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Content

- 101 *A Tribute to Donald L. Boisvert*
Steven Lapidus

Articles

- 103 *The Courage to Be Yourself:*
A Que(e)rying of Contemporary Protestant Existentialist
Theology
Jordan Wadden
- 120 *The Reproduction of Saint Sebastian as a Queer Martyr*
in Suddenly, Last Summer and Lilies
Nikola Stepic
- 135 *Discipleship and Gender*
in The Gospel According to Thomas:
A Narrative Analysis of Salome and Mariam
Through The Implicit Narrator
Joseph E. Brito

Book Reviews

- 157 ***Unmanly Men:
Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts***
Alexander Nachaj, reviewer
- 159 ***Muslims in the Western Imagination***
Parnia Vafaeikia, reviewer
- 162 ***Humanism:
Essays on Race, Religion, and Popular Culture***
Amin Mansouri, reviewer
- 164 ***Pastrami on Rye:
An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli***
Claire English, reviewer
- 167 **Call for Papers 2016/17
*Religion, Ideology and Violence:
Imagination, Display and Deployment***

The Reproduction of Saint Sebastian as a Queer Martyr in *Suddenly*, *Last Summer* and *Lilies*

Nikola Stepić

Abstract

This essay traces the figure of Saint Sebastian as it is employed in two plays, Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly*, *Last Summer* and Michele Marc Bouchard's *Lilies*, as well as in their film adaptations (directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz and John Greyson, respectively). Saint Sebastian, an example of the stereotype Richard Dyer calls a "sad young man," is here analyzed as conduit for both identity formation and homoerotic anxiety. The Saint is positioned as a figure through which issues surrounding storytelling, production of memory, personal history and historical revision are embodied. By making these issues the central dramatic conflicts, the two plays do not only engage with the figure of Saint Sebastian in order to codify its central melancholy gay characters, but also explore the way the Saint's queer potentiality is reproduced through the work of memory, revision and revival.

Keywords: Saint Sebastian; Tennessee Williams; Michele Marc Bouchard; Joseph L. Mankiewicz; John Greyson; Richard Dyer; Homoerotic Anxiety; Identity Formation; Production of Memory; Historical Revision.

Director John Greyson's opus is remarkable for its constant dialogue with seminal cultural and political elements of queer history. From reincarnated historical figures (Frida Kahlo, Langston Hughes and Gaëtan Dugas, to name a few) to repurposed fictional characters (Wilde's Dorian Gray, Kipling's Mowgli or Mann's Tadzio) and historical events (the policing of washroom sex in 1980s Toronto, an 18th century sodomy trial in South Africa, the 1985 murder of Kenneth Zeller), Greyson does not merely juxtapose these elements to shed a light on a topic that a particular film dramatizes. Rather, they are dialectically opposed within his diverse authorial opus in order to emphasize and deconstruct the work of queer culture, history and memory.

In Greyson's 1996 feature film *Lilies*, the big-budget adaptation of Michel Marc Bouchard's 1987 play *Les Feluettes*, the first instance of such intertextuality comes in the form of Gabriele D'Annunzio's play *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, as enacted by the film's main characters in their youth. The narrative of Saint Sebastian—which, in the twentieth century, has become the pre-eminent code for “the homosexual as beleaguered, existential hero”—seems a natural point of entry into a story of hidden desire, torment and marginalized queer memory.¹ In that respect, it is reminiscent of another queer narrative that broaches similar themes through the iconography of Saint Sebastian, Tennessee Williams' 1958 play *Suddenly, Last Summer* and its 1959 film adaptation directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Apart from Bouchard and Williams' revision of the figure of Saint Sebastian, the connection between the two is further reinforced through Greyson's intertextual dialogue with Williams in his 1986 video essay and multimedia performance *You Taste American*, in which the Toronto-based director acknowledges the seminal playwright's significant influence. This essay will aim to explore the ways in which the figure of Saint Sebastian is evoked and appropriated in *Suddenly, Last Summer* and *Lilies*, with special attention paid to the parallels between the saint and the text's queer central characters as part of a larger cultural context in which the melancholy, tragic gay subject is reimaged and codified through the iconography of Saint Sebastian's martyrdom.

I. Sainly Performances

In *The Culture of Queers*, Richard Dyer, writing about the stereotypical homosexual as a “sad young man,” identifies the figure of Saint Sebastian as one of his most iconic representations.² He argues that while many stereotypes indeed assert “the static, unchanging, settled nature of the designated group,” they can also stand for “impermanence or transience”—the stereotype of the sad young man is one such example, and is “strongly marked in terms of transition [...] by virtue of moving between normal and queer worlds, always caught at the moment of exploration and discovery.”³ His outline of the “sad young man's” trajectory through Christian, Romantic and contemporary forms is reminiscent of Richard A. Kaye's historicization of Saint Sebastian from Medieval times, through Renaissance and the nineteenth century, to the present moment—from “a Christian saint invoked against illness” to the “self-consciously homosexual emblem in the twentieth [century].”⁴ Troubled, melancholy young men are to be found at the center of both *Suddenly, Last Summer* (Sebastian Venable) and *Lilies* (Simon Doucet). Their negotiation of “normal and queer

worlds,” as Dyer puts it, is situated in the invocation of the homosexually coded Saint Sebastian—evoked as both symbol and stereotype—and grows in complexity as it is explored and developed in the two works.⁵

While it is not difficult to argue Saint Sebastian as a mythical stand-in for homosexual desire in both *Suddenly, Last Summer* and *Lilies*, the ways the figure is appropriated differ between the two. On the one hand, the young lovers of *Lilies* carve out a space for their desire in a theatrical reenactment of Saint Sebastian’s martyrdom as a tactic for engaging in a transgressive homosexual affair. On the other hand, Williams’ Sebastian Venable, a character who is dead from the onset but whose absence does not compromise his centrality in the proceedings, is retroactively mythologized from the present day by his mother, Violet Venable. Her depiction of him is situated in the image of the Romantic poet as a prophet and a deity, while Williams’ allusive writing further aligns him with Saint Sebastian, a figure that works towards Violet’s agenda in canonizing her son as more than human and, thus, invincible against illicit claims about his sexuality. As Joe Falocco astutely recognizes, “Sebastian can be seen not as an exploiter but rather, like his namesake Saint Sebastian, as a martyr” within a play that “indicts not homosexuality but [homosexual behavior].”⁶

Elizabeth A. Castelli argues that “the designation ‘martyr’ is not an ontological category but a post-event interpretative one, [...] produced by the stories told about them.”⁷ This is very much true in the case of Sebastian Venable, with the bulk of the dialogue in *Suddenly, Last Summer* revolving around episodes from his life, and the characters in the present vying for their own version of Sebastian’s personal history to be recognized as truthful. The two conflicting histories are those of his relative Catharine, who offers a visceral account of Sebastian’s predatory (homo)sexual nature that ended in death by cannibalism, which she witnessed, and that of his mother, who campaigns for a more ambivalent narrative that paints her son as an elusive, mythical figure. Violet’s production of Sebastian’s life story parallels Castelli’s theorization of the production of a martyr, which states that, “it is in such moments of catastrophe and crisis, uncertainty and heightened conviction that the martyr/the suffering innocent emerges as a figure to convince and reassure.”⁸ Violet narrates Sebastian as “the suffering innocent” in a telling piece of dialogue, where Williams’ language play reveals both her labor in the retelling of Sebastian’s life, and the very particular way she replaces his predatory nature with that of a troubled fugitive in a predatory world.

My son, Sebastian, was chaste. Not c-h-a-s-e-d! Oh, he was chased in that way of spelling it, too, we had to be very fleet-footed I can tell you, with his looks and his charm, to keep ahead of pursuers, every kind of pursuer! – I mean he was c-h-a-s-t-e!–Chaste.⁹

Mankiewicz's film adaptation of the play reinforces the connection between the martyrdom of beleaguered poet Sebastian Venable who died "suddenly, last summer" in the process of writing one of his yearly poems (the process itself described by Violet as laborious, and likened to pregnancy), and the specificity of Saint Sebastian as a figure in whose image Sebastian Venable's nature is reimagined. In a deviation from Williams' text, the same scene in the film is marked by the presence of the Saint himself, in the form of an oil painting that forms a part of the film set and that is directly referenced by Violet (played by Katharine Hepburn): "He would sit in his chair, I in mine, at five o'clock every day, and we would have daiquiris with Saint Sebastian brooding above us."¹⁰ Thus, in this version of the text Saint Sebastian is even more present, a looming figure that reassures the family narrative as much as it obfuscates its central member. The painting is visually contrasted in the same scene with a decorative human skeleton with wings, gruesomely betraying Violet's efforts at posthumously reimagining her son as saintly.

Lilies, on the other hand, engages with the symbolic in a more complex trajectory, moving from the image of Saint Sebastian as a necessary, yet pleasurable, code for forbidden desire, to the saint as a limiting and dehumanizing vehicle of suffering. The former emerges in the form of a play-within-a-play that young Simon Doucet (Jason Cadieux) and Count Vallier de Tilly (Danny Gilmore) stage in 1912, adapting from D'Annunzio's *The Martyrdom of St Sebastian*. Not only does the play allow the characters to act on the feelings they have for each other, but it also foreshadows the coming events through its explicit connection to the martyred figure of Saint Sebastian. The casting of Simon in the role of the saint is appropriate, as the proceedings find the character's integrity and love for Vallier tested on numerous occasions. An explicit, real-life occurrence of his martyrdom first occurs in his punishment at the hands of his father, who violently whips him for his romantic involvement with Vallier. Bouchard's text makes the connection explicit in a line of dialogue omitted in Greyson's adaptation.

He tied me to the bed while he drank his bottle of gin...
Then he took off his belt. "How many arrows did you

goddamn saint get?” [Pause.] I passed out a couple of times, but he kept swingin’ away till I got my twenty-two lashes. And he hit hard, really hard. Harder and harder. Again and again.¹¹

That Simon’s punishment is the same as the saint’s, the twenty-two lashes corresponding to the twenty-two arrows that pierce the dramatic character of Saint Sebastian in the play the boys are producing, reinforces the reimagining of Simon in the saint’s image. While the opening of the play suggests that the codification of a homosexual as the iconic figure may hold the potential for carving out a space for forbidden desire, the play’s denouement betrays this promise as Simon finds himself more and more caged in his martyrdom. That he takes it upon himself to repair social relations by getting engaged to a woman is only a part of his suffering through denying himself the physical and romantic pleasures of Vallier’s love, temptations he adamantly refuses.

The character of Simon follows the blueprint of Dyer’s sad young man, “an image of holy sensitivity,” yet he finds an outlet for his melancholia and misery in the form of pyromania.¹² It is a reoccurring motif that Greyson uses to great visual effect in the film adaptation, and, while the fire could arguably be read as petty mischief on the part of an impulsive young man, its two major occurrences signify the transformational quality of Simon’s experience as felt by the larger community. The first, Simon’s burning down of a convent, is reminiscent of Tennessee Williams’ usage of Christian imagery for subversive effect. Simon’s connection to Saint Sebastian is extended through this interplay with religion, which John M. Clum understands as “a language for defining [the] combination of isolation, desire, and atonement.”¹³ The shots of Roberval’s residents extinguishing the fire, and the charred statue of John the Baptist holding Jesus Christ while floating down the river as debris, underscore Simon’s alienation and rejection of religion and the saintly narratives that previously formed the conduit for his desire. At the same time, his pyromania signals his transformation to a “fallen” saint, a subversive Sebastian who must negotiate Christianity and his conflicted feelings of desire and persecution.

The fire motif is repeated at the end of both Bouchard’s play and Greyson’s film, an instance where the film otherwise departs from the original text the most. Bouchard resolves the story by having Simon and Vallier find peace

by committing suicide by fire. The ritualistic nature of the suicide, which includes a perversion of the wedding ritual with both boys swallowing wedding rings and reciting lines from D'Anunzio's play, serves as Simon's final subversive impulse and invokes another trope from Tennessee Williams' opus, that of a "blasphemous Eucharist."¹⁴ The blasphemy is propelled by the zealous Bilodeau (Matthew Ferguson), Simon and Vallier's peer who is jealous of their intimacy and frightened of his own dormant (homo) sexuality, and who pleads with his friends to run away to the wilderness and recreate the Garden of Eden together. "I won't be goin' to the Seminary," Bilodeau says in an inspired speech. "It's more important to dedicate my life to a saint... We're gonna pray so hard... We're gonna confess our sins... We're gonna tell each other all our bad thoughts."¹⁵ It is, however, his plea that Simon give him "a little saint's kiss" that drives Simon to reject him and attempt suicide with Vallier.¹⁶ Bilodeau's insistence that same-sex love can only be enacted through codification rooted in Christian symbolism motivates Simon to commit suicide, as he realizes that living out the figure of a saint, however fallen, is ultimately limiting, and that death provides the only possible escape through a martyrdom of his own making. The epilogue of the play works to recreate this idea into the framework set in 1952. Now a Bishop, Bilodeau—who saved Simon but purposefully let Vallier die—is confronted by Simon, who has been falsely imprisoned for thirty years. After being manipulated to witness a recreation of their youth in an elaborate, theatrical confession staged by Simon and other convicts, the grief-stricken Bilodeau begs for Simon to kill him, himself invoking Saint Sebastian:

Oh, my archers, let my destiny be fulfilled. [*He opens his cassock.*] Let me die at the hands of men. Kill me! Kill me!
I loved you so much I wanted to destroy your soul.¹⁷

In his taking on the role of Saint Sebastian, the sexually and spiritually troubled Bilodeau not only reinterprets himself as a queer martyr at the mercy of others, but also aligns martyrdom with despair and not glory for his inability to profess his love to another man. As "the martyr stands as an irreducible embodiment of an unassailable truth," Bilodeau's sacrifice reads as a last confession, a "coming out" of sorts.¹⁸ That he is ultimately denied death--Simon's last words in the play are "I hate you so much... I'm gonna let you live"—is a delicate way to link sainthood to prison, and paint death as a tragic and inglorious, yet necessary escape.¹⁹

Greyson's film changes the narrative in that it is Bilodeau, and not Simon, who starts the fire, saving Simon in the last minute, but (as is the case in the original text) leaving Vallier behind. However, the deviation does not change the outcome of the story. In fact, the displacement of the fire motif from Simon to Bilodeau underlines the difficult relationship between religion and desire. The young Bilodeau is willing to enter into a homosexual relationship with Simon as long as the latter is a saint, a divinity whose physical desire and beauty is shrouded in the veil of religious mysticism. Simon's refusal to give him a "little saint's kiss" triggers Bilodeau's violent reaction, and his starting a fire against his two peers becomes an exorcism of sorts. His line, "Then the two of you can rot in hell!" comes off as a battle cry against the fallen Simon, no longer any more saintly than Bilodeau himself.²⁰

II. *Memories of Saints*

Greyson's 1986 video essay, *You Taste American*, opens with a re-edited clip of Elizabeth Taylor as Catharine Holly recounting the death of her cousin Sebastian Venable from Mankiewicz's film adaptation of *Suddenly, Last Summer*. Clips from the film appear throughout the piece, and it is also alluded to by Greyson's own narration told in a caricatured Southern drawl. For the purpose of the video essay—a meditation on the mass arrests of homosexuals in washrooms in 1983 Orillia, Ontario, as told through video and performance art—the director borrows from *Suddenly, Last Summer* in order to position the power to speak as a way of asserting power. The urgency of this project is only greater considering the 1983 political context, the power of storytelling becoming central to creating historical narratives that do not relegate sexual minorities to the margins of public debate.

The interplay with *Suddenly, Last Summer* is appropriate, since Williams' text is largely concerned with storytelling and the power dynamics that emerge from the privilege, or lack thereof, to speak of one's (queer) memory. As discussed before, Violet Venable uses her authority to not only silence the (hi)story that she deems inappropriate, but also to rewrite it and recast her son as a mythical figure rather than an ordinary man prone to desire. Having already established Williams as an influence in Greyson's work, an inquiry into the issue of storytelling in *Suddenly, Last Summer* provides a valuable entry point into its textual interplay with *Lilies*, a text that, particularly in Greyson's hands, moves these issues to the forefront of its dramaturgy.

With the absence of the play's central character, the mystery of Sebastian Venable in *Suddenly, Last Summer* is revealed through two conflicting narratives. As Andrew Sofer notes, the play "weaves its subject into a glittering skein of language, until we can no longer say for certain where the body ends and discourse begins."²¹ In fact, the discourse effectively *replaces* the body, as visualized in Mankiewicz's film through the obscuring of the face of the actor playing Sebastian. In other words, as there is never any material evidence to support either the claims of Violet or Catharine, and considering the unreliability of both characters, the major conflict of the story becomes not the search for "truth," as the veracity of the events can never be truly supported, but for the power to speak. Catharine's power to act as a speaker is silenced by being placed in a mental institution, and is further threatened by Violet's efforts to have her lobotomized, erasing her already disputed memory altogether. Violet's position of power, coupled with her recreation of her son's life as a saint, or a chaste prophetic artist, is explicitly verbalized, as she laughs off the accusation that she is bribing the medical authorities to perform the lobotomy on Catharine:

Name it that – I don't care. There's just two things to remember. She's a destroyer. My son was a creator! Now if my honesty's shocked you – pick up your little black bag without the subsidy in it, and run away from the garden!²²

While Williams' own sexuality and recurring interest in gay characters suggest that Catharine's story could be true, as communicated by the play's final lines, the film strengthens this assumption by including a monologue for Violet in which she herself goes mad, reinforcing Catharine's narrative as the more believable one. Until the very end of the film and the play, however, Catharine inherits from Sebastian the role of the silent martyr. Both characters are absent, one dead and the other in a mental institution. Similarly, both characters' memories and histories are under risk of obliteration by a person in a position of power, either through efforts at mythologizing the memory of them, or through erasure. Catharine, however, is an unwilling martyr, as she refuses to comply and be silenced, and instead asserts her own voice and memory in the final, theatrical moment of storytelling, which is made even more filmic by Mankiewicz's superimposition of an uncredited actor playing Sebastian onto the footage of Taylor as Catharine as she is delivering her monologue, the visuals legitimizing her narrative.

Considering Greyson's opus, which is often metatextual and puts its audience in a state of reflective detachment, it should not come as a surprise that the issue of performance is at the center of *Lilies*. In spite of a more traditional and affective approach to Bouchard's text compared to his usual style of filming and storytelling, Greyson insists on the theatricality of the historical scenes, played out by an all-male cast and serving as reenactments and fantasies, rather than histories.²³ As Sara Graefe notes, "The subtitle of Bouchard's *Lilies, the Revival of a Romantic Drama* [...] emphasizes how theatre as a medium enables one to reconstruct one's past in an attempt to understand one's present situation."²⁴ In a queer context, however, the idea of the revival is even more pressing, considering the centrality of memory in queer identity formation. On this function of memory, Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed theorized that collective identity emerges "through the pleasurable rehearsal of a canon of subcultural references and [...] the revision of personal memory narratives."²⁵ Thus, Simon's theatrical production of memory reveals the process of his own identity formation, moving from the image of Saint Sebastian, the "gay saint," to Simon's own revival of his childhood.

Similarly to *Suddenly, Last Summer*, the veracity of the memories in *Lilies* is never insisted upon, as the play-within-a-play structure of the text gives precedence to the processes of remembering and replaying. The intricate *mise en abyme* structure of the film signals that both the play derived from Simon's memory of his childhood and D'Annunzio's *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* are based on recollections, one personal and the other collective. The figure of the martyr as perpetuated in shared culture is crucial for exploring this strategy of storytelling, as the play spills into the territory of personal memory and vice versa. For example, Simon interrupts the play's rehearsal by asking questions about Saint Sebastian and the possible repercussions of staging a story of love between two men. Moreover, in a response to the impromptu staging of D'Annunzio's play at Simon's engagement party that reveals the love between two boys, Simon's fiancée starts speaking of herself as if she were an actress performing a role. "The woman betrayed, Countess. In the theater, one laughs at the betrayed woman."²⁶ Similarly, as Shannon Brownlee notes,

D'Annunzio's language facilitates Simon and Vallier's relationship: the local, heteronormative language of romance cannot express a love that it forbids, so they

borrow D'Annunzio's homoerotic words periodically throughout the film to explore their emotions.²⁷

Just like Saint Sebastian's homosexuality is "assumed even as it is never explicitly articulated," the identities of the characters in *Lilies* are uncovered through tapping into collective memory.²⁸ That the play-within-a-play structure refers to uncovering this memory as "confession" and "revenge" is fitting, since the two signifiers, usually in opposition, denote the core of the dialectical issue between performance by those in power and those on the margins. Here, the person in power is Bishop Bilodeau, who not only occupies the position of religious authority in 1950s Quebec, but is also vested with the power to receive a confession and facilitate God's forgiveness. However, it is Simon's confession that turns into revenge, and the memory of Bilodeau's childhood revenge that prompts a confession. The tension between storytelling and power, situated in the homoerotic idea of Saint Sebastian, is thus at the core of both *Suddenly, Last Summer* and *Lilies*.

Sofer explores the notion that Williams' characters are "compulsive fictionalizers," as C.W.E. Bigsby has claimed, and concludes that "performance allows Williams' creations to come alive, both on-stage (as incarnated by actors) and, more importantly, at the level of their own subjectivity."²⁹ Similarly, the characters of *Lilies* assert their own subjectivity by enacting D'Annunzio's text. While this is most evident in Simon and Vallier's performance as Sebastian and the archer Sanaé, it is also found in the character of Vallier's mother, the Countess de Tilly, who rewrites reality in a similar vein to that of Williams' "fictionalizers." Haunted by the absence of her husband who she reimagines as loving and faithful, she asks her son to take her to the forest and kill her by strangulation so that in death she can return to France and her former life. The scene is yet another reenactment of The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, with the Countess recasting herself as the titular character:

Don't be like Sanaé refusing to give Saint Sebastian the eternity he longs for. "I shall be reborn, Sanaé. I shall be reborn. But first I must die. If thou dost truly love me..."
Enough talk. The last ship for France will be leaving soon.
[Moved.] You were the only one who ever loved me in my entire life. Who else could I ask this of?³⁰

Although the Countess is mostly a positive force in *Lilies*, this scene demonstrates an uncanny parallel between Bouchard and Williams' mothers. The somewhat incestuous recasting of mother and son as Sebastian and Sanaé is reminiscent of Violet's memory of her relationship with her son during their travels:

We were a famous couple. People didn't speak of Sebastian and his mother or Mrs. Venable and her son, they said "Sebastian and Violet, Violet and Sebastian are staying at the Lido, they're at the Ritz in Madrid. Sebastian and Violet, Violet and Sebastian have taken a house at Biarritz for the season," and every appearance, every time we appeared, attention was centered on us!³¹

For both the Countess and Violet, the removal of familial relations is necessary in order to reimagine reality as fiction. For Violet, imagining her son and herself as a platonic couple is an alternative to believing in his exploits with young men. For the Countess, the evocation of Saint Sebastian is the necessary role-playing so that her son could take her life. Interestingly, Greyson's removes any mention of Saint Sebastian from this scene in his adaptation. However, he stages the scene as another *mise en abyme*, by inserting Bilodeau into the scene as an onlooker and framing the forest as yet another stage, preserving and cinematically expanding the theatricality of the characters as storytellers and role-players.

Both Williams' *Suddenly*, *Last Summer* and Bouchard's *Lilies* insist on performance as a strategy through which the characters assert themselves and form their subjectivities. Negotiating between official and marginalized histories, public and private knowledge, the imagined and the "real," Mankiewicz and Greyson utilize cinematic tools to emphasize these tensions. While Mankiewicz stages the film in a series of long, static scenes that mimic theater, preserving the cinematic technique of superimposition for the big reveal, Greyson utilizes the *mise en abyme* structure and the aesthetics of *tableaux vivants* to underscore the theatricality and performativity inherent in Bouchard's text. The starkest example of this is the love scene between Simon and Vallier, interrupted in both the play and the film by the arrival of the Countess, who insists that the two boys recite their lines from *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*. While the original text cuts their lovemaking short, Greyson extends the scene by framing it in a fantastical sequence, the two boys covered in falling leaves in spite of

occupying an interior space. As such, even the most private and intimate scenes are reimagined as performative and theatrical, the reenactments emphasizing the possibility of an intervention of the private into the public, of the silent into the declarative. Moreover, like Sebastian Venable remains central to *Suddenly, Last Summer* in spite of his physical absence, here the myth of Saint Sebastian—as told in D’Annunzio’s dramatic text but also meta-textually recognized as queer by Greyson’s audiences—remains the symbol of the homosexual struggle and its simultaneous presence in the public discourse; a particular mix of desire and pain.

III. Conclusion

The rich trajectory that the figure of Saint Sebastian has navigated, camouflaging and signaling forbidden homosexual desire to “knowing” audiences, finds itself dissected in Michael Marc Bouchard’s play *Lilies*, as well as its dazzling cinematic adaptation by John Greyson. Greyson’s previous work, deeply saturated in iconic historical and fictional characters repurposed for queer issues and audiences, invokes another such character in Tennessee Williams’ *Suddenly, Last Summer* in the form of the saint’s namesake, Sebastian Venable. Through his proclivity for deconstructing queer memory and shared culture, Greyson repurposes the figure of the “gay” saint in order to explore issues of identity, memory and performance through an exercise in storytelling that reinforces the connection between Bouchard and Williams’ characters. The comparison becomes especially vivid when it comes to Mankiewicz’s filmic adaptation of Williams, which, in spite of its more traditional ambitions and execution, is comparable to Greyson’s *Lilies* in its theatricality and the focus on agency through storytelling and remembering. Both of these works reinforce and validate the personal queer histories of their characters by embodying and retelling the myth of Saint Sebastian, a figure whose queer potential and meaning is perpetuated through memory, revision and revival.

Notes

1. Richard Kaye, "Losing His Religion: Saint Sebastian as Contemporary Gay Martyr," in *Outlooks: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities and Visual Cultures*, ed. Peter Horne and Reina Levis (London: Routledge, 1996), 87.
2. Richard Dyer, *The Culture of Queers*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 116.
3. Ibid., 130.
4. Kaye, "Losing His Religion, Saint Sebastian as Contemporary Gay Martyr," 87.
5. Dyer, *The Culture of Queers*, 131.
6. See Joe Falco, "Gardens of Desire: Toward a Unified Vision of Garden District," in *The Tennessee Williams Annual Review* no. 7 (2005).
7. Elizabeth A. Castelli, "The Ambivalent Legacy of Violence and Victimhood: Using Early Christian Martyrs to Think With," in *Sipritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 6 no. 1 (2006): 1.
8. Ibid., 18.
9. Tennessee Williams, *Suddenly, Last Summer* (New York: New Directions, 1958), 25.
10. *Suddenly, Last Summer*, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz (Sony Pictures Entertainment, DVD), 1959.
11. Michel Marc Bouchard, *Lilies, Or, The Revival of a Romantic Drama*, trans. Linda Gaboriau (Toronto: Coach House Press), 34.
12. Dyer, *The Culture of Queers*, 134.
13. John M. Clum, "The Sacrificial Stud and the Fugitive Female in Suddenly, Last Summer, Orpheus Descending, and Sweet Bird of Youth," in *Tennessee Williams* ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2007), 32.
14. Ibid.
15. Bouchard, *Lilies, Or, The Revival of a Romantic Drama*, 69.
16. Ibid., 66.
17. Ibid., 69.
18. Castelli, "The Ambivalent Legacy of Violence and Victimhood," 2.
19. Bouchard, *Lilies, Or, The Revival of a Romantic Drama*, 69.
20. See *Lilies*, 1996.
21. Andrew Sofer, "Self-Consuming Artifacts: Power, Performance and the Body in Tennessee Williams' Suddenly Last Summer," in *Modern Drama* 38 no. 3 (1995): 337.
22. Williams, *Suddenly, Last Summer*, 32.
23. Shannon Brownlee, "'But...It's so Beautiful': Collective Fantasy in Lilies," in *The Perils of Pedagogy: The works of John Greyson*, ed. Thomas Waugh, Brenda Longfellow, and Scott MacKenzie (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 426.
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25. Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed, *If Memory Serves: Gay Men, AIDS, and the Promise of the Queer Past*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 121.
26. See *Lilies*, 1996.
27. Brownlee, "'But...It's so Beautiful,'" 429.
28. Kaye, "Losing His Religion, Saint Sebastian as Contemporary Gay Martyr," 86.
29. Sofer, "Self-Consuming Artifacts," 338.

30. Bouchard, *Lilies, Or, The Revival of a Romantic Drama*, 63.
31. Williams, *Suddenly, Last Summer*, 26.
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Nikola Stepić

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