold, hard metal.
Look at you; stifled laughter.
Look at you; hurricane thunderclap.
Let the elements rend flesh and the strange men take and
take and take.
Feel the pain and your skin and the way it's been changing
as you move your feet from hot pavement
and into the grass.
Look at you. You furious hungry thing.
This existence of yours, this object of awe to those who have
yet to exist:
Have you considered it not as a container, but a blinding
emotion?
Have you considered the glow of day settling to a whisper
as he undresses you and holds your hand?
As he floods into your eyes
and bears witness as you unfurl humanity into an infinite
second.
A second that opens itself to the wind
and follows a stream

all the way down to the lake.
Consider this many bodied life as you stand here, tall.

Second Place

YES, LORD

Written by Emma Jean

"A good woman is hard to find; she is worth her weight in diamonds." Proverbs 31:10

The pastor shouts this verse over the climaxing music, and Jessie shouts back out of instinct. "Yes, Lord." She breathes in the artificial smoky air and lifts her hands.

"Never spiteful, she treats her husband generously all her life long!" the pastor calls. "Yes, Lord," she responds. She had imagined herself becoming a good wife; she had imagined that her whole eighteen years of life. She thinks of the boys beginning to audition to be her husband, and imagines fulfilling these words for them. All her life long? That's one long life. The flashing lights burn her eyes and she presses them closed.

"When she speaks she has something worthwhile to say, and she always says it kindly!" "Yes, Lord!" She

has lots of thoughts she thinks are worthwhile. When she tried to say them to James, the most persistent of the candidates, she struggled to get them out, let alone kindly. The thoughts rang through her mind like an alarm bell; 'Get away from me. You do not want me as your wife'. She coughs on the smoke.

Maybe she'd never get married. Maybe she'd live with her best friend instead. That sounded much better. Claire's new dorm on the other side of town was bigger than they'd both expected. Maybe she could sleep on the floor there. Take a breath, take a class, take a bit more time. With Claire. Be with Claire. But that wouldn't make her a good woman, would it?

"Her children respect and bless her; her husband joins in with words of praise: "Many women have done wonderful things, but you've outclassed them all!" The pastor screams the words now; Jessie flinches but yells right back, face hot and eyes stinging. "YES, LORD!"

Honourable Mention

THE BALLAD OF JANET

Written by Meghan Danyluk

My parents don't know that they bought me a crying room on wheels. Picotee blue, worryingly humid, when they bought it from the last guy he said "careful, still drives like a sports car". Seventy kilometres per hour felt like dystopia among faceless grey vehicles. I called her Janet and started asking her questions:

Are other cars nice to you when I leave?
Does this ever get easier?
Am I selfish for empowering you?

She answered by holding raindrops and all of my empty coffee cups, singing me Landlady and eating my debit card and all of the money in it. She stood by me even though I drove her tires bald and cheated on her with Translink and laughed when my coworker said "sounds like a Volkswagen". Sounds like the future isn't powered by gas or forty minute commutes. Still, I'll always remember speeding to work together at five in the morning, fog and sun working together to make the road seem so pastel I thought we had died.

VISUAL ART



First Place

REFLECTIONS



By Harleen Buttar

While diverse, we are connected by our emotions, experiences, and biology. So look into eyes of the people you say are different from you and bear witness to yourself.

GROCERY RUN

By Kitty Cheung

Second Place



Food is a basic human need. However, not everyone has access. In this artwork, I drew a single-parent family on a “grocery run.” The mother is sneaking a bundle of bok choy under her coat while her child witnesses this act of theft. The child is confronted by the ethical grey area of her mother’s humanity. She is confused by the moral wrong of stealing while also realizing her mother’s need to feed their family. When creating this artwork, I was thinking about what food insecurity can look like in the Chinese Canadian community and what lengths low-income families are forced to go to in order to survive. This illustration was made with love for all the fruit-sniffing seniors, single-parent families, and newcomer immigrants in Chinatown.

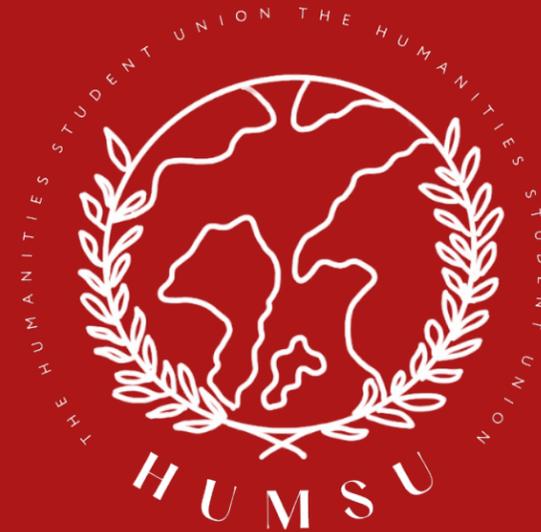
Honourable Mention



SANCTUARY OF DELPHI

This piece is a reconstruction of the Sanctuary of Delphi, located in Greece. The construction of the sanctuary dates to around 500 to 300 BCE. The Sanctuary was considered the center of the Greek world and was of immense religious importance since it was the location of the Oracle of Delphi and hosted the Pythian Games. The Sanctuary was a space where Greeks could come together and interact safely despite political conflicts.

By Sarah Grenier



**GET CONNECTED WITH SFU'S
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We acknowledge that the SFU Humanities Student Union's activities primarily take place on the Unceded Coast Salish Territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Kwikwitlem (Coquitlam), Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Peoples. Unceded means this land was never surrendered, relinquished, or handed over in any way.

We seek to support the different strategies Indigenous peoples are using to protect their land and communities, and we commit to dedicating time and resources to working in solidarity. Today, most of BC remains unceded sovereign Native lands, over which neither the Canadian or BC government have the legal or moral authority to govern.