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# COMPASS

ARCADIA UNIVERSITY'S SCHOLARLY JOURNAL



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John R. Hoffman, Ph.D.  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
provost@arcadia.edu

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# The Rise of Russia's Cold-Water Ports

By Alex Merker, *Arcadia University*

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## I. Introduction

One of the most consistent pillars of Russian foreign policy throughout history has been its pursuit of warm-water ports.<sup>1</sup> Given Russia's geographic positioning, ports which didn't freeze over during the harsh Eurasian winters were arguably the key to its entrance as a great power. The importance of these port cities carried into the Soviet era, as influence stretched around the world, along with the need to project power globally.<sup>2</sup> However, in the age of receding arctic ice and expanding hard and soft power opportunities in the region, are ports such as St. Petersburg or Sevastopol still necessary for Russian power projection?

In this paper, I will discuss how changes in both climate and technology are reshaping Russian naval ambitions. In the past twenty-five years, Russian foreign policy planners have not only had to adapt to political changes in Europe and Asia, but also changes with their own geography. Every year, the ice which once dominated the Siberian coast recedes in a slow but certain retreat as a result of excess carbon emissions in the atmosphere. Where there were once vast swathes of sea ice, Open Ocean has appeared in its place. On the surface, merchant shipping can now travel from Europe to Asia along a route much faster and safer than those in the Indian

Ocean, while on the seabed vast newly accessible petroleum reserves are being discovered. Together with the easy clearing of ice in ports using icebreakers, northern cold-water ports are quickly becoming Russia's most valuable assets.

The thesis of my argument is really quite simple. As a result of the impact of climate change on access to mineral resources and trade routes, Russia no longer needs to pursue and control traditionally warm-water ports to maintain its economic and military power. To help present a clear and concise analysis, I will refer to this thesis as the cold-water transition theory, after the meteorological nature behind this shift in potential foreign policy possibilities. Through detailed analysis of these changes, theory applications, and consideration of dissenting opinions, I intend to prove this theory. To validate my thesis, I will use existing academic theory to build a foundation of credibility. The theory that I believe best applies to my cold-water transition thesis is offensive realism. Offensive realism theory dictates several key points, which fit well with current events in the Arctic Circle involving Russia and other regional actors.

When examining any issue involving Russia's connection to the sea, the most obvious starting point is to briefly consider its

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<sup>1</sup>"The Russian Quest for Warm Water Ports," *GlobalSecurity.org*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/warm-water-port.htm>.

<sup>2</sup>Fukuyama, Francis, Scott Bruckner, and Sally Stoecker, *Soviet Political Perspectives on Power Projection*. Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 1987.

geographic positioning and climate. The vast majority of Russian economic power is situated far from the shore, in landlocked population centers such as Moscow.<sup>3</sup> Though not a large hindrance on its own, this positioning becomes far more troublesome with the consideration of the Eurasian climate. With much of Russian territory straddling the Arctic Circle, weather conditions are a serious burden to economic development and political expansion. Considered by many to be Russia's most notable feature, the Eurasian winter is harsh and unforgiving. With temperatures dropping as low as negative sixty-eight degrees Celsius, life can crawl to a standstill during winter months.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, the climate conditions of the Russian winter not only hinder travel by land, but travel by sea as well. In the early years of the Russian Empire, the only ports within its territory froze over during the winter, requiring the empire to seek out warm-water ports if it ever wished to compete on the international stage with the other European powers. Warm-water ports can be defined as harbors which do not freeze over at any time of the year; while their counterpart, cold-water ports, can be defined as harbors whose waters freeze over during parts of the year. To address this issue and establish Russia as a true European power, Tsar Peter the Great set out to claim such a port. This quest resulted in the conquest of what is modern day St. Petersburg and other warm-water port cities, events which directly resulted in Russia's ascendance onto the world stage.<sup>5</sup> These ports continue to be economic and military centers of Russian

power, having played a pivotal role in the development of the Russian and Soviet Empires.

## II. Analysis

### Analysis Overview

Of course, in order to even attempt to prove a theory that disagrees with conventional wisdom, a great deal of evidence must be brought in to support such claims. There are many different factors at work in cold-water transition theory, all of which stem from the central belief that climate change is a real and actively occurring shift in earth's meteorological conditions. The resulting reduction of arctic sea ice from rising temperatures then creates a large number of opportunities for Russia and the rest of the world, which will be examined in this analysis. Such opportunities include new sea lanes, access to mineral resources, and multi-ocean access for arctic states, among a great many possibilities. In this section I will use evidence to support my claim that there exists sufficient proof that these factors signal the beginning of the end of Russian reliance on warm-water ports to maintain its current position in world affairs.

### Climate Change

At the very root of cold-water transition theory is the overwhelming evidence of global climate change.<sup>6,7</sup> Whether it is manmade, or a result of natural climate conditions, the reality of climate change is nearly scientifically undeniable. This is supported by an ever increasing

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<sup>3</sup>"The Russian Quest for Warm Water Ports," *GlobalSecurity.org*.

<sup>4</sup>Etty, John. "Russia's Climate and Geography," *History Today*. (Accessed November 23, 2015). <http://www.historytoday.com/john-etty/russia%E2%80%99s-climate-and-geography>.

<sup>5</sup>"The Russian Quest for Warm Water Ports," *GlobalSecurity.org*.

<sup>6</sup>Schulte, Klaus Martin. "Scientific Consensus on Climate Change?" : *Energy & Environment*: Vol 19, No 2. July 29, 2009. Accessed November 23, 2015.

<sup>7</sup>Oreskes, Naomi. "The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change," American Association for the Advancement of Science, (2004).



number of scientific foundations, both national and international, coming to an agreement that the earth's meteorological systems are changing.<sup>8,9,10</sup> The process behind this is complicated, but can be simplified to a few key points.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, scientists have a ninety-five percent certainty that the root cause of climate change is a global increase of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, in the earth's atmosphere as a result of human and geologic activities.<sup>11</sup> As these gases build up in the atmosphere, they create an ever strengthening blanket that traps heat in energy. A similar process can be observed on the planet Venus, albeit caused by volcanism and on a much more dramatic scale.<sup>12</sup> The increased atmospheric temperature changes both water and land temperatures, causing glaciers and snowpack to melt at far greater rates than can be replaced, resulting in even more carbon dioxide being released into the air in the process. Because of the fluidity of earth's weather systems, changes can be very dynamic, causing very strong storm systems that vary from drought to typhoons.<sup>13</sup> Overall, these changes may appear contrary to the term "global warming"; however, they are in fact a strong indicator for what is a broad increase in temperature that can still result in very strong winter weather in certain areas.

With these facts clearly laid out, it

becomes apparent that there are very genuine changes occurring which can have a considerable impact geographically, but politically as well. In what can be considered one of the most immediately visible changes, the arctic ice cap which connects with Russian Siberia has begun to recede. According to statistics by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and backed up by numerous published reports in well-known scientific journals, the total area coverage of contiguous sea ice in the arctic ocean has declined between six-seven percent every decade since record keeping began in the 1970s.<sup>14,15</sup> This reduction is most pronounced in areas of ocean and coastline claimed and owned by Russia, with a great deal of previously impassible sections of sea now open year round. The significance of this occurrence cannot be underscored nearly enough, and is the basis for cold-water transition theory.

The resulting change in ice coverage during winter months brings an important question: are northern cities still cold-water ports after climate change? Though the original definition of a cold-water port would include winter icing, this is no longer the case. However, for the duration of this paper I will continue to call traditionally warm-water ports by that name, with the same applying to cold-water ports. This will help easily distinguish these ports from each other during analysis and maintain clarity.

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<sup>8</sup>"Understand and Responding to Climate Change," US National Academy of Sciences.

<sup>9</sup>Niel Stenhouse, et al., "Meteorologists' Views About Global Warming: A Survey of American Meteorological Society Professional Members," American Meteorological Society. (2013).

<sup>10</sup>"Scientific Consensus: Earth's Climate Is Warming," NASA, <http://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/> (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>11</sup>"Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary," *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, (2014).

<sup>12</sup>"Greenhouse Effect, Clouds and Winds," *European Space Agency*. [http://www.esa.int/Our\\_Activities/Space\\_Science/Venus\\_Express/Greenhouse\\_effect\\_clouds\\_and\\_winds](http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Science/Venus_Express/Greenhouse_effect_clouds_and_winds). (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>13</sup>"Global Climate Change: Effects," NASA, <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>. (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>14</sup>Perovich, D., S. Gerald, S. Hendricks, W. Meier, M. Nicholas, and M. Tschudi. "Arctic Report Card Update for 2014," *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*. [http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/reportcard/sea\\_ice.html](http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/reportcard/sea_ice.html). (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>15</sup>"National Snow and Ice Data Center," *NSIDC Arctic News and Analysis RSS*. <http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/>. (Accessed November 23, 2015).

## New Trade Routes in the Arctic Ocean

Arguably the strongest of the “soft powers,” trade is a staple of economic power. As climate changes causes the sea ice in the arctic to recede, a new corridor will open for year-round travel from the North Sea to Barents Straits. This route will allow for travel that is not only thirty percent faster by some estimates,<sup>16</sup> but will be far safer than current sea lanes which traverse highly dangerous waters in the Gulf of Aden and Indonesian Archipelago. The most critical aspect of this is that the near entirety of the route moves through Russian waters, giving them unparalleled control over what could soon be a vital sea lane. The ever present influence of offensive realism driven foreign policy decisions has already begun to show itself with respect to this opportunity, as these new sea lanes are already being used for global trade. Though Chinese maritime analyst Gary Li believes that it requires “another twenty or thirty years of climate change to make it fully viable,” the number of ships using these routes increases with every year.<sup>17</sup> According to the Northern Sea Route Information, an NGO specializing in promoting such trade routes, seventy-one vessels traversed arctic trade routes in 2013, up from forty-six the previous year.<sup>18</sup> Out of those vessels, the vast majority were of Russian origin. Though this pales in comparison to the estimated seventeen thousand of all nationalities which pass through the Suez Canal each year, it is still

considerable growth for a previously unused passage.<sup>19</sup> This relates to offensive realism, because it is a rapid capitalization of a potential opportunity for growth.

Another benefit of this new sea lane is its proximity to Russian ports. With immediate access to the newly opened arctic sea lanes, port cities such as Murmansk and Vladivostok will become far more valuable for trade than ever before. In fact, should the trade routes in the north become as successful as some predict, it can be argued that northern ports would become far more valuable than any other in Russia.

## Emerging Fossil Fuel Access in the Arctic Circle

As the ice caps continue to melt across the Arctic, they will begin to expose vast amounts of previously inaccessible fossil fuel deposits in the process.<sup>20</sup> Russia currently holds the largest arctic claim of any other country, already giving it a strong advantage against competitors for these resources.<sup>21</sup> Though oil prices are currently in a period of stagnation, global reserves are not finite. Current prices are a result of changes in production across OPEC states and increasing growth in North America, a situation that will certainly not last forever as global demand continues to increase with the economic growth of the global south.<sup>22</sup>

Russia’s economic development over the past decade has been largely dictated by the export of oil and natural gas.<sup>23</sup> This fact has

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<sup>16</sup>Masters, Jonathan. “The Thawing Arctic: Risk and Opportunities,” *Council on Foreign Relations*. (2013).

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>18</sup> “List of NSR Transit Voyages in 2014 Navigational Season,” *Northern Sea Route Information Office*, (2014).

<sup>19</sup> “NSR Transit 2013,” *Northern Sea Route Information Office*.

<sup>20</sup> Evengård, Birgitta, and Joan Nymand Larsen, *The New Arctic*, 191.

<sup>21</sup> MacDonald, Fiona. “This Map Shows All the Claims on the Arctic Seafloor,” *ScienceAlert*, (2015). <http://www.sciencealert.com/this-map-shows-all-country-s-claims-on-the-arctic-seafloor>. (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Krauss, Clifford, “Oil Prices: What’s Behind the Drop? Simple Economics,” *The New York Times*, October 05, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> Aleksashenko, Sergey, “Rebuilding the Russian Economy: Is a Lack of Policy the Right Policy?,” *The Brookings Institution*, (2015).

been made itself rather visible in the current Russian federal budget, which has seen a great deal of cuts across the board.<sup>24</sup> Though some experts argue that this may be due to simultaneous sanctions imposed by the west in the aftermath of the Ukraine Crisis, there is a strong correlation between oil prices in Russian GDP during that period of time.<sup>25</sup>

A Russian drive to occupy the arctic would be verification of the offensive realism component of cold-water transition theory in action, as it would indicate a proactive effort to secure economic interests. This is, in fact, already happening. In early August of 2015, the Russian Federation submitted to the United Nations a territorial claim of more than 1.2 million square kilometers of ocean in the Arctic Ocean.<sup>26,27,28</sup> This claim was made on the basis of the 1982 UN Convention on Law of the Sea, which dictates that a state may lay claim on waters that extend up to two-hundred miles from its continental shelf.<sup>29</sup> Though these waters were technically still able to be claimed before the recession of the Arctic ice shelf, the opening of accessibility and exploration of fossil fuel resources on the seabed in these regions is

very likely to have prompted this action. Within these newly claimed waters, the Russian Ministry of Mineral Resources believes there to be up to thirty-six billion barrels in oil and natural gas reserves.<sup>30,31</sup> In current valuation of these resources, this would be worth over thirty trillion dollars.

Russia's push into the Arctic for financial gain is a clear indicator of offensive realist theory at work. As mineral resources and economic opportunity become available, theory dictates that they will capitalize on these opportunities. This is important, because it can help us predict future actions by actors within the region and verifying by proxy many of the other points of analysis.

### Defense Trends in the Arctic Circle

Another benefit of the retreat of Arctic sea ice is the now unhindered access to both Atlantic and Pacific oceans from Russian naval bases along the Kola Peninsula to Vladivostok in the Far East. In a theoretical conflict with NATO, control over the Atlantic supply routes connecting North America with Western Europe would be a decisive tool for either side.<sup>32</sup> Though

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<sup>24</sup>IMF Survey: Cheaper Oil And Sanctions Weigh On Russia's Growth Outlook," IMF Survey : Cheaper Oil And Sanctions Weigh On Russia's Growth Outlook. August 3, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2015/CAR080315B.htm>.

<sup>25</sup>Aleksashenko, Sergey. "Rebuilding the Russian Economy: Is a Lack of Policy the Right Policy?" The Brookings Institution. September 25, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2015/09/25-rebuilding-russian-economy-aleksashenko>.

<sup>26</sup>"Russia Submits 1.2 Million Sq Km Arctic Claim to UN," RT English. August 5, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <https://www.rt.com/business/311627-russia-submits-arctic-claim/>.

<sup>27</sup>Kramer, Andrew E. "Russia Stakes New Claim to Expanse in the Arctic," The New York Times. August 04, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/05/world/europe/kremlin-stakes-claim-to-arctic-expanse-and-its-resources.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/05/world/europe/kremlin-stakes-claim-to-arctic-expanse-and-its-resources.html?_r=0).

<sup>28</sup>Quan, Douglas, and Vladimir Isachenkov. "Russia Submits Claim for 1.2-million Square Kilometres of the Arctic ...including the North Pole." National Post Russia Submits Claim for 12million Square Kilometres of the Arctic including the NorthPole Comments. August 4, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/russia-submits-claim-for-vast-arctic-seabed-territories-at-united-nations>.

<sup>29</sup>"United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea," United Nations, December 10, 1982. Accessed November 23, 2015. doi:10.1163/9789004249639-rwunclos-all.

<sup>30</sup>"Russia Submits 1.2 Million Sq Km Arctic Claim to UN," RT English. August 5, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <https://www.rt.com/business/311627-russia-submits-arctic-claim/>.

<sup>31</sup>"Russia: International Energy Data and Analysis," US Energy Information Administration. July 28, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=RUS>.

<sup>32</sup>Hanley, John T., Jr. "CREATING THE 1980S MARITIME STRATEGY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY," Naval War College Review 67, no. 2 (Spring 2014). Accessed November 23, 2015.

St. Petersburg and the Black Sea ports are active year-round, they both require passage through geographic bottlenecks controlled by NATO powers such as the Denmark Strait in the Baltic and the Bosphorus Strait in Turkey. For Russia or the former Soviet Union, the only clear route to the Atlantic originates from bases on the Kola Peninsula or Western Siberia. While in the past these bases would have been difficult or impossible to use during the harsh winter months, climate change and the development of icebreakers have made them capable of remaining active year-round.<sup>33,34</sup>

Though there are no immediate indications of a change in military doctrine along the Arctic Circle, Russia and the former Soviet Union have already made extensive use of arctic waters in their strategic nuclear planning.

Unlike the United States, which dispersed its nuclear ballistic missile carrying submarines (SSBNs) across the world's oceans in the hopes of using the vast expanses of water to hide, Soviet strategy took a much different approach.<sup>35</sup> Soviet strategic planners chose to use their geographic positioning to their advantage, using the vast expanses of sea ice and natural gulfs to create a defensive shield to cover their submarines in is known as Bastion Defense Doctrine. By hiding submarines beneath ice sheets and patrolling natural bottlenecks in the Barents and Sea of Okhotsk, it was believed that Soviet SSBNs could be protected long enough during a conflict to launch their nuclear payloads in a first or second strike capacity. In this way, cold-water ports have already showed their importance to Russian foreign policy long before climate

change provided additional opportunities. This is yet another example of offensive realism at play, as the previously useless ice sheets in regions such as the Barents Sea were viewed as opportunities to grow power and seized upon. Given this history, it can be predicted that planners will again attempt to find and seize upon advantages in the changing meteorological conditions for military use. In doing so, Russia will continue to lessen its dependence on warm-water ports and grow military power in the Arctic Circle.

### III. Opposing Arguments

As with anything else, there are two sides to this argument. On one side are the arguments which I have made in its support, and on the other are potential arguments against it. In this section I will attempt to address possible criticism of my thesis and analysis. Because this is not based on a currently circulated theory, but rather a new one based on many emerging trends, it would be next to impossible to find direct opposition. What I have gathered to present as a dissenting voice is a compilation of potential arguments based on current trends in foreign policy. They are by no means the only possible arguments; however, I feel these are the most important to immediately consider with respect to my analysis.

The most obvious response to the assertions made in this paper would be that ports such as St. Petersburg and Sevastopol are critical to Russia economically and militarily. Indeed, St. Petersburg is the second strongest Russian city economically by reported GDP as

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<sup>33</sup>Staalesen, Atle. "New Icebreakers Open Way for Russia in Arctic," Barentsobserver. May 5, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://barentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2015/05/new-icebreakers-open-way-russia-arctic-05-05>.

<sup>34</sup>Gady, Franz-Stefan. "Russia and China in the Arctic: Is the US Facing an Icebreaker Gap?" The Diplomat. September 7, 2015. Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/09/russia-and-china-in-the-arctic-is-the-us-facing-an-icebreaker-gap/>.

<sup>35</sup>Hanley, John T., Jr. "CREATING THE 1980S MARITIME STRATEGY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY," Naval War College Review 67, no. 2 (Spring 2014). Accessed November 23, 2015.

valued by the Brookings Institute, second only in the country to Moscow and comparable to Charlotte or Cleveland in the United States.<sup>36</sup> Its proximity to the rest of Europe and use as the base of operations for the Russian Baltic Fleet also make a strong case for its continuing importance to Russian trade and naval power.<sup>37</sup>

Even if Russian interests in the arctic continue to increase, it can be strongly argued that Russia will continue to have concern for developments in the remaining part of the globe beneath the Arctic Circle. The current Russian military action against ISIS is one such current event that can be used to highlight this point. Russian movements in support of the Assad regime make use of ports around the Black Sea and in Syria, in the same way that they could be used for other operations across the Middle East.<sup>38</sup> Based on these events, a case can be made that so long as developments outside of the Arctic Circle influence Russian economic and political standing; it will continue to require warm-water ports to compete for global power.

Critics of cold-water transition theory would of course have many critiques relating directly to current events. Russia's moves in the Black Sea and Syria are contrary to the idea of a shift towards arctic power. This is not without strong reasoning, as Syrian ports in the Mediterranean are vital to power projection and the port of Sevastopol in Crimea can

be considered the jewel of the Russian Black Sea Fleet.<sup>39,40</sup> Actions in Syria and Ukraine can be considered evidence that Russia continues to pursue southern ports.

Even while remaining within the realm of offensive realism, it can be argued that these actions are further proof that Russian foreign policy is making use of offensive realism to expand power outside of the arctic and would potentially do so in the future as part of a global strategy. In Syria, it is speculated that Russian support for the Assad regime is not only based on the trade of arms, but assurance of the continued use of the only permanent Russian naval base outside of the Russian territory.<sup>41</sup> If this is correct, then it would fit well with an offensive realist narrative of pursuing every possible point of power expansion around the world.

In response to these criticisms, I have a number of rebuttals. Though there are many valid points to be made in opposition to the idea of a shift away from warm-water ports, I believe that these arguments are largely unable to conclusively prove a requirement for warm-water ports in the future. With regards to the argument in favor of a continued requirement for warm-water ports built upon strong reasoning, I do not believe that this criticism would necessarily disprove cold-water transition theory. In the coming decades, fossil fuel resources in the Middle East are expected

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<sup>36</sup>"Global Metro Monitor," *The Brookings Institution*, (2015). Accessed November 23, 2015. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports2/2015/01/22-global-metro-monitor>.

<sup>37</sup>"Baltic Fleet Turns 307," *Rusnavy.com*. [http://rusnavy.com/news/newsofday/index.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=9479+%5C](http://rusnavy.com/news/newsofday/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=9479+%5C). (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>38</sup>"Syrian Civil War: Russian Navy Base Tartus In Syria Giving NATO Cause For Concern While Helping To Prop Up Assad Regime," *International Business Times*. <http://www.ibtimes.com/syrian-civil-war-russian-navy-base-tartus-syria-giving-nato-cause-concern-while-2092371>. (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>39</sup>"Syrian Civil War: Russian Navy Base Tartus In Syria Giving NATO Cause For Concern While Helping To Prop Up Assad Regime,"

<sup>40</sup>Wolf, Christopher, "Here's Why Russia Won't Let Go of Crimea," *Public Radio International*. March 3, 2014. . <http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-03-03/here-s-why-russia-won-t-let-go-crimea>. (Accessed November 23, 2015)

<sup>41</sup>"Syrian Civil War: Russian Navy Base Tartus In Syria Giving NATO Cause For Concern While Helping To Prop Up Assad Regime,"

to decline with continued use, allowing for a shift of power towards the next frontier in oil and natural gas, the Arctic Ocean.<sup>42</sup> Even in the very likely scenario that global hotspots for military and economic activity continue to appear outside of the Arctic Circle, the opening of access to northern ports will allow for power to be projected from those harbors without need for others in warmer waters.<sup>43,44,45</sup> As was discussed in the military section of the analysis, the recession of sea ice will provide cold-water ports with easy access to both Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and by extension, the rest of the world. Under this reasoning, I would argue that Russia could continue to function at a similar capacity militarily and economically in a situation where it no longer had the ability to use its warm-water harbors. This would be in keeping with my thesis, which states that Russia no longer requires access to the sea to remain a global power.

In relation to the question of Russian activity in Syria, there are a number of factors at play in this decision. From a strategic standpoint, the Mediterranean would most likely be blocked at both exits during a conflict with the west. The only potential use of Syrian ports would be to contest NATO forces in the Mediterranean while being completely isolated from the rest of the Russian Navy and Air Force.<sup>46</sup> Though this would be a thorn in the side of NATO forces in Southern European and would require a diversion of resources from other theaters, the considerable air and sea power of France, Italy, Turkey, Greece, and of course the US and UK would no doubt be overwhelming for and Russian fleet. This is of course

before even considering the proximity of this port to NATO bases in Turkey. While these bases are certainly useful during peacetime for supply and maintenance purposes, they would be isolated from the Russian mainland during a conflict with the West. Altogether, I would assert that these responses effectively counter the most obvious criticisms to my analysis and the thesis it supports.

#### IV. Conclusion

After considerable analysis and discussion of the impact that global climate change will have on the politics of the Arctic Circle, along with the resulting changes in oceanic access from traditionally cold-water ports, a clear picture can be made of current and future events. The picture made in this analysis points towards a shift in possible Russian power from traditionally warm-water ports to cold-water ones along the Arctic Circle. Based upon the supporting evidence for this assertion, it can be concluded that the thesis argument that Russia no longer needs to pursue and control traditionally warm-water ports to maintain its economic and military power is based upon sound reasoning. Though critics may be able to argue that a modern Russia cannot live without its southern ports, the evidence brought to support cold-water transition theory has delivered a clear argument for a decisive change in what has been fundamental Russian foreign policy for more than three hundred years. What was once a hindrance to its ability to ability to become global superpower, Russia's cold-water ports will soon become the key to its reentry as a power player on the world stage.

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<sup>42</sup>Mehrabi, Shah, "The Impact of Decline in Oil Prices on the Middle Eastern Countries," Global Awareness Society International 24th Annual Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, May 2015.

<sup>43</sup>Masters, Jonathan, "The Thawing Arctic: Risk and Opportunities," *Council on Foreign Relations*. (2013).

<sup>44</sup>Staalesen, Atle, "New Icebreakers Open Way for Russia in Arctic," *Barentsobserver*. (2015).

<sup>45</sup>Gady, Franz-Stefan, "Russia and China in the Arctic: Is the US Facing an Icebreaker Gap?," *The Diplomat*. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/09/russia-and-china-in-the-arctic-is-the-us-facing-an-icebreaker-gap/>. (Accessed November 23, 2015).

<sup>46</sup>Hanley, John T., Jr. "CREATING THE 1980S MARITIME STRATEGY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY," *Naval War College Review* 67, no. 2 (Spring 2014). Accessed November 23, 2015. <https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/2b962da8-c60f-4916-9a98-86d1dd831b5b/Creating-the-1980s-Maritime-Strategy-and-Implicati.aspx>.

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# Artistic and Religious Propaganda in the Deinomenid Tyranny

By Mara McNiff, *University of Washington*

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The Deinomenid brothers, who ruled during the 5th century BC in Greek Sicily, are credited as the tyrants who transformed the archaic city of Syracuse into a major world power and spotlight for art and commerce. Through these transformations, such as changes in artistic commissions and currency used in the ancient Greek city-states of Gela, Syracuse, and Aitna, the Deinomenid brothers Gelon and Hieron could craft an identity for themselves that goes against the modern definition of the word “tyrant.” In its original Greek, the word *tyrannos* refers to an authoritarian sovereign,



Figure 1: *Early Coinage of Gela, 490-475 BC – Nude Warrior / River god Gelas; Source: American Numismatic Society*

but did not have quite the pejorative connotation that it has today. Modern usage refers to tyrants as being cruel and using oppressive force to legitimize their power. The Deinomenids were able to use propaganda to reach the

status of tolerant or benevolent tyrants during their reign in ancient Syracuse.

Each tyrant used propaganda in the way that best enhanced his strength as a leader. Gelon, a fair military commander and superior athlete, used coinage and the erection of temples to celebrate his success. Hieron, an avid patron of the arts, commissioned odes and plays from ancient playwrights and poets such as Aeschylus, Bacchylides, and Pindar, as well as drew comparisons between himself and the god Zeus Aitnaios in coins minted for the new-found city of Aitna, in the region around Mt. Etna. In an effort to appeal to the populous' piety, both brothers drew inspiration from ancient Greek gods in their propaganda. Gelon is credited with drawing connections between his ancestry and the cult of Demeter.<sup>1</sup> He also cites his many military and athletic victories in coins minted for the cities of Gela and Syracuse.

The coinage of Gela, commissioned and supervised by Gelon, was the first step in securing the tyrant's popularity in the Greek city-states. The coins of Gela contained an image of Gelas, an important river god associated with the colony. The inverse of the coin featured a design not previously seen on Greek currency: a naked rider on a horse (Figure 1). This most likely refers not just to the city's strong soldier base, but specifically to Gelon and his role as a cavalry commander and his success in military campaigns. This

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<sup>1</sup>Herodotus, *The Histories* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972).

image signaled a change in monetary representation, a shift from symbols that related to the local characteristics of a city to symbols connected to a specific person. Before Gelon's coinage, a human figure on a coin was usually an anthropomorphized version of a god, but on



Figure 2: Coinage of Syracuse, 485 BCE; Source: American Numismatic Society <http://numismatics.org/collection/1987.25.15>

the coins from Gela the figure of a man refers to an actual human being. This change in coinage is a considerable deviation, since the deities that were usually depicted on coins were replaced following Gelon's rule, a fact which greatly helped the brother promote his power in Gela.

Gelon's takeover of the ancient city Syracuse also signaled a change towards highly personalized imagery being represented on coins. A coin from 490 BC features an archaic-style two-horse chariot and driver with a winged Victory (or Nike in Greek) flying overhead on one side (Figure 2). The image of the goddess Nike holding a wreath above a chariot scene appears to be a direct reference to the athletic victories won by members of the Deinomenid family in the Panhellenic games.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the depiction of a chariot can also relate to aristocracy, power, and war, which may reference the Deinomenids' wealth and many victories in

battle. It is significant to note that the coinage of Syracuse that predates Gelon's takeover of the city features a chariot scene with no victory goddess present.<sup>3</sup> The inverse of the coin features a female head surrounded by a ring of dolphins (Figure 2). The female head is believed to be the image of Arethusa, a nymph connected to the origin of Syracuse. Both images serve as another example of the coinage of the Deinomenids, featuring a symbol of religion on one side, and a symbol referring to their own achievements on the other. This connection Gelon created through his propaganda of coinage suggests that the tyrants are at equal level with the gods.

Gelon—who is credited with the takeover of the city of Syracuse and its installment as the capital of his rule—also used religion as propaganda by commissioning sanctuaries to Demeter, the goddess of fertility, and her daughter Kore when he repopulated Syracuse (Figure 3). The significance of this could hav2



Figure 3: Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, connected to modern Church of Santa Maria delle Lacrime; Source: Galleria Roma <<http://www.galleriaroma.it/Siracusa/Monumenti/Chiese%20Aperte%20al%20culto/Chiese%20fuori%20Ortigia/Santuario%20Madonna%20lacrime%202.htm>>

<sup>2</sup>Jones, *A Dictionary of Ancient Greek Coins* (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004), 156.

<sup>3</sup>Jenkins, *Ancient Greek Coins* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1972), 142.

been to signify that Syracuse would prove to be a fertile and successful capital. However, it may have also been a clever move on Gelon's part to draw a connection between his rule and the cult of Demeter, a relationship already established by one of his ancestors Telines. Herodotus records that Telines secured for his family and descendants the priesthood of the cult of the Earth Goddesses. A priesthood would mean special access to the members. A city whose ruler was a member of the priesthood of the Cult of Demeter would most likely be favored by the goddess herself and mean more abundance for Syracuse:

[A]s a result of party struggles in Gela, a number of men had been compelled to leave the town and to seek refuge in Mactrium on the neighbouring hills. These people were reinstated by Telines, who accomplished the feat, not by armed force, but simply by virtue of the sacred symbols of the Earth Goddesses. How or whence he came by these things I do not know; but it was upon them, and them only, that he relied; and he brought back the exiles on condition that he and his descendants after him should hold the office of Priest.<sup>4</sup>

Like Telines, conjuring this connection to the cult of Demeter proved useful to Gelon in his takeover of Syracuse because in this new city, unlike Gela, Gelon did not hold a respected position. He had forcefully brought in new inhabitants and displaced the locals. By using the religious propaganda of the cult of Demeter, Gelon could provide, "an external force to bind together this dangerous combination of peoples, made up of the angry, defeated Syracusans and the uprooted neighboring cities."<sup>5</sup> Religious propaganda proved a useful tool to both brothers

in the pacification of a population, especially in the takeover and foundation of a new city.

Hieron, who succeeded his brother's rule as tyrant of Syracuse, is also credited with the establishment of a new city, Aitna, in the area



Figure 4: Coinage of Aitna 5th Century; Source: Europeana <[http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/92002/BibliographicResource\\_1000093325356\\_source.html](http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/92002/BibliographicResource_1000093325356_source.html)>

surrounding Mt. Etna. It is believed that Hieron had the coin known as the tetradrachm of Aitna minted soon after the 476 BC foundation of the city, although the exact date is unknown (Figure 4). Like the other coinage produced during the reign of the Deinomenids, it contains important references to their tyranny, drawing a connection between their rule and the ancient gods. The coin of Aitna, however, contains perhaps the most personal and political messages of all the Deinomenid coinage. One side of the coin features the head of a satyr. The satyr is believed to be associated once again with Dionysus, the god of fertility. This connection was probably to establish Aitna as a land with a promising future in agriculture, especially since the land surrounding Mt. Etna is known to be very fertile. Below the satyr is a small beetle and the word AITNAION ("of the people of Aitna"). The dung beetle that is present alongside the satyr can simply be seen as an image of good luck, one that was, "taken over by the Greeks from the Egyptians."<sup>6</sup> This small detail on the coin evokes

<sup>4</sup>Herodotus, *The Histories*, 7.153.2

<sup>5</sup>White, "Demeter's Sicilian Cult as a Political Instrument" (1964), 263-264.

<sup>6</sup>Holloway, *The Archaeology of Ancient Sicily* (London: Routledge, 1991), 125.

the hope that this new colony of Aitna will flourish and gain great fortune, especially in connection with the satyr and agricultural developments.

The reverse image on the coin features the seated figure of Zeus and several secondary images which together create a complex and multifaceted message related to Hieron's establishment and control of Aitna. The enthroned Zeus on the coin of Aitna is believed to be Zeus Aitnaios, the identity given to Zeus when he is acting as the patron god of Mt. Etna. Zeus' thunderbolt is adorned with a pair of wings. The image of wings could be a reference back to the Nike figure seen on the coins from Gela and Syracuse, and, in this way, hints at the Deinomenids' many athletic and military victories. Additionally, the coin features a tree with a bird, believed to be an eagle, on top of it, serving as another symbol for Zeus.<sup>7</sup> The triangular shape of the tree may also be interpreted as the peak of the mountain. This idea of the eagle on the peak of the mountain instills the idea that Zeus is god of the mountain, and therefore the city of Aitna. If the Mt. Etna region truly belongs to Zeus, then Hieron, as a "king" who has been given the right to rule by Zeus, is simply protecting the land that rightfully belongs to the god, legitimizing Hieron's claim over the city of Aitna. This image of Hieron as a "caretaker" for the gods further hinted towards his benevolence as a ruler. Instead of a lust for power, Hieron's driving force is piety.

Another form of propaganda Hieron used in his search to legitimize his claim over the city of Aitna, and praise his success as ruler, was to commission a play by Aeschylus called *Women of Aitna*. The fact that Aeschylus left his native land of Greece and wrote a

play for a Western Greek tyrant is completely unprecedented: in *Women of Aitna*, Aeschylus praises the foundation of Aitna even though Hieron established the city by using extremely violent measures. This Greek tragedy was completely removed from its familiar environment:

"...the play has been removed from the context of the Great Dionysia to the context of a celebration of a specific event: the 'foundation' of Aetna....[I]t can not have been based in the tradition of questioning civic ideology that is central to many Athenian tragedies. The only ideology that could be presented in the play was ideology that Hieron wished to present to his subjects."<sup>8</sup>

In *Women of Aitna* Aeschylus took figures from indigenous myth and made them subjects under Zeus, king of the gods. The play features the marriage between Thalia and Zeus. Thalia represents the indigenous sikels (natives of Aitna), as she was a nymph, daughter of Hephaestus, mother of the Palikoi in the indigenous myth from the cult of Palici, and is referenced herself in the play as Aitna.<sup>9</sup> Zeus, conversely, represents the foreign, or the mainland of Greece. This marriage between Thalia, the representation of Aitna, and Zeus, the representation of Greece was meant to draw a connection to the harmonious union of opposites, in this case, the indigenous peoples of Aitna and the new Grecian settlers who moved there during the foundation.

Aeschylus' second staged form of propaganda commissioned by Hieron to help his favor also aimed at creating a unifying link between mainland Greece and other Greek controlled cities in ancient Sicily. While in Syracuse,

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<sup>7</sup>Jones, *A Dictionary of Ancient Greek Coins*, 245.

<sup>8</sup>McMullin, *The Deinomenids: Tyranny and Patronage at Syracuse* (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004), 145.

<sup>9</sup>Dougherty, (1999), 89.

Aeschylus restaged another of his famous plays, *The Persians*. The timing of Aeschylus' visit in the 470's to Sicily is significant, as the end of the Persian War (c. 449 BC) and the birth of the classical period enforced a "negative attitude toward tyranny," an attitude that did not fit with Hieron's rule.<sup>10</sup> This play and its performance could have been Hieron's attempt to show the mainland that colonies in the west were just as powerful and "Greek" as the city of Athens. For this reason, his choice to have the play *The Persians* performed is significant. The Greek world had recently defeated Xerxes and "[b]y bringing an Athenian poet to his court, Hieron could emphasize Syracusan unity with the mainland and its defeat of the Persians."<sup>11</sup>

This performance of *The Persians* can also be seen as an attempt to allow the population of Syracuse to celebrate that they too, as members of the Greek world, could claim a part of this victory. Hieron also used this play to pacify a newly conquered populace. By having the play performed shortly after taking Syracuse by force, Hieron may have been trying to de-emphasize the brutal actions of his family by contrasting them with the atrocities of the Persians. Hieron was likely trying to convince the audience to rally together and turn their anger and energy towards a common enemy of the whole Greek world, instead of against Hieron himself. This performance of *The Persians* was also intended to help Hieron distance himself from the label of "a cruel ruler" by comparison to Xerxes, the newly defeated Persian king. The performance art provided entertainment for the inhabitants of Syracuse, while still providing subtle messages regarding the power of the Deinomenids and their rightful claim to the

colonies they controlled in Sicily.

An avid patron of numerous art mediums, Hieron also commissioned propaganda through poetry. Hieron's next appointment was the hiring of Pindar and Bacchylides for the composition of Epinician poetry. Epinician poetry was, "lyric odes honoring a victor of the Panhellenic games."<sup>12</sup> Pindar and Bacchylides both travelled to Sicily after having been invited by the Deinomenids to compose such odes. These poems, and their performances, allowed the tyrants to justify their rule in the colonies through artistic expression. Using artistic propaganda by famous poets would help glorify Hieron's athletic victory and further underline his strength and aptitude as a ruler. It is likely that these performances were done locally and would often include, "... important guests from elsewhere on Sicily."<sup>13</sup> This allowed the Deinomenids to spread their propaganda not only before the inhabitants of their own colonies, but also among other significant individuals, and, thus, reinforce their power over the rest of the island as well and forge powerful alliances.

Epinician poems were written to honor victors in the Panhellenic games. Bacchylides' 3rd Ode (468 BC), written for Hieron's chariot victory, refers to the glory of Demeter and Hieron in the first few lines: "Sing, Klio...of Demeter, queen of Sicily where the best grain grows, of Kore violet-crowned, and of Hieron's swift Olympic-racing mares."<sup>14</sup> Bacchylides describes Demeter's important connection to agriculture in Sicily and then immediately makes a statement regarding Hieron's superiority in athletics. By referring to the goddess and Hieron together in the poem, Bacchylides suggests

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<sup>10</sup>McMullin, *The Deinomenids*, 143.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>12</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica

<sup>13</sup>Morrison, (2007), 3.

<sup>14</sup>Bacchylides, Ode 3.

that Hieron is as renowned as the goddess and reinforces the Deinomenids' connection to the cult of Demeter. Bacchylides then refers to the king of the gods implying that Zeus himself has decreed that Hieron should hold a position of power in Sicily: "Ah, thrice-blessed is the man who has won from Zeus the privilege, more than all others, of ruling over Greeks."<sup>15</sup>

After successfully eluding to a strong connection between Hieron and the goddess Demeter, Hieron commissioned more poems, this time from Pindar. The victory odes written by Pindar for athletic victors are considered to be, "some of Pindar's most impressive and widely admired poems, such as the first two Olympians and first three Pythians."<sup>16</sup> Pindar's first Olympian ode, he uses myth to draw important connections between Hieron and Pelops, a hero killed by his father then brought back to life by the gods. Pindar writes that Pelops receives gifts from the god Poseidon: "a golden chariot and winged horses never weary."<sup>17</sup> Just as Pelops was aided and loved by the gods, Hieron appears to be protected by them as well: "Hieron, a god is overseer to your ambitions, keeping watch, cherishing them as his own."<sup>18</sup> This connection between Pelops and Hieron further implies that Hieron is not only favored by the gods, but that any control Hieron claims is by divine right.

The poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides helped secure Hieron's identity as a ruler favored and even appointed by the gods, but Hieron still needed to prove his own ability as a ruler, as odes can only do so much before real action and victory must be taken. The opportunity to prove Hieron's prowess came with the Battle of Cumae. The Battle of Cumae, fought

in the Bay of Naples, was originally a battle fought by Aristodemus, the tyrant of Cumae, and the Etruscans, natives of the Tuscan region on the mainland of Sicily.<sup>19</sup> Hieron contributed his army to that of Aristodemus for a successful victory over the Etruscans. To pay tribute to the gods after his victory, Hieron dedicated three bronze helmets to the Gods at the Sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia (Figure 5). An inscription on the helmets reads, "Hieron, son of Deinomenes, and the Syracusans, [dedicated] to Zeus Etruscan [spoils] from Cumae."<sup>20</sup> By setting up the helmet for all visitors to see, Hieron ensures that they will be reminded, yet again, of when the West helped defeat a barbarian force. This subtle but pious form of religious propaganda aimed once again at solidifying Hieron's strength as a ruler, victor for his people, and a tyrant blessed, if not chosen, by the gods.

With all of this considered, there appears to have been no method too extreme or controversial for the Deinomenid brothers



*Figure 5: Helmet from the battle of Cumae, 474 BC; Source: The British Museum. <[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=399519&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=399519&partId=1)>*

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Morrison, (2007), 2

<sup>17</sup>Pindar, Olympian Ode 1

<sup>18</sup>Pindar, Olympian Ode 1

<sup>19</sup>Diodorus, 11.51.1-2

<sup>20</sup>British Museum Collection Database. "1823,0610.1" website listed under image, British Museum: Online.



when it came to legitimizing their hold over Sicily and solidifying their rule. This included promoting, manipulating, and exaggerating ties they had to religion through propaganda and to the land of Sicily to make it appear as if the gods themselves sanctioned the power that the family held. These actions also made it appear that the Deinomenids' tyranny was rooted in the history of the island. Through the minting of coins, commissioning of architecture and written propaganda, among other art forms, the Deinomenid tyranny secured their place as successful, even popular rulers, and forged Syracuse's identity as a major player on the world stage and as an ancient city rich with history for millennia to study.

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# Impacts of Prenatal and First-year Brain Development

By Jennifer Brown, *Arcadia University*

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## Abstract

This paper highlights a basic brain structure and typical sensorimotor development. This allows us to analyze the cognitive and sensorimotor effects of various deficiencies that occur prenatally or in the first year of life. Malnutrition impacts long term cognitive function, with varying possible degrees of remediation dependent on the degree of deficiency and the extent of damage. Frequently, the brain damage is too severe to be mitigated, but in some cases, measures can be taken to mitigate the severity of the impact.

Neurology is developing rapidly as a field due to recent advancements in imaging technology.<sup>1</sup> This rapid development has allowed neurologists to study for the first time not only how the brain functions, but specifically how children's developing brains function. Because of this, we can now search for specific vulnerabilities, allowing scientists the potential for intervention or remediation to prevent irreversible damage to growing minds. This rapid development has allowed neurologists to study for the first time not only how the brain functions, but specifically how children's developing brains function. Because of this, we can now search for specific vulnerabilities, allowing scientists the potential for intervention or remediation to prevent irreversible damage to growing minds.

## Brain Structure

Even small human functions draw upon multiple regions of the brain. However, there are basic structural regions responsible for specific purposes. For example, the brain stem connects the spinal cord to the rest of the brain. It controls reflexive or involuntary practices, such as breathing—it's the part we get to thank for the fact that we don't have to consciously tell ourselves to take each breath. The cerebellum, at the base of the brain, is responsible for balance and coordination. The final and largest region of the brain, the cerebrum, enables higher thinking processes like learning and memory.

The cerebrum is covered by the cerebral cortex. The cortex is less than ¼ inch thick, but it has folds that allow it to maximize surface space. This gives the brain ridges (gyri) and grooves (sulci). The cortex is divided into four lobes per hemisphere: the occipital lobes in the back, the temporal lobes on the sides, the parietal lobes on top, and the frontal lobes in front.<sup>2</sup> The occipital lobes control sight; the parietal lobes control sensations caused by external stimuli; the temporal lobes control language skills, among other skills; and the frontal lobe is involved with planning, impulse control, and other related skills. The pre-frontal cortex is the last area of the brain to mature prenatally and continues developing

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<sup>1</sup>D. Meyers, *Psychology* (New York City: Worth Publishers, 2009).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

in adolescence. This makes it extremely susceptible to damages that permanently affect an individual's life.

On the cellular level, the brain is composed of neurons.<sup>3</sup> These form networks of cells that send electrical and chemical signals which constitute the basics of learning and memory. A neuron is a cell body with branches, known as dendrites, and a long axon covered by a fatty substance, or a myelin sheath. In between neurons are synapses, or gaps through which electrical signals jump. Babies are born with all of their neurons, but their synapses form over the first two years of their lives. After two years, a process called blooming and pruning allows the brain to kill off useless synapses to hone skills and develop specialized abilities. The skills that are kept into adulthood are the ones following strong neural paths: they consist of the things we did most often as children. Thus, parents have the ultimate impact on what their children's abilities later in life will be.

## Brain Development

The first formation of the brain occurs prenatally throughout all three trimesters. In the first trimester, the brain gains its basic structure without detailed specialization, like the outline of a project waiting to be completed. The neural tube is the first structure to form: embryonic cells forming the neural plate coalesce into a tube that eventually shapes over time into the brain and spinal cord.<sup>4</sup> After that process, the neurons and synapses develop, allowing the first movements of the growing fetus. During the second trimester, the gyri and sulci form across the surface of the brain as the cerebral

cortex develops and synapses form. Myelination begins to occur in these months, with myelin (a fatty substance) covering the axons of neurons to facilitate the speed information traveling across synapses. Without these myelin sheaths, the spinal cord would need to be three yards in diameter.<sup>5</sup> In the final trimester of the pregnancy, the cerebral cortex officially switches on, taking over processes such as responding to external stimuli.

Babies are born with an outstanding degree of ability belied by their limited capacity to interact actively with the world. They can recognize faces and simple expressions, as well as recognize familiar voices, particularly their mother's. The development from this point into the next few years is the most rapid period of brain development to ever occur in any individual's life. The cerebellum triples in size, leading to increased motor skills. Synapses continue to connect in the occipital lobes, improving an infant's sight from dim outlines to full binocular vision.<sup>6</sup> Growth of the hippocampus increases memory capacity. Finally, the synapses in the language cortex of the brain begin to become specialized. It is for this reason that a newborn can be raised to learn any language, but after the first year or so begins to distinguish their natural dialect as is spoken at home.

## Nutritional Effects on Development

Nutrition is inarguably important in maintaining a healthy human body. As Prado and Dewey claim, "Nutrition is especially important during pregnancy and infancy, which are crucial periods for the formation of the brain, laying the foundation for the development of cognitive, motor, and socio-emotional skills."

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>T. McDevitt and J. Ormrod, *Child development and education* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2013)..

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>E. L. Prado and K. G. Dewey. "Nutrition and Brain Development in Early Life." *Nutrition Reviews* 72, no. 4 (2014): 267.

For the neural plate to even form, the embryo needs folic acid, copper, and Vitamin A. Yet, despite the scientific community's knowledge of some specific impacts of early nutrient deprivation, such as the former example, many impacts remain unknown and can be influenced by multiple factors. The degree of nutritional deprivation, the timing of deprivation, and the child's external environment all have an impact on the extent of cognitive and physical impact as well as the degree of possible recovery.

Certain nutrients are more important to specialized development at particular times. When deficiency occurs during those periods, the severity of detrimental impact increases. One such important process is the myelination that occurs during the second trimester.<sup>8</sup> Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) is necessary for the synthesis of myelin. Scientists believe that adding dietary supplements of DHA during the third trimester and into the first year of life can improve the process of myelination, particularly regarding auditory pathways. When tested, this hypothesis showed merit: infants fed formula with DHA showed more activity in the auditory sections of their brains than infants with regular formula. This clearly demonstrates that the timing of nutrient deprivation impacts the degree of later disability.

The degree of nutrient deficiency also has an impact on the severity of deleterious developmental effects. More severe deprivation leads to more damage than moderate deficiency. Homeostasis ensures regulated development regardless of external insufficiencies; while this process can only offset inhibited development in moderate cases, the re-prioritizing of necessary processes and growth during development can prevent severe damage from occurring. In

places of placental insufficiency, the fetus will have decreased blood flow to peripheral tissue, as the brain and heart are the most important organs to sustain.<sup>9</sup> Not every nutrient deficiency can be offset by homeostasis, and each is offset to varying degrees. While proper nutrition is preferable, the body does have ways to remediate mild insufficiencies.

In more severe cases of nutritional deprivation, more negative side effects are likely to occur. However, the chance that a child can later be helped with nutrient supplements also increases proportional to the severity of the initial deficiency. Iron deficiencies can result in stunted cognitive and motor development. Cognitive impairment often remains despite iron supplementation; however, supplements often consistently decrease the impairments long-term. In five trials, motor development skills increased with iron supplementation; in two trials, language development and vocabulary scored higher; and in three trials, the children were more socially adept within their community.<sup>10</sup> Iodine is an even more essential nutrient, because it impacts neurogenesis. One severe impact of reduced or absent iodine nutrients is cretinism, characterized by mental retardation, facial deformities, deaf-mutism, and severely stunted growth.<sup>11</sup> This particular disorder cannot be mitigated with any supplements. However, when cretinism is not present, iodine deprived children often present lower IQ scores than children without a history of iodine deficiency. Scientists are still unsure whether supplementation can have any positive effects on reducing the cognitive impairment caused by this deficiency in the absence of cretinism. So, severe cases of

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<sup>8</sup>J. K. Moore, L. M. Perazzo, and A. Braun. "Time course of Axonal Myelination in The Human Brainstem Auditory Pathway," (2009).

<sup>9</sup>Prado and Dewey. "Nutrition and Brain Development,"

<sup>10</sup>S. P. Walker, T. D. Wachs, and J. M. Meeks-Gardner. "Childhood Development: Risk Factors for Adverse Outcomes in Developing Countries," *Lancet* 369.

<sup>11</sup>Prado and Dewey. "Nutrition and Brain Development"

nutrient deficiency are a toss-up in a biological game of chance: some can show great improvement with supplementation, while others are unsalvageable.

The final effect on the impact of undernutrition is the child's environment. Experience controls brain development in two ways: experience-expectant processes and experience-dependent processes.<sup>12</sup> An experience-expectant process develops the brain based on input received from the external environment. This, for example, is why children pick up their native language: the auditory stimuli from the environment shapes the brain's formation in a way that supports linguistic learning based on the family's spoken dialogue. Experience-dependent processes shape the brain to allow for the development of new skills, the same way as frequently used muscles strengthen to support repeated tasks. The first type of development has a holistic impact on the brain's structure, while the second is more specialized and unique. Both are extremely valuable to cognitive devel-

opment, and in the absence of these, cognitive growth will be stunted, with or without malnutrition.

Proper cognitive stimulation has the power to offset the impact of malnutrition in children. Studies have shown that undernourished children who are not externally stimulated fall behind the average in preformed tasks. Depending on the type of nutritional deficiency, well-stimulated children can perform equally as well or better than well-nourished, under-stimulated children of the same age. In Vietnam, children with nutrient deficiencies who participated in preschool programs between the ages of three to four showed higher cognitive scores between the ages of six to eight than children of similar levels of nutrient deficiency who did not attend preschool classes.<sup>13</sup> While the ideal situation for cognitive development is a well-nourished, highly stimulated environment, providing one of the two is always better than the complete absence of both.

### **Sensorimotor Development**

Motor and sensory development tends to occur in phases marked by milestones. Children reach milestones at approximate ages, but no specific date is set for when each child should possess each ability. The age a child begins to walk varies, but all children with typical development eventually learn around the one year mark. Newborn babies have very little control over their bodies; the first year of life is a period of rapid growth and discovery unparalleled in the child's life.

In the first three to four months, babies learn the basic building blocks for sensorimotor development. They develop control of their heads, they can grab for toys, and they can sit

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<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>K. Watanabe, R. Flores, and J. Fujiwara. "Early Childhood Development Interventions and Cognitive Development of Young Children in Rural Vietnam," *Junior Nutrition* 135 (2007).

<sup>14</sup>Gurian, Anita. "Motor Development: The First Five Years," *The Child Study Center* (NYU: Langone Medical Center).

without falling when supported by a person or object. They can see objects a foot away, follow objects with their eyes, and begin to coordinate their vision with their bodies. This is due to proprioception. Proprioception is a sense, like hearing or sight, that gives the child a sense of its body in space.<sup>15</sup> This allows a baby to ascertain the control it will eventually be able to exert upon the physical world.

Between five and eight months, babies begin to develop more specialized skills. Babies can roll from their backs on to their stomachs and support themselves when sitting up. They can focus both eyes equally to utilize binocular vision. They begin to crawl during this period and refine finger usage, rather than continuing to use less nimble fists and palms for grabbing motions. Most importantly, during this time they begin to mimic the steps of walking, although they still need to be supported and guided by adults.

Between nine and twelve months, babies gain a new degree of mobility and self-sufficiency. While far from adulthood and the ability to fend for themselves, they can now grab their own toys without falling over. They can push themselves from a prone to a sitting position without assistance. They recognize people and begin to pair words with objects, the beginnings of a vocabulary developing in their minds. They develop more complex emotions such as anger and fear of strangers. Binocular vision is now a completely specialized process. At twelve months, babies can say simple words. They can now stand on their own and take independent steps, although they still frequently fall and do not yet possess complete sensorimotor control.

One specific skill that develops during the first year is object control. This is a honed motor skill that allows individuals to categorize similar items and adjust their interaction with the objects accordingly.<sup>16</sup> Researchers Clay Marsh and Marc Bornstein (2014) devised an experiment to test object control in infants. Every individual action, such as lifting a glass to drink, requires the specific coordination and choice of movement potentials. In this experiment, babies of varying ages were given objects to lift and play with. Control objects weighed similar amounts, and test objects weighed less. When infants put too much force behind their lifts, it indicated that they remembered the similar control object weighing more and adjusted the force of their lift accordingly. This memory-to-action skill developed around nine months in the infants who participated in the experiment. This sensorimotor adaptation to interaction with the child's environment displays the effects of the strengthening neural pathways within the motor cortex. As these synapses generate and strengthen with practice, the child's ability to use specialized motor control advances.

Infant motor development is also connected to the characteristics of each child.<sup>17</sup> Perception, motivation, and movement are linked in early childhood advancements.<sup>18</sup> This is why playtime is so important to young children; fun encourages them to explore their environment, providing the motivation to learn and hone motor skills. Motivation forges the link between an individual's temperament and their physical growth. Dorlap and Barlett conducted an experiment in 2014 to study these temperamental impacts on child development in the first year.<sup>19</sup> Children

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<sup>15</sup>Gurian. "Motor Development."

<sup>16</sup>G. Marsh, M. H. Bornstein, and A. Banerjee. "Development of Object Control in the First Year: Emerging Category Discrimination and Generalization in Infants' Adaptive Selection of Action." *Developmental Psychology* 50, no. 2 (2014).

<sup>17</sup>S. Dorlap and D. Barlett. "Infant Movement Motivation Questionnaire: Development of a Measure Evaluating Infant Characteristics Relating to Motor Development in the First Year of Life," *Infant Behavior and Development* 37, no. 3 (2014).

<sup>18</sup>Von Hofsten, "An action perspective on motor development," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8.

<sup>19</sup>Dorlap and Bartlett. "Infant Movement Motivation Questionnaire,"

who were noted to be more active also tended to show signs of advanced motor development, which could be explained by the strengthening of synapses in the motor cortex due to the child's increased action. Children's curiosity was another temperament that remained constant over time and improved motor coordination and advancement. Curiosity led to increased opportunity for exploration that allowed children to be flexible in their responses to the various situations in which they found themselves, such as the best way to pick up a toy or how to move their arms as they learned to crawl. Motivation, categorized by an infant's perceived enjoyment, anticipation, and awareness, was linked to increased movement. Dorlap and Barlett supposed that this could be attributed to increased awareness in these infants, who then were more aware of their success, became excited by the positive outcomes, and were encouraged to continue favorable actions. Finally, adaptability, while not reliably an inherent trait, did show a positive correlation with superior motor advancement. Adaptable children were more stubborn in their attempts, refusing to give up an action until they had succeeded. Thus, an infant's temperament, innately wired into their DNA, affects the advancement of a child's motor development.

### **Impact of Atypical Development**

While an understanding of how infants should interact with their surroundings in their first year of life is undoubtedly important, the fact that every action draws upon numerous parts of the brain makes studying the effects of neural development on motor ability difficult. Studying cases of brain injury and its subsequent impact on child development can aid in scientists' understanding of what specific areas

of the brain influence individual actions.

Dusing, Izzo, Thacker, and Galloway conducted a longitudinal study of three infants during their first years of life to measure the impact of white matter injury on cognitive and motor function.<sup>20</sup> They proposed to study this impact by measuring the postural complexity of the infants: the infant's control of their own body and ability to manipulate it to suit their intended goals. These studies centered around the perception-action theory, in which cognitive function (an infant's perception of the environment) and motor skill (ability to react to the environment) are both dependent on and enhance one another.

Why is postural complexity so important to this? The ability to sit up without falling over, to reach for an item without missing it, to hold an item without dropping it: these are all part of postural complexity. A lack of postural complexity, or ability to act, causes delays in perceptive learning that, in turn, lead to longer developmental delays. Excessive complexity, likewise, damages infant's function because they cannot adapt their movements to different external demands; low complexity provides no stability in strategies toward interacting with the environment, so any successes infants have in any task are lost. The optimal amount of postural complexity, which naturally diminishes over the course of the first year as infants hone their motor function, is the ability to try different tactics in new tasks until they discover the most efficient strategy.

Three infants born between twenty-four and twenty-eight weeks (excessively premature) were studied. All three had periventricular leukomalacia, which causes holes in the brain. The infants were assessed with the Test of Infant Motor Performance (TIMP),

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<sup>20</sup>S. C. Dusing, T. Izzo, L. R. Thacker, and J. Cole Galloway, "Postural Complexity Influences Development in Infants Born Preterm With Brain Injury: Relating Perception-Action Theory to 3 Cases," *Physical Therapy* 94, no. 10 (2014).



useful up to four months of age, and the Baley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development, used from four to twelve months.<sup>21</sup>

The first infant showed linguistic and cognitive strength but exceptional motor delay. She could not reach for a toy until she was six months (age adapted) old. Her postural complexity declined rapidly in the first three months but then rose back to average levels around six months; the scientists posited that this was because she focused her cognitive resources visually on the toy until she could reliably focus her eyes enough to redirect her focus toward motor control. Her adaptive strength proved the connection between motor and cognitive function.

The second infant showed close to average motor skill but severe cognitive deficits. The infant displayed low postural complexity early in life, which damaged the degree to which his perception benefited from his action. Thus, while he quickly developed motor skills later on, including the ability to pull himself up to standing by twelve months, his cognitive development was negatively impacted.

The final infant had average postural complexity in his first four months. At five months, he developed delays, most significantly to his motor development. He could focus on toys by two months, but could not reach for them until he reached six months old. Over time, his postural complexity increased, leading to reduced efficiency of his movements that led to developmental delays.<sup>22</sup> Despite this, he

could stand independently at twelve months and walk shortly after. His average postural complexity in the first four months of life mitigated the motor damage caused by his brain injury, although his cognitive function was permanently impaired.

Little could be discovered by way of how specific brain injury would impact these infants. All three children did, however, show significant motor and/or cognitive delays resulting from the brain injury. The difference in display highlights the utter complexity of brain structure and function and the growth still to come in the neurological field.

## Conclusion

The field of neurology has allowed scientists to gain a great degree of knowledge of brain structure and function. This understanding is only beginning to be applied to studies of normative sensorimotor and cognitive development in both children and adults. The effects of brain damage are difficult to study both because so many areas of the brain are necessary to each individual function as well as because similar damage impacts individuals in different ways. Still, experiments with nutritional supplements and cognitive stimulation show hope for at least some children with damage due to deficiencies. Continual study will hopefully discover more about remediating damage in small children so they can live healthier adult lives.

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<sup>21</sup>Dusing, Izzo, Thacker, Galloway, "Postural Complexity,"

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

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# Redefining the Gaze: The Self-Portraiture of Helene Schjerfbeck, Romaine Brooks, and Marianne Werefkin

By Megan D'Avella, *Arcadia University*

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## Introduction

Throughout the history of art, self-portraiture has been explored by artists as means to emphasize their artistic capabilities, claim their importance in modern art, and solidify their existence. The work accomplished by female artists, however, must be considered separately from the overall genre of portraiture. Women in the early twentieth century needed to approach the canvas with careful consideration of past representations of their gender. Additionally, women were mindful of how their technique would impress upon critics. Helen Schjerfbeck, Romaine Brooks, and Marianne Werefkin distanced themselves from the artistic historical tradition of idealized female portraiture by creating self-representations that emphasized the internal experience as opposed to the external.

By approaching the subject of self, an artist is blurring the lines between creator and model. Unlike their male counterparts, female artists considered the historical significance of female models. Up until the twentieth century, women were usually portrayed with elegant beauty, as objects to be admired. Paired with the unforgiving cynicism of contemporary critics, women had to carefully plan and execute their self-portraits. While female painters often portrayed themselves in a quieter, predictable

manner, males boldly presented themselves through self-imagery.<sup>1</sup> This can make early female self-portraiture difficult to read autobiographically, as a subdued painting does not necessarily translate into a subdued woman.

Keeping in mind the traditional standard of female portraiture, the un-idealized self-representations that Helen Schjerfbeck, Romaine Brooks, and Marianne Werefkin painted were no small statement at the turn of the century. They shifted away from canonical art historical representations and cemented themselves in modernity. Pursuing an artistic career was a bold choice for women, but creating art that went against traditional standards was revolutionary. By utilizing innovative techniques, representing the internal experience, and challenging the male gaze, these three women turned away from the academy and changed the way female artists were perceived. These women personify the *femme nouvelle*, the independent woman who is not weighted with the pressures of conventional femininity.<sup>2</sup> Their self-portraits aim not to describe their appearance, but to explain who they are.

The desire to represent the internal experience was born alongside the introduction of psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth century. This breakthrough was significant to artists,

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<sup>1</sup>Frances Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998), 18.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, at 125.

many of whom took it as an opportunity to discover their inner selves. Introspection was the central focus in the self-portraits of Helen Schjerfbeck, Romaine Brooks, and Marianne Werefkin. The fact that these women never met and, likely, never heard of each other proves the international attraction to psychoanalytic approaches to artistic production. They were separated by country, style, and time, yet all three women expressed themselves in similarly unconventional ways. By grouping them together, it is evident that they shared a common sensitivity to the artist's mind.

Looking at the artists individually, it is evident that their processes and experiences with art varied greatly. Helene Schjerfbeck, the most prolific self-portraitist of the three, spent much of her career working in isolation. Although she found great success at the Paris Salon and within the artist communities in the city, Schjerfbeck was forced to return to Finland due to her financial and family situations. Severed from the modernity of the continent, Schjerfbeck found herself in the middle of an entirely different art scene. Finnish artists were interested in nationalism, preferring patriotic themes over genre paintings. A distaste for this work led, in part, to Schjerfbeck's hermetic lifestyle.

It was not uncommon for female artists like Helene Schjerfbeck to work in isolation, Paula Modersohn-Becker and Käthe Kollwitz are other notable examples. This could be attributed, in part, to the lack of openness in welcoming women into art movements. Even though the early twentieth century was a time of rapid artistic development, experimentation, and optimism, most women associated with major artistic movements are recognized only by their connection with male members.<sup>3</sup>

Marianne Werefkin fits within the latter stereotype; although she was a founding member of *Der Blaue Reiter*, she is often mentioned in relation to Alexei Jawlensky. Regardless of her standing within art history, Werefkin was a leading intellectual at the turn-of-the-century. Her salon was visited by famous artists, dancers, and composers where they contemplated the concepts of modern art. As an artist, Werefkin shied away from the extreme abstraction of her colleague Wassily Kandinsky.

Romaine Brooks is over ten years younger than both Schjerfbeck and Werefkin, but her work is timeless. Her individualized style paired with a cosmopolitan lifestyle puts her between the extreme isolation of Schjerfbeck and the intellectually driven Werefkin. Seeing great success during her lifetime, Brooks was a much sought-after portraitist among the elite class. Most women artists of the time were not graced with the same overwhelming praise. There was a seemingly conscious effort to dissuade women from pursuing art.<sup>4</sup> Such criticism was not only influenced by the apparent belief that they were less talented, but also because the late nineteenth century saw an abundance of female painters. Industrialized society enabled women to leave the home and pursue artistic opportunities. Simultaneously, women were allowed into places of art education.

Criticism was also evoked in the mode of abstract art, despite the proliferation of modern artistic movements at the turn-of-the-century. Critics preferred traditional representations, especially from women. There was a fear that if women started to break away from this artistry, they would also decide to separate themselves from other societal confines.<sup>5</sup> Schjerfbeck, Brooks, and Werefkin all worked

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<sup>3</sup>Elsa Honig Fine, *Women and Art* (New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld Publishers, 1993), 142.

<sup>4</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2007, 23.

<sup>5</sup>James Hall, *The Self-Portrait: A Cultural History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2014), 224.

in some form of abstraction. Schjerfbeck's work progressively becomes more obscure throughout her life, eventually paring down details until only a shadow of a figure remains. Brooks explores abstraction through a limited palette and new forms of figuration. Werefkin makes a dramatic jump in her work from naturalistic art to abstract, using expressionist techniques to bring color to the forefront.

All three women went against the traditional modes of creation, both within the broader realm of painting and within the genre of portraiture. Their work signifies a change in women's self-perception and empowerment. They forewent the beautification of the past in favor of more honest representations.

In this paper, I will individually consider Helene Schjerfbeck, followed by Romaine Brooks, and culminating with Marianne Werefkin. I will analyze their respective self-portraits, proving the significance of these works. By considering the history of these women in relation to their artwork, it will become evident that these women created paintings with the intention of expressing the inner self. When viewed in tandem with the societal standards in the beginning of the twentieth century, it also becomes clear that Schjerfbeck, Brooks, and Werefkin were revolutionary in their modes of expression.

## II. Helen Schjerfbeck

Helene Schjerfbeck began her career as an artist traditionally, beginning at the School of Finnish Art Society and later moving on to the Colarossi in Paris. Although she eventually turned

towards abstraction, these teachings created a foundation that Schjerfbeck carried with her throughout her life. This pattern was echoed in the lives of Romaine Brooks and Marianne Werefkin. Two factors may have influenced each of their turns against the academy. The first was a major shift in the art world at the *fin de siècle* towards modernism and abstraction, to which all three artists reacted in their work. Schjerfbeck and Werefkin tended towards these movements, creating work that challenged contemporary standards. Brooks aimed for an art that returned to tradition, preferring strict aesthetic to loose abstraction. The second factor was the distinct critical distaste for female artists, which many women responded to by pushing back with even more controversial artworks.<sup>6</sup> The lack of acceptance into modern art communities may have fueled the un-idealized nature of these portraits; it certainly had notable significance to Helene Schjerfbeck.

Schjerfbeck was raised in Finland during the late nineteenth century, when the country was subjugated by Russian rule. Finnish nationalism abounded, and the heritage of the country as well as its traditions were well promoted. A distinct patriotic theme filtered into Finnish artwork, and it was under these ideals that Schjerfbeck was taught artistic techniques. She began studying at the age of eleven, eventually continuing her studies at the private academy of Adolf von Becker.<sup>7</sup> By 1879, Schjerfbeck earned a state grant to study in Paris. It was here, in the cultural center of nineteenth-century Europe, that Schjerfbeck turned towards a more emotive artistic mode. This change was certainly

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<sup>6</sup>Shulamith Behr, 15.

<sup>7</sup>Schjerfbeck's talents were supported by her father who, despite her family's poor financial situation, ensured she had all the supplies necessary. His support must have outweighed her mother's disapproval, which persisted throughout her life. Schjerfbeck's mother refused to even discuss art with her daughter, causing a rift between the two women. Schjerfbeck certainly resented her mother's disdain for art, as well as thinly veiled attempts to keep Schjerfbeck from painting. Schjerfbeck spent the majority of her time cleaning the house at her mother's request, often allotting hardly two hours to work on her paintings. Alessandra Comini, "Review," *Woman's Art Journal* 16 (1995): 51. See also: Michelle Farcos, "Helene Schjerfbeck's Self-Portraits: Revelation and Dissimulation," *Woman's Arts Journal* 16:1 (1995), 14. As well as: Ahtola-Moorhouse 2007, 21.

inspired not only by the famous artworks she saw in museums like the Louvre, but also through paintings by Edouard Manet and Paul Cezanne.<sup>8</sup>

Schjerfbeck exhibited at the Paris Salon three times during her years abroad, receiving critical acclaim for her work.<sup>9</sup> Her success on the Continent was not as evident in Finnish art circles, although the Finnish Art Society continued to support her studies. A disinterest in her work could be explained by both her subject matter (genre scenes and portraiture) as well as her gender. Schjerfbeck showed her work at a Grand Finnish Exhibition in 1885, but critics did not take kindly to paintings done by women. J.J. Tikkanen wrote, “Of the 45 artists on display no less than 21 of them are women! This astonishing fact can perhaps be explained when one considers the suitability of art as a pastime. Among this group, however, there are some women who think of their endeavors with the utmost seriousness. None of them is anything more than mediocre, though one or two of them may yet improve with time.”<sup>10</sup> This response exemplifies the fact that, although women were being accepted into art circles, equality was still a fanciful concept. Other critics ignored content altogether, opting to discuss technique.<sup>11</sup> Women had to either disregard these comments or fight back against them. Schjerfbeck, Brooks, and Werefkin chose the latter.

Despite her desire to continue her studies in Paris, Schjerfbeck was eventually forced

to return to Finland.<sup>12</sup> After 1902, she never again left Scandinavia. Schjerfbeck’s isolation from the art world was a self-inflicted protective measure. Because she was unable to return to a life of leisure—her financial situation would not permit it and neither would her mother—Schjerfbeck was forced to stay in Finland. Her work became more simplified and intrinsically focused, fostering tense relationships with leading Finnish artists of the time. The stress, born from her resilience against the conventional, was so overwhelming that Schjerfbeck spent much of the 1890s in and out of health facilities. The harmful impact this had on her life led Schjerfbeck to shy away from the public eye, preferring to live in isolation.

Once committed to a life of solitude, Schjerfbeck’s work began to rapidly evolve. Her break from society freed her from any lingering conservative restraints. She focused her attention on capturing the inner spirit of her subject, often conveying her own emotions onto the canvas.<sup>13</sup> This unconscious transference can be understood in her letter to friend Einar Reuter, “It is the subconscious, the primitive aspects of one’s soul that create art, not rational thought, at least not in my case.”<sup>14</sup> Schjerfbeck’s belief in an artistic pull outside her cognizant mind is part of why her work is so multidimensional. Her understanding of these concepts evolved during her time in France. She was surrounded by a society that actively investigated the newest cultural phenomena, such as the advent of psychology.

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<sup>8</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2007, 23. See also: Leena Ahtola-Moorhouse, *And Nobody Knows What I'm Like: Helene Schjerfbeck's Self-Portraits 1878-1945* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Taide Art Publishers, 2000), 18. As well as: Carolin Köchling, “Sur/Faces: People as Project Surfaces, Images as Models,” in *Helene Schjerfbeck*, ed. Carolin Köchling and Max Hollein (Frankfurt: Kerber Art, 2014), 19.

<sup>9</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2007, 23.

<sup>10</sup>As cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 28.

<sup>12</sup>It should be noted that Schjerfbeck’s return to Finland was reluctant, but unfortunately necessary. Not only had she run out of funds to further her studies abroad, but she had to take over the care of her mother. Her brother was getting married, and since Helene Schjerfbeck was an unmarried woman it was expected that she assume these responsibilities. Comini, 53.

<sup>13</sup>Comini, 51.

<sup>14</sup>As cited in Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 28.

Closely associated with the Scandinavian artists in Paris was Axel Munthe, a doctor who specialized in hypnosis. Schjerfbeck's close friend Helena Westermarck was present for one of Munthe's hypnosis facilities demonstrations.<sup>15</sup> Although it is unknown if Munthe and Schjerfbeck ever discussed his work, it is doubtless that she would have been aware of his experiments with the unconscious and the rising popularity of psychoanalysis. The scientific breakthroughs in psychology held significant sociological value as people began seeing the self as a pliable and layered entity as opposed to stagnant and predetermined.<sup>16</sup> Schjerfbeck's interpretation of this information involved a deep investigation of the subconscious. This is especially apparent in her more than forty self-portraits.

In 1912, at the age of fifty, Helene Schjerfbeck created the first self-portrait in her newly developed style (Fig. 1). Schjerfbeck's two previous self-portraits, created over twenty years prior, were naturalistic representations that hinted at the influence of famous paintings. The 1912 self-portrait was a personal study, as were most of her subsequent self-representations, which sought to alleviate the stresses of age and analyze her life thus far. Schjerfbeck most likely decided to create this painting because of her milestone fiftieth birthday, seeing as she inscribed the date alongside her signature.<sup>17</sup> This work marks the beginning of a lifelong attempt to capture her essence on canvas, not simply her appearance.

The figure appears much younger than her actual age, implying that Schjerfbeck



Figure 1: Helene Schjerfbeck, *Self-Portrait*, 1912, Oil on Canvas

Painted a mask over her face to hide the world from her true appearance. However, it is more likely that she was struggling with her age. As a painter of

internal experiences, she would not have imagined herself as an older woman. Leena Ahtola-Moorhouse suggests that Schjerfbeck is, "exploring her state of mind, displaying her creative vitality."<sup>18</sup> This idea is further supported by the fact that she did not portray herself in an idealized way, as was the norm at the turn-of-the-century. Although Schjerfbeck appears younger, her anxious expression, deep-set eyes, and unembellished outfit force the viewer to see her insecurities. She did not beautify her image; she mirrored her internal self.

Unlike the works by Romaine Brooks and Marianne Werefkin, Schjerfbeck does not meet the viewer's gaze. She looks over her shoulder, averting her eyes slightly down and to the right. Not only is she avoiding the intrusive viewer, but Schjerfbeck is also failing to meet her own gaze.<sup>19</sup> She is not quite willing to confront herself, her past, or the internal perspective she analyzes.

<sup>15</sup>Farcos, 15.

<sup>16</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 11.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Farcos, 12.

Analyzing Schjerfbeck's expression in *Self-Portrait*, there is a distinct difference between the right and left side of her face. Thus, the mirror impacts the viewer's perspective. A self-portrait is almost always created by an artist referencing a mirror, as done by Schjerfbeck, Brooks, and Werefkin. In this way, their image is reversed on the canvas. Therefore, when I refer to the left side of the painting, I am also referring to the literal left side of her face and not the perceived left. This distinction is vital when interpreting the significance of the two sides of the painting.

The eyes themselves are of particular interest. The right eye is delicately rendered, describing the pupil, the subtle color shifts within the green iris, and even the shadow from the eyelid. This is a stark contrast to the left eye which has been simplified to a flat patch of blue. The difference between the eyes can be attributed to Schjerfbeck's interest in introspection, as well as a reference to her childhood injury. At the age of four, Helene Schjerfbeck fell down the stairs and severely damaged her left hip.<sup>20</sup> Schjerfbeck sustained a lifelong limp from the incident, thus influencing her personality and artwork. The psychoanalyst Sirkka Jansson speculates that the unbalanced composition between the left and right sides of Schjerfbeck's paintings is a reflection of her childhood injury.<sup>21</sup> It is surely not a coincidence that the artist chose to use her left, injured side to represent the inter-

nal experience. Living with a disability, however subtle it may seem to modern perspective, was a matter of emotional discomfort for Schjerfbeck.<sup>22</sup>

The eyes also speak to the duality of existence, the real and the imagined.<sup>23</sup> The right, more naturalistic eye represents the physical world. The left, abstracted eye is symbolic of the internal experience. By forcing these contradicting realities upon the same visage, Schjerfbeck implies that she is at war with herself.<sup>24</sup> Schjerfbeck's anxious expression, her inability to make eye contact with the viewer, and her turned body all add to the unsettling impression that she is between two worlds.

The dark blue, unmitigated color of Schjerfbeck's painting frock creates a ghostly illusion, forcing her body backwards and separating her head from it. Interestingly, Schjerfbeck does not appear decapitated, although the stark difference in color values between her face and coat—as well as the dissolved neck—should confuse the eye. Instead, Schjerfbeck forces the viewer to look at her face. This bold composition juxtaposes her apprehensive expression. Schjerfbeck's expression is also contrasted by the bright blush on her cheeks and nose, hinting at her vibrancy.<sup>25</sup> By painting a plain, unembellished dress, Schjerfbeck reveals her disinterest in portraying herself as part of the physical world.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Although her father wanted to take out a loan to fund a doctor for Schjerfbeck's injury, her mother refused saying, "With what, then, would we buy Magnus's [Schjerfbeck's older brother] books and clothes for school?" Raket Liehu, "Helene," *World Literature Today* 78:3-4 (2004): 111.

<sup>21</sup>As mentioned in Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 81.

<sup>22</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2007, 21.

<sup>23</sup>Schneede, 34.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid. Schneede argues that Schjerfbeck is on the fence between reality and imagination, ready to intervene if necessary. In this instance I would have to disagree. Schjerfbeck is not passively watching and waiting. The anxious expression on her face speaks to a greater desperation, the dualities of her realities confusing and discomforting her.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>26</sup>Farcos furthers this argument to state that Schjerfbeck's use of exaggerated makeup acts as a protective mask. Implying that the bright blush was intended to transform Schjerfbeck's visage into one of youthful attraction undermines the artist's ability to portray the internal experience and instead insinuates that Schjerfbeck was more focused on the external. I would offer the interpretation that Schjerfbeck was opening a window unto her soul, allowing the viewer to see her true life force. Whereas Farcos argues that she is creating a mask, Schjerfbeck is actually doing the opposite. Farcos 15.



Helene Schjerfbeck's 1912 self-portrait goes against all traditional representations of women and artists. She forewent the traditional palette and paintbrush, choosing to



Figure 2: Helene Schjerfbeck, *Self-Portrait*, 1895, Oil on Canvas, 38 x 31 cm

disregard the male-artist model.<sup>27</sup> Whether or not she did this as a conscious revolt against the masculinized standard is unknown. However, it furthers her disinterest in the physical world and her preoccupation with the internal. While she

does not portray herself as an artist, Schjerfbeck also refuses to align herself with the traditionally sensual and desirable model.<sup>28</sup> Schjerfbeck's self-portrait does not sit comfortably among conventional representations, whether of the self or other, at the turn-of-the-century.

Schjerfbeck continued to explore the motif of self-portraiture throughout her life, the majority created in her final years. Her work continues to become more simplified, aggressive, and internal. She later remarks

that while looking at a book of famous artists' self-portraits, "the ones that make themselves more beautiful are boring."<sup>29</sup> To this effect, she also remarks that, "A painting must be a painting, not air, not nature... Yes, beauty is a broad term, but that's not what we're all looking for... what makes a painting beautiful is the way it is painted."<sup>30</sup> Her disinterest in beauty is further proof that the so-called mask Schjerfbeck paints is not one meant to idealize.

Even though Schjerfbeck's self-portrait may not be extreme to modern eyes, its unveiling had mixed reviews. One of the most striking reactions was from her close friend Helena Westermarck, who remarked that she was puzzled by the ruthless manner of the work.<sup>31</sup> In a surprisingly passive-aggressive gesture, Westermarck refused to even include the image in her article. Instead she included a much more subdued self-portrait from 1895 (Fig. 2), effectively deeming the contemporary work unfit for viewers. Westermarck proves that sexism in art was not relegated to male critics. There was a general expectation that women create work suitable for their gender by using gentler techniques and softer colors.

For the most part, twentieth-century art critics ignored the deeper meaning behind Schjerfbeck's works and chose to focus on the more "feminine" aspects.<sup>32</sup> Critiques of work at the time were usually relegated to formal issues, with the context being ignored.<sup>33</sup> It is this misunderstanding of her work that explains why she devalued her work and categorized herself as being part of the "weaker sex."<sup>34</sup> Schjerfbeck

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<sup>27</sup>Anu Koivunen, "Uncanny Motions: Facing Death, Morphing Life," *Discourse* 35:2 (2013), 255.

<sup>28</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 25.

<sup>29</sup>As cited in Ahtola-Moorhouse 2007, 30. See also the translation in Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 65. "Those that beautify themselves are boring."

<sup>30</sup>As cited in Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 62.

<sup>31</sup>As mentioned in *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>32</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2007, 28.

<sup>33</sup>Ahtola-Moorhouse 2000, 28.

<sup>34</sup>Annabelle Gorgen, "One day the work of this Finnish artist will be part of European cultural heritage': The reception," in *Helene Schjerfbeck*, ed. Annabelle Gorgen and Hubertus Gassner (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2007), 41.

wrote, “That which lies innermost—passion—is what I would like to reveal, but then one becomes ashamed and is unable to conjure it up—because one is a woman. Only very few women have been such conjurers.”<sup>35</sup>

### III. Romaine Brooks



Figure 3: Romaine Brooks, *Self-Portrait*, 1923, Oil on Canvas, 117.5 x 68.3 cm

Although Romaine Brooks did not work in complete isolation, her stable financial situation allowed her to create art outside of major artistic movements. Much like how Schjerfbeck was able to freely experiment during her seclusion, Romaine Brooks’s independence inspired a style that cannot be strictly classified. Nonetheless, some art historians align her

work with that of the Surrealists, often claiming she preceded the movement.<sup>36</sup> During her lifetime, however, Brooks was contemptuous of modern abstraction, once asserting, “I grasped every occasion no matter how small, to assert my independence of views. I refused to accept

the slavish traditions in art.”<sup>37</sup> Brooks held fast to the societal ideals that were threatened by World War I well after peace reigned Europe. While Brooks’s technique straddled the line between traditional and unconventional, her ideas were influenced by modernity. It often appeared as if Romaine Brooks lived a life of contradictions, and the duality of her experiences were fully represented in the 1923 *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 3).

In order to fully understand the underlying meaning behind Brooks’s works, first her troubled childhood must be examined. Key to her early trauma was the influence of her mother, Ella Waterman. The volatile heiress was divorced from her husband only months after Brooks’s birth, leaving the children to be raised without a father figure.<sup>38</sup> Trapped in the custody of Waterman, Brooks was left in uncertain peril—both physical and emotional. Constantly rejected by a mother who promised, “I will break your spirits,” Brooks’s only companion was her brother, the mentally unstable St. Mar.<sup>39</sup> She was caught between two unstable forces, often taking the brunt of their anger.<sup>39</sup>

In the midst of this familial chaos, Brooks attempted to find solace in art. Unsurprisingly, she did not receive maternal support for her creative impulses.<sup>40</sup> Although Brooks’ father was not present to counteract Waterman’s disdain, he later showed a profound appreciation for Brooks’

<sup>35</sup>As cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>Liana Cheney, Alicia Craig Faxon, and Kathleen Lucey Russo, *Self-Portraits by Women Painters* (England: Ashgate, 2000), 176.

<sup>37</sup>As cited in Cassandra Langer, *Romaine Brooks: A Life* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 66.

<sup>38</sup>For Waterman’s title of heiress, see: Langer, 18. Ella Waterman was the daughter of Isaac Waterman Jr.—a Quaker minister who doubled as a coal and salt mine tycoon. He entrusted the capital of his wealth to his grandchildren, although Ella Waterman kept that fact a secret. For the impact of Brooks’s father’s absence, see: Langer, 19. Although it was never confirmed, Brooks believed that she was the product of an affair. She theorized that this was why she was resented by her mother and abandoned by her father. See also: Meryle Secrest, *Between Me and Life: A Biography of Romaine Brooks*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 17. Secrest argues that Brooks used this claim as a coping mechanism, and she often flip-flopped between whether or not it was true.

<sup>39</sup>For the Waterman quote, see Langer, 26. For the mentally unstable St. Mar, see Secrest, 19. Secrest observes that the Waterman family line had “sinister strains,” Ella Waterman’s sister was an alcoholic who also had a mentally unstable child, Mamie. Waterman’s own unpredictability, paired with the fact that she married an alcoholic, builds the foundation for an unfortunate bloodline.

<sup>40</sup>Whitney Chadwick, *Amazons in the Drawing Room: The Art of Romaine Brooks* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2000), 11.

work.<sup>41</sup> It was not until Brooks' mother disappeared to Europe that she was finally encouraged to pursue her passion.<sup>42</sup> This hiatus from Waterman's disdain was short-lived, however, and soon Brooks found herself once again in the clutches of her mother.

Because of Waterman's constant travels, Brooks jumped from boarding schools to convents to finishing schools.<sup>43</sup> She finally emancipated herself at the age of twenty-one, and then pursued an academic education in painting.<sup>44</sup> Much like Schjerfbeck and Werefkin, Brooks used her lessons as a foundation from which she built a unique style. Unlike most women at the time, Brooks travelled alone to Rome, where she was admitted into the Scuola Nazionale as the only female student. Despite her passion and talent, Brooks was consistently berated and demeaned by her classmates.<sup>45</sup> There was an overarching "male anxiety" towards woman attempting to change their status, and this filtered into art education.<sup>46</sup> By going against societal standards, female artists were becoming increasingly more difficult to suppress.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, men still strived to wield their power. As a single woman in Rome, Brooks could not walk around the city without being accosted by men.<sup>48</sup> Such behavior against women proves Brooks' resil-

ience. Her desire to study art and further her career was unsupported by the greater society, forcing her to overcome the oppressive sexism of the *fin de siècle*.

Eventually, Brooks had to leave Rome because she felt unsafe.<sup>49</sup> The move to Capri, an island off the coast of Italy, proved to be a significant turning point in her life. Brooks formed a close circle of friends, among whom was the aforementioned Axel Munthe.<sup>50</sup> The two likely discussed the effects on the subconscious, considering they spent so much time together. Interestingly, the same man linked to Schjerfbeck's understanding of the inner self was also closely tied to Brooks.

Despite the fact that her wealth ensured that she did not need to create work for others, Brooks devoted her artistry to portraiture.<sup>51</sup> Her ability to capture a haunting presence on canvas earned her the title "Thief of Souls," but it is suggested that Brooks was merely transferring her own emotions into the paint.<sup>52</sup> Brooks integrated her painful experiences into all of her work, merging the external and the internal. It is in the 1923 *Self-Portrait* that Brooks most succinctly incorporates her past and future, the physical and emotional. The painting reads like a diary entry, symbolic meaning laced throughout the brushstrokes.

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<sup>41</sup>Langer, 25.

<sup>42</sup>Ella Waterman eventually ceased paying the laundress, putting the woman in immense financial strain. Mrs. Hickey was forced to seek out Brooks grandparents to relieve the burden. Romaine Brooks's temporary solace, despite living in poverty, was ended. Langer, 23

<sup>43</sup>It should be noted that Waterman was travelling around the world to find a cure for her son's mental illness. Her love for him and his health was all-consuming, so much so that she did not have room in her heart for her youngest daughter.

<sup>44</sup>Langer, 30.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>46</sup>Hall, 224.

<sup>47</sup>As suggested by Ibid, 217.

<sup>48</sup>Secrest, 108.

<sup>49</sup>Langer, 36.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 37. See also: Secrest, 135.

<sup>51</sup>Romaine Brooks is remembered as a woman of immeasurable wealth, but in the early years of her art career she did not have the pleasure of financial independence. Ella Waterman withheld her daughter's inheritance, forcing Brooks to be reliant upon her mother for support. The meager allowance she was allotted barely covered her cost of living. In 1902, Romaine Brooks's mother passed away, leaving her with a significant fortune. The sudden wealth ensured that Brooks would no longer have to struggle to support her artistic career. Brooks did not have to rely on the support of patrons or the income from commissions. In fact, she could now paint and draw whomever and whatever she pleased. Much in the same way that a life of isolation allowed Schjerfbeck to experiment, so too did Brooks achieve unexpected explorative freedom in her art.

<sup>52</sup>Chadwick, 11.

Brooks had a tumultuous relationship with her past. She suffered unimaginable traumas in her early years, from physical to mental to sexual.<sup>53</sup> Brooks wanted to liberate herself from these oppressive memories, but her attempts were unsuccessful.<sup>54</sup> Even in her old age, Brooks lamented, “My dead mother gets between me and life.”<sup>55</sup> Brooks came to view herself as a phoenix, rising from the ashes of her youth. She believed that the internal self had the ability to overcome all attacks on the external.<sup>56</sup> In Brooks’s self-portrait, the resolute woman looking out at the viewer is clearly strong and capable. Yet she still manages to leak some insecurity and fear into the painting, proving that Brooks’ self-perception was at odds with her internal experience.

Brooks paints herself staring directly at the viewer, a far cry from Schjerfbeck’s timid gaze. Her face is set towards the viewer and herself with stern but not unkind eyes. She wears the expression of a woman who has seen a lifetime of pain, but who has overcome adversity. Adorned in an elegant black suit with a gloved hand poised in front of her, Brooks highlights her aristocracy while also hinting at her individuality. The woman’s sophistication is offset by the background, depicting a destitute city. This self-portrait is laced with symbolism and meaning relating to her life and self.

The somber color scheme, part of Brooks’ hallmark style, evokes a melancholy atmosphere.<sup>57</sup> Only slight bursts of colors are per-

mitted, as seen in the mildly rouged lips and a subtle pin on the jacket. Otherwise, the painting is a study in gray. Brooks wrote to a friend that on occasion, “I shut myself up for months without seeing a soul and give shape in my paintings to my visions of sad and gray shadows.” The colors are not merely an aesthetic choice, Brooks connects the grays as a reflection of her depressive states. The sky is a muddled blue, reminiscent of a retreating storm; symbolizing her struggle with overcoming her past, this example suggests that she has recently done so. Brooks’s figure is clothed in black, with a white undershirt acting as an arrow pointing towards the face. Her skin echoes the blues in the sky, showing that the storm inside her is also fading. The minimized color scheme is repeated throughout the painting, creating a cohesive whole, thus emphasizing the meticulous procedures Brooks followed when creating a work of art.

A top hat shades Brooks’ eyes, creating the illusion of someone who watches, but does not want to be seen. Only a glimmer of light reaches out from the shadowy depths, piercing the viewer with an unwavering stare. According to Wendy Wick Reaves, “By holding our gaze, [women] artists challenge the objectification so frequently inherent in male depictions of women.”<sup>59</sup> Brooks references the oppressive male gaze, both that of the artist and viewer. Although Brooks takes a position of confrontation in the painting, she also manages to shield

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<sup>53</sup>Brooks’s sexual assaults were left undocumented in her memoirs, but art historians have uncovered information that hints at such struggles. Langer suggests that Brooks may have been accosted by St. Mar during her childhood. Langer 9. In her old age, Brooks revealed that her brother-in-law, Alexander Hamilton Phillips, forced himself upon her. She was having financial difficulties and had turned to Phillips for advice. He took advantage of her vulnerable situation. She subsequently became pregnant and had no choice but to give the child up for adoption. When she was financially stable she returned to retrieve her child, only to learn that the baby had died at two months. Secrest, 92.

<sup>54</sup>Langer, 44.

<sup>55</sup>As cited in Secrest, 383.

<sup>56</sup>Chadwick, 11.

<sup>57</sup>Brooks derived this palette while painting in St. Ives, and continued to use it throughout her life. Ironically, it was also in St. Ives that Schjerfbeck developed a livelier palette.

<sup>58</sup>Secrest, 284.

<sup>59</sup>Wendy Wick Reaves and Anne Collins Goodyear, *Reflections/Refractions: Self-Portraits in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2009), 5.

herself from prying eyes. She is hesitant to let others see her true self. The shadow that echoes the brim of the hat lends to the unreadability of Brooks' expression. The dichotomy between the presented self and the internal self, which can also be seen in Schjerfbeck's self-portrait, was to be expected in aristocratic circles during the early 1900s. A well-mannered member of this social class would portray herself as a stoic, groomed person with high morals. To discard this mask in public was an unforgivable offense, and Brooks sometimes suffered such consequences.<sup>60</sup> On the surface, Brooks's self-portrait is poised and elegant. Yet, the glimmer of light in her eyes, as well as the challenging stare, hint at a devious inner self.

Of special symbolic significance is Brooks' suit, which deserves careful analysis to be fully understood. It was clearly not common apparel for women of the 1920s, fitting closest with women's riding habits. Brooks was aligning herself with the iconic nineteenth-century Amazon, a term referencing female riders. The Amazon was commonly painted by artists such as Manet, Renoir, and Courbet.<sup>61</sup> Looking at the idealized form in *Manet's Portrait of an Amazon* (Fig. 4), it is clear that Brooks was taking back the female form and reanalyzing it. Manet's Amazon is a woman to be ogled, her exaggeratedly slim waist and beautiful face overpowering any hint of individuality. Brooks' figure, on the other hand, is neither feminine nor masculine. She separated herself from the societal conception of feminine beauty through the use of androgyny.<sup>62</sup> Her



Figure 4: Edouard Manet, *Portrait of an Amazon*, 1882, Oil on Canvas, 73 x 52 cm

self-portrait references the outbreak of dandyism, the reinvention of the modern woman, and hints at her lesbianism.<sup>63</sup>

In the early 1900s, fashion allowed women to distance themselves from bourgeois standards of femininity. Styles that emphasized a boyish figure, as seen in Brooks' *Self-Portrait*, were used by lesbians

to imply power and independence. Portraying herself in masculine attire, Brooks was part of a movement to reinvent the imagery surrounding lesbians.<sup>64</sup> Brooks designed her own clothing, which was inspired by Baudelaire's concept of the dandy.<sup>65</sup> The suit in her self-portrait creates an ambiguous sexuality, but it does not suggest that Brooks wanted to look like a man.<sup>66</sup> Brooks is proud to be a woman, but will not adhere to the conventional representations of her sex. Any suggestions at masculinity are juxtaposed by a carefully made-up face, showing that Brooks was feminine in her own right

Despite a stream of lovers, as well as a lifetime partner, Brooks considered herself a loner.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>60</sup>After one unfortunate incident, when Brooks voiced her private thoughts in a public setting, she remarked, "I was very angry with myself and on returning home gave vent to my feelings by jerking down the curtains of my bedroom window, rings and all." Langer, 53.

<sup>61</sup>Cheney, Faxon, and Russo, 177.

<sup>62</sup>Chadwick, 33.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>65</sup>Langer, 122.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>67</sup>Brooks was in a lifetime commitment with Natalie Barney, although the two had an open relationship. Langer suggests that they were actually in a polyamorous relationship with another woman, Élisabeth de Gramont. Langer argues that Brooks was fulfilled by this relationship and did not suffer from undue jealousy. It also enabled Brooks to have sufficient alone time, something she cherished. Langer, 5-6.

She associated with the French lapide, or out-cast.<sup>68</sup> Like with herself, Brooks felt she was at war with the world. Secretst says, “Romaine had an ideal image of herself as a perfect being, a saint, Natalie’s Angel, which coexisted with a second view of herself as powerless, unwanted, and unlovable.”<sup>69</sup> The outbreak of World War I allowed Brooks to become the hero she believed herself to be. During the war, Brooks volunteered for ambulance duty, converted her cellar into a bomb shelter, and used her artistic talents to raise funds.<sup>70</sup> The French government awarded her the Cross of Legion of Honor for her effort, and she included the pin on her lapel in *Self-Portrait*. When the time for heroism was over, Brooks felt unneeded. By providing for others, Brooks proved her own strength. Losing this brought back her childhood fears of inadequacy. By including the pin in her self-portrait, Brooks is telling the viewer she is as brave as she looks. She is reassuring herself, creating a mask of strength over her insecurities. As one of the only areas of color in the painting, the pin shows that she took great pride in her deeds and considers herself to have been integral in the war effort.

Brooks’ inner self is represented in the painted figure, but her struggle is most evident in the background. In a constant attempt to leave the past behind, Brooks immortalized her pain in paint. The crumbled city behind her represents the past, from which Brooks is separated by a balcony wall. She stands above the ruins, a triumphant figure that has won against all odds. Brooks considered herself a sole survivor—she stands alone on that balcony. Her figure is isolated, personifying the feelings of loneliness and

inadequacy that were born in her childhood and resurfaced continually throughout adulthood.

Brooks’ artwork was met with considerable praise from critics, perhaps because she chose not to stray towards abstraction. When compared to the “degenerate” art of the period, her work was more closely aligned with the formal techniques critics preferred. Her first exhibition in 1910 ended with floods of positive responses, and it succinctly sealed her career as a portraitist. Many critics commented on her ability to capture more than a simple likeness, but only Guillaume Apollinaire noticed deeper emotion beneath the figure. “She painted with strength...but with sadness, too much sadness.”<sup>71</sup>

Romaine Brooks was a prominent figure in the twentieth-century French aristocracy. Her life was troubled, and she struggled to find peace. As means to cope with her history and to prove her self-worth, Brooks created a self-portrait that depicted a triumph over disaster. She painted herself with symbolic strength, aligning herself with the Amazon and reminding the viewer of her selfless deed in World War I. But, behind this mask, the viewer can see the pained eyes of a woman who has seen too much. Her past is laid out openly for all to see. She cloaks her insecurities in paint, but they emerge nonetheless.

Marianne Werefkin is most well known in the history of art for her role as a *salonnière*, but her passion for discussing art is only triumphed by her desire to create.<sup>73</sup> She spent her life pursuing art—both seeking knowledge

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<sup>68</sup>Adelyn D. Breeskin, *Romaine Brooks: Thief of Souls* (Washington D.C.: National Collection of Fine Arts, 1971), 35. See also: Chadwick, 13 in which she translates lapide as the abused and martyred self. As well as: Langer, 8 who translates it to mean, “the martyred lesbian and artist whom the ignorant stone to death.”

<sup>69</sup>Secretst, 389.

<sup>70</sup>Langer, 75-76.

<sup>71</sup>As cited by Secretst, 198.

<sup>72</sup>Breeskin, 24.

<sup>73</sup>She is occasionally referred to as Marianne von Werefkin. Her German colleagues inserted the “von” in reference to her family’s military history. Werefkin also earned the title “Baroness”—an inaccurate aristocratic association—because of her financial independence. Behr, 26.

and experimenting with creation. Unlike Brooks and Schjerfbeck, these ambitions were supported from a young age by Werefkin's parents. Because her mother was an artist, Werefkin had an inspirational role model who provided a unique perspective about the capabilities of women. She was encouraged to paint, and her father's position as a general in the Russian Czar's army ensured that her endeavors were easily funded. Because of her father's military position, Werefkin's family lived in several different cities throughout the Russian Empire. This enabled her to study in several institutions—from private lessons to the Moscow School of Art—eventually coming to study under the renowned artist Ilya Repin.<sup>74</sup> It was within the walls of this studio that Werefkin's potential was realized.

Whereas Brooks was met with reproach from male figureheads in the art world, Werefkin received overwhelming praise from Repin. He was a source of unending support, bestowing upon her the title "Russian Rembrandt." In 1888, Werefkin accidentally shot her right hand during a hunting expedition. Repin helped her overcome this disability, teaching Werefkin to paint with her left hand and encouraging her to continue her artistic practice.<sup>75</sup> While Repin's studio was a place where Werefkin was encouraged to cultivate her talent, it was also where she encountered the source that would hinder her artistic career—Alexei Jawlensky. Jawlensky was a

penniless lieutenant who first charmed Werefkin in 1891 as a fellow student of Repin. Werefkin adored his work, and as his muse she fervently hoped to help further his career. They worked in Repin's studio side-by-side until her father's death in 1896, when a large inheritance financed their move to Munich.<sup>76</sup> At this point, Werefkin made the altruistic decision to end her career so she could dedicate herself towards inspiring Jawlensky.

Werefkin's decision might seem nonsensical, given the esteemed praise she received from artists and friends. Her view of art, however, sheds some light on her decision. To Werefkin, art was an entity greater than man—it was Godly in its power.<sup>77</sup> As a devoted worshiper, she showed her piety through abstinence. "I love art with a passion so selfless that when I believed that I saw that I would be able to serve it better by abstaining myself, so that another could succeed—I did it."<sup>78</sup> Behind her belief of Jawlensky's superior talent were the constructs of society and her adherence to sexist ideals. Werefkin thought that as a man, Jawlensky would be able to penetrate the art world more effectively.<sup>79</sup> Much in the same way that Schjerfbeck dismissed her own work due to her sex, Werefkin wrote in her journal, "Am I a true artist? Yes, yes, yes. Am I a woman? Alas. Yes, yes, yes. Are the two able to work as a pair? No, no, no."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Adrienne Kochman, "Ambiguity of Home: Identity and Reminiscence in Marianne Werefkin's Return Home, c. 1909," *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide*, 5 (2006): n.p. It is clear that her talents were well supported because at the age of nineteen she was granted her own atelier. Mara R. Witzling, ed., *Voicing Our Visions: Writings by Women Artists*, (New York: Universe, 1991), 128.

<sup>75</sup>Behr, 20. Repin also insisted that he was jealous of Werefkin's talents, although Natalya Tolstaya suggests that this statement was merely to encourage Werefkin. Natalya Tolstaya, "Marianne Werefkin: The Woman and the Artist," *Tretyakov Gallery 3* (2010), 73. Tolstaya's assumption only plays into the sexist stereotyping abundant in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>76</sup>While getting treatment for her hand injury, Werefkin spent some time in major German cities. It was here that she realized the possibilities of modern art and felt inspired to change her style. When she could finally afford a move, she decided to return to this place of inspiration. As suggested by Tolstaya, 73.

<sup>77</sup>Witzling, 129.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 136.

<sup>79</sup>This is a European construct that Linda Nochlin suggests was not as prevalent in Russia. Maura Reilly, ed., *Women Artists: The Linda Nochlin Reader* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2015), 113. Why Werefkin adhered to outside stigma instead of relying on her own country's advancement in unknown, although she may have felt the European art world superior because of its modernity.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid. See also, Kochman: "I am a woman, I lack every [ability for] creation. I can understand everything and cannot create... I don't have the words to express my ideal. I am looking for the person, the man, who can give this ideal form. As a woman, wanting someone who could give the internal world expression, I met Jawlensky..."

Jawlensky depended on Werefkin for inspiration, adoration, and money.<sup>81</sup> Werefkin was willing to oblige on all accounts, even when she received nothing in return.<sup>82</sup> She finally reached a breaking point when, in 1901, Jawlensky impregnated Werefkin's housemaid.<sup>83</sup> The betrayal was enough to convince Werefkin to draw again, but she still would not turn her back on Jawlensky. Her revived work was a complete shift from the realism she studied in Russia, although it was not quite as abstract as her writings may have predicted.<sup>84</sup> Even after her unending support of his art, Jawlensky could not deem to repay her kindness. Gabriele Münter remarked on his treatment of Werefkin's work, "She was extremely perceptive and intelligent, but Jawlensky didn't always approve of her work. He often teased her about being too academic in her techniques, and too intellectual and revolutionary in her ideas. He used to pretend that she had never managed to liberate herself entirely from the teachings of the Russian master Ilja Repin."<sup>85</sup> This disregard of Werefkin's talent hints at the reasons behind her feelings of artistic inferiority. Nonetheless, Werefkin did not heed Jawlensky's disapprov-

al. She continued to explore abstraction for the rest of her life.

During Werefkin's ten-year hiatus from making art, she ardently researched and debated issues of art theory. Her salon was the center of the Munich avant-garde, where painting techniques were investigated, theories debated, and movements formed.<sup>86</sup> Art historian Gustav Pauli reminisced that, "on all questions of art and literature, old and new, [Werefkin] would engage in debate with unheard-of zeal and just as much spirit."<sup>87</sup> Much of her ideas were documented in her journal, *Lettres a un Inconnu*—a product of her failing relationship and growing discontent.<sup>88</sup> Within these pages she discusses the possibilities of abstract art, the effects of color, and her desire to once again paint. The greatest accomplishment of Werefkin's salon, which occurred after she began painting again, lies in the development of *Der Blaue Reiter's* precursor—Neue Künstler-Vereinigung München (NKVM).<sup>89</sup>

Marianne Werefkin, Alexei Jawlensky, Gabriele Münter, and Wassily Kandinsky, along with a few other artists, worked to develop a new understanding of abstract painting.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Werefkin received a large yearly commission after her father's death. Some sources have suggested that she and Jawlensky remained unmarried because otherwise the funds would have been cut off. This stipend supported the two until the 1917 Russian Revolution effectively ended it. When the money eventually ran out, in 1921, Jawlensky left Werefkin for another woman. Witzling, 128.

<sup>82</sup>Werefkin's memoirs, *Lettres à un Inconnu*, describe her feelings of discontent in her relationship. "I am only the housekeeper, the porter. I give my life for a creation a deux, and one only asks me to pay my accounts and to not get in the way. And when, in despair, I ask for the peace of love one is sharp with me and sends me about my business." Witzling, 137.

<sup>83</sup>The household went to Russia to hide the birth, then claimed the child was Jawlensky's nephew.

<sup>84</sup>She once said, "The more reality has been transferred in a work of art into the unreal, the greater the work." Hans Roethel, *The Blue Rider*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 135.

<sup>85</sup>Behr, 20.

<sup>86</sup>Witzling, 128. Werefkin's salon was prefaced by one in Russia. Of the predecessor, Igor Grabar said, "With an excellent knowledge of foreign languages and financially comfortable [sic], she bought all the newest books and magazines on art and acquainted us, who knew but little about all this, with the latest developments in art, reading to us aloud fragments from the most recent publications on art. There I heard for the first time such names as Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Renoir, Degas, Whistler." Tolstaya, 74.

<sup>87</sup>Behr, 26.

<sup>88</sup>Werefkin began her journals when she realized Jawlensky had been unfaithful to her. Prior to this, she had believed that the two of them had a mutual understanding. They were partners in life, but would remain celibate so that their full focus could be on art. As suggested by her writings, quotes in Witzling, 134. Jawlensky's betrayal was not only to Werefkin, but to art as well.

<sup>89</sup>"Neue Künstler-Vereinigung München" translates to "New Artists Association." Witzling, 128.

<sup>90</sup>A year after Werefkin and Jawlensky settled into Munich, Wassily Kandinsky arrived on the scene with his partner Gabriele Münter. Jawlensky and Kandinsky met at Anton Azbé's studio and quickly became friends.



From this the artist collective NKVM was born—a community that believed art should be formed from inner experiences.<sup>91</sup> Norbert Wolf notes that it was also “the first artists’ association to include large numbers of



Figure 5: Marianne Werefkin, *Self-Portrait*, 1908-1910, Tempera on Paper mounted on Board, 51 x 34 cm

women, as members or guests, a circumstance that was largely the result of Werefkin’s strong personality.”<sup>92</sup>

The exhibitions developed by the group were heavily attacked by critics, although Franz Marc refuted the negative remarks with his review.<sup>93</sup> The NKVM quickly dissolved when one of Kandinsky’s more ab-

stracted works was refused by some modest members, spurring him to secede and create a rival facet called *Der Blaue Reiter*.<sup>94</sup>

Although Werefkin never officially joined *Der Blaue Reiter*, she is considered a founding member of the group. Werefkin worked as an artistic evangelist, helping other artists realize their potential and guiding them along their path to abstraction. “People have always come to tell me that I am their star,” Werefkin said. “They couldn’t progress in life without me. So, foolishly, I

made myself available to serve them until they knew their direction. I held the light of ideals high, I illuminated the way for them.”<sup>95</sup> It is unsurprising that Werefkin put her own work aside to help others, considering her contribution to Jawlensky’s career. In fact, many of the revolutionary ideas Kandinsky claimed as his own can be attributed to Werefkin.<sup>96</sup> Her ideas on abstraction, as well as her inspiration role to *Der Blaue Reiter*, made her a vital asset to the group.

Marianne Werefkin’s *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 5) was created during the transition period from NKVM to *Der Blaue Reiter*. It acts as a representation of her relationship with art—as a salonnière, a painter, and a visionary. Werefkin’s hand is not gentle in describing her features; she emphasizes the loose skin on her chin and deepens the wrinkles around her mouth. Captivating red eyes pierce the viewer, intensifying the overall impression of a harsh and calculating woman. The use of vibrant, unrealistic color points towards the influence of the Fauves as well as Werefkin’s intellectual approach to painting. The self-portrait captures Werefkin’s self-perceptions, but it also hints at the tribulations in her adult life. Her expression is poised but wary, perhaps an indication of her partner’s deceit. Werefkin’s body is sideways, neither opening herself up towards the viewer nor shutting off an advance. She puts herself in a position of control, prepared to accept or deny whomever approaches. Her face is turned in three-quarters view—a reference to Vincent van Gogh.<sup>97</sup> Werefkin’s body is awkwardly proportioned;

<sup>91</sup>Roethel, 18.

<sup>92</sup>Norbert Wolf, *Expressionism* (Köln: Taschen, 2004), 18.

<sup>93</sup>Helmut Friedel and Annegret Hoberg, ed., “The Blue Rider”: Watercolours, Drawings and Prints from the Lenbachhaus Munich: A Dance in Color (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2011), 9.

<sup>94</sup>Wolf, 18-19.

<sup>95</sup>Behr, 26.

<sup>96</sup>Witzling, 131.

<sup>97</sup>Behr, 26.

her neck and chest seem exaggeratedly large and cumbersome. They anchor the face, fortifying Werefkin's figure and presenting her as strong and capable. Whereas aspects of Brooks's and Schjerfbeck's paintings unintentionally reveal aspects of the internal, Werefkin's self-portrait is a carefully rendered autobiographical representation. Like other artists in the NKVM and *Der Blaue Reiter*, Werefkin was keenly aware of the internal experience and its effects on modern art.

Marianne Werefkin believed that in order to become a successful artist, it was vital to incorporate the self into the work.<sup>98</sup> She wrote, "The artistic creation thus is made from without to within... True art is that which renders the soul of things."<sup>99</sup> A testament to Werefkin's ability to achieve this effect can be seen through Kandinsky's condescending analysis of Werefkin's work as, "confessions in a diary."<sup>100</sup> This backlash from a close friend shows deep-seated sexism in Germany, especially because Kandinsky himself hoped to explore the internal experience in his art. Nonetheless, it proves how accurately Werefkin represented her inner self in her paintings. Much like Brooks, Werefkin was skilled at reflecting her sitter's emotions onto the canvas.<sup>101</sup> This is partly thanks to the fact that, unlike the other members of *Der Blaue Reiter*, Werefkin's work focused on social issues and human existence. She was interested in how people are influenced by uncontrollable forces, such as psychological tendencies and destiny.<sup>102</sup>

Werefkin's use of color acts as a direct connection to the internal experience, embedding her personality into the pigments.<sup>103</sup> Vibrant, unnatural colors flood the canvas in swirling

brushstrokes, framing Werefkin's face and returning the viewer's eyes to her penetrating stare. Although not nearly as somber as Brooks's self-portrait, Werefkin infused a lot of black into her work, hinting at impressions by her Russian education.<sup>104</sup> The self-portrait was created using Werefkin's preferred tempera and gouache technique, something she began to practice along



Figure 6: Henri Matisse, *Woman with a Hat*, 1905, Oil on Canvas, 80.65 x 59.69 cm

with her contemporaries.<sup>105</sup> Her mastery of the medium is evident in *Self-Portrait*, where she highlights certain areas with varnish to intensify the light and leaves the rest unattended so that the tempera colors remain vibrant.<sup>106</sup>

The colors may seem spontaneous, but each area of her paintings were carefully laid out prior to creation. Werefkin would make a preliminary sketch onto which she would demarcate the color of each section.<sup>107</sup>

Werefkin's elongated face is painted in a dizzying array of colors, bright yellow highlighting the cheekbones and deep blue shadowing the eyelids. A streak of green punctuates the nose, reminiscent of Matisse's *Woman with a Hat* (Fig. 6). Matisse's influence was especially

<sup>98</sup>Witzling, 138.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>101</sup>Behr, 32.

<sup>103</sup>As suggested by Wolf, 9. See also Miguel Fernandez, "Dans le prisme de Werefkin," *L'Œil* 515 (2000), 45: "Pour Werefkin, 'l'abstrait' designe une realite interieure, un monde d'idees et de sentiments, exprimables a travers les couleurs et les formes, dans un systeme de representation non mimftique."

<sup>104</sup>Friedel and Hoberg, 244.

<sup>105</sup>Her contemporaries eventually returned to oil painting, but Werefkin remained faithful to the medium. Ibid., 243.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

important to members of the NKVM and *Der Blaue Reiter* due to his emancipation of color.<sup>108</sup> While Matisse's figure in *Woman with a Hat* is revolutionarily portrayed, she still maintains a sense of femininity and beauty. Werefkin's evasion of these concepts is in part explained by the Expressionist desire to discard the ideal. Norbert Wolf notes that it was preferable to paint unseemly or grotesque images so as "to liberate art from the ghetto of the 'beautiful and true', where it had degenerated into pretty, innocuous decoration for home and fireside."<sup>109</sup> By ascribing to this theory, Werefkin was rivaling traditional women's paintings. Her self-portrait is pointedly not idealized. This is further exemplified by the fact that Werefkin's friend Gabriele Münter painted her in a way that described Werefkin as a kind, petite woman with a beautiful countenance—proving that *Self-Portrait* was electing to disregard female standards.

The most dramatic aspect of the self-portrait is Werefkin's eyes. The intention to emphasize this area is evident in the *impasto* thickness of the paint. The irises are painted a startling red-orange color, contrasted by the blue-green sclera. Framed with a solid black line, they stand out against the face and continually recapture the viewer's gaze. Werefkin reverses the viewer's role from observer to being observed. She painted her eyebrows in thick, undulating lines, adding an air of incredulity. Partnered with flared nostrils, there is a sense of wildness and discontent in Werefkin's expression. Werefkin finished the portrait when she was fifty-one and, like Schjerfbeck, she was looking back on her life. Bitter over years spent neglecting her art, Werefkin looks with determination to the future—resolved to redefine her life.

Although Werefkin seems like a woman shackled, she held firmly to her freedom—if

not in practice then in idea. While there has been speculation as to why Werefkin and Jawlensky did not wed—from financial reasons to those of status—she wrote in her journals that "the woman possessed is a slave."<sup>110</sup> In her self-portrait, Werefkin reaffirms her desire for independence and individuality. *Self-Portrait* depicts a woman who is confident in herself and her work; she is not bound by the conventional sexual restraints of society. Werefkin wants the viewer to understand her power and influence, which—despite Jawlensky—was abundantly clear in the Munich art scene.

Unlike Schjerfbeck and Brooks, Werefkin did not separate herself from the art world. Instead, she became a major player in modern artistic movements and influenced other artists. Werefkin saw herself as a resilient, independent woman. Although her self-portrait clearly references this ideal, it also hints at her troubled relationship with Alexei Jawlensky and her hiatus from art. Werefkin's attention to the internal experience, a concept that was formulated through her study of art, elevates her self-portrait past mere representation. She encapsulated her spirit, her theories, and her life on the canvas.

## V. Conclusion

At the *fin de siècle*, the female form was being manipulated, idealized, and oversexualized by male artists. Artists throughout history, including Manet and Matisse, subtly transformed the woman from a human being into an object. This act also proved to associate successful artistry with "male sexual energy." By portraying themselves in ways that elevated the internal experience and quieted the external, Schjerfbeck, Brooks, and Werefkin reclaimed the female figure. Their portraiture was unprecedented in

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<sup>108</sup>Roethel, 20.

<sup>109</sup>Wolf, 10.

<sup>110</sup>Witzling, 136. Werefkin later remarks on the irony that her beliefs do not align with her practice.

the art world, where women were expected to create traditional works. Despite that the turn-of-the-century was a time of rapid change, women were expected to keep their artistic practices within society's patriarchal standards.

Helene Schjerfbeck, Romaine Brooks, and Marianne Werefkin disregarded the expectations of their contemporaries, critics, and mentors. They refused to merely paint what they saw. Instead, they captured emotion on canvas, both those of the subject and of themselves. Each of these women have been criticized for their honesty, but they have also been exalted for their ability to capture the spirit of a sitter. This skill is most masterfully used in their self-portraits, where each brushstroke is laced with meaning.

When approaching their own likenesses, these women opted not to idealize themselves. Werefkin chose to exaggerate the signs of old age, Brooks donned an expression that references masculine dominance, and Schjerfbeck portrayed herself as fearful. By intentionally contesting the iconography of beautified womankind, Schjerfbeck, Brooks, and Werefkin redefined the male gaze. These portraits are not to be admired for their beauty, but rather for their artistry and skillful portrayal of the internal experience.

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# Russian Rationality: Understanding Sanctions and Decision-Making Processes in Russia

By Rebecca L. Smith, *Arcadia University*

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## Introduction

In March 2014, the approximately two million people living in the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea were 'reunified' with Russia.<sup>1</sup> The international community responded by placing sanctions on Russia to persuade the state into changing its policy toward Crimea and Ukraine. Sanctions are a tool used by states and intergovernmental bodies typically designed to "coerce, deter, punish, or shame entities that endanger their interests or violate international norms of behavior".<sup>2</sup> However, the sanctions do not appear to have caused any change in Russia's foreign policy actions to date. This begs the question; how might one best understand Russian foreign policy decision-making concerning Crimea and their response to the retaliatory economic sanctions? To examine this, I use expected utility theory and prospect theory – two psychological theories that have been adapted to economics and international relations. Following a discussion of each theory and the explanation each offers for decision-making behavior, I apply each theory to pertinent speeches and events to investigate which theory offers the best explanation for Russian foreign policy decision-making. Ultimately, I conclude that prospect theory offers the best framework for understanding Russian foreign policy decision-making

behavior vis-à-vis Crimea and the economic sanctions. An improved understanding of how states make decisions with respect to sanctions is useful in contributing to the overall debate about whether sanctions are an effective tool to provoke change from other states.

## Background

On March 16, 2014, in a referendum condemned by the West as illegitimate, 97% of voters in Crimea voted to secede from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation. Following the referendum, leaders of Western states, including the U.S. and EU member states, warned Russian President Vladimir Putin against absorbing Crimea into the Russian Federation and imposed a travel ban and asset freezes on key Russian officials to deter such action. Despite the warnings and outrage at potential violation of Ukrainian sovereignty, President Putin signed a bill to annex Crimea into Russia on March 18, 2014.<sup>3</sup> Official sanctions on Russia soon followed from the EU, US, and a host of other countries, including Australia, Iceland, Japan, and Norway. Many of these countries are Russia's largest trading partners.<sup>4</sup>

States have since scaled up the sanctions several times in addition to blacklisting several senior Russian officials and select companies. These sanctions specifically target the

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<sup>1</sup>Macias, Amanda. "A Detailed Look at How Russia Annexed Crimea," *Business Insider* (2015): n.p.

<sup>2</sup>Masters, Johnathan. "What are Economic Sanctions," *Council on Foreign Relations* (2015): n.p.

<sup>3</sup>"Ukraine Crisis Timeline," *BBC News* (2015): n.p., accessed November 12, 2015.

<sup>4</sup>Dreyer, Iana and Nicu, Popescu. "Do Sanctions Against Russia Work?" European Union Institute for Security Studies, December 2014, 1.



businesses and people closest to decision-making power in Russia. The main focuses are state finances, oil firms, and the arms sector. The EU and US also chose to target specific individuals and companies with connections to President Putin's inner circle.<sup>5</sup> Overall, sanctioning states aim to place sanctions severe enough that they will encourage a change in Russian policy, but narrow enough that they harm those closest to Russian decision-making power rather than the average Russian. These sanctions have contributed to the current political and economic climate confronting decision-makers in Russia today.

## Theory

The implementation of these sanctions has sparked a debate over whether sanctions work, and more narrowly, whether sanctions work on Russia. This debate revolves around two central themes: the extent of economic impact on Moscow and whether the sanctions are enough to change Russia's behavior.<sup>6</sup> However, an examination of Moscow's view towards the sanctions is missing from this discussion. It is important to understand the Russian perspective, since the real decision-making power for change rests with Moscow. This section, therefore, offers two theories that may be useful in understanding Russian decision-making behavior with respect to the economic sanctions. The fundamental point of contention within these theories revolves around the idea of rational choice.

## *Expected Utility Theory*

One theory that may help explain Russian foreign policy decision-making behavior with respect to economic sanctions is expected utility theory (EUT). EUT assumes two fundamental aspects about decision makers. First, it accepts that actors are rational, and therefore make logical decisions to maximize their benefit. Second, EUT assumes that actors consider the probability of possible outcomes. When dealing with uncertain outcomes, EUT states that decision makers will consider various options based on each option's expected utility.<sup>7</sup>

There are five central axioms that sum up the core of EUT:

1. Decision makers are rational. Actors order various outcomes in terms of preferences.
2. This order of preferences is transitive. Actors will rank preferences so that A is a more favored outcome than B, which the actor prefers to C, D, E, and so forth. If the cost of preference A outweighs its benefits, a rational actor would choose option B.
3. Decision makers know the subjective value, or the utility, of their actions.
4. Actors consider outcomes through examining both the utility of the outcome and the probability of success.
5. Decision makers always select the option with the greatest expected utility.<sup>8</sup>

This theory is consistent with the logic behind implementing economic sanctions. The sanctioning party or parties inherently assume the

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<sup>5</sup>"How far do EU-US sanctions on Russia go?" *BBC News* (2014): n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>6</sup>Dreyer and Popescu, "Do Sanctions against Russia work?," 1.

<sup>7</sup>Mongin, Philippe. "Expected Utility Theory," in *Handbook of Economic Methodology*, edited by John. B. Davis, D. Wade Hands, and Uskali Mäki (Edward Elgar, London, 1997): 342.

<sup>8</sup>Bueno, Bruce de Mesquita, "The Contribution of Expected-Utility Theory to the Study of International Conflict," in *Handbook of War Studies*, edited by Manus I. Midlarsky (Routledge, New York, 1989): 144.

rationality of the target and that negotiations will follow the sanctions, eventually leading to a desired goal.<sup>9</sup> In the realm of economic decision-making, the most important consideration is considering short-term financial prospects when deciding whether to take a risk for a long-term financial gain.<sup>10</sup>

### Prospect Theory

Prospect theory (PT) emerged as an alternative to EUT in 1979. Rather than rationally considering the utility and probability of an outcome, PT posits that actors make decisions from a personal reference point and fear losses more than gains, even when each outcome has the same probability of occurring.<sup>11</sup>

There are six major tenets to PT:

1. Individuals think in terms of gains and losses of a decision from a reference point rather than the net outcome.
2. Actors think about gains and losses differently. Decision-makers are less likely to take risks for potential gains and more likely to take risks to prevent loss.
3. Actors dislike losing possessions more than they like winning a similar thing they do not possess (loss aversion). This tendency to over-value possessions is the endowment effect.
4. Since actors make decisions from a reference point, the framing of a problem is crucial. Framing is the interpretation of a situation that a decision-maker uses to respond to events. Framing a situation in terms of loss makes the situation direr, due to loss aversion.

5. Decision-makers tend to overweight small probabilities and underweight high probabilities.

6. Decision-makers tend to simplify choices, cancelling out options that seem similar.<sup>12</sup>

Generally, PT argues that decision-makers consider options from their own reference point, fear loss, and frame prospective choices in terms of gains or losses. Figure 1 represents the relationship between loss aversion and framing. When actors frame a potential outcome with high probability as a loss, they are more likely to take risks than a high-probability potential outcome in the domain of gains. This is because decision-makers are desperate to avoid significant losses. The opposite is true, however, in a low-probability situation.

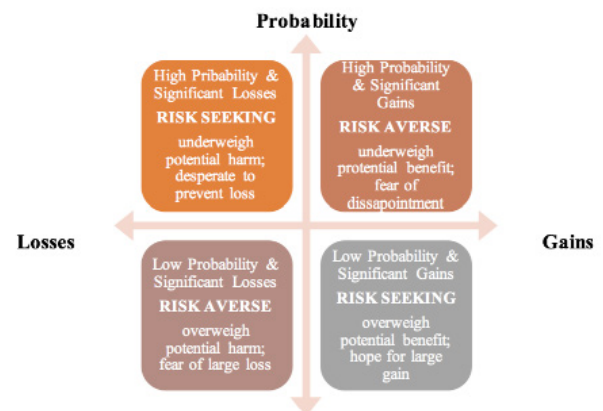


Figure 1

### Analysis

To understand whether either expected utility theory or prospect theory offers a helpful framework for understanding Russian

<sup>9</sup>Hakimdavar, Golnoosh. *A Strategic Understanding of UN Economic Sanctions: International Relations, Law, and Development* (Routledge, New York, 2013): 136.

<sup>10</sup>Briggs, Rachel. "Normative Theories of Rational Choice: Expected Utility," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Stanford, 2015): n.p.

<sup>11</sup>McDermott, Rose. *Risk Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy* (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2001): 18.

<sup>12</sup>Levy, Jack S. "An Introduction to Prospect Theory," *Political Psychology* 13, no. 2 (1992): 174-179.

decision-making behavior in relation to the economic sanctions in retaliation to the annexation of Crimea, I apply the major tenants of each theory to key speeches and events. This investigation, while limited by the knowledge available regarding the Russian decision-making process, shows that prospect theory provides the better explanation.

### Applied Expected Utility Theory

There are several aspects that one would expect to see while using EUT as a framework to understand Russian foreign policy decision-making in response to the economic sanctions. Among these are the consideration of alternate outcomes with respect to preferences and the probability of each outcome occurring, the perusal of actions in order of favored outcomes, and for Russia to always choose the outcome that will yield the highest utility. Most importantly, EUT expects that Russia will always rationally weigh the probability of success and the utility of a potential outcome before choosing an action.

Does Russia meet these benchmarks? While it is impossible to truly know everything President Putin and his advisors considered when choosing whether to annex Crimea, one can make observations about the utility of Crimea to Russia. Fischer and Rogoza outline the benefits of the annexation: strengthening support for Vladimir Putin, natural gas and crude oil reserves, ownership of the Crimean tourist infrastructure and other industries, and broad access to the Black Sea.<sup>13</sup> While it is true that the annexation did boost Mr. Putin's approval rating, it is important to note that it was also very high before the annexation. Since 2000,

his approval ratings have fluctuated between 60% and 90%.<sup>14</sup> Putting this in perspective, President Putin's lowest approval ratings are still higher than President Obama's highest approval ratings.<sup>15</sup> He did not need to annex Crimea to save approval rating because it was never in jeopardy. Similarly, Russia does not need Crimea for oil or natural gas reserves. Russia is already the world's second highest producer of fossil fuels, and estimates suggest Russia accounts for more than 80% of the world's energy supply and has a 455-year supply of coal.<sup>16</sup> Russia in no way needs to depend on Crimea for energy resources.

Additionally, the annexation itself spoiled much of the benefit Russia could have received from Crimean industry. Industry in Crimea has suffered, especially tourism, and more than three-quarters of the region's international investments have pulled out of the area.<sup>17</sup> More access to the Black Sea, nonetheless, does still provide Russia with some utility for military infrastructure. However, the vast majority of the identified benefits to acquiring Crimea were not actually very important for Russian interests. Therefore, Crimea has rationally low utility to Russia. Furthermore, Russia's decision to move ahead with the annexation despite warnings from its biggest international trading partners shows that decision-makers did not rationally weigh the costs and benefits of success. Thus, Russian decision-making around the annexation does not reflect the third tenet of EUT.

While planning to reclaim Crimea began three weeks before the referendum during an all-night meeting with security advisors is initially consistent with the second tenet of EUT

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<sup>13</sup>Fischer, Ewa and Rogoza, Jadwiga. "A Bottomless Pit: The Costs of Crimea's Annexation by Russia," *Center for Eastern Studies* (2014), n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>14</sup>Adomanis, Mark. "Vladimir Putin's Approval Rating is Still Holding Steady," *Forbes* (2013), n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>15</sup>"Barack Obama's Yearly Job Approval Averages," *Gallup* (2014), n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>16</sup>Clemente, Jude. "How Much Energy Does Russia Have Anyways?," *Forbes* (2015), n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>17</sup>Yablokova, Alina "Crimea in painful transition one year after referendum," *Global Risk Insights* (March 29, 2015), n.p., accessed November 10, 2015.

giving Mr. Putin and his advisors the benefit of the doubt that they strategically considered their plan), failing to adapt from the point that the international community warned Russia forward fails to reflect this axiom.<sup>18</sup> President Putin failed to consider the potential negative effects of the economic sanctions before continuing with the plan to bring Crimea back into Russia. This is not consistent with the second axiom of EUT because it increases the cost of Russia's first preference (annexation) and Russia failed to choose an alternative, transitively ranked preference.

However, later actions are more consistent with this second tenet of EUT. While not initially adapting to the threat of economic sanctions, the negotiations on the Ukrainian conflict in Minsk, Belarus in February 2015 does appear to align with the EUT notion that actors will pursue transitively ranked preferences. In exchange for the resumption of economic relations (this does not mean an end to the sanctions, however), Russia agreed to a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, the withdrawal of weapons, and Ukrainian control of the border by the end of 2015.<sup>19</sup> Such negotiations as the Minsk Agreement appear in accordance with EUT. Russia eventually realized the cost of its actions outweighed the benefits, and therefore Russia decided to enter negotiations to move towards a less desired, but overall more beneficial option. Adapting to the situation appears consistent with the transitively-ranked preferences component of EUT.

However, analysis also indicates that Russia never fully considered the utility of its

actions, the fifth tenet of EUT. Objectively, Crimea provides very little benefit to Russia and comes with a very high price tag. In 2014, Russia spent 125 billion rubles on Crimea. In 2016, the country announced plans to invest 680 billion rubles in Crimea by 2020.<sup>20</sup> On top of this expense, Russia faces the damaging effects of the economic sanctions. Russia's GDP fell 3.7% in 2015 and while the county did experience some growth in 2016, it has still not recovered to its pre-sanctions GDP.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, inflation is rising and the value of the ruble is dropping. Combined with Russia's ban on food imports from the EU and U.S. (in retaliation of the sanctions), has caused a sharp increase in the price of food.<sup>22</sup> Failing to consider the costs of annexation and properly weigh the negligible benefits is inconsistent with the fourth and fifth axioms of EUT. President Putin and his advisors did not consider potential outcomes by examining both the utility of the outcome and the probability of success, nor did they select the option with the greatest expected utility.

Generally, an examination of Russian decision-making behavior seems very inconsistent with the central axioms of EUT. Therefore, EUT does not appear to be a good explanation of Russian decision-making behavior regarding sanctions and the annexation of Crimea.

### ***Applied Prospect Theory***

Prospect theory, as an alternative to expected utility theory, allows for decision-makers to act outside of strictly rational thought. With respect to Russian decision making vis-à-vis the economic

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<sup>18</sup>Kondrashov, Andrey. "Crimea: The Way Home – EN Subtitles – Full Documentary," *Vimeo* video, March 25, 2015, accessed November 18, 2015. <https://vimeo.com/123194285>; Neil MacFarquar, "Early Memo Urged Moscow to Annex Crimea, Report Says," *The New York Times*, 2015, n.p.

<sup>19</sup>Weaver, Matthew and Luhn, Alec. "Ukraine ceasefire agreed at Belarus talks," *The Guardian*, 2015, n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>20</sup>Makarenko, Olena. "Crimea's economy: When Russia's words and figures don't meet," *Euromaiden Press* (Ukraine), May 17, 2016, n.p., accessed February 21, 2017.

<sup>21</sup>World Bank Group, "Russian Federation," The World Bank, accessed February 22, 2017.

<sup>22</sup>Birnbaum, Michael. "A year into a conflict with Russia, are sanctions working?," *The Washington Post* (2015), n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

sanctions and Crimea, there are several components that one would expect to see when using prospect theory as a framework. First, one would expect Russian *perception* of reality to play a bigger role in decision-making processes than objective, rational thought. The fear of loss would also play a role in explaining Russian actions. This loss aversion would also lead to the over-valuation of “possessions.” Finally, one would also expect to see framing of choices in terms of gains or losses. These concepts, applied to key events and speeches, appear useful in understanding Russian decision-making behavior around the economic sanctions.

The idea of loss has surrounded much of President Putin’s rhetoric regarding the annexation of Crimea. If consistent with PT, this loss aversion would also lead to the over-valuation of possessions. Per Rudy and Venteicher,

States are willing to fight to defend the same territory they would not fight to acquire in the first place. In such cases, states fight to defend their territory because they value it more due primarily to the fact that they own/control the land (as suggested by the endowment effect), and possible losses generates more risk acceptant behavior due to loss aversion.<sup>23</sup>

In this case, Crimea is the “overvalued possession” that Russia is willing to accept risk and potential loss to defend. Since Crimea is historically Russian territory, Putin views it as rightfully belonging to the Russian Federation rather than Ukraine.<sup>24</sup> This is consistent with Russia’s willingness to spend billions on

the tiny peninsula while also struggling due to economic sanctions.

A Standard and Poor’s estimate claims Russia would have to pour approximately one billion dollars into Crimea annually to bring the living standard up to Russian standards. Furthermore, Crimea needs most of its energy, drinking water, and food imported. In addition to the costs of merely maintaining Crimea, there are also costs associated with integrating it into the Russian Federation. This coupled with a steep decline in Crimea’s tourism industry – the largest sector of the Crimean economy – makes the cost of Crimea substantial.<sup>25</sup> Despite this cost, Vladimir Putin maintains his position on Crimea, clearly stating, “I believe we did the right thing and I don’t regret anything.”<sup>26</sup> He claims the annexation righted a historical wrong – namely, that Crimea always belonged to Russia rather than Ukraine.<sup>27</sup> The massive amount of money and resources Russia is willing to pour into a tiny peninsula in the Black Sea appears rationally disproportional. The endowment effect helps to explain the motivation behind such a risky action. This is particularly evident in President Putin’s justifications for the annexation because Crimea is historically part of Russia. This is also an example of loss aversion because Mr. Putin’s justification for the annexation deals directly with Russia’s historical possession of Crimea. This is consistent with the first and third tenets of PT.

According to PT, the desperation to repossess Crimea makes Russia risk-seeking. The willingness to endure economic hardship to

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<sup>23</sup>Rudy, Michael A. and Venteicher, Jerome F. “Prospect Theory and Economic Sanctions: Towards a Theory of Economic Coersion,” presented at *Midwest Political Science Association*, Chicago, IL (2006): 11, accessed November 9, 2015.

<sup>24</sup>Kottasova, Ivana. “Sanctions will cost Russia more than \$100 billion,” *CNN* (2015): n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>25</sup>Fischer and Rogoza, “The costs of Crimea’s annexation,” n.p.

<sup>26</sup>Neuman, Scott. “Putin: ‘No Regrets’ Over Crimea Annexation,” *NPR* (2015): n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>27</sup>Meyers, Steven Lee and Barry, Ellen. “Putin Reclaims Crimea for Russia and Bitterly Denounces the West,” *The New York Times* (2014): n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

hold on to Crimea already reflects some risky behavior. Russia not only consistently stands behind the actions that led to the sanctions in the first place, but encourages similar actions in other historically Russian regions. Shortly before the one-year anniversary of the Crimean annexation, President Putin signed an agreement to create a common security space and open boarder with South Ossetia, a breakaway region of Georgia. Critics of this arrangement equate it with a Russian annexation of South Ossetia. Russia also supports the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine.<sup>28</sup> These actions all share similarities with the actions that led to the sanctions in the first place. This demonstrates risk-seeking behavior, which suggests that PT offers a fitting explanation regarding Russia's framing of the situation in terms of potential loss of Crimea. This risk-seeking behavior reflects the second precept of PT.

Additionally, PT would also expect to see framing of choices in terms of gains or losses. This is evident in the Russian framing of the situation to fear the loss of Crimea more than loss from economic sanctions. As discussed above, Putin already frames loss of Crimea is a terrible injustice. The economic consequences of the sanctions, however, do not receive an equally negative framing. On the one-year anniversary of the annexation, marked by a huge celebration in Moscow, Putin acknowledged that the sanctions are "not fatal, but naturally damage our ongoing work."<sup>29</sup> He went on to argue that the sanctions are worth any ensuing struggle because of what Russia would lose if it submitted to the coercion of the sanctions. In his speech,

frames this potential loss by saying, "The issue at stake was the sources of our history, our spirituality and our statehood – the things that make us a single people, and a single, united nation."<sup>30</sup> Putin's statement reflects an awareness of the harmful effects of the sanctions. However, by referring to Russia's "ongoing work," he also alludes to the notion that Russia is not willing to change its policy to bring an end to the sanctions. Putin therefore frames loss from economic sanctions as second to the potential loss of Crimea. Thus, the possession of Crimea is Russia's point of reference and Russia fears losing Crimea a second time in this instance. This is consistent with the fourth tenet of PT.

On the other hand, Russia also faces potential harm from the international community's sanctions. Since Russia fears losing Crimea, they risk economic harm from these sanctions. This harm manifested in several ways since the implementation of the sanctions, including a credit rating cut from Standard & Poor's, a steep devaluation of the ruble, inflation, a decline in foreign investment, falling bond prices, a reduction in economic growth, and a rise in geopolitical tensions.<sup>31</sup> The desperation to prevent the loss of Crimea, combined with the high-probability of loss due to the economic sanctions and international pressure places Russia in the upper left quadrant of the graph in Figure 1. Forgoing objective and rational thought through the evident overvaluation of Crimea and the underweighting of potential harm from the sanctions is consistent with the fifth rule of PT. Prospect Theory's framework for

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<sup>28</sup>Herszenhorn, David M. "A Year After Seizing Crimea, Putin Celebrates as Ukraine Seethes," *The New York Times* (March 18, 2015): n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>29</sup>"Crimea annexation: Putin admits sanctions 'damaging,'" *BBC News* (2015): n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

<sup>31</sup>Herszenhorn, "A Year After Seizing Crimea," n.p.

<sup>31</sup>Philips, Matt. "S&P says Russia's Crimea caper has already hurt the economy," *Quartz* (2014): n.p., accessed November 18, 2015.

decision-making appears to offer a useful explanation for understanding Russian decision-making behavior in this case. Loss aversion and the endowment effect describe why Russia so adamantly seeks to keep and support a territory that offers it such little benefit in return, even in the face of risking high financial loss. Moreover, it also offers an explanation for Russian risk-seeking behavior in similar situations since the implementation of the sanctions.

### ***Towards a Better Understanding***

In this case, PT offers a more useful understanding of Russian decision-making behavior than EUT. With respect to the sanctions meant to coerce Russia into changing its behavior toward Crimea, rational decision-making does not appear evident, as Russia celebrates the annexation of a region with no noteworthy benefits, despite significant negative financial effects of the sanctions. However, President Putin's rhetoric shows that he does not frame the situation in terms of logical net gains, but rather in terms of the potential loss of Crimea – a Russian “possession.” Russia is willing to risk the financial harm of the sanctions because it fears losing Crimea. This is more consistent with the framework PT offers for understanding decision-making behavior than that of EUT.

### **Conclusion**

Prospect Theory offers the clearest explanation for understanding Russian foreign policy decision-making behavior vis-à-vis the economic sanctions and the annexation of Crimea. This contributes to a comprehension of how states respond to sanctions. In the case of economic sanctions on Russia, PT explains how Russia is willing to accept high financial costs to prevent the loss of Crimea. However, it is also important to note the limitations of this study. As the sanctions are

relatively new, it is difficult to fully assess their complete effects at this point in time.

Prospect Theory offers the clearest explanation for understanding Russian foreign policy decision-making behavior vis-à-vis the economic sanctions and the annexation of Crimea. This contributes to a comprehension of how states respond to sanctions. In the case of economic sanctions on Russia, PT explains how Russia is willing to accept high financial costs to prevent the loss of Crimea. However, it is also important to note the limitations of this study. As the sanctions are relatively new, it is difficult to fully assess their complete effects at this point in time.

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