

## Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2018 Mary Gates Hall

### Online Proceedings

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#### UNEXPECTED REBELLIONS: REFRAMING THE NORM

Session Moderator: Michelle Liu, English

MGH 288

12:15 PM to 2:15 PM

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

##### **A Story of Feminine Sacrifice: the Music, Text and Biographical Connections in Amy Beach's Concert Aria *Jephthah's Daughter***

Clarissa Aaron, Senior, Music Composition, Seattle Pacific University

Mentor: Cherie Hughes, Music, Seattle Pacific University

Mentor: Christine Chaney, Honors Program, Seattle Pacific University

*Jephthah's Daughter* (Op. 53), a concert aria for soprano and orchestra written by Amy Beach (1867-1944) in 1903, has long suffered neglect due to the fate of its manuscript and the fate of Beach's work in general. This investigation seeks to probe how Beach engaged the Biblical subject matter and mid-1800s French text in her setting. I discuss this engagement through stylistic comparison with the musical traits of her other work, translation comparison between the literal meanings of the original poem and Beach's English rendition, and contextualization of Beach's setting within the history of how this story has been interpreted. The aria fits within Beach's dramatic Romantic style and deliberate molding of text, and tells a story with notable connections to her life and work. Because of the extent to which Beach's life story aligns with that of Jephthah's daughter, Beach's own statements on music as autobiography, and her choice to engage this story in such depth, I argue that this aria may express lament for Beach's own suppression as a female composer in Victorian society. This reading provides further support to a narrative of Beach's life which examines the negative impact of her patriarchal context.

##### **The Value of Monstrous Love: Examining the Narratives of Nonhuman Desires**

Brian Dang, Senior, English, Drama

UW Honors Program

Mentor: Michelle Liu, English

Sexuality acts as a societal arbiter; the further away one is from the norm, the more marginalized one becomes. As a

result, sexuality forces us to ask the question of, "who deserves love, and who should we extend it to?" These questions become paramount in stories that present love towards nonhuman subjects. *Lars and the Real Girl*, a movie about a man who falls in love with a sex doll; *The Shape of Water*, a fantasy romance between a mute woman and an amphibious man; and *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*, a play that features a man who has an affair with a goat, will be the base texts being analyzed. These stories question the structures we have in place for what we do and don't tolerate as love: what's wrong with loving a goat? To answer this question, I imagine love as a scale, with all the things in between the most normative love - white, heterosexual, and cis - and bestiality examined. Where do we draw the line between good, valid love and bad, invalid love and why? Using queer theory, a framework already populated with these questions, I analyzed these texts. There is a pervasive idea that writing about love has become a cliché and naïve pursuit. However, this thought has stifled the nuances that exist within the concept and erases the populations it has already marginalized. It is a delicate situation, but examining our desire, from the possible to the impossible, may illuminate what we believe is ethical. For without straying into the uncomfortable, we cannot challenge a norm. Rethinking perspectives and coming to a more complete and inclusive concept of love can be the value of these narratives of nonhuman desires.

##### **Vice & Visibility: Changing Attitudes toward Prostitution and Sexual Behavior in Victorian Britain**

Melissa C Morgan, Senior, History

UW Honors Program

Mentor: Moon-Ho Jung, History

Mentor: George Behlmer, History, University of Washington

In the 1860s, British Parliament passed a series of bills called the Contagious Diseases Acts, which granted the police the power to arrest women suspected of being prostitutes. These women would be subjected to a forced examination, and if found to have a venereal disease, a woman could be held in

a hospital against her will for up to nine months. While considered by many to be a natural response to a public health issue, these Acts outraged anti-vice moralists and the newly-budding movement of feminists, who objected on constitutional and moral grounds. The moralists and feminists campaigned furiously against the Acts, rallying public opinion against them throughout the 1870s, and the Acts were successfully repealed. Another success of these activists was the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which raised the age of consent for girls from thirteen to sixteen years old and increased police powers in cracking down on underage and forced prostitution. The Act also prohibited “any act of gross indecency” between two men. While seemingly out of place amongst the rest of the Act, many Victorians believed that the same overindulgence that led men to seek out prostitutes, particularly young girls, also led men to homosexual behavior. Rhetoric of earlier decades would have focused on sympathy for the women and girls who were the victims of male vice, but the activism against the Contagious Diseases Acts had ushered in a new discourse which instead focused on the men who brought about their ruin. The activism that defeated the oppressive Contagious Diseases Acts directly led to the passage of the repressive Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 by creating a moral panic over “immoral” aristocratic male sexual behavior, leading to an increase in state power to enforce monogamous, heterosexual, and therefore moral sexual behavior.

### **A Beast in the Pews: *The Autopsy of Jane Doe*, A Contextual Analysis**

*Jeffery (Jeff) Salazar, Recent Graduate, Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (Communication), UW Tacoma*

*Mentor: Ellen Moore, School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, UW Tacoma*

*Mentor: Alexandra Nutter Smith, Culture, Arts, and Communication*

Steeped in ritual, *The Autopsy of Jane Doe* walks viewers through the (mediated) processes of a clinical autopsy with the subject being a young, recently-deceased woman in pristine condition. Psychoanalysis of this film reveals deep interconnections of Freud’s structures of the mind and cultural portrayals of gender power dynamics. Dillman explores the concept of a “dead-beginning”, where women play active roles in story development, yet experience a halting of “temporal progression”, reinforcing the objectification and exploitation of women’s bodies. What starts as a routine procedure, beginning with cataloguing of biometric data, quickly turns into chaotic mania as dead bodies are reanimated, flash floods trap the inhabitants and a dead woman seems to have taken control of the building. Using a psychoanalytic approach, this paper illuminates major connections between the id, ego and superego while also identifying the preconscious, conscious, and unconscious functions of the brain. As expressed through character interaction and symbolic relation,

this paper posits that the continued shallow practices of female representation contribute widely to a culture built on systematic oppression and the exploitation of women as sexual objects. Furthermore, Jane Doe’s retaliation over her circumstances echo traits of the #MeToo movement and the crucible of men in positions of power.