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## Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Laurier Undergraduate Journal of the Arts' 2017 edition begins with Erica Parnis' article "Voyeurism and Gendered Violence in Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* and Griselda Gambaro's *Information for Foreigners*." Exploring the ethics and politics of dramatic sexual violence, Parnis attempts to expose the ways in which contemporary playwrights risk turning their subjects into mere fetishes and their audiences into mere voyeurs. The depiction of sexual violence is a fraught endeavour, one which Parnis argues Highway and Gambaro broach with differing results. Also engaging with questions of Aboriginal stereotypes and fascistic state terrorism, the article compels its readers to consider the ways in which dramatic voyeurism can be utilized to alternatively perpetuate or deconstruct acts of violence.

Next, Emily Sider examines the artistic possibilities of computer animation in her article "Texture and Narrative in *WALL-E* and *Tangled*." The transition from cel-shading to CGI marked an undeniable technological advancement, but Sider argues that it also instituted a concomitant revolution in narrative. She provides a brief sketch of the history and development of animation followed by an analysis of certain narrative techniques made possible by the evolution of CGI. Specifically, Sider argues that the incredible amount of detail possible with modern texture shading provides animators with a more powerful toolbox than ever before, allowing them to craft narratives that simply were not possible twenty years ago.

While the first two articles approach their subjects from an English and Film Studies perspective, the next two articles utilize a more social scientific lens to examine contemporary geo-political issues. First, in her article entitled "The Effects of Assisted Voluntary Return Programs on Marginalized Women: A Critique of the IOM and UNHCR," Annalisa Lochan examines the practices of two major international organizations, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which she argues have shifted their focus from humanitarianism to migration management. By tracing the history of the organizations, specifically their adoption of assisted voluntary returns programs, Lochan attempts to expose the degree to which humanitarian intentions

can be warped into corporative greed, with migrants, especially migrant women, as the victims.

The second geo-political article, Katherine Ziomek's "A Country in Crisis: The Changing Demographics of Japan," deals with Japan's 'birth dearth' and its social, political, and economic consequences. Ziomek begins by describing Japan's current demographic shift, in which a scarcity of births and improved life expectancy has resulted in a rapidly aging population. She then catalogues the effects of such a demographic trend, particularly focusing on Japanese women, and proposes some tentative solutions to the perceived problem. Combining the statistical rigour of economics with the pragmatism of political science, she argues that the solution to Japan's demographic crisis must be as much cultural as it is fiscal: Without a substantial re-envisioning of the role women are allowed to play in Japanese society, the crisis will only continue to escalate.

The next two papers address issues related to gender and sexuality, although they approach their subjects from different methodological frameworks. In her article "Not Just Biology: Socio-cultural Perspectives of the Female Orgasm," Sarah Best interrogates the role both scientific and non-scientific discourses play in shaping the popular perception of the female orgasm. In tackling this controversial topic, Best deftly weaves together anthropology and biology, decoding the cultural biases inherent to medical and psychological theory with a precision that is properly scientific. Extensively researched and compellingly argued, the article epitomizes the academic excellence and interdisciplinary spirit LUJA exists to recognize.

Equally well-argued is Toby Finlay's article "Non-Binary Performativity: A Trans-Positive Account of Judith Butler's Queer Theory," in which the author offers an insightful re-appraisal of one of the twentieth centuries most influential gender theorists. Judith Butler's influence on modern queer and gender studies has been incalculable, but she has also provoked staunch criticism, including from some trans people who have struggled to reconcile her theories with their lived experiences. Responding to these criticisms, Finlay offers a reparative reading of Butlerian performativity that accounts for the importance of trans identity and functions pragmatically in the emerging ecology of discourses and political movements surrounding queer and trans experience. Delving simultaneously into arcane philosophies and contentious politics, Finlay nevertheless grounds the article in personal experience, thereby suggesting a viable way forward that retains the theoretical but embeds it in the essentially human.

The final paper in the 2017 edition takes the idea of political action and puts the fashion industry in the crosshairs. In "Globalization and Fashion: Too Fast, Too Furious," Victoria Ledezma argues that the modern fashion industry,

particularly “fast fashion,” is replete with both generic, mass-produced styles and foreign, low-wage employees, resulting in an ongoing human rights catastrophe. Part historical survey and part exposé, the article attributes the predominance of fast fashion to globalization and warns that, if not curtailed, this trend could result in disaster. Articulate, engaging, and playfully polemical, the article constitutes a call to action and a reminder that underneath the stylish silk and polyester lies an ethical conundrum with no easy solutions.

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