



*Student writing from
American University's
Writing Studies Program*

Atrium 2017

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Introduction

Consider what happens when you open up something to read. You come to that moment, of course, with expectations and goals. When you read a syllabus, you're trying to figure out the rules and requirements of the class. When you examine the instructions for Ikea furniture, you're making sure that you have enough *torsbos* to pair with your new *hasselvika*. When you read an email -- or even a text -- from a friend, you're quickly noting when and where you'll meet for lunch.

Now think about teachers. We sit down with hundreds of essays and thousands of pages each year. And, truth to tell, sometimes we find ourselves reading as judges, continually asking: "What grade does this earn?" Often we act as editors and coaches, considering what revisions to suggest and how to suggest them. There are moments when we wonder why the correct spelling of a word like "their" seems to be up for debate.

Every now and then, though, we get to occupy a different space. We forget that we are reading a paper which must, after all, be assessed. The essay might compel us to rethink something we've taken for granted. Or it might even coax some envy, the fervent wish that we had written what we just read. When this happens, the correcting pen falls to the floor and we linger over the words, delighting more than deliberating. We invite you to enjoy those moments along with us.

That brings us to this collection, the 4th annual edition of *Atrium*, a compendium of work from students in WRTG classes in 2016-17. Consider the moves these writers make. Look at the sharp edge of that argument and the care devoted to that well-turned phrase. Monitor how

these writers change the way you think about a subject. Most of all, savor the work of the writers in this year's *Atrium*.

John Hyman

Director, Writing Studies Program – 2000-2017

About Atrium

Throughout the academic year the *Atrium* committee asks Writing Studies professors who teach Writing 100, 101, and 106 to submit essays that stand out to them for one reason or another. We aren't looking for the "perfect" or "ideal" essay; we're looking for the piece we read and immediately want to share with someone else. Our goal is to create a collection that will inspire and challenge both us and our students to read and write civil, thought-provoking, empathetic, and meaningful conversations.

Credit for *Atrium* goes to Professor Stina Oakes, who founded this annual collection four years ago and who continues to serve as our executive editor. Additionally, thanks to Professors Amanda Choutka, Chuck Cox, and Arielle Bernstein for their work reading the submitted entries, selecting the final collection, and editing. Cover design is by Faith Whitmore. And, most importantly, thanks to the writers whose work is included here -- without you, *Atrium* wouldn't exist.

Entering the Process

Single Story of Pit Bulls

Sarah Kathryn Clark

Note: This assignment asked students to give a 10-minute talk on what they learned in writing their final research paper. Students were required to attend to the following questions: How did you decide on your topic? How did you conduct research and come up with a clear specific thesis? What was your biggest challenge? Your proudest success? What will you come away from college writing knowing more about? How will you apply these skills in other classes?



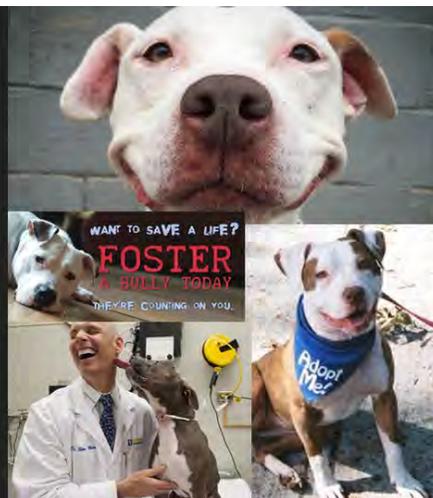
Forming my Thesis- Importance of They Say/I say

Although many argue that pit bulls are inherently malevolent and aggressive dogs, in reality, pit bulls have only turned aggressive due to poor guardianship. In fact, the aggressive behavior in pit bulls is being magnified by popular media, which is actually contributing to the mistreatment of the breed resulting in increasing accounts of pit bull attacks.



Changing the Conversation

- More pit bulls being adopted
- Less pit bulls being killed and euthanized that have shown no signs of violence or aggression
- Lower amount of accounts of pit bull abuse
- Decrease number of pit bull attacks
- A more rigorous adoption process
- An increase in money fundraised to provide medical support to abused pit bulls
- Destigmatize pit bull owners who feel they have to lie to strangers about the breed of their dog



Importance of Distinguishing Sources: Popular Sources

Popular sources have a really broad scope-- anywhere from New York Times article to a Facebook Post

Knowing this distinction between popular sources and scholarly sources became incredibly valuable to me when writing this research paper, as my argument revolved around the media's influence on our perceptions of the breed

Through the research process, I discovered that a lot of the news sources I had previously believed to be incredibly trustworthy and reputable released articles that were not based in fact (ex.) *TIME* magazine's article "The Problem with Pit Bulls



Differences Within Popular Sources

I discovered that I had previously been misinformed about what constituted a scholarly source, as I did not know it had to be peer reviewed

I also discovered that not all non-scholarly sources are created equal. For example, my most informative and helpful source for this research project was actually a non-scholarly source: a book by Bronwen Dickey titled "Pit Bull: The Battle Over the American Icon"

This book was considered non-scholarly as it was not peer reviewed, however, it was obviously an incredibly reliable source as Dickey consulted hundreds of other sources such as veterinarians, lawyers, animal rights advocates, etc.



Importance of Distinguishing Sources: Scholarly Sources

This was really important in my paper, as all the scholarly sources I looked at were in opposition of breed specific legislation

In addition, most scholars were in agreement that an entirety of a breed can not be blamed for the actions of a few members of the breed

The scholarly conversation consisted of researching what has precipitated the vilification of the breed, and how we can help the breed

This was crucial in my paper, as the informed individuals were not blaming pit bulls which showed popular media's inaccuracy in making



Biggest Success

I believe my biggest success was pinpointing my claim, or in other words, my “I say”

It was hard for me to develop my “I say” because I wanted to go into the research process with an already established “I say”

However, I ended up finding that my “I say” came to me after I had conducted some research and establish a foundation of knowledge on the subject

As I researched, I began to see a connection between the media’s reporting on pit bulls and instances of pit bull abuse



My Other Big Challenge: Citing My Sources

Prior to this class, I had no idea that you still had to put the author and page number in parentheses at the end of a quote even if you have a narrative lead in (a.k.a. Quote sandwich)

I also did not know that you had to utilize the end of sentence parentheses citation when you paraphrased information

Formally, I had only done the end of sentence parentheses citation with books, not websites etc.

Tied up loose ends-- (blank qtd. in blank) and (blank et. al)



My Second Big Success

Gaining the ability to critically analyze sources

Learning to decipher what type of source I’m studying, how knowledgeable the author is on the subject, and how reliable the source is

I learned a lot of this through the process of creating my annotated



In Summary, The Main Things I Learned This Semester

How to write a clear thesis
(They say/ I say)

How to conduct research
(specifically at AU)

How to quote sandwich, cite
sources, and use MLA format

How to be more confident in my
writing

How to look critically at the



How I will apply this to other classes

Most importantly, I believe the research techniques I learned in this course will be immensely helpful for me in my other classes. For example, I now know how to conduct research through the AU library portal and I now know how to critically examine my sources of information

Better able to cite sources for papers in other classes

Better knowledge on how to construct a concise and clear thesis

Can apply They Say/ I Say to arguments I make in other course



Sorry my pit bull went against your stereotypes and disappointingly licked your face instead of gnawing it off.

THE MEDIA BE LIKE

TODAY, NOT IN THE NEWS...

"CHILD ATTACKED BY PACK OF VICIOUS PITBULLS"

AN ESTIMATED 3.5 MILLION PITBULLS DID NOTHING BUT LOVE THEIR FAMILIES.

Dear PETA,
I'm A LOVER,
NOT A fighter!

I WANT YOU
TO ADOPT AN AMERICAN
PIT BULL TERRIER

 A collage of images and text. On the left, a dog's face is shown in a halftone pattern. Below it, a dog is lying down. In the center, a dog is sitting on a lawn next to a blue stroller with several piggy banks scattered around it. To the right, a dog is sitting on a wooden floor. Below the stroller, a sign reads 'Dear PETA, I'm A LOVER, NOT A fighter!'. To the right of the sign, a dog is wearing a military-style uniform with a top hat. At the bottom right, a sign says 'I WANT YOU TO ADOPT AN AMERICAN PIT BULL TERRIER'.

Hybridity: Negotiation and Integration in the Postcolonial Diaspora

Fiona Corcoran

Introduction

The field of postcolonial studies is a relatively new one, and its subfields and theories are being expanded upon continually where older academic disciplines have stagnated. Its creation can be traced back to Edward Said's 1978 book *Orientalism*, which problematized Western representations of "the Orient," or the culture and peoples of Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. It addressed the pervasive inaccuracy in study and perceptions of the East and linked their development to assumed Western superiority and falsely exaggerated difference (Said, 1978). Writers such as Chinua Achebe and Frantz Fanon incorporated postcolonial themes in their creative works prior to the publication of *Orientalism*, but Said was the first to bring those concepts into the realm of theory.

Early in the evolution of the field, scholars often disagreed on what the term "postcolonial" signified. A semantic and temporal interpretation of the term would suggest that it narrowly refers to the time following the exit of a colonial power from a colonized territory. However, the widely accepted interpretation of "postcolonial," as first laid out in the influential 1989 handbook *The Empire Writes Back*, encompasses literature and theory that deconstructs the ramifications of colonialism during and after actual imperial dominance (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989; Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996). There has been some recent criticism that this notion

privileges the uninterrupted timelines of white settler colonies such as Australia and Canada over colonies in Asia and Africa that experienced more profound historical disruption after gaining independence, but the 1989 definition has been made use of in most significant postcolonial works (Trivedi, 2015). As a result of this looser conceptualization, postcolonialism can be considered both a “textual effect” and a method of finding meaning within a text (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996). This ambiguity also informs the projects of many postcolonial writers, who focus on the convolution of postcolonial identity in ex-colonies in contrast to the essentialism that was imposed by the colonizer.

Hybridity vs. Essentialism

Essentialism, as understood in postcolonial theory, is the idea that people have a fixed and unchangeable essence that defines their identity. Colonial dominance is dependent on an essentialist construction of colonized peoples as “Other,” a fixed stereotype in opposition to the “essence” of the West that allows for subjugation (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994). The stereotype is both what is already “known” about the colonized and something that must be reproduced and held constant in order to justify colonization.

Homi K. Bhabha is one of the foremost figures in postcolonial studies due to his concept of “hybridity.” The term has its origins in biology and the faux racial science of the 19th century, but it is a conscious subversion of its beginnings and an examination of the contradictions in essentialist colonial discourse. If the colonial system depends on circumscription of the identity of subject peoples, then anything that interrupts the binary of colonizer and colonized is a threat to that system (Bhabha, 1994). Building on Said’s distinction of a “median category” that

emerges from encounters between the East and the West, Bhabha (1994) emphasizes the colonizer's *ambivalence* towards the colonized (p. 73). A colonial power attempts to reform and ensure the complacency of the colonial subject through conditional access to the culture and education of the colonizer. In order for the mimicry of colonial manner to be effective in maintaining the colonial Other as a subject of difference, it must be an imperfect imitation. The colonizer inadvertently creates a hybrid of their own identity and that of the Other, thereby disrupting the essentialist binary (Bhabha, 1994).

The hybrid exists in a liminal "in-between" that Bhabha styles "third space" (1996, p. 54). The existence of the third space challenges the belief that culture is ever truly homogenous and allows for the appropriation and translation of cultural symbols to create new meaning (Rutherford, 1990; Bhabha, 1994; Papastergiadis, 1997). Hybrid identity within the third space acts as a "lubricant" in the concomitance of cultures (Papastergiadis, 1997, p. 261). In the realm of literary criticism, hybridity warns against simplistic interpretation of postcolonial works that are mimetic of the social and historical themes of a colonial power. Although a text may take its cues from the English literary tradition, Bhabha would consider its postcolonial origin as an inherent and radical departure from the "English surface" of the work (as cited in Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 34).

Before hybridity was first introduced to the postcolonial corpus, theorists had developed other methods of challenging essentialism. Although not necessarily in conflict with the idea of hybridity, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of "strategic essentialism" repurposed essentialism as a political tactic of representation (Spivak, 1990; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007). While acknowledging that colonialist application of essentialism is negative, Spivak maintained that essentialist ideas are

useful with regards to postcolonial peoples rebuilding the sense of value and identity that was lost during the imperial period (Ashcroft et al., 2007). It can function as a temporary outward-facing erasure of internal group difference in order to achieve specific goals (Spivak, 1990). Spivak later abandoned the concept due to its widespread misuse as an argument for essentialism itself (Danius, Jonsson & Spivak, 1993). Despite this, strategic essentialism remains an interesting analytic contrast to hybridity.

Hybridity in the Diaspora

The natural locus for postcolonial studies would seem to be former colonies, or at least the writing that their authors produce. As an increasingly globalized era leads to the privileging of transitions in space over transitions in time, though, theories that expand beyond an assumed ex-colonial location have become central to postcolonial discourse (Ponzanesi, 2004). Diaspora is one such notion. Unlike diaspora in the traditional sense, which is a territorial scattering of identity that only exists in reference to a lost homeland, the diasporic experience as postcolonial theorists would define it is an acknowledgement of the necessity of hybridity (Hall, 1994). Further, it is an understanding of identity as existing through, not in spite of, diversity and difference. Narratives of migration and immigration are brought to the forefront, but with more of an emphasis on the communities of transculturation formed afterwards than on the displacement itself. The presence of ex-colonial immigrants within the territory of a colonial power fractures the imposed binary between colonizers and the racial Other that was previously kept at an oceanic distance. Ex-colonial diasporic peoples make up sizeable

minorities within European countries, leading to the colonial powers becoming a site of analysis (Ashcroft et al., 2007).

The South Asian population in Britain, for example, has been a focus of much postcolonial research. One particularly comprehensive study delves into the minutia of South Asian physical and social presence in British culture, highlighting the hybrid “BrAsian” architectural forms that arose from conscious trade-offs between identity and location (Kalra, Sayyid & Ali, 2008, p. 386). Inseparable from the existence of diasporic ex-colonials in European imperial states, and therefore from postcolonial diasporic studies, is the reaction of the white majority to their presence. This raises the issue of degrees of integration and assimilation, and in short, multiculturalism.

Multiple Multiculturalisms

Multiculturalism has become something of an empty signifier, notable for its lack of meaning and catch-all nature. It seems to imply homogeneity and heterogeneity at once, both one unified culture and several equal yet distinct cultures (Bhabha, 1996). Some theorists have disavowed use of the term entirely, pointing to its frequent co-option by the State in nation-building and assimilationist projects (Gunew, 1997). In its current uses, multiculturalism is more efficient in erasing pressing issues of cultural prejudice than in elevating marginalized communities to an equal status or critiquing the imperial origins of prejudice. Three distinct and oppositional forms of multiculturalism can be identified, and it is these that postcolonialism is in tension with: conservative multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, and left-liberal multiculturalism (McLaren, 1995).

Conservative multiculturalism traces its roots to colonial essentialism. While outwardly distancing themselves from scientific white supremacy by touting the cognitive equality of the races, conservative multiculturalists present whiteness as the absence of race and the “common culture” to which other ethnicities should aspire (McLaren, 1995, p. 92). The onus of assimilation into the dominant white culture is placed on the racial Other, with the expectation that all markers of otherness are removed in the process.

Liberal multiculturalism posits an intellectual equality among racial populations but, unlike conservative multiculturalism, attributes social inequality to lack of access to educational and social opportunities rather than to “cultural deprivation” or weak values in ethnic communities (McLaren, 1995, p. 96). In this iteration of multiculturalism, there is a belief that modification of institutions can lead to a more equal playing field. Nevertheless, the standard of equality to be reached is still associated with white cultural norms and the larger systems that produced the conditions of inequality are not interrogated. In both liberal and conservative multiculturalism, there is an implication of a “special interest” that exists in opposition to the general interest (Mohan as cited in Gunew, 1997, p. 26). Left-liberal multiculturalism is more cognizant of cultural difference as opposed to a false common culture, but inevitably relies on essentialism to portray difference. An individual’s status as a member of a marginalized group is taken as authority to speak for the whole of the group and a single authentic group experience is posited (McLaren, 1995). Although the intention of left-liberal multiculturalism is to amplify the voices of the oppressed, it dangerously removes lived experiences from a larger historical and theoretical context, rendering them disjointed and contradictory at best.

Peter McLaren (1997) presents an alternative to the established forms of multiculturalism which he terms “critical multiculturalism.” Instead of advancing accommodation to the existing social order, critical multiculturalism envisions the creation of a new social order as a result of the struggle over meaning and culture that is intrinsic to interaction between groups. McLaren frames his idea in terms of poststructuralism, but his work is deeply linked and referential to hybridity and cultural negotiation within the third space (McLaren, 1997; Gunew, 1997).

Conclusion

Theories of postcolonialism are often at odds with each other because they belong to a body of work that aims to deconstruct existing assumptive frameworks that are a product of colonialism. Often, postcolonial criticism itself is unintentionally rooted in the colonial discourse it challenges. Hybridity, which is premised upon an extant yet altered colonial system, acknowledges this reality and builds upon it to offer alternative routes for the advancement of postcolonial peoples. It is an unavoidable truth that cultures are transformed by coming into contact with other cultures, and it is because of this that hybridity is so prominent within the field. Themes of hybridity can be observed in works of fiction as well as theoretical texts. Postcolonialism deals heavily in the interpretation and analysis of texts, but until recently has mainly stayed within the realm of literary theory. Although there are scholars who have applied postcolonial theory to visual media, there is more work that can be done. Since postcolonial themes can be imposed as an intentional textual effect as well as inferred by scholars, they can and should be analyzed in all forms of media. Issues of representation and diversity, which are central to postcolonialism, are omnipresent in contemporary popular discourse, especially in reference to the exclusion and depiction

of minority groups on television. My work will attempt to assess this unexplored area of work in the context of hybridity.

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Scholarly Framework: Ethnomusicology

Alex de Ramon

Note: This process assignment is an exploration of the workings of a specific academic discipline. Students investigate a wide range of resources about their chosen discipline, then distill their findings by answering a series of questions about what they learned. Rather than a formal, cited essay, the result is an informal snapshot of what they've discovered and how they might use it.

My chosen discipline is ethnomusicology, which can be defined as a subset of anthropology studying how music is a product of culture and how it also reflects cultural and social values and norms. I chose this discipline because it serves as a good framework for connecting the cultural backgrounds of artists with the music they produce, which is key to my central project of how differing cultural norms about gender and sex may produce differences in hip-hop and rap lyrics around the world, as opposed to the well-known sexism prevalent in American rap music. In other words, are international hip-hop artists more heavily influenced by the founding American artists of the genre in terms of sexist and misogynist lyrics? Or, on the other hand, do foreign artists' conceptions of gender and sex reflect their local cultures and ensuing social norms and gender roles? I think that this discipline will shape my work by forcing me to focus on cultural norms about gender/sex both as an input and an output: in other words, gender roles and the typical male "bravado" culture of rap music influences lyrics about sex, women, and relationships, which in turn reinforce social norms by being expressed as a piece of popular culture.

While ethnomusicology is somewhat interdisciplinary and draws from cultural anthropology, linguistics, music theory, history, and race or ethnic studies, its scholars generally study music as culture and as a reflection of culture. They see music as an essentially human activity that is shaped by its cultural context. Topics studied recently in the field include Westernization and globalization, which has resulted in folk music blending with global popular music trends, as well as increasingly blurred lines between different types of genres. Another topic is popular music and its standardizing effect (which leads to questions over whether pop music actually reflects cultural values or if it simply reflects the corporate sector and its pursuit of profit). Ethnomusicologists would ask questions such as: How do social and cultural factors affect the content and form of music? What is the effect of globalization and popular Western music on local music styles? How do individuals create and experience music and how is this music socially interpreted? These scholars find exigency in cultural and social practices and the meanings of music to its audience and how these meanings are conveyed. They also take a global approach to music in order to correct for previously ethnocentric views of non-Western music in the early decades of the field.

For my work, Ellen Koskoff's theory of gender in ethnomusicology will be most relevant. Essentially, Koskoff contends that gender can help explain musical practices of a society: for example, gender-based dualisms (such as private/public and feelings/actions) are as common in music as they are in other realms of society. This has even (historically at least) affected the field of ethnomusicology itself, as women who may have been confined to the home or the private sphere may not have been allowed or given access to ethnomusicologists who conducted lengthy fieldwork. Koskoff goes on to say that these kinds of divisions

demonstrate how societies view gender; does musical behavior, as a whole, support established gender roles or reflect cultural change by subverting them? In terms of rap, this theory may help me go beyond simple analysis of lyrics. Rap has always been an overwhelmingly male-dominated industry in the US (and it seems so internationally as well according to my presearch), which I think says a lot about gender roles in and of itself in the industry. I think examining Koskoff's dualisms may help me make more authoritative conclusions about gender roles in US and global hip-hop than close reading of lyrics alone would allow me to.

Historically, typical methodologies in ethnomusicology consist primarily of ethnographic fieldwork, which consists of directly observing the music being studied and often gaining skills in another music tradition as a performer or theorist. This kind of direct personal experience will not be relevant to my work, but this type of methodology has shifted as technology has made it possible to record performances and create videos and documentaries, so that accurate studies can be made outside of the field. Because my focus will necessarily be on how lyrics about relationships and sex reflect different gender roles and varying degrees of sexism, a close reading of lyrics and analysis of their social and cultural implications should be a good methodology to pursue. In addition, it would be interesting to pursue how female rappers (both in the US and internationally) interpret gender roles and how they respond to the dominant masculine influence in hip-hop, which may connect to Koskoff's theory mentioned above.

I plan to use the methodologies of close reading and content analysis of a small sample of songs from both US hip-hop songs and a variety of international hip-hop artists. This method will allow me to comparatively assess similarities and differences between the two in

order to determine the extent to which local culture dictates how gender roles are expressed in the music versus the extent to which globalized US rap music influences these international artists and consequently, their lyrics about sex, relationships, and gender. I will then use Koskoff's theory of gender dualisms to extend my findings by analyzing how a possible variance in the number of female artists and their relative popularity (as it is likely harder for female rappers to "break into" the industry) may further affect the aforementioned gender roles.

Established conversations in the discipline (focused on US rap and hip-hop) question whether sexism and misogyny are a function of social norms, of rappers' own personal experiences and beliefs, or of what the label company thinks will be popular and make money (a more structuralist interpretation). Because international hip-hop industries are usually on a smaller scale and not dominated by record labels, a prevalence of similar kinds of lyrics about gender roles to the US may help me join this conversation by allowing me to emphasize the power of social and cultural norms in determining musical attitudes about gender roles. On a macro level, however, there have not been many studies or much focus on gender roles or sexism in international hip-hop, even though a wealth of research has been done on this topic for rap in the United States, so I think this will be a unique and fresh angle for me to enter the conversation about gender in rap music.

In terms of challenges or limits, I am necessarily limited by the scope that my paper can possibly take, as I will not be able to closely analyze enough songs to be a representative sample of the broad topic of "international hip-hop." However, I think I will be able to analyze enough to make my paper an interesting start on the topic, considering its freshness in the discipline. Also, another challenge that I have considered

will be understanding foreign rappers as many of them rap in languages other than English. However, I have already found at least ten possible international artists I can use for my paper that rap mostly or at least partially in English, which I think will be enough considering the limited scope of my paper. Of course, I will have no shortage of US hip-hop songs to choose from, but I would like to have some sort of relative balance with a combination of contemporary and older artists, as well as considering the region of the country where the artists are from (West Coast, New York, South, etc.).

Annotated Bibliography

Kathryn Morgan

Carraway, Gertrude S. "HISTORY IS AN IMPORTANT PRODUCT." *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1958, pp. 182-90. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23517054

1. Gertrude S. Carraway was the first director of the Tryon Palace Restoration in New Bern, North Carolina. She was also a member of the Executive Board of the Department of Archives and History at this same facility. Carraway was also heavily involved with the Daughters of the American Revolution. Due to these accreditations, she is a credible and reliable source because she is respected within the community of historical preservation and historical societies. Gertrude S. Carraway was the first director of the Tryon Palace Restoration in New Bern, North Carolina. She was also a member of the Executive Board of the Department of Archives and History at this same facility. Carraway was also heavily involved with the Daughters of the American Revolution. Due to these accreditations, she is a credible and reliable source because she is respected within the community of historical preservation and historical societies.
2. This is a non-scholarly source because it is published by the North Carolina Office of Archives and History, which is a government source. There is a possibility that this article could present bias, therefore it is non-scholarly.

3. This excerpt focuses mainly on American history and local histories. Carraway argues that there is a "...want to understand the firm foundations laid by our predecessors. This gives us an assurance of permanence and continuity." In understanding the past, there is a better comprehension of today, and yet an even better capacity of how to prepare for tomorrow. Carraway believes the universal statement, "History repeats itself" as she wrote in this piece. If society can learn from past mistakes, then we can become an enlightened people. Carraway also touches upon history as a commercial product. She states that in 1850 the first historic house museum opened in the United States. She continues to talk of historic sites and other goods inspired by history. Carraway believes that "History is an important product that should be cultivated and harvested in the present as well as planted and nurtured for the future."
4. This excerpt will give my paper perspective since it is from a different time period. Even though this article was written in 1958, I do not see it as an outdated source, rather an opinion captured on my same topic in time. It will also be interesting to perhaps track public perception of history throughout time and explore history as being a product that can be sold to people.

Corfield, Penelope. "All People Are Living Histories – Which Is Why History Matters." *The Institute of Historical Research*, Nov. 2008. *ResearchGate*, www.researchgate.net/publication/258929671_ALL_PEOPLEARE_LIVING_HISTORIES_WHICH_IS_WHY_HISTORY_MATTERS_A_conversationpiece_for_those_who_ask_Why_study_History_full_text. Accessed 8 Oct. 2016.

1. Penelope Corfield studied at Bedford College and then at Royal Holloway, both universities in London. She is now a retired professor from the history department of Royal Holloway and visiting professor at Newcastle University. Corfield has consulting with professors from various universities around the world, taught British history for the Yale-in-London program, and has given many lectures. She has also been on the executive board of the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Due to her educational background and contribution to academia, she is considered a credible and reliable source.
2. This source is not technically scholarly because Making History was created by the Institute of Historical Research, and is not peer reviewed. This website is a kind of database which has organized articles, interviews, statistics, and other resources of those who study history in London. This website is a tribute to all in the field and is accessible to anyone with any historical inquiry.
3. This article argues that we are all our own histories that contribute to a larger story in time. Corfield states that history is an essential part of learning because it gives individuals, "...the ability to analyze a diverse array of often discrepant data, to provide a reasoned interpretation of the said data, and to give a reasoned critique of one's own and other people's interpretations." Instead of students memorizing facts and dates, students should have history presented in new and exciting ways. She argues that the "in-depth analysis and the long-term perspective" gleaned by history make it not only useful but essential to everyday life. It is those who are, "...wisest among them [that] look to the past, to understand the foundations, as

well as to the future, in order to build.” History teaches us what actions did not work in the past so that the future can learn from those failures.

4. In essence, this is what I would love to expand upon in my paper. I believe there are so many valuable reasons to study history, just as Corfield has stated in this article. I think my paper will touch upon ways to teach history, however I want to focus on how to present history to the general public and not just to students. Maybe a route to go would be how to design historical units for classrooms that present history in exciting ways. This would connect nicely to the article about history being sold as a commodity.

Fordham, Michael. “Disciplinary history and the situation of history teachers.” *Education Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2012, pp. 242-253. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/educsci2040242>

1. Michael Fordham has received his Masters degree in History from the University of Cambridge, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in secondary history from the University of Cambridge, and is an affiliated lecturer in history and the University of Cambridge. Due to his educational background and contribution to the field of history, he is considered a credible and reliable source.
2. This is a scholarly source because it has been peer reviewed before being published in the *Education Sciences*. At the top of the online journal article, there is a list of when the paper was received, revised, accepted, and then finally published. The

presence of these dates denotes the scholarship behind the process of publishing this paper.

3. Michael Fordham calls for a “...disciplinary understanding applied to a progressive framework structure which in turn will allow for complex ‘big pictures’ of the past” when teaching. He argues that history teachers should not decide to focus between the knowledge or the skills acquired by history, but rather teach both so as to form a full narrative in which students can interpret for their own the past. Fordham also states that, “...past authorities are there to be challenged and not accepted as dogma”. While it is important to look at historiographies, it is equally as important to interpret primary sources for ourselves. This has been the recent trend in history education since about the nineteenth-century. He argues that through the presentation of events in “a more complex relationship between a history teacher and the academic discipline of history,” teachers can act as the vehicle for the initial introduction of historical events. It is through this relationship that the direction of history education should go.
4. This journal article will be useful in comparing the ways in which history education has developed through the years. Fordham includes his opinions on the ways in which he thinks history education should go, which will be interesting to talk about in my research paper. He not only disagrees with the narrative that history should be taught as facts, but also disagrees that it should not just be taught for the skills one can acquire. He argues that there should be a balance of both, which I am also an advocate of. Students may think that history is boring when it is presented as

pure facts. Students may also think history is boring when it is just reading primary sources yet developing critical thinking skills. However, with the combination of both, true learning can occur and be exciting for students. When students understand the primary source through their critical thinking skills and be able to apply the context from the facts learned in class, students can feel accomplished. This is how history should be taught. In my paper, I want to illustrate that students should not just learn history but discover history.

Froeyman, Anton. "The Ideal Of Objectivity And The Public Role Of The Historian: Some Lessons From The Historikerstreit And The History Wars." *Rethinking History*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2016, pp. 217-234. *Historical Abstracts*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2016.1153270>. Accessed 5 Oct. 2016.

1. Anton Froeyman is a history theorist who works in the Philosophy Department of Ghent University, Belgium. In 2013, he received his PhD from the same university in which he now works. Due to and his educational background, he is deemed a credible and reliable source.
2. This is a scholarly source because it was published in *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*. This is an acclaimed journal which allows historians to present new perspectives on historical events. This is a quarterly publication used by mostly historians.
3. This article discusses the relevance and role that history but mainly historians play in our lives. Historians are thought to have

the social responsibility to ease tensions between groups of people through history. The more truth that historians produce, the more they contribute to the betterment of society. The “...preferred role [of a historian] is that of the neutral expert, the myth-buster or the fact-checker, not that of the activist or the partisan” yet some historians advocate for specific groups (i.e. gender historians). There are two type of historians: objectivists and narrativists. Objectivists create a sense of community around a shared historical event and therefore contribute to a more consensual society. Narrativists, on the other hand, disregard the idea of a “consensual” society because everyone has their own opinions and ways of interpreting events. In this view, groups never have to come to a single conclusion on how an event occurred. This article uses the examples of the Historikerstreit Australian “History Wars” to demonstrate how historians should and should not behave when presenting information to the public.

4. This source can be used to show how historians should present information to the public and how they are regarded by society. It is important to keep in mind that this article was written about historians by a historian. This shows insight to the rules of the field in which most historians abide, and that we as historians should as well. We should look at history objectively rather than subjectively, thus history should be taught this way as well. This is something important to keep in mind when innovating new ways of teaching and presentation.

McMeekin, Sean. "Is History Dead?" *Salon.com*, 12 Jan. 1998, www.salon.com/1998/01/12/cov_11feature_2/. Accessed 13 Oct. 2016.

1. Sean McMeekin went to Stanford University for his undergraduate degree and then the University of California, Berkeley for his masters and doctorate in history. He is now a professor of history at Bard College in New York. Due to his credentials, he is a credible and reliable source.
2. This is a non-scholarly source because this article was posted on a website. *Salon.com* is a part of the Salon Media Group, which typically writes about United States politics and current affairs. It is perceived to be a liberal publication.
3. This article discusses the movement of "cultural studies" and how it threatens historical facts with theories. These "cultural studies" are the offshoots of history that, by this author, are thought to be "fashionable academic theories." Advocates of these studies do not like traditional history yet traditional historians have not stated anything against the proponents of cultural studies. There has just been a change in "contemporary historiography ... [which] is more wide-ranging, inclusive, sophisticated and diverse in its approaches and methodologies than ever before." That being said, the academic conversation is harder to get into.
4. This article brings up an important spin off of historians, and presents another way in which history is presented to the public. This article however was all over the place talking about different historical events. However, it does bring about a good point in which I feel will be essential to my paper in that new offshoots of

history are being created in order to accommodate the interests of those who do not like traditional history. Yet, these concepts can be found within traditional history, which is what makes it still exciting today. This is the reason for writing this paper. People who believe history to be the opposite and boring most times feel that they cannot relate to the events of the past. Since it has no relevance to these naysayers directly, studying these people and events at all is brought into question. The answer is that we all have the commonality of being human. We all have emotions and the ability to make decisions. All societies should learn from their past so as not to repeat it. This is the relevance of the past to the present; we are all connected by our histories.

Milo, Greg. "Why Do Students Hate History?" *Education Week*, 10 May 2016, www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/09/23/why-do-students-hate-history.html. Accessed 12 Oct. 2016.

1. Greg Milo has worked at Archbishop Hoban High School, St. Louis University, and the University Park Alliance. He is currently a freelance writer at the Global Ties Akron and Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group. Due to some of his accomplishments in his career listed above, he is considered to be a credible and reliable source.
2. This is not a scholarly source because it is an article written for an online trade journal. This publication is written for teachers. This journal offers tools and different ways of teaching, as well as news from the education world.
3. Milo reflects on why his students dislike history class. The

answer: it is boring. Most students ask how these events from so long ago will ever relate to them in their life. But sometimes history is not about learning the events, but the thinking that is developed from analyzing history. Milo also hopes to "prepare students to be participating citizens". Milo also argues that, "If we want our students to make reasoned decisions, then they'll have to be able to understand the complicated mix of people, places, and things that lead to an outcome". To combat the ideas that students have about history being boring, Milo purposes that history classes should focus on a single idea of study, for example social forces, and then pick five unrelated events to study that theme in depth.

4. This source confirms from a teacher standpoint that students think history is boring. I would like to find an article that works in tandem with this one that is perhaps by a student who expresses their own dislike for history. However, this article does include reasons for what the learning of history gives to students. This will be helpful when listing all of reasons, and then expanding on them, as to why history is important and relevant to students of every generation.

Strauss, Valerie. "The Right Way to Teach History." *The Washington Post*, 25 Sept. 2013, www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2013/09/25/the-right-way-to-teach-history/. Accessed 12 Oct. 2016

1. Marion Brady began his teaching career in 1952. Over the years, Brady has taught every grade level from 6th grade up until

college. In addition to being an educator, he has also been a director of instruction, consultant to publishers, and author of academic journals, textbooks, and newspaper columns. His career and work done in education for history make him a credible and reliable source.

2. This is not a scholarly source because it is published in *The Washington Post*. This is a widely-read newspaper written for a general audience, since it has columns that are more specific that people then choose which to read.
3. History “contains no easy answers, no ready-made conclusions, no precise parallels to today’s situations”, however it is important to learn from the past to avoid the path taken long ago in similar situations. Yet, education emphasizes the importance of facts and dates in history, not the actual stories behind them. It is not just the educational institutions but the textbook companies themselves which provide the information in such a dry manner; in order for a textbook to become published it would “...have to be written in a bloodless, impersonal style or are considered too subjective to be acceptable.” Brady suggest that in teaching history, education should be instead “moving to active learning using un-interpreted primary sources, and requiring real investigation and deep analytical thought is a key to developing that engagement”.
4. This article was written by an educator of history. He knows that history is often presented to the youth as numbers, dates, and facts that all have to be memorized for a test. However, Brady knows that this is not how students will learn about history and enjoy it. The idea that history is not a story contributes to the

narrative that history is dull and boring because students do not see it as such. We must preserve the love of history now so that later generations will learn our stories and learn from us.

Literature Review

Gabriel Rhys Simerson

The extent of research in media and cyberpsychology into texting is both limited, due to the relative youth of the field and its studied phenomena, and booming, due to the sheer popularity of such phenomena among enormous chunks of the average populace. As the research branches out and develops, it seems to cover two primary areas of interest: the emotional effects of texting and the trends exhibited in texting as they relate to demographics and personality. In other words, the research goes two ways: how texting influences the texter, and how the texter texts.

Even the study of the influence of texting on the texter goes more than one way; much of it, for example, seems to be centered largely around the concept of anxiety. Defined by Donna and Fraser Reid as the “combination of fear, apprehension and worry that people experience when they anticipate being unable to make a positive impression on others,” anxiety has been studied both in the capacity of a motivator to engage in computer-mediated communication (CMC) and as an attachment-related symptom that stems from texting and has deeper implications, such as in Daniel Kruger and Jaikob Djerf’s study on the correlation of attachment anxiety with “phantom vibration syndrome.” Anxiety seems to soak the emotional space of texting, and current research shows that it is a major element in both of the aforementioned research angles of how texting influences the texter and how the texter texts.

In terms of texting's influence on the texter, a pre-existing anxiety has been found to contribute to certain behaviors as they relate to a person's relationship to their phone and to instant messages. Higher levels of attachment anxiety, for example, are shown to have a correlation with "phantom vibration syndrome," in which a person thinks he felt a vibration (indicating an incoming text), when no such vibration or receipt of text has occurred (Kruger ad Djerf 2016). Similarly, Kingsbury and Coplan's study on anxiety and the interpretation of ambiguous text messages looked at the correlations between the anxiety felt when trying to interpret such messages and a similar type of anxiety traditionally associated with a theory known as interpretation bias, which they defined as a "tendency to ascribe threatening interpretations in ambiguous social situations" (Kingsbury and Coplan 2016).

Other theories have been applied to the culture of instant messaging, such as interpersonal deception theory (IDT), which is defined by Megan Wise and Dariela Rodriguez as an argument that "deception is an interpersonal action where people employ communication tactics to achieve various goals." Their study attempted to see if this theory, born in an in-person context, could be used to study deception in texting. Its results suggest that deception is alive and well in the realm of CMC.

Meanwhile, research has been done on the characteristics of instant messaging as considered in the context of the identity of the sender. A study by Thomas Holtgraves traced some texting characteristics to their roots in, primarily, gender and social context as determined by the nature of the relationship between two communicants. He looked at elements such as emoticons, profanity, verbosity, and number of pronouns and emotion-expressive words. In

general, men were more profane, women used more pronouns and emoticons, men spelled less accurately, and those in romantic relationships were far more likely to use emoticons. Marengo, Giannotta, and Settanni went even deeper, analyzing emoticons in the hope of finding insight into the sender's personality.

Research on how the texter texts goes the other way as well. A group of graduate and post graduate students analyzed the role of self-esteem and personality as predictors of technology use (Ehrenberg, et al. 2008). Another study limited its scope to gender and analyzed gender roles in texting style (Ogletree, et al. 2014).

The general trend, then, is that first, there are correlations between sender identity and the nature of their texts, and second, that psychological factors (such as anxiety) and theories (such as IDT and interpretation bias) regarding one's psychological condition play a role in a person's relationship with instant messaging and other forms of CMC. While the current research has done much to analyze texting both as a language and as an indicator of personal identity, there are still areas in which it lacks. For example, it has been previously studied how certain characteristics of "textese" are statistically attributed to certain senders, while there does not seem to be a comparable repertoire of material focusing on how a recipient uses this textese to interpret and infer. In addition, the nature of the studies seems to be something of a limitation. Most of them were of the self-reporting variety, implying that there may have been some sort of personal awareness and bias in providing personal and text-related information. It would be optimal to develop a research method that collects data real-time, unfiltered, without infringing on the privacy of its subjects.

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Expanding from the Personal

Defining Personal Boundaries (Without Fried Chicken)

Faith Gay

I don't eat fried chicken very often. Certainly not as much as some people might think I do. It never occurred to me, though, that people believed that about me until a classmate of mine asked me what my favorite fried chicken restaurant was. The two of us, along with five other white people I didn't know all that well, were eating lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant. At some point while slurping her absurdly expensive pho, my classmate wanted to know where I went to get fried chicken. When she asked me, I became incredibly confused because, as I said earlier, I don't eat fried chicken very often and definitely not enough to have a favorite restaurant. And just before I was about to tell the girl that in those exact words, it hit me.

I'm black. She's white.

We attended a predominantly white school in a largely white neighborhood. She'd never known more than three or four black people in her entire life. As a result, she'd bought into stereotypes and assumed that I fit into them.

I pondered for a few seconds whether she was actually joking or not, and this was the moment where everyone at the table just laughed it off. But as I watched a couple of people giggle and a couple of others look at me nervously to see my response, her face remained as equally serious as it was when she asked me the question. So, with as much grace as the

awkward fifteen-year-old me could possibly muster, I stuttered how I don't eat fried chicken often or have a favorite restaurant and looked down at my now-cold food.

When I dared to look up, the other five white people looked mightily disappointed in my answer. In particular, the girl who asked me the question was frowning. She turned away from me and opened her mouth to start a new conversation. In an effort to save whatever piece of black identity I wanted them to think I had, I blurted out how I don't eat fried chicken often but I know a great place called Honey Kettle that I ate at once. Everyone at the table turned to look at me during this outburst, and after slightly nodding her head in acknowledgement of my terrific recommendation, the girl turned back around and ignored me for the rest of the meal. And so goes the story of the first time I ever sacrificed a part of my identity to please white people.

This event is one of my earliest memories of a racist experience, but I doubt it was the first. In his lecture, "Step Across This Line," Salman Rushdie states that when the earth's earliest sea organisms were first trying to survive on land and flopping back into the water in defeat or dying, "[t]here were perhaps millions of these unrecorded retreats, these anonymous deaths, before the first successful step across the waterline" (Rushdie 75). According to Rushdie, the first time a sea organism breathed on land certainly couldn't have been the first attempt of an organism to do so. To some extent, I feel that way about getting asked the fried chicken question. That can't be the first racist experience I've had, can it? My classmates and I were all immature at that age, so someone must have said something insensitive to me that I just didn't notice. Rushdie's quote inspired a lingering question, though: how many of those

offhand comments and statements were made before I caught them, and what does that mean about how people perceive me?

I worried about how the girl's comfortability in asking me that question reflected something larger about what she and other classmates thought of me but didn't say out loud. In his lecture, Rushdie states that "[d]aily life in the real world is also an imagined life. The creatures of our imagination crawl out from our heads, cross the frontier between the dream and the reality...and become actual" (99). He points out that the terrorists who orchestrated the September 11, 2001 attacks had to imagine the attacks before they could carry them out (99). If your imagination is the inspiration for your daily actions, what stereotypes did that girl imagine about me in order for her to feel comfortable asking me that question? What did she imagine my reaction would be? How did she imagine my response?

Ultimately, I knew frequenting fried chicken restaurants didn't make me black, but I acted like it did to try to appease white people. That fact made me concerned that I didn't really know what black identity was and whether it was my place to show it to other people. While voicing his concerns about post- 9/11 America, Rushdie speaks to how confused Americans still were about their country's identity a year after the attacks. The people of the U.S. lacked certainty about its country's role in the rest of the world and how, exactly, it was supposed to play that role (90). Before I was asked about the restaurant, my thoughts concerning black identity usually revolved around who my family was, what my family had been through, or what sort of black role models I looked up to. It never dawned on me that a key part of my individual black identity could be how I respond to people's assumptions on what it means to be black. Rushdie helped me realize that at least during that time in my life

when I got asked that question, I didn't know how to respond to those situations, and, as a result, I didn't fully know what my identity was or how it should play a part in my interactions with other people.

In his lecture, Rushdie also discusses the consequences of acting out of fear of the unknown; the way in which he frames his argument reminded me of some of the consequences I have since dealt with. After my incident at the restaurant, I thought about what I could do to protect myself from getting into similar situations. At the time, the best idea seemed to be to distance myself from people like that girl, to ensure that I didn't surround myself with anyone who held stereotypical views of me. What that decision resulted in, though, was me second-guessing everything people said rather than living in the moment and trusting that people will learn to not believe in stereotypes. Rushdie says that if you're constantly shielding yourself, "waiting for the barbarians to arrive," eventually the arrival of the barbarians won't matter because you will have "become the barbarians" you feared (83). While I agree with Rushdie over the basic sentiment that constantly guarding yourself is unhealthy, I think I ended up being more nervous around people than combative or "barbaric." I also think people can manage a balance of guarding themselves and not adopting an attitude falsely grounded in the belief that everyone seeks to stereotype you.

Since that moment in the restaurant I've given a lot of thought to the alternative responses I could've given. I could've just done what I was originally going to do and only stated that I don't eat fried chicken often. Or maybe I could've gotten angry with her and lectured her and the other five white people at the table about their insolence and the problematic nature of the question. But would either of those responses have personally given me any peace? No.

Honestly, I think my responses today to instances like that one vary depending on a range of factors, but if I could pick two consistent thoughts I tend to have in those situations, they are these: questions like that one bother me enough that it feels insufficient to only provide direct answers to them and not address the issues with them being asked in the first place; however, I'm also not inclined enough to give out lessons about stereotypes to people I don't really know. So while that girl certainly didn't act appropriately with me, the most appropriate thing I could've done is given her a response that I knew she would understand and knew she deserved. The fact of the matter is that she honestly didn't know any better, and I should've treated her as such. So I should've kept it simple: "I don't eat fried chicken often, so I wouldn't know a good restaurant to go to." But, I could've said, "I think you're asking me the wrong question for the wrong reasons, and I would really encourage you to research why."

In regard to what she deserved, an angry lecture wasn't it. For one, her question wasn't coming from a place of malice, but one of ignorance. Her intentions behind asking me were just as important as the asking of the question itself. Two, she wasn't someone I cared about enough to want to help personally educate. I should've been willing to challenge her comfort with her prejudiced attitude, but I wouldn't have sat there in that restaurant and pretended like she was someone I felt was deserving of my time, worthy of hearing my opinions on the matter. Last, simply put, it's not like she couldn't educate herself. She wasn't of a socioeconomic background that hindered her access to educational resources. Google Search is still free. While I could've been helpful, I wasn't necessarily needed.

Overall, the lecture's message of understanding identity and its role in the decisions we make is one that many people, like me, will never stop needing. As Rushdie points out, the true display of our character and undeniable reflection of our identity is shown in our responses to conflict. But we don't run from fights. We let the barbarians come. We let them cross the line. And if we feel like it, we wait for them with grilled chicken and straight facts on the other side.

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A Business's Role in the National Parks Service

Charlotte Grayson

The sweltering sun mercilessly beats down on hikers, making every breath they take increasingly harder. Pebbles crunch under their feet with each step, and backpacks slowly get heavier. Some hikers sign the trail register while others take a sip of water as they admire the view. It's summer on Mt. Whitney in the Sequoia National Park, and the trails are teeming with life. Specks of pink, blue, green, and orange from the hiker's backpacks cover the mountain, and cars fill the parking lots. Tourists pour out of their cars to catch a glimpse of the summit and the National Park, have a picnic, hike, visit the information center, or even rock climb. The park greets visitors with an information center full of guides and refreshments, and signs point to the nearest cleared trails.

But the Sequoia National Park and Mt. Whitney weren't always like this. A little over a hundred years ago in 1915, at this same spot, more than a dozen of the country's most influential men sat around a fire and discussed the future of these lands. They had to battle their way through the uncleared trails and climb over fallen trees in order to get to a campsite. Wildlife grew rampant over the lands. The leader of this trip was a man named Stephen Mather. His purpose of gathering a wide variety of men from a congressman, to a railroad executive, to the editor of *National Geographic*, was his passion for these parks. Mather saw an opportunity to address the men as they lounged around the fire. He stood up and cleared his throat then proceeded to say that, "the valleys and heights of the Sierra Nevada are just one small part of the majesty of

America.... Just think of the vast areas of our land that should be preserved for the future” (qtd. in Siber 26). Kate Siber, a correspondent for *Outside* magazine, chronicles the history of National Parks and how, during this trip, Stephen Mather used his influence and connections to impress upon these important men “the utter necessity of a government agency to protect the parks for future generations and from selfish interests before it was too late” (26). This trip was all part of Mather’s grand vision for a National Park Service.

While “corporate social responsibility” was not an official term during Mather’s time, he was an early example of how important the role of business in society is. This role is part of an ongoing debate over whether it’s a conflict of interest for businesses to be involved in other aspects of society or even government. Mather serves as an example of the crucial role a business’s impact and power can play. Without his connections and business background, he would not have had the influence he did to create the National Parks Service.

Born in San Francisco in 1867, Stephen Mather got his first taste of the wilderness while he hiked and rode horses through the mountains and meadows of the Sierra during his childhood. He spent weekends camping and exploring the mountains. His love for nature helped turn him into a strong and adventurous man. When he grew up and entered the working world, he was a cunning businessman who used his marketing genius in the Borax industry. Donald Scott, a former ranger at Alcatraz and a Mather historian compared Mather to a Steven Jobs or a Walt Disney because “he was a tremendously driven man in the best sense. He believed when you did something, you did it thoroughly” (qtd. in Siber 29). Because of Mather’s ideas like the now-famous 20 Mule Team brand, Borax became a staple in every American household. Despite all of his

success, Mather was unsatisfied. He wanted a higher purpose and to make an impact.

Mather met a famous naturalist, John Muir, during one of his explorations of the mountains. Muir impressed upon Mather the grave threat to the wilderness. It wasn't until two years later in 1914 that Mather took action. Siber, in her article, "The Visionaries" writes that, "Mather was so inspired by Muir's devotion and horrified by the persistence of loggers eyeing the sequoias of Yosemite that he sent an indignant 26-page missive to Franklin K. Lane, the secretary of the Interior and fellow Berkeley alumnus, detailing the sorry state of the national parks" (29). Lane famously wrote back saying, "Dear Steve, if you don't like the way the national parks are being run, come on down to Washington and run them yourself" (qtd. in Siber 29). Although hesitant to accept his offer of working for the government, Mather so was driven by his desire to make a change that he accepted and moved to the capital.

Stephen Mather went on to use his business background, his connections, and his success and fortune to start a publicity campaign for the creation and preservation of the National Parks Service. He became very involved in his social life and made an active effort to entertain. Looking through old newspaper articles from Mather's time shows various news blurbs that chronicle his efforts. One article tells how he and his wife hosted a dinner party with nearly five hundred representatives and capital employees. All of this socializing was for the bigger purpose of National Parks. So, after the dinner he hosted, "motion pictures of the scenery of several national parks were shown" ("National") in order to remind the guests why they were really there. Mather also led a conference on a horseback ride through Washington, D.C, which another newspaper article documented. This was to show them their wilderness

surroundings and also the Washington Zoo. But again, this was for the greater goal of the National Parks so, “after their three-hour trip on horseback, the conference returned to the Department of the Interior, where they discussed road building in the national parks, the elimination of dust on highways and problems of road maintenance” (“Executives”). Mather was so dedicated to his cause that he used every resource he could find to broaden the reach of his campaign. His determination, perseverance, and cunning business expertise allowed him to be successful in his goal.

Stephen Mather’s expeditions and lobbying for a National Parks Service helped create and maintain the great American resource so many people today know and love. On their official website, the National Parks Service released a report titled “Rethinking National Parks Service” that focused on the purpose and prospects for the National Parks. The report states that, “parks are places to demonstrate the principles of biology, to illustrate the national experience as history, to engage formal and informal learners throughout their lifetime, and to do these things while challenging them in exciting and motivating settings”. These parks are sanctuaries of learning and exploration that are woven into the American identity. National Parks have grown to encompass more than 380 sites in every state but Delaware (“Rethinking”), far exceeding Mather’s original vision of National Parks. Those hikers, tourists, and campers using the parks every day gain a deeper knowledge and receive a greater connection to our roots from their visit, even if it’s subconsciously. Stephen Mather recognized the need for institutions like National Parks in order to educate the public but also to put on display the wilderness he loved so much.

But in order to create those institutions, Mather needed to use his business background. While he directly did not support the National Parks with his business, he used his connections and monetary contributions to set the idea in motion and start the inception of National Parks. Today, companies and their employees in the business world similarly utilize their business backgrounds and power to give back to the community. A term used to describe this role is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Anne Lawrence and James Weber, in their textbook *Business and Society: Stakeholders, Ethics, Public Policy*, define CSR as how a “corporation should act in a way that enhances society and its inhabitants.” By utilizing his corporation’s power and network for the creation of the National Parks Service, Mather enhanced society and its inhabitants. Scott Campbell, an instructor in Management at American University, says that, “companies can bring both resources and skills to bear in a volunteer capacity that can be incredibly beneficial to the local community.” A company’s involvement in the community and other organizations is incredibly crucial for not only the monetary impact, but the time given and their direct involvement.

Not everyone, though, shares this same opinion about companies’ involvement in other aspects of their community. In their article, “What’s wrong with Corporate Responsibility?” Corporate Watch states that, “CSR diverts attention from real issues, helping corporations to: avoid regulation, gain legitimacy and access to markets and decision makers.” Although some corporations or businesses may have ulterior motives, Scott Campbell counter argues that the majority of businesses operate positively and have “benefits for the community and broader society for which they operate. Their general goodwill and reputation helps the brand, also helps with recruiting and making it more attractive place for

people to consider employment.” Creating a positive environment where donations are made for the greater good attracts similar people. Stephen Mather was motivated by wholesome ideals and the outcome was something that continues to benefit the greater good today.

Like Stephen Mather’s contributions to the National Parks Service, there are other companies making impacts today. They are part of a corporate partners group in the National Parks Foundation. Of the many companies that contribute, included on that list are American Express, REI, and Subaru. Similar to Mather, these businesses recognize the power and impact their companies can make on the National Parks and act on their corporate responsibility. In a press release on American Express’s website, they announce that, “at American Express, we believe that serving our communities is not only integral to running a business successfully, it is part of our individual responsibilities as citizens of the world. The mission of our program is to bring to life the American Express value of good corporate citizenship by supporting communities in ways that enhance the company’s reputation with employees, customers, business partners and other stakeholders.” Throughout the rest of the press release, they continue to say they will award over two million dollars to the National Parks Service. REI thinks similarly to American Express in how they act on their corporate responsibility. In an article from *Outside* magazine titled “REI Expands Offerings for National Parks,” the CEO of REI, Jerry Stritzke, is quoted saying, “REI is aiming to connect people everywhere, including our community of 5.5 million members, with America’s greatest natural spaces—in particular the hidden gems...We’re channeling a good portion of our support for the centennial into stewarding these places so that their beauty can be enjoyed for generations.” Stritzke and Mather both shared a common goal of

preserving these parks and using their resources to ensure their protection.

The president and chief operating officer at Subaru, Thomas J. Doll, also shares this longevity outlook for the wilderness. On Subaru's website, writers Diane Anton and Michael McHale detail Subaru's commitment to giving back. Doll is quoted saying, "at Subaru, we are dedicated to making a positive impact on the world and preserving our environment and we want to help ensure that the national parks are around for at least another hundred years." Subaru has been an active contributor to the National Parks: from donating vehicles to be used at the parks, to backing the promotion "fee-free" day, to donating nearly three million dollars through their "Share the Love" campaign (Anton and McHale). These CEO's and people in charge at these companies and Stephen Mather all shared the same vision. Even if they lived over a hundred years away from each other, they can still share the same goal and use their business resources to fulfil that goal. Without the help and monetary contributions these companies give, the National Parks service would lose out on crucial funding they would not be able to receive elsewhere.

But there are dissenters to this idea of a corporation's involvement because it can create a conflict of interest. People fear that these parks could become overrun with commercialism and advertisements from contributing corporations. A columnist for the *Washington Post*, Joe Davidson, writes that a 2009 Government Accountability Office "lists several potential risks to NPS from these donor relationships, including, partner exerts undue influence over Park Service priorities, public confidence in the Park Service is compromised, and Parks and Park Service become commercialized". They fear that these parks have become

too dependent on corporate funding and thus can become more easily controlled by these businesses.

The counter argument is that “while allowing corporations and other donors to get too deeply involved in any government service presents conflicts of interest, the Park Service apparently felt it was driven to this point because of inadequate government funding” (Davidson). This funding helps preserve and maintain the institutions and learning centers that are the National Parks. There are also objectors to how the parks should be funded. In an article in the *Daily Signal*, Robert Gordon expresses his stance on the National Parks Service. He says that “at time when we have \$18 trillion in debt and 623 million acres already under federal control, having a special \$900 million annual fund dedicated to purchasing yet more land is unnecessary. We need less, not more, federal land.” Though he is right about the debt part, he forgets the utter importance and impact these parks have on our social identity. Mather knew the importance of using resources in a way that benefits the greater good as do these present day corporations.

National Parks continue to grow more important in twenty-first century terms. In an article titled “Will Future Generations Preserve the National Parks?” Michael Sainato and Chelsea Skojec impress upon us the necessity of National Parks today. An imperative element to the future preservation of parks is for the new and younger generations to get involved. The CEO and President of the National Park Foundation, Will Shafroth, believes that today, “industrialized societies’ belief systems assert humanity’s dominion over nature — an attitude manifested in extensive land development and increasing urbanization that have led to widespread destruction of the natural environment. The younger generations are losing their connections with nature, with potentially

adverse effects on the conservation efforts that have protected parts of the natural world from destruction. And without their participation, the livelihood of the U.S. National Park Service — the largest U.S. conservation system, with more than 84 million acres of protected land— is in jeopardy” (Sianato and Skojec). We need a present-day Stephen Mather to continue the fight for the preservation of National Parks.

Long ago, Stephen Mather had a mission of creating a government protected parks service so that current and future generations alike could reap the benefits of the wilderness. He used his business network and personal corporate responsibility to launch a campaign for the creation of these parks. Over a hundred years later, the National Parks Service has become a staple of the American identity and has served generations after generations. Corporations and the people in business today share the same corporate responsibility Mather had and because of their donations and support, the National Parks is able to operate more effectively. But it is still important that future generations have the same passion for preservation that corporations today and Mather a hundred years ago had. National Parks help shape the American culture into what it is today and without Stephen Mather, none of this would have been possible. He is the reason those campers and tourists can enjoy Mt. Whitney and those hikers can walk cleared trails or grab maps from the Welcome Center.

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Akon: The Truth Behind the Bars

T. Albert Fujii

“Konvict is the genre,” Akon emphatically tells *Billboard Magazine*. “When I first came out, it was all created in jail, so we called it that. It’s gimmicky but it reminds me of the path I came from and how it changed my life” (qtd. In Mitchell).

Slam. The cold steel bars of the jail door clang shut on a young, dark-skinned man. A few seconds later, the prisoner whispers one word: konvict. This word, which creates a vivid image, opens most of Akon’s songs, hinting at the common theme of incarceration. Jail and the context around mass incarceration, both at the national and international level, are central to Akon’s brand as an artist. Recently, however, this brand came under fire because of Akon’s alleged fabrication and exaggeration of his criminal past. Mass media latched onto this falsehood, which resulted in dire misunderstandings about Akon and his connection with the experience of incarceration. In other words, the mass media perpetuated a perversion of Akon’s metaphor of jail to silence his deeper social critique of the African American experience in the United States.

Incarceration is fundamental to Akon’s brand as a Hip-Hop artist. With the launch of his hit single “Locked Up” in 2004, Akon inserted himself into the public spotlight as a self-proclaimed criminal. He publicly boasted about his arrests for gun possession and car theft to gain notoriety in the Hip Hop community (Sisario). Akon goes as far as implying that he wrote his single “Tired of Runnin’” while incarcerated

(Akon). Akon's brand of criminality spans his musical and artistic works. For example, he acted in two movies: *Black November* and *American Heist*. In both films, he was the criminal antagonist (Champion). This branding worked for a few years as Akon gained the public eye as well as a fortune of 20 million dollars ("Akon Net").

Akon's veneration for incarceration, from flaunting his alleged arrest record to the name of his genre *Konvict*, was not unchallenged. In 2008, multiple sources, including the FBI, revealed that Akon was not the criminal he portrayed. *The New York Times* wrote a scathing review that included the contradiction that, though Akon claimed to have led an "extensive car-theft ring," he was never convicted (Sisario). Katherine Thompson of *The Huffington Post* wrote an article titled "Akon's History of Prison and Arrests Revealed as a Fake Marketing Tool," tagging it with the keywords "Akon Liar." In the article, Thompson reported that "police, court, and corrections records reveal that the entertainer created a fictionalized backstory that serves as the narrative anchor for his recorded tales of isolation, violence, woe, and regret." *The Guardian* went even further, quoting FBI special Agent Peter McFarlane who said: "Ah, this is bullshit. This guy is a phony. He's an arrogant SOB" (qtd. in Swash). These three cases represent the media outrage towards Akon's spotty criminal past. However, by drawing concern only to the inconsistency, the media created a smoke screen that confused Akon's words in an effort to distract from his real message; his message is *konvict*, not *convict*. The distinction is meaningful because, contrary to the media's interpretation, Akon's music is not an epic about his own experience in a literal jail, but instead, of his daily experience in socially constructed jails he and other African Americans face at the national and international level. He writes about the incarceration he felt as an African American in the United States

and his worldview about the shackles Senegal, his African country of origin, faces in the post-colonial African economic system.

Akon uses song to depict the harsh realities of growing up in racial “ghettos” within the United States. He graphically raps about police brutality and the disproportionate impact incarceration has on African American communities. Akon makes a point to address how these instances of inequality within the justice system effect young children. The three best examples of Akon’s songs that highlight these domestic incarceration concerns are: “Tired of Runnin’,” “Ghetto,” and “Locked Up.”

Akon’s song “Tired of Runnin’” is a nostalgic letter to his girlfriend, a letter he composed in jail. He reflects on the reason he is in jail, blaming his incarceration on systematic racism and flaws in the criminal justice system. His opening verses are powerful social critiques, exemplifying Akon’s experience in the ghetto:

I’m sittin’ on my porch, watching the law,
As they ride past in they patrol cars,
So tell me why I feel like the enemy,
They’re supposed to be here protectin’ me...
This gangsta life ain’t no longer in me
And I’m tired of runnin’,
Tired of the runnin’ from the law. (Akon, “Tired”)

Akon presents an image in the lyrics of police making authoritarian patrols around a impoverished neighborhood while an African American man is trapped inside, terrified. Akon questions why law enforcement protects some while terrorizes others. By presenting this paradox of the justice system, Akon solidifies his position that his theme of konvict is not an isolated, personal experience (even though his use of his own name in the term suggests a level of internal imprisonment); konvict is a

transcendent experience for racially and economically oppressed communities of color in American “ghettos.”

Akon expands on this “ghetto experience” in his song labeled “Ghetto” which draws the nexus between judicial and economic shackles. In the song, he builds on his already prevalent theme of police brutality and corruption when he sings that there are “teeth marks on my back from the K-9.” He blames these teeth marks, both literal and metaphoric, on “crooked cops” that make children feel like “everyday is gon’ be their last.” In addition to the profound fear, Akon’s song brings the term *ghetto* into the conversation. Julie Anne White, a linguistic academic, identifies that the term *ghetto* carries fierce stereotypes of violence since American ghettos have traditionally been a space of revolt against colonial and racial exploitation (273). The incorporation of *ghetto* into Akon’s music analogizes the incarceration system and other societal shackles that disproportionately affect African American communities. As such, Akon includes examples of police brutality associated with the “ghetto experience” to draw attention to fear, a debilitating metaphoric jail imposed on minority communities.

The song “Ghetto” takes the conversation of incarceration one step farther by explaining economic walls that systemically disenfranchise poor communities. Akon sings that “these streets remind me of quicksand / when you’re in it, you’ll keep going down / and there’s no one to hold on to / and there’s no one to pull you out.” This sense of helplessness results in a sense of “self destruction” and hopelessness because every luxury “comes and goes, even the life you have is borrowed.” By writing that all material goods come and go and that life itself is borrowed, Akon complicates the second layer of his domestic jail: money. By creating an environment that perpetuates drug sales to “feed

the kids,” the ghetto experience is rooted in economic inequality (Akon, “Ghetto”). Wealth comes in the form of another borrowed day and food on your plate. As a result, kids are taught by experience that material wealth is not an aspiration, but a wall; poverty is a divisive economic wall constructed by society to make an “us” and a “them.” One of these group has interests in supporting the “jail keepers” while the other group is locked within the economic jail of the ghetto.

Finally, Akon’s song “Locked Up” further explores the notion of incarceration in the context of a multi-national individual. Akon’s first two lines are a powerful double entendre, a literary tool that Adam Bradley, an expert in Hip Hop lyricism, labels as “coded forms of communication, speaking to a select group of initiates with a shared set of cultural knowledge” (96). The double entendre in the song “Locked Up” is: “I’m steady trynna find a motive / why do I do what I do? / The freedom ain’t getting’ no closer.” On the surface, the word “motive” is analogous with “inspiration” or “drive” to work or succeed, a shrug to the stigma surrounding immigrant workers. However, as Bradley identifies, those with shared cultural knowledge decode the word “motive” as a reference to the judicial system in which freedom is a privilege reserved for choice few. Akon narrates a story about how police officers stop him in a “random” patrol, resulting in Akon being “locked up.” Once inside the jail, Akon laments that “they won’t let me out” even though he has a family on the outside. As a result, incarceration not only perpetuates the theme that police prejudice creates a jail that limits freedom, but incarceration itself also separates families. By separating families, these judicial injustices create a cycle that passes the experience of jail down through the generations.

In these three songs, Akon writes about different jails that are part of the ghetto experience of, according to Chuck D, systematic “social silencing” (qtd. in Bradley and DuBois 793). However, unlike the popular media’s portrayal and interpretation, the shackles Akon identifies span beyond his own experience. The experience of jail is due to systematic failures of the criminal justice system, economic walls, as well as family separation. However, because the mass media misunderstood Akon’s brand of konvict, popular media discourses miss the fact that Akon is entering into the already contentious academic and social conversation around incarceration and race.

Akon’s music works hand-in-hand with academics like Christopher Lyons and Becky Pettit who write about the “compound disadvantage” of race, incarceration, and wage growth. Their article parallels well with Akon’s songs. For instance, in “Locked Up,” Akon joins with Lyons and Pettit to bring attention to racial discrepancies in the justice system (Lyons 257). In his song “Tired of Runnin’,” Akon unpacks these discrepancies by critiquing the relationship between incarceration rates and race. Lyons and Pettit, after conducting a social stratification study on Bureau of Justice Statistics records, found evidence of the extent of these discrepancies. The scholars found that one in three African American men can “expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime” (Lyons 258). Finally, Akon’s song “Ghetto” speaks to the economic shackles that Lyons and Pettit confirm with their finding that African Americans have a 21 percent lower rate of employment after incarceration (257). Therefore, by focusing public attention towards superficial understandings of incarceration, popular media silences the deeper scholarly conversation about the jail-like confines of the racially prejudiced U.S. criminal justice system.

The second form of incarceration that Akon sings about, and that the popular media perverts, is the international jail. First, it is important to note that the concept of international Hip-Hop is not a new concept. James Spady, a Hip Hop academic, defines Hip Hop as a “global urban language” (128). Philippe Wamba, another Hip Hop historian and scholar, breaks Hip-Hop down as a collection of “diverse interconnections linking black music from around the world in an international cultural system” (251). Wamba praises Hip Hop’s powerful ability to “link between African American and African musical traditions and liberation struggles” (270). This international and cultural bond is prevalent in Akon’s home country of Senegal. For example, Senegalese rapper Simon Bisbi Clan has utilized work by artists like KRS One and Public Enemy to “give a voice to the voiceless youth” that are struggling with homelessness and poverty. He said that common themes in U.S. Hip-Hop gave Senegalese youth the channel to start developing their own “cultural voice.” Similar to Simon Bisbi Clan, Akon writes songs that speak to the international Hip Hop community. However, he uses that international microphone to further his brand and social message of *konvikt*. In his songs “Freedom,” “Mama Africa,” and “Senegal,” Akon extends his image of the jail to include the international economic shackles that Senegal faces in the post-colonial African economic system.

Akon’s song “Freedom” is a tribute to the isolation and social jail inflicted on immigrants within the United States. The song begins with the story of Akon’s family who came “from Senegal, West Africa to St. Louis, Missouri.” His father and mother “did the best with what they had.” However, his family faced backlash from their community because everyone knew that they were the “foreigners from another town.” Instead of giving up, Akon, in a verse of pure strength and determination,

exclaims that he won't give up until he gets that "freedom." His top priority as an immigrant is to break the shackles placed on him by the disdain of his community.

In "Freedom," Akon covertly pays homage to his African roots when he describes the way in which his father wanted to "change the world." He says that his pops "came down with his drum." The symbol of the drum is an international emblem that connects African and African American Hip Hop. Phillipe Wamba points out that this symbol has historical significance since slave owners forbade slaves from singing their traditional African songs (261). In the face of such adversity, these slaves created intricate beats that were expressive of their African heritage and culture. These polyphonic beats, according to LeRoi Jones, were a communicative symbol of the fight against colonial enslavement (25). Akon uses this symbol to expand the enslavement of African people to the enslavement of his country.

Akon further explores this international imprisonment in his song "Mama Africa." He writes that his old mother Africa has "so much love to share." But he also brings attention to the post-colonial divisions within Africa when he pleads that Africa "needs to unite." He lyrically complicates this message when he creates the following acronym:

A: Is for all the love and the life took away

F: Don't forget we were bought and trade

R: Ripped from the land and shipped away

I: is the inspiration we use to survive

C: Have to see it with your own cries

A: No play add it up and arrive. (Akon, "Mama Africa")

In this acronym, Akon urges his audience and other African Americans to not forget how they came to the United States. Slavery took away their

autonomous lifestyles when slave dealers “ripped [them] from their land.” Therefore, when Akon writes that he wants to reunite Africa, he is speaking about melding the divides left by the slave trade. His last word of caution is that this movement must be organic since “you won’t see it on your TV” because the media is a force controlled by the oppressor. As a result, even though the literal shackles of slavery have been broken, Akon still condemns the current jail that his “Mama Africa” is locked in.

Akon takes his international jail metaphor and makes it country specific in his song titled “Senegal.” This song is arguably the most complex song by Akon. He begins with clear depictions of violence in Senegal. He writes about an older man that “cops shot down” and child soldiers “with automatic machine guns waiting for the war to get on their side.” This violence, according to Akon, is “right in the ghetto.” His use of the code word “ghetto” links his feeling of incarceration in U.S. ghettos with the same feelings of violent and fear Africa, thus expanding the comparison of the ghetto and a jail to the international sphere. However, the covert meaning of the song is hidden in the first two lines: “I’m from Africa. Home of the Goree Islands.” By highlighting the Goree Islands in his song’s introduction, Akon makes a direct reference to Senegal’s modern colonial shackles, specifically those imposed by the United States.

The Goree Islands have deep historical and contemporary roots to slavery. Michael Ralph, a scholar that has studied the contemporary slavery, researched a specific event in these islands that happened in 2003, the same year Akon wrote “Senegal.” During 2003, then President George W. Bush made a diplomatic trip to the Goree Islands (Ralph 203). Advance teams for President Bush began their security preparations which included the mass imprisonment of Senegalese villagers in their sandlot soccer field (203). Ralph writes that this mass imprisonment

along with “the technique of coercion used to subdue Senegalese peoples in that moment reproduced the way enslavement historically occurred on Goree Islands” (204). Therefore, when Akon mentions these islands, he is condemning the United States’ horrific imprisonment of his people. In so doing, Akon takes his metaphoric notions of an international jail and makes them concrete in a decisive social critique of the United States actions, a deeper theme missed by popular media discourses.

Akon’s successful theme of jail and konvict, once applied to domestic and international contexts, is impactful in two key ways. First, it enters Akon into the conversation of criminal injustice, economic injustice, and the effects that the creation of a ghetto has on young people. Second, the fact that Akon’s metaphor is not literal in the way that popular media portrays it gives Akon the authority to then critique the current media system that does not read between the lines; current media looks for the superficial dramatic gossip and misses the deeper message.

Akon’s usage of themes and metaphors associated with incarceration create a profound social critique of the African American experience in the United States. Craig Watkins, an economist and Hip Hop scholar, notes that Hip Hop is a social critique and social movement in of itself (qtd. in Forman 700). He writes that “the intensification of racial and economic polarization in the United States” has forced black youth to “mobilize their own discourses, critiques, and representations of the crisis-colored scenarios” in the form of rap (698). This social movement and critique is the deeper discourse that connects Akon’s songs. However, by discounting Akon because of his isolated history, this powerful social statement is lost and misconstrued.

When Akon’s brand of incarceration and convict are attacked, the popular media also enters into this conversation; the popular media

opens itself up to criticism. Erica Scharrer, a specialist in mass communications, proposes a potential solution for the media's influence on incorrect racial and ethnic perpetuation of stereotypes (171). She argues that readers, when presented with complex scenarios like Akon, need "media literacy" that encourages "an active and critical stance toward media" (171). This "media literacy" would enable Akon's audience to recognize the deeper impactful meaning of *konvikt*.

Even though popular media questioned Akon's authenticity in 2008, his true intentions are clearer than ever. He has started an important charity that is focused on counteracting the economic shackles that Senegal faces. He started the charity Lighting Africa to counteract the power crisis in Africa. Akon chose power because electricity, according to Eastern African specialists Nyasha Kasek and Stephen Hosking, is the prerequisite for economic development and growth (114). Akon's Lighting Africa initiative would help absolve these shackles by "providing relief to the 600 million Africans that don't have electricity" (Akon Lighting Africa).

Akon's charity verifies that Akon is not trying to use his allegedly fabricated criminal as a "Fake Marketing Tool" like media such as *The Huffington Post* would have the world believe. Instead, Akon uses *konvikt* and the metaphor of the jail to provide social critique of a domestic system that forces African American youths into economic and unjust shackles, from police brutality to disproportionate mass incarceration. Furthermore, *Konvikt* stands as a broader critique of the economic and violent shackles that Africa, specifically Senegal, faces in a new age of economic imperialism. As a result, popular media is exposed as superficial and inaccurate that silences Akon's social critiques of systematic disenfranchisement of communities of color in the United

States. Therefore, Hip Hop is left as an authentic voice for the African American experience in the U.S. and broader world, a voice that is profound, powerful, communal, and loud.

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From Books to Bombs to Books

Hana Manadath

Inside one man's 2 year journey from Syria to Greece to Germany

Introduction

Hassan Alhomse was no stranger to death. His family and friends were being killed by the Syrian Regime, Russian, and American forces. All around him, death was the norm, and bombs were background noise, but he wants me to know that Syria was not always this dangerous. Hassan's home was not always



Hassan Alhomse, age 22 (Photo: Manadath)

covered in blood. It all started in 2011, inspired by the ideals of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries, an increasing number of Syrians took to the streets. Peaceful demands for political and economic rights quickly gave way to violence from the Syrian Regime and foreign governments (Jabbar & Zaza, 2014). Countless lives have been lost in this 6 year conflict and with recent American imperial-
esque involvement, there seems to be no end in sight.

Despite these tribulations, Hassan, like so many Syrians, remains determined to continue his education; knowledge is one thing that the Syrian Revolution relies on and the Regime can never take away. For refugees, the journey of continuing a disrupted higher education involves unconventional externalities, such as post-war trauma and social programs of resettlement countries that must be navigated with finesse. A challenge in the journey is mitigating the disruption that occurs in higher education, when Syrians are forced to flee the Regime. 330,000 of the 5.1 million Syrian refugees are between 12-17 - the age when higher education becomes a reality or an unattainable dream (Jacobs, 2016).

Pre-migration: Syria

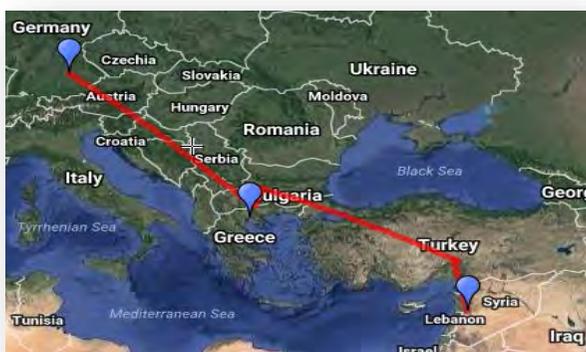
“Homs was a vibrant city. It is the only home I have ever known. That’s why I decided to stay there for Uni as well,” remarked Hassan (H. Alhomse, personal communication, April 15th, 2017), via Whatsapp Video Call.

Hassan studied at Al-Baath University, a few miles away from his home. He recounts that his family has always valued education and now that he is without it, he feels empty. Now all the students have been displaced or killed, says Hassan. Hassan himself left Homs 2 years ago, at the age of 24, and has not been back since. Instead, he crossed the Mediterranean and lived in a Greek refugee camp for two years, and later was smuggled to Germany where he now attends university again. Hassan’s decision to leave was a hard one, he recounts.

“Syria is my love...if all the young people leave, who will be there to rebuild it when the revolution is over? I will go back the day the war ends. I must go back,” he says.

Hassan adds that his determination to go back is because he does not want his beloved home to experience “brain drain,” which is the emigration of highly trained or intelligent people from a particular country. While waiting to return home, he is continuing his education and learning the art of photography. In Homs, Hassan was studying English Literature. We discuss a shared favorite book, *The Alchemist*, before moving onto the next question.

While Hassan's pursuit of higher education is one that leaves room for hope, not all refugees are in the same boat. Many Syrians expected the crisis to be resolved in a few months. The reality has left them on a path of downward mobility, as months turn into years and the only constant in refugees' lives is desperation. It is estimated that 100,000 Syrian refugees have had their higher education disrupted by the 6-year



Hassan's 2 year journey (Graphic: Manadath)

civil war (Redden, 2016). Whereas, before the conflict began, about a quarter of Syrian high school graduates went on to university. Now, there is no data on

how many Syrians go on to university because most universities in Syria are not operating. In addition to many of the universities being bombed or closed by ISIS, approximately 2,000 academics have fled since the war began (Jacobs, 2016). Hassan's worries of “brain drain” are corroborated by these statistics.

Hassan's life was turned upside down the day he left Syria by boat to seek asylum in Greek refugee camps.

Year 1: Greece

While in the camps, Hassan's education took a pitfall. With little to no resources to continue his education, he was forced to put it on pause. Instead, he read books to keep his mind sharp and practiced taking photos to keep his mind happy. However, living in a camp did take an emotional toll on him and he reveals that even when NGO's set up makeshift classrooms for language classes in the camps, they were not well-attended. Hassan revealed that at times, the hopelessness became overwhelming and he struggled with his mental health. As Hassan explained, he was "a prisoner in the camp and a prisoner in my own mind."

Hassan is just one of millions of people who have fought a psychological battle after escaping a literal one; exposure to war and violence increases rates of mental illness. According to a German based cross sectional study, 15%-20% of refugees have a mild to moderate mental illness. Most of these diagnoses are depression, anxiety, and post traumatic stress disorder (Jabbar & Zaza, 2014). The traumatic pre-migration experiences, resulting in a diagnosed mental illness or not, and the dismal conditions of the refugee camps must be addressed before education can become a positive tool. Typically, Syrian refugees live in camp for at least a year before resettlement (Gearan, 2014). This waiting period is at least one year of fighting a mental battle while knowing that other components of life such as education, health, starting or living with family, are all slipping away. If refugee camps are not equipped to address

basic needs such as food and water, let alone the dismal mental health of refugees, any type of education is futile (Marquardt et al., 2015).

Conversely, education can serve as a source of resilience, but more so in permanent asylum granting countries. According to a psychiatric study, among young refugees who had resettled in Western countries, social support, acculturation strategies, education, religion, avoidance, and hope were the six most promising factors that helped alleviate mental health disorders (Sleijpen et al., 2015). Narrowing in on education, it is clear why education may serve as a positive light in the lives of refugees. Education provides consistency in lives that have not known it for so long. Additionally, education preoccupies the mind with new information and inspires ideas, which is beneficial to a mind that survived war. Education is also inherently social, as it provides a common area for students to mingle and study together. Given that the majority of Syrian refugees are Muslim, they are aware of the importance of attaining education in Islam; the first word of the Quran is “read” (Rizvi, 1993). In essence, education is the common thread that ties together the 6 sources of resilience for refugees.

“It is easy to lose focus of education in the camps when you are focused on surviving. When you don't have enough food or water....education is the last thing on your mind. The environment matters...that is why I had a hard time focusing on education in the camp. In Germany, it seems like the right place and right time,” Hassan says candidly.

Hassan's views are in line with Maslow's pyramid hierarchy of needs. Maslow stated that “people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this need will be the first thing that motivates

our behaviour” (McLeod, 2016). Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on. In other words, bombs disrupt the acquisition of knowledge, and refugees such as Hassan fall back to the bottom of the pyramid, taking books with them. Thus, the low-education, high poverty cycle is perpetuated within the camps, and only a few make it out of the cycle when they leave the camps. For many refugees, breaking the cycle and the resettling in a supportive country go hand in hand (Crea & McFarland, 2015). Apart from the inadequate resources in camps to provide refugees with education and break the aforementioned cycle, there is a lingering question - “Why educate refugees in camps if they can’t work in the host country?” (Crea & McFarland, 2015). Both host governments, and refugees recognize the little return on investment that comes with being educated in a refugee camp. This reluctance is why if refugees do go on to complete higher education, it is done in entirety in a country that grants refugees permanent asylum rather than in a host country such as Greece.

One year later, Hassan embarked on another dangerous journey from Greece to Germany, on foot.



Hassan's tent is on the far right (Photo: Alhomse)

Year 2: Germany

Hassan's journey to Germany was calculated in order for him to continue his higher education. Germany is a country that offers free college tuition, and there are many education programs to aid refugees who wish to continue their education. Thus, Hassan is currently enrolled in the University of Heidelberg and has completed his first semester of German language courses.

Not all refugees are able to pursue this path. Syrian refugees who end up in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey are restricted by the costs as well as the countries giving priority to its citizens (Crea & McFarland, 2015). In refugee camps, while formal education is not present, there is an informal exchange of information that shapes the decisions of refugees' immediate futures. Hassan recounts how he learned about which country to seek asylum in based on their generous social programs:

“Within the camps, many of the discussions revolve around which countries are the best to seek asylum in. Everyone wants to go to Germany or Sweden. For me, I wanted Germany because my brother is there, also enrolled in Uni. No one wants to go France because they are racist there...I have heard. Spain is poor, so it gives little welfare to refugees. America would be great but that is for the lucky few. The American dream, huh? Basically, Germany and Sweden provide the best opportunities for me, and a top priority for me was continuing my education. I didn't study in Homs for 2 years for nothing,” says Hassan.

After hearing Hassan's testimony about Germany, I researched the higher education opportunities available for refugees there. According to Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research, once refugee status is recognized by the government, refugees are able to enroll in University just like any other international student. There exist a number

of ways to verify qualifications if documents are missing and many free German language courses are offered at community centers to cover the language requirement (Noak, 2016). Along with the low to zero tuition rates in Germany, refugees can obtain government funding to cover the remaining costs with a program called Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz or “BAföG” for short. About 60 universities across Germany partake in the program and some universities even cover travel and book expenses (Noak, 2016). The education ministry has found it to be a moral obligation to educate refugees who enter Germany.

“Migration is a task for all of society, and universities must do their part,” University of Hildesheim President Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich told *Handelsblatt*, a German newspaper.

While countries like Germany recognize the moral obligation to educate refugees, there lies another reason which shows how host countries can reap the benefits of educating refugees. For instance, Germany, like many European countries, has an aging population. This demographic trend means that the number of people in the workforce is decreasing, which will eventually result in a shrinking economy (Adam, 2015). Here is where refugees become an asset, not a burden: most refugees are children and young adults and middle aged adults who can fill in the gaps in the labor force. The more educated a labor force is, the better off the country as a whole (Adam, 2015). Similarly, many media reports from refugee camps have featured young professionals who not only speak English, but also express their interest to continue their education and build a career, which has been interrupted by forcible displacement (Wit & Altbach, 2016). Therefore, countries like Germany recognize the return on investment in opening up paths to higher



education for refugees, even if they do preliminarily require more support than the average citizen.

These benefits make it clear why Germany is a

popular country for refugees to seek asylum in. This search for a better life is why many refugees end up paying smugglers to take them across Europe, all the way to Germany. In 2015 alone, there were 500,000 asylum claims in Germany with 140,910 being approved that year. For comparison, in the same year, 100,000 asylum claims were made in the neighboring country of France (BBC, 2016). The asylum approval statistic highlights the lengthy approval period present even in countries with great welfare systems like Germany. Hassan was smuggled through Spain to Germany, but denied to provide details, citing legal reasons.

“How I got here is not important. The fact is that I am here and I am being treated with humanity. My family is reunited and I am finally back in school. My life has taken a 360 turn and I owe it to first and foremost God but also Germany for being so supportive,” says Hassan. In many ways, Germany is where Hassan's story begins again. It is where he once again, opened a book and could finally put the trauma of the last 6 years behind him.

The moral obligation of a country is a topic of debate when it comes to the higher education of refugees. For countries such as Germany,

the moral obligation may appear clearer given that it is a wealthy country. Does this moral obligation hold true for second and third world countries? According to International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, supporting social and economic rights for displaced persons, especially the right to gainful employment, is required of host countries (Sinha et. al., 2012). This requirement makes no mention of the financial capabilities of host countries to provide support. If accepting and aiding refugees was based on GDP of a nation, Jordan and Turkey would not be hosting approximately 3 million Syrian refugees within their borders (UNHCR, 2016). Thus, countries such as Germany have a greater moral obligation given their monetary resources compared to countries such as Jordan and Turkey. However, the global community should take note that although Turkey and Jordan have lower GDP's, they welcome refugees with open arms. Therefore, no country should be exempt from accepting and aiding refugees, but countries with higher GDP's should bear a larger responsibility than they currently do.

“Wallahi*, if moral obligations were dependent on GDP, Qatar, an Arab state with an extremely high GDP, should be hosting more than zero refugees. Jordan, which is a second world country, should be hosting zero,” asserts Hassan.

Two years and three countries later, Hassan has finally found peace—but his journey does not end here.

What's next?

Hassan's story, while inspiration, is not unique. There is a generation of college-aged young adults leaving Syria. They live in refugee camps and go on to seek asylum in safer countries, just like Hassan. What determines success for these young people is the attainment of higher

education. Higher education transforms the downward mobility in refugee camps to upward mobility in the asylum-granting country. In many ways, higher education is the golden ticket to economic mobility for refugees, who tend to pursue employable, well-paying majors. Economic mobility translates to many other positive outcomes: opportunities for career advancement, ability to maintain a healthier lifestyle, higher rates of civic engagement, lower rates of crime, and higher rates of overall well-being of next generation (Ma et al., 2016). The bottom line is this simple fact: education is something that the Syrian Revolution relies on and the Regime can never take away. Revolution has two meanings to Syrian refugees: the freedom of Syria from an oppressive regime and the freedom of the mind after the trauma of fleeing a war zone.

The narrative of Syrians seeking higher education should not include the word “bombs,” but it does. Will these bombs be the defining factor, or will books, once again, save the day?

The answer for Hassan is books.

“The Regime took everything from me...my family, my friends, my home, my country, my will to keep going at times...but not my education. That is one thing I will never give up. No one can touch that,” he says.

While it may seem counterintuitive, Hassan considers himself one of the lucky ones. He was able to escape the war zone, soldier through living in a refugee camp, and safely leave the refugee camp. He was granted asylum in Germany and continued his higher education. However comfortable his life in Germany may seem, Hassan remains determined to go back to his homeland when the war is over. Until then, he will continue studying, spending time with family, reading books, and perfecting the art of photography

It took 6 years for the world to start caring about Syria and Syrians. There is a generation of hopeful refugees that escaped one war and has yet to find humanity. Let us not take another 6 years to recognize the importance of higher education for Syrian refugees, InshaAllah*.

*Wallahi: I swear by God-a commonly used word in Arabic conveying conviction.

*Inshallah: If God wills it-a commonly used word in Arabic conveying hopefulness.

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The Life of a Privileged Minority

Henry Moir

I rolled over in bed. I pressed my face into the pillows. It was a Saturday morning, and I had zero inclination to go anywhere or do anything. I was perfectly content laying in a motionless state for the next several hours. Momentarily, a wave of peace and serenity came over me. I was unburdened, warm, and comfortable. Not even the chilly air from the open window was enough to disturb me. I felt as if I should remain in this state of apathy for the rest of my life. Then my phone chimed with a text message, as if whole of digital society were passive-aggressively chastising my inaction. I looked at the words on the little screen. It said, "Hey, Henry, it's Marc. My family and I just got into Union Station. Do you want to meet up at the Women's March?" Although I didn't know in that moment, the Women's March would lead me to the epiphany that I could no longer pretend that social justice had no relevance to me. I could no longer ignore my status as a racial minority, and pretend that I was white. I could no longer pretend that the greater white American culture would ever be as inclusive to me as it has been to the white majority.

The problem was that I had been ignoring and pretending all my life. When confronted with social justice, apathy was my go-to response. Robert Marin, a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pittsburg, defined apathy as "a syndrome of primary motivational loss that is not attributable to emotional distress, intellectual impairment, or diminished level of consciousness." In

laymen's terms, it means to not care, to not observe, or to ignore, even if the truth is as plain as the paper they use to make the protest signs. If Professor Marin attempted to apply his definition to my attitude towards social justice in the moment when I received Marc's text, no words would suit me better. I did not care for social justice movements, and much less for protests. I held the same opinions that most of white America still holds today: protests are loud, disruptive, and rowdy. They keep the ordinary course of business from happening. But I wasn't going into the city to protest. I was going there to meet my friend from high school. I looked back at the text and began typing.

I told Marc I would be in the city within the next two hours. For a moment, I wasn't sure if I could follow through with it. After about ten minutes, I stood up. My body wanted more than anything to flop back down on the bed. I wanted to send a message to Marc changing my mind to "no." Instead, I challenged myself. I challenged the Saturday status quo by moving forward. I challenged myself to shower, to dress, and get out the door to catch the shuttle-bus to Tenleytown. I challenged myself to wait in the Metro station, amidst the waves of protesters. I challenged myself not give into apathy.

Certainly, the temptation was there. I might have easily turned around. But something kept me there. As I boarded the train to Union Station, I looked up and down the tightly-packed crowd. Waves of individuals with picket signs and pink hats moved as one body. It wasn't so much a monolith as it was a testament to solidarity. These people were moving to one place, with more-or-less one goal in mind, united by the events of the day before. They were united against apathy. It was apathy that prevented other from moving forward, from keeping their promises to support the downtrodden and marginalized. It was apathy of the

Trump Administration, and its stances on the rights of women, immigrants, Muslims, the LGBTQ+ community, Latinos, African-Americans, the disabled, and many others. It was the apathy that keeps people in their beds, that keeps them from recognizing the outside reality. I did not want to expose my silent loyalty to the status quo, where apathy reigned supreme. This philosophy was incompatible with them. To act on it would leave them inconsolable. I remained with the crowd for the time being.

The train pulled into Union Station. I still could not find Marc. I called him, although his voice was barely audible with all the surrounding noise. He told me that his family was near the yellow gate. I trekked forward, dodging pockets of people, trying to pick out Marc's green Whalers sweatshirt. In the grand scheme of the Women's March, my search for Marc mattered little. The waves of women, men, and children continued to crash against the great force of apathy. Yet, I still hunted Marc's green sweatshirt in the sea of pink. Here I was, speeding towards my selfish goal, with apathy shielding me from the wrath of protesters. Marc and his family, a symbol of the quiet isolation of home, would bring me personal solidarity. They were a sanctuary from the explosiveness of political outrage, an island in this sea of pink. I had no solidarity with the crowd, at least not yet.

For the moment, I had no solidarity with the crowd because I indulged in the apathy that tried to keep me in bed. I indulged in the apathy that tempted me to turn back from the train. I held the same apathy that ushered in a conservative backlash in the Rust Belt and put Donald Trump in the White House. But the white majority says apathy isn't immoral; apathy doesn't characterize any wrongdoing. I can't be racist because I'm a person of color. I can't be sexist because I'm a

Democrat who supports equal pay. I can't be anti-immigrant because I was born in another country. These sets of traits are, in the eyes of the white majority, mutually exclusive. But the Women's March told me otherwise. I was never immune to discriminatory thoughts. I am just as capable of hate. I am just as capable of turning a blind eye to the needs of my fellow citizens. Apathy has rested in my consciousness since my beginnings. My education had a job of eliminating it, to open me up to different cultures and peoples so that my apathy might be replaced with sympathy. But this did not happen because I grew up white.

I grew up in such a way that some might consider me a "privileged minority." East Asians and Indians are stereotyped as gentrifying, upper-middle class citizens. I do nothing to break that stereotype. I was born in Saigon, adopted by Caucasian parents at 4 months old, and English was my first language. I know no other culture besides American culture. I grew up in two-income household with four bedrooms. I go to college in Washington D.C. I competed for the top of my class in high school, and graduated salutatorian with my name engraved on five plaques on our school atrium. Life has been easy for me.

My life as the child of Caucasian parents led me to think of myself not as Asian, or even Asian-American, but simply "American." I identified as an American the way that the white majority does. I have described myself as speaking and acting like a "white person." American culture (or even "white culture") has tuned me to the notes of the Caucasian majority. I have since been guilty of viewing social justice issues, even race, through the same lens of Caucasians. I subscribed to the philosophy of apathy that the Women's March stood against. I did this because my parents are Caucasian. But I could not escape the truth, the inextricably painful reality that the country would never be as kind to me as it was to my parents

when they grew up. I subconsciously tried to ignore racial issues the way that many white Americans do. But the differences made themselves known. My apathy back then came back to haunt me later.

The first of many incidents involved my friend Sarja, who was in my class in second-grade. At a brief stop at the water fountain after school, Sarja remarked that I was lucky. He said it was because I was “white.” I wasn’t sure what he meant at first, but he pointed out that I was lucky because his skin color was much darker than mine. Sarja continued, and said “You could drink from the clean water fountain back in the olden days.” Since then, I view the incident with a great deal of cynicism. I do so because the incident represents apathy in effect, the same apathy that dominated my thoughts and actions for nearly two decades. I realized being raised by Caucasian people and assuming white American culture does not make you white. Ta-Nehisi Coates used the term “Dreamer,” to describe those who would allow for domination of white culture. I was indoctrinated into the ways of the Dreamers by my Caucasian parents.

I was so indoctrinated that I didn’t know how to handle incidents that made a point of my differences. My friend Austin, also from elementary school, kept laughing at me while I was over his house. He repeated over and over that I was from China. I thought it was a joke at first, but it got on my nerves after a few exchanges. I insisted that I was from Vietnam. Eventually his father stepped in to scold him. After the incident passed, I could hear him crying in his room. As a child, I pitied him because I never liked having time outs either. At most, the racial aspect was a blip on my radar that I effectively ignored.

As an adult, I now pity him for his indoctrination. He was raised into the same American culture that I was. He, too, would become a practitioner---and therefore a perpetrator---of apathy. The difference

between us was that a privileged minority like myself lies to his heritage to accommodate this philosophy. I called myself an American. I left the Asian part out, because I was a “Dreamer” in the eyes of Ta-Nehisi Coates.

My sister is also a “Dreamer.” She is from China, and English is her first language. Looking at her, I see the same apathy of myself, the same apathy for social justice of white Americans. Yet, she cannot come to terms with changing schools between 8th and 9th grade. Her reason for this is because her new school lacks the same racial and cultural diversity. She wants the diversity because she knows that Asians and other “privileged minorities” cannot hide among Coates’ “Dreamers.” Doing so will devour who she is.

I support my sister’s need for immersion in a diverse setting. For both of us, and all privileged-minority Dreamers, there is a limit and a price to our adoption of white American culture. My indoctrination into this culture has reached its limit. I no longer adopt the standard of apathy, the standard that so many white Americans, my parents included, have adopted towards social justice. As I was searching for Marc, this standard was very much in control of me. I continued to navigate the sea of pink, confused and apathetic as ever.

I eventually waded so deep into the water that by the time I approached Library of Congress, it was pure luck that I spotted his green sweatshirt. He was standing near a tree. I approached, and we fell into the usual “How are you doing?” “How’s school going?” I was, for the moment, actively avoiding the elephant in the room or rather, the many elephants that now controlled all three branches of our government. Then Marc started walking. I was hesitant to follow him. I had no protest sign. It felt as if I had nothing to vocalize. I had no stake in social justice. Apathy

gripped me for those first few seconds. I wrestled myself from it, caught up to Marc, and rejoined the waves in the sea of pink.

I quickly became aware of the chants: “No Trump, No KKK, No Fascist USA!” Other chants were part of the same umbrella of outrage against Donald Trump. “Black Lives Matter” and “Science is real” were two of the most common. Marc and I panned our eyes across the sea of pink, a vast conglomeration of different people with different motivations.

But time was the Catch-22. The longer I waded into the sea of pink, with Marc’s green sweatshirt next to me, the less it seemed like a sea at all. Fish do not realize the vastness of their habitat. They live in it, and experience it. They don’t fly overhead in a Boeing 737, looking down on the sea as if it were somehow beyond caring about. Fish need the sea, and realize how important it is to them. I saw one man in a cap, the same type that “Newsies” of the 1890’s would wear, carrying a sign saying, “I’m still with her.” One woman was holding up a sign that said, “Love Trumps Hate.” I took the images that represented peoples’ frustrations and internalized them. Their anger became mine. I could no longer pretend to be above them, to prefer apathy to activism. I could no longer pretend that I was white. I could not pretend that I was still one of Coates’ Dreamers. I had no choice now. I either joined the fight against apathy, or became complicit in it.

I had broken from the American culture of Caucasian families, and joined the people who also knew they had a stake in our governance. I, too, crashed against the force of injustice. I might have been raised white, but I was born Vietnamese. Navigating the sea of pink at the Women’s March showed me this truth. I can no longer pretend to be white and ignore my racial heritage. My heritage is why I must resist the Trump

administration. My apathy is dead. But the Women's March continued because the country realized it cannot afford apathy any longer. There are people like me, both privileged and not, who have adopted apathy as their doctrine in relation to social justice. They have learned to not care. They have learned to not care while being robbed by white America. They are robbed in jobs prospects, educational opportunities, and political clout needed to affect change. Even white America is robbing itself of decent morality, by allowing itself to become prejudiced and indifferent to the needs of others. Everyone is being robbed because the status quo says they should be.

Only the Women's March and similar protests can show both the privileged and the Dreamers in white America that social justice matters to everyone. The atmosphere and the emotional dedication would be enough to kill the apathy that grips American citizens. Exposing them to what they don't understand will force them to learn why it is important to them. But convincing America warrants special prescription. I needed a selfish reason to go into the city that day, and so will the country. Friends, family, or even just an excuse to get out of work should be enough. But they will learn, one way or another, that everyone is being robbed. One cannot pretend to be white, or to blend in, or to bask in privilege, because there is no privilege in being robbed. Everyone has their own reasons for social justice causes, whether it be race, gender, sexuality, religion, disabilities, and so on. Everyone is robbed on one way or another. America sorely needs to wake up, get out of bed, and wade into the sea as I did. America will not stand to be robbed, and neither should the rest of the world.

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“Don’t Paint on My Wall:” Reexamining Physical Property Rights Concerning Street Art

Daniel Ritter

Abstract

Street art has experienced rapid growth in abundance and popularity over the past few years. Very little legal doctrine currently exists to establish physical property ownership rights over pieces of street art. This paper examines the difference between graffiti and street art and touches on intellectual property concerns before delving into the current state of physical property rights. I propose the legal doctrine of equitable division and explain several nuances and concerns surrounding both this approach and the legal treatment of street art in general.

Introduction



One May morning a few years back, residents of London's Haringey neighborhood woke up to find new graffiti on the side of a local discount store. It was different than the rest though – not a tag, but a portrait of a young boy at a sewing machine, stenciled by famed street artist Banksy. CNN reporter Brad Lendon wrote that many residents saw it as a “commentary on sweatshop labor, something that hit home in the working class neighborhood.” “Slave Labour,” as the work became known, became a popular attraction in the following months, leading residents to grow fond of it. One resident told the BBC that “it represents the struggle of the community in general,” while another wrote that it “brought much needed positive attention to Wood Green instead of the ugly image often spread” (Lendon). The following February, however, blogger Michael Zhang wrote that the work was “abruptly cut out of the wall . . . in order to ‘preserve’ the work.” Banksy's work, known as “Slave Labour,” was auctioned off for \$1.1 million a few weeks later (Kopstein). The residents were outraged and upset, but there was little they could do. After all, as the auction's dealer said, “the work was painted on a private wall and the owner of a private wall can do whatever he wants with his own wall” (Zhang).

The sale of “Slave Labour” went through, but not without raising debate among the wider art community. At its heart was a dispute over how to handle street art, a mixture of graffiti, traditional gallery art, and public expression. Graffiti cases of the past were often cut-and-dry, with loopy tags clearly bringing property values down. Street art is a different beast. It is an increasingly important form of political and social expression, and few deny the artistic abilities of Banksy and Shepard Fairey. But on the other hand, it is clearly illegal – a work painted on a public or private wall without the owner's permission. While artists'

intellectual property rights are protected by copyright law, the dispute over “Slave Labour” highlighted the variety of opinions over physical property rights. Who is able to lay claim to this piece of art? Is it merely a dispute between the artist and the property owner, or should community and government claims be considered too? This debate is complicated by the lack of a legally enforceable definition of what constitutes street art. As the popularity and abundance of street art grows, these questions need to be answered in order to provide a fair and structured means of resolving conflict over newly created works.

This paper will examine these questions from a scholarly and legal viewpoint, while taking popular cases into consideration. I will start by offering a brief description of street art and its distinction from graffiti, in order to better inform conversations over property rights. Next, I will briefly touch on copyright protections over an artist’s intellectual property, before moving into a discussion of the current state of physical property rights. Lastly, I will outline a possible solution for questions over property rights and touch on several concerns over its implementation. When it comes to street art, many take property laws at face value – you, a street artist, illegally painted on my wall, and now I own the rights to that physical piece of work. While some would argue that the property owner should hold unanimous rights, I propose that courts should decide cases based on equitable decision doctrine, taking the claims of all parties involved into account.

Street Art, Defined

A discussion on the physical property rights afforded a piece of street artwork is incomplete without a definition of what constitutes such a work. Tony Chackal, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Georgia,

provides an excellent definition in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, which adds to of New York University professor Nicholas Riggle's classification of street art. Chackal defines street art as "an art form that entails creating public works incorporating the street physically and in their meaning" and emphasizes two points: that "street artwork must be in the street" and that "illegality is a prototypical and paradigmatic feature" (359). He further writes that this illegality shapes the "materiality" of artworks, part of which is its "ephemerality: the artist accepts that works may be short-lived if they are removed, destroyed, painted over, or appropriated into another's work" (Chackal). This likely leads many to think that ownership of the artwork should automatically fall to the property owner, as the artist has accepted he is creating something both illegal and ephemeral. I believe this is a valid argument, and it warrants consideration in any decision. However, other factors show that only awarding ownership to the property owner would be an oversimplification.

It can be easy to confuse street art with graffiti. Consider a wider definition of graffiti. British scholars Alan M. Forster, Samantha Vettese-Forster, and John Borland Forster recently published a paper on the cultural significance of historic graffiti, defining such work as "inscribed or surface applied media, forming writing or illustration, produced without expressed or implied consent" (62). Street artwork at face value clearly fits this definition. However, I believe there is still a noticeable distinction. Street art typically has a much higher quality than your run-of-the-mill tag or blockbuster. This, coupled with a specific message street artists are trying to convey, makes it a more positive work of art, often bettering the community. Resident reaction to the removal of "Slave Labour" is a perfect example of this, as is the widespread popularity of

Shepard Fairey's stencil of a younger Barack Obama with the word "Hope" inscribed underneath. Contrast this with graffiti's relation to broken windows theory, a criminological theory that links "disorder and incivility within a community to subsequent occurrences of serious crime" (McKee). That's not to say that street art doesn't have its negatives – some believe that street art that raises awareness of gentrification actually contributes to a neighborhood's gentrification by making it trendy and popular (Arlandis). But as a whole, street art can be differentiated from graffiti by its positive effect on the community (or its lack of a clear negative effect).

Perhaps the best test to differentiate between graffiti and street art comes from a Supreme Court case regarding pornography. *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (1964) involved a suit against a theater for playing a film containing a sexual scene that some deemed obscene. In his decision, Judge Potter Stewart famously said, "I know it when I see it." There will never be a clear line between graffiti and street art due to their nature. Using Potter's test (guided by the definition of street art proposed above) would be better than trying to force street art into a strict box. Some would argue that judges naturally hold opinions on the act of spray-painting a building itself (whether as graffiti or art) and would rule more or less strictly as a result. However, a judge's general opinion would likely be shaped by the community he or she works in, and likewise would reflect the community's values and what they wish to happen.

A Brief Note on Intellectual Property Rights

Just like conflicts over physical property rights, intellectual property cases are still being decided in the courts and on the streets. However, this fight comes from the necessary transitory period as street

art becomes more commonplace in society. Legally, street artists have the same protections as more traditional artists do. California lawyer Christoffer Gaddini recently noted that “copyright law is neutral towards the legality of how a work was created.” British copyright laws make a similar case. Jessica Bent, a partner at the law firm Royds Withy King, writes that the “first owner of an ‘artistic work’ . . . will always be the creator or artist”. Bent writes that under U.S. law, these copyright protections ensure that the holder has the right to reproduce, produce derivatives, and publicly display the copyrighted work (Bent). These are fairly standard rights that all artists hold. However, the intensely public nature of street art challenges the extent to which these rights can be enforced.

While all displayed artwork can be considered at least semi-public, street art is more public than a sculpture in a museum. A museum or gallery can charge admission and limit photography if it wishes, but it’s almost impossible to enact this for a work of art stenciled on a city building. This typically means the public has almost unlimited access to the work, allowing them to freely take photographs. For most people, posting a picture of a Banksy work on Instagram isn’t enough to get you in trouble. British law (and similar statutes in the United States) cover “copying for the purposes of ‘criticism or review,’” as well as “‘incidental inclusion’” (Bent). However, artists are legally protected from the more entrepreneurial members of society. In 2013, Banksy revealed that a booth struggling to sell stenciled canvases had actually been set up by himself to sell Banksy originals, not copies. A week later, the New York Post reported that a clever businessman set up a stand advertising completely fake prints, who said: “All 40 sold out in one hour. Including the price sign” (MacIntosh). Personally, I remember walking down the

streets of Florence a few summers ago on a class trip and seeing booths set up with fake prints of work by L'arte Sa Nuotare and Exit/Enter, two notable Florentine street artists. These illegal operations will typically be shut down (or at least limited in their ability), but sometimes street artists are hesitant to the most egregious offenders to court out of fear of revealing their true identity and compromising their ability to create artwork. There is still work to be done to ensure that artists receive the protection due to them, but so far the law has been clear on what protections they deserve.

The Current State of Affairs

Decisions concerning the right to ownership of a physical street artwork can become highly contentious. This stems from the wide variety of actors who hold legitimate claims. Typically, the battle is between the artist and the property owner. To side with the artist is to ignore the illegal aspect of painting on someone's property, while siding with the property owner strips the artist of the rights to a work they created. Often, the neighbors, the general community, and the government hold a stake in the issue as well. As street art increasingly becomes the target of criminal and civil suits, most decisions result in one actor gaining complete ownership. In the case of "Slave Labour," that ownership went to the building's owner, who decided to auction the piece. It is important to remember that most street artwork doesn't fall to the courts, as many artists cede control to the property owner, but in the cases that do make it to court, the decision often falls strongly in favor with the property owner.

Intellectual property cases have dominated legal cases over pieces of street art so far, leaving few real physical property case studies to

examine. However, Banksy's work has been involved in several disputes, including "Slave Labour" and another work titled "Mobile Lovers," which a local boys club wished to auction off to raise funds for the club. The city objected, wishing to keep the work in the community, but Banksy himself ultimately intervened, giving the club permission to auction the work off (which the city then accepted) (Salib 2293). While there is a historical lack of physical property right cases, the disputes that have happened show there is no clear legal doctrine concerning the physical ownership of street art.



Changes in Legal Doctrine

The proposed parameters of street art emphasize its illegal nature. Mr. Chackal noted that "an artist commits an illegal act and consequently has no claim over the work," which often means an artist won't take legal action out of concerns for personal freedom (364). Peter Salib, a law student at the University of Chicago, writes in *The University of Chicago Law Review* that this results in most disputes "[arising] between finders

of street art and owners of the property on which the art is found” (2295). A modification of this can be seen in the cases of both “Slave Labour” and “Mobile Lovers,” where the finder is equivalent to the community at large. If the street artist does decide to pursue legal action, this can lead to multiple competing claims for ownership. Thus, it is important to create legal doctrine that weighs competing claims against each other in order to determine the fairest (if not most equal or satisfying) solution.

Before proposing a legal approach, I would like to take a moment to briefly examine possible claims in a case. Earlier, I touched on the dispute between the artist and the property owner. This debate can be summed up as one between the illegality of painting on someone else’s property and the personal nature of creating a work of art. However, the artist and the property owner aren’t always the only claimants. Street art often plays one of two roles in a community – it can increase the value of a community, or it can decrease it. Consider one potentially challenging situation. Just a few months ago, cultural blogger Mick Hartley wrote that “gigantic drawings of penises and sex scenes have appeared on the walls of the capital” in Brussels. If the building owner happens to like these works (perhaps they’re a commentary on the area being a red-light district) and decides to keep them, what is the community to do? It is important to have a workable approach that deconstructs all possible claims carefully, without a knee-jerk reaction. Community claims can also extend past the neighborhood the work resides in. Writer Jonathan Lethem introduces the concept of a “usemonopoly” in *The Ecstasy of Influence*, an essay on plagiarism. He writes that the “rapacious expansion of monopoly rights has always been counter to the public interest” (Lethem 64). While most claims revolve around clear positives and

negatives, there will likely be cases centered on the work's philosophical contribution to society.

After considering a number of possible recommendations, I believe Mr. Salib's proposal of an equitable division approach to street art would function best. Equitable division "refers to a court's ability to divide ownership rights in a single piece of property among those with competing claims [of ownership]" (Salib 2305). Salib notes that equitable division is extremely flexible, writing that "it can determine ownership rights in a variety of contexts and apportion those rights via the consideration of any relevant factor" (2306). This would work for street art quite well, as different interests from a number of actors must be fairly equated. Critics argue this approach would increase the subjectivity of each decision (as a judge must make a decision between apples and oranges, so to speak). This is a clear consequence, but using a unified approach would actually lead to greater consistency in decision. Any subjective differences would quickly be normalized as judges learn how to decide between competing, non-comparable claims.

Other Concerns

While the most prominent cases concerning street art typically involve only a few of the most prolific, well-known street artists, it is important to remember that disputes come in all shapes and sizes. It is imperative to treat every case equally, whether it is a million-dollar issue or a hundred-dollar one. Consistent, just application of laws and legal precedents ensures that all cases are resolved in a fair and proper manner. Lower profile cases shouldn't just be "rubber-stamped" through the system. Second, it is important to remember that one's stance on how to divide rights among the property owner, the artist, and others often

comes down to one's personal preference, or is at least indirectly. New laws and legal precedents must be straightforward, applicable to a majority of cases, and as objective as possible. While some subjectivity remains necessary in any decision (such as in deciding whether to treat a work as street art or graffiti), this must be limited when possible. This problem is partially solved by the judge's accountability to their community's values. A liberal jurisdiction will likely have a more liberal judge, meaning any subjective decisions made by this judge will likely reflect the community's interests. This raises an important point: identical cases tried in different communities will likely turn out differently under an equitable division approach. This should be considered as an advantage to the system, as it accounts for community norms, rather than taking a hard stance on each case.

In addition, some would argue that equitable division could lead to abuse by the street artist. Let's say an artist decides to stencil on a New Jersey highway sign as commentary on the Fort Lee lane closure scandal, and later submits a claim for the right to keep the work there. Perhaps the community agrees. However, the government would submit a claim stating that it is a distraction to drivers, leading the judge to likely rule in their favor, rather than blindly siding with the artist. It is also important to remember that equitable division doesn't exempt artists from criminal suits. Even if equitable division leads to a proliferation of street art in the community, any increase would be partially dampened by existing criminal sanctions.

Conclusion

As social media changes how we see the world, forms of artistic expression are changing as well. Street art has seen a recent rise in

popularity, prominence, and abundance in our society and is becoming more accepted by the month. Thus, it is imperative to determine from the start how to decide ownership of each work of street art. Recent social and political movements have shown that people around the world are yearning to express themselves in new and powerful ways, and street art can be that outlet. Impassioned speeches on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial can only be made by a few and a single tweet is often lost among billions. But a stencil can be wielded by all. To quote Banksy: "Speak softly, but carry a big can of paint."

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Exploring Issues

Needles in the North Country

Ilida Barber

Kristy doesn't tell success stories. While other directors of New Hampshire's residential treatment centers tell about the people they've been able to help, hoping that it will earn them donations, Kristy Letendre, the director of Friendship House, tells about a heroin addict who slipped through the cracks. Eddie Sawyer was found dead in his apartment in April 2015. By his phone was a list of every residential treatment center in the state and their phone numbers. All of the names were crossed off. Not a single one could offer him a bed.

I don't remember when I became aware of the drug use in my town in norther New Hampshire, but I do remember heroin suddenly becoming the one everyone was using. I also remember the day when I found out that people in my high school, in my class, were using heroin. I remember the friend who gleefully told me the rumor, because she could never resist a good one – I remember where we were and the color of her skirt (it was black). I wish I could say that I remember my stomach sinking. But I don't. As someone who'd grown up in a community where drug addicts were quickly growing in numbers and had been for years, knowing that people my age were using heroin wasn't a shock. Really, I'd been waiting for it.

In Dr. Celine Gounder's article for *The New Yorker*, she explains that the national spike in heroin use is due in part to the number of narcotic prescriptions written in the past seventeen years. Doctors started prescribing narcotics for long term use in the late 1990s, when patients began seeing advertisements for drugs like OxyContin and

Vicodin. “Many people...bristle at the notion that pain is a fact of life,” writes Dr. Gounder. Patients pushed for their doctors to give them prescription pill instead of trying other methods of relieving pain. But these narcotics are highly addictive. After the prescriptions ran out and insurance stopped paying, the patients-turned-addicts looked for something less expensive. They turned to heroin.

In the past three years we have seen the number of drug related deaths in New Hampshire rise from less than 200 in 2013 to over 430 in 2015, according to political reporter Yasmeeen Alamari. It seems almost vain to say that New Hampshire's narcotic problem is more important than that of other states, because people are dying of overdose all over the country, and yes, this is a national crisis. But New Hampshire is in a unique position, with the third highest drug-related death rate in 2015 and the second worst substance abuse treatment program in the country. In the northern half of the state, an area about twice the size of Rhode Island, there is only one residential treatment facility – Friendship House in Bethlehem, New Hampshire. To put that in context, Friendship House is the closest residential treatment center to my town, and it's an hour's drive away. At any given time, Friendship House can have a waitlist of four to six weeks. At the treatment centers in the southern half of the state, the waitlist is often as long as six months.

A wait of four weeks can mean life or death to a heroin addict. Kristy Letendre told Rachel Gotbaum of Kaiser Health News that “There's a small window of time...when people are ready for help. If they don't get help in that window, the risk of relapse and overdose is very high because withdrawal sickness is so miserable it drives people to use again”. Withdrawing heroin addicts have ten days of vomiting, diarrhea, sweating, shaking, and spasming. Their muscles and bones hurt, they're

cold and then hot and then cold again, and on top of it they're constantly anxious, they can't sleep, and often they're suicidal. And all they want is another hit. Ten days doesn't sound like long, but it's long enough for just one relapse, and one is all it takes. If Eddie Sawyer had been admitted to a treatment center, then he might have lived to see his little girl grow up. And while an alcoholic can be admitted to a hospital to wait out their withdrawal symptoms, heroin and other drug addicts can't. An alcoholic's withdrawal symptoms can include life-threatening seizures. None of the symptoms of narcotic withdrawal are life-threatening, so no hospital will give the addict a safe place to wait out their recovery. That means that miserable, suffering people are at home where they can easily get access to their drug again.

There are medications that, if professionally administered, can ease the pains of withdrawal. In a study done by Lev Langerman et al, a daily morphine injection almost completely eradicated the withdrawal symptoms of eight patients. Only one patient reported craving heroin, and only once. Other symptoms included insomnia, tooth pain, and a runny nose, all of which were mild – the vomiting and shaking that are typical of heroin withdrawal were nonexistent. Most importantly, none of the patients relapsed after treatment, and there were no complications when the morphine injections stopped. These were people who had been addicted for years, and Langerman's method helped them quit almost painlessly. They were observed 24 hours a day for ten days, and then they were done. That was all it took. But the patients need a place to live while going through treatment, and a doctor needs to be present to administer the daily injections and watch over the patients.

The only way to provide proper treatment and help this epidemic is to give funding to residential treatment centers like Friendship House.

They need the money to be able to host more people, to expand the building and property, and to support the heating and electricity costs of treating more people, not to mention the cost of food. And while we've heard plenty of promises, no one is asking where to send the check.

In November of 2015, Senator Jeanne Shaheen (DNH) proposed a \$600 million emergency funding bill to help treatment centers. In Heather Hamel's report for WMUR, Shaheen quoted New Hampshire statistics, but said that her bill would be used to treat the nationwide epidemic, not just the problem in New Hampshire. Governor Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire wrote a column in June of 2016 in the Concord Monitor in which she summarized the work that she and her office had done to stop the statewide epidemic, which included \$15 million invested through treatment centers and law enforcement programs. She made a brief mention of the treatment needed, but spent most of the column talking about law enforcement and what they had done to take out the dealers. Even President Obama promised New Hampshire \$2 million to help fight the epidemic earlier this year.

But where's that money? Giving money to the state is not the same as giving it to the treatment centers. And Friendship House has seen none of it. It's not enough to talk about what we're going to do. It's not enough to tell people that there's a crisis going on – we know that. And it's not enough to throw money at the state and hope that we'll fix it ourselves. Places like Friendship House need money given directly to them, or whatever money they do get will come too late for too many people.

And the money that Gov. Hassan gave to law enforcement, the \$15 million she gave to put drug dealers behind bars? That money will help to fund a system that, despite its good intentions, punishes the people we need to help. The criminal justice system, as Ruben Castaneda said in his

Writer as Witness address at American University, is becoming the new Jim Crow laws. Like the Jim Crow laws, the criminal justice system discriminates against people who have little voice. In this case, it's the lower class citizens who live below the poverty line and may not have had more than a high school education – the people who make up over 40% of the North Country, the northern half of New Hampshire. Law enforcement arrests them for possession of illegal substances and throws them into jail of giving them the treatment that they need. Then the money that could and should be going to treatment centers is instead being given to prisons to support the rising number of inmates.

And those people who are living in poverty make the North Country part of the same stigma that associates heroin use with impoverished Appalachia. When a lower class citizen dies of an overdose, everyone turns a blind eye. It isn't a tragedy – it's their own fault for having such a weak personality. Drug use is dismissed as a problem of the “dumb hicks” and the “white trash,” especially heroin, it's so cheap. That stigma means that the impoverished, rural North Country is forgotten and ignored.

“This epidemic has devastated communities...It affects all of us. But sometimes it feels like folks in Washington don't hear.” These are the words of Pam Livengood of Keene, New Hampshire, as quoted by Amanda Hoover. She's not alone – a lot of New Hampshireites, especially those of us in the North Country, think that Washington doesn't care much for us because we're a smaller state, and because so many of us are poor. And when it comes to the heroin epidemic, we're being proved right. Our people are dying. That means thousands of young adults who didn't get a chance, and thousands of children left without their parents. And that's not something that might happen in the future, it's something that I

watched happen growing up. It's something that Eddie Sawyer's little girl will have to live with. So let's see it, Washington. Prove us wrong. Let Kristy tell some success stories for once.

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4 Things I Think You Should Know About Emojis



Gwendolyn Bishop

You stare at your phone obsessively for what feels like hours. You're weighed down by the pressure of a text message from Dave from bio class who just asked you to go to dinner. You're not exactly sure what your next move is: Do you respond right away? Do you wait a few minutes? Do you use an emoji? You decide you want to throw in an emoji, just to help catalyze the conversation a bit. The tiny faces stare back at you mockingly as you nervously scroll through, trying to decide what kind of emoticon would best convey to Dave how you feel. You overanalyze each and every one, desperately trying to figure out how he will interpret it. You eventually decide on the little blushing one with the rosy cheeks.

Hey dinner at 5 sounds great 😊

. . .and then you hit 'send'. Your heart rate immediately jumps to a borderline lethal level as you watch your text slip away from your fingers and into cyberspace. The overanalyzing commences as you nervously pick apart every little bit of your message, wondering if it was too forward or if the emoji was effective. I'm sure this is a feeling we've all been burdened with quite intimately; The obsessive scrutiny over emoticons and their respective connotations has become a commonplace practice for texting millennials. However, upon further observation, I've noticed something fascinating- girls seemed to treat emojis with much more

gravity and significance, whereas the boys I know seem more careless about their emoticon use. While this might seem to be a small and trivial issue, it is in fact a manifestation of some pretty deep psychological and sociological concepts.

1. Emojis and emoticons reflect our emotions- but only to an extent



First, let's take a look at the words "emoji" or "emoticon". In case you didn't notice, they both start with the same root as the word "emotion". This isn't a coincidence; Emojis are meant for us to express ourselves, and help tell other people what we're feeling. After all, we all have emotions. We all get happy, sad, angry, frustrated, excited, among thousands of other more complicated feelings. For example, upon receiving a text from Dave, you feel a rush of elation and giddiness. Or perhaps you become anxious and even a little worried about the potential of the impending conversation. Regardless of what you are feeling, you want to express that to Dave.

Now, if this conversation with Dave were happening face-to-face, obviously the pressure to properly convey your emotions would be much less intense; rather than having to choose an emoji to send and try to decipher his emojis, your face would naturally display your emotions. When we look at people in person, our brains have the ability to pick up on facial cues and physical signals given off by others. We do this subconsciously and automatically- it's not something we have to take a few minutes and think about. Humans' ability to understand and empathize with what other people are feeling is actually an evolutionary adaptation. Facial expression has allowed people to help communicate how

they feel, which in turn helps them survive (Enchautegui de Jesus). Facial signs such as smiling, frowning, laughing and crying are often seen as universally recognized demonstrations of human emotions such as sadness or happiness.

As you know, however, the emotional depth of any individual is far more nuanced than the two aforementioned emotions. Happy and sad are but the tip of a massive, complicated iceberg. Thus, many emotions are not so universally recognizable; Different cultures emphasize different parts of the human face for emotional recognition. A 2011 study examined two groups, one group comprised of Chinese participants and the other of Caucasian participants. Researchers asked each participant to examine an image of a facial expression and determine what emotion was being conveyed. “The study found that the Chinese participants relied on the eyes more to represent facial expressions, while Western Caucasians relied on the eyebrows and mouth” (Perception of Facial). On top of this, each individual’s emotions and outward expressiveness develop with their respective cognitive maturity. Basically, as each person grows and evolves into young adulthood, their ability to articulate and empathize with others becomes more individualized.

I know this all seems like a psychology lecture, but it directly correlates with why emojis themselves can be so confusing and so impacting. When you text Dave, you and him are trying to convey what you feel through a teeny tiny little image. You don’t have any other cues to rely on, like you would if you were sitting across from him at Starbucks. Instead, you’re dependent solely on an emoji. When you see the emoji, you try to make sense of it the same way you would if you were looking at Dave in person. A 2014 study even concluded that the sight of an emoji face triggers a response from the same part of our brain that is activated

when we see a real human face (Churches). Essentially, our brain wants to understand what emojis mean as if emojis were people too. The problem with this is that there are only 96 facial emojis- whereas there are millions of facial expressions that can be made by a human face. This leaves room for a lot interpretation by the recipient, who might have different personal connotations with different facial expressions. So, although emojis do help us show what we can't actually say, they can also complicate conversation due to their ambiguity. Dave might send you an 🐱, which to him has a flirty connotation. But maybe you hate cats, and you associate that emoji with negativity. My point here is that everyone thinks different (which I'm sure you're aware of).

2. Emojis are essentially nonverbal communication



Facial expressions are part of a much larger phenomenon of human psyche referred to as nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication encompasses a wide array of physical motions people do to convey what can't be said verbally. This includes all sorts of actions: Shrugging, laughing, the way we position our bodies, and yes, facial expressions.

We all have our own personal paradigms concerning our nonverbal messages. Of course, gender is a very significant determinant of these internal paradigms engrained within us all. In a study done by Judith Hall and Nancy Briton in 1995, a group of college students were asked through a written survey their perception of nonverbal contact among genders. The students were asked questions about ability to recognize facial expressions, laughing, and smiling, among many other

forms of nonverbal discussion. It was concluded from the study women were seen as more likely to be able to understand others' facial expressions, smile, and "decode" what others are trying to convey nonverbally (Briton and Hall 84). Men were seen as more likely to be interruptive and frown, and were less able to decode what others meant. Interestingly, women were also seen as more talkative than men (Briton and Hall 80). I would argue the fundamental differences in how men and women communicate nonverbally, as shown in Hall and Briton's study, lay the foundation for how individuals will communicate with images, or emojis. Another study of 1984 conducted by Kay Deaux examined how gender roles themselves are perpetrated and treated. According to this research, "warmth and expressiveness" are quintessentially feminine qualities, whereas men are generally expected to be more stoic (Deaux 992). Though this study is nearly 33 years old, the fundamental ideas it proposes about communication are still relevant to today, as its central claims remain consistent with contemporary data. Furthermore, the study discussed the dichotomy of societal expectations for gender performances. According to Deaux's research, humans tend to see traits as being related to a certain specific gender (Deaux 993). In other words, we have a largely binary view of gender, and see a behavior as either masculine *or* feminine, but not both. So let's connect the dots: The outward expression of our emotions is largely viewed as feminine. Emojis are primarily used to express emotions. Therefore, emoji usage is viewed as a more feminine behavior.

3. Boys and girls text differently- and use emojis differently too



These ingrained expectations for gender behavior do not exist in a vacuum; They play a daily role in how we implicitly understand and make judgements on others. Gender stereotypes are so deeply rooted within our society, we often do not even consciously think of them, even when we are constantly acting upon them. More often than not, we let these gender biases limit what we deem to be socially acceptable behavior. In 2004, a study was conducted on the impact of challenging traditional gender roles. Referring to this as “gender role transgressions”, the study investigates how and why we react differently when an individual behaves contrary to the conventional conduct of their gender. More often than not, defying the standard is met with negativity and scorn. However, past research referenced throughout the article asserted males are more mistreated when it comes to deviation from the set gender standards (Sirin 120). From this, we can logically extrapolate that males are less likely to use emojis in their texting, because emojis are a form of emotional expression. Because emotional expression is typically associated with femininity, males would likely feel emasculated or deemed overemotional when they express their emotions.

Although gendered stereotypes perpetrate rather narrow ideas of how people should act, it can be argued these stereotypes are not always inherently bad. There is, in fact, a psychological benefit to categorizing people based on clichés: It makes life a lot easier. Gary D Levy’s 1995 study on childhood development analyzed the advantages to stereotypes, stating “. . .stereotyping can be considered a normal and cognitive process: in order to organize adaptively and efficiently. . .we create

simplified representations that are often structured around prototypical instances” (Levy). What Levy is arguing here is that the binary gender categories by which the vast majority of society uses to understand others is essentially, at its core, an evolutionary adaption to help us make more sense of the world around us. To put it another way, the reason we are so quick to make assumptions about others based on gender is because it allows us to make decisions and understand others more efficiently.

Let’s connect even more dots now. We’ve already established that emoji usage is seen as more of a feminine behavior. Because of this, boys are less likely to use emojis and girls are more likely to use them. In the next section, we’ll take a look at how expected behaviors impact the usage of emojis in texting.

4. You’re overthinking it



When we consider the complex psychological background underlying decision making and bias, we can begin to apply these concepts in a tangible, real-life setting. As we’ve already established, there are some pretty significant differences in the way that men and women communicate with each other nonverbally, so now let’s take a look at how emojis come into play.

A study conducted by clinical psychologist Leslie R. Brody examined college students and their usage of emojis. The study concluded women are more likely to use emoticons such as 😊 or 😞 face to denote their emotional response to a text. Furthermore, this research also concluded more feminine individuals were also more likely to send

emoticons. (Brody) Another study in *Journal of Children and Media* conducted an investigation on the usage of emojis and text messages by teenagers 13-19 years old. Additionally, Brody examines and compares different cultures' perceptions of emotional expression among genders. Her research has found that both Western and Asian cultures exhibit stereotypical expectations for behavior (Brody). The study concluded not only do boys and girls have different styles in texting, but different motivations for texting fundamentally. The researchers of the 2014 study stated "Boys view phones as a status symbol to perform a basic function; they are direct and rapid in their conversations, make their arrangements and go. . .Girls undeniably like to chat, socialize and enhance their conversations with smiley faces etc" (Taylor and Francis). In other words, while boys are more likely to text strictly for communication purposes, girls are more likely to use texting as a medium through which they can share and express feelings.

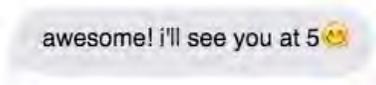
All of this being said, we can begin to understand how girls and boys use emojis differently. Socially, it is acceptable and expected for girls to be emotional. Girls have historically been perceived as more demonstrative and expressive of their feelings. In contrast, boys are expected to withhold emotions- or run the risk of being viewed as less masculine. That is to say, when boys show more emotions than usual, they are seen as challenging typical gender roles. We can then make the connection between these gendered pigeonholes and the frequency of our emoji usage when we text. If outwardly expressing emotions is viewed by society as a feminine behavior, and emojis serve the primary purpose of expressing emotions, it would make sense for it to be more socially acceptable for a girl to use them while texting. By the same token, the likelihood of a boy using emojis through text is less than that of a girl,

because using emojis is seen as analogous to emotional expression. So, let's revisit my main point: Girls seem to be more analytical of emoji use than boys. Considering the double-standards that exists among boys and girls that girls are allowed to share their emotions. Since it is less acceptable for boys to be emotional, boys in turn learn to put less emphasis on how others feel- and how they themselves feel as well. Correspondingly, girls have never been shamed for crying or being emotional. Therefore, they see emotional expression has being a valid and normal aspect of human behavior. Girls take emotions seriously rather than brushing them off as being "too dramatic". Even when boys and men do use emojis, they use them differently than women typically do.

When we look at emojis as a virtual manifestation of nonverbal communication rather than merely computer symbols, we can gain a more comprehensive appreciation for the reasons behind gender difference in usage. The psychological studies of Judith Hall and other social scientists have shown there are multiple deviations among gender when it comes to the way people communicate without words. Although the conclusions from these studies pertain primarily to physical mannerisms, the ideas presented throughout their works can unquestionably be applied in the more contemporary world of 😊, ❤️, and 👍.

After what feels like an eternity has passed, you're still anticipating a response from Dave. You've spent nearly all day mentally prepare yourself for disappointment. *"He probably thought my emoji was weird. . .he's probably going to cancel on me. . ."* goes through your head as you try to distract yourself from the suspense of his reply. From the corner of your eye, you see you phone light up to notify you that you've

gotten a new text. Eagerly, you unlock your phone and open up your messages. At the top of the screen you see Dave's name.



awesome! i'll see you at 5 😊

...and you wonder why you were so worried in the first place.

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Coca-lombia: The Story of a Drug and a Country

M. Camila Cisneros

My mother fled from Colombia and escaped to Miami at the young age of 19. As she was checking in for her flight to Miami, she informed the American Airlines worker that she was flying alone. The worker placed an asterisk next to her name on the passenger list, with no other explanation. Once she landed, my mother was pulled aside and she, along with her belongings and luggage, were searched. After asking why she was being treated in such manner, my mother was informed that she was thought to be a drug mule carrying pellets of cocaine in her stomach, which explains why the asterisk was placed next to her name. Anyone who has seen the Colombian drama film *Maria Full of Grace* knows how common drug mules traveling to Miami and New York were during the 1990s, and my mother, according to the airline worker, fit the description perfectly. Not once did they consider that she could have been taking a vacation in Miami, or fleeing from a violent country that had a seemingly bleak future. To them, she was just another young Colombian woman carrying drugs in her stomach for money. Colombia and its people had one story, and one story only: cocaine. From being baptized as “Coca-lombia” by other Latin American countries, to continuously being denied visas by the United States as a “precaution” to prevent drug trafficking, Colombia has been pushed down and has been prevented from progressing. The one story that everyone seems to know fails to include the happy ending; Colombia has risen from the ashes and flourished.

The question is, why is it that to this day and age, one cannot speak of Colombia to most people without cocaine, Pablo Escobar, or violence coming to their minds. The media is a powerful tool that holds a level of influence that is hard to beat. It has the power of changing Colombia's narrative, but the way it has been used has further enforced the negative connotations that Colombia carries. An example of this is seen in an article titled "Colombia Hooked by Drug Documentary," published by *Variety* magazine. Just by reading the title, Colombia's single story has been reiterated. The choice of wording in the title suggests to the reader that this is all there is to Colombia: drugs and being addicted to drugs. It prevents Colombia the right to move on from its previous stigma and cruelly jokes about a topic that has caused much devastation to the country. From there, one can only guess who the article talks about -- the one and only, the ruling king of Colombia even through death, Pablo Escobar. The article discusses the documentary made by Pablo Escobar's son, Juan Pablo Escobar, who now goes by Sebastian Marroquín. The documentary follows him as he writes letters of apology to the sons of Pablo Escobar's victims and delivers the letters in person (Newbery). He attempts to make amends to redeem the sins of his father, hence the title of the documentary, *Sins of My Father*. It also tells the story of Pablo Escobar and how his drug trafficking operation led to him being killed, and his wife and kids fleeing the country. The documentary focuses on forgiveness and ending violence. However, the article sent the opposite message of what the documentary being discussed was trying to convey. The article was a reminder that Colombia rarely gets spoken of in American media, but when it does, it is regarding the same story of its brutal past. According to the article, "documentaries are rarely released in Colombia, and if they are, it is only on one print" (Newbery). Given this,

the author still chose to make a title poking fun of Colombian stereotypes, and as an effect, the readers missed the documentary's message on forgiveness and ending violence. *Variety*, an American magazine, further enforced the story into its readers' heads that there is only one noteworthy topic in Colombia. This is a story that must change.

Pablo Escobar, without a doubt, shook the foundations of Colombia, and changed its history forever. That is why when *Narcos*, an American crime show regarding Colombia's drug wars, first premiered on Netflix, Colombians were excited. Finally, the world could see their history and see the truth behind the drug wars. However, the stereotypes that Americans had in the 1980s and 90s regarding Colombia simply resurfaced. The show did not bring a new light to the other side of Colombia and its story. It seemed to resuscitate dying stereotypes. In the article "Five Reasons You Should Stop Watching *Narcos*," author Nick Brown talks about how cocaine is Colombia's single story, accompanied with a personal story about how he asked a friend what she wanted from Colombia and she responded with, "a pound of cocaine." It is small jokes like these that turn into common Colombian stereotypes. As the article states, stereotypes become so powerful that they begin to create an incomplete narrative, manifesting itself into the minds of those who do not know anything about Colombia (Brown). *Narcos* only shows one side of Colombia, a side that repeats the single narrative that the stereotypes are based on. It shows the worst of Colombia, which can be seen in the way the characters play the roles of either a "criminal, corrupt police officer, or a sexy woman trying to get ahead through sex" (Brown). These are commonly believed to be the three basic roles to exist within Colombian society. The trait they all share is the intrinsic motivation to work towards their own self-interest.

The problem with these stereotypes is self-fulfilling prophecy. By definition, self-fulfilling prophecy is the belief one has about others determines how one acts towards them, which then plays a role in determining the behavior of others. Colombians hear the same story about themselves, and this affects them psychologically, making them feel like they are not good enough to be anything other than what they hear they should be. They hear they are only good for cocaine trafficking, and therefore the thought manifests itself into their minds, influencing many to not want to reach for anything better because they are expected to be only that.

Colombia has been battling its stereotypes and has recently made obtaining peace a top national priority to remove the stigma of being a country full of violence. By achieving peace, the nation could gain closure from its bloody past, change the global perception of Colombia, and further prosper without being held back. One of the main reasons Colombia has been full of violence is due to the fact that it has the longest running civil war the world has ever known. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has waged a war with the Colombian government for 52 long years. In the article "Colombia Signs Peace Agreement with FARC After 5 Decades of War," author Nicholas Casey talks about how the war "tore the social fabric of Colombia. Decades of fighting brought the rise of paramilitary groups who massacred civilians and burned villages" (Casey). To gain more wealth and power, the FARC became involved in the drug trade. According to Latin American affairs analyst June Beittel, "the FARC's involvement in the drug trade deepened to include all stages of drug processing, including cultivation, taxation of drug crops, processing, and distribution" (Beittel). With the accord, the FARC will hand their arms over to UN inspectors in order to begin their

lives as average Colombian citizens. In return, Colombia “will agree to a “transitional justice” system in which, according to President Santos, rank-and-file soldiers will be granted amnesty or given reduced sentences for crimes they committed” (Casey). Although the peace treaty was denied on a national referendum on October 2nd, 2016 due to lack of justice, Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos has made a revised agreement that will bring justice for the lives that were lost. The treaty has been approved by congress and is in the process of being implemented. This goes to show that Colombia is transitioning to a country of peace and is changing the lives of its people, as seen with David Oliveros, a 19-year-old from Bogotá who is studying biochemistry at Columbia University. When talking about the peace treaty, he said, “I’ve never lived in a country in peace, without war. It’s a moment I’ve waited for all of my life.” Colombia is more than just cocaine and drug traffickers, and the media only shows a story that will sell.

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She Won Three Gold Medals... But Why Isn't Her Hair Done?

Reina DuFore

“Wherever there’s a black girl, there’s a hair conversation.”
-*Michaela Angela Davis*
(qtd. in Hudson)

After intensely training for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the time finally came for Gabby Douglas to make her big debut. The chronological scene was painted as such:

First thirty seconds. A serious expression appeared on the Olympian’s face, contrasted against her vibrant American flag leotard, as she mentally prepared herself for the bars. You could hear a couple of screams in the audience paired with the silence of the announcers patiently awaiting to comment on her performance.



Gabby Douglas

Minute one. As she went from one bar to the next, effortlessly, there were monotone buzzwords such as “floating,” “height,” and “light” uttered by the announcers.

Minute two. She let go of the final bar, stuck her landing, and the first commentator asked, “Does she always rise to the occasion?” “She does!”

Minute three. A sigh of relief, and a smile slowly snuck upon the Olympian’s lips. Her heart slowed down only by a pace. The bars were over.

Minute four. Twitter comments about Gabby Douglas started flooding in. Retweets were made. “Likes” were established. Gabby Douglas, three-time gold medal winning Olympic gymnast, fell victim to the social media pack. The main trending question about her Olympic performance: What in the world was going on with her hair?

Immediately after Gabby Douglas dared to expose her curly—some would say “nappy”—edges at the 2016 Olympics, disappointed fans used Twitter to criticize her hairstyle—or her lack of one. Comments about her gymnastic abilities were overshadowed by comments about how she looked. The tweets about Gabby Douglas’s hair became part of the never-ending narrative surrounding the expectations for a Black women’s hair. Surprisingly, the majority of the people continuing the narrative were other Black women.

Within the Black community especially, Cheryl Thompson, professor of Visual Culture and the Politics of Identity at the University of Toronto Mississauga, notes that it is understood that hair “is laden with messages, and it has the power to dictate how others treat you, and in turn, how you feel about yourself” (Thompson 80). On top of merely being



Gabby Douglas Tweets

a representation of an individual's style and taste, it can also be a sign of rebellion, strength, professionalism, or a combination of the above.

However, according to Dr. Christian Hope Gillespie, because of popularized Western-beauty ideals, "the prevalent message regarding Black hair is that it is inferior to White hair, unattractive in its natural state, and only considered appropriate or attractive if fundamentally altered to appear long and straight such that it reflects the dominant mainstream beauty norms" (Gillespie 21). Because of this, the pressure for Black women to alter their natural hair texture dominates Black hair culture.

Fan's disapproval of Gabby Douglas's hair is not only because they believe her hair wasn't "done," but also because she didn't adhere to the expectations of mainstream beauty norms. As an Olympian, Gabby Douglas is held to high standards. As a twenty-year old *Black female* Olympian, these standards are even higher.

The quickness to attack her for not having her hair "done" emphasizes the expected image that successful women, especially Black women, must have. "It doesn't matter that Gabby tumbles across the mat with such fierce determination, or that she flies through the air fearlessly," explains Renee Martin, a renowned writer for the magazine, *The Establishment*. "What matters is her refusal to conform to the socially-imposed behavior and appearance standards for Black women" (Martin).

The disconnect between her inappropriate and "unkempt" hair and her achieved success created discomfort and confusion within those who criticized her. It left her Black fans wondering: How can we view you as successful if you can't even do your hair? In other words, her image didn't seem to match up to her caliber of success.

For example, when we look at television, we see images of seriousness, success, and power commonly attributed to women who possess straight, flawless, hair. The most known powerful, Black female characters dominating television right now are Shonda Rhime's Annalise Keating in *How to Get Away with Murder* and Olivia Pope in *Scandal*. The overlooked attribute that both characters share besides amazing wardrobes and deep-rooted emotional issues: straight, flawless hair. This similarity implies that straight hair and success are linked. To be a fierce lawyer, such as Annalise Keating, or a White House trailblazer, such as Olivia Pope, you must have immaculate hair.

The fact that both characters have straight hair is not coincidental. Elayne Saltzberg, a Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist fellow at Yale, and Joan C. Chrisler, a professor of Psychology at Connecticut College, claim that "Black women who actually go through the measures of altering their appearance to meet hegemonic beauty standards would likely be perceived as possessing greater intelligence, personal, and moral character than Black women who resist such standards" (Gillespie 21). Because of these alterations, viewers readily glorify these two characters as strong, intelligent, Black women. Their sleek, straight strands indicate success.

The result of that: the misconception that perfectly straight, well-groomed hair means that you are completely competent in whatever task you chose to pursue.

"Wherever there's a black girl, there's a hair conversation," explains Michaela Angela Davis, renowned writer on African-American style, race, gender, and hip-hop culture. "To a conservative Black audience, this is the point where respectability politics kicks in. It triggers something in them that says if you're not really pulled together, or if you

are a little Black girl with messy hair, that means you aren't loved or something just isn't right" (qtd. in Hudson). The belief that two seconds of imperfect hair means something is wrong puts immense pressure upon Black girls to avoid criticism by always looking perfect.

Even Viola Davis recognizes the societal pressures relating to Black girl's hair. She notes how people criticize her ability to be a good mother if her daughter's hair isn't "done." Similarly, in her own experience she makes a powerful point when she explains, "Sometimes [actresses] feel like if we don't have perfect hair, then we're not doing anything. We have to understand that hair doesn't negate our beauty. You'll see a Caucasian lady walking into the scene with messed up hair, or after the shower with no makeup and it's not a big deal," says Davis. "It's just her portraying that moment in time. But we don't allow ourselves to do that" (Campbell).

However, some women who embrace their natural hair texture are not meeting resistance. Alicia Keys, for example, has started an all-natural campaign and received comments on how gorgeous she looks with her natural hair and no makeup. Viola Davis showed up to the Oscars with her natural hair and people labeled it "powerful." Lupita Nyong'o never straightens her hair or wears a weave and people comment on her beauty. Tracee Ellis Ross refuses to straighten her hair for any role she plays, and she is seen as strong for having that resistance. So then why were there so many attacks on Gabby Douglas's hair instead of it being met with applause?

The difference between Gabby Douglas and Alicia Keys, Tracee Ellis Ross, and the rest of women starting to wear their hair natural is that Gabby Douglas wasn't coming to the Olympics to make a statement about hair. She was coming to win a gold medal.

Because of this, the criticism of her hair came from the fact that her choice to not maintain perfectly straightened edges was not publicized as a rebellious act. Viewers weren't able to defend her actions from a "rebellious" or an intentional "screw Western beauty standards" standpoint. This led them to believe that she truly doesn't care about her image; which has been determined unacceptable.

However, by simply being Gabby Douglas, an African-American female, three-time gold medal winning Olympic gymnast, and not worrying about her hair, she *was* being rebellious. And amidst this unplanned rebelliousness, she sends a larger message: I'm still successful even if my hair isn't "done" so why does it matter?

Gabby Douglas is trying to challenge the belief that success is tied to whatever is deemed a perfect image. After facing criticism in the 2012 Olympics about her hair, but still not concerning herself with laying her edges, she is breaking the connection between worth and whether or not your hair is done.

"The pressure for women to look good while they excel—whether they're athletes or running for president—is evidence of a double standard that needs to go away" said A. Khan. "That goes double for black women, who are scrutinized even more" (Khan).

To get rid of this double standard, Gabby Douglas sends the message: I can still be a gold-medal Olympic gymnast, be one of the most successful athletes, and I do not have to have a perfect image while doing it. So what does that mean?

She is asking the Black community, and everyone, to question how important hair really is. Gabby Douglas's hair points out the flaw of tying image to worth, but it also represents Gabby Douglas's attempt to change

this narrative. She is challenging people to focus more at what she can do instead of how she looks while doing it.

She is showing that even successful women don't need to be perfect—and that's perfectly okay.

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**“We memed a man into office”:
Memes, Specifically Pepe the Frog, as
Legitimate Forms of Propaganda
*Benjamin Khoshbin***

Abstract

Over the course of the 2016 Presidential Election, we have witnessed the ascent of a populist, white nationalist movement with extreme racist undertones to the White House. This movement, the “alt-right,” has altered the face of American politics forever. There has been an unprecedented rise in fake news, purposefully inflammatory statements, and subtly bigoted messages. In this paper, I will examine the relationship between this rise and the internet meme “Pepe the Frog.” Pepe has been used in a variety of forms by the alt-right. I will analyze the primary uses of Pepe by the alt-right, including the recruitment of new members, the normalization of far-right ideologies to the mainstream, and the turning of otherwise serious topics into satire. The full implications of the alt-right’s rise can only be understood when considering the historical parallels of such a movement. Pepe the Frog is not just a silly frog. Pepe is a legitimate form of propaganda; a new iteration of a centuries old historical phenomena that has ushered in countless totalitarian regimes with strikingly similar ideologies as the one we’ve just elected.

“We memed a man into office”



(KnowYourMeme.com)

It’s 3 am. You should be sleeping. You can’t, so you unlock your phone, open your Twitter, and begin to browse through your feed. The white light beaming into your eyes sharply turns to green as you scroll over a Pepe meme. You see a fence labeled “US Border” with two Hispanic people standing behind it. You then see Pepe: the unmistakable green skin, the smirk, the soulless black eyes. But this Pepe is not any normal Pepe. This Pepe happens to be more human than frog. It seems to be an amalgamation of Pepe and Donald Trump, complete with the yellow combover and a blue “Make America Great Again” button. This meme has very clear, very serious political implications: it shows that Trump, rather his supporters, have a genuine desire to “keep out the illegal Mexicans” to “Make America Great Again”. How did such a controversial belief find its way into a Pepe meme? Such is the nature of memes. They turn the serious into the absurd. They spread like wildfire: unchecked, unmitigated, unstoppable. Memes are everywhere. They have always been here. They will continue to be here so long as humans populate the earth. In

the past two decades, we have been able to glimpse into the maelstrom of memes through the internet. However, through the internet, we have begun to trivialize memes. We have belittled the strength of memes, merely discounting them as tools of the immature and the socially inept. This collective naivety towards the true nature of memes has only increased their power. Memes, in particular the Pepe memes, have transcended the boundaries between satire and serious. They have catalyzed the normalization of radical views. They have begun the transition of white nationalist, xenophobic, pseudo-fascist politics to the mainstream.



(StareCat.com)

In this piece, I will briefly discuss the beginnings of memes in the internet stage, the origins of “Pepe”, and the supposed hijacking of Pepe by the alt-right movement in a successful attempt to turn it into a twisted form of propaganda to further their cause. The underlying question we will attempt to answer is whether an internet meme such as Pepe can affect the real world. Do memes transcend our temporary political and social boundaries, or rather are memes an embodiment of said boundaries? These questions are ones we must answer in the coming months as we have, in essence, “memed a man into office.” Memes have defined our new political discourse. They have normalized

otherwise extremist beliefs. They have even been used as recruiting tools for white nationalist movements. Before we examine the power of memes, we must begin to understand what a meme is. Webster's Dictionary defines a meme as "an element of a culture or system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by nongenetic means, especially imitation" (Merriam-Webster). The idea of cultural elements transcending normal genetic transitions was originally proposed by Richard Dawkins, an evolutionary biologist, in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkins coined the term "meme" when he described it as a cultural parallel to the gene. Memes, per Dawkins, were identical to genes in the sense that they were both self-replicating units that passed down from generation to generation (Solon). The only difference was that memes were intellectual units rather than physical. Memes are units of cultural transmission: intangible, yet ever-present. It seems to be more difficult to map the origin of a popular meme such as "Dat boi" or "Pepe the Frog" than it was to map the human genome. Even though that statement is facetious, it shines light on the fact that nobody really knows where memes originate, how they were first distributed, and what makes them stick.

Memes are and always have been omnipresent in popular culture. Internet memes, in particular, are especially pervasive in the lives of millennials. Their ubiquity makes it difficult for us to answer the question: "What was the first internet meme?" Many internet scholars claim the first meme was the iconic "All your base are belong to us". This meme originated from the 1989 Japanese video game *Zero Wing*. It refers specifically to the English version of the game, as the translations from Japanese to English were incorrect and often comical. In one of the

scenes, the phrase, “All your base are belong to us,” is uttered. This phrase, strangely enough, wasn’t recognized for its immense comedic value until nearly a decade later. The phrase was found in a gif that floated around the message boards of the site “Something Awful”, a popular place for absurd things to be discussed. From there, it caught fire. On February 23, 2001, the tech magazine *Wired* reported on its meteoric rise, from being in insanely popular YouTube videos to adorning thousands of t-shirts being worn in public (Boutin). People were stunned an obscure quote from a Japanese video game over a decade old caught fire so quickly. This, as many would come to find out, was only the beginning of this bizarre phenomena.

The spread of a meme can be likened to the spread of a virus; there’s an origin point, a replication rate, and, eventually, a critical mass at which the meme either stops spreading or has reached every person alive. Dr. Rosanna Guadagno, an associate Professor in Emerging Media and Communication Overall at the University of Texas at Austin, found that Internet memes go viral due to a psychological process called *emotional contagion*. Emotional contagion is, per Dr. Guadagno, “a process through which emotions spread like a disease and are therefore considered contagious.” What’s so dangerous about emotional contagion is that it “conveys to people that the socially appropriate response is to engage in the same actions as that of the people — either physically or virtually — around them...” which, in this regard, would be to share the meme (Guadagno, 2013). This facet of emotional contagion plays a disturbing role in the rise of Pepe. It has become a social norm to ignore the negative, offensive aspects of a meme, in this case Pepe. Sharing it is “the normal thing to do” now, and even if the vast majority of sharers don’t ascribe to the offensive

viewpoints being purported by the meme, they'll still share it to go along with the norm.

It is difficult for one internet meme to stand out above all the others. A meme must have a set of truly unique qualities that makes it especially contagious. Pepe the Frog has all of these qualities and more. This lovable, irreverent amphibian found life in a comic strip called *Boys Club #1*, authored by cartoonist and artist Matt Furie. Furie posted this comic in a series of blog posts to Myspace in 2005 (Nuzzi). In this comic, Pepe was found doing outlandish things such as “urinating with his pants all the way down”, and when asked for his rationale, he responded, “Feels good man.” These comics were formed with no social statements in mind, only “for the lulz.” Pepe soon transcended the boundaries of Furie's comics, quickly becoming adopted by 4chan's /b/ message board. 4chan's reputation for taking the absurd seriously propelled the rise of Pepe, coining phrases such as “Rare Pepes” and “Feels (insert emotion here) man”. This absurdity reached new heights when “Rare Pepes” started popping up on EBay and Craigslist, as if these memes held some sort of real-world value (Notopoulos). Sketches, both digital and drawn, started garnering actual bids with actual, real world money. This is a prime example of utter absurdity being taken seriously, a common trend among the now-infamous Pepe. Like some sort of ironic black market, the “Meme market” took hold of the internet, peddling Pepes of all shapes and sizes. Eventually, much to the dismay of the meme community, the “normies” hijacked Pepe. Celebrities, Katy Perry for example, started posting memes. Even politicians jumped on the bandwagon, using memes to take jabs at their partisan opponents (this was before the rise of Trump). To combat this, many prominent 4chan members “crashed” the meme market by

posting thousands of Pepe's to 4chan's /r9k/ message board which is intended for original content only (Kiberd). The oversaturation of Pepees in the meme market devalued their "dankness," effectively ruining them for everyone. The logic behind this purported market crash was to seize Pepe back from the hands of normality. If Pepe were to become mainstream, his purpose of being too absurd for "normies" would be defunct. Pepe, however, would not belong to the mainstream for much longer.

Usually, a fad will be exclusive before it goes mainstream and then eventually dies out as its original fans rant about how "they liked it first" and how it's become "basic" and "mainstream trash". It's uncommon, however, for something to go mainstream and then be coopted into obscurity. The irony of Redditors griping about the "normie" takeover of Pepe is that the normies were the ones who first held the unholy mantle of Pepe's likeness. Pepe's dark turn towards the Alt-Right began at the height of one of the most vicious election cycles America has ever seen. During the 2016 election, Pepe became much more than just a joke. Pepe became the symbol of the alt-right movement (Williams). To truly understand the significance of Pepe, we must understand the origins of the alt-right. The term alt-right first originated in 2008 following the election of President Obama. At first, it was just another way to describe the Tea Party, a fringe group within the GOP focused primarily on combatting President Obama's "big government" initiatives such as the Affordable Care Act and his plan to give financial aid to bankrupt homeowners. However, as time passed, the alt-right movement began to sprout out. The origins of the alt-right can best be attributed to the message boards of Reddit and 4chan, where young, white, heterosexual men often trivialized the Holocaust

and slavery for nothing other than laughs, or so we thought. The Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization that focuses primarily on categorizing and combatting hate groups, states that the alt-right movement as “a big-tent ideology that blends the ideas of neo-reactionaries (NRx-ers), who advocate a return to an antiquated, pseudo-libertarian government that supports “traditional western civilization”; “archeofuturists,” those who advocate for a return to “traditional values” without jettisoning the advances of society and technology; human biodiversity adherents (HBDers) and “race realists,” people who generally adhere to “scientific racism”” (SPLC Staff). It seems entirely absurd that a movement so sinister could hijack such a seemingly peaceful frog. They did it, despite the odds, and did it with such skill that it helped them win over the support, and ultimately the votes, of millions of young Americans.

The most effective form of propaganda is that of which is indiscernible from a credible news source or a seemingly innocuous meme. Pepe’s effectiveness lies within the memes ability to disguise itself as a frivolous gag, existing only to evoke “teh lolz.” Its purpose as a propaganda tool of the alt-right is cloaked under the guise of humor. Its effectiveness is further amplified by how easy it is to spread. The Pepe meme is highly malleable and easily distributable. It is multipurpose and can be used to reflect any aspect of pop culture or current affairs. Its immense popularity virtually ensures that anyone viewing the meme will recognize that it’s a Pepe, albeit an altered one. Its satirical nature also gives it comedic value, even if the alterations are regarding a rather serious political issue. It is propaganda in its primal state. Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda for Nazi Germany, said, “The rank and file are usually much more primitive than we

imagine. Propaganda must therefore always be essentially simple and repetitious.” (History.com Staff). Pepe epitomizes this quote. Pepe advances complex, often sinister goals, such as eugenics or the denial of the Holocaust. The average Pepe meme-sharer has no idea what eugenics are or may pay no attention to the claims made by Holocaust deniers. But when this average meme sharer tweets a picture of Pepe in a Nazi SS uniform holding a gold star or a Pepe wearing a shirt that claims “multiculturalism is white genocide”, they are unknowingly contributing to dark movements they may not even know exist (Porter).

Just like the vast majority of German citizens who lived next to concentration camps had no idea what unspeakable horrors laid inside, the typical Pepe meme sharer has no idea what dark, twisted visions the Alt-Right movement seeks to enact upon America. How do you convince an average member of 4chan or Reddit to vote for Trump? This was the question the alt-right movement intended to solve. In Pepe, they found the ultimate tool to energize the once-apathetic “Redditors” into an army of unquestionably loyal Trump supporters. The key barrier the alt-right had to cross was the unspoken assumption that everything that was being said, whether it was about Jews, African-Americans, or Muslims, wasn’t serious. What made it okay, at least in the minds of the Redditors, was that it was all satire. Allum Bokhari and Milo Yiannopoulos, two writers for the self-proclaimed intellectual haven of the alt-right, pose this question: “Are they [the Redditors] actually bigots? No more than death metal devotees in the 80s were actually Satanists. For them, it’s simply a means to fluster their grandparents” (Bokhari). In short, the answer to that question is they only do it for the “lulz.” We can see the social phenomena of emotional contagion once again in the sharing of Pepe memes, specifically Trump

supporting ones, across Reddit. Members of the alt-right began conspiring on how to shape their message of white nationalism to appeal to the “meme lords” of the internet. Thus, the subreddit “r/the_donald” was formed. As an unofficial campaign site, r/the_donald started off simply relaying news regarding Trump’s campaign. It turned into something no one can quite explain. It’s now a chaotic mix of trolls, white nationalists, genuine Trump supporters, and self-purported meme connoisseurs: all of which are virtually indistinguishable from each other. This relatively small site of around 176,000 members contributes a significant amount of alt-right chatter on Reddit. Per Jason Koebler, a writer for Motherboard, r/the_donald is “a subreddit that supports the candidacy of Donald Trump, but only because Trump’s tendency to say whatever the hell he wants has given voice to people with usually unspoken biases, has given easy scapegoats to people who blame immigrants and [M]uslims for their lot in life” (Koebler). The feed is constantly flooded with racist remarks, fake statistics, and a whole lot of Pepes. Even if the Redditors believe they’re simply doing it for the lulz, they’re really just pawns of a far larger, more sinister movement with genuine white nationalist views.

The rise of Pepe is not a trivial matter. The prevalence of this meme has had some very real consequences. Pepe has normalized hate speech. Pepe has brought horrid topics such as eugenics, ethnic cleansing, and Holocaust denial, into the mainstream. Pepe is more than just an abstract meme. Thanks to the teeming masses of Redditors, Tweeters, Facebookers, and Instagrammers who post offensive Pepe memes for the lulz, Pepe has become akin to the swastika or the rebel flag. Just like the swastika, a benevolent ancient Hindu symbol, and to a

certain extent, the rebel flag, also known as “The Battle Flag of the Army of Northern Virginia”, Pepe wasn’t created to serve the alt-right. But as Hitler and the Nazis hijacked the swastika, and the KKK repurposed an old confederate battle flag, the alt-right has taken hold of Pepe and made it into something far different than it was ever intended to be. Pepe memes with swastikas or confederate flags are commonplace now. Before the rise of Pepe, sharing a photo with an offensive symbol would be frowned upon. Now, however, it’s become okay thanks to the emotional contagion of Pepe. There’s been a clear uptick in hate speech since the election. Swastikas written on peoples cars. Children chanting “deport the Mexicans” in a school lunchroom. Women with hijabs being attacked on the subway (Yan). Hate speech has been normalized in large part by the prevalence of Pepe the frog.



(KnowYourMeme.com)

“First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak
out— Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not
speak out— Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to
speak for me.” (UCSB History).

The Holocaust didn't happen because every person in Nazi Germany hated Jews and wanted to see them die. Slavery didn't last for nearly 300 years in the United States because everyone believed that Africans were genetically inferior and that their only purpose was to serve the white man. Atrocities occur when people become apathetic. Good people shrug off anti-Semitic Pepe memes as nothing other than satire, just as good people in Nazi Germany shrugged off propaganda pieces depicting Jews as long-nosed, greedy, evil bankers that secretly controlled the world. Complacency leads to only one outcome: oppression. To view Pepe the Frog as innocuous is to view propaganda as powerless. Pepe wields real, tangible power in the form of normalizing radical opinions. Do not be fooled by its comedic nature. Those who share bigoted Pepe memes, even if it's for the lulz, are just as atrocious as the neo-Nazi white supremacists who actually ascribe to those views. Pepe is a very real, very effective form of propaganda. If left unchecked, offensive Pepe memes will change our pop culture and in turn bring the radical ideas of the white supremacist alt-right into the mainstream. The ones who treat Pepe as a joke may one day find themselves of the man in the above quotation. And, if the alt-right has its way, there will soon be no one left to speak for them.

Addendum: The Death of Pepe

[On May 8th, 2017, Pepe the Frog was officially killed off](#) by his creator Matt Furie in a single paged comic strip depicting him lying in an open casket. Despite all of the work Furie did to pull him back from the dark abyss that is the Alt-Right part of the internet, Pepe's fate was inevitable. Towards the end of his life, Pepe took a journey to France to become



[“Pepe Le Pen”](#), a frog doppelganger of former French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen. Ironically enough, Pepe was killed off the same weekend that Le Pen was soundly beaten by now-President Emmanuel Macron. Furie, like all of us, wished that simply putting Pepe to rest was enough to remove him from the hands of the Alt-Right. The nature of memes, and of those who use them, makes it impossible to truly erase a

meme from existence. Memes are indelible. They are ineradicable. The lifespan of a meme can only be shortened if said meme is no longer relevant or if it fails to produce “lolz.”

The second a meme is created, it belongs to the world. There is no ownership on the internet. There is no unsullied meme; no image or thought that has yet to be hijacked. When Pepe was announced dead, the denizens of 4chan immediately started brainstorming different ways in which to [appropriate Furie’s other characters in retaliation](#). To summarize the existence of Pepe, let us turn to the words of District Attorney Harvey Dent from the critically acclaimed film *The Dark Knight*: “You either die a hero or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain.”

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**“A Masterless Woman”:
Queens as Alternative Role Models**
Annmarie Mullen

When people ask me to name my favorite historical fiction novel, I always hesitate because I have two choices: *A Tale of Two Cities* or *Tarnish*. *A Tale of Two Cities* is Charles Dickens’ quintessential novel of the French Revolution, and the innocents caught up in the conflict. *Tarnish* is Katherine Longshore’s young adult historical fiction novel about the romance between Anne Boleyn, future queen of England, and Thomas Wyatt, Renaissance poet. One is a staple of the Western canon, the other unknown outside of particular online circles. One is written by a man, with a male protagonist, while the other is written by a woman, with a female protagonist. Answering with one would get me approving nods and expressions of agreement, while answering with the other would get me perplexed looks and quirked eyebrows. After all, *A Tale of Two Cities* lands on every list of 100 Most Influential Novels of All Time. *Tarnish* is just girly trash.

When something is seen as feminine—whether because it is written by a woman or marketed towards young girls or features predominantly female characters—it is also seen as frivolous, silly, or worthless. Because of the number of female authors and female-led stories, young adult and historical fiction is often seen as a lowly form of writing, about as worthwhile as fast food, something for silly girls to consume because their silly brains can’t handle higher forms of writing.

These responses to young adult and historical fiction negatively impact young girls, because those types of fiction are often the only types to offer positive, well-rounded female protagonists. When society shames young girls for their interests in these kinds of stories, girls find themselves cut off from potential role models, from relatable stories, and from a wider community of girls like themselves.

Representation matters, particularly for marginalized people. When I discovered Anne Boleyn, a whole new world opened up to me. Here stood a woman who hadn't been conventionally attractive, who had relied more on her wits and force of personality to get ahead, who had ambition and desire and cleverness and rage in equal measure, who remained true to herself and her convictions even until death. But such a woman was not commonplace in mainstream media. For us girls and women, unfortunately, representation typically comes in the form of hypersexualized, objectified female characters. By objectification, I mean the theory that women go through "a process of dehumanization" (Fox et al. 350) to become sexualized commodities for straight male pleasure. Once objectified, women "are not perceived as deserving of moral consideration" (350) because they are no more human than a car or a can of Coke, their only purpose to be used and abused by men.

Sexualization has a particularly insidious effect on young girls, as sexualized images of teenage girls saturate the media landscape. In a study of modern advertisements directed towards adolescent girls, researchers found that "the message from advertisers and the mass media to girls (as eventual women) is they should always be sexually available, always have sex on their minds, be willing to be dominated and even sexually aggressed against, and they will be gazed on as sexual objects" (Merskin 120), despite their youth and sexual inexperience. In

fact, that inexperience becomes part of the fantasy. Men do not want young girls to have role models who reflect the reality of being a young girl, but role models who reflect the fantasy of teenage girlhood—innocent enough to be sexually alluring, but aware enough to use their ‘wiles’ to seduce men. The media encourages these fantasies in their “fetishization of young girls’ innocence and their vulnerability to physical and emotional violence” (120). When girls look to the media for representation, they don’t see well-rounded girls with a wealth of interests or diverse personality traits; they see that men find their innocence and their pain sexually attractive.

Girls looking to other types of media for more positive, less objectifying media are derided for their search. Anything connected to women “is devalued...because women are seen to have little value” (“Patriarchy’s Magic Trick”) outside of their service to men. We see this stance in everything from the job market to the media—jobs done predominantly by women, like teaching or nursing, are undervalued, while media marketed or produced by women is cheap, trashy, or unintellectual (“Patriarchy’s Magic Trick”). The culture “imbues us with a sense of the inferiority of women, that tells us, in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, that anything a woman does is obviously easy, requires little effort, and is of minimal value to society” (“Patriarchy’s Magic Trick”). In terms of media, teenage girls often bear the brunt of this sexist derision. Anything teen girls enjoy, from boy bands to Starbucks to vampire novels to Ugg boots, becomes fair game for unrelenting, misogynistic criticism. In fact, teen girls cannot enjoy anything without someone writing a poorly thought-out thinkpiece or hastily drawn comic on how stupid said thing is.

The media must always remind girls that “their interests are vapid and trite” (Moss) because young girls unironically enjoying a piece of media constitutes the single greatest threat to society—or at least to men. Most often, the media directs their ire towards ‘young adult fiction,’ which actually has no codified distinction from regular ‘literature.’ One demonstrable difference lies in the fact that young adult fiction, like *The Hunger Games*, *Twilight*, and *Divergent*, often focuses on teenage heroines. Apparently male power fantasies like the Superman comics can be considered ‘real art,’ but female power fantasies will be looked down upon, begging the question, “How are they [teenage girls] supposed to grow up to be writers, thinkers, artists, lawyers, doctors or anything when they feel subhuman?” (qtd. in Moss). The answer appears to be—they aren’t supposed to grow up to achieve much of anything. Teenage girls are meant to be broken, either by the media’s unflagging hatred of anything marketed towards teen girls or by the media’s bombardment of sexualized female objects.

Female historical fiction novelists, and female historical fiction fans, receive a great deal of criticism for the apparent dangers of historical fiction. In building his case against the merits of historical fiction, author Toby Litt offers the hypothetical of “an entirely naïve reader who picks up a novel by Philippa Gregory...this reader...completely trusts the writer not to mislead her” (Litt 111). Not only does Litt mark Gregory for particular condemnation, but also imagines the potential reader as a girl. Indeed, Philippa Gregory has become the posterchild for trashy historical novels. Her novels, mostly centering on the women of the Wars of the Roses and Tudor-era England, are derided both by other historical novelists and by actual historians, although she has a large following among teenage girls (Bordo 228). That teenage girls show great interest

in Gregory's novels shouldn't come as a surprise because Gregory focuses almost exclusively on the experiences of teenage girls and young women during the 15th and 16th centuries.

I acknowledge there exist valid criticisms of Gregory's work. Personally, I don't appreciate Gregory's tendency to idolize some of her female characters at the expense of others, or her insistence on her (false) credentials as a historian. As an Anne Boleyn admirer, I vehemently disagree with the portrayal of Anne in her novels. However, I have to wonder if some of the most virulent criticism centers on Gregory because of her female focus. Susan Bordo devotes most of a chapter in her book, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, on the poor historical and literary qualities of Gregory's writing, while allowing other (male-focused) writers like Hillary Mantel or Margaret George more leeway. Hillary Mantel, in contrast to Gregory, receives equal parts praise and condemnation for her novels *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*, both of which center on Thomas Cromwell and utterly villainize Anne Boleyn. Mantel "is intent on building a case against Anne...as a cold, self-seeking manipulator" (Bordo 237) in contrast to the humanization of Cromwell, but because she writes in a more 'poetic' style (235), she receives a pass. Nitpicky as this may seem, especially for someone who, as I said, doesn't even enjoy Gregory's novels, I can't help but think that part of the disgust with Gregory comes from a woman writing about women for young women. Better that women writers center their stories on men, like Mantel, or don't write historical fiction at all as Litt suggests, rather than introduce young girls to historical female characters.

That people like Litt would encourage the isolation of teenage girls from fictional representations of powerful women, written by women, constitutes an injustice because these kinds of books can open up unique

avenues of thought and expression suited for young girls. Research has proven that fiction by itself promotes empathy (Fottrell), and historical fiction has even more benefits. Historical fiction can unearth history so often relegated to footnotes or esoteric graduate theses. As writer Meredith Turtis states, “Not everyone gets their stories told; and often, those [stories]...are about women” (Turtis). Historical fiction offers a unique opportunity for female authors to write about historical women and, by doing so, give young girls more role models to admire. Kathryn Lasky, author of the successful *Royal Diaries* series, saw her own historical fiction writing as offering this kind of empathetic outlet for young girls, as “these characters might be princess but they still, on many levels, had the same responses of ordinary twelve-year-old or fourteen-year-old girls” (Lasky). In a book centered on the teenage Elizabeth I, or the teenage Marie Antoinette, girls can read about characters who look or act like them, rather than being forced to empathize with, say, Louis XVI or Napoleon or whatever other historical male receives the majority of attention from historians. This kind of writing about women, for women, and by women can help young girls “see [them]selves in them, understand them, and perhaps most importantly, feel [they] know them” (Turtis). The ability to empathize with female characters is incredibly important for young girls who so often only have objectified, male-produced versions of women to look to for inspiration. That the female characters in these books were also once real women adds a further layer of importance because it can spur these girls to dig deeper into women’s history, a subject so often forgotten. Feminist media critic Susan Bordo tells of hearing several parents “praise [Philippa] Gregory for luring their teenaged daughters out of the mall and into an appreciation for history” (Bordo 228) because of Gregory’s knack for breathing life into historical

figures. Not only, do girls gain fictional role models, but they also discover a chain of historical woman of which they can become a part.

Historical fiction can offer the kind of alternative, well-rounded representations of women so lacking in mainstream media. Though the women may have some unsavory qualities, they also act more like real women than idealized fantasies. Feminist scholar Alison Light, for example, discusses her own experiences with historical fiction as mostly positive. Much of the historical fiction she read centered on the Tudors because of the number of powerful women at the time, including, but not limited to: the six wives of Henry VIII; Mary I, the first queen regnant of England; Mary, Queen of Scots, the infamous Scottish queen regnant; and the legendary Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen (Light 61). Light describes how female authors depicted these women as “‘Women of Substance’” (61). Despite the acknowledged perils of the time period, the authors portrayed the women not as hypersexualized damsels in distress, but as women and girls in charge of their own lives. In these kinds of books, girls are not encouraged to seek out traditional ‘female’ activities like marriage and childbearing. In fact, “marriage is often depicted as inadequate and oppressive, the realm of violence (including wife-beating and wife-murder) and of bad or nonexistent sex...Similarly, motherhood is far from idealized” (63). These kinds of depictions stand in direct opposition to the mainstream depiction of young girls and women existing purely for male consumption. Media forces sexual submission down young girls’ throats, trying to convince them that being the object of a man’s sexual or marital desires is the highest spot a woman can attain. In contrast, much female-centered historical fiction depicts marriage as an oppressive institution; for example, in Elizabeth I’s installment of *The Royal Diaries* series, she ruminates on the sad fates of her father’s wives, two of whom were

executed, including her own mother (Lasky 5-8). In Gregory's *The White Princess*, focused on the life of Elizabeth of York, the marriage between Henry VII and Elizabeth starts with rape and remains an abusive relationship throughout the novel. These books do not dress up marriage as the zenith of a woman's life, but rather as a potential danger, an important lesson for young girls to learn when they are so often discouraged from their own dreams in favor of 'settling down' with a man.

Historical fiction allows for a more nuanced portrayal of female sexuality, one where a woman can navigate her own sexuality while still participating in public life. The heroines of these books "do not get tied down by motherhood, are socially mobile...even get the top job" (Light 63). Their sexuality may bring about criticism from the males around them, but it doesn't topple them from their positions of power. The depictions of sexuality can also help young girls explore their own sexualities in a more controlled environment than mainstream media. Take Elizabeth I as an example. As a young girl living in her stepmother Catherine Parr's house after the death of her father, Thomas Seymour, Catherine's fourth husband became enamored with Elizabeth. His treatment of her could, in modern terms, be construed as sexual assault: once, he forced Catherine to hold Elizabeth down while he sliced her dress to shreds with his hunting knife (Sharnette). Many young girls have experienced unwanted sexual advances or contact. For young girls, "becoming accustomed to male scrutiny can be deeply traumatizing" (Light 65), and perhaps no young girl will ever become completely 'accustomed' to her own objectification. In fact, I would argue, no young girl should ever become 'accustomed' to her own objectification, because that would imply an acceptance of the validity of that objectification. Girls deserve to feel like humans, not objects, because they are humans, not

objects. However, in fiction, “what would be fraught with fear and guilt in actuality, is made painless in fiction” (65), so that young girls can work through their own experiences with older men through the fictional Elizabeth. They can also see a pathway to escape, a glimmer of hope that they will not necessarily be doomed to life under an oppressive male figure, but may someday become “a masterless woman whom we are asked to respect and admire” (65). Again, when we think about the interests of teenage girls, we see that society sets out to discourage girls from ever having the same ambitions as their male counterparts. But if Elizabeth, a royal girl living in a time of patriarchy not quite so different from our own, can find a way of retaining control over her body and her life, why can’t the girls of today?

Historical fiction does not, of course, come without problems. Although novelists do not have to recreate history perfectly in their books, there is a danger in taking too much liberty with facts. Bordo warns that “people are being culturally trained to have difficulty distinguishing between created ‘realities’ and the reality thing...and that’s the way advertisers and politicians want it” (Bordo 229). Surely the advertisers of sexualized female models would not object to historical novels presenting such sexualization as natural or empowering for teenage girls. Female authors are also not exempt from harming young girls with their depictions of historical women. *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Philippa Gregory’s most famous novel, “strikes a...clear-cut division between the good and the wicked woman, with Anne playing the role of the wicked witch and Mary [Boleyn] the long-suffering, virtuous heroine” (220). This novel reinforces the patriarchal virgin-whore dichotomy, where passive women get rewards, while ambitious and active women get damnation. Such a depiction hardly helps young girls. While women can be portrayed

as villains without it automatically being sexist, it would be much more revolutionary if *The Other Boleyn Girl* depicted a healthy and loving relationship between the two Boleyn sisters, instead of an aggressively competitive one.

It must also be mentioned that not every girl has the opportunities afforded to historical noblewomen. Although the patriarchy has affected women of all classes throughout history, it remains a fact that those of the upper-classes will often have more access to power than those of the lower-classes. While Elizabeth I can escape the sexual tyranny of her stepfather, such an escape is not always available to modern day girls of lower classes. Still, historical fiction can and should be a form of escapism for girls as much as superhero comics or action movies are a form of escapism for boys; and while historical women are not perfect role models, they are alternate ones that can and do allow young girls to consider other ways of existing in this world beyond 'sex object.'

While historical fiction is far from perfect, it offers something undeniably important for young girls—nuanced reflections of themselves. Young girls cannot have only sexualized objects for representation when young boys have everyone from Superman to John McClane to every United States president from whom to draw inspiration. Young girls need to know that they can be more than a receptacle for sex, that they can lead countries or spark revolutions or simply have control over their own lives. For me, I would not be the person I am today without historical fiction. Discovering Anne Boleyn inspired me. It thrilled me to know that it was possible for women to be human and messy and powerful, while also reminding me how far we still have to go as a society. After all, Anne's story did not end like a fairytale, unless that fairytale was *Bluebeard*. To deride my interest in Anne Boleyn and media about her as

nothing more than girly or trashy is to deny the importance of that kind of representation in my life. Every girl, no matter her race, sexuality, class, or religion, deserves to have their Anne Boleyn—and historical fiction can give them to her.

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Engaging with the Scholarly Conversation

**As British as Chicken Tikka Masala:
Hybridity and Multiculturalism in
*The Great British Bake Off***

Fiona Corcoran

Abstract

This essay examines the controversy that often surrounds *The Great British Bake Off* due to its diverse casting choices and status as a beloved British cultural symbol. Television is often an indicator of broader social attitudes and as such can be a revealing site of analysis. I draw on the postcolonial theory of hybridity to illustrate the connections between cultural fusion in food on reality television and cultural transformations and attempts to preserve national culture in Britain. I also describe the various perspectives on multiculturalism that have been displayed in the public discourse around *Bake Off* in recent years and draw parallels between backlash against the show's casting choices and responses to the integration of ethnic minorities in the West. *Bake Off* is representative of the negotiation of identity and cultural meaning and the larger debate on immigration and representation that has become omnipresent in former colonial powers.

Chicken tikka masala is now a true British national dish, not only because it is the most popular, but because it is a perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts external influences.

-Robin Cook, former British Foreign Secretary

If a show as gentle as *Bake Off* can stir up such a sludge of lazy misogyny in the murky waters of the internet, I hate to imagine the full scale of the problem.

–Ruby Tandoh, series 4 runner-up

Introduction

“On your marks, get set, BAKE!” This unusual battle cry is a hallmark of one of the most unusual shows on television. A highly technical baking competition where the judges toss around phrases like “crumb structure” and gently rebuke the contestants for over-proofing their baguette dough doesn’t sound like a ratings giant, but *The Great British Bake Off* has consistently garnered millions of viewers for the BBC. The fifth series finale was second only to England’s match against Uruguay during the 2014 World Cup in terms of viewers, bringing in an audience of 13.5 million compared to the 13.9 that tuned in to watch the game (“TV Events in 2014”).

A far cry from cut-throat culinary contests like *Top Chef* and *Chopped* that have dominated American food television, part of *Bake Off*’s draw is its almost cloying niceness. The show is set in a large marquee tent in the picturesque English countryside, with Union Jack bunting and vintage cookware abounding. The bulk of the action, such as it is, features the contestants worrying over the consistency of their *crème pâtissière* and staring anxiously into the ovens. If a mishap occurs, the unfortunate baker laughs it off or is comforted by one of the sympathetic hosts.

That a twee, idiosyncratic show like *Bake Off* could be the focus of anyone’s ire is counterintuitive. Aside from an incident of accidental custard theft in series 4, the baking itself is almost never the subject of controversy. However, the contestants often find themselves at the center

of a bitter public discourse as the real drama plays out in the press and online. Commentators in British tabloids and on social media frequently accuse *Bake Off* of valuing political correctness and the inclusion of “fashionable minorities” over merit (Letts, 2015). The backlash against what some consider the forced multicultural agenda of *Bake Off* reached a peak after Nadiya Hussain, a hijab-wearing mother of three, was declared the winner of series 6.

Whether or not such an agenda exists is secondary to the effect that the presence of people of color in reality television has had on the British viewing public. Britain’s colonial history intensifies the issue, as the integration of sizeable minorities of the nation’s ex-colonial subjects, notably the South Asian and African-Caribbean populations, has been a source of contention for decades. In fact, *Bake Off* can be taken as symbolic of the larger debate around multiculturalism and the preservation of a national culture that is taking place in Britain and the rest of the West.

The meeting of East and West is an old theme, and one that has given rise to a host of theories that attempt to explain and predict the transformative consequences of this convergence. Without fail, the first such meetings were marked by the violent suppression and exploitation of the peoples of Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa by European colonial powers. Edward Said termed this relationship, and the warped perceptions of the East that resulted from it, “Orientalism” in his 1978 book of the same name. The Orient is constructed in both spatial and essential opposition to the Occident, or the West, necessarily leading to the creation of a concept of “Self” in opposition to an “Other” (Said, 1978).

In the context of the British immigration debate, the Other becomes a foreign and unwanted presence on familiar soil, now a threat to the cohesive conception of the Self rather than a far-off curiosity. When

the Other is given access to an area deemed to be a part of the British Self, whether it be baking or the BBC, there is a reflexive backlash to the breach of the carefully maintained binary of colonizer and colonized.

Leaving behind the turbulent realm of public opinion, the dynamics of the competition itself are also worthy of consideration. By promoting, intentionally or otherwise, a space where ethnic minorities and the white British majority can interact and compete on equal footing, *Bake Off* acts as a catalyst for cultural hybridity. Multiple hybridities can be observed in *The Great British Bake Off*, the most obvious of which is culinary hybridity. The infusion of Indian flavors into a traditional British cake or pastry is not simply a reflection of the trend towards fusion cuisine, but an affirmation of the value of the culture that gave rise to those flavors. Culinary hybridity becomes a stand-in for a ubiquitous hybridity that occurs wherever there is interaction between disparate groups. *Bake Off* is significant because it places ex-colonial ethnic groups in a setting that has all the outward markings of a colonial, homogenous Britain, and yet it posits a reality wherein these groups have an unquestioned and valued position therein.

In my analysis of the postcolonial significance of *The Great British Bake Off*, I make use of the work of scholars (Bhabha, 1994, 1996; McLaren, 1995; Spivak, 1990, 1993) who attempt to delineate the complexities of identity and cultural meaning in reference to the legacy of colonialism. First, I discuss the physical characteristics of the show, in terms of both location and aesthetics, and the intentional framing of *Bake Off* as “quintessentially British.” Next, drawing on Homi K. Bhabha’s foundational work in hybridity theory, I introduce the concept of *Bake Off* as a third space in which homogeneity is challenged and cultural symbols are appropriated by the ex-colonial peoples of Britain. I then situate

competing approaches to multiculturalism within the discourse surrounding *Bake Off*; a conservative conception that mirrors the backlash towards diverse casting choices, a left-liberal perspective, and a critical multiculturalism that advocates for a new social order predicated on negotiation of cultural meaning between groups. Lastly, I examine the ramifications of *Bake Off's* brand of hybridity with regards to British culture.

Location, Location, Location

Early in the evolution of the field of postcolonial studies, scholars often disagreed on what the term “postcolonial” signified. A semantic and temporal interpretation of the term would suggest that it narrowly refers to the time following the exit of a colonial power from a colonized territory. However, the widely accepted interpretation of postcolonial, as first laid out in the influential 1989 handbook *The Empire Writes Back*, encompasses literature and theory that deconstructs the discourses and power structures of colonialism during and after actual imperial dominance (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989; Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996). As a result of this looser conceptualization, postcolonialism can be considered both “a textual effect and a reading strategy” (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996, p. 2). In other words, a text may have been intentionally constructed with themes of postcolonialism in mind, or postcolonial themes can be interpreted within it as a result of the wide-reaching ramifications of colonialism. Scholars analyze the works of imperialist authors such as Conrad and Kipling alongside the novels of those they colonized for this reason. The fact that these men could not have intended their writing to be examined through a postcolonial lens does not negate

the fact that they give insight into the colonial mindset and the colonizer's split perception of the colonized.

Reality television is a prolific text through which phenomena such as hybridity can be observed. As in the case of *Bake Off*, reality television can also serve as a microcosm of shifting social attitudes. Although the authenticity of interactions and judging outcomes on the show are rendered questionable by the editing process and the need to cater to an audience, the editing itself is a site of analysis. The character a show creates for itself is often as telling as the unscripted elements within it.

By all appearances, *Bake Off* is empire in miniature. The baking tent has been pitched on many a picturesque country estate throughout Britain over its seven series run. Since 2014, the marquee has found a home on the expansive grounds of Welford Park, a favorite hunting lodge of King Henry VIII, and before that at Harptree Court, a Grade II listed building of special historic interest (Vincent, 2013, 2016). The competition is intercut with footage of sprawling lawns and the occasional gamboling lamb or squirrel. As a cultural signifier, the Pastoral, denoted by idealized depictions of livestock and open land, is as identifiable with colonial Britain as high tea or cricket. The stately estate surrounded by green pasture harkens back to a time when the brutal expansion of empire and the exploitation of foreign wealth made such a lifestyle possible. Portraying the Pastoral on the page or onscreen is a self-conscious exercise in escapism, existing to invoke nostalgia for a bygone era (Sharrad, 1991). Even the interior of the tent recalls a cheery farmhouse kitchen from the last century. The adoption of the aesthetics of empire and the representation of an ideal past that is rooted in the oppression of the Other can often function as a renewal of that oppression. In many cases, "the schizoid convention of the Pastoral in

which the countryside stands for court, peasant for aristocracy, idyll for economic history, and so on, extends to the...form itself being a cover-up for cultural politics” (Sharrad, 1991, p.114). Inside the *Bake Off* tent, the fancifully-named judges Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood are akin to regents. Berry’s highest compliment for a particularly successful bake: “Queen Victoria would be proud” (Beattie, 2015, September 16).

Culinary Hybridity

The colonial nostalgia of *Bake Off* is part and parcel with its mainstream success in Britain. The “political correctness” accusations and the backlash against the show arose in reaction not to the program itself, but to the higher proportion of people of color appearing as contestants in the later seasons. In series 6, four out of the twelve contestants were people of color, a high for *Bake Off*. The presence of people of color in an aesthetically British colonial setting creates a split perception of the Other that Homi K. Bhabha terms “ambivalence” (1994).

Ambivalence is the duality with which the colonizer inevitably comes to view the colonized. The term was originally used in reference to the cultural consequences of colonization for both the oppressed and the oppressors. While Edward Said focused on the colonizer, and postcolonial scholars such as Frantz Fanon on the colonized, Bhabha emphasized “the mutualities and negotiations across the colonial divide” (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). An inevitable consequence of the purported *mission civilisatrice* undertaken by European powers in the 19th and 20th centuries was the introduction of symbols of colonial authority into the cultural lives of the colonized Other. The colonizers attempt to strengthen their presence and authority by creating “a class of interpreters between [them] and the millions who [they] govern” (Macaulay as cited in Bhabha, 1994, p. 86).

By allowing this class of “mimic men” conditional access to the education and culture of the colonizer, it was assumed that the colonized population at large would become complacent and amenable to the imperial regime (Naipaul as cited in Bhabha, 1994, p. 88).

Colonial dominance is dependent on an essentialist construction of colonial Self in opposition to colonized Other as it is a fixed stereotype that promotes the inferiority of the colonized Other and allows for subjugation and exploitation. The stereotype is both what is already “known” about the colonized and something that must be reproduced and held constant as a justification of colonization (Bhabha, 1994). In order for the mimicry of colonial manner to be effective in maintaining the Other as a subject of difference, as inferior, it must be an imperfect imitation. The resultant class of people “can neither be ‘original’ – by virtue of the act of repetition that constructs it – nor ‘identical’ – by virtue of the difference that defines it” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 107). The colonizer inadvertently creates a hybrid of their own identity and that of the Other. In this way, the symbols of colonial authority, intended to promote compliance and a degree of assimilation, have a distinctly different effect.

A similar hybridity can be considered a driving force of *Bake Off*. Woven throughout postcolonial literature, in works written by both colonizers and the colonized, is the “sudden, fortuitous discovery of the English book” (Bhabha, 1994, p.102). The book acts as a stand in for the civilizing effect that the colonizer believes it has on the colonized. The colonial subject, having happened upon or been introduced to the book, is altered by the interaction, rendered more acceptable and less Other. An unintended consequence is that the book itself is subverted and turned into “grounds of intervention” where the negotiation of other cultural symbols can take place (Bhabha, 1994, p. 112).

In order to understand this concept's relevance to *Bake Off*, call it an English *cookbook* instead. The incorporation of Indian flavors into traditional British and European recipes is a common occurrence on the show and is looked upon favorably by the judges. The success of series 5 contestant Chetna Makan exemplifies this trend. Chetna, who moved from Mumbai to Britain in 2003, used distinctly Indian flavors in the majority of her bakes. Notable examples include her mango chutney-filled bread centerpiece, masala chai baklava, crispy lentil kachori, and chocolate and mango eclairs. The “explosion of spice” in her creations was often noted approvingly by Paul Hollywood. The judges’ enthusiasm for unusual flavors led Chetna to take fourth place in her season and later first place in the 2016 *Bake Off* Christmas special.

Simply by gaining access to the culinary and cultural platform of *Bake Off*, Chetna renegotiated the meaning of British cooking and the “English cookbook.” Her bakes were not strictly British, nor were they strictly Indian, but a hybrid of two distinct culinary traditions. In this sense, Chetna can be viewed as one of the mimic men mentioned earlier. She makes concessions to the inherently British nature of the show, while subverting the competition by altering the symbols of cultural authority—in this case, the canon of British cuisine—and as a result cannot be easily relegated to the category of Other in the eyes of the ambivalent audience.

A real-world example of hybridity in this vein can be seen in the “BrAsian” architectural forms that arose from conscious trade-offs between identity and location made by the South Asian immigrant population of Britain (Kalra, Sayyid & Ali, 2008, p. 386). In the construction of the Gujarat Hindu Society Temple of Preston, Lancashire, brick and slate roofing was combined with a beehive-esque *shikhara*

dome supported by four marble pillars, both an allowance for the sensibilities of the native residents of the neighborhood and a statement of cultural difference (Kalra, Sayyid & Ali, 2008). Like the unexpected flavor of mango in an éclair, the temple and its members were integrated into the cultural life of the neighborhood and a hybrid was created in the process.

Contrast Chetna's success with that of her fellow series 5 contestant Norman Calder. A retired naval officer from the northeast coast of Scotland, Norman often came under fire for playing it safe and his bakes were regularly labeled bland and simple. The issue was not with his technical skills, as his bakes were usually well-crafted and uniform, but with his adherence to traditional British recipes. To Norman, adding pesto to bread and making a basic tarte au citron was exotic fare. To the judges, it did not meet the standards of culinary hybridity that Chetna and past contestants had set. The hybrid is held up as a superior form than the British original.

Hybrid identity exists in a liminal "in-between" that Homi K. Bhabha styles "third space" (1996, p. 54). The existence of the third space challenges the belief that culture is ever truly homogenous and allows for the appropriation and translation of cultural symbols to create new meaning (Papastergiadis, 1997; Rutherford, 1990). A "median category" emerges within this space that is neither completely new nor completely familiar (Said, 1978, p. 58). The *Bake Off* tent serves as a third space in this respect, located within the British Pastoral but at the same time supporting the integration of the Other. Hybrid identity within the third space acts as a "lubricant" in the convergence of cultures (Papastergiadis, 1997, p. 261).

Multiple Multiculturalisms

Multiculturalism has become something of an empty signifier, notable for its lack of meaning and catch-all nature. It seems to imply homogeneity and heterogeneity at once, both one unified culture and several equal yet distinct cultures (Bhabha, 1996; Frello, 2013). Some theorists have disavowed use of the term entirely, pointing to its frequent co-option by the State in nation-building and assimilationist projects (Gunew, 1997). Multiculturalism is often more efficient in erasing pressing issues of cultural prejudice than in elevating marginalized communities or critiquing the imperial structures that lead to said prejudice. When an op-ed writer complains about forced multiculturalism, the nebulous nature of the term makes it difficult to determine what exactly is being complained about.

The division of opinion within the viewing public, between acceptance of the third space and rejection of the multiculturalism which it is taken to represent, is augmented by the portrayal of real narratives and personalities as opposed to the fictional constructs usually found on television. To those who feel threatened by the increased presence of ethnic minorities in their daily lives, their presence on television is perceived as a further infringement. The different perceptions of *Bake Off* can be outlined through Peter McLaren's analysis of the distinct categories of multiculturalism.

Conservative multiculturalism traces its roots to colonial essentialism. While outwardly distancing themselves from scientific white supremacy by touting the cognitive equality of the races, conservative multiculturalists present whiteness as the absence of race and the "common culture" to which other ethnicities should aspire (McLaren, 1995, p. 92). The onus of assimilation into the dominant white

culture is placed on the racial Other, with the expectation that all markers of otherness are removed in the process. The vitriol directed at series 6 winner Nadiya Hussein reflects this expectation. Wearing a hijab made her the most visibly Other of the ethnic minorities among the contestants and therefore the target of the most hatred. A columnist at the *Daily Mail* went so far as to suggest that Flora Shedden, a young middle-class white woman, was passed over in the semi-final round because she was not as politically correct as Nadiya, a Muslim mother, Tamal, a gay Indian doctor, or Ian, a stay-at-home father. The columnist suggested that Flora might have made it to the final episode if she had baked a “chocolate mosque” instead of a chocolate carousel in the showstopper challenge (Lee, 2015). The implication of this accusation is that Nadiya did not reach the final, and later win the season, because of her own baking merit but because the creators of *Bake Off* wanted to project a certain image.

Liberal multiculturalism posits an intellectual equality among racial populations but, unlike conservative multiculturalism, attributes social inequality to lack of access to educational and social opportunities rather than to cultural deprivation or weak values in ethnic communities (McLaren, 1995, p. 96). In this iteration of multiculturalism, there is a belief that the modification of institutions can lead to a more equal playing field. Nevertheless, the standard of equality to be reached is still associated with white cultural norms and the systems that produced the conditions of inequality are not interrogated. There is an implication of a “special interest” that exists in opposition to the general interest (Mohan as cited in Gunew, 1997, p. 26). The representation of people of color is the special interest in this context, as opposed to a merit-based approach to selecting contestants. The complaints of a contestant line-up that is unrepresentative of the “humdrum, plain-as-white-flour, Middle-English”

majority that is assumed to have applied for the show would fall into this category (Letts, 2015). In other words, liberal multiculturalism desires a diversity of fixed identities rather than a hybridity of identity.

Both liberal and left-liberal multiculturalism tend towards Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of "strategic essentialism," which repurposes essentialism as a political tactic of representation (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007; Spivak, 1990). Left-liberal multiculturalism is more cognizant of cultural difference as opposed to a false common culture, but inevitably relies on essentialism to portray difference. An individual's status as a member of a marginalized group is taken as authority to speak for the whole of the group and a single authentic group experience is posited (McLaren, 1995). While acknowledging that colonialist application of essentialism is negative, Spivak maintained that essentialist ideas are useful with regards to postcolonial peoples rebuilding the sense of value and identity that was lost during the imperial period (Ashcroft et al., 2007). It can function as a temporary outward-facing erasure of internal group difference in order to achieve specific goals (Spivak, 1990). With regards to representation on television, this attitude manifests itself in a "checking boxes" approach to diversity. When, as has been common in the past, a season of *Bake Off* only includes one member of a certain ethnic group and places the responsibility of representing the entire group on that contestant's shoulders, the opportunity becomes reductive rather than beneficial. Spivak herself later abandoned the concept due to its widespread misuse as an argument for essentialism (Danus, Jonsson & Spivak, 1993).

If *Bake Off* intentionally pursues any form of multiculturalism, it is this one. Anna Beattie, creator of *Bake Off*, explained that contestants are first selected based on their ability to bake both breads and cakes,

then on their ability to bake and talk at the same time, and finally on whether the final line-up is a “representative mix” of Britain (Khomami, 2015). Claiming that a single Indian woman on a British television show can be in any way representative of the entire South Asian British population is absurd. Although ethnic minorities may enter the *Bake Off* tent, the complexities of everyday life do not. The Britain rendered onscreen is post-racial in the extreme, a space where distinctions are erased and the main determinant of success is not skin color but talent. Many scholars have concerns with this approach, as portraying a utopian, hybrid society where such a one does not exist “leaves all the old problems of class exploitation and racist oppression unresolved” (Werbner as cited in Kraidy, 2002). It’s questionable if anything that is packaged by a major broadcaster and sold to the public in the form of brand name cooking tie-ins can be truly revolutionary. However, concessions must be made to the television format. While it may be impossible to portray the breadth of the British minority experience within the confines of the *Bake Off* third space, there is still the potential for subversive hybridity.

Peter McLaren (1997) presents an alternative to the established forms of multiculturalism which he terms “critical multiculturalism.” Instead of advancing accommodation to the existing social order, critical multiculturalism envisions the creation of a new social order as a result of the struggle over meaning and culture that is intrinsic to interaction between groups. McLaren frames his idea in terms of poststructuralism, but his work is deeply linked and referential to conceptions of hybridity and cultural negotiation within the third space (Gunew, 1997; McLaren, 1997). Although the creators of *Bake Off* are approaching multiculturalism in a left-liberal format, if at all, they are unintentionally

bringing about a third space which allows for a hybrid critical multiculturalism.

Conclusion

The controversy surrounding *The Great British Bake Off* does not exist in a vacuum. Television is both a bellwether for social conflict and a powerful reflection of existing tensions. It can also serve as a normalizing force, bringing the average viewer into contact with cultures and practices they are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with. Due to the strong links between what is shown onscreen and what occurs in daily life, connections can be made between the pressing political issues of the day and the conversation surrounding popular television shows. The discourse on multiculturalism, both for and against, that has followed *Bake Off* throughout its run on BBC One is indicative of the larger debate on immigration and representation taking place in Britain.

As is often the case, the subtler and more transformative forces of hybridization that are at work within *Bake Off* go unnoticed. Contestants like Nadiya Hussein and Chetna Makan didn't succeed in spite of their culture and traditions, but because of them. It's no accident that Nadiya's winning bake was a classic British lemon drizzle cake adorned with a red, white, and blue sari (Beattie, 2015, October 7). The symbolism is hard to miss. However, these signifiers of cultural negotiation are overlooked by *Bake Off* malcontents in favor of challenging the very presence of ethnic minorities on mainstream British television. The exaggerated colonial British aesthetic of the show both raises the stakes for viewers who feel as if the national culture is disappearing and strengthens the potential for meaningful hybridity.

The main limitation of this research, and of most hybridity theory, is that hybridity is understood to be both a ubiquitous condition and a revolutionary occurrence. It is thought to be both subversive and commonplace in any interaction between cultures. The definition of hybridity is often so broad that it can be shaped to fit any criteria. It is difficult to quantify the effect that *Bake Off's* hybridity has had on the show's audience simply because there is no set boundary to what can or should be considered hybridity. I have focused mainly on culinary hybridity because of the nature of *Bake Off*, but factors like language and dress could have also been analyzed.

An interesting continuation of this research would be to analyze reality and reality competition television shows produced in other Western countries in order to discern parallels between popular culture discourse and national social discourse. This could be fruitful in the same vein as my analysis of *Bake Off*, especially in reference to the growing nativist sentiment across the West. The legacy of colonialism is such that contemporary social attitudes almost always have their roots in the original historically disruptive meetings between East and West, between the colonizers and the colonized.

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Don't Hold Your Breath for Highway Tunnels: Assessing the Resurgence of the Urban Tunnel Phenomenon

Dana DuPuis

Introduction

Anyone who has spent much time trying to get around in Los Angeles can tell you how horrible traffic congestion can get. In a global study of over 1,000 cities, LA placed highest in average hours a commuter could expect to spend in congestion per working year at 104.1 hours (“Global Traffic...”). This statistic likely came as no surprise to the many residents like Phil Rivera, whose 3.2 mile commute takes 30-40 minutes — only slightly faster than walking (Yu). The same study revealed the top 10 most congested American cities have only gotten more congested since 2015. Unless this trend is to continue, city planners have to adopt new visions for commuter traffic.

One such vision came on December 17th, 2016 when billionaire inventor Elon Musk angrily tweeted “Traffic is driving me nuts. Am going to build a tunnel boring machine and just start digging.” Six hours later, and presumably free of the early morning rush hour that prompted the tweet, he reaffirmed his road rage fueled plan (Tracy). By the end of January, a hole had been excavated on SpaceX property in LA; Musk and the tech writers who idolize him proclaimed the experiment underway (Marshall). One of President Trump’s infrastructure advisors, Richard LeFrak, hailed Musk’s initiative on national television (Belvedere). After

the digging began, in an interview with *Wired*, Musk provided some logical reasoning behind a move underground:

If you think of tunnels going 10, 20, 30 layers deep (or more), it is obvious that going 3D down will encompass the needs of any city's transport of arbitrary size... You have tall buildings, they're all 3D, and then everyone wants to go into the building and leave the building at a same time... On a 2D road network, that obviously doesn't work, so you have to go 3D either up or down. And I think probably down. (Marshall)

The urban automobile tunnel movement has taken firm root across the nation in the late 20th and early 21st century before Musk's personal project, from Boston's Big Dig to Seattle's Highway 99 excavation. Lok Home, President and CEO of the Robbins Company, a prominent tunnel boring machine (TBM) cutterhead manufacturer, wrote a public response to Musk's ambitions on his site's blog, praising him for "getting the general public to think about solving traffic by going underground." At their core, these projects offer a palatable solution to the everyday troubles of traffic and the environmental impact of countless cars idling in the middle of the city — out of sight, out of mind.

The reality on the ground (or underground as the case may be) is far more complicated than simply boring through the earth. While this project and ones like it appear to promise much, they oversimplify the interconnected systems that make up traffic, and will further damage urban areas. Not only is Musk's specific tunnel scheme questionable, so too is the entire concept of underground highways. I will detail the significant challenges urban tunnels face before their opening, specifically

their cost of construction and legal barriers.¹ In valuing these costs, I will also assess the benefits these tunnels provide in both environmental and traffic impacts, as well as the expected beneficiaries. Although high capacity car traffic tunnels have certain advantages, their duration of construction and extreme cost severely limit immediate application. In some cases these tunnels have improved accessibility, however their introduction often brings many disadvantages, and their advantages are mostly only felt by commuters and other nonresidents.

Can you dig it? Construction Barriers

While Musk has technically broken ground on his own property, the immediate scale of the project is far smaller than his tweets first let on. The tunnel in progress today is by no means a cross-city highway — more appropriately it should be called a cross-boulevard alley, as its only effective purpose will be to link the employee parking garage with the SpaceX facility by tunneling under Crenshaw Boulevard (“Elon Musk’s...”). Admittedly, it will provide an opportunity for Musk to develop technological improvements he desperately needs to make a cross-city tunnel effective. During a site visit to a tunneling machine in Washington, DC, Musk asked the machine operator if a tunneling goal of mile per week was possible (Chafkin). That Bloomberg reporter Max Chafkin was invited to attend this site visit calls into question Musk’s mile per week goal — was he exaggerating his question because he knew it would attract

¹ When discussing the construction and planning of these tunnels, highway and transit tunnels can be used interchangeably because they follow the same important construction procedures, however as explored in the second half of this paper, the impact of automobile tunnels is entirely different.

more attention? It is entirely unclear how seriously he can be taken,² or if the entire project is nothing more than a publicity stunt to generate more headlines for SpaceX and Tesla, Musk's other ventures.

If Musk is to be taken at face value, however, a mile per week would be an incredible improvement, at almost 2,000% higher than the machine's current speed (Chafkin). Construction of tunnels is notoriously slow, from Boston's 15 year long "Big Dig" to San Francisco's projected 9 year long Central Subway Project (Hofherr; SFMTA). Construction times greatly increase when engineers account for the incredibly varied geological strata which must be bored through. In a Robbins Company white paper, employee Noah Johnson emphasized the difficulties his company faced when working in San Francisco, particularly when they had to switch out the cutterheads of their TBMs (127). According to the US Army Corps of Engineers, seismic activity along tunnel routes and "[t]unnel damage [caused by earthquakes] is expected," of particular note for LA and other cities near fault lines (124). Groundwater reservoirs and underground gasses must also be accounted for before construction begins, as well as carefully watched for during boring (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 38, 79).

Drilling in urban environments is considerably more difficult than tunneling that takes place outside of cities, since the impact of tunneling must not seriously impede the lives of the city's citizens. Although they function out of sight of the surface, no tunnel is bored in a vacuum. The existing layer of underground piping and access tunnels — which are

² Chafkin does note that Musk has also suggested nuking Mars to Stephen Colbert and developing an *Iron Man* suit for the US military, "outlandish statements designed to troll the press or simply amuse himself." It is possible that Musk's Boring Company will dissolve once the employee tunnel is complete.

often either unmapped or poorly mapped — is far denser than many initially believe, and must also be avoided or moved out of the way with little interruption to life on the surface (Graham 284). Residents are also forced to cope with increased traffic and noise near entrances and exits of the tunnel during construction. The complexity of removing the bored earth further limits the capacity to tunnel. With increased tunneling speed, speed of waste removal must increase. A mathematical analysis of Musk's goal clearly demonstrates the challenges he faces. If his company did innovate in TBM technology enough to accomplish tunneling the length of a mile in one week, he could end up filling a single 20 ton hauling truck (Fig. 1) every second. If any significant part of this monumental increase in traffic is felt on surface streets, the project would quickly become politically doomed. For widespread tunneling to become practical, advocates still face substantial technological barriers before their implementation can become widespread.

Hey, that's my dirt you're digging! Legal Barriers

Urban tunnels (like any urban construction) face a multitude of legal challenges. Whether through simple negotiation or eminent domain, tunnel projects must currently acquire permission to drill beneath private property from each landowner (Marshall). In a city, this can mean thousands of households and businesses must be at least officially included in the project's planning. For many urbanites, these kinds of projects seem inexorable, but wealthier neighborhoods are often sources of extreme resistance. LA's subway system was prevented from tunneling beneath Beverly Hills High School for almost a decade thanks to consistent legal challenges from its wealthy neighbors (Fig. 2) (Broverman). Neal Broverman with the LA Magazine unsympathetically

blames the city's Westside for unnecessarily halting expansion of public transit, ostensibly for safety concerns, but with the unstated fear that "they [city officials] won't be able to build more underground parking." Tunnel projects have to be presented to city officials in a way that convincingly argues their value to constituents, which can be difficult if the tunnel is oriented towards providing commuter support.

Objections from wealthy citizens to use of their underground space is not limited to public officials. In his book *Vertical*, Newcastle University's Professor Stephen Graham explains how extremely wealthy citizens in London are increasingly turning to "iceberg houses," which occupy more underground area than on the surface, "like the clichéd arch-villains of a James Bond movie" (313-314). These basements usually serve lavish entertainment purposes, equipped with "bowling alleys, swimming pools... billiard rooms," and various other diversions (Graham 314). One



Fig. 1 M917 dump truck(Freightliner LLC)
If work continues every day of the week for a mile tunnel with a 30 foot diameter, and using volume and weight standards used by the US Army, excavators would fill 44 of these trucks every minute, totaling 5 million yd³ of dirt and stone, weighing up to 8.75 million tons.

need not look across the Atlantic to find these domestic bunkers, as the trend has spread to some wealthy neighborhoods in the US as well, including the Hamptons and Silicon Valley (Higgins and Scheinin). Building below ground allows homeowners and developers to inflate the value of houses, while circumventing height or historical regulations. This inversion of the traditional view of the basement as a storage room

invokes a perceptual shift in the value of underground space. As knowledge of these constructions spreads, leaders of tunnel projects should expect more resistance from wealthy neighborhoods, who may want to hold construction off when faced with the possibility of their own personal underground complexes.³ Like many other NIMBY-style resistances, serious objections to tunnels should be expected from wealthy residents who perceive a risk to their sovereignty. The usefulness of such objections appears to be decreasing, especially when they



Fig. 2 (“Route of the Purple Line extension”) Here the Beverly Hills obstructionism is clearly demonstrated. The LA Metro’s Purple Line is currently composed of only 2 stops unique to that line. The other five light rail lines have an average of 16 stops unique to each line (“Metro Rail & Busway”).

interfere with a project the rest of the community agrees upon as necessary. Before highway tunnels become mainstream, national property rights reform would likely be required, a process which could take decades.

³ Musk in particular probably need not worry about iceberg-houses interfering with his LA tunnel — instead he should worry about the earthquakes interfering with the iceberg-houses.

Where's the Air? Environmental Impact

Before more of these tunnels are constructed, it is vital to assess their impacts. One possible (yet traditionally unexpected) impact of highway tunnels is their potentially decreased environmental footprint. Since tunnel air must be circulated to keep their internal atmospheres safe for cars and their passengers, they provide a unique opportunity for capturing of car exhaust. Brusselen et al. demonstrated this ability when modeling a proposed project to replace an existing “open air ring road” in Antwerp, Belgium with a “filtered tunneled ring road” in a study funded by both the Belgian government and the tunnel’s developers, Ringland (1). They predicted measurable, “considerable health gains for the approximate 352,000 inhabitants living in a 1,500 meter perimeter around the current open air ring road,” giving tunnel proponents a trendy, concrete benefit they could present to city councils and state governments (2). The ring road of a city as large as Antwerp will always have traffic on it, regardless of the money poured into public transit, so arguably planners should make some effort to contain its pollution.

Antwerp’s ring road is not the only case of a tunnel being touted as the more environmentally friendly or healthy option. Sydney, Australia’s Cross-City Tunnel, (CCT) was also marketed to residents and officials as a way to filter downtown car exhaust. Ultimately, the project has come under fire as an example of what experts like Professors Graham Haughton and Phil McManus have called “rollout neoliberalism,” in which a government and project advocates “work[ed] with the grain of greater public sensitivity regarding environmental and social concerns to gain public acceptance” (91). The private sector oversold the value of the CCT to Sydney and Australia at large as a healthy and environmental option when in fact it did little to promote either issue. The evidence for tunnels

as an environmentally healthy option are mostly based on projections and modelling, since it is difficult to quantify the exact impact these kinds of improvements can have unless particular attention is paid before and after construction, and of course, the accuracy of these models heavily depends on their origin and funding.

Breaking Free of Gridlock: Traffic Impact

The picture painted of highway tunnels so far has been particularly bleak, but I have so far almost exclusively focused on their indirect effects and problems of construction, not their actual effectiveness at their true goal: to ease surface level traffic congestion. Like their environmental impact, their effect on traffic cannot be stated with absolute certainty. As stated above, tunnels do not exist in a vacuum, and many variables affect traffic congestion. However, by examining a variety of tunnels, hopefully a greater picture will emerge.

Few would argue the failure of the Sydney CCT to mitigate traffic. Surface traffic increased, entrances lacked proper signage, and the projected usage far exceeded the actual result, meaning the tunnel was far less profitable than originally claimed (97). Through collusion or circumstance a number of free alternative surface roads closed in what the public saw as an attempt to extort toll money, further worsening congestion and public opinion (Haughton and McManus 98-99). Estimates for ridership were so inaccurately low that the tunnel has changed owners three times, and its current owner, Transurban, is reportedly seeking to force the Australian government to lower the toll (O'Sullivan). Haughton and McManus caution against Australia's preference for neoliberal "public-private partnerships," (PPPs) which have also been suggested in the US, most notably by the previously

discussed Presidential advisor LeFrak (Haughton and McManus 102, Belvedere). These PPPs “rhetorically [present] failure as success and opposition as ‘short-sighted,’” claiming to be “reflexive” and “open to adaptation and change” despite neglecting or ignoring “opportunity costs” and regulation until a crisis point is reached and the government is forced to intervene (Haughton and McManus 102). In the case of the CCT, government officials were incorrectly convinced that a need for the tunnel existed and have been saddled with a piece of expensive and underperforming infrastructure.

Boston’s Big Dig also presents itself as an important example, most notably how profoundly its frustrations embedded themselves into the municipal memory. It’s planning and construction were fraught with costly missteps, wasting time, money, and the life of an innocent citizen (Hofherr). Despite the projects failures, however, public planning experts have identified the Big Dig as part of a broader renewal movement in US infrastructure characterized by a “privatization of political power... ironically... stemm[ing] from popular efforts during the 1960s and ‘70s to restore citizen control to transportation planning” (Fein 48-49). In her article “Can We Talk Rationally About the Big Dig Yet?” with Boston.com, Justine Hofherr explains that for all the benefits the project brought to the city, “the numerous snafus that occurred tend to overshadow.” Hofherr identifies three lasting legacies of the Big Dig: financial, environmental, and public relations disasters — none of which relate to the day to day traffic of the city, which serves as an indicator of popular value of the Big Dig’s traffic contribution.

According to the Boston Globe at the time of the Big Dig’s opening in 2006, however, the average time to travel through the city center decreased from 19.5 minutes to 2.8 minutes, and the number of people

living within a 40 minute drive of Logan International Airport increased by 800,000. The discrepancy between the popular perceived value and the measurable traffic impact is a direct result of the poor project management. If tunnel advocates want tunnels to spread across urban areas, they will need to avoid the precedent set by the Big Dig, and accurately estimate project costs, as well as ensure construction is carried out smoothly.

The Holland and Lincoln Tunnels connecting New York City to Jersey City underneath the Hudson River have been vital to the health of both regions since their constructions in the early 20th century (Gillespie 49, 57). Their age makes them two of the oldest urban tunnels in the world, with the Holland Tunnel predating the Big Dig and subsequent tunnels by more than 60 years. These tunnels provide insight into their long term impact, free from the complaints of construction. While both entrances are located in city centers, the tunnels are primarily used by commuters driving to New York from New Jersey's suburbs during morning rush hour and returning home after work (Gillespie 137). In his book about the two tunnels, Angus K. Gillespie⁴ notes that "predictably, this is the group that is least satisfied with their tunnel experiences," and associates it with a cultural desire to own a large enough house to support a family (137-138). When these urban employees are unable to buy near the city, they end up purchasing houses increasingly further away from their places of employment. In a metropolis like New York City, this can mean commuters live 90 minutes away from their workplaces, leading to getting up earlier and leaving work later (138, 141).

⁴ A professor of American Studies at Rutgers University

But what do drivers think of their experiences with the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels? Congestion inside the tunnel is rarely a problem. Instead, frustration and delays are found on their approach roads, which bottleneck the tunnels (Gillespie 149). One Port Authority cop described the approach roads as “stuff[ing] one hundred pounds of potatoes into a seventy-five pound sack” (Gillespie 149). If city planners want to expand the tunnels to accommodate the extra 25 pounds of potatoes, they would either have to shut down the tunnels to expand them, or construct additional tubes. As discussed in the next section, however, this approach will only invite more commuters and bring more cars. When critically evaluated, these two tunnels provide the same tradeoff as many other highway infrastructure improvements, such as increased access to more surface streets with the cost of enabling a commuter culture and worsening surface street congestion near its entrances.

Who’s down there?

Taking a closer look at the people who use these tunnels helps in evaluating the tunnel movement. While there are no significant studies of the demographics of highway tunnel users, certain characteristics about the majority of the group can be assumed because of the tunnels’ requirements. First, users must be using a car to take advantage of these tunnels, and second, they must be able to afford any additional fees, such as tolls, that using the tunnel may incur. As is the case with the Holland and Lincoln tunnels previously discussed, if a tunnel connects a city center with a suburban periphery, typical users will be commuters or other visitors to the city. Urban residents stand to gain very little from tunnels such as these, except through the indirect benefit of having commuters working in their communities, which some might argue is no

benefit at all. In her renowned book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs dedicates an entire chapter to the “Erosion of cities or attrition of automobiles” (338- 371). Jacobs claims that “increased city accessibility by cars is *always* accompanied by declines in service of public transportation,” presenting increases in car accessibility as fundamentally opposed to increased public transit accessibility (352). By expanding surface streets, planners invite more cars to fill the vacuum, and close that space off from public transit, bikes, and pedestrians. If expanding surface roads has a demonstrated negative consequence on urban life, one could expect a similar result from high capacity tunnels.

Commuters are not the only group that stands to benefit from urban tunnels. Cargo delivery within cities as well as truck routes through them could serve to benefit from urban tunnels by both saving trucking companies money and isolating trucks’ pollution, allowing it to be filtered out through ventilation systems. The idea of segregating traffic based on its type is not new to this new wave of tunnel advocates. In his 1929 text, *City of To-Morrow*, Le Corbusier advocated putting “heavy goods traffic” where he called “below-ground” (164). His meaning of “below-ground” really meant underneath the giant stilts on which his enormous skyscrapers were planned to be perched, however the principle is essentially the same; all other traffic was physically elevated above heavy goods traffic (164). In execution, both solutions also share a similarity: total impracticality due to cost. Neither urban highway tunnels nor Corbusier’s stilted skyscrapers provide enough measurable benefits to justify their cost.

Conclusion

Any project that promises to immediately alleviate all of Earth's traffic problems should be held under close inspection. "One-size-fits-all" approaches often neglect the cost to the public, and for the foreseeable future the cost of tunnels remains tremendous. Put simply, there is no one solution to the problem of traffic. Neglecting roads entirely leads to difficulties not only for commuters, but also for cargo deliveries, which are just as important to a strong urban economy. Overemphasis on roads will likely lead to increased congestion as more cars fill the new space. Increasing availability of public transit will only go so far, as some commuters will continue to be disappointed with its coverage regardless of efforts, while an underfunded transit system will likely force more users to drive, worsening congestion even more and hurting the urban residents who depend on it. Urban planners and city officials must be wary of proposals like Musk's and be aware of their unintended consequences.

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ESPN Magazine Has Body Issues: Sport-typing, Microaggressions, and Textual Portrayals of Female Athletes

Jess Levine

The purpose of this text is to show that the different portrayals between genders can cause psychological damage to both female athletes and audiences and can lead to female athletes being taken less seriously. First, I will examine the history and relationship between masculinity, femininity, and sports. Then, I will see how stereotypes reflect athletes' actions and audiences' reactions. Next, I will look deeper into textual portrayals of females in sports and the effect that microaggressions have on meanings. Lastly, in my analysis, I will dissect the ESPN Body Issue interviews by examining word choice, titles, interview focus, and overall tone. I argue that the differences in these interviews reveal the gender gap in sports representation and portrayal, thus affecting the treatment of athletes. Attempts to create equality within sports journalism, as shown in the Body Issue, are not as equal as they seem.

Introduction

Once upon a time, when the first man and woman roamed the earth, God gave Adam a gift. The Creator presented Adam with a spherical object and said, "Go kick this around, run after it, and show off your strength. It's called soccer." Eve, intrigued, went to off to follow him. "Hold up, where do you think you're going?" God's voice boomed after her.

“Well, to join Adam in this wonderful looking activity,” the first woman responded. God laughed as poor Eve stood dumbfounded. “Goodness Eve, are you simple? Girls don’t play sports!”

There may not be any proof in Genesis that this confrontation really happened, but there is substantial evidence to show that in the realm of sports, men dominate. From the first Olympic Games in Ancient Greece to modern-day sports like football, basketball, and wrestling, the spotlight has always been on men. Athletic events allow males the chance to show off their masculinity. Men who like to play “manly” sports also like to watch other men play “manly” sports. A female participating in a masculine game, though, does not adhere to the male audience’s interests (Greer & Jones, 2011). Due to many men’s disinterest in women’s sports, many female athletes often feel the need to accentuate their feminine qualities (Cartey, 2005). Magazines have attempted to get men interested in women’s sports by printing female athletes on the cover.

In order to meet the demands of their consumers, many media outlets choose to sexualize female athletes. A prime example of such sexualization occurs in the *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue*. Every year, the magazine releases an issue portraying women in bathing suits, mostly models, though several issues contain pictures of female athletes. The target audience of *Sports Illustrated* is men (Lumpkin, 2009); thus the magazine tries to grab their attention by printing these provocative pictures. If most of these women are models, not athletes, why should they pose for a sports-centered magazine? At the same time, when the issue covers female athletes in swimsuits, the magazine is putting the focus on the athletes’ body appearance, not their athletic achievements.

In 2009, *ESPN* promoted the *ESPN Body Issue*, a celebration of athletic bodies in a non-sexual way. The annual release would portray not

only female athletes but male athletes, and *nude*. The aim of the *Body Issue* is to celebrate the hard-worked bodies of athletes, to have the audience gape at the toned legs and long arms, and wonder what exactly is hiding behind that baseball bat or those crossed arms. Above all, the *ESPN Body Issue* seeks to appreciate all athletes and all body types, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The interviews paired with female athletes' photos, in contrast to males' photos, focus more on appearance or other trivial matters rather than athletic accomplishments and abilities.

In this article, I will examine the history between masculinity, femininity, and sports. Then, I will move onto how these stereotypes reflect athletes' actions and audiences' reactions, especially younger sports players. Next, I will look deeper into textual portrayals of females in sports and the effect that microaggressions have on meanings. Lastly, in my analysis, I will dissect the *ESPN Body Issue* interviews by considering word choice, interview titles, interview focus, and overall tone. I argue that the differences in these interviews reveal the gender gap in sports representation and portrayal, and thus affects the treatment of these athletes. Attempts to create equality within sports journalism, as shown in the *Body Issue*, are not as equal as they seem.

Background

For years, female athletes have been either absent or scrutinized in sports media. As Carter, Casanova, and Maume (2012) write, coverage of women's sports in both print and electronic media has been significantly less than coverage of men's sports. Title IX, passed in 1972, allowed for equal funding and opportunities for women's sports in educational institutions (Whiteside & Hardin, 2011). As a result,

viewership of women's sports has gone up but still lags behind men's events. Whiteside & Hardin (2011) mention this is due to the fact that women's sports are often televised at the same time as highly advertised men's games. Lumpkin (2009) writes that *Sports Illustrated* and other magazines feature significantly fewer female athletes than male athletes in order to interest their predominantly male audience. When female sports are covered, the more "feminine" sports and sexualized athletes get more attention (Carter, Casanova, & Maume, 2016). Athletes are sexualized through the process of sexual objectification, where they are reduced to their body or body parts rather than their athletic achievements, personality, or other non-appearance characteristics (Kaskan & Ho, 2015).

Female athletes are often treated as less than male athletes. They are placed in inferior positions and referred to as "girls," whereas male athletes are referred to as "men" (Kaskan, 2014). As Lumpkin (2009) writes, female athletes are also cast as "other." She continues on to say the media discusses female athletes' appearance more often than their athletic achievements. In soccer (also called fútbol), Pfitser (2015) explains that commentators, television broadcasters, and other media zero in on attractive players, rather than leagues, games, or other team members.

In an attempt to de-sexualize athletes' appearance and to combat the financial recession, *ESPN Magazine* began to release their annual *ESPN Body Issue* in 2009 (Clifford, 2009). The first issue featured athletes posing semi-nude and a special section called "Bodies We Want" where athletes were "in the buff" (McCarthy, 2009). Clifford (2009) notes that photos were accompanied by small quotes and information about the athletes (Clifford, 2009), but later issues contain longer interviews (Ain,

2012). Athletes featured in the *Body Issue* come from various sports, genders, races, sizes, and backgrounds. In order to dissect the interviews of these athletes, we must first examine how and why females are portrayed in the ways that they are.

Research Context

Manly and Manlier: Masculinity, Femininity, and Sports

“Feminine” and “masculine” are two words that have been thrown around tirelessly in conversation for years, with many people not using them in the right context. To try to find a universal definition for both words, however, is a difficult task. As Victoria Cartey (2005) notes, “Masculinity and femininity, of course, are not universal essences but are constructed through fluid meanings and behaviors” (133). Similar to the idea of race and gender, masculinity and femininity can be considered socially-produced myths rather than natural states (Knoppers & McDonald, 2010). These terms are loosely defined by how a person presents themselves to others. Certain sports and athletes are labeled either “masculine” or “feminine” based on such vague qualities. For example, as Pfitser (2015) writes, soccer gave men the opportunity to demonstrate their masculinity. Pfitser explains as well that because soccer is historically described as masculine game, the introduction of women to soccer results in a fear of “feminization” of the sport. Where masculine sports are characterized by strength, danger, and speed, feminine sports are marked by aesthetics, advanced skills, and cognition (Greer & Jones, 2011). In Greer & Jones’s (2011) study, the “masculine” sport was identified as basketball while the “feminine” sport was identified as volleyball. In regard to athlete appearance, participants rated the masculine female athletes as having more muscles and being

“bigger girls” than feminine female athletes. Such sport and athlete stereotyping is referred to as “sex-typing” and “sport-typing” (Greer & Jones, 2011). Greer and Jones (2011) define “sport-typing” as characterizing sports as masculine or feminine. Kaskan & Ho (2015) expand on this by explaining that “sport-typing” is based on binary constructs, assuming that there are only two genders. This sport-typing can illicit reactions from both athletes and audiences alike.

Girls Don't Play Sports! Audience and Athlete Responses to of Sport-Typing and Femininity

Identifying sports as “feminine” or “masculine” can be difficult and is subject to opinion. Greer and Jones used photos in their 2011 study on femininity and masculinity of female athletes to operationally define these terms. Masculine female athletes were portrayed as muscular, wearing athletic gear, and larger than the feminine athletes, who were lightly toned, wearing more sexual clothing, and thinner. Greer and Jones (2011) found male participants reported lower interest when a non-stereotypical athlete was featured. That is, a masculine athlete playing the feminine sport (volleyball) or a feminine athlete playing the masculine sport (basketball). On the flipside, women liked to see masculine athletes breaking gender norms, and had decreased interested when there were feminine athletes (Greer & Jones, 2011). Even though females tend to commit this stereotyping less often than men, sport-typing has a significant impact on young girls.

Stereotyping in sports can affect the younger generation's expectations for athletes. In Jeanes's (2011) findings, 5th grade female soccer players saw “aggressive” playing as intolerable. These girls explained that tackling hard and pushing players off the ball was not playing “nice” and was not how girls were supposed to participate. If a girl

played too dirty, she was ostracized, further reassuring the importance of playing with less contact. In addition, Greer and Jones (2011) note that the girls felt the need to accentuate their feminine qualities because they were engaging in a more masculine sport. Professional athletes, too, want to stress their feminine appearance.

Even women's sports players feel pressured to exemplify their feminine qualities (Cartey, 2005). As Cartey (2005) writes, female athletes have to appear healthy and physically attractive as well as femininely attractive in order to acquire an audience. Some athletes do so by posing on magazine covers baring skin. Cartey describes in detail how Brandi Chastain's 1999 World Cup goal celebration became controversially famous. In a 2000 Nike Ad, Chastain posed in the same stance, nude except for her cleats. She defended her decision by explaining she was showing off her hard worked body, not objectifying appearance (Cartey, 2005). Other athletes accentuate their femininity by showing off their heterosexuality, like soccer star Julie Foudy did in the 2000 *Sports Illustrated SwimSuit* cover (Cartey, 2005). Foudy is pictured running on the beach in a bikini, with her husband alongside her chasing a soccer ball. Instead of the highlighting Foudy's soccer skills or muscles, the focus shifts to her relationship with her husband (Cartey, 2005).

Cartey (2005) acknowledges the surfacing of an important debate between moderate and radical feminists regarding these athletes' willing portrayals of their lives and their bodies. Many radical feminists argue that when female athletes pose for body shoots, shine the spotlight on their husbands, and accept sponsorships with sexist undertones, they are hindering advances in feminism (Cartey, 2005). Much to these radical feminists' dismay, textual portrayals of female athletes can do just as much if not more damage as promiscuous pictures.

It's All in The (Microaggressive) Writing: Textual Descriptions of Women in Sports

Microaggressions are subtle forms of racism, sexism, and insults about other marginalized groups (Pierce, 1970). Microaggressions can be split into “microassaults,” “microinsults,” and “microinvalidation” (Kaskan & Ho 2015). Microassaults are the most blatant, like racism, sexism, and homophobia. Microinsults are usually unconscious, negative descriptions of someone, much like backhanded compliments. Microinvalidations deny the hardships of marginalized groups, usually with good intentions (Kaskan & Ho, 2015). Kaskan & Ho also define “assumptions of inferiority” as the idea that women are less physically/mentally able than men.

Assumptions of inferiority and microaggressions have been experienced by many women in sports. Female athletes are often referred to as “girls” while male athletes are rarely referred to as “boys” (Kaskan & Ho, 2015). During the 2012 Olympics, two female long jump medalists were asked “Okay ladies, now where is that Olympic Smile?” (Kaskan & Ho, 2015). Not only was the interviewer insulting the women by calling them “ladies,” but was also doing so by focusing on their appearance and specifically their emotional expression. Arguably, the reporter would never have asked a male athlete where his smile was.

Many ad campaigns that feature female athletes contain these microaggressions. In a 1996 Nike advertisement titled “If You Let Me Play,” various girls, wearing dresses, bathing suits, and braiding hair recite the positive outcomes of girls playing sports (Cartey, 2005). As Cartey elaborates, there are several problems with this campaign: first, all of the girls are doing traditional feminine activities and wearing feminine clothing. Second, the phrase suggests that girls need permission,

presumably from boys or men, to play sports. In attempt to empower women, the campaign has pictured a typical, sexist advertisement, females' need for permission from males, and misplacement of girls in sports.

Another ad campaign in 1996 has soccer player Mia Hamm reciting "Soccer Vows" about the women's toughness when playing soccer (Cartey, 2005). Throughout, there are close-ups of the players' intense faces and clips of them sliding through mud and tackling other players. Cartey (2005) argues that although the advertisement can be seen as empowering for women, the focus on marriage, relationships, and intimacy are still present, in line with conventional gender roles and descriptions. Similar descriptions of female athletes are found in writing and tend just as harmful, but less obvious.

Analysis

Method

The photos of both male and female athletes in the *ESPN Body Issue* are similar in position, exposure, and connection to sport. Overall, these pictures celebrate diverse body types. However, the interviews accompanying the photos are subject to problems. I will determine the length of each interview by looking at the number of questions asked. I will examine if article titles are more sport-oriented for male athletes than female athletes and the different types of words the author uses for each gender. I will see how focused the interview is on the athlete's sport or training routine rather than the athlete's physical appearance and compare between the genders. In my analysis, I used articles from 2012-2016 for seven female athletes and seven male athletes.

How to Reel in The Reader: The Title

Title differences in early *Body Issue* pieces are not as prominent but they are still present. Tennis star “Daniela Hantuchova loses the skirt,” but in running back Maurice Jones-Drew’s title he simply loses the jersey. Hantuchova loses a more feminine article of clothing, one that also has less of a role in the sport as compared to Jones-Drew’s football jersey. By first writing that Hantuchova loses a skirt and not specifying it as part of the sport (which the reader may not know), the author is unintentionally focusing on more feminine clothing. In another title from 2012, the “Manimal strips his fur,” where beach volleyball athlete Keri Walsh-Jennings just “gets naked.” First of all, by referring to basketball star Kenneth Faried as his nickname, but not bothering to provide nicknames for female athletes, the writer is highlighting only Faried’s athletic expertise and popularity, as well as his manliness. Second of all, by using the word “strips” for Faried rather than Walsh-Jennings’ “get naked,” he is given more of an active role in the process. Themes in titles differ between the genders as well.

In recent issues, overcoming hardships, confidence, and humor are highlighted in male titles. Cleveland Cavalier’s center Kevin Love’s title, “This injury is one of the hardest things I’ve dealt with,” leads the reader to admire all Love had to endure to repair his dislocated shoulder. Bryce Harper says his “Body feels pretty unbelievable,” providing the outfielder’s confidence in his frame (Pressman, 2015). Hockey player Tyler Seguin’s title is humorous and nothing to do with his sport, poking fun at his clicking joints. On the other hand, body image is the continued theme in the titles of female athletes. Many titles discuss the shape of the athlete’s body, like thrower Amanda Bingson’s noting that “Athletes come in all shapes and sizes” (Ain, 2015). Others try to pick at the athlete’s

perception of their own appearance, like beach volleyball player April Ross on “body image” (Ain, 2015). Some even focus on facial expression, such as “Jamie Anderson in only a smile” (Ain, 2014). Once again, narrowing in on emotions and facial appearance is specifically reserved for women. Female athletes’ “game faces” are deemed as important, but are only attractive if they are smiles. Zeroing-in on a women’s appearance is a type of microaggressive way to downplay their role in sports and athletic achievements. Next, I look at word choice and length in the body of the interview.

Diving into Details: Word Choice and Length

On average, males were asked an average of 15.85 questions while females were asked an average of 17.43 questions. Yet even though females were asked more questions, these questions were phrased differently than those presented to males. In male athletes’ interviews, many of the questions emphasized their manliness. Kenneth Faried was asked how his parent’s “toughened him up” to play sports, and Joffrey Lupal was pushed to talk about the “toughness of hockey players” (Ain 2013, 2014). Other violent terms and action verbs were used in male athletes’ questions like Tyler Seguin “fighting [for his] way in” and mix martial artist Connor McGregor discussing “verbal warfare” (Ain 2013, 2016). In contrast, women’s questions contain more passive verbs and are more condescending. With Hillary Knight, a female hockey player, the idea of toughness is not mentioned once. Why was it discussed in a male hockey player’s text but not hers? Hockey is sport-typed to be a more masculine game, so the interviewers may have thought that describing Knight as “tough” or using other “masculine” adjectives would be off-putting to readers. In soccer player Christen Press’s interview, her daily shot taking is labeled as “obsessive” (Ain, 2016). Instead of being praised

for practicing her sport and spending time improving her skills, Press is almost ridiculed for trying too hard. The interviewer asks how Kerri Walsh-Jennings “embraced” her height, implying that Walsh-Jennings’ height clearly affected her life negatively and she had to overcome it. Additionally, interviewer Morty Ain (2013) asks how much time she “took off” to give birth, like it was a conscious choice to go on maternity leave and she was forfeiting work time. Sydney Leroux was asked why she plays so physically, as if tackling other players for the ball was too aggressive in professional soccer.

Various words were repeated within both male and female articles. In female athlete interviews, “body/bodies” was mentioned 58 times compared to the men’s 54. Male athlete pieces mentioned “confident/confidence” more often than female athlete pieces. Female interviews discussed “femininity” five times, but male interviews lacked the words “femininity” and/or “masculinity.” Male interviews had 17 instances of competition words (“play” or “compete”) in contrast to females’ 12. These words affect the focus of the article; the more a text refers to competition, the more it focuses on the sport. The more a text refers to bodies, the more it focuses on appearance. In general, female athletes’ interviews feature more microaggressive terms when describing style of play, training routine, and appearance. Along with word choice and length, the overall focus of the interview is different for both male and female athletes.

Spotlight on the Sport? Focus and Tone of the Interview

Overall, 38 out of 122 total questions (30%) of all females’ questions were based on their body image in some way, compared to 24 out of 111 (21%) for males. Judging by these statistics, we can see that

even though on average female players were asked more questions, the majority of their questions had nothing to do with their sport or career.

Thirty-three percent of the questions asked for females were not focused on the sport that they played, compared to 32% for males. Although this seems to be a minimal difference, the content of the interview that was “off-topic” differs for males and females. Off-topic sections of Male interviews discuss humorous events or childhood stories. Vernon Davis talks about how he became the honorary captain of the U.S. Curling team and Tyler Seguin expresses his desire to see a kangaroo. When these interviews contain other topics, it affects the tone of the text. Because males relay funny stories, weird talents, or bucket list vacation spots, the articles seem more interesting. The text flows better and has a lighthearted tone. Conversely, off-topic sections of female interviews featured more body insecurities or difficulties. Nzingha Prescod admits her breasts get in the way in training, Hillary Knight describes her previous opinion on muscles not being feminine, and Christen Press is confronted about her bad posture and unusual game face (a smile!). In discussing deeper issues, the female athletes’ interviews tend to be more subdued. They are not as funny, do not read quite as smoothly, and have less entertaining anecdotes than male athlete articles.

Conclusion

It is clear that women are represented less in sports than men. Cartey (2005) explains that although viewership and popularity of women’s sports has increased, the way that this is achieved is questionable. Many women are thwarted with microaggressions that downplay their roles as athletes (Kaskan & Ho, 2015). In the *ESPN Body Issue*, some of these microaggressions can be found in the article titles.

Male titles tend to be about the overcoming a hardship, while female titles are centered around their appearance. Similar themes arose in the body of the interview.

Furthermore, male and female interviews differed in word choice. In the male interviews, “toughness” and “confidence” were repeated. In female athlete’s interviews, the words “body/bodies” are used much more often. No mention of masculinity or femininity exists in the male interviews, while femininity was discussed five times in female interviews. This lack of discussion on masculinity/femininity in male articles correlates with the fact that males are not as pressured as females to adhere to gender roles. Many of the female athletes discuss how they sometimes longed to keep their more feminine attributes. Though the average female athlete was asked more questions, a higher percentage of their interviews were unfocused, containing other frivolous topics like pregnancy or self-confidence issues. Male interviews contain a more lighthearted tone than female interviews. More easygoing interactions occurred in the males’ interviews than the females’, which can result in a more positive response to male interviews.

It is important to ask why interviews for the *ESPN Body Issue* are necessary if the magazine is supposed to highlight body image through photographs. I also questioned the decision to have the majority of the articles written by one journalist. I wondered if the author created an organized interview style and how he tried to give unbiased accounts. A few of these gaps in the conversation require more research to be done. The reason for including interviews in an issue primarily printed for photographs and the choice to have one consistent writer should be researched further to gain a better understanding of textual portrayals of female athletes.

The *ESPN Body Issue* has only been out for seven years, so there are only a handful of interviews. The author of these interviews is probably committing these blunders unintentionally, unaware that they are offensive, just like microinsults. It is important to note that there are also positive *Body Issue* articles. Natalie Coughlin (2015) and Emma Coburn's (2016) pieces contain unproblematic titles, a focus on the sport rather than the body, and do not simplify phrases.

Even if the purpose of *Body Issue* is not to showcase the articles, these text pieces are still important and are proven to be problematic. As shown in Jeane's (2011) study, the stereotypes and portrayals of female athletes influence how young girls see themselves as athletes. Women who witness microaggressions tend to have lower self-esteem and negative attitudes towards athletes' abilities (Kaskan & Ho, 2015). These portrayals can also affect the athletes themselves through increased stress, cognitive impairment, lack in motivation, and forced compliance to follow through with the stereotypes for fear of looking weak. (Kaskan & Ho, 2015). Such biological and psychological effects on women can prove why some conflicts surrounding female misrepresentation in sports are occurring today.

The tension between the United States Women's National Team (USWNT) and U.S. Soccer Federation (USSF) regarding compensation is a perfect example of why misrepresentation of female athletes matters. In March 2016, five USWNT players filed a counter-suit against the USSF (Das, 2016). That February, Das explained that the Federation had sued the players' union for proposing a new collective bargaining agreement, one that would increase pay. Because microaggressions on television and in print have created negative attitudes toward female athletes, as well as reinforced the lack of sincerity of these players, one reason why the USSF

was so reluctant to allow equal pay is because the women are not taken as seriously. In April 2017, a group of USWNT players worked with the USSF to draft a new collective bargaining agreement, which will last through 2021 (Hays, 2017). Though the players now receive larger base and bonus pay and the USSF will provide more support for the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) to expand the player pool, the process took months and negotiations became heated (Das, 2017). Additionally, Das notes that the new agreement does not completely eradicate the wage gap between male and female players; the USWNT's increased salaries are still less than those of the men. Of course, some economic explanations for this pay disparity exist, but the gap is also thanks to large federations' lack of respect for female athletes. Once audiences begin to treat female athletes as more than objects, once the media begin to focus more on female athletes' achievements instead of their appearances, once people begin to view female athletes as *athletes*, we will see true equality on all levels.

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**Gotta Catch Em' All...
But Only in the Appropriate Spaces.
The Potential for Policy Regulations
of Pokemon Go**

Olivia Morris

Abstract

In this article, I explore whether or not the use of Pokemon Go in public spaces can be regulated through public policy. There is an abundance of scholarly work done on the divide between public and private space and the implications of this divide on the ability of policymakers to enact and enforce policies in such places. I will begin with an overview of this conversation; however, the core of my article will be on the ability of public policies to regulate behaviors in public spaces, an idea that has received little scholarly attention. To do this, I will first look at the divides between different public spaces in terms of the varying levels of expectations of behaviors in these spaces. These different levels of expectations have the potential to be translated into varying levels of policy. In order to look at why people act the way they do in spaces, I analyze how social norms affect individuals' behaviors. This analysis leads into a discussion of the idea that public policies should target social norms as a way to change individuals' behaviors. Through these discussions, I look at the effectiveness of past policies in regulating individuals' behaviors as a basis for how policies can effectively regulate where Pokemon Go is played. I finally offer my proposed policy solution

for how to best combat disruptive Pokemon Go players in public spaces. Throughout this article, given that public spaces are intended to be enjoyed by all, I argue that public policies can and should be used as a way to regulate the use of Pokemon Go within these spaces in order to ensure that the space is being respected for its original intent.

Keywords

Private space; Public space; Pokemon Go; Policy regulations; Individual behaviors; Social norms

1. Introduction

“There’s one right here.” Ten kids run past you. “Guys, over here!”, another kid shouts from across the memorial. Again, a herd of children barrels right past you. You look around and there must be at least thirty children all throughout the memorial, each encapsulated by their phone screens, all running from one spot to the next without ever looking up. They’re shouting to one another and running right around you. You had planned to have a nice family afternoon at the memorial, teaching your young children about the country’s past and remembering the thousands of people who gave their lives to support the cause. Instead, the memorial has been overtaken with Pokemon Go players who have no respect or appreciation of the location in which they are playing. This is far from your vision of how the memorial should be used.

The augmented virtual reality game Pokemon Go took the world by storm this past summer. It seemed as if wherever you went, you would witness groups of people of all ages running around while looking at their phones trying to catch virtual Pokemon characters. The game quickly

became one of the most popular videogames in history. Just 10 days after its launch, Pokemon Go became the largest mobile game ever (Doran & Davis, 2016, p. 8). However, it is this widespread popularity that has also caused trouble.

Many public spaces have become overrun with Pokemon Go players utilizing these spaces without awareness and appreciation of the purpose of these spaces as well as the other people in these spaces. After the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. became a PokeStop this past summer, director of communications for the museum, Andy Hollinger, released a statement in which he proclaimed, “[p]laying Pokemon Go in a memorial dedicated to the victims of Nazism is extremely inappropriate” (as cited in O’Brien, 2016). Management of Arlington National Cemetery had the same reaction to Pokemon Go when they tweeted, “[w]e do not consider playing Pokemon Go to be appropriate decorum on the grounds of ANC. We ask all visitors to refrain from such activity” (as cited in O’Brien, 2016). Both memorials were being misused by Pokemon Go players.

Not only does playing Pokemon Go in certain public spaces take away from the purpose of the space, such an activity also disrupts the experiences of others. People do not go to historic sites with the goal of being immersed in large crowds of Pokemon Go players. As a result, the issue that arises once again is the misuse of public spaces. Thus, in this article I aim to explore how an individual’s behaviors can and should be regulated in these public spaces to ensure that these behaviors do not interfere with the purpose of public spaces.

It perhaps may seem straightforward to say that the distinction between private space and public space is defined in terms of the amount of regulation within each space. However, the distinction has many layers.

Prominent Italian philosopher of law and political science Norberto Bobbio (1989) has called the distinction between private and public one of the “greatest dichotomies” of Western thought in that public and private exist on their own until they meet at a point of mutuality; that is, the terms qualify each other (p. 1). However, Setha Low and Neil Smith (2006), both professors at the City University of New York, add a new idea to this conversation. They propose that even public spaces have different levels of regulations, an idea they term “publicness” (p. 3). That is, even though a national monument and a shopping mall are both deemed public spaces, the regulations and acceptable behaviors differ tremendously between the two spaces. Therefore, Low and Smith see the need for different levels of regulation depending on the space.

While some scholars, including Low and Smith, and policymakers may argue that more regulations are needed in public spaces, one policymaker from New Zealand believes quite the opposite. He believes that these regulations are “socially engineering” our societies (Rouch et al, 2010, p. 6). This policymaker uses the term to demonstrate that enacting and enforcing policies allows policymakers to engineer society to fit their needs rather than allowing society to function naturally. Although I believe I understand the point this policymaker is trying to make, I believe that the idea of “socially engineering” our societies can be a positive thing. I plan to highlight this new idea in my article as no scholarly attention has yet been given to the positive side of “social engineering.” Without this ability, policymakers would have little control over what goes on in public spaces, arguably a danger to the public’s safety.

Furthermore, in order to enact policies within public spaces, it is crucial to look at why people act the way they do in public spaces. Social

psychologists Robert Cialdini, Raymond Reno, and Carl Kallgren (1990) believe that social norms dictate people's behaviors in that "if everyone else is doing it, it must be a sensible thing to do" (p. 1015). Karine Nyborg, an Economics professor at the University of Oslo, and Mari Rege, an economics professor at Case Western Reserve University (2003) connect the idea of social norms to the idea of regulation. They state that public policy affects social norms and social norms affect an individual's behaviors. Therefore, both economists draw the conclusion that public policies indirectly influence individuals' behaviors (p. 324).

Although Nyborg and Rege find a connection between public policy and an individual's behaviors, little attention has been given to how personal behaviors can be regulated within public space. In this article, I aim to explore whether or not public policy can be used as an effective mechanism for regulating the use of Pokemon Go in different public spaces. To do this, I will explore the distinction between public space and private space from the perspectives of various scholars. These distinctions will lead to conclusions of how effective public policy can be in regulating individuals' behaviors in public spaces. To explore what kinds of public policies will be needed, it will be necessary to look at how social norms influence behavior. In particular, I will examine the social norms surrounding Pokemon Go, especially in terms of where its use has been widely supported and accepted. Furthermore, I will use examples of how policies in the past have been used to change individuals' behaviors, which will then lead to a discussion of the potential of public policy to regulate the use of Pokemon Go in public spaces. I will conclude with my proposed policy solution for how to regulate Pokemon Go. Because public space is meant to be used and enjoyed by all people, it is important that

we explore how the behaviors of individuals can affect the experiences of others.

Ultimately, given that public spaces are intended to be enjoyed by all, I argue that public policies can and should be used as a way to regulate the use of Pokemon Go within these spaces in order to ensure that the space is being respected by all for its original intent. Given ever-changing technologies and evolving social norms, people will begin to use spaces for purposes other than the original purpose. Thus, although little attention has yet been given to this, the ability of policymakers to enact and enforce policies regulating people's behaviors in public spaces will become crucial. Therefore, I will focus on this idea throughout this article. Having a set basis of how public policy can be used as regulation in public spaces will allow policymakers a guide to issues that arise in the future.

2. Public vs. Private: Implications on Policy Making

I can only properly and thoroughly examine the ability of public policies to be enacted and enforced with the intention of regulating individuals' behaviors in public spaces by first exploring the distinction between public and private space, and what this distinction means in terms of public policy. Although the distinction between public and private space may appear to be clear-cut, scholars across multiple disciplines have dedicated their careers to examining this divide.

In his book, *Democracy and Dictatorship*, Bobbio (1989) terms the divide between public and private space as one of the "greatest dichotomies" of Western thought (p. 1). Bobbio goes on to explain that public and private space exist on their own until they meet at a point of mutuality. That is, the public domain only extends as far as the private

domain, and vice versa. For this article, I will adopt Bobbio's interpretation of the divide between private and public space to say that a space cannot be both public and private. The spaces qualify each other in that they occur simultaneously, yet they do not overlap.

It is now important that I establish working definitions of what I mean by public and private. Throughout this article, I will use the definitions that Alan Freeman and Elizabeth Mensch, both professors at the University of Buffalo Law School, use in their journal article "The Public-Private Distinction in American Law and Life." Freeman and Mensch (1987) define the private domain as a "protected sphere of autonomy" where individuals are free to make "self-willed individual choices and to feel secure against the encroachment of others" (p. 237). In this sense, in the private domain, people are free to govern themselves as they see appropriate. In private spaces, people set the rules for themselves to follow without much need to acknowledge the good of those around them. On the contrary, Freeman and Mensch (1987) define the public domain as the "world of government institutions, obliged to serve the public interest rather than private aims" (p. 237). That is, public spaces have rules and regulations put in place by the government and its institutions that are intended to serve the need of the public as a whole rather than the needs of each individual. In this way, public spaces are meant for the public as a whole to enjoy.

Just as public and private spaces are distinct from each other, so is the potential for policies in each space. As Freeman and Mensch (1987) defined the term, public space has the potential for governmental rules and regulations (p. 237). On the other hand, Smith and Low (2006) explain that private space is protected by state-regulated rules of private property use (p. 4). The idea of private property revolves around the idea

that the owner of the property, not an outside influence, has the responsibility of creating policies in regards to use of the property. In this sense, the power of the government is extremely limited when it comes to enacting and enforcing policies in private spaces. Simply put, policymakers have the ability to enact and enforce policies in public spaces, but not in private spaces. Of course, there are exceptions to this logic, but for the sake of this article, I am going on the idea that policymakers only have power in public spaces. As a result, this article will focus on the potential for policymakers to enact and enforce policies regulating an individual's behaviors in public spaces.

3. Publicness: The Divide Between Various Public Spaces

While Bobbio, Freeman, and Mensch's interpretations will be useful for separating public and private space, Setha Low and Neil Smith, both professors at the City University of New York, add a new idea to the conversation regarding public spaces. They propose that there are divides between different public spaces. Low and Smith (2006) term this idea "publicness" (p. 3). They write, "[l]egally as well as culturally, the suburban mall is a very different place from the national park or the interior of a transcontinental airliner" (Low & Smith, 2016, p. 3). This idea is crucial to my article as even though places such as historical monuments are deemed public spaces, the regulations and appropriate behaviors in such spaces are much different than those in other public spaces, such as a shopping mall. I plan to extend Low and Smith's term "publicness" to say that different public spaces have different levels of appropriate regulations.

I argue that the main difference between the rules in such places is the purpose of the space. It is acceptable to be loud, touch items, eat, drink, and talk and text on your phone in a mall because the mall is meant to be a social venue where people come to buy personal items. However, historic monuments and memorials are far from this social venue. It is clearly stated in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's policies that eating, drinking, and cell phone conversations are not permitted in the museum (Reading Room Policies). Although playing Pokemon Go does not involve a cell phone conversation, it is still extremely disrespectful to the purpose of the museum: a memorial dedicated to remembering the lives of millions of people. This sentiment is echoed by Andy Hollinger, director of communications at the museum, in his statement, which reads in part, that Pokemon Go is extremely inappropriate in a memorial dedicated to the victims of Nazism (as cited in O'Brien, 2016).

The idea of using the "publicness" of a public space as an indicator for the level of policies that can be enacted and enforced within the space has received very limited attention by scholars and policymakers. Yet, I am convinced that the "publicness" of a space is the ideal indicator, as it allows policymakers to consider who uses the space, the purpose of the space, and how the space should ultimately be used. I am not completely opposed to Pokemon Go; I simply feel that there are places where the game is better suited to be played than others. I stand by my previous assertion that historic monuments and memorials are far from appropriate places to be playing a virtual video game. These places are meant to be places of remembrance, places that people go to with the expectation that people will not be running around on their phones, as such distracting and disrespectful actions take away from the experiences

of all visitors. On the contrary, places such as a town's local park or the sports fields at the local schools are much more appropriate places for Pokemon Go as these places are intended to be used by community members for various activities. No matter what you are doing in a space, there should always be a level of respect for it. If it is not appropriate to have a phone conversation in a museum, then it probably follows that playing on your phone is also not appropriate.

Even though places, such as the Holocaust Museum, have made their feelings on Pokemon Go known, none of these places have official policies in place that ban visitors from playing Pokemon Go. Throughout this paper, I will explore the potential for policies to be enacted that ban such disruptive activities. After exploring the idea of "publicness," I believe that different public spaces have different levels of expectations when it comes to people's behaviors. To this degree, I believe that different public spaces can enact policies that align with expectations of the space.

4. Social Engineering: How Policymakers Regulate Society to Benefit Us All

Understandably, not all people and policymakers agree with government intervention in public spaces. These people see government intervention as an infringement upon their personal rights. In this section, I aim to portray why public policies do not have to be a negative thing.

In their qualitative research study, Rouch, et al. look at policymakers' opinions on smoke-free legislation in public and private spaces. Although most of the surveyed policymakers were more supportive of legislation in public rather than private spaces, the general

consensus was that smoking was viewed as a “personal decision, unlikely to be amenable to regulation” (Rouch et al, 2010, p. 6). Although I acknowledge that any level of regulation is not the complete solution to a problem as no behavior can be perfectly regulated, I find it odd that these policymakers claim personal decisions cannot be regulated. Are not texting and driving, or more importantly drinking and driving, personal decisions that have very strict policies in place against them? Deciding to play Pokemon go is a personal decision just like deciding to drink and drive is. Therefore, I hold that Pokemon Go can and should be regulated through public policy.

Even though I disagree with the claim of these policymakers, I do acknowledge that it has one important implication for policies in regards to playing Pokemon Go. That is, any policy enacted will not have the ability to completely control where Pokemon Go can be played. In reality, a policy will not end the disruptive nature of the game. Therefore, any policy that is put into place will act to regulate the game’s use rather than completely eradicate it.

One particular policymaker surveyed in Rouch et al’s study believes that policies in public spaces are “socially engineering” our societies. In this policymaker’s view, enacting and enforcing policies allows policymakers to engineer society to fit their needs rather than allowing society to function naturally. Although I understand the point this policymaker is trying to make, I hold that enacting and enforcing policies is not a negative thing. After all, as laid out in the Public Service Commission’s website, policymakers have an “overarching obligation to act in the public interest” (Acting in the Public Interest). To this extent, policymakers are expected to look at a problem and to create policies that will effectively respond to the particular problem as well as satisfy the

general public. The power to create and enforce policies allows policymakers the ability to socially engineer our societies to better serve the overall needs of the society. Policymakers are in a unique situation in that they are able to make overarching changes in society. Without this ability, societies would become chaotic and uncontrolled as everyone would be self-interested rather than aware of everyone around them. In this way, I view “social engineering” as a way for policymakers to use their power to keep society functioning in a way that is conducive to all citizens.

5. Social Norms and Pokemon Go

In order to enact policies within public spaces, it is first crucial that I look at how and why people act the way they do in public spaces. In our increasingly interconnected society, it is easy to observe the behaviors of the people around us. Because humans are a group-living species, we are driven to adapt to the behaviors of those around us (Kameda et al, 2005). In this drive to adapt, we subconsciously begin to mimic the behaviors of others. This mimicking leads to the formation of social norms. For my article, I will use Karine Nyborg’s (2016), a professor of economics at the University of Oslo, definition of social norm: that it is a “predominant behavioral pattern within a group, supported by a shared understanding of acceptable actions and sustained through social interactions within that group” (p. 42). In this sense, a social norm is a recurring behavior that is not only widely conformed to, but also seen as the right thing to do.

Many of the social norms that exist within our society are courteous actions that are seen as the right thing to do. Such actions include holding the door open for people behind you, shaking hands with people you are meeting for the first time, and saying “thank you” when

someone does something for you. However, social norms are not always an accurate basis for individual action. As I was told multiple times growing up, “just because everyone else is doing something, does not mean that it is the right thing to do.” An ideal example of this is a study performed by Professors Robert B. Cialdini and Raymond R. Reno from the University of Arizona and Professor Carl A. Kallgren (1990) from Pennsylvania State University. These professors found that people are more likely to litter in an already littered environment as compared to a clean environment, because these people perceive that their litter will do less damage to the state of the environment than if it were clean (p. 1016).

The results of this study can be compared back to the Pokemon Go phenomena. If a player sees many other players playing at a location, he is likely to take out his phone to look for Pokemon as well because it appears to be socially acceptable to play Pokemon Go in this location. Thus, when looking to make policies in regards to Pokemon Go, the problem that needs to be addressed is the social norms surrounding the game. Indeed, Nyborg and Rege (2003) connect the idea of social norms to the idea of regulation when they state that public policy affects social norms and social norms affect an individual’s behaviors (p. 324). Therefore, both economists draw the conclusion that public policies indirectly influence individual’s behaviors. Now that I have determined that public policies should target the social norms of Pokemon Go, I will now explore the potential for policies to regulate Pokemon Go.

6. Policy Potential: How Pokemon Go can be Regulated

In order to look at the potential for policies to be enacted and enforced in public spaces, I will now look at how effective past policies

have been at regulating behaviors in public spaces. In this case, I will look at how effective anti-smoking legislation has been at prohibiting smoking in public spaces. This example is parallel to my aim of looking at policy in relation to Pokemon Go as both Pokemon Go and smoking are individuals' behaviors that take place in public space that affect other people in the space. By looking at past policies, I will come to conclusions on how to best regulate Pokemon Go.

In 1988, the Norwegian government amended their smoking laws to prohibit smoking in spaces the public has access to (Nyborg & Rege, 2003, p. 324). As discussed above, Nyborg and Rege believe that public policies indirectly affect an individual's behaviors through changes in social norms. To test their assertion, the professors did a case study in Norway in which they explored how the new smoking regulations affected people's smoking habits. They found that the new regulations prompted a change in the social norms surrounding smoking in public spaces (Nyborg & Rege, 2003, p. 324). Smoking in public was no longer socially accepted. As a result, the social norm shifted from smoking in public to smoking in private. An additional finding of this case study was that smokers became more considerate in unregulated areas (Nyborg & Rege, 2003, p. 324). I believe that this can be seen as a result of the social norms transferring beyond the regulated areas. Policies in one part of a person's life have the potential to have effects on their behaviors in other aspects of their life.

The findings from this case study are crucial for my article. First, the findings show that policies should be addressed at social norms in order to combat individual behaviors. In order to create a policy regarding where it is appropriate to play Pokemon Go, it is necessary to target the social norms of the game. In this sense, policymakers need to

look at how players play the game and where players play the game. As concluded above, although Pokemon Go can physically be played in any public space, it is not appropriate in all of these spaces. To this effect, policymakers need to look at which spaces are not appropriate. In this article, I have suggested that historic monuments and memorials are inappropriate places for Pokemon Go. It commonly only takes observation to see how players play the game. Because the game involves looking through your phone at a virtual world, many players rarely ever look up at the real world around them. Not only is this an obvious safety concern, it also has the potential to ruin the experiences of others trying to enjoy a space. No one likes to be run into or cut off by someone distracted by their phones as they attempt to enjoy a space for its original intent.

Another critical finding of the case study is the idea that considerate smoking habits carried over from the regulated areas into the unregulated areas. Just as this particular social norm changed, I feel that the social norms surrounding Pokemon Go also have the potential to change based on the regulations put into place in a limited number of spaces. In this sense, regulation of Pokemon Go does not need to be all inclusive of every public space. Regulations in one public space may make players more aware of not pulling out their phones to play when they are near other people trying to enjoy a space. This consideration of other people in a space has the potential to carry over into unregulated spaces, such as town parks, where although Pokemon Go should be allowed, there still needs to be a level of respect for others in a space. Therefore, I foresee policy regulations having effects on Pokemon Go players beyond just places where the game becomes prohibited.

7. My Proposed Solution

Now that I have found that there is potential for public policies to regulate Pokemon Go in public spaces, I will now offer my proposed solution to how such policies should be implemented.

In thinking of how to create a policy to regulate Pokemon Go, I feel that using the incrementalism theory will be most effective. The incrementalism theory focuses on “small changes to existing policies rather than dramatic fundamental changes” (Sutton, 1999, p. 10). This idea of building on existing policies is crucial in policymaking because, as American political scientist Charles E. Lindblom stated, creating completely new policies is “impossible as people are unlikely to agree on objectives for creating a brand new policy that satisfies everyone” (as cited in Hayes, 2013). I agree with Lindblom; it will be nearly impossible to create a brand new policy in regards to Pokemon Go that would gather enough support to be put into law. But, by using current policies as the basis for new policies, the change the new policies present will not be as dramatic as if the new policies were completely original. A slight change in policy is more likely to be accepted by communities’ members because they won’t be forced to make as big of a change. Therefore, my proposed solution is to use current policies that deal with cellphone use as a base point for Pokemon Go policy.

As stated at the beginning of this article, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum already has a policy that prohibits cellphone conversations. Although many places have such a policy, I will use this museum as my example for this discussion. The museum should take its current policy and amend it to say that all cellphone use is prohibited. In consideration of the incrementalism theory, this policy is a

change but not a major one. Such a policy should not be difficult for the museum to implement and for visitors to adhere to, as it is not a drastic change.

However, even though it is not a drastic change, such a policy effectively prohibits Pokemon Go. Even more so, the new policy achieves the goal of respect: it forces people to respect and enjoy the place they are in for what it is rather than as a gaming location. Furthermore, this policy also protects the experiences of others in a space against the disruptive nature of Pokemon Go. As a result, the ultimate goal of this policy is achieved: respect for the space and respect for the other people in the space. Public spaces are meant to be enjoyed by all, an idea this policy aims to uphold.

It is important to note that throughout this article, I have argued for policy regulations to prohibit Pokemon Go in museums and memorials. Of course, many more public spaces have the same ability to enact and enforce similar policies; however, for the consistency of my argument, I chose to focus solely on museums and memorials. Further research should be done into the need for such policies in other public spaces.

Through this article, I have found that it is possible to use public policy to regulate individuals' behaviors in public spaces. As society becomes increasingly complex and interconnected, it will be essential for policymakers to have control over society. This control is not a negative thing or a breach of power; rather, it protects everyone who uses public spaces, as policymakers have the ability to use their power to ensure that public spaces continue to be enjoyed by all citizens. As a result of the findings of this article, I hope my conclusions will lead to further

examination and ultimately implementation of policies as a way to ensure that spaces are being respected and enjoyed by all people.

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Prisoner's Dilemma: Disenfranchisement, Rights Forfeiture Theory, and Race

Mary Simons

Abstract

In forty eight out of fifty states in America, prisoners are denied the right to vote. My aim in writing this paper is to determine whether rights forfeiture, as a theory of punishment, can adequately account for the normalized state of prisoner disenfranchisement in the United States. To answer this, I will be analyzing the works of rights forfeiture scholars, first to measure whether their core principle successfully justifies the seizure of suffrage as permissible punishment for criminal behavior, and then to compare those results with the present condition of voting rights. I argue that rights forfeiture cannot justify prisoner disenfranchisement normatively nor empirically, and that all theories of punishment must take into account the social context in which they were created in order to have any sort of explanatory power. I claim that one influential aspect of our country's social context in regard to punishment is its history of racial disenfranchisement. If we do not acknowledge how race and criminality have been intertwined in American society, we will never be able to understand why theories of punishment fall short in their application, nor will we be able to recognize the extent that the exclusion of marginalized racial groups from political power has been perpetuated through the criminal justice system.

Prisoner's Dilemma: Disenfranchisement, Rights Forfeiture Theory, and Race

Rights forfeiture, as a theory of punishment, claims that it can adequately account for the normalized state of prisoner disenfranchisement in the United States. However, I argue that rights forfeiture theory fails to justify prisoner disenfranchisement, as it was formulated to rationalize the surrender of personal and civil liberties, and is therefore ill-equipped to properly handle the political right to vote. Furthermore, when scholars do address voting rights in theory, the amount of consideration they afford to the issue is directly at odds with the present proportion of disenfranchised prisoners in the United States. This divide indicates that there is something missing in right forfeiture's model that would answer for the difference. A theory of punishment, detached from the political reality from which it is meant to be applied, may be insufficient in translating its tenets from theory to reality. In this case, I suggest that one aspect of our political reality is the history of racial disenfranchisement in the United States. To understand what rights we maintain or lose in the justice system, and why some theories of punishment are lacking in their explanatory function, we must acknowledge how race and criminality have been intertwined in American society, to the extent that the exclusion of marginalized racial groups from political power has been built into the system.

The saying "one person, one vote," though originally declared in the context of electoral districts, has come to embody the democratic ideal that every American citizen has an equal say in the direction that their country is going. However, this beloved maxim has been proven false, in that there exists a significant part of the population excised from the ballot with limited public backlash. They are the current inmates at

prisons, whose disenfranchisement, even more so than those that have served their time and have re-entered society, goes largely unquestioned, with Main and Vermont being the only two states in the nation granting prisoners the right to vote.

Before we begin, I find it necessary to clearly differentiate between what I refer to as “prisoner disenfranchisement” and what is more commonly recognized as “felon disenfranchisement.” Prisoner disenfranchisement refers to how the vast majority of inmates currently in American prisons are banned from voting. This concept is more specific than the broader issue of whether or not former felons, who have been released on parole or probation, or have fully served their sentence and have reintegrated into society, should be allowed to vote. This latter issue is known as felon disenfranchisement. Although in public discourse, felon disenfranchisement is discussed as an umbrella term, under which prisoner disenfranchisement is often grouped into, within the scope of my argument prisoner disenfranchisement should be understood as separate from felon disenfranchisement, as they are treated differently by society and rights forfeiture theory.

The first step in trying to comprehend the phenomenon of prisoner disenfranchisement is to determine whether it can be normatively justified by rights forfeiture theory. To put it in slightly different terms, does rights forfeiture theory offer a convincing explanation why prisoners should not have the right to vote? Rights forfeiture is a theory of punishment, meaning that at its foundations, it seeks to explain how and why we discipline those that transgress society’s standards. Its specialized language of “rights” sets rights forfeiture apart from competing models like retribution, which takes a general “eye for an eye” approach, because it provides the particular

mechanism through which criminals can be punished and is the key to explaining why state punishment is permissible. But what exactly makes punishment permissible? When is it allowed? In his revitalization of rights forfeiture, philosopher Christopher Heath Wellman (2012) answered these questions by emphasizing how a theory of punishment, regardless of its objectives, is only permissible if it “violate[s] no one’s rights” (p. 372). Wellman asserted that no such violation takes place under the framework of rights forfeiture, because in the process of committing a crime and inflicting harm unto someone else, criminals have chosen to surrender the right to govern themselves (p. 373). They do not endure the restricted freedoms that come along with incarceration unfairly, because they have forfeited the right not to have their freedoms restricted from the state. As voting is such a right seized by the state upon becoming a prisoner, rights forfeiture’s approach makes it the ideal lens through which we can assess the normative legitimacy of prisoner disenfranchisement.

Yet, the types of rights Wellman and other political theorists regularly refer to in the context of rights forfeiture contrast against society’s understanding of voting rights, putting prisoner disenfranchisement’s legitimacy in doubt. In a vague manner, Wellman defined the rights being forfeited as “life, liberty, and/or property rights” and “rights against hard treatment” (p. 373, 374). More specifically, he described the rigid structure of incarcerated life, such as the limitations placed on how a prisoner is allowed to dress, how they choose to structure their time and activities, what level of privacy they can expect, and where they are able to go. These types of rights are known as personal liberties or, when formally protected by law, civil liberties. In other words, if an individual has not harmed someone else by committing a

crime, personal and civil liberties dictate that the individual should be able to act and associate freely without any arbitrary restrictions.

In fact, the entire structure that rights forfeiture theorists use to depict why inmates are not guaranteed these rights in prison is highly individualized, focusing only on the criminal, the harm they have done, and the rights they cede. Wellman went so far as to isolate the effect of surrendering rights by saying that “one forfeits the privileged position of dominion over one’s *self-regarding* [emphasis added] affairs” (p. 373). Rights forfeiture was designed to justify the denial of personal and civil liberties that are only supposed to affect the individual that performed the crime.

However, voting rights are political in nature, and inherently differ from personal and civil liberties. Political rights are the means by which citizens can participate in deciding the direction of their country, its policies and principles. In a democratic republic like the United States, the most direct way to do this is by voting for local, state, and national politicians that will keep their constituents’ views in mind when they formulate laws. People make decisions on who to vote for based on not only what will most benefit them as individuals, but on what is best for their neighborhoods, identity groups, and entire nation. With this understanding of how people choose to vote, I believe that enfranchisement can hardly be considered “self-regarding” and does not fit into the same category as personal and civil liberties. Depriving one person of their right to vote necessarily requires depriving the communities they belong to of a full representative voice. When taking this consequence in consideration, prisoner disenfranchisement, within the framework of rights forfeiture, unjustly punishes more people than just the prisoner that committed the crime, an outcome that contradicts

rights forfeitures' emphasis on individualized penalties and its conception of permissibility.

The disproportionality of prisoner disenfranchisement as a punishment, and how rights forfeiture theory fails to justify it, becomes even more apparent when we take into account what kinds of crime lead to its revocation. Within the field of rights forfeiture, there is disagreement on whether the surrendered rights have to be "symmetrical" to the harm inflicted. In other words, the nature of the punishment has to match the nature of the crime. While Wellman rejects this premise, in his evaluation and critique of rights forfeiture theory political philosopher Brian Rosebury (2015) enforced the idea that "*this* unpleasant experience caused by X to Y gives us a reason to impose *that* unpleasant experience on X" is necessary in order to rationalize the forfeiture of rights (p. 261). "*This*" and "*that*" must be logically connected, or else the punishment would be arbitrary and would negatively influence the theory's legitimacy. A theory that lets punishment come in any form, regardless of the crime, does not sound like a fair theory. If we accept Rosebury's statement as true, then within the context of prisoner disenfranchisement, a criminal would have to infringe on somebody else's political right in order for their own political right to be taken away. More specifically, the only reason a prisoner could be disenfranchised would be if they committed an election-based crime, such as damaging a polling machine or sabotaging paper ballots. Under this stipulation of symmetry, rights forfeiture would very rarely apply the penalty of disenfranchisement to a prisoner.

However, even if we discard such a rigid stance on crime and punishment, proportionality still poses a problem for rights forfeiture in a different way. Rights forfeiture aims for proportionality in the duration

and severity of a sentence relative to its crime. Once again, in order for a punishment to be fair, it must match the harm the crime caused in how long the punishment lasts and how harsh it is on the criminal. Let us consider one felony that can lead to disenfranchisement: theft. When someone steals another person's possession with the intention of depriving that person of their property, and that possession is worth more a certain monetary threshold as determined by state law, it is considered a felony (Theoharis, n.d., para. 6). Can theft, a breach of property rights, be equated with a political right like voting that, as stated above, has the potential to affect a wide range of people? In our example, as with many other felonies, including disenfranchisement in the punishment comes off as overly severe. Wellman brushed this conflict aside with the claim that all theories of punishment have difficulties striking a fair balance, but this does not excuse rights forfeiture's responsibility to endeavor for the most equal outcomes that it can possibly obtain (p. 387). Just because other theories of punishment share the same flaw, it does not make the act of having that flaw acceptable, only unfortunately common. The lack of set proportionality may not be the sole reason on which we would reject rights forfeiture's permissibility, but the disparity between crime and punishment seems especially alarming when voting rights are at risk due to their significance within American society.

The extent to which prisoner disenfranchisement is perceived as an unfair punishment for a crime, and thus erodes rights forfeiture's normative clout, depends on how highly our society regards voting rights. As voting is often viewed as the cornerstone of democracy, it is not a matter of whether voting rights are deemed important, but how important, and what assumptions we make concerning those who have

suffrage, versus those who do not. The question at the heart of all this is: does citizenship necessarily entail suffrage? Are all those that are disenfranchised, such as prisoners, full citizens of the United States? In his exploration of penal disenfranchisement, philosopher Christopher Bennett (2016) identified four functions of voting, with the last one concerning citizenship status. He stated that voting acknowledges “the person’s right to govern [their] own life as important to the degree that, as Rousseau would have it, only a law in the formulation of which [they have] an equal say is fit to govern [them],” a standing that they enjoy with their fellow citizens (p. 412). In essence, voting is important because it represents a society’s power to decide its own rules. However, Bennett went on to contend that there are other routes to fulfill the functions of voting, other forms of political participation, so that the right to vote is itself unnecessary for complete citizenship. To him, you can be denied the right to vote and still be considered a citizen.

While it is important to acknowledge that voting is not the only method in which we can enact political change, it is my opinion that suffrage is such a fundamental indicator by which we have evaluated equality in this country that it is a required and essential sign of citizenship, where retracting it is an unacceptable altering of status. The label of “second-class citizen,” referring to a person deprived of the full set of political rights, acknowledges that person is a citizen in name only. In actuality, they are both treated unequally by the state and cannot effect change through the same channels as “first-class citizens,” meaning that they compose an entirely separate and inferior status group (historically, and relevant to my discussion of race later on in this paper, “second-class citizens” has been used to describe African Americans during the Jim Crow era due to their deprivation of rights). Political scientists Saul

Brenner and Nicholas J. Caste (2003) also subscribe to this point of view, citing influential philosopher John Stuart Mill and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall in their defense that “a democracy in which no citizens are accorded the vote is self-contradictory” (p. 228). Even if a society had other ways in which its inhabitants could politically express themselves, it could not be considered a democracy that entirely protected the rights of its citizens without that direct channel of political participation. It is the only direct method in which citizens can hold their government accountable, and lacking that, they are only “second-class citizens,” mere subjects to the state. However, losing your personal or civil rights does not result in the same, drastic status change. In this sense, voting rights (and their understanding as symbols of citizenship) surpass the types of liberties rights forfeiture was formulated to justify, and prisoner disenfranchisement is an unsuitable punishment in its framework.

On the rare occasions that rights forfeiture theorists have openly addressed prisoner disenfranchisement, there has been disagreement on how often it should be applied, but more importantly, the theorists overall have demonstrated a great amount of respect towards voting rights. None of the scholars I evaluated believe that felon disenfranchisement should extend beyond a felon’s sentence, and none of them claim that prisoner disenfranchisement should be employed unilaterally across all types of crimes. As voting rights are so significant, some reasoned that prisoner disenfranchisement should only be used for the most serious of crimes that threaten a person’s status as a continuing member of society (such as arson, rape, or murder), and can even be used as a civics lesson to raise a prisoner’s sense of collective responsibility (Bennett, 2016, p. 423; Sigler, 2014, p. 1741). Political scientists and professor at Brown

University Corey Brettschneider (2007) also stressed moderation, although he is slightly more pragmatic in his approach to balancing prisoners' rights as citizens and preventing them from exhibiting too much political influence for personal gain. Recognizing the greater influence citizens have at the local level of politics, Brettschneider recommended that prisoners be allowed to vote in national elections, but revoke the right when choosing local officials like a sheriff that could influence the prison's safety (p. 190). The high respect and caution in limiting voting rights continues with Brenner and Caste (2003). As previously stated, they believed that the right to vote is an essential aspect of democracies, and because of this conviction, they advocated that suffrage should not only be extended to current inmates, but that prisoners should be required to vote as part of their reintegration into society, which would benefit them individual and the population at large (p. 241). Even though their exact suggestions for how often and in which circumstances prisoner disenfranchisement should be used as a punishment have varied, rights forfeiture theorists have taken the prospect of revoking voting rights incredibly seriously.

Given that so many rights forfeiture scholars believe that prisoner disenfranchisement should be applied precisely and sparingly at most, if rights forfeiture theory has any explanatory power, then we should expect that most prisoners should have the right to vote. However, this is almost the exact opposite of the present state of prisoner disenfranchisement in this nation. Out of all of the United States, only Maine and Vermont have no restrictions on allowing their prisoners to vote, making up a miniscule proportion of the total prisoner population. Furthermore, public opinion polls suggest that this is unlikely to change in the near future. In their survey on attitudes towards felon

disenfranchisement, sociologist Jeff Manza and colleagues (2004) found that only thirty one percent of their target group supported reinstating voting rights for prisoners, a drastic divide from the sixty percent that supported reinstating voting rights for probationers and parolees, even though prisoners, probationers, and parolees are all groups that have not fully completed their sentences (p. 280). The empirical condition of the proportion of prisoners barred from voting, in combination with the perspective of the public that prisoners should remain disenfranchised, contrast against Brettschneider's professed goal as a theorist of "limiting cruel and unusual punishments and preserving democratic rights to the greatest extent possible" (p. 190). Even when rights forfeiture scholars felt the need to place limitations on prisoners, they would still vastly expand the franchise more than the public and legislators have allowed, meaning that rights forfeiture cannot properly explain how prisoner disenfranchisement has manifested in reality.

To review what we have covered so far, rights forfeiture cannot normatively justify prisoner disenfranchisement, as it was founded to defend the loss of personal and civil liberties, not political rights. Nor can rights forfeiture account for the rigid ban on prisoner suffrage present throughout nearly the entire nation, based on the theorists' respect for voting rights. These failures of rights forfeiture indicate that there is a crucial element missing from its framework that is necessary for understanding the current state of voting rights in America. So, what is capable of bridging the gap between theory and reality?

Although there may be other factors that can contribute to an answer, the explanation that I believe most comprehensively addresses the flaws in rights forfeiture is related to race. Let us consider some statistics on incarceration and disenfranchisement. Based on publications

from the Department of Justice and data from state departments of corrections, sociologist Christopher Uggen and colleagues (2016) estimated disenfranchisement rates for 2016. Their report, sponsored by The Sentencing Project, a nonprofit organization that advocates for criminal justice reform, approximated that there are over 1.3 million prisoners disenfranchised in the United States. Furthermore, of those disenfranchised prisoners, a staggering forty two percent are African Americans (Uggen, Larson, & Shannon, 2016, p. 16). As African Americans make up only thirteen percent of the entire United States population, it is clear that prisoner disenfranchisement laws have had a disproportionate impact on black citizens.

This disparity reflects two important issues that the public needs to understand about the history of race in this country. First, excessively high rates of black disenfranchisement compared to white disenfranchisement are not new, nor unique to the prisoner population. The United States has an enduring history of politically alienating African Americans and blocking them from accessing the ballot through strategies as varied as literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses, white primaries, voter I.D. laws, and felon and prisoner disenfranchisement. While these first four voter suppression methods have been ruled expressly unconstitutional, the latter two persist into the present day and still disproportionately affect black citizens. Alabama's prisoner disenfranchisement law is an example of one such policy. The law prevents any persons convicted of a crime involving "moral turpitude" from voting, a phrase which has never been formally defined, and whose interpretation is usually left up to the discretion of local registrars. Upon investigating the Alabama law's origin and current consequences, Campbell Robertson (2016) of the *New York Times* found that it was

passed with the intention “to establish white supremacy in this state,” in the words of 1901 Constitutional Convention president (para. 11). After the collapse of Reconstruction, Alabama used the ambiguous phrasing of “moral turpitude” to explicitly target black voters and prevent them from exhibiting any of their emerging political influence. Even though the unabashedly racist decree would be struck down by the Supreme Court in 1985, Robertson reported that the Alabama legislature ten years later reinstated the moral turpitude clause to selectively apply to felonies (para. 12). The moral turpitude clause continues to have a racially biased effect, as African Americans make up fifty eight percent of Alabama’s disenfranchised prisoner population, but only twenty seven percent of the overall state population (Uggen et al., 2016, p. 16). With such a high proportion of black citizens removed from the political process and unable to have an equal say in the future of their communities because of prisoner disenfranchisement laws, the label “second-class citizens” from the time of literacy tests and poll taxes remains relevant to this day.

The second issue that the public needs to understand is that prisoner disenfranchisement does not exist independently of other criminal justice policies. There is a consensus among academics specializing in African American affairs that the high amount of blacks deprived of the right to vote is a result of regulations that overall increase the number of African Americans entangled in the criminal justice system (Mauer, 2002; Ochs, 2006; Brown-Dean, 2007; Feinberg, 2011; Gray, 2014). These policies marked the execution of the War on Drugs, and one academic, sociologist Khalilah L. Brown-Dean (2007), explained how the “adoption of mandatory-minimum sentences, the abolishment of parole in many states, and the adoption of differential sentencing plans for certain crimes” contributed to the rise in black disenfranchisement (p.

110). The new laws often had a racial dimension in content and implementation. For instance, Congress enacted much harsher penalties for crack cocaine versus powder cocaine (known as the 100:1 disparity in sentence length), which was associated more with African American communities, and police forces arrested greater numbers of blacks for the use and possession of marijuana, despite comparable rates by whites. By setting minimum prison lengths that could not be lowered even with extenuating circumstances, and by preventing prisoners from applying for early release, the black prison population swelled. More people are incarcerated for longer periods of time, meaning that they are also disenfranchised for longer periods of time. But looking at incarceration rates and disenfranchisement rates by race alone, without any context of what led to them, we would have no idea that there are greater forces at play.

The combination of the history of disenfranchisement laws and how criminal justice policies interact with each other to disproportionately affect African Americans demonstrate the dominance of structural racism in American society. The maintenance of racial differences takes place not through individual actions, but through the systematic preference of white people over all other races, as evident in the wide array of unequal outcomes blacks face in the criminal justice system. Worse yet, these outcomes have become normalized, and society rarely questions the set of laws, institutions, and cultural standards that enforce them. Society views the disproportionate incarceration and disenfranchisement rates of African Americans as confirmation of individual fault, not as the end result of decades of policy that functions to keep whites at the pinnacle of political power. After all, who else benefits from disenfranchising major portions of the black population? In

order to understand why prisoner disenfranchisement is still so prevalent, we have to consider how structural racism functions in the United States. However, rights forfeiture theory fails to do so, and thus it insufficiently justifies prisoner disenfranchisement because it follows the same trend of ignoring the political reality of race in America in pursuit of a normative ideal.

Rights forfeiture may not be alone in its inability to properly justify prisoner disenfranchisement or why punishment is considered permissible. Any theory of punishment that fails to consider the context in which it was created will not only fall short in its explanatory abilities, but may reinforce oppressions built into the system. In her defense of prisoner disenfranchisement's use in a modern liberal democracy, law scholar Mary Sigler (2014) declared that she will not be considering the racial dimension of prisoner disenfranchisement, saying, "it may turn out that intolerable racial consequences doom the practice in any event, but my present aim is to explore the possibility of a compelling and principled case for disenfranchisement" (p. 1728). It is very likely doomed, for prisoner disenfranchisement does not exist in a vacuum, and theories divorced from their social context will only reinforce power hierarchies without any pre-emptive measures to combat racial inequality in place. Even race-neutral laws with the best intentions can have devastating, racially disproportionate outcomes, and it is a naïve worldview that thinks that theory can be effective when separated from reality. An unwillingness to grapple with race results in rights forfeiture, which perceives the fundamental rights being deprived from a prisoner as personal and civil, but not political, and cannot explain why a disproportionately black population of prisoners are still being barred from voting. Even more significantly, it also means that academics and the

rest of the public alike do not know how to change our perceptions on prisoners, how to recognize what rights should go along with their citizenship, and why we should amend the law so that all citizens can engage with the country's political process. Until we can rethink the relationship between theory and reality, significant portions of the American populace will continue to be treated as inferior and prevented from having an equal say in the future of our nation.

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Research Strategies Reflection

American University's library resources were essential for my research paper, and from the very start I used them to formulate and narrow down my paper's point of view. My goal in researching voting rights for current inmates in the United States was to survey academic approaches regarding a personal belief. My opinion heading into the research process was that all Americans, irrespective of incarceration status, should have the right to participate in the democratic system by selecting their local, state, and national representatives and to express their citizenship, but how does this stance relate to the scholarly work of political theorists? Furthermore, the fact that only two states out of the entire country allow current inmates to vote without restrictions indicates that my opinion is not popular in practice, whether it be with legislators or constituents. Seeking to develop a more nuanced understanding of prisoner disenfranchisement and why it is so prevalent, I began my research by brainstorming subject topics and decided to analyze theories of punishment that attempt to justify prisoner disenfranchisement. I did a basic search on SearchBox connecting theories of punishment and voting rights, with the most promising options being the retribution, social contract, and rights forfeiture models. After skimming through several articles from each theory, I decided to use rights forfeiture as it directly addresses the revocation of rights as a result of criminal activity. In addition, SearchBox produced more results on rights forfeiture that explicitly referenced prisoner disenfranchisement in the way that I defined it in my paper, as opposed to the articles about retribution and social contract theory that had a broader treatment on voting rights. Having these specific search results meant that I would not have to extrapolate as much from the normative

to the empirical, and that I could make precise criticisms of the theory of punishment without the risk of misinterpreting general principles.

For the process of determining the exact sources I would use in my paper, I moved to the Wal-Mart and subject databases accessible through American University's library. Considering that the project's assignment required that sources were to be limited to scholarly articles, along with supplemental articles from popular media outlets that also passed the C.R.A.A.P. test, I was able to use databases like ProQuest Central that feature academic periodicals and can filter out irrelevant results. Part of the strength of my sources' content is that they were published relatively recently and are particular to the state of voting rights in America, two fields that I could control through ProQuest's search settings. HeinOnline Law Journal Library was especially useful in locating articles about the foundations of rights forfeiture. I found that the "rights" to which rights forfeiture most commonly refers to are civil and personal liberties, which vary from the political liberty of voting. To me, this difference had the potential to be significant in uncovering assumptions underneath when rights forfeiture believes punishment to be permissible, so I returned to the original keywords of prisoner disenfranchisement and redesigned the focus of my research to be on the basic concepts of rights and citizenship. Truthfully, I struggled with these concepts, as there was a lack of consensus by the authors I read on the full implications of denying the right to vote to current inmates within rights forfeiture literature. However, in my writing I used this disagreement as further evidence in and of itself that rights forfeiture may not be enough to explain the state of prisoner disenfranchisement in our country.

Later on, I revisited HeinOnline throughout the revision process, as it also offers articles from legal publications that specialize in the

intersection of race and the law, which provided me with the groundwork for analyzing the reality of prisoner disenfranchisement. By becoming more detailed with my keywords and combinations of Boolean operators, I could find new sources that built on what I had already included in my paper. Moreover, I drew on the bibliographies of my pre-existing sources to find thematically related articles that expanded on areas of interest within rights forfeiture theory and voting rights. I removed sources that contributed less to my argument and replaced them with others that were more effective in making my point.