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Introduction

An "atrium" is a large, open space at the center of a building—in our case, the center of Battelle, the building that houses the Writing Studies Program. Battelle is also the home of the College of Arts and Sciences, the school at the center of the university. So this open space—our atrium—is at the heart of not just the writing program but also the work of the university.

Atrium reflects that role and position. It welcomes different genres, perspectives, and approaches. It can encompass diversity. And it enacts the values of the university: critical thinking, inquiry, engagement with research and other points of view, argument, and excellence.

That last value—excellence—is one of the hallmarks of this publication. The student-authored texts included here were chosen through a competitive process; they were selected as exemplars of different ways of going about the "writing work" of the university. Look to them not as formulas for "how to write a research paper" but as generative sources of inspiration for new ways you might tackle organization, or support for an argument, or even the shape of a sentence.

And look to *Atrium* as a space that invites you into a conversation about writing and ideas.

Finally, I'd like to thank the *Atrium* committee, including Stina Oakes, Chuck Cox, Miranda Pennington, and Caimeen Garrett.

Welcome to *Atrium*.

Lacey Wootton
Director, Writing Studies Program

Locating the Conversation

Literature Review: Scotland and Post-Colonial Studies
Alexia Gardner

Recently, a debate as to whether or not Scotland could be classified as a colony has arisen among scholars, particularly among those within the field of Scottish literature and history. The introduction of *Within and Without Empire,* a collection of post-colonial essays on Scotland by Sassi and van Heignsbergen, provides a summary of the debate in its current form. On the one hand, the authors acknowledge that although it is fair to analyze contemporary Scottish writers from a postcolonial perspective, Scotland played a key role in building the British empire. Not all Scots benefitted equally from that empire-building, but the fact remains that, as a country, Scotland benefitted from Britain's participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade and its colonization of the Global South. The authors sum it up best with a quote from *The Empire Writes Back:* "While Scotland and Ireland and Wales were the first colonized by Britain, they were later complicit in its colonization making it difficult for the people to accept their identity as postcolonial" (6). In short, Scotland exists in an ambiguous position within postcolonial analysis.

Ireland, however, has frequently been accepted as a colony of Britain by post-colonial scholars, leading Jackson and Maley to justify establishing Scotland as a colony using a comparative analysis of Scottish and Irish literature. Jackson and Maley stake their claim on a discussion of hybridity and the Scottish language. The Irish, they point out, can write in Irish, English-Irish, or English, with English-Irish being a hybrid language resulting from colonization. A similar choice exists for Scots, thus forming the basis of Jackson and Maley's analysis. *Uneasy Subjects*, for which I located a scholarly book review to help me understand, makes a similar argument to Jackson and Maley, supporting a post-colonial reading of Gaelic poetry. The author of *Uneasy Subject,* Stroh—according to a book review by Malzahn—writes of the "marginalisation that entailed the erosion of 'a confident Gaelic identity' (52) through 'the growing hostility of the anglophone mainstream'" (56). In short, what Jackson, Maley, and Stroh agree upon is that the declining significance of the Gaelic language

and its hybridization with English make the case for an establishment of Scotland in post-colonial terms.

One of the biggest points of contention among scholars debating the "colonization" of Scotland is the distinction between Lowland and Highland Scots. In his critique of Jackson and Maley's work, Liam Connell argues against the notion that the whole of Scotland is a British colony. Connell points out that Lowland Scots in fact abused and mistreated the Highland Scots; thus, to conjoin the two as one Scottish colonial experience is a mistake. The appropriation of the Highland Scottish experience by Lowland Scots was a 20th century invention to serve a nationalist end—Scotland's independence. Connell writes, "Such revisionism is necessary because, in the absence of clear material evidence of Lowland colonization by England, colonial model of Scottish history depends upon a generalization of certain exceptional instances of Highland oppression as the normal experience of Scotland as a whole" (260). In summary, Connell is arguing that the only way in which to argue that Scotland is in fact a British colony, one must appropriate the experience of Gaelic Scots to Scotland as a whole. This reflects back to the introduction of *Within and Without Empire,* in which Sassi and van Heignsbergen point out that "the process of brutal 'modernisation' undergone by the Celtophone Highlands…implemented by forms of cultural repression or denigration…was closely related…to what was happening in other parts of the British Empire." (5). Thus, although some scholars argue against the portrayal of Scotland as a colony, they will concede to the experience of some Scottish Highlanders bearing similarities to the colonization experience of the Global South.

Some writers step away from the argument of seeing Gaelic Scotland in post-colonialist terms altogether. In her essay "Gaelic Scotland—A Postcolonial Site?" Krause initially appears to support Jackson and Maley's argument, writing of the marginalization of the Gaelic language in terms of hybridity, with English poems frequently appearing in Gaelic publications and the threat of English translations to Gaelic. However, at the end of her article, Krause switches gears, concluding that the hybridization of Gaelic only helped it grow as a language.

An overarching thread throughout the field is an agreement on Scotland's strange position within the field of postcolonial studies, wherein it is at once arguably a colony and a colonizer. Some scholars, like Connell,

argue that its very status as a colonizer negates its status as a colony. Graeme McDonald, in his essay "Postcolonialism and Scottish studies" attempts to explore the ambiguity and nuance in Scotland's status as a colonizer and colonized. He uses James Robertson's *Joseph Knight* to epitomize this ambiguity. *Joseph Knight* is the story of "Scots forced into exile for anticolonial resistance in the Jacobite Rebellion [that] become part of the slave- owning plantocracy in eighteenth-century Jamaica" (128). Thus, the characters in the story are a metaphor for all of Scotland— at once abused by Britain, and yet themselves British abusers.

There is some confusion in the field between; it appears as though some scholars equate the study of Scotland through a post-colonial lens with the establishment of Scotland as a colony. For example, Krause's essay claims to reject a post-colonial analysis of Gaelic Scotland, but her essay is an of itself is a post-colonial exploration of Gaelic poetry. Thus, the line between questioning of Scotland's status as a colony and the legitimacy of using postcolonial studies to examine Scottish history needs clarification and elaboration.

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Sassi, Carla, and Theo van Heijnsbergen. "Introduction." *Within and Without Empire: Scotland across the (Post)Colonial Borderline*, Cambridge Scholars Publ., 2013, pp. 1–13.

Annotated Bibliography: How Dating Apps are Shaping Intimacy in a Digital Age
Nicholas P. Hansel

Source #1:

Aalai, Azadeh. "Are Dating Apps Ruining Your Love Life?" *Psychology Today*, 28 Feb. 2017, www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-first-impression/201702/are-dating-apps-ruining-your-love-life.

This article/blog post was written by Azadeh Aalai (Ph.D.). She is an assistant professor of Psychology at Queensborough College in New York. She is also an adjunct professor at New York University and previously was a professor at George Washington University. Aalai is the author of *Understanding Aggression: Psychological Origins and Approaches to Origins.*

This source is non-scholarly. It was retrieved from *Psychology Today*, a magazine published every two months in the United States. It is a blog post and is certainly not peer-reviewed; therefore, it is non-scholarly. The audience is for a variety of individuals interested in psychological issues of today. Much of this has to do with relationships and ourselves. Some of the blogs and articles are targeted to casual readers while others are more scholarly in nature.

The article essentially summarizes the hopes and pitfalls of navigating the dating application scene in today's world from a psychological perspective. Aalai discusses that she, in fact, met her partner via a dating website. The key ideas of the article are the seemingly infinite number of potential partners and the paradox of choice. This states that we think we will happier with more choices; however, often times "constrained choice leads to a more satisfactory life." The important thing, she concludes, is to get out in the real world with potential partners and experience life. She urges users to experience the unpredictability of an encounter with another human, embracing their imperfections and considering how well they match with one's own.

This text is very important and relevant to my research particularly because it is derived from a psychological standpoint. There is an emphasis on "shallow in, shallow out" which I will analyze on a deeper level as it pertains to superficiality. This source discusses how if someone is looking for just "hook ups" they will likely be able to find that relatively easily. However, as in the real world, looking for love, intimacy, and long-lasting companionship, takes time. In many cases, it takes failure as well. Are apps just tools/platforms or do they subconsciously alter our behavior? This source will be a valuable piece helping to evaluate this question. Aalai references the paradox of choice and I will use this commentary to inform my conversation as I confront the issue of user's superficiality, as well as contentment. I plan to discuss the dehumanizing effects of viewing others as just a profile and how the vast choice of potential partners actually can harm us in our search for partners and in our current romantic relationships.

Source #2:

Banks, Jaime, et al. "A Mere Holding Effect: Haptic Influences on Impression Formation through Mobile Dating Apps." *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 76, Nov. 2017, pp. 303-311. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.07.035. Accessed 12 Feb. 2018.

Dr. Jaime Banks (Ph.D.) is an assistant professor at West Virginia University. Her research focuses on the melding of technology, communication, and who we are as humans. She also researches smartphones and social media profiles—and how those technological relationships influence a communicator's sense of self. Dr. Liesel Sharabi (Ph.D.) is also an assistant professor at West Virginia University. Her research on online dating received the Top Dissertation Award from the National Communication Association. Her work has appeared in numerous peer-reviewed journal and scholarly publications. Dr. David Westerman (Ph.D.) is an associate professor at North Dakota State University. He studies communication and technology.

This is a scholarly source. It was published in the *Computers in Human Behavior* journal. The detailed headings indicate that this is an exceptionally well-written and researched work with extensive footnotes and other research cited. *Computers in Human Behavior* is a bi-monthly

peer-reviewed academic journal covering human-computer interaction and cyber psychology. It was established in 1985 and is published by Elsevier. The editor-in-chief is Mathieu Guitton.

This publication and the included study analyze the role of the physical handheld device and swiping on intimacy and connection in how we view potential matches. Study participants were 75 undergraduate students in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The study was fascinating for its simplicity. The authors sought to discover more about the role of the device as it pertains to our psychology and perception of the profile or person on the other end. Holding the device, giving the user a feeling of power or dominance, resulted in less attraction. The conclusion of the study was that handheld devices result in a more objectified and commodified view of the potential match when compared to a desktop-based dating profile.

This text is important because it shows how our actual perception of someone changes based simply on the fact that their profile is on our handheld smartphone device. The authors are in dialogue with many other studies and research sources analyzing and commentating on the psychological effects of mobile and app-based dating. Perhaps the most intriguing point to me was about the increased perceived psychological ownership of the profiled person. I plan to utilize this in conversation with my other research pertaining to superficiality and dehumanization effects. These apps can be a "cognitive anchor for future face-to-face interactions" leading to disappointment and heightened expectations upon meeting in person. The study found that those interacting with potential matches on the device were reduced "personhood, belonging, and self-efficacy", pointing to the smartphone subconsciously, yet concretely, changing how we view others. I will put this text in conversation with social media viral videos (not listed in this bibliography) that illustrate the game-like enjoyment people derive from judging others on the apps. Additionally, the authors make valuable points about the convenience and accessibility of dating apps leading to reduced attraction and promoting the continual search for the "perfect match," which I will utilize analyzing the psychological effects of dating app proliferation.

Source #3

"Dating Apps Can Help Older Adults Meet? No Time Machine
    Necessary." *NPR.org*, 30 Jan. 2018,
    http://www.npr.org/2018/01/30/581043485/dating-apps-can-
    help-older-adults-meet-no-time-machine-necessary. Accessed 16
    Feb. 2018.

The "authors" in this case were radio commentators. Ashley Brown is
an editor for NPR *The Morning Edition.* Before joining NPR in 2017, she
spent nearly a decade on the television side of news writing and
investigative journalism at WRC-TV in Washington, D.C. Her work included
various investigative pieces and several of her productions have won
regional Emmy, AP, and Edward R. Murrow awards. She is a graduate of
American University's School of Communication. Jeffrey Pierre and Alyssa
Edes are producers for NPR in Washington D.C. Laura Roman is a social
media strategist for NPR.

NPR.org is a non-scholarly source. It is an arm of National Public Radio.
NPR is privately and publicly funded and is a non-profit organization. It
serves as a national syndicator to over 1,000 public radio stations in the
United States. This was broadcast on January 30th, 2018 to a wide-ranging
and diverse national audience.

This discussion focuses on the power of dating apps and the internet to
unite those who likely would otherwise never meet. The conversation
focuses on seniors and people who may not have the opportunities to
interact in the real world as much as younger people do. The conversation
discusses the tremendous growth in users above 50 and the accompanying
creation of apps with a minimum age requirement. There are certainly
creeps focused on sexual encounters (particularly men), but the
conversation ends happily. We hear the story of Anna Fiehler, a 56-year-
old widow, who found love after sticking with online dating. She was
patient, spent a lot of time creating her profile, and sifted through bad
apples to find Heinz Raidel, "the one."

This text is important because it illustrates some of the forgotten
unification abilities of online dating sites and applications. The article cited
an interesting Pew study which showed that from 2013 to 2015, the
percentage of people single, divorced, or widowed and aged 55-64 dating
online grew from 6% to 12%. The desire for someone to share your golden

years with is a very real and powerful thing. As my research and thesis develop, it is eye-opening to consider the anecdotal evidence of love being found on these platforms. I embarked on this journey with a bias that these applications were increasing superficiality while complicating our relationships; however, Anna and Heinz are a concrete example of hope. It is interesting to listen as love found in the golden years can improve the quality of life for many in this demographic. These people are not superficial, but are simply searching for intimacy and love. It is important to consider this part of the conversation as I explore the complicated nature of our dating app adventures as a society. Perspective can be everything; as Anna said, "they're actually providing incredibly rich connections for people ... and it can be really worthwhile."

Source #4

Hobbs, Mitchell, et al. "Liquid Love? Dating Apps, Sex, Relationships and the Digital Transformation of Intimacy." *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 53, no. 2, June 2017, pp. 271-284. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1177/1440783316662718. Accessed 15 Feb. 2018.

This article was written by Mitchell Hobbs (PhD), of the Media and Communications at the University of Sydney. He writes about media power, social media, and political communication. His current research is focused on the social consequences of dating applications. Mr. Hobbs is a co-author of several books and publications regularly used at universities in the United States and Australia. Stephen Owen (PhD) is a Lecturer at the University of New South Wales. His doctoral thesis analyzed "technology of the self." Livia Gerber is a PhD candidate at Macquarie University and a research assistant at the University of Sydney (Australia).

This is a scholarly source. It was published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Sociology.* The detailed headings indicate that this is a scholarly work coupled with the research information and findings discussed by the authors. The nearly two pages of references and the listing of funding information from a University of Sydney (Australia) research grant also indicate a scholarly text. This research is intended for a more specialized audience of sociologists, specifically studying the modern relationship. The title is a reference to *Liquid Love* by Zygmunt Bauman, a 2003 book on humanity and relationships.

This article highlights the transformation of modern courtship. It particularly focuses on dating apps and the current conversation of how we view relationships as a society. The study ultimately argues that many accounts of dating applications are too pessimistic and do not take into account the positives of networking intimacy and the power of connection afforded by online platforms. Interestingly, the authors conclude that these applications are welcome "intermediaries" in the search for love, sex, intimacy and companionship. People are not slipping down a dark slope towards superficiality, but still value and seek romantic love, monogamy and long-term relationships according to the survey. Humans are inherently resourceful, and they may utilize all available tools to meet potential partners.

This text is vital to my research because it is a fascinating scholarly source examining the impact of dating apps on how we view monogamy, marriage, sex, intimacy, and companionship. It incorporates past conversations (such as *Liquid Love*), other research, the authors' own comprehensive study, and some very interesting anecdotes. For instance, the single mother, Amy, who often messages Tinder matches "Sex?" because she does not get a significant amount of time to herself and wants a release. The article is in conversation with *Liquid Love*, the book by Zygmunt Bauman, on the frailty of human bonds. This source promotes the argument that dating applications do not represent the end of monogamy as we know it. Overall, people still desire someone to share their life with. New technologies offer an endless menu of new freedoms and possibilities, but also the same "anxieties about risk, self-image and love" remain. This is an important point. Our innate fears about the search for partners lingers within us like an unwanted ghost. Despite the fact that more of us may view potential partners on dating apps as commodities rather than humans, anxieties about relationships remain as potent as ever.

Source #5:

Mantel, Barbara. "Online Dating: Can Apps and Algorithms Lead to True Love?" *CQ Researcher*, vol. 25, no. 12, 20 Mar. 2015, pp. 265-288. library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/cqresrre2015032000. Accessed 14 Feb. 2018.

Barbara Mantel is a freelance writer in New York City. She was a 2012 Kiplinger Fellow and has won several journalism awards, including the National Press Club's Best Consumer Journalism Award and the Front Page Award from the Newswomen's Club of New York for her 2009 *CQ Researcher* report "The Internet and Terrorism." She holds a B.A. in history and economics from the University of Virginia and an M.A. in economics from Northwestern University.

This is a non-scholarly source. It was published in the *CQ Researcher.* The detailed headings indicate that this is an exceptionally well-written and researched work with extensive footnotes. There are many references and ample fact-checking; however, it is not peer-reviewed. CQ Press is part of SAGE Publications, publishing books, periodicals, and other sources on a variety of topics. The company is headquartered in Washington D.C.

The article covers the proliferation of online dating and dating applications and the benefits and risks of this trend. Mantel utilizes personal experience as well as numerous anecdotes to illustrate both the pros and cons of app dating. She discusses the "they say" view of some critics that the unlimited amount of choice is hurting relationships, along with safety risks and financial targeting. As one female user said, "going online beats going to a bar and having a weirdo hit on me, at least online, I know a little bit about each person before meeting." The safety net of the online profile at the very least encourages us to believe we know more about who someone is prior to that first in-person encounter. Mantel also highlights the exponential financial growth in the industry. This has led to services that intensively interview clients and create optimum dating profiles for them. The article also alludes to the conspicuous generational divide between those who date on traditional (questionnaire profile based) online platforms versus the dating app generation.

This source is valuable to me for the variety of perspectives it puts forth. It will help me discuss the vast amount of choice and how this may increase the propensity to get out of a bad relationship. However, it leads to a deeper question of this unlimited choice leading to the ending of relationships because someone may not fit a perfect model. I will use some anecdotes to delve into the question of whether individuals are less likely to let a relationship develop now versus twenty years ago in a pre-dating app world. The dialogue from many different sources including the

companies themselves, researchers, professors, users, and more confront many fundamental issues of my paper. Writer R.D. Rosen declares: "There's an enormously addictive quality to online dating that has never existed before in the culture," (he is working on a book about the evolution of courtship.) "You want to keep going back, because you think you're going to hit the jackpot eventually." These perspectives will be very useful as I explore the consequences of this trend.

Source #6

Markowitz, Dale. "The Future of Online Dating Is Unsexy and Brutally Effective." *Gizmodo*, 25 Oct. 2017, gizmodo.com/the-future-of-online-dating-is-unsexy-and-brutally-effe-1819781116. Accessed 11 Feb. 2018.

This article was written by Dale Markowitz. Markowitz is a psychotherapist based in New York City. She is a former data science engineer at OkCupid, a dating site. She utilizes her own experience, interviews, data, and anecdotes in her articles. Her work has been published in publications such as *The New York Times Magazine, The Washington Post,* and *The Atlantic.*

This is a popular, non-scholarly source. This article was retrieved from Gizmodo.com. Gizmodo.com is a science, design, and technology website that also occasionally writes about politics. It was originally a blog founded by Gawker and Nick Denton and has now been purchased by Univision. The audience is likely consumers interested in science and technology. The user base is known as a more liberal leaning audience.

Markowitz discusses the prospect of data algorithms getting to know us and our preferences better than we actually know ourselves. For instance, she compares this to Netflix recommended movies and shows based on what we've previously viewed and enjoyed. Instead of asking users questions (in which they may be dishonest), the new wave of app dating will simply monitor user behavior and build the algorithms accordingly. She references LoveFlutter, a UK dating app that uses twitter profiles and social media to create a "28 axis personality breakdown." This source is interesting because it looks towards the future in terms of bespoke algorithms analyzing our behavior and preferences.

This is a compelling piece examining biases we do not claim or even know we have. For instance, the story of the 55-year-old man who says he likes women aged 40-50, but in actuality likes 25-year-old blonde women. It will be illuminating in helping to identify whether we are more superficial in actuality than we would like to be. This source represents the most technological and future-oriented of my written text research. It will be a crucial source as I examine superficiality, biases and ask the question of whether or not as a society, we will be willing to relinquish control of our dating destiny to an algorithm. The alarming claim of the article is that we may soon enter an age when algorithms know more about us than we know or admit about ourselves. Markowitz also talks about a dystopian future where algorithms can analyze a potential partner's social media and flag any depression or other issues and reject them. I will put this text in conversation with the Netflix show *Black Mirror* and the episode "Hang the DJ." The futuristic episode explores the power of simulations and the role they could play in the future. As I develop my thesis, I will evaluate our contentment with relationships and our role in this "game" in the context of whether we will embrace this more efficient, but less spontaneous method of dating.

Fat Comedic Relief is a Thing of The Past: *This is Us* Shows the Value of Body Positivity
Stephanie Mirah

Introduction

Too often, television programs and movies choose to adopt stereotypical archetypes of real-life people to portray single-dimensional characters that do not accurately represent the complexity of the world. According to *MediaSmarts,* Canada's Center for Digital and Media Literacy, "television programs are quite short, [thus] the identities of characters must be established as quickly as possible." In this case, stereotypes are an easy scapegoat for creating "easily recognizable and relatable" characters, yet they also can encourage "false impressions of various societal groups" (MediaSmarts 9). One societal group that is frequently misrepresented in the media is overweight people. Usually depicted as stooges, overweight characters are primarily utilized for fat comedic relief, an outlet for other characters to pick on them for their weight. Fat comedic relief can also be a technique used, where an overweight character's size becomes a characteristic that presents them as an unattractive character rather a dynamic protagonist ("Fat Comedic Relief" 1).

For example, in the 1990s sitcom *Friends,* Courteney Cox played Monica Geller, a girl who was referred to as "Fat Monica" in her youth. "In high school, Monica was approximately 100 pounds heavier and possessed every negative stereotype ever assigned to plus-size people. She was always eating, always a slob, and always naïve" (Harper 1). Cox is not overweight outside of the show, which evidently makes her past persona humorous. Below the surface level humor, though, "present day" Monica is no longer overweight, informing the audience that losing weight should always be the end-goal because it makes you more desirable and attractive. By exemplifying overweight characters as punchlines and embarrassments, it becomes inherently acceptable to demean and dehumanize those who are fat.

In fact, Alisa Solomon, the director of the arts and culture concentration in the MA program at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, notes in her article "Who Gets to Be Human on the Evening News?", how the news media frames a group of people usually

defines how that group is perceived by others. She discusses how the news may play on the audiences' emotions by depicting people in anguish as "victims," causing viewers to care. The news' mentality is that if the audience "only knew" then they would want to help; however, this emotional appeal can be "counterproductive...[and] can just as easily dehumanize their subjects" (Solomon 1587). This mindset takes away the alleged "victims'" agencies and presents them as people who desperately need to be saved rather than allowing them to save themselves. By dramatizing a group of people's situations, the news is presenting information in the mass entertainment's genre of melodrama (1585-1592).

　　　　While *Friends* is a TV sitcom and not a news outlet, Solomon's concept of melodrama still applies. She states that:

> The absolute imperative of melodrama [and, one might add, of the evening news] is therestoration of the moral, social, and domestic order – and consequently, the reassurance of the audience – by subjecting its characters to a high degree of risk and uncertainty and lifting them out of danger. Melodrama must satisfy its audiences' expectations rather than present a confrontation with belief and value. (Solomon 1591)

Instead of trying to make a social point about how being "overweight" is not necessarily bad, the creators of *Friends* appeased the audience's minds about what was socially acceptable by ensuring that "present day" Monica was thin and successful. When Cox transformed into "Fat Monica", the audience watched her be dehumanized "by presenting [her] as helpless, voiceless, and generic" (1590). People's pity for her was rooted in humor, not distress.

　　　　With negative portrayals, however, there is often positive counterparts. Overlapping with *Friends* was *Rosanne*, a comedy about a blue-collar family lead by two overweight parents, Rosanne Conner, played by Rosanne Barr, and Dan Conner, played by John Goodman, who were not used as comedic relief (Tucker 1). Focusing less on their weight as a joke and more on the family dynamic, *Rosanne* began to break the stereotypes of overweight characters being "helpless and generic" by making their storyline's more about their working-class lifestyle. Presently, *NBC*'s new hit drama *This is Us* can be considered a melodrama because of its appeal to the viewer's emotions, and its overall theme of placing the fictional

characters in "a high degree of risk and uncertainty and lifting them out of danger" (1591). Kate, one of the show's protagonists played by Chrissy Metz, challenges the concept of melodrama within her specific character by not "satisfying the audiences' expectations" of actresses needing to be thin (1591). Metz's character frames weight in an authentic and complex way which aids in breaking the stereotypical use of fat characters as comedic relief

Airing its pilot episode on September 20, 2016, *This is Us*, directed by Dan Fogelman, is a dramedy that follows the life of the Pearson family. The show transitions back and forth between flashbacks of the family's past in the 1980s and the family's present today. In the 1980s, the plot focuses on how the father Jack Pearson, played by Milo Ventimiglia, and the mother Rebecca Pearson, played by Mandy Moore, shaped their children's lives. In the present, the plot focuses on the children's lives, Kevin, played by Justin Hartley, Kate, and Randall, played by Sterling K. Brown, 37 years later (NBC 1). With each character, Fogelman wanted to ensure that he accurately portrayed his characters, especially Kate Pearson who struggles with body acceptance and weight-related problems. Basing Chrissy Metz's character on his own sister, Deborah Fogelman Devine, Dan Fogelman had Devine on staff as a consultant to ensure the show accurately represents an overweight person's journey. Beyond Metz's weight, however, her character deals with other problems such as coping with her father's early death, her emotional journey in losing her baby during pregnancy and balancing her love life with Toby, played by Chris Sullivan. Despite this, though, weight always finds a place in every one of her problems due to its natural existence.

In episode eight of season one, "Pilgrim Rick," the audience is provided with a breakthrough moment that helps them to understand Kate's battle with weight as she exchanges a serious conversation with Toby. Despite her genuine background, Kate's body authenticity associated with her weight-related narrative has been criticized, especially in this episode and the remainder of season one, for being her main storyline. A weight-related narrative is one that involves the existence of an overweight actress of or actor who is not in a fat suit and can or cannot be losing weight as a part of their character. If Metz's character is scrutinized, that begs the question: Is the existence of a weight-related narrative valuable for Hollywood joining in a body positivity movement?

Annotated Bibliography

Source 1

Barnes, Brooks. "In a Body-Positive Moment, Why Does Hollywood Remain Out of Step?" *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 Aug. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/08/16/movies/in-a-body-positive-moment-why-does-hollywood-remain-out-of-step.html.

Summary

"In a Body-Positive Moment, Why Does Hollywood Remain Out of Step?" by Brooks Barnes discusses how Hollywood's choice to cast based on weight is leading to both a lack of opportunities for overweight actresses and an expectation for them to play primarily fat-driven roles. The article follows Danielle Macdonald, the lead role in "Patti Cake$", while she talks about her view on how Hollywood expects girls to be "scarily skinny" and how she tries to not get caught up in that mindset (Barnes 1). In Hollywood, "for women—less so for men—weight is perhaps the most stubborn of the entertainment industry's many biases. Have an average-sized body? Call us when you've starved yourself" (1). When the overweight actress makes a debut, Hollywood loves it and the media believes it is the beginning of the end of "Hollywood's insistence on microscopic waistlines" (2). However, this often leads to overweight actresses only starring in overweight roles.

For example, Nikki Blonsky from *Hairspray*, Gabourey Sidibe from *Precious*, and Rebel Wilson from *Pitch Perfect* all have struggled to find roles that are not focused on their weight. David Rubin, a casting director and Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences board member, discusses how Hollywood is caught up on ideal thin body types and how they should move towards casting overweight actresses in roles not focused on weight. Rubin goes on to use Chrissy Metz as an example saying, "It's terrific to see Chrissy Metz do such fine work on 'This Is Us,' but casting won't fully reflect the real world until someone like Chrissy is cast in Mandy Moore's role" (3). It is positive that Metz plays a major role in the show, though. Danielle Macdonald argues how Hollywood is not representing most Americans and thus is falling behind in the body-positive movement.

Connection

       This source serves as evidence and provides me with other exhibits for my topic. This provides a basis for the idea that there is a body-positive movement occurring, but not in Hollywood. The connection between this source and my research question is that it mentions how overweight actresses are used for their weight to promote weight-related narratives. This provides me with a jumping off point on how weight-related narratives should not be held in such a negative regard. While viewed critically, they at least give opportunities for overweight actresses to join the acting business. They can be beneficial for showing people in an audience that there is a journey to losing weight and it has the potential to be not just about weight.

Response

       As demonstrated by Blonsky, Sidibe, and Wilson, overweight actresses can be categorized in one of four ways: they stop working after one movie or show, they lose weight and continue to work, they own their weight and work in their present state, or they are Melissa McCarthy. Blonsky did not have much work following her debut in *Hairspray* other than another movie called *Queen Sized* and a TV series called *Huge*. Sidibe, now starring in *Empire*, underwent laparoscopic bariatric surgery to combat her Type 2 diabetes and still works, but it is still a struggle because she is still not "scarily skinny" (Nelson 1). Wilson owns her weight in her role as "Fat Amy" in *Pitch Perfect*, however, when she tried to star in a romantic TV show, audiences just were not interested. Even better known than all the above actresses, Melissa McCarthy has starred in countless blockbusters such as *Spy* and *The Boss*. Rather than McCarthy acting as a catalyst for other overweight actresses to break into the business, however, "...her success is viewed by studios as an anomaly" (3).

       I agreed with Barnes and all his external sources that weight-related narratives can be insulting when fat actresses are only used for their weight, yet in Chrissy Metz's case, she has been an inspiration to many girls because of her weight-related narrative. Weight is already a stigmatized conversation so by showing authentic stories of people struggling with weight, people outside of the show can feel more confident in themselves. New information that I learned from the article is that movies tend to be stricter about weight than TV shows and that many actresses must lose weight to portray a specific look for a movie. When

Geremy Jasper cast Danielle Macdonald for the role of in *Patti Cake$,* he thought she was incredibly beautiful which positively counters the stigma that fat actresses must be "ugly" to fulfill the meaning of the role.

Source 2

Boothroyd, Lynda G. "Visual Diet versus Associative Learning as Mechanisms of Change in Body Size Preferences." *PLOS ONE*, Public Library of Science, 7 Nov. 2012, journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0048691.

Summary

"Visual Diet versus Associative Learning as Mechanisms of Change in Body Size Preferences" is a study that was conducted by Lynda G. Boothroyd, Martin J. Tovee, and Thomas V. Pollet about how the body types we see affect our preferences to which bodies are acceptable in society. Western worlds have determined that thin is more attractive than heavy while other developing countries have determined the converse. "The 'visual diet' mechanism represents a cognitive adaptation effect, where changes in preferences are induced by visual exposure to a certain variety of a given stimulus" (Boothroyd 2). In simpler terms, visual diet is the images we consume daily. Associative learning is when "observers determine the relationship between body size and adaptively relevant traits, specifically status and health. Within Western media and culture…being overweight is stigmatized…[and] thinness is associated with high socioeconomic status, high prestige and better health" (2). There is evidence that the more girls watch TV featuring thin women, the more they will prefer thin bodies. The opposite is also true. When girls view more overweight bodies, they will prefer them.

To prove these statements, the study itself consisted of showing females pictures in one of three categories: (1) aspirational women, ones that were healthy and attractive in high-status clothes, (2) non-aspirational women, ones who struggled with eating disorders and were clothed in gray leotards, or (3) a combination of both women. During the visual diet portion of the study, the first group of female observers was divided and shown either thin bodies or large bodies that they could manipulate. Those who were shown thin bodies during the beginning

portion preferred thin bodies in the post-preference test while those who viewed large bodies preferred large bodies. In the associative learning portion of the study, two new groups were shown both thin bodies and large bodies in various states. Those who were shown aspirational thin bodies and non-aspirational large bodies preferred thin bodies while those who were shown large aspirational bodies and thin non-aspirational bodies preferred large bodies. All of this can be concluded that the more we are view different body types, especially in media, we will be more preferential towards them.

Connection

This source provides me with a psychological study that can explain why Hollywood needs to showcase more overweight actresses because it could destigmatize Westerner's views on what weight is preferable. It connects to my research question because if both aspirational thin and large bodies are shown authentically and often in the media without the preconceived notion that thin is more successful, then a larger percentage of the nation will be represented. Furthermore, body authenticity can encourage more people to embrace the way they look and encourage people to individually work to reprogram our definitions of beauty.

Response

This study helped me understand why we should encourage the casting of overweight actresses regardless of their narratives. On a small scale, it confirmed that there is a difference between being overweight and being healthy at a larger weight by showing both aspirational and non-aspirational body types on both extremes. Being thin does not always equal healthy and fat does not always equal unhealthy. Chrissy Metz and her character Kate are losing weight with the intentions of being healthy not to be thin which makes both aspirational to audiences. This study did not promote the stigmatization of thin people to promote larger people, but rather it encouraged a variety of body types to encourage widespread acceptance

Source 3

Rochlin, Margy. "Creator Dan Fogelman Knew He Had a Gem with Breakout Hit 'This Is Us'."*Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, 22 Nov. 2016, www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/la-en-st-1122-this-is-us-20161106-story.html.

Summary

In the article "Creator Dan Fogelman Knew He Had a Gem with Breakout Hit 'This Is Us'" by Margy Rochlin, she discusses how Dan Fogelman took precautionary steps to ensure his narrative was an accurate representation of real-life problems. Fogelman, the creator of *Cars* and *Crazy, Stupid, Love,* disclosed how he had a feeling the show would be a hit, but he was surprised it caused so many tears. Beginning as a movie script and then being transformed into a TV series, *This is Us* "comes down to seeing the extraordinary in ordinary people's lives" (Rochlin 1). NBC, the network that the series airs on, has given Fogelman complete artistic freedom, so all choices are made by him and are not influenced by the network.

To ensure that the characters Randall and Kate were represented correctly, Fogelman brought in outside sources. "Fogelman brought in an expert on trans-racial adoption so that his writing staff could better absorb the intricacies of Randall's story arc, of what it is like to be an African American child raised in an all-white family" (2). As for Kate's character, Fogelman based her story on his biological sister, Deborah Fogelman Devine, who works as a consultant on the show. Deborah reads every script to provide her input on Kate's character and will send notes on her opinion of the accuracy of the representation of an overweight character. She says that she is "'…trying to find stories for Kate that aren't always about the weight,' [because] 'It's *always* about the weight'" which inspired one of Kate's monologues. Metz agreed that too frequently everything is about the weight for someone who is overweight. Metz also believes that Kate is an accurate representation because she shows a "complex journey" (3) rather than being a flat character in place for comedic relief.

Connection

  This source serves as analysis for my topic. It connects to my research question because it confirms that Kate's character is an authentic representation of what it is like to struggle with being overweight and trying to lose weight. By Deborah Fogelman Devine saying, "It's *always* about the weight" that shows how weight can affect almost every aspect of a self-conscious person's life. Because life is "about the weight" for plus-sized people, it is valuable to show a character that understands the feeling of having one's life controlled by numbers on a scale (Rochlin 1).

Response

  While Deborah Fogelman Devine is not the creator of the show, it is still important that she plays such a role in the creation process. It is positive that Metz sees a lot of herself in Kate's character because that means that the story is being portrayed in a truthful manner. If Metz herself or the audience did not feel that her character accurately represented the struggle of weight, her character's existence could have a converse effect and further stigmatize an already overweight people ever further. Even though Kate struggles with much more than just weight, for example, her relationship with Toby, within all her problems weight is present and looming.

Source 4

Variety. "This Is Us Interview - How Has the Show Changed Your Life?"
  YouTube,   YouTube,   10   Apr.   2017,
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXmHNPYQ3aw.

Summary

  "This Is Us Interview – How Has the Show Changed Your Life?" by Variety is a video interview with the cast and they talk about how they have been impacted by the show outside of shooting. The whole cast discusses how their performances have changed not only their own lives but random civilians' lives as well. Chrissy Metz speaks specifically to how a lady has told her that she used to never know how to talk about being overweight with her daughter, but Metz is helping her bridge that gap. Milo Ventimiglia, Jack on the show, closed out the interview by emphasizing the

point that "people want to let you [the cast members] know that you're impacting them" (Variety 2:25).

Connection

This source serves as background for my topic. It connects to my research question because it goes beyond the realm of the show and discusses the actual positive consequences of the show's existence. When Metz talks about the people who approached her regarding her role in the show, it exemplifies how the show has left an impact beyond an entertaining one. Connecting the cast interview to the article about Dan Fogelman, the show seems to be having such a large impact because it is written about ordinary people.

Response

This source confirmed that having characters portray a weight-related narrative can be important if that weight-related narrative shows positive aspects of becoming healthy and not extreme ones. It is comforting to see that people can feel comfortable know that they are not alone in the journey of weight acceptance when they have representation in media. Like the "Visual Diet vs Associative Learning as a Mechanism of Change in Body Size Preferences" discovered, if the media shows more weight-related narratives, the chance of it becoming destigmatized is significantly greater.

Synthesis

While *This is Us* does successfully break traditional expectations of weight in the media, the way it achieves that is controversial. In his article "In a Body-Positive Moment, Why Does Hollywood Remain Out of Step?", Brooks Barnes, a Hollywood reporter for the New York Times, describes how casting can be vicious and dangerous process as actresses are expected to fulfill a standard of beauty that is defined as "scarily skinny". If they are not up to that expectation, they are often required to lose weight to achieve it or risk not being casted (Barnes 1). Chrissy Metz is not absolved from this expectation. According to an interview by *People Magazine*, Metz contractually agreed to lose weight for her role, yet she can do it in her own way, on her own terms (Mazziotta 1). This does seem

counterintuitive to the agenda the creator is pushing regarding the body authenticity, yet Kate openly struggles with weight. Evidently, struggles present solutions, and in this case, it is in the form of weight loss. Barnes mentions that there is indeed a body positivity movement occurring across the nation especially on the Internet. Although he would disagree, it does appear to slowly be seeping into traditionally-skinny Hollywood. Despite her contract, David Rubin, a casting director and Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences board member commemorated Chrissy Metz from landing a protagonist role on the show, but he still believes that "...casting won't fully reflect the real world until someone like Chrissy is cast in Mandy Moore's role" (Barnes 3). Fat comedic relief is being replaced by overweight characters telling their narratives about the struggles of being overweight. Because of this, we are making strides in some direction by having Metz in a lead role, but is it the right direction?

In the "Pilgrim Rick" episode of *This is Us*, the audience is informed on how the past can alter the future using Thanksgiving traditions to connect the two times. In present-day L.A. on a date, Toby is doing most of the talking about how he hopes Kate's mother likes him when the two of them fly to New York together for Thanksgiving. Clearly upset, Kate admits to Toby how she wants to break-up and not spend the holiday with each other. Confused by Kate's sudden change of heart, Toby asks why she wants to break-up. Kate explains how as a little girl she believed that she would be endlessly happy if she was to find a man like Hugh Grant who would solve all her problems. To her, Toby is a better Hugh Grant, yet she is still unhappy. To be truly happy she needs to find it by herself, for herself. She says how she "needs to get a handle on all of it, the weight and all of it" (NBC). While Kate does mention her weight as a part of the reason she doesn't want to be with Toby anymore, her story is much deeper than that. The concept of self-love should be promoted more frequently for all people and all body types. If Kate the character or Chrissy Metz wants to work on their weight, their choice should not be marked as an unfair conformation of beauty standards, but rather a personal choice. The portrayal of overweight characters with weight-related narratives should not be contested as misrepresentation because when people struggle with weight in real life, weight is prevalent in everything: love, work, etc.

When reviewing the episode, Raina Deerwater, a contributing critic at *The Tracking Board*, disagreed saying that Kate's weight-related

narrative ruined the seemingly good episode, bringing it down to a "C level" (Deerwater 2). At the end of "Pilgrim Rick", following some airplane turbulence that could have ended poorly, Kate has a revelation that amplifies how she must get a handle on her life. Upon arriving to Thanksgiving, she surprises the audience, and her family, when she announces that she will be pursuing Gastric Bypass surgery. Deerwater was enraged by this choice saying, "Kate being restricted to a story about weight loss is a bad story move. Let her do other things" (2). Deerwater alluded to that she wishes Kate's revelation on the airplane would have been about her mistake of breaking-up with Toby. Deborah Fogelman Devine, the director's sister, a show consultant, and the real person Kate is based on, agrees that Kate deserves more story plots than just weight, but it is much more difficult than that because "it's *always* about the weight" (Rochlin 1). When everything comes back to the fact that Kate is unsatisfied with her weight, it would be inappropriate to not address that as a crucial aspect of her plot.

Viewing the break-up as well-scripted and not based on one problem, critic Jay Bamber for *PopMatters*, described the scene as a valuable moment for Kate's character. On the date, Bamber observes that "as [Kate] sits forking through her salad and [Toby] enjoys a plate of spaghetti, she realizes what her life might look like with him: constantly denying herself in the face of someone who's decided to deny himself nothing" because he is portrayed having a supernatural level of self-esteem (Bamber 1). Considering this observation, it is important to note that it is not selfish for Kate to want to put her weight before being with Toby because Kate's weight and health are a part of her. Self-love is crucial for her before she can love another, "a concept that seems foreign to Toby" (Bamber 1). It is important that Toby is confused by this concept because that can transfer into real-life regarding how everyone has their own "complex journey." Someone may not understand another's struggles, but that does not make them any less real.

Moreover, the dinner scene emphasizes losing weight as a process and not a simple feat. In the scene, Toby enjoys his pasta while Kate pushes a salad around her plate. That is a perfect example of showing rather than telling on how weight loss includes giving up pleasantries like pasta for results that may not show for a long time. On top of that, Kate takes working out and Weight Watchers, the place where she and Toby met,

seriously, while Toby is not concerned about continuing either those things. The idea of weight as a process is challenged when it was revealed that Chris Sullivan, the actor who plays Toby wears a fat suit to fulfill his role as Kate's fat boyfriend. In terms of the definition of weight-related narrative not including those who wear fat suits, it appears that the show undermined its own goal of authenticity. Many audience members were outraged leading some people to question the show's choice to do that. Sullivan spoke about his fat suit in a dismissive manner during an interview with Andy Cohen on *Watch What Happens Live* saying that he thinks "'...that the show is just too good; they [the audience] had to find something wrong with it'" (Longeretta 1). He expands passed his attitude to mention how the fat suit is "a tool" and how "logistically speaking, it allows me to travel back and forth through time when Toby was not as heavy as he is now" (1). By articulating the idea that his fat suit allows him to move back and forth between weights with ease makes weight seem as simple as taking on and off clothes. That does not show weight as a process, that shows weight as a manipulatable factor. Applying this back to the dinner scene and the dynamics of the characters, Toby can easily give-up trying to lose weight because if the show wants him to be thinner, they will just give him a smaller fat suit or remove the one he uses now completely. For Kate, however, to portray even the most minor changes in weight, she must actively lose real weight.

In response to her co-star's fat suit, Metz reaffirmed why the entire show's authenticity is not lost by this flaw. In her own interview with Andy Cohen, Metz defends Sullivan's use of a fat suit by saying how "Chris has been heavier" so she thinks "he understands the plight of being overweight" (Vivinetto 1). This comment brings some redemption to the situation because at least Sullivan has internalized what it is like to struggle. If the show chose to cast a naturally skinny actor and place him in a fat suit, the authenticity would be destroyed due to the person's lack of experience with what it means to be overweight. In an interview with Ellen DeGeneres, Metz moves past her initial justification for a deeper thought on how "'like most actors, we are chameleons. We play different roles'" (1). That is powerful because being an overweight actress comes with baggage of being judged for your weight alongside your acting skills and not just your acting skills like thin actresses experience. Overweight actresses must work twice as hard to prove themselves as viable options. So, while

Sullivan's role does not empower the audience, his fat suit should not dismiss the fact that Metz's storyline is authentic and expands outside of just acting. Again, in her interview with Ellen, Metz explained how she was excited to play Kate saying "'Oh, I *hope* I get to lose weight. Because that is a win-win for me'" (2). She is winning because she gets to portray something that is aspirational to the audience while she experiences the positive the effects outside just entertainment.

In comparison with Monica Geller's insensitive humorous fat role on *Friends*, Kate's character exudes body positivity because of the raw personal emotion behind Metz's experience. In another interview with *People Magazine*, Metz disclosed that as a child she joined Weight Watchers at eleven years old because her mother did not how to talk about weight with her, yet she wanted her daughter to love herself regardless. Metz herself had a revelation, like the one Kate had on the show, at thirty following a breakdown that landed her in the hospital that she wanted to get her life together for her own benefit even if that meant giving up on acting. She knows what she is doing is worth it even on "frightening" days when she has to do things that make her feel exposed because of the impact she is having beyond mere entertainment (Beard 1).

The use of a weight-related narrative for an overweight actress can at first appear demeaning and unfair because a person is much more than her weight. Yet, beyond first glance, the positives outweigh the potential negatives. According to the study conducted by Lynda G. Boothroyd on body size preferences, our visual diets, what we consume daily, can and will consume whatever they are provided, whether those images are positive or negative. If the only portrayals of overweight people in the media are examples like Courteney Cox in a fat suit directly mocking plus-sized people, then that is what we will consume and, therefore, retain as acceptable behavior. Our associative learning, how we correlate weight and status, will also teach us that overweight people should be dehumanized as jokes for our own amusement (Boothroyd 1-9). With the utilization of weight-related narratives and role models like Metz, we are consuming stories of people like us, and we are opening our minds to a new definition of beauty. Weight is a personal concept and if anyone understands that, it's Chrissy Metz. Knowing that Kate's struggles are also Metz's demonstrates to the audience that she is not just acting, she is experiencing. After Hollywood normalizes weight-related narratives and

casting overweight actresses, only then can we work to fulfill David Rubin's hope for more people like Chrissy Metz playing roles like Mandy Moore without any hesitation or questions.

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Proposal & Annotated Bibliography: Reevaluating the Civil Rights Movement: African-American Soldiers and Nazi Germany
Jason Wade

Proposal

I visited the Freedom Wall portion of the National World War II Memorial, which depicts one gold star for every one hundred American soldiers who lost their lives in the war. While looking at these thousands of stars, I couldn't help but wonder how many of these brave men and women were racial minorities. I recall learning in high school history classes that WWII set the groundwork for the civil rights movements because African-Americans were thrust into greater roles in society following the deployment of millions of Caucasians. I am unsure, however, how African-American soldiers were treated in the Armed Forces during this time period and whether this conduct was indicative of or influential in the protests for social justice that soon followed.

Currently, my working thesis is: To what extent did the treatment of African-American soldiers in World War II serve as a catalyst for the civil rights movement? In other words, I am curious as to whether the war fostered an environment in which all American soldiers worked together and discarded any previous racial prejudices. Perhaps the sacrifices made by black soldiers prompted Americans to realize that they deserved the same rights as whites. Or, on the contrary, maybe discriminatory treatment of black soldiers encouraged them to fight harder for equality and motivated WWII veterans to lead the civil rights movement. To be clear, I am referring to the United States Civil Rights Movement of 1954 to 1968 that resulted in African-American voting rights and other laws prohibiting segregation and racial discrimination.

I intend to answer this question by researching how African-Americans were utilized in the Armed Forces and received by their Caucasian counterparts. Relevant information I may uncover includes segregation of units by race or other harassment of African-American soldiers. To incorporate primary sources, I plan to analyze letters, articles,

and diary entries written by black soldiers in the war detailing their experiences, thoughts and feelings, and proposed solutions. In terms of secondary sources, I have already found a *Smithsonian Magazine* article that explains how soldiers retaliated against segregation in the Armed Forces and succeeded in enacting changes. Similarly, I have discovered pieces of scholarship published within the last decade in the *Journal of Negro Education* and the *American Academy of Political and Social Science* that further discuss the inferior positions assigned to African soldiers during WWII.

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1. Current magazine article
2. Delmont argues that black soldiers had trouble justifying why they should risk their lives defending America from Nazism when a lot of parallels existed between the two (i.e., blacks were treated under Jim Crow segregation similarly to Jews under Hitler). He includes numerous primary sources in the forms of related poems, letters, and articles.
3. Delmont's key points:
   a. *The Pittsburgh Courier* along with black journalists and activists played a fundamental role in establishing and advocating for the Double Victory campaign.
   b. Too many Americans pride themselves on defeating Hitler's racism yet forget that their own Armed Forces were segregated and black soldiers were seen as inferior.
   c. Although the Double Victory campaign has had numerous successes, he believes that blacks are still not treated as perfect equals in modern American society.
3. This source is useful because it clearly establishes a link between the racism present in Nazi Germany and the Jim Crow laws that plagued the southern United States. It is also filled with primary sources in the form of poems and letters that I could find and use as

supporting evidence in my own argument. I could FORWARD Delmont by BORROWING his comparison and using it to argue that Double Victory was not just a choice, but a necessity for the continuation of the United States. I could COUNTER Delmont by ARGUING THE OTHER SIDE and showing that the inhumanity of slavery does not quite compare to the brutal extermination of over six million Jews.

4. This source is limited in the sense that it is concise and general, which means that it does not go into the same level of background knowledge and detail as scholarly sources. Furthermore, it focuses almost exclusively on the timeline of the Double Victory campaign but not on the conditions that forced it to come into existence in the first place.

5. Matthew Delmont is the director of and a professor in the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. The *Smithsonian Magazine* covers and chronicles developments in the fields of science, history, art, popular culture, and innovation to keep their diverse readership informed.

6. Quotations:
   a. "There is a historical relationship between Nazism and white supremacy in the United States."
   b. "When the United States entered WWII, African-Americans joined the fight to defeat fascism abroad. But meanwhile, the decades-long fight on the home front for equal access to employment, housing, education and voting rights continued."
   c. "...the Double Victory campaign issued a challenge to America that remains unanswered."

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1. Current news article
2. Höhn argues that the efforts of black soldiers in World War II were underappreciated, as evidenced by a lack of primary videos featuring them and celebration upon their return. However, she

believes this neglect actually motivated many black WWII veterans to join the NAACP and become influential leaders in the subsequent civil rights movement.

3. Höhn's key points:
    a. Like the last source, she points out how many black soldiers detected hypocrisy in America's condemning Nazism while supporting Jim Crow segregation laws.
    b. Many military personnel objected to the racial integration of troops on the grounds that it would be inefficient and lower the self-esteem of white soldiers.
    c. Many black soldiers enjoyed serving in Post-Nazi Germany more than being home because they were freer to express their culture and not seen as so inferior.

4. This source is useful because it provides evidence for the claim that America has forgotten about the role of black soldiers in World War II. Furthermore, its unique value comes from the fact that it covers the treatment black WWII veterans received once back home and how they went on to shape the 1960s civil rights movement. I could FORWARD Höhn by EXTENDING her analysis of black WWII veterans to my own argument, in which I contend that white people were more likely to support the movement upon seeing how valiantly black people served their country. I could COUNTER Höhn by UNCOVERING VALUES and trying to pin down what exactly she means when she claims that Americans have "forgotten" the sacrifices of black soldiers.

5. This source is limited in the sense that it merely summarizes historical events without any inclusion of primary sources to include the perspectives of the time period. Additionally, it is a popular source written to be understood by the general public, which means that it lacks specific Armed Force and civil rights movement technicalities and vocabulary.

6. Maria Höhn is currently a professor and chair of history at Vassar College in New York. *The Conversation* is an independent publication that delivers academic research directly to the public. Their goal is to inform public debate with journalism that is fact-based, ethical, unbiased, and diverse.

7. Quotations:

a. "Until the 21st century, the contributions of African-American soldiers in World War II barely registered in America's collective memory of that war."
b. "90 percent of black troops were forced to serve in labor and supply units, rather than the more prestigious combat units."
c. "White America was stunned to see how much black GIs enjoyed their time abroad, and how much they dreaded their return home to the U.S."
d. "About one-third of the leaders in the civil rights movement were veterans of World War II."

Moore, C. (2011, May 23). African American legends: "Black soldiers: The unsung heroes of World War II." [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4FYIpnaWHQ

1. Recorded interview conducted by someone else
2. Moore emphasizes the heroic actions of African-American soldiers in World War II and details the trauma that they faced on a daily basis from their supposed peers. He concludes by highlighting that it is important for black people to learn the history of their ancestors because this knowledge can be used to help win the modern fight for equality.
3. Moore's key points:
    a. Popular culture presents the notion that black servicemen were only tasked with "sweeping up," when in reality their work was critical for overall victory.
    b. Black soldiers were sent to dangerous and unpleasant places like Australia and New Guinea first to carve out the jungles, set up docks, etc., for future use.
    c. Many blacks saw enlisting in the Armed Forces as an opportunity to prove to white people that they are of equal ability and have equal love for their country.
4. This source is useful because it goes into great detail on specific military units and soldiers who had great achievements in World War II, yet received little acknowledgement. The value of this source being a recorded interview is that I get to hear Moore's motivation and methodology in writing the book. I could FORWARD Moore by AUTHORIZING him as an expert on the topic of black

soldiers' involvement in WWII. I could COUNTER Moore by once again DISSENTING and mustering up evidence to support the notion that black soldiers are recognized plentifully in literature.

5. This source is limited in the sense that Moore only talks about the process of making the book rather than reading and transferring the specific information in the book. It is also only a 26-minute interview, which means that many questions went unasked and Moore may have had to make his answers more concise than they actually are in reality.

6. Christopher Moore is a Senior Researcher for the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and has published at least two books. Dr. Roscoe Brown, the interviewer, served in World War II as a Tuskegee airman and advocated for civil rights and better educational opportunities for people of color. He even received the NAACP Freedom Award and the Congressional Award for Service to the African-American community.

7. Quotations:
    a. "Historians and Hollywood gave you the impression that these black soldiers were just sweeping up or something, but their work was far more crucial to the nation's cause in World War II."
    b. "Black soldiers were stationed on New Guinea...and going there first to hack out the jungles, create airfields, create docks on the shorelines so that more ships can come...in other words, island hopping would not have occurred without the work of the [black] construction battalions"

Morrow, J. (2010). Black Africans in World War II: The soldiers' stories. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *632*(1), 12-25. doi: 10.1177/0002716210378831

1. Scholarly article
2. This article's thesis is that British and French Armies also openly discriminated against African soldiers in World War II as a result of historical biases. Its methods include examining the changing role of African soldiers from WWI to WWII, comparing these trends with

America's, and then discussing the forgotten achievements of these soldiers.

3. Morrow's key points:
    a. The preconceptions that Europeans held about the inferior abilities and intelligences of Africans were paralleled in the United States during this time.
    b. Historians have overlooked the achievements of African soldiers in World War II for far too long while celebrating equal acts of bravery among white soldiers.
    c. Victory in WWII instilled in many African soldiers the feeling that they deserved equality and gave them the confidence they needed to demand and fight for it.

4. This source is useful in the sense that it provides a more global context on the treatment of Africans in military apparatuses. These findings are also indicative of America's sentiment towards black people because it chose to ally with nations who treated them as inferior. I could FORWARD Morrow by EXTENDING his scrutiny of British and French Armies to my argument about the treatment of African-Americans in the United States Armed Forces. I could COUNTER Morrow by ARGUING THE OTHER SIDE and asserting that the accomplishments of black soldiers do receive their fair share of celebration in academic literature (with examples to assert this position).

5. A clear limitation of this source is that it mainly focuses on the treatment of Africans in the British and French Armies, which is largely irrelevant to my intended topic. Moreover, Morrow does not cite many of his sources, which leaves me unable to verify his claims and conduct further research on these issues for myself.

6. Dr. John Morrow, Jr., is currently a professor of modern European history at the University of Georgia. His areas of research expertise include European history, war and diplomacy, and World War I. The *American Academy of Political and Social Science* is headquartered at the University of Pennsylvania and publishes research on contemporary political, economic, and social issues in the hopes of informing public policy. This article contributes to the ongoing conservation about the role of racial minorities in global conflicts

by bringing to light a number of African soldier achievements that he feels have gone unnoticed in popular culture.

7. Quotations:
   a. "The British and French attempts to omit, diminish, or discredit the achievements of African soldiers stemmed from their intent to ignore or limit African demands for equality and independence, in the same fashion that white Americans' refusal to acknowledge the combat service of African-American soldiers was intended to keep the latter 'in their place' and forestall the granting of equal rights to black citizens under the law."
   b. "The African soldiers epitomize the 'forgotten soldiers' of that 'forgotten' struggle, just as their French African and African American counterparts became the "forgotten" soldiers of their armies. Historians are now in the process of rescuing these men from obscurity so that history might reflect their very real contributions to the allied war effort in the Second World War."

Rollins, J. (1944, August 13). Attack on Black WACs [Letter to the editor]. *The Pittsburgh Courier*. Retrieved from http://oberlinlibstaff.com/omeka_hist244/items/show/248

1. Primary source
2. James Rollins, Jr., seeks to notify the American public of the horribly degrading acts being committed against black servicewomen in Tennessee with the goal of inciting outrage that will bring punishment to the perpetrators and future protocols against such behavior.
3. Key points:
   a. This letter was sent to the newspaper by James Rollins, Jr., but featured an account from one of his informants who was a member of the targeted group.
   b. *The Pittsburgh Courier* previously published a similar story about discrimination in Kentucky, which prompted a demand for justice and rectified the situation.
   c. White paratroopers repeatedly trespassed into female barracks and forcefully took black boys into the woods and abandoned

them. As a result, the female servicewomen were afraid to sleep and were constantly protecting themselves.

4. This source is useful in the sense that it grants me access into how African-American soldiers felt about being treated as inferior to whites. It provides details that no scholar could recreate, and the risk taken to make this information public illustrates the extent to which they were desperate for justice. I could FORWARD Rollins by AUTHORIZING him as someone who lived through World War II and saw the bigotry firsthand. I could COUNTER Rollins by ARGUING THE OTHER SIDE, which may contend that he exaggerated these accounts to garner more sympathy from the American people and expedite the granting of equal rights.

5. This source is limited in the sense that it only discusses the events that took place on a camp in Tennessee, which may not be indicative of the black experience in more historically tolerant U.S. locations. Additionally, this source was intended to be read by the public, which may have made it a bit more emotional than a diary entry, for example.

6. This letter was written in August of 1944, which is quite close to the end of World War II, so perhaps it cannot speak to the treatment of black soldiers throughout the entire war. Also, it was published in *The Pittsburgh Courier,* which was one of the most widely read and influential African-American newspapers in the United States during this time. I cannot find much information on Rollins himself or his alleged female informant.

7. Quotations:
   a. "I am writing you in regard to the situation now existing in Camp Forrest, Tennessee; a situation which I think could be greatly relieved through the effort of your paper."
   b. "My informant who is an enlisted member of the detachment, has written me in several letters about the situation there. I am certain that you will feel as I do; that the situation is intolerable for the women, and a disgrace to the Army."
   c. "Well last night about 25 paratroopers came in our area and grabbed two colored boys and started dragging them down

the road… after that round we stayed up all night, piling our footlockers to the door and stood guard until morning."

Thompson, J. (1942, January 31). Should I sacrifice to live "half-American"? [Letter to the editor]. *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 3. Retrieved from http://blackquotidian.com/anvc/blackquotidian/media/PC%201-31-42%20-%20Thompson%20letter%20to%20Editor.pdf

1. Primary source
2. Within this letter Thompson struggles with the notion of risking his life to defend a country that does not even grant him the most basic of civil liberties. He proposes the launch of a Double Victory campaign that pledges to fight against the evil overseas while simultaneously standing up for racial justice back on the home front.
3. Thompson's key points:
   a. The same level of passion exerted in fighting foreign enemies should be channeled to fight the discrimination that African-Americans face at home.
   b. America may not be a country worth defending if future generations of black people are subjected to the same racism that previous generations were.
   c. Thompson encourages black soldiers to keep fighting for America because he believes that it will change for the better if enough people call for such change.
4. This source is useful in the sense that it grants a unique look into the innermost thoughts of a black soldier serving in World War II. This source shows me the struggle of a man who is discovering firsthand the hypocrisy of America and allows me to trace the Double Victory campaign back to its origins. I could FORWARD Thompson by BORROWING his term "half-American" and applying it to the ways many black soldiers were made to feel inferior to their white counterparts. I could COUNTER Thompson by ARGUING THE OTHER SIDE and asserting that fighting for equality undermined the fight for victory.
5. This source is limited in the sense that it does not specifically address the discrimination that black soldiers were facing or how the Double Victory campaign sought to achieve racial equality. It

was also created with the intent of being published in a major newspaper, which generates questions about its ulterior motives and accuracy.

6. This letter was published in *The Pittsburgh Courier* in 1942, which was during the heart of the war and soon after America's entry into it. The credentials of *The Pittsburgh Courier* are discussed above. This letter is considered the launch of the Double Victory campaign, which encouraged thousands of black soldiers to demand the same rights as whites.

7. Quotations:
   a. "I suggest that while we keep defense and victory in the forefront that we don't lose sight of our fight for true democracy at home."
   b. "The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for victory over our enemies within."
   c. "This should not and would not lessen our efforts to bring this conflict to a successful conclusion; but should and would make us stronger to resist these evil forces which threaten us. America could become united as never before and become truly the home of democracy."

White, G. (2012). "I am teaching some of the boys": Chaplain Robert Boston Dokes and Army testing of black soldiers in World War II. *Journal of Negro Education*, *81*(3), 200-217. Retrieved from www.journalnegroed.org/

1. Scholarly article
2. White claims that Army Chaplain Robert Dokes is a hero for working to reform the institutional segregation that African-American soldiers experienced in World War II. His methods of research are multi-archival in the sense that he references numerous works of prior scholarship in conjunction with presenting personal letters from black soldiers.
3. White's key points:
   a. With an emphasis on the Army General Classification Test (AGCT), he argues that Army assessments were used to deny benefits to African-American soldiers.

b. He explains how Chaplain Dokes empowered black soldiers and overcame the systematic racism by giving classes to his battalions on how to pass the tests.

c. Lastly, White expands upon these anecdotes into the larger topic of institutionalized racism in the U.S. Armed Forces and the modern presence of standardized tests in education, which may carry hidden limitations.

4. This source is useful in the sense that it provides a concrete example of how the U.S. government and military were able to justify their discriminatory behavior towards African-Americans. It also focuses on the story and actions of one man in particular, which may allow me to narrow the focus of my essay rather than trying to comment on the experiences of every black soldier. I could FORWARD White by BORROWING his criticisms of the AGCT and using them to support my argument that racism against African-American soldiers was systematic rather than an unintended consequence. I could COUNTER White by UNCOVERING VALUES in regards to why he considers Chaplain Robert Dokes a hero (merely because of his efforts or because of his success?).

5. A limitation of this source is that it focuses too narrowly on the story of Chaplain Robert Dokes, whose story may be an anomaly from the majority of African-American soldiers. Furthermore, it makes several references to conflicts previous to World War II and to the development of the American eugenics movement, which are both irrelevant to my topic.

6. White is currently an associate professor in the department of history at the City University of New York. His areas of research expertise include African-American history and American law and society. *The Journal of Negro Education* is published by Howard University and analyzes the educational problems African Americans face in the United States, with the goal of inspiring solutions.

7. Quotations:
   a. "As Table 1 demonstrates, the scores of White soldiers fell into a relatively symmetrical bell curve, with the largest proportion of White test-takers collecting in Category III. In contrast, the scores of Black soldiers represented a steep

downslope, with the largest proportion grouping in Category V."

b. "Rather than end racial segregation in order to efficiently use its limited resources, the military maintained racial segregation and responded to the dilemma by lowering the quota for Black inductees or disproportionately deferring Blacks for 'mental deficiency.'"

c. "[Dokes] provided supplementary training for his men and some of the soldiers went on to qualify for, and succeed in, Officers Candidate School, thereby proving that intelligence was dynamic and socially constructed. Because he operated from the presumption that Black and White soldiers were intellectual equals, Dokes likely saw in the test results the racial disparities in access to formal education, general societal knowledge, and quality of the educational environment that resulted from racial discrimination, segregation, and extralegal violence. His efforts whether preaching, teaching, or counseling seemed to indicate that Black soldiers needed more, not fewer resources in order to reach their potential precisely because of the overweening power of White privilege."

The White House (1948, July 26). *Executive Order 9981: Establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces.* Retrieved from https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=84

1. Government website
2. This executive order requires that the Armed Forces begin integrating troops and treating each person equally regardless of their skin color, national origin, and so on. Additionally, it creates the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which investigates the various policies of the Armed Forces to ensure that racial discrimination is not being hidden underneath bureaucracy.
3. President Truman's key points:

    a. The democratic practices that are valued on the American home front should be extended to the men and women who risk their lives to defend it.

    b. Full cooperation between the federal government and the Committee is expected. This includes the various secretaries of Defense, Army, Navy, and Air Force.

    c. This order and the Committee can only be terminated by another executive order.

4. This source is useful in the sense that it symbolizes a change in the stance of the federal government towards the treatment of African-Americans in the Armed Forces. I can use this document as evidence that the efforts of black soldiers in World War II did have some impact on the development of the civil rights movement that soon followed. Thus, I could FORWARD Truman by ILLUSTRATING that the resistance of black soldiers to institutionalized racism did enact substantial societal changes. I could COUNTER Truman by DISSENTING and asserting that this executive order was done for the sake of image or to appease African-Americans and prevent them from demanding total equality.

5. This source is limited in the sense that it only reflects the sentiment of President Harry Truman and not the entirety of the federal government or military complex. It was also signed three years after the completion of World War II, which means its impact can only be seen on subsequent wars rather than in the experiences of black soldiers in WWII.

6. Our Documents is an initiative that was launched by President Bush in 2002 with the goal of creating a publicly accessible digital archive of the country's top historical documents. The collection has been added to over time with a specific focus on creating outlines that can be used by teachers to educate students on the development of America's democracy.

7. Quotations:

    a. "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin."

b. "The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the Armed Services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order."

Screen Shot of First Page of Source 1.

Screen Shot of First Page of Source 2.

The United States in World War II: Historical Debates about America at War

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ATTACK ON BLACK WACS: LETTER TO P. L. PRATTIS 8 JULY 1944

Title

Attack on Black WACs: Letter to P. L. Prattis 8 July 1944

Description

Letter to the editor of the Pittsburgh Courier, P. L. Prattis, from Rollins W. James, on the behalf of black WACs stationed near white paratroopers.

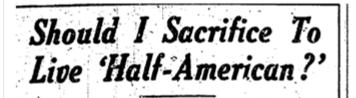**Creator**

Rollins W. James, Jr.

Source

Collection

Race Relations Group

Citation

Rollins W. James, Jr., "Attack on Black WACs: Letter to P. L. Prattis 8 July 1944," *The United States in World War II: Historical Debates about America at War,* accessed April 9, 2018, http://oberlinlibstaff.com/omeka_hist244/items/show/248.

Should I Sacrifice To Live 'Half-American?': Suggest Double VV for ...
Thompson, James G
The Pittsburgh Courier (1911-1950); Jan 31, 1942; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Pittsburgh Courier
pg. 3

Should I Sacrifice To Live 'Half-American?'

Suggest Double VV for Double Victory Against Axis Forces and Ugly Prejadices on the Home Front.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: A young man, confused and befuddled by all of this double talk about democracy and the defense of our way of life, is asking, like other young Negroes, some very pertinent questions. We reprint this letter in full because it is symbolic.)

DEAR EDITOR:

Like all true Americans, my greatest desire at this time, this crucial point of our history; is a desire for a complete victory over the forces of evil, which threaten our existence today. Behind that desire is also a desire to serve, this, my country, in the most advantageous way.

Most of our leaders are suggesting that we sacrifice every other ambition to the paramount one, victory. With this I agree; but I also wonder if another victory could not be achieved at the same time. After all the things that beset the world now are basically the same things which

First Page of Source 7.

"I Am Teaching Some of The Boys:" Chaplain Robert Boston Dokes and Army Testing of Black Soldiers in World War II

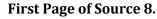George White, Jr.   York College-CUNY

African Americans have served in the United States Armed Forces in nearly every conflict in the nation's history. However, the State—through official government policy, ad hoc decisions of military commanders, or statements by prominent civilians—was rarely comfortable with Black military service. Throughout most of American history, the various branches of the military practiced racial segregation against Black troops. Despite the fact that more than one million Blacks served in the military during World War II, the practice of segregation persisted and shunted the overwhelming majority of Black service personnel into non-combat service units. "I Am Teaching Some of the Boys" is based on the experiences of an African American minister-turned Army Chaplain, Reverend Robert Boston Dokes, who defied this tradition.

During World War II, officials relied on the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) to determine which soldiers served in which capacities. The AGCT provided convenient cover for an institution that was determined to find a rationalization for racial discrimination. The AGCT was part of a larger assessment environment that controlled promotions, pay grades, and other benefits of military service. Moreover, the invocation of White privilege through testing, especially in a war with Nazi Germany, seemed as an important means of refuting Black claims to full citizenship rights. This article, based on multi-archival research, will address the efforts of Chaplain Dokes and other reformers to help Black soldiers overcome these institutional limits. Dokes' experience with several Black battalions underscores the impact of the Army's testing regime on Black troops.

Keywords: racism, military, educational testing, African American history

Sitting in a small office under palm trees and azure skies, a Black minister made a long-distance confession to his spouse. Chaplain Robert Boston Dokes joined the Army in May 1941, months before the patriotic fervor in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor because there were very few Black chaplains serving the spiritual needs of their brothers-in-arms. The shortage of Black chaplains persisted throughout his service and, coupled with racial discrimination against Black service members, Dokes found himself performing tasks that would have been considered extraordinary for many of his peers. On the occasion of his confession, Robert's letter revealed to Carol Esther Dokes that, in addition to preaching, public speaking, and meeting with local townspeople, he was "teaching some of the boys a little English and spelling each Monday" (Dokes to CC Dokes, March 25, 1943). Although his efforts met with some success, Dokes ended his tour of duty in a military hospital, recovering from exhaustion and hypertension likely caused by the extraordinary commitment he made to Black soldiers, regardless of whether or not they were in the units to which he had been assigned (Dokes, December 29, 1945).

During World War II, military officials relied on the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) to determine which soldiers would serve in specific capacities. The AGCT was a descendant of the intelligence tests used by psychometricians in World War I. The AGCT was part of a larger assessment environment that controlled promotions, pay grades, and other benefits of military service. Although the Army did not explicitly claim that the AGCT was a measure of innate intelligence, this article will show that the Army used the scores from the test in a way that reinforced social stratification and racial privilege. This article also will explain how the AGCT provided a justification for the continued racialized practices in the American Armed Forces. The

First Page of Source 8.

Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces (1948)

First Document Image

EXECUTIVE ORDER

ESTABLISHING THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICES

WHEREAS it is essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense:

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.

2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.

3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the armed services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and advise with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary

Making Meaning Out of the Personal

Keystrokes to Perfection
Rachel Geisel

"Read this sentence and tell me what is wrong with it?" That question is frequently part of fun, challenging banter between my parents. As the only child of two journalists with keen eyes for typos, grammatical blunders and clunky sentences, my writing has been picked apart with a fine-toothed comb over the years. Looking at the literary world through the lens of two journalists has developed my appreciation of and affinity for the written word and language in general. Though writing came easily—or maybe even because of this fact—I have grappled with living in the shadow of my journalist parents, wondering how I might stack up.

Several events have served as touchpoints in my development as a reader and writer. When I was a toddler, my mother, who read to me nonstop, brought me to story hour at the public library. Week after week, we listened to the librarian, Ms. Kim, not simply read books, but tell animated stories. After the hour was up, my mother let me select a book to bring home until the next week. Soon I was finishing my sentences with "she said" or "she cried," giving attribution to my speech at all times, until my family thought I had developed a tic. Long after I aged out of story time, my mother and I took trips to the library where she encouraged me to read a wide array of books.

At the beginning of every summer vacation, my mother and I would make our pilgrimage to the library so I could get my copy of the summer reading list the librarians created for students. There were prizes and an ice cream social at the end of the summer for those who read all the books, but for me, the real prize was delving into a story and becoming immersed in the plot and characters. I felt a sense of accomplishment finishing one book after another and checking them off the list. It was these summers that gave me the chance to realize not only the joy of reading, but also how the right words can create the perfect story.

The more I read, the more I wanted to write. I filled notebooks with narratives I created, excited rather than intimidated by the act of putting pen to paper, even if it took time for the words to flow. The notebooks were extensions of my being, they were suspended in a space-time continuum where the concept of perfection did not seem to exist. Here, in the world

that I created, there was no journalistic standard, no "right way" to say something, no such thing as "word economy." These terms that my parents bounced around as they edited stories or interviewed sources did not apply to me then.

While I excelled in writing classes and peers asked me to edit their work, I lived in dread of "good enough." I wanted my work to surpass expectations. I craved the approval of peers and teachers, but more than anything, I wanted the approval of my parents. I yearned to show them that I had talent too, that I could be a part of this exclusive club of writers. As I got older, I thought that I was on the verge of club membership. My writing was becoming more mature as I began to grasp the concepts of diction and tone.

Then I had a setback in the form of a seventh-grade assignment. My English teacher assigned an essay on our impressions of a novel about an Antarctic voyage. While most of my classmates found this tale of Antarctic adventure gripping, I read the book as quickly as I could—just to say I finished it—and was eager to be through writing a paper on a subject I found to be incredibly dull. I breezed through the essay, paying little attention to the content and construction of my sentences, simply hoping to check the boxes on the rubric and scrape by with just enough effort to meet the criteria for an "A." I gave the paper to my mother to proofread. After she was finished reading she told me very matter-of-factly that it was "simply unworthy of turning in." I confessed that I hated the book and the subject. "It shows," she said. "This is not your best work." My mother handed the paper back to me, instructing me to rewrite the assignment and let it reflect my capability and pride in my work.

This was a different experience for me. Usually I grappled with the insecurity generated by perfectionism and the need for approval, my writing was good and I wanted to make it better. I wanted to prove myself with every assignment. I relished every glowing comment or good grade I received. This time, it was not about turning good into great, it was about creating great from utterly unacceptable.

All my life I had been known in school as the rule follower. Disappointing people made my stomach churn. A reprimand for talking in class left me feeling ashamed for days. This time, I was disappointing myself. I was defeated. I had been told I was a good writer for the entirety of my—albeit short-lived—academic career. Now, I was at a crossroads:

give up because I did not like the subject or complete an assignment to the best of my ability even though I did not enjoy it. The literary world was sufficiently ingrained in the way I grew up that I chose to revise. I reread the paper, chiding myself at the sheer apathy with which I wrote the essay and the silly mistakes I made. It took hours, but I managed to turn nothing into something, unacceptable to good, and good into great.

The teacher praised my essay, but I wanted to redeem myself in my parents' eyes. Praise came, but in a form I did not expect. The writing itself and the improvements I made to the piece did not go unnoticed, but the commendation they gave me focused my willingness to rewrite. "Good writers struggle, especially when they are writing about something unfamiliar or uninteresting to them," my parents told me. Though I felt better after having received praise on the new and improved essay, I lost interest in writing for fun and for no one but myself. I stopped filling notebooks with stories and quotes. I no longer saved newspaper articles and letters. Paraphernalia of the written word seemed to have little merit.

Living in a world expanded by words, the idea of having a voice that was silent yet loud at a young age resonated with me. The words I strung together to make sentences and paragraphs and stories mattered. The words I read in books published by acclaimed authors mattered. My parents taught me that communication is the greatest power anyone can possibly have. I would not trade my love affair with the English language for anything else, though writing under the pressure of eyes trained to catch each and every mistake fueled my perfectionism. I wanted all of my work to be worthy of a byline. I had to get over the sting of the words my mother said to me about the essay in seventh grade. In order to do this, I had to write. The hiatus I took from filling notebooks with narratives had to end. I had to prove to myself that perseverance is a more powerful tool than raw talent.

The next school year, I reclaimed my voice. In eighth grade, I was lucky enough to have an English teacher who unearthed my passion for writing. My favorite unit of the year was on George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The class put Napoleon the pig on trial for the murder of the much beloved horse, Boxer. I was selected to be the lead attorney for the prosecution. This meant I was in charge of a team of "attorneys" and "witnesses" that would build our case. I was to give the closing statement at the end of the trial as part of my role as lead attorney. I was engrossed in the assignment.

I wrote draft after draft of my closing argument, delivering it to my parents after each iteration. The day of the trial finally came, and our teacher invited parents to watch as our eighth-grade class acted as lawyers and witnesses. I delivered my closing with passion and a smile a mile wide.

I have always called myself a writer. Sometimes, I have been a writer frustrated with her craft, but a writer nonetheless. I am a writer in a family of writers, searching for how I want to use my talent. It is easy to get entrapped by the myth of perfection and the need for approval. It is much harder to accept that perfection may not exist in writing, even if we want it to be so. Calling myself a writer and a bibliophile means embracing the fact that I can be my own worst critic when I attempt to measure my writing against someone else's metrics.

I Should've Told You This Before
Isaiah Hug

Maggie,

We have known each other for almost three years now. We have been together for the majority of that time. As such we have become familiar with each other, almost disturbingly so. We know each other's quirks, our likes and dislikes, and our family situations. We understand our individual histories, our slightly different senses of humor, and to some extent, our aspirations. But there is one part of my life, and a major one at that, that you have not learned about. About a month ago, while on the phone with you I addressed this blind spot, particularly about how we as a couple had not really talked about it sufficiently. I use "we" liberally because in this case the responsibility falls on me, for this is a problem that, while you may know it exists, you have not been equipped with the requisite history of this problem. You have not had the opportunity to fully comprehend it. But to be honest, very few white girls truly understand their black boyfriends in their entirety. There is a myriad of reasons as to why that is. But the important part is that when we were discussing this, I was cynical in thinking that you didn't know and wouldn't ever truly understand the nature of living with black skin. But you replied, "I want to know."

This made me happier than I let on. Sometimes I forget that behind that hard and jaded Scorpio visage is a compassionate, caring, and loving person. Maybe I am the only one that has the privilege of seeing under this mask, but it's there. If I recall correctly, at that time we did not tackle the issue. I am a coward for this, but realistically how am I to explain the entirety of my existence, the reality of an entire people, and their four-hundred-year history in a phone call? Is it my responsibility to educate every white person who is unconscious of the world that *I* live in? Is that even possible? The pragmatist—which I would like to think I am one of— would argue yes. Simply because if we won't, who will? I think it is also in both our interests that I do, as we have had our fair share of awkward moments about my race. From your parents' strange and random allusions to information and media that they think proves them as being "woke," or your one aunt's immediate distaste for me despite my politeness, or most recently, your initial apathy towards my distress following a racist incident

on the campus that I now call home. As I said, it's not as if you were unaware of the issue when these things happened, but I feel that we never really processed anything together. Any restitution was only a superficial, "Don't worry, I'm used to it" or a "I know, I'm a stupid white girl." We said these things to deflect the discomfort. Yet, these superficial words hold tremendous meaning.

For me, being black is not just about soul food, rap music, coco butter, or celebrating Black History Month. For me, it is an integral part of my life that informs what 'I can and can't do' and how the world perceives me. It informs every dap I give out, or don't. It informs what I wear, what music I listen to, the looks I give and receive, who I date, who I vote for, what I study, and what I live through. All because of where I was coincidentally born. This madness stems from the culture of the country we live in, as it facilitates all of this, while telling us that it isn't doing so. By this logic, your father didn't insist on sharing a country song lamenting the death of Trayvon Martin in an attempt to connect with his daughter's black boyfriend; instead, he was just an innocent fan of the song and wanted to share. Or your aunt didn't glare at me last summer because I'm black, but rather it was because of something that I said. Hell, maybe she just didn't like me. These two examples stick out me because they cover the two types of interactions that I often have with white people.

It wasn't as if your dad was malicious in his attempt, nor was he original. It is almost a cliché for the older white person to reference something "woke" in an attempt to inform my judgement of them. Your father is a sweet guy. He doesn't have a malicious bone in his body. But he has not been trained for these interactions. I do not blame him for this, but when one is imprecise, there are consequences.

I do not know if while the song was playing you looked into my eyes—if you weren't too busy trying to sink into the floor in mortification. I don't think you did, because as you know I have a horrible poker face, and if you had you would've seen an intense sadness in my eyes. Not only was the song melancholy, but Trayvon hits a certain nerve for me. I remember when he was killed back when I was in middle school. I remember the news coverage, the investigation, the political firestorm, the racists on the internet pumping the idea into my head that Trayvon deserved it, the trial, and the subsequent exoneration of his killer. I remember having the "talk" with my mom, the *one* that was compulsory for every black family with a

black son. I remember thinking, if Trayvon, the sweet teenage boy who was scrawny and had a baby face, could scare someone into killing him just by walking around at night, how would I fare? I am muscular, imposing, and have a temper.

I remember right after the shooting happened I found myself lost in a white neighborhood, at night, in the rain, with a black hoodie on. All twelve-year-old me could think about was my own mortality. Whenever I recounted this story for other people, it was for comedic affect; the sort of morbid humor that you love. But that is simply a way for me to try and bury the sheer terror I felt that night. But no matter what I do it will always be a shallow grave. To this day, the terror still persists. I have learned to control it, but it's there. The terror is still there, Maggie. Every time I don a black hoodie at night, in the back of my mind is the fate of Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Gardner, Philado Castile, Alton Sterling, Prince Jones, the black kid that was shot holding an airsoft rifle in Walmart, the black kid that was shot in the back fleeing police, the black guy who was killed on tape by officers who were behind him while he was on his knees handcuffed, the black man that was mauled by a police dog in New Jersey; and, in the back of my mind, I wonder what makes me so special?

So, when your father played that song, I felt all of that. Plus, I saw Trayvon's face, and I recalled Zimmerman's smug and arrogant behavior and how he was all but rewarded for his actions that night. You couldn't tell, but I was holding back tears. Don't let the laughs and dismissals afterwards fool you, you are too smart for that. The laughs and the jokes hide a visceral pain and sadness and rage that never truly goes away.

Now, why did I not express all of this when I was initially confronted with it? It would've required me to be extremely vulnerable. And vulnerability is not a luxury that I have all the time. If we were to tell your father all of that, the conversation would've been perhaps productive, but there would've been a cost. I don't know what exactly. But in my experience, when I really get into the weeds about race, it makes all the white people uncomfortable, even threatened. If I had this conversation then, in my estimation, the mood would've been killed. The illusion that everyone in this country enjoys would've been shattered and you and your dad would've been brought down to the sobering reality that I live. I didn't want to do that. I stay with you because when I'm alone with you, watching

a movie or walking through the woods by your house, I get to be in that illusion for even a few hours. I forget about Trayvon, or the white clad terrorists that are revered as patriots; or the fact that, down the street from my house, there are kids like me who are abused, forgotten and left for dead by this country. I forget about the one hundred different times I've been called a nigger and the one-hundred different ways my childhood tormenters found a way to articulate that "fact." I forget all the things I've heard about me or my people that made my blood boil and my mind fantasize about the breaking of necks and the crushing of throats. When we are alone, it is just you and me. All the inherited problems that plague our generation fade away. Perhaps this escapism is selfish, but I really couldn't care.

But like most modes of escape, it isn't permanent. This is where your aunt comes in. See, all that fear I feel when I don a hoodie is arguably unsubstantiated. I have never personally been stopped by the police. That one time I was lost in the white neighborhood, the white people there were polite and pointed me to the house I was looking for. For every one of my peers who belittled me, there is a well-intentioned one who respects me as an individual. What's fucked up is that I almost wish this wasn't true. Because every example of white people treating me right feeds into the narrative of the illusion, that everything is fine. If I were to be stopped by a cop, I could at least say, "I told you so," to all the skeptics. I wouldn't have to recite dozens of statistics and examples to prove that I'm not crazy. Rather, my personal example would suffice. But that's not the way things work here in the Northeast. Outright racism is uncouth so people bury it in a shallow grave of coded language and excuses. That way all the well-meaning liberals who watched *Black Panther*, voted for Obama, and read their de rigueur Ta-Nehisi Coates can gentrify with an intact conscious. So, when your aunt gave me that look, I was actually surprised. As I said, such blatant hostility is uncommon in the liberal bubble I seem to always be trapped in. That look was the stuff of history books, legend, a myth even. The type of thing we honor our grandparents for having to endure, but never ourselves witnessed.

I was caught off guard, but as always, I recovered. I remembered my place. I remembered what the nature of this country we call home is. The situation with your aunt shattered the intoxication I enjoyed with you. And it planted a seed of doubt. It made me question our reality. Not so much

our relationship, but rather the factors that affect it. So, when your mother makes me undo my spring break plans with you, I wonder is it because she is worried that I will sully your reputation when we are left alone or is it because of a more sinister rationale. The problem is that I will never know the answer. There is always an alternative solution to this problem. Maybe your mom is just an unreasonable and slightly insane person, a narrative that has ample evidence to support it. Maybe she just doesn't like me for some infraction that I hadn't even noticed. One can run these examples all night long, but you'll never get an answer. Any or all of them could be true. Furthermore, if one of us was to confront her, she would never admit to her *disease*. That is, if she is indeed sick.

I feel a hostility emanating from certain members of your family, and I can't put my finger as to why. Perhaps it is my own arrogance, and I will admit I am not perfect, but it honestly confuses me. I would say that for most parents, they would regard me as a good boyfriend. I am good looking and fit, but still smart and book savvy. I treat you well, but I don't arbitrarily shower you in cheap manifestations of love. I am smart, but I can still swing a hammer and turn a wrench, and while I may not be as handy as they would like, I still can (and have) helped out with the dirty jobs around your house. I am polite. I dress moderately. I refer to them as "ma'am" and "sir." I am trying. Yet it is never enough and part of me thinks that they will never truly accept me. I have begun to notice this because of the seed of doubt your aunt inadvertently planted.

Going forward, I am not asking for you to necessarily change your behavior. For you to coddle me would drive me to insanity. All that I have explained to you is really out of your control. I wrote this as a way of opening up. If we are to stay together, I need to let you in all the way. The fact that it took a college writing assignment to get me to tell you all of this is almost pitiful, but nonetheless, it needed to happen. I want you to at least be able to try and understand a little bit. I doubt that you'll read this and have some grand epiphany and suddenly feel everything I have felt in 19 years. But, I still owe it to you to explain myself. I have been lying to you and to myself for too long. It's time for me to unearth the reality and wake you up.

Working with Texts

Are We Entitled To Our Own Facts?
Anne McKenna

At the end of his show on October 22, 2008, Keith Olbermann stares down the camera and says in his trademark angry tone that he's going to play a game called "Sarah Palin in the big leagues! Or, 'Are You Smarter Than a Third Grader?" An interview clip of Palin comes up on the screen, during which she takes a written question from a third grader; the question is "What does the Vice President do?" Palin's response includes "'[the Vice President is] in charge of the United States Senate, so if they want to, they can really get in there with the Senators and make a lot of changes that will help [American] families." Olbermann looks into the camera and shouts condescendingly, "Oh, so sorry, Governor! The correct answer can be found in the Constitution of the United States, Article One, Section Three." Continuing, Olbermann reads Article One Section Three of the Constitution, which details the organization of the Senate and reads, "The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided." Olbermann then looks back into the camera and says, "so the Vice President is not in charge of jack, Governor, let alone the Senate. And you, Governor, are NOT smarter than a third grader." Olbermann concludes the clip by saying that Palin is either "stupid," or plans to move the parameters of Vice Presidential power outside of what is allowed by the Constitution. His final line is "At least wait until you achieve office before you attempt to seize power extra-Constitutionally!" (Olbermann).

By the end of watching that clip, you may feel satisfied to hear someone say so clearly what you have been thinking this whole time. You may feel tired and as though Olbermann was too harsh and too dramatic to make such grandstanding claims from one interview moment – after all, it was just one blunder, right? You may also feel skeptical about how biased Olbermann seemed in his commentary – couldn't you find a clip of Joe Biden slipping up like that if you tried? Should you have included that clip alongside the one of Palin? Would that have been evenhanded, or fair and balanced? It turns out that Olbermann doesn't have to do *any* of that. Why? Because he isn't a journalist.

As it turns out, Keith Olbermann wasn't delivering the news when he hosted *Countdown* in MSNBC's primetime slot every night for almost ten years. Neither is Rachel Maddow today, and neither is Sean Hannity, or was Bill O'Reilly. None of these people are journalists, so none of them are delivering news. They are delivering news *commentary*. The difference between news and news commentary is not well understood; it is understudied and yet so crucial to mass communication in the United States and across the world because people are paradoxically only watching political commentators on television, yet the public's perception of media bias is incredibly polarized. With MSNBC and Fox News' primetime lineups being dominated by political commentators, their millions of viewers are being pulled to opposite ends of the political spectrum, making communication across political lines nearly impossible, and making the gridlock in American politics even worse.

Media Bias: Perception vs. Reality

The greatest threat to America is not necessarily a recession or even another terrorist attack. The greatest threat to America is a liberal media bias."
- Rep. Lamar Smith (R)

The world has an ever-growing number of news sources coming in different media from different people and companies. Additionally, distrust in the media is more common and encouraged than ever before. During election cycles, particularly the most recent one, television news plays a critical role in shaping and narrating campaigns and elections, but it is becoming more common for candidates to have their own team of news organizations that they trust, while bashing a group of other ones (take CNN vs. Fox, for example). With charges of bias coming from both sides, it's hard to know which news sources are trustworthy. Is it true that media has a large-scale partisan bias? How can you measure bias if no one can have a totally non-biased view of the news themselves? We all prescribe to our individual political beliefs and any lens we watch the news from will be filtered by that lens.

Regardless of what the objective truth may be as far as it can be measured, public perception of media bias is at an all-time high. According to a 2011 Pew study, "66% [of Americans] say news stories often are inaccurate, 77 % think that news organizations tend to favor one side, and 80% say news organizations are often influenced by powerful people and

organizations" (Bedard). You have probably heard the term "fake news" or "mainstream corporate media" to describe these feelings. *So many* Americans think that the news sources they don't subscribe to are biased and untrustworthy, and half of the country thinks the same of the news sources they consume. The same study results mentioned that Fox News and CNN were the most commonly mentioned news cites when asked to describe media bias. So clearly, the perception of television news sources has become so polarized that people just chose one source for their news and write off all of the others. But regardless of the public's perception of media bias, does this media bias actually exist?

You've probably heard the term liberal media, or liberal corporate media, or some term to that effect thrown around, especially if you're a fan of Fox News. Conservative political commentator Ann Coulter dedicated a whole book to it; *Slander: Liberal Lies about the American Right* is Coulter's book about, to use her words, "the left's hegemonic control of the news media" (Coulter 10). This accusation that all media sources are liberal leaning or "in the bag" for Democratic politicians is something that liberal-minded newscasters and politicians have to face and fight against because the accusation has become so commonplace. But how true is this claim?

While the accusation that media has a liberal bias is widespread, there are many professionals in communications that see this claim as dishonest and dangerous. *Economist* and *New York Times* contributor Paul Krugman has written about this phenomenon and argues that this accusation creates a fear in mainstream media outlets, which affects their reporting. He writes, "The media are desperately afraid of being accused of bias. And that's partly because there's a whole machine out there, an organized attempt to accuse them of bias whenever they say anything that the Right doesn't like" (Krugman). This means that, according to liberal columnists like Krugman, people who demean mainstream media as left-wing have been successful in their strategy because it influences the way mainstream media outlets behave. Whether they mean to or not, mainstream media outlets are fearful of being called disreputable, so they tiptoe around those accusations, which works in favor of the right.

In his book *Lies and The Lying Liars Who Tell Them,* former US Senator Al Franken dedicates a chapter to examining this "liberal bias," which he argues doesn't exist. He cites a study from Pew that examined the 2000 presidential election, which actually found that democratic nominee

Al Gore received 7% *more* negative coverage than Bush, while Bush received 11% more positive coverage than Gore (Franken 42-43). The same trend has continued into more recent elections. A 2009 study for *Daedalus* found a stronger pro-McCain bias for Fox News than there was a pro-Obama bias for CNN in 2008 (Jamieson and Gottfried). Focusing on the 2012 election, a study conducted by Elon University found that Mitt Romney's campaign received more coverage on average from television and print media than the Obama campaign; additionally, more stories on average were negative towards Obama (Quackenbush). Franken assesses in his book that because there is such a widespread conception that there is a "liberal bias" in the media, that mainstream media networks and papers feel as though they need to fight against that assertion, which causes them to subconsciously report with bias against liberal politicians (Franken 44). This is how coverage of the 2016 Commander-in-Chief forum on NBC was analyzed.

In September of 2016, Matt Lauer hosted a question-and-answer event with Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, and Lauer received criticism from political commentators and newscasters across the political spectrum for his uneven treatment of the two candidates (Byers). During the event, which featured back-to-back live interviews with both of the candidates with town-hall style audience questions, Lauer notably interrupted Secretary Clinton far more times than he did Donald Trump, and asked far more antagonistic questions, focusing on her email scandal, while comparatively throwing "softballs" as Trump (Gyrnbaum). Lauer was criticized for being unprepared, sloppy, and irresponsible for treating the candidates so unevenly in his role as the moderator (Gyrnbaum). While there is certainly an argument to be made that this is partially attributed to sexism, Lauer's critics also argue that his performance has an example of journalists "giving in" to right wing commentators who project the notion that all media is liberally biased, and trying to come off as balanced by going harder on left-wing candidates.

So, what accounts for the large skepticism that the public has for the so-called "liberal media," when study after study indicates that this assumption makes the mainstream news media skew in the other direction? It's because people more often than not are watching news commentary when they think they are watching the news. And there's a big difference.

Commentators vs. Journalists

"People want me to make fun of Sean Hannity tonight but I can't. This dinner is for journalists."
–Michelle Wolf, White House Correspondents Dinner, April 28, 2018

     The simple difference between a journalist and a commentator is that straight journalists are required to be much more balanced in their reporting of news stories. The job of a journalist is to offer any objective facts about a news topic, then offer representation to any relevant points of view, and report them accurately ("The Difference"). All journalists must abide by the School of Professional Journalists' "Code of Ethics" ("SPJ"). The code's four core tenets explain that journalists must: seek truth and report it, act independently, minimize harm, and be accountable and transparent ("SPJ"). These are all codes that outline that journalists must never deliberately distort facts or context for stories, take responsibility for the accuracy of their work, avoid conflicts of interest, never editorialize or give their opinion on a story, and label commentary as commentary ("SPJ"). There are protections for journalists under the First Amendment, as well as strict potential punishments for libel, spreading falsehoods, or misrepresenting one's views or opinions when reporting on them, according to the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (Saharko). What's essential to journalists is that they offer what the opposing views to an issue are, and not comment on it themselves. This isn't to say that journalists only give surface level information. They are expected to do in-depth analysis of their stories, but they must fairly and accurately analyze the viewpoints and facts involved in a story.

     A news commentator will typically offer the same raw facts as a journalist, but has license to offer their opinion, which they usually also call "analysis," though this analysis is more one sided and not required to be as in depth as a journalist's (WGBH). This means a commentator has more license to insert their opinions into stories, and are not held to as high standards with issues of bias, and even conflicts of interest. Just this month, Sean Hannity came under fire for a potential conflict of interest. On his Fox News show, Hannity was discussing the possibility of a federal investigation into President Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen regarding the payments he supposedly made with his own money to silence Stormy Daniels, an adult film star who apparently had an affair with the President in 2006. Hannity openly discouraged the idea of an investigation, which

came under fire when it was revealed that Michael Cohen is Hannity's personal lawyer (Farhi). That would violate a journalist's code of ethics in two ways; if he were a journalist, Hannity should not have given his opinion about the pending investigation at all, and he would have had to recuse himself from covering a story involving someone he has personal or business ties to. But Hannity's defense was "I never claimed to be a journalist" (Farhi). Hannity has misleadingly called himself "a journalist. But [an] advocacy journalist, or an opinion journalist," which is just another term for a commentator (Farhi).

The difference between a news story and a commentary piece can be quite difficult to detect, especially when there are commentators and journalists on the same news channel. For example, on February 2nd 2018, when President Trump declassified the Republican members House Intelligence Committee's memo accusing the FBI of favoring Democrats and abusing their power during the early stages of the Russia investigation, different shows on Fox News reported it very differently. When Shep Smith reported the story, his headline read "Controversial Republican Memo Released" (Fox). Smith only presented raw facts about the memo and its possible political ramifications, taking into account the contents of the memo, as well as the bias of its authors, since it was written by Republican members of the Intelligence Committee. This is in line with journalistic standards, as he considers both sides and frames the context accurately, and refrains from sharing his opinion. When Sean Hannity reported the story on his primetime show, the headline read "The FBI purposefully deceived a federal court" (Fox). Hannity went on to summarize the memo and agree with it wholeheartedly, the report was laden with Hannity's own opinion, and the analysis of the memo was one sided; Hannity did not explore any other takes on the story (Fox). This would have been in violation of a journalist's standards, but Hannity isn't a journalist, so he can tell his opinion on his show all he wants, with no obligation to represent an opposing view. But at first glance, they are both talking heads in a news set, and their setups are similar, so there hardly seems to be a difference between them, right?

The trickiness of distinguishing opinion from straight journalism is much more difficult on television than it is in a newspaper. In a newspaper such as the *New York Times*, stories are categorized into different sections. The world politics, US politics, style, sports, and *opinion* sections are all

segregated. So when you're reading about the news, you know definitively if you are reading a story by a journalist who has to abide by standards, or if you are reading someone give their personal opinion about the news. On television, how are you supposed to tell the difference between a journalist and a commentator?

Network television has been able to blur the line between journalism and opinion since the FCC repealed the Fairness Doctrine in 1987 (Fletcher). The Fairness Doctrine was implemented in 1949, which dictated that public broadcast license-holders must present important issues to the public and give multiple perspectives while doing so (Fletcher). This was back when there were only three major television networks – ABC, CBS and NBC – and lawmakers were concerned about any of those networks abusing their platform to push a biased agenda. By 1970, the FCC maintained that the doctrine was the "single most important requirement of operation in the public interest" (Fletcher). But it was repealed in 1987 under President Reagan. The reason for the repeal was that the Reagan administration saw the doctrine as something giving the FCC the ability to censor news content (Fletcher). Ever since, commentators have become more and more present in cable news.

Can you say definitively whether Jake Tapper is a journalist or a commentator? How about Rachel Maddow, Shep Smith, or Tucker Carlson? All four of those newscasters are on cable news networks; they all look and speak relatively similarly, they talk about the same news stories, and their sets even look the same. Before researching this, I thought that Rachel Maddow and Jake Tapper were journalists and that Shep Smith and Tucker Carlson were commentators. As it turns out, Tapper and Smith are both journalists while Carlson and Maddow are commentators. But there isn't a banner across the television when Tucker Carlson or Rachel Maddow are on television saying "This is commentary, not news." In fact, if you go to the websites for any of the major news networks, the section of the website that lists photos of their "news team" includes journalists and commentators, so it's not easy to distinguish between them (CNN; Fox News; MSNBC).

The real media bias

"The bias of the mainstream media is toward
sensationalism, conflict, and laziness."
– Jon Stewart

So what does this have to do with Keith Olbermann? He was always pretty open about the fact that he was delivering commentary, not straight news. After he was abruptly fired from *Countdown* in 2011, MSNBC was in renegotiations to allow him to return to the network and host a news show without commentary, Olbermann backed out of the talks, saying that he did not see the point in doing a show where he couldn't do commentary (Rosenberg). If Olbermann is honest about his bias, that's not a problem, right? The problem, and Olbermann is an example of this, is that as networks have been allowed to have more commentary in their lineups, the commentary shows have brought in more revenue and viewers for the networks, which motivates the networks to dominate their lineup with commentary shows. At its peak, *Countdown* was the highest rated show on MSNBC (Carter). It had the primetime slot of 9pm, and its significant rival was Glenn Beck's show – another commentary show – on Fox News at the same time. Commentary shows bring in enthusiastic niche audiences, so networks are incentivized to make more of them (Hagey). The polarizing nature of commentary shows is very attractive to the viewers who agree with particular hosts; the ease of watching a news show that you will definitely agree with will not only make you more likely to tune into that show, but it will make you excited to watch it every night.

Even today, the primetime (7-11pm) lineups for Fox News and MSNBC are *all* political commentary shows (Fox News; MSNBC)*.* This means that most Americans who watch the news after work are only watching commentary; they have very little access to journalism or straight news, which is very dangerous. In his *Politico* article, "Cable After Beck And Olbermann," Keach Hagey warns that cable news is veering in an extreme direction by emphasizing their commentary shows with extreme hosts such as Glenn Beck and Keith Olbermann, as doing so worsens political polarization. If most Americans are getting their news from a given political commentator, they are experiencing the news very differently from whoever is listening to a different commentator, which makes even more difficult than it already is to find common ground to bridge the gap of political partisanship we are currently grappling with. When there were only three major television networks tightly monitored by an FCC with a Fairness Doctrine, there was at least a common reality and basis of facts with television news. Today, if you watch an episode of

Rachel Maddow then watch Sean Hannity immediately after, you may question whether those shows exist in the same universe.

The importance of rectifying the error of editorializing cable news cannot be understated. The 2016 presidential election was so shocking to newscasters and the public in terms of the perception of media bias and false claims that it has yet to be thoroughly studied. However, there have been analyses of the media coverage of the election that found that Americans have never had a stronger distrust in the news sources that are watched most frequently, namely Fox News and CNN (Sides). Additionally, that *Washington Post* analysis of media bias found that while there are ideological biases in networks like Fox News and MSNBC, they share a bias towards a juicy, salacious story (Sides). Frederick Fico et al's journal article "Broadcast and Cable Network News Coverage of the 2004 Presidential Election: An Assessment of Partisan and Structural Imbalance" examined the structural bias in cable news when covering Presidential elections. The study found that while Fox News and CNN had the most ideologically imbalanced stories, all networks shared a *structural* bias, meaning they all possess the flaw of chasing more entertaining or salacious stories, which are more likely to be false.

This is the underlying danger of political commentary dominating our news cycle, and it is non-partisan. If political commentary shows are primarily geared towards appealing to their niche audiences, they will gravitate towards gossipy stories, most likely about members of their opposing political party. This leads to a lack of actual substance in news stories, which did not happen so frequently when there were strict guidelines for balanced, accurate reporting of the news on television. Why else do you think Fox News spent so much time talking about Clinton's emails, while MSNBC dwelled on Trump's scandals?

How political commentary makes polarization worse
"Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts"
– Sen. Daniel Moynihan

In an interview for *Vice's* documentary "A House Divided," which examines political polarization, former Speaker of the House of Representatives John Boehner attributed much of the United States' polarization to television news. He said in the interview:

we've got all these cable channels and all they do is politics all day long. And then all of a sudden you have Facebook and Twitter and Americans are choosing where they want to get their news. And you know, a lot of people get their news from Talk Radio. I mean, that should scare the Jesus out of anybody!... It's pushed or pulled Americans to the right or left, leaving fewer and fewer people in the middle. Members of Congress represent their constituents. All of a sudden, their constituents are way left or going way left, making it almost impossible to get anything done.

This feedback loop is the consequence of the news commentary consumption in the United States. As Speaker Boehner explains, as people have switched from news to political commentary talk shows to get their information, their opinions become more extreme, so they are inclined to vote for more extreme candidates. This results in a more extreme and polarized group of representatives in Congress, particularly in the House of Representatives, where candidates are accountable to smaller groups of constituents. The absence of moderates in Congress results in political gridlock, which is a term to describe situations where there is such little compromise or common ground between political parties that nothing gets done (Kim). This lack of progress frustrates constituents, who become more extreme in their own views as a response because their commentator of choice is telling them that its all *the other side's* fault. They then vote in more extreme representatives, and so on and so on (Kim).

If Americans are largely only watching biased commentary shows that are geared towards non-substantive, slanted stories, they will become so politically polarized that they won't be able to see any common ground with people with whom they disagree. This phenomenon pulling people to opposite ends of the political spectrum is reflected in the representatives they vote into office; we've seen pretty clearly in the past three years what can happen when people depend on television for their news, and an extreme candidate who they've seen on television runs for office. It is imperative that the difference between news and commentary be made clearer. Because as of right now, millions of Americans get home from work, turn on the TV, and absorb whatever Fox, or MSNBC, or CNN tells them.

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The Cuddle with a Struggle: Rape Culture on College Campuses
Evamar Gonzalez

The night of October 19, 2013, excitement was high. It was Homecoming Weekend for Baylor University and the Bears had just beaten Iowa State 71-7 (Luther and Solomon). Sam Ukwuachu, who was ineligible due to NCAA rules regarding transfer students, was celebrating along with an 18-year-old soccer student, who court documents refer to as Jane Doe. The two were friendly, so when Ukwuachu texted Doe, she called him moments later and agreed to go with him to get something to eat or to go to another party. However, after he picked her up that night, he turned the wrong way out of her apartment complex and drove her to his apartment instead (Luther and Solomon). Doe, believing she was with a friend, went up to his apartment with him. She described Ukwuachu as extremely agitated and claimed she resisted his initial advances. Unfortunately, it did not end there; he began to grab her. She testified: "He was using all of his strength to pull up my dress and do stuff to me. He had me on my stomach on the bed, and he was on top of me" (qtd in. Luther and Solomon). She had to describe to a judge and a jury how he pulled her dress up, pulled her underwear to the side, and forced her legs open, her head pressed between his bed and his desk, and then forced himself inside of her (Luther and Solomon).

According to her testimony, after he finished, he told her "This isn't rape," despite her screaming and vehement "No's," and asked her if she was going to call the police (Luther and Solomon). The next day, Doe went to the hospital and was subjected to a rape kit, which found vaginal injuries including redness, bleeding, and friction injuries (Luther and Solomon).

In August 2014, Baylor defensive coordinator Phil Bennett told reporters Ukwuachu had "some issues" to deal with and "will not practice for a while" (qtd. in Rajan). The coach also allowed him to continue to do conditioning work with the team two months after he was indicted in June 2014. During a speech in Fort Worth in June 2015, Bennett said, "We expect him to be eligible in July," despite being on trial (Rajan). Nothing was said about the victim's ability to continue playing soccer. During the trial, it became known that the victim's scholarship value had been reduced in the

wake of the events. Nonetheless, Ukwuachu remained on full scholarship, and was close to playing, as reported by his coach. Finally, Ukwuachu was sentenced to only 180 days in county jail and 10 years of felony probation.

This is just one case among many. Around 23% of female undergraduate students experience sexual assault on college campuses (US Department of Justice). Let that sink in for a moment; if a girl is in a group of four or five female friends there is a high probability that at least one of them will experience sexual assault. This is *not* news; this statistic has been brought up in nearly every discussion of college rape for the last five decades. Worse still, The US Department of Justice also reported that only about 10% of these cases report the rape to authorities. Putting that into perspective, the average influx of female undergraduate students in a public US college, according to The Digest of Education Statistics in 2010, is 7,868,803. About 1,809,824 of these women will experience rape or some form of sexual assault while on campus but only 181,000 of these survivors report it in some way. Why do such a high number of sexual assault victims stay quiet?

Laura Dunn, student from University of Wisconsin, says she stayed quiet about what happened at the end of her freshman year at the University of Wisconsin, "I always thought that rape was when someone got attacked by a stranger and you had to fight back," she says (qtd. in Shapiro). She knew and trusted the two men who took her back to a house for what she thought was a quick stop. Instead, she says they raped her as she passed in and out of consciousness (Shapiro).

On a university campus, there is one kind of sexual assault that is more common than the others: Acquaintance Rape. Out of all the women raped, 80% are raped by someone they know: a classmate, a co-worker, a teacher, a friend, and this is the main reason for such a low percentage of reported rapes (United States). Because these cases tend to be acquaintance rape cases, another reason girls do not file a report is in fear of retaliation, in fear of "Rape Culture." The sad reality is that rape survivors often get treated worse than their rapists. There are four significant groups of people who hurt survivors in different ways: The campus as a community, including faculty, teachers and other students; the authorities; the rapist and his friends; and, painfully, the survivor's own friends.

Many survivors are victims of incapacitated assault. Meaning, they are sexually abused while drugged, drunk, passed out, or otherwise incapacitated. Instead of making it easier to determine if penetrating or partaking in sexual intercourse with an unconscious or incoherent woman is rape, it means that her credibility is shot. If a woman reports her assault to her school, before even contacting the authorities, they will ask her a series of questions—Were you drinking? Have you had sex with him before? How were you dressed? Did you say no at any time? —before deciding whether to act. Most universities see it in their best interests to sweep cases of rape under the rug. Colleges do not want that kind of publicity nor those ratings. Corey Rayburn Yung, JD, a law professor at the University of Kansas, analyzed the numbers of on-campus sexual assaults reported by 31 large universities and colleges during audits by the U.S. Department of Education for compliance with federal crime reporting requirements; he found evidence that some schools provided a more accurate picture of sexual assaults on campus only when they were under federal scrutiny (APA). He concluded that, "Many universities continue to view rape and sexual assault as a public relations issue rather than a safety issue. They don't want to be seen as a school with really high sexual assault numbers, and they don't want to go out of their way to report that information to students or the media" (qtd. in APA). Therefore, they will offer the victim money, send them to counseling or, in extreme cases, expel them. The ugly truth of the matter is that, in most cases, the reputation of the colleges and the men who assaulted the women are seen by the campus communities as more important than the actual assault. The university may explain it away with phrases such as: She should have known what would happen if she walked home alone, or she did not say no, or he is such a good student/star athlete and has true potential. They may want their varsity athletes to reach this "potential" and/or their biggest donors to feel comfortable." They want controversial statements, such as "I was raped" to disappear. That is the what we can infer they were trying to do when they reduced Doe's scholarship, from the Baylor case, adding to the stress she was already feeling (Luther and Solomon).

However, if the survivor is lucky, the official authorities will be brought in. These experts will cross-examine survivors as though they are criminals. Take the Brock Turner case as an example. To his victim and to the passerby who detained the assailant, the fact that there had been a

sexual assault was clear, but then, at the trial, she was forced to answer questions from prosecutors such as:

> Did you drink with dinner? No, not even water? When did you drink? How much did you drink? What container did you drink out of? Who gave you the drink? How much do you usually drink? Who dropped you off at this party? What were you wearing? Why were you going to this party? Are you sure you did that? When did you urinate? Where did you urinate? Did you drink in college? You said you were a party animal? How many times did you black out? Did you party at frats? Are you serious with your boyfriend? Are you sexually active with him? Do you have a history of cheating? Do you remember what time you woke up? (Baker)

They asked about when she "woke up," which indicates that they knew that during the attack she was unconscious, or at least incoherent and nearly unconscious. They were looking for any small detail that might slander her reputation and prove Brock Turner, somehow, innocent. Of the reported rapes and sexual assaults, like the example used above, only 8 percent to 37 percent ever lead to prosecution and just 3 percent to 18 percent of rapes and sexual assaults lead to a conviction (United States).

By now, news of her rape is public. It is circulating within all the inner circles on campus and on social media. Some people will call her out in person, saying things like "You cost us the game!" because her rapist is a star athlete, or other slurs like "slut and whore;" she'll be told she was asking for it. Somehow, wearing a short skirt and a tank top, or tight jeans and a crop top, or any kind of revealing clothing, makes it her fault because "men have natural biological urges and can't control themselves" (Turner). Dancing to a beat, drinking a beer, partying, even walking home alone are all signs that she "wanted it". There are chants on campus, "No means yes, yes means Anal!" (a chant used by Delta Kappa Epsilon at Yale), or "We love a Cuddle with a Struggle!" that make her want to curl into herself and disappear. "Jokes" are posted online, such as "Oh you don't want sex? Challenge accepted," and even "I've got a dick and a knife, at least one of them is going inside of you tonight." It is infinitely worse when this kind of criticism and doubt comes from those near and dear to her. When her "girlfriends" say things like "But he is kind of cute," or "you shouldn't have separated from the group." When her guy friends ask what might happen

to her rapist, and when she responds with expulsion or possible jail time, they say "poor guy."

It is words and actions like these that prove without a doubt that Rape Culture is alive and well in our lives; it is in rape culture that perpetrators like Turner and Ukwuachu have a future, but their victims only have a past. It should not matter how much we drank, how much we flirted, how we dressed. The first question that should be asked is "Did you ever consent to the sexual intercourse?" the second should be, "Do you think you were legally able to consent?" Arguably the worst part of this is that the girl I refer to as "her" throughout this explanation, could easily be you or me. It is the fear of having to sit through class with our rapist, after having it thrown in our face that the assault either did not happen or was our fault, after being ostracized by their friends and ours, after they *know* we snitched, that keeps our mouths shut.

Many times, when the topic of Rape Culture is brought up for discussion, it will automatically be refuted or ill-defined. Cathy Young, Russian-born American journalist, wonders at the existence of a culture that constitutes rape. In her article "The Injustice of the 'Rape-Culture' Theory", she argues against the belief that boys using statements about how a game "raped" him is rape culture. She writes, "But losing a game is also called 'getting slaughtered', and the words 'kill' and 'torture' are routinely used in a metaphorical sense. Does that make us a 'murder culture' or a 'torture culture'?" (Young). In the article, Young brings up the many definitions of rape culture that prominent men and women have come up with and tries to dismantle them. One example is political analyst, writer, and commentator Zerlina Maxwell's assertion that "rape culture is when we teach women how to not get raped, instead of teaching men not to rape" (qtd. in Young). Young reminds us that we have a criminal code that threatens men with severe punishment if they do decide to rape, and that there is nothing to teach. This is where I believe she failed in addressing the statement as a whole; we know that men are not taught to rape, that is not in question. However, men are shown that they can be abrasive, intimidating, and that they are entitled to all that we have. This culture allows these ideas to be implemented into them with no effort to remove or correct. They learn that if they cannot control themselves then their victim must be doing something wrong. So, though they are not taught, they learn. Not to mention, women *are* taught: to be constantly

afraid, aware, covered up, and in a group. This culture is what pushed our parents to teach us these values. Rape Victims suffer through the knowledge that what they said and did and experienced will never be enough to silence the monsters they face in their day to day life.

A few days to a few weeks after the assault, victims are known to show symptoms of diminished alertness, numbness, dulled sensory, affective, and memory functions, disorganized thought content, vomiting, nausea, paralyzing anxiety, pronounced internal tremors, obsession with washing or cleaning themselves, hysteria, confusion and crying, bewilderment, and acute sensitivity to the reactions of other people (Brown et al.). They'll try to cope in assorted ways, for example: pretending "everything is fine," an inability to stop talking about the assault, refusing to discuss the rape, trying to analyze what happened and why, and sometimes even moving to a new home or city or altering their appearance (Brown et al.). Then, after already dealing with these moments of self-hatred and fear from memories alone, they are forced to face a society that firmly believes that there is a good chance the victims are liars (Brown et al.). Those who pretend everything is fine obviously made the whole thing up; those who cannot stop talking about it are just trying to convince everyone else they are not lying, so clearly, they are. Those who analyze must think it's their own fault and those who move are cowards. Can you even imagine living through this? This dismissal of torture, both physical and metal?

We know why survivors do not speak up. How can colleges reduce these numbers and help these people? I have defamed many authority and college criteria for their handling of rape cases, I have accused them of victim blaming and rape-splaining, but Congress, and many Universities are genuinely trying to change these policies. Congress has implemented the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, a law that explicitly requires all schools to offer "primary prevention and awareness programs" that reduce the risk of sexual assault (Bishop). The idea is that all students and faculty members should be held accountable for the elimination of sexual violence on campus (Bishop). In these programs, participants learn what is defined as consent, for example, and how to recognize signs of abusive behavior. It also stipulates some minimum standards in campus judicial proceedings (for both the defendant and the accused) and mandates that institutions specify the number of dating- and sexual-violence claims filed

in their annual crime reports (Yoffe). Colleges have the Title IX, introduced in 1972, which indicates when a student experiences a hostile environment such as sexual assault or "severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive sexual harassment" ("Title IX"), schools must stop the discrimination, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. This includes retaliation from other students, school administrators, or faculty.

As an undergraduate college student, I can assure you, I was required to be educated of my rights, of Title IX and its implications, and the university reminds me of these constantly. Title IX requires schools to combat sex discrimination in education. One of the most common objections we hear to campus adjudication is "but isn't rape a crime?", suggesting that the police should handle it directly. However, rape and other gender-based crimes manifest and perpetuate inequality. To make sure that all students, regardless of their gender identity and expression, have equal access to education, schools are required to prevent and respond to reports of sexual violence (Bhatnagar). The universities I have visited have all succeeded in educating its students of the dangers and consequences of sexual assault, drinking, partying, and drugs. Still, the way colleges handle sexual assault cases is very skewed. I have already mentioned that I believe that they push too many cases under the rug and make it uncomfortable for a survivor to report an assault, but the reverse is also true. There are times where a university will go too far. They forget the legal belief that an accused is innocent until proven guilty. Before any sort of trial, the accused can be banned from university housing, from eating on campus and restricted from attending any club or group events (Yoffe, 2017). There are cases proving the stress these people go through has a negative impact on their health, with good reason, having to fear the possibility of a life where they can never escape the thought of, "I did nothing wrong and they won't ever believe me."

The Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has expressed that she believes that the way campuses address sexual assault fails too many students. She intends to replace the department's current approach "with a workable, effective and fair system" (qtd. in McCausland). DeVos said the system needed to do more, not only for survivors of sexual assault, but to ensure fair due process for the accused. "Every survivor of sexual misconduct must be taken seriously. Every student accused of sexual misconduct must know that guilt is not predetermined," she said (qtd. in

McCausland). There are those who fear that DeVos' new guidelines on "solid" evidence will let more assaulters walk free but others look forward to a more ironclad system that lets innocent people stay in school, instead of behind bars (McCausland). The controversy has people frothing at the mouths trying to get their points across. My point here is that she's not wrong. Destroying a man's life just because someone said he assaulted them is not the goal; the goal is justice. Each case is special and requires a neutral and dedicated investigation; sometimes solid evidence is needed and other times knowing the situation is what will prove the case. Allegations are to be taken seriously, survivors are to be heard and protected, *and* the accused are to be investigated thoroughly before being punished for something they may or may not have done. It is not a hard concept to grasp, and besides, that is legally how these cases are supposed to proceed.

Nevertheless, these policies and regulations have failed in some aspects. While they have acknowledged rape, they have not acknowledged Rape Culture. Students and faculty make lewd jokes where women are drunk and then "regret" the "sex" in the morning. Fraternities plan to get girls drunk at parties for fun. Girls lightheartedly say, "I thought he was going to rape me," referring to a person they thought was creepy, and then laugh it off. Guys yell, "suck my dick," in both arguments and for laughs. Security guards will watch a guy slap a passing girl's butt or catcalling in "appreciation" and say, "Boys will be Boys." I have witnessed each and every one of these things. Not all of these happened in the same place, and not all of them were quite as serious as others. But they all terrify and disgust me to my very core.

Some communities have found ways to start combatting this culture. The most exciting is a gender-violence prevention program being implemented in schools in Kenya by the No Means No Worldwide organization. Not only do they teach girls and women self-defense but they also provide a gender-based violence curriculum for the boys. After finding out from the girls in Kenya that most rapes they experienced were by friends or boyfriends, the researchers realized that if boys were part of the problem, then perhaps they could be a solution, as well (Mnangagwa). They did a study that investigated the effects of those classes on improving their attitudes toward women and increasing the likelihood of bystander intervention. They found that boys who go through training were more

likely to intervene when witnessing a girl being assaulted, and they were less likely to verbally harass girls. Additionally, schools featuring this program found that rape by girls' friends and boyfriends dropped by 20% (No Means No Worldwide). Imagine if universities across the country implemented some sort of mandatory course along the lines of the No Means No Worldwide organization. Not only would men learn of the horrors women face daily and stop participating in initiating such things, but they are also more likely to call out someone else for doing it. How many cases of assault could have been prevented if someone stepped up?

Rape Culture supports rapists and incriminates victims. This culture, believed by many to be a myth, makes it ok to joke about the pain and humiliation every victim goes through in an attempt to be heard, in a search for justice. It lets boys get away with lewd and crude gestures and disrespecting women and the law. It fosters a community of families that lost their little girl to a haunted expression and a bottle of pills. While many think these things are harmless, unrelated, and that they do not constitute a "culture" per se, Rape Culture has an effect on the psyche of individuals.

Rape Culture across college campuses is a wildfire that no one is rushing to extinguish. From the way we are raised, to the way we act, to the places we feel safe going to, to the way we dress, all of these are directly affected by the culture around us: a culture that normalizes and excuses acts of sexual violence and assault. It is time universities acknowledge this culture and the behaviors it instills. It is time we stand up and change.

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The Rhetoric of Trophy Hunting
Sophia Pagnone

Throughout the past few months, the Trump administration's recent revisions of former President Barack Obama's ban on the importation of elephant trophies into the United States has led to a wider discussion on trophy hunting in general. Two articles from *CNN* and *National Geographic* have addressed this controversy in various ways. *CNN's* article, written by conservationist Amy Dickman (2018), argues that big-game hunting funds conservation programs and prevents illegal poaching. The *National Geographic* article by Michael Paterniti (2017) explores the complexities of the issue and the perspectives of both sides of the big-game controversy. Nevertheless, both authors employ rhetorical strategies to persuade their audiences. When considering the rhetorical strategies of the Aristotelian appeals of ethos and pathos, Paterniti's (2017) article on the complexities of big-game hunting is more rhetorically persuasive than Dickman's (2018) pro-hunting opinion piece.

In *CNN's* opinion piece, "Ending Trophy Hunting Could Actually Be Worse for Endangered Species," long-time conservationist Amy Dickman (2018) claims that people tend to construct their opinions on trophy hunting from emotion and attempts to persuade readers that factually, big-game hunting actually results in positive outcomes for endangered animals. She states that trophy hunting is not responsible for the decline in animal populations and instead that habitat depletion, poaching, and problems with local peoples are the primary reasons why some animal populations have decreased so dramatically in recent years. Dickman (2018) argues that in most African nations in which trophy hunting is legal, hunting practices benefit animals because trophy hunting fees help to maintain wild habitats, deter poaching activities, and fund conservation organizations. She also claims that alternatives to trophy hunting, such as photo-tourism, are not substantial enough to be a reliable source of funds to preserve wildlife areas. Overall, her argument focuses on how the public need not base their opinion of trophy hunting on their emotions rather than on factual evidence, because if they fail to recognize the facts of the situation, it could result in the extinction of certain species (Dickman, 2018).

Both anecdotal and analytical, *National Geographic*'s "Should We Kill Animals to Save Them?," by Michael Paterniti (2017), does not stem from a specific stance on the issue but rather delves into the nuances of the big-game controversy through conversations with biologists, conservationists, and hunters themselves as well as through the author's own personal experience on the hunting grounds in Namibia. Paterniti (2017) provides a plethora of pro-hunting perspectives, including how hunting provides jobs, helps local peoples, and funds conservation, helping many animal populations flourish. He also provides insight into how critics of trophy hunting claim there is not enough substantial positive evidence that fees from hunting help conservation and how sometimes hunting indirectly funds corrupt governments rather than conservation. In general, the author displays how hunters believe that big-game hunting fees help provide revenues for conservation, whereas opponents argue that the positives of hunting are overstated (Paterniti, 2017).

While not as persuasive as Paterniti's (2017) article, Dickman's (2018) pro-hunting opinion piece substantially appeals to ethos by making readers aware of her identity as well as through the reputation of *CNN* as a reliable media source. The article begins by describing the author's background, stating, "Amy Dickman is the founder and director of Tanzania's Ruaha Carnivore Project, part of Oxford University's WildCRU. She has worked in African conservation for over 20 years" (Dickman, 2018). This immediately establishes credibility and appeals to ethos because the reader instantly becomes aware that the author has experience in the field of conservation and can provide knowledgeable insights into the big-game hunting discussion. It is an effective strategy to list the author's credentials at the beginning of the article because it catches the audience's attention and influences the reader to continue reading because they believe the information is coming from a reliable source. The publication, *CNN*, also appeals to ethos because most of the public considers *CNN* to be a reliable, mainstream news source about current events.

A subtler appeal to ethos is what Dickman (2018) opens the article with, by stating her identity: "I am a lifelong animal lover and vegetarian for whom the idea of killing animals for fun is repellent, and have committed my career to African wildlife conservation." This basic fact about the author creates a situation in which readers trust her. Her pro-

hunting viewpoint seems more reliable because it is coming from an individual who isn't a hunter herself and who acknowledges the issues with hunting. This makes her seem unbiased on the topic and able to see both sides of the controversy.

This inclusion of the author's identity as a vegetarian and animal lover is also an appeal to pathos, but other than this there are no other effective appeals to emotion in Dickman's (2018) article, making it less rhetorically persuasive as she fails to acknowledge the emotional aspects of the big-game hunting issue. The idea of a pro-trophy hunting conservationist in conflict with her love for animals tugs at the reader's emotions. The reader is able to see how the author's identity clashes with her perspective on big-game hunting: she finds hunting repulsive but also recognizes how trophy funds can help endangered species in the long run. This stirs some respect or admiration for the author for how she is able to overcome her emotions and face the facts, but other than this the author doesn't employ any other rhetorical strategies that appeal to the audience's emotions. Dickman (2018) emphasizes how one shouldn't "respond emotionally" to the issue of trophy hunting, so the article isn't emotionally based, but big-game hunting is an inherently emotional topic. The big-game controversy involves the death of sentient beings and the decline of animal populations; therefore, no matter how logically based an argument is, people will still need to be convinced emotionally on arguments confronting the topic of death. Dickman (2018) could have persuaded her audience more if she had appealed to pathos by more thoroughly describing the tragic consequences the end of trophy hunting could have on animal populations. The author's dependence on ethos caused her to overlook the importance of pathos when discussing such an emotionally charged topic such as big-game hunting and ultimately resulted in a less persuasive article.

Contrasting with Dickman's (2018) piece, *National Geographic*'s Michael Paterniti's (2017) combination of both anecdotal and analytical writing styles as well as his use of visuals to present his experiences in Namibia persuade his audience by appealing to both ethos and pathos. There isn't anything specific about the author's identity that makes him seem like an incredibly reliable source; he's a writer for various magazines and a published author. Nonetheless, his implementation of storytelling to describe the scenes he personally witnessed on the hunting grounds in

Namibia gains the author significant credibility. Paterniti (2017) immediately opens up the article with a moving anecdote of his experience: "Elephants kept appearing in wrinkled herds, loitering near the dusty pans, in search of water. With the September temperature pushing a hundred degrees at midday, the pachyderms were moving at the edge of the Kalahari Desert in Namibia…." The author used an anecdotal writing style to let his audience know that he has witnessed trophy hunting first hand, which makes his perspective seem remarkably credible. It informs readers that the author developed his judgments on trophy hunting from what he personally observed on the hunting grounds and from his experiences with hunters and conservationists themselves, rather than from mere hearsay. His use of analytical writing in which he quotes scientists and hunters he has interacted with also appeals to ethos because he does not focus too extensively on his own perspective, but the experiences and remarks of others as well. It shows that his article derives from the viewpoints of others, which makes him seem more reliable and effectively establishes credibility.

Paterniti (2017) employs a combination of storytelling and visuals to encapsulate the activities of the hunting grounds and evoke an emotional response from the audience, effectively appealing to pathos. The emotionally fraught, anecdotal nature of the piece alongside the images of the reservation and animals provided throughout the text allow the audience to envision the author's experiences themselves. Because the author presents the article as a narrative, the article contains vivid and emotional word choices that appeal to the audience's emotions. The visuals of dead animals alongside their hunters and images of creatures roaming the vast savannahs of Africa complement Paterniti's (2017) writing style and help him to persuade his audience emotionally. The visuals help to capture what actually occurs on the hunting grounds. Some photographs depict gruesome images of hunters posing proudly next to the game they have just caught, which show the tragedy behind trophy hunting and appeals to the anti-hunting perspective. But at the same time, Paterniti (2017) also includes images of dead game providing food and resources to the local peoples of Namibia, conveying the positive aspects of trophy hunting. Therefore, the photographs evoke both positive and negative emotions from readers and also help to inform them about both sides' perspectives through imagery. The author's inclusion of visuals

complements his article as the photographs present multiple perspectives just as his article aims at exploring the issue rather than presenting his own opinion.

While Dickman (2018) establishes a substantial amount of ethos by describing her extensive background in conservation, she relies too heavily on ethos and falls short when it comes to convincing her readers emotionally. On the other hand, Paterniti's (2017) piece effectively appeals to both ethos and pathos through the unique nature of his writing style and his use of images, which makes his piece more rhetorically persuasive. While opinion pieces such as Dickman's (2018) can be influential, they usually only present one side of the argument and ignore the complexities of issues. Paterniti's (2017) success in persuading his audience rhetorically through a more moderate article that doesn't adhere to a particular ideology or opinion goes to show that more nuanced articles can be more convincing to readers, as it displays reasonable logic that deciphers the many "gray" areas of modern controversies.

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Following the Research

Reciprocity: A Time Commitment for Change
Madeline Beyer

The desk looms large in front of me. Armed only with a short pamphlet detailing my duties at the service learning site, I take my place behind the desk, overwhelmed by lack of instruction and concerned that I will be faced with a situation that I will not be able to handle. Clients come in, needing help that I cannot provide them, and I am constantly finding myself searching for a superior to deal with the situation. Two hours later, I am exhausted and overwhelmed, feeling like I learned more about myself than about the community I served. Unsure if I did more harm than good, I returned to my safe haven: campus.

Students all over America share a similar experience, as service learning has grown more popular on college campuses. While service learning grants a wealth of benefits to students, the work that students do in the community can cause great harm. Because one of the main pillars of service learning is reciprocity—meaning the work is intended to be mutually beneficial—these negative effects present a problem. While community organizations are being harmed, true reciprocity is impossible to attain. Thus, reciprocity is not being achieved in service learning as communities are often harmed by lack of student diligence. In order to achieve the full effects of reciprocity, students should be required to serve a minimum of ten hours in their intended organization before participating in a service learning course.

Service Learning Defined

First, I believe that it is important to define service learning. Christine M. Cress (2005), professor of educational leadership and service learning, defines the term as the engagement "in community service activities with intentional academic and learning goals and opportunities for reflection that connect to their academic disciplines." In other words, students serve in a community in order to further their classroom learning objectives. Cress (2005) also draws a distinction between simple volunteer work and service learning, as, in service learning, students "intentionally use… intellectual capabilities and skills to address community problems." Thus, one of the main goals of service learning is to apply one's classroom

knowledge to improve the community they are serving in some way. This argument is the foundation for reciprocity. Students are supposed to *improve* the communities in which they serve, understanding that they will personally benefit while they aid a community organization. In fact, Jacob Bucher (2012), assistant professor of sociology at Baker University, claims that there are three main goals of service learning. The first two goals target student growth with the final goal focusing on a positive community impact that results from the students' work. Bucher (2012) further argues that the literary conversation on the two student categories has been well developed, while the community aspect of the conversation has been overlooked by scholars. It appears, however, that students are *supposed* to benefit more from service learning; after all, they pay to take the course and volunteer their time and talents to the community. Is it fair that students gain more than community organizations? Before answering that question, it would be helpful to spell out the benefits to both students and community organizations that are wrought by service learning.

Student Benefits

To begin, students, according to Cress (2005), benefit from seeing a real-world connection to their classroom studies, allowing them to put their knowledge into practice while revealing underlying communal issues that create difficulties within a community. The class structure allows students to be more actively engaged with the material, granting students more opportunity to determine educational outcomes (Cress, 2005). When students are able to be active in their learning, they are often more interested than they would be in a class that forces students to be passive information receptors (Cress, 2005). Cress (2005) also claims that service learning courses accommodate many different learning styles, which can be very beneficial to students that struggle to learn in a traditional classroom setting. Students are more likely to see how their individual life impacts the lives of others and how their lives are part of the whole, giving them a global mindset that is increasingly important in our progressively interconnected world (Cress, 2005). Cress (2005) also cites that service learning students demonstrate more ethical decision making and more advanced problem-solving skills than students who do not participate in service learning. Additionally, service learning often heightens a student's empathy for others and increases their societal awareness (Cress, 2005).

Therefore, service learning brings academic, social, and personal benefits to students.

Community Organization Benefits

Next, I will touch on the benefits that service learning brings to community organizations. According to Eugene C. Roehlkepartain (2007), a senior advisor to the president of Search Institute, service learning allows organizations to expand both their reach and their mission without facing increasing monetary costs. Additionally, organizations point out that most of the students that serve are motivated and enthusiastic, bringing life and vitality to their overworked staff members (Roehlkepartain, 2007). These students also boast specialized skills and fresh ideas that these community partners are able to utilize to further their mission (Roehlkepartain, 2007). Not only do students bring enthusiasm to the organizations, they also provide free labor on which many organizations rely heavily. In a study done by Andrea Vernon, the director of the Office of Civic Engagement at the University of Montana, and Lenoar Foster (2002), many program directors expressed their appreciation for student volunteers on the grounds that their programs would have to be greatly reduced without the presence of the college students.

While these benefits often seem very attractive to community organizations that rely on the help of volunteers, they are not inherent in service learning programs. This means that, according to Roehlkepartain (2007), there are specific elements that must be present in order to enact these benefits. Included among these is the requirement that students serve "at least twenty hours across several months (Roehlkepartain, 2007)." What happens to the organization, then, when these criteria are not met, or the student falls short?

The Question of Reciprocity

It is clear that students receive, on average, greater benefit from service learning experiences than the organizations in which they serve. Let us now return to the previous question. Is it fair that students gain more than community organizations? This question is not easy to answer, since the very structure of service learning courses is set up in a way that emphasizes the student over all else; all other benefits are just side-effects. The way Catherine Cress explains the essence of service learning is a perfect example of this dangerous mentality. She asserts that "the whole

point of service learning is for you to grow in skills and knowledge precisely because you are bringing your capabilities to real-world problems. While you do this, your community benefits as well (Cress, 2005)." Growing skills and knowledge by applying abilities to problems in the real world can rarely be seen as a negative action, but the issue I take with this stance arises from the way Cress treats the community impact. By her wording, she places the community benefits as an afterthought to the student benefits. Other scholars do the same. Just as Jacob Bucher (2012) does, Kathryn Yankura Swacha (2015), a Ph.D. candidate at Purdue University, also puts community benefits at the bottom of her list. In explaining the three main goals of service-learning, she focuses on students for the first two goals and only on the third goal does she mention benefit to the community (Swacha, 2015). However, the goal's ambiguity as well as its placement in regard to the other two goals is troubling. Cress, Bucher, Swacha, and many other scholars in the field of service learning prioritize students over community partners, creating a hierarchy in a system already riddled with power dynamics. I am not arguing that students should not be beneficiaries of these classes. However, I am arguing that the positive impacts on community organizations should be equally important. It is evident that this is not the case in American service learning today, evidenced by the harm that is often done to community organizations based on a lack of student diligence.

The Argument for Hours

Harm is not inherent to service learning programs, yet its presence is felt across the nation. This can be verified by interviewing representatives of community organizations to understand their experiences with these programs. According to a *New York Times* article written by experienced journalist Stephanie Strom (2009), a representative of a community organization in Massachusetts dreads August because she knows that college students will stream through their doors causing havoc. Further, Strom (2009) writes that "volunteers… can be as much a curse as a blessing" to community organizations. In the world of nonprofits, free labor should never bring a feeling of dread to an organization leader. These feelings reveal the dangerous harm that select students have enacted within community organizations.

David D. Blouin, assistant professor of sociology at Indiana University South Bend, and Evelyn M. Perry, Ph.D. candidate in the

Department of Sociology at Indiana University (2009), also expose several negative impacts that service learning brings upon community partners. They argue that the costs of service learning outweigh the benefits when either the service brought risks to the group or it drained the group's resources. I agree with their assertion that the cost of service learning has the potential to be greater the benefits, yet I assert that a ten-hour service prerequisite will be effective in preventing unnecessary harm to the community. I will focus on three established negatives of service learning that could be counteracted by a service prerequisite.

The first is the lack of long term commitment that many students give to the community organizations. A study done by Andrea Vernon, the director of the Office of Civic Engagement at the University of Montana, and Kelly Ward, Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Recognition and Professor of Higher Education at Washington State University (1999), revealed the challenge that short-term commitments brought to organizations. In an interview with one agency director, frustration was expressed with service learning hour requirements that prompted students to stop serving after they reached the necessary hours (Vernon & Ward, 1999). Most of the projects that he wanted to assign would therefore be longer than the student's service requirement (Vernon & Ward, 1999). A service prerequisite would counteract this issue. If students were required to serve in the same organization prior to enrolling in their service learning course, they would dedicate a full year to the specific community organization, thus allowing for longer student commitments. The study by Vernon and Ward (1999) also addresses the struggle of scheduling college students, as their time is limited by classwork, families, and jobs. This makes it very difficult to reach the twenty hours that Roehlkepartain (2007) suggests is necessary to reach reciprocity in service learning. However, if students enroll in the course, they will have already served half of that time, making it much less stressful to reach the twenty total hours in order to achieve reciprocity.

The next argument responds to the harmful emphasis students put on educational projects. Vernon and Foster (2002) found that many organizations shared the perception that students only served because it was a class requirement, which was reflected in their lack of motivation and poor work quality. Their attendance was intended solely to receive credit for their hours rather than to effectively engage with the community

and within the organizations (Vernon & Ward, 2002). Along the same lines, Joan Clifford (2017), assistant professor at Duke University, described an instance when a student was encouraged by the community organization to interact with a refugee family. The student, too focused on completing a service project, did not focus on the relationship with the family, showing the priority several students place on the educational requirements rather than the reciprocal relationships. The requirement of service hours will serve as a preemptive deterrent to students whose focus is entirely to gain credit or to finish a project because few college students would do extra work where it is not required. Many students would simply choose another course if they did not feel motivated to serve reciprocally, thus leaving only driven students to take these courses.

This weeding out process would eliminate many of the negative effects of service learning, including the third and final argument: students lack punctuality and attendance, bringing great harm to community organizations. Because organizations put a lot of their limited resources into training student volunteers, when students do not show up, the organization is hurt in two ways. The first is that each staff member will have to take on more work as a result of the absence, and the second is that the organization wasted its precious resources in training a student that does not make that sacrifice worth it. However, non-attendance and lateness does not only hurt the organization, but they also hurt the community the organization serves. This in turn reflects poorly upon the community organization. Vernon and Foster (2002) found that, especially in youth programs, attendance and punctuality are vital, as the children can be deeply hurt if his or her mentor does not come. A time prerequisite would reveal this pain and hardship that the children and the organization face simply because students would inevitably see it first-hand within their volunteer time. The prerequisite time that students spend in the organization also gives the students a better understanding of the organization, the staff members, and the community, which would allow the student to communicate more effectively with all of the aforementioned individuals. The student would have a more personal relationship with the organization, and thus would be less likely to accidentally harm the community. Further, spending more time in the organization would grant students more opportunity to identify the needs of the community partner. This knowledge would allow for more effective

service projects and less stress while creating them. The student would thus be able to make contributions of higher quality that actually may make a difference.

Conclusion

I acknowledge that there are several limitations to this paper, one of which is that I focus nearly entirely on the negative effects of service learning. In fact, most community organizations give very positive overall reviews of service learning students. While this is valid, that conversation has already been extensively developed by the scholarly community. Knowing that there are many positive effects of service learning is not enough, however, as many organizations and communities all across the nation are harmed in the process of service learning. It is necessary that universities act to prevent future community harm through service learning by requiring ten hours of service as a prerequisite to any service learning course a student decides to take. The time that a student will put into the community before beginning their service learning course will lay the foundations for the student and the community organization to reciprocally benefit. Until no community organization is harmed by service learning, we as responsible citizens must act, as any harm done to a community is too much harm.

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Columbia, Maryland: A New American City?
Sarah Jane Bookter

On June 21, 1967, shopping center developer James Rouse broke ground for his biggest project to date: Columbia, Maryland. Rouse had spent the past few years buying up farmland in Howard County, in a strategic location directly between Washington, DC, and Baltimore. The plan Rouse had was ambitious. Not only would he be building an entire town from practically nothing, but Rouse was also focused on erasing economic and social lines among its residents. Rouse envisioned single-family homes next to low-income apartment complexes, next to modest townhomes. The grand plan that the Rouse company put forward saw ten villages, a thriving town center, and opportunities to work both within Columbia or commute out to either of the metropoli at its north and south.

A quick glance might render Columbia a success. Fifty years later, Columbia is a thriving suburb, often recognized on lists as one of the best places to live in America. It seems that some of Jim Rouse's more unconventional ideas--no individual mailboxes, incredibly unique street names, and little directional signage--have proven to be a uniting thread for Columbians. "You Know You Grew Up In Columbia MD When," a popular Facebook group with nearly 8,000 members, is full of fond memories, memorable stories, and even the odd event organization. Columbians populate the group with interesting discussion about the streets they grew up on. Lately, however, the group has seemed to turn more towards the impending changes to the Columbia they know and love.

In November of 2016, the Howard County Council passed a plan for the revitalization of downtown. In some ways, it was necessary; there are zones of downtown that are not easily accessible and are dead most hours of the day. However, many residents took to social media to protest. While some simply did not want the town to change, others argued that James Rouse's original vision was being compromised. A downtown lakefront staple, the American City Building, is slated for demolition in favor of repurposing the land as greenspace for the condominiums going up nearby. In a September 2017 comment thread on Facebook in response to this news, citizens aired their disapproval: "I am so glad I am [no] longer there and am not seeing the devolution of Rouse's plan," stated Lydia

Hatch. Cindy Ryan wrote that even though the downtown Columbia redevelopment plan speaks about how Rouse wished to operate on a "human scale," they are misappropriating the term by applying it to parking garages. Kerry Martin further complained that "'they' have been putting words in James Rouse's mouth for years." Despite public discontent, demolishing the American City Building should hardly be a debate; while many citizens have fond memories of the building, myself included, the building has sat mostly empty for years. This, along with the luxury apartments with rents upwards of $2,000 and the repurposing of the Frank Gehry-designed Rouse Company building as a Whole Foods, has shaken up Columbia natives.

Despite this well-documented protest, Howard Hughes Corporation and other developers continue to move forward. "This is what's known as turning columbia into downtown silver spring building by building," wrote Facebook user Steven Carillo. However, despite all this public disapproval, is developing Columbia into a more modern city truly against the vision of James Rouse? In this paper, I will examine the history of Columbia, its development thus far, and the plans Howard Hughes Corporation and other developers have put forth. Though the face of Columbia will be changing in the coming years, the town should be seen as evolving, rather than completely abandoning its original intent. At its core, Columbia will maintain the town it is by adhering to the values established by James Rouse from the town's very inception.

Columbia's first baby, a biracial boy, became a symbol for the town's goal of inclusivity.

Clandestine Beginnings

In November 1962, 1,039 acres were purchased in Howard County, Maryland. In the next year, 14,000 acres would be quietly purchased by James Rouse, shopping center developer ("Timeline"). Howard County residents had a number of suspicions, but Rouse did not reveal himself and his plans to build a city until October 1964 (Stamp). In the following years, Rouse and his planners outlined a plan for a city of ten villages, each with retailers and a community center, as well as stipulations for recreation, transportation, and a thriving town center. On June 21, 1967, the first village, Wilde Lake, was dedicated. A month after Columbia's dedication, the first citizens moved into the Wilde Lake neighborhood ("Timeline"). Jim Rouse outlined four goals in his hopes for Columbia, as recorded by Maryland journalist and Columbia native, Len Lazarick: Firstly, Rouse placed great value on the respect of nature. Columbia is known for its miles of winding footpaths foliage throughout the town. Secondly, Columbia was envisioned as a town for the growth of people. James Rouse believed that the success of a town was measured in its ability to develop and contribute to mankind. Thirdly, Rouse developed Columbia with the mindset that it would become a complete city. Lastly, Columbia was always intended to turn a profit, although this did not occur until ten years after the initial prediction (Lazarick). In the fifty subsequent years, nine more villages have been established, and the town population has grown to around 100,000 residents ("QuickFacts").

A Tool for Gentrification?

This past summer, Columbia celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. As the Columbia Association kicked off a summer of celebration across the town, residents couldn't help but be hyper-aware of the new construction downtown. In January of 2004, the county rejected a plan to add nearly 2,000 new residences ("Timeline"). However, just because the county struck it down once, did not mean that motions did not continue to be put forward to redevelop the downtown area. While certain parts of the town were thriving, in the fifty years since its founding, some areas had become "dead zones." A prime example of one of these "dead zones" was, in fact, the first village center: Wilde Lake.

From 2002-2015, I saw the decline of the village center and beginnings of its revitalization, as I attended church, camp, and high school within the confines of that village center. Wilde Lake used to have a post

office, fast food, a Giant food store, and two health food stores, among numerous smaller shops. As the years went by, retailers began to close up shop; by 2010, all that was left were a few small retailers, a barber shop, and one of those health food stores. It was nowhere near as thriving as any of the nearby villages, such as Harper's Choice or Hickory Ridge, despite being close to the downtown area and surrounded by housing. In May 2013, redevelopment was approved for the village center, and bigger retailers began moving in: a CVS, Indian and Chinese restaurants, a smoothie bar, and most recently, a Starbucks ("Village Center Redevelopment"). Today, Wilde Lake is well populated during the day. However, along with the retailers to kickstart the economic aspect of the village center, another aspect of the plan raised concerns among residents.

Alta Wilde Lake

The area immediately surrounding the Wilde Lake village center is made up of a number of smaller apartments and condos. James Rouse intended for Columbia to defy traditional housing lines, and in Columbia proper, he got most of the way there. Wilde Lake supports a number of low-income families with both affordable apartments and Section 8 housing. However, in the redevelopment plan, planners included Alta Wilde Lake. This was a luxury high-rise apartment building, which seems rather out of place in a village of low two-story buildings. The cheapest unit at Alta, a one bedroom, one bathroom, comes in at $1,755 a month; it is safe to say that given the current economic makeup of the area, this will not be an apartment building that current residents will be moving into.

Alta Wilde Lake is, in many Columbians' eyes, a tool of gentrification. However, Jim Rouse himself might disagree. As he intended Columbia to erase socio-economic lines, especially in the era of civil rights, would he not support the building of a luxury apartment complex just a

few cul-de-sacs down from a Section 8 community? Whether Alta Wilde Lake will thrive, considering its high rent, has yet to be determined. Perhaps it can take a hint from grander-scale development just down Twin Rivers Road.

Columbia: The Next Bethesda?

A drive through Columbia in 2003 is quite different from the Columbia you see outside the car windows today. A cruise down Little Patuxent Parkway would show a number of bland office buildings, surrounding a popular enclosed shopping mall. Further down, the man-made Lake Kittamaqundi hosted a few restaurants on its waterfront, the Frank Gehry-designed Rouse Building, and a walking path that did not fully encircle the lake. While this lakefront area was popular for Fourth of July fireworks, it was often out of reach for most residents. Driving is necessary in Columbia, a fact lamented by all high school students who do not yet have their licenses. Walking paths, though existent in 2003, were more for recreational walking, rather than getting anywhere efficiently. The Howard County Transit Bus, not-so-fondly called the Green Bus, was hardly reliable; schedules were unclear, and service was spotty. Jim Rouse's dream of a thriving, walkable city was poorly realized.

A jaunt down the same streets today tells an improving story. A number of new modern buildings have gone up, which update the overall age of the town. Sidewalks have been extended downtown, making travel easier for pedestrians. At the lakefront, the building that was once headquarters of the Rouse Company is now a Whole Foods, with a members-only day spa on the lake-level floor. A music venue is going into one of the restaurant spaces along the lake, and Merriweather Post Pavilion, just up the street, has been updated to increase seating space in the main pavilion and on the lawn, as well as building a new stage, the Chrysalis, on the property. The transportation has been handed over to the Regional Transit Agency of Central Maryland, which travels as far south as to College Park, and north to Ellicott City and Catonsville (Regional Transit Agency). For all intents and purposes, it seems as though Columbia is back on track, development-wise.

Some of the newest buildings downtown are the luxury apartments facing the mall, The Metropolitan and the nearly finished m.flats. These buildings have greatly changed the landscape of the mall area and tower over the neighboring downtown apartment complexes. Like Alta Wilde

Lake, the apartments are expensive, and residents are concerned about how they change the landscape of the downtown area, as well as the housing situation for low-income families. Though the official plan to redevelop was passed by the Howard County Board in November 2016, it was not without controversy regarding a stipulation to secure low-income housing (Waseem).

Controversial Planning Nearing the Bicentennial

Downtown Columbia new apartments,
artist's rendition.

During Columbia's initial planning, Jim Rouse set a benchmark of 10 percent for low- and moderate-income housing (Scruggs). In creating the new plan for Columbia, this came under debate. The "Terrasa plan," as it became known, called for Columbia to adopt the current county-wide 15 percent requirement to provide low-income housing. The alternative plan provided for units, both permanently affordable and others utilized as such, to be leased as low-income units for 40 years (Scruggs). Despite widespread support for the Terrasa plan, the second proposal was voted into action. In building these apartments, the Howard Hughes Corporation, which is funding the redevelopment of downtown, became non-responsive to continued inquiries about building these low- and moderate-income units. Only after what Scruggs describes as "Councillor Mary Kay Sigaty [knocking] heads" was a compromise reached, with the Howard Hughes Corporation agreeing to the 40-year stipulation, as well as donating land to develop further low-income units in future mixed-use buildings (Scruggs).

The People Tree at Lakefront

The New Columbia plan acknowledges that business has moved out of the Downtown area into the eastward Gateway Park area. In order to re-establish itself as a place to live and work, as well as to take advantage of its prime location between Baltimore and DC, the redevelopment must aim to revitalize the business park of the town (Howard County Council 20). Unlike most malls today, the mall in Columbia is thriving, with a large movie theatre and restaurants surrounding it. Recently, the County has introduced community bikes, with docks downtown and at the community college.

In contrasting the Columbia of 2018 with the Columbia of 2003, the differences are clear. 2003 Columbia was a city approaching its last leg, more of an office park than the thriving downtown Rouse pictured. Today, that picture is being realized more clearly than ever. In coping with the changing fabric of the city, there are a number of things that must be remembered. For developers, Columbia is not a town of chance. Every aspect of Columbia was planned, and although not all of these plans came to fruition, it is important to remember the core values of socio-economic equality that Jim Rouse, and so many residents after him, value Columbia for. What will keep Columbia from becoming a carbon-copy of Bethesda

will be adherence to those values. For residents, in a time of frustration and distaste for development, Rouse reminds us of his fourth value: To make a profit. No city is sustainable if it is not making a profit; economic downturn is what kept Columbia in the 1970s from having the accessible downtown it is seeking today. Pressure must be exerted upon developers to ensure that planning adheres to Columbia's values, but outside of this, development is what James Rouse envisioned: a fully functional city, along the corridor between Baltimore and Washington, to bring together citizens of all class, creed, and race, in one great idea to develop the New American City.

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Cause of Death: Vending Machine
Lucy McGehee

Hunger pains. You have been working for six hours straight. The only thing on your mind are those Cheetos in the vending machine you walked by this morning. You are now on a mission to satisfy your hunger. A dilapidated dollar bill—washed a few times and sat on for a few days—clings to your back pocket. A quick smoothing of the rough green note and you are off. You stick it in the vending machine, press the magical B6 button for the Cheetos, the wire spins and… nothing. The Cheetos are stuck. Immoveable. Mission not accomplished.

It is this exact moment where some people make a rash life or death decision. While most people walk away from this moment, frustrated and disappointed, but living, some make the decision to tempt the stuck object and their fate by shaking the vending machine. According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), there were 37 deaths and 113 injuries from 1975 to 1995 in the United States alone. Although vending machine deaths are extremely rare, they illustrate a completely irrational side to human behavior. The vending machine shakers who found death instead of a candy bar may have been commemorated with the honor of a Darwin Award, a website that shares the glory of natural selection through stories of, for lack of a better term, stupid deaths. The innocent-looking vending machine gives a surprising insight into the cultural reaction around sudden and foolish deaths.

Stupid is as stupid does

Before delving into the rather bewildering topic of death, let's discuss how and why the decision to dangerously shake a vending machine comes to fruition. The answer is a mix of social and psychological influence. Rational decision making can be clouded by emotion, like feelings of anger or frustration. Research performed by Harvard Psychologist Jennifer Langer addresses this. She observed anger in subjects caused them to be "more likely to take risks and to minimize how dangerous those risks will be" (qtd. in Khazan). Think back to those aforementioned hanging Cheetos. The pollen-like, ungodly powdered cheese was moments away from deliciously sticking to your fingertips. Now they are just a finger-length

away, behind a thin layer of glass, stuck on a tantalizing ledge. How could one not feel at least a little bit angry? The anger could override the warning labels of the vending machine and in turn make the vending-machine-shaking less dangerous in one's annoyed and hungry mind. The vending machine's impersonal automation is largely responsible for the frustration.

The vending machine is, of course, not staffed by anyone. There is no one waiting to push buttons for the next customer or help unleash a stuck item. According to Dong H. Lee, who studies consumer behavior, vending machines can leave consumers feeling helpless. Lee determined that the impersonal interactions present problems and could "potentially alienate consumers." This is what makes vending machines as frustrating as they are convenient. In addition, when our expectations are not met and anger sets in, we will go to extra lengths to get what we desire.

It is a basic human instinct to impulsively go after what we want, even if that means overlooking rationality. Langer explains, "This trigger-happy impulse is evolutionarily adaptive. We evolved in hunter-gatherer times. If someone steals your meat, you don't think 'Should I go after him?' No! You strike back quickly" (qtd. in Khazan). There is even something a bit primal about shaking a vending machine, like shaking a coconut down from a tree. Except that the coconut is a Sprite and the tree is a chunk of metal that can fall on you.

Other factors also influence risky behavior around vending machines. Warning labels on vending machines display a signal word warning or depict an unfortunate stick person pictograph about to be crushed by the machine with a frightening red X over it. Marc Green, an expert in Human Factors Engineering, studies decision-making procedures in the presence of a warning labels. According to Green, there are a few procedures that happen in the brain that determine decisions. One is the "perception of danger level" that is often predetermined by the physical look of the dangerous object and how often its danger is publicized (Green).

Vending machines present no obvious outward risks. The colorful candy and soda could even be considered a welcome sight. There are no sharp, protruding characteristics and no alarms that could go off if the machine is shaken. However, this makes them no less capable of crushing a user who could overlook the warning label based on their perception of the machine's danger. People are not necessarily as scared of risks when

they observe no obvious danger. So, the perception that a vending machine is only capable of dispensing snacks and not killing its user influences more risky behavior around it.

Green's other component in evaluating risk and decision-making is "personal and social and cultural decision-making factors" which surround any death or injury. In the case of the vending machines, there are a few key social indicators that may contribute to death and injury: age, gender, and involvement in military. Michael Q. Cosio and Gregg W. Tyler analyzed 64 injuries from vending machines, 15 of which were fatal. Of those 64, only one was female and the average age was 19.8 (Cosio and Tyler 186). Given the number of unintended injuries and deaths sustained by males, it is worth exploring how and why this happens.

Natural selection is not random

Why are one setting, one age group, and one gender overwhelmingly represented in injury and death statistics? Let us start with deciphering the most overwhelming characteristic in Cosio and Tyler's study: gender. Given that 63 of 64 injuries were male, there is obviously something different in male social groups and individual male behavior than in females. Christine R. Harris, Michael Jenkins, and Dale Glaser, researchers at University of California, San Diego, interviewed a large pool of undergraduate psychology students with roughly equal numbers of males and females. The students self-reported how likely it is for them to engage in risky behavior, such as gambling, or social risk-taking, such as asking someone out or calling someone out. They found that males overwhelmingly took more risks in most categories and reported more enjoyment when taking risks than their female peers (Harris et al. 48-49). The findings directly correlate with the risk of shaking a vending machine that resulted in injuries and death. To get at the direct reasons why this is, we will look at theories from our friend Charles Darwin.

The evolutionary perspective gives an interesting insight into why males and females perceive risks so differently. Some theorize that females can better perceive risks because they are equipped to successfully raise offspring, whereas males take more risks because, physiologically, they can spread their offspring much faster to multiple people while females have to wait nine months to further their DNA (Harris et al. 60). In other words, the evolutionary perspective reveals that males do not have to stick around as long to reproduce, so they take more risks. Ironically, a popular website

honors Darwin and foolish deaths by giving out Darwin Awards to the most idiotic deaths. The idiocy involved supposedly confirms Darwin's theory of the "survival of the fittest." Upon further analysis, the website also shows that the awards overwhelmingly go to males.

Darwin Award candidates must show an "astounding misapplication of common sense" and be the "cause of their own demise" (Lendrem et al.). A data analysis of the candidates from 1995 to 2014 reveals that 87% of recipients were male (Ledrem et al.). This statistic confirms that males disproportionately participate in stupid behavior. To add to the discussion regarding differences in male and female decision-making, Darwin's theory is now backed up with modern scientific data about the brain.

Pivotal research done by Kristina Caudle, a neuroscientist at the Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City, shows that male adolescents have to think much harder to restrain themselves (qtd. in Underwood). The adolescents in the study were shown photos of intimidating faces and the choice of "go/no go": to risk fighting or stay in safety. "Those adolescents who did manage to restrain themselves showed significantly higher activity in a brain region called the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), which is involved in top-down control of behavior" (Underwood). This study also corresponds to the average age of victims of vending machines, which is relatively young at 19.8 years old. Adolescents made 15% more errors (risks) than children and adults (Underwood).

Another factor important in Cosio and Tyler's study is the environment of the injuries and deaths. Not only do age and gender play a role in decision making, but the setting does, too. For example, many deaths occur on military bases, which are notoriously male-dominated and have strict social and cultural discipline. The male-dominated community facilitates shows of strength, such as physical testing. This relates back to risk because men want to prove themselves in everything they do (remember back to the evolutionary perspective—they want their meat!). Getting a soda from the vending machine is no exception, even if it means a destructive shake or two.

Now that we better understand how and why stupid deaths occur, it is now time to grapple with the aftermath of the many fatal, irrational decisions. It can be easy to brush away vending machine deaths as rare,

and you would be correct. They are. But foolish deaths happen almost every day; could stupid deaths guide us through our fear of our own impending deaths?

"I'm not laughing *at* death, I'm laughing *with* death!"

Death is, of course, inevitable. It happens almost everywhere, every second, every day. But as inevitable and frequent as death is, it is often not confronted or talked about. Grief is met with whispers and prepared lasagna from the neighbors, but not with dialogue. The rare and rash decision to shake a vending machine, and the possible death resulting, provide us with some clues as to how to deal with death. How? The case of Kevin Mackle, a teenager crushed by a vending machine, shows us that humor can be a jumping block to start conceptualizing death.

Kevin Mackle was a first-year student at Bishop's University outside of Montreal, Canada. As his parents anxiously awaited his return home for the winter holiday, Kevin died intoxicated and alone, crushed underneath a 1000-pound Coca-Cola vending machine the night before his train home ("Student Dies of Thirst"). He died after presumably trying to coax a soda out of the machine by shaking it. How is a parent or friend supposed to rationalize his sudden death? Any son or daughter could make a foolish decision, so exploring the Mackle family's reaction could be beneficial to the difficult conversation surrounding death and grief. However, the Mackle family gave no official interviews, and it is difficult to measure the emotional aspect of a death. What we can evaluate is how the public perceives death and the constraints this presents to the family and friends involved.

Research done by psychotherapists Marcia Lattanzi-Licht, Kenneth Doka, and Kenneth J. Doka, indicates that social values attached with the victim and "degree of intentionality" influence the extent of grief allowed by the family. Youth gives a positive social value to death, meaning the grief is more validated (Lattanzi-Licht et al. 7). If a death is preventable or deemed intentional (done consciously at the person's own expense), then the death loses value and the victim is more apt to "be held responsible and face collective wrath" (Lattanzi-Licht et al. 9). Given Kevin Mackle's young age and poor decision to shake the vending machine, the parents are presumably left conflicted on how publicly they should grieve and how they should respond. While their grief was private, they did file a lawsuit against the Vendo Company who owned the unsecured vending machine.

The lawsuit brought up many questions. What is the economic value of a life? The Mackles decided that $665,000 was enough to make up for funeral and emotional costs that ensued after their son's death ("Family Sues Over Vend Machine Death"). On chat forums and websites, many questioned the family's decision to sue.

While people typically look at death with sympathy, in some circumstances, particularly when alcohol is involved, they can also view death with hostility. This showed in comments regarding the lawsuit filed by Kevin Mackle's family. On the website called EnterStageRight.com, a self-proclaimed e-Journal of Modern Conservatism that allows blog post submissions, a contributor named Shelly McKinney gave her bitter review of the family's lawsuit, poetically titled, "Overdosing on Coke: Soda Machine Falls on Drunken Idiot." The finale of her rant reads: "I'd love to read that the judge to whom this case is presented would look at the Mackles and bark, 'Whatever happened to personal responsibility? Whatever happened to personal dignity? Get your idiotic Jerry Springer lawsuit out of my courtroom. I find it both sickening and immoral.'" You can feel her anger and disbelief that the family is willing to go through a long and arduous trial, just because of their son's decision, made more complex when the coroner reported Mackle had been intoxicated at the time. Although death can bring much hardship to a family, a result of stupid decisions or not, it is not uncommon for people to joke about the death.

The aforementioned Darwin Award was given to Kevin Mackle in 2001 ("Coke it is!"). The website is not only useful for showing that men take more risks that result in irrational deaths, but it also reveals our tendency to balance hard subjects with humor, or anything just to take the edge off. Even though it's tacky, humor is used as a natural coping mechanism in the grieving process or when confronted with the topic of death. Brian D. Vivona conducted interviews with crime scene investigators (CSIs) who deal with death every day. They frequently see morbid crime scenes and are confronted with the difficult task of consoling grieving family members. If your life's work was to deal with death's work, how would you cope? The CSIs use humor. According to Vivona, they retell humorous stories to their colleagues often, on the job or not. The ensuing laughter can defuse the stressful work environment through what is called "tension relief theory" (Vivona). The theory suggests that the energy exerted through laughter physically releases stress from the face. The

theory is grounded in Freud's idea that "laughter served to release nervous energy that was no longer needed" (Vivona). Relatedly, many websites like the Darwin Awards have been created to portray the humorous side of death.

The Darwin Awards site is full of outrageous titles and cheesy Clip Art graphics. Kevin Mackle's death, for instance, was titled "Coke it is!" People can argue that the website is doing injustice to the families of the victims by labeling their dead relative as someone who ought to die for the best of mankind. However, behind its perceived mocking front, the hashtag #YourDeathMatters under the logo stands out. With this hashtag, The Darwin Awards are communicating that all deaths, even the most mind-boggling, stupid, and senseless deaths, deserve some kind of acknowledgement. The Darwin Awards strive to do so by delivering humor alongside their lesson of morality.

All jokes aside, why does such a gruesome website exist? Are humans so low that we get amusement from reading about or seeing others' misfortune? The answer is a complicated "yes." According to Leah Sottile, contributor to *The Atlantic,* stories about death are fascinating because they are not happening to *us*. Scott Bunn, a professor of criminology and sociology at Drew University featured in the article, nicely sums up this idea: "[Looking at causes of death] is a form of escapism. There's an inherent need to get close to the edge of the abyss and look in without falling in" (qtd. in Sottile). Humans naturally fear death, so to read about it on the screen or a book gives us a nice barrier while we safely confront the subject. So, we have one side to evaluating death that is made out of pure curiosity, but the Darwin Awards also reveal that humor is a natural reaction to death. So, if laughter can diffuse tough situations, it can get people that much closer to discussing death. But why do we feel better about laughing at idiotic deaths, like being crushed under a vending machine, more than natural, common deaths?

It turns out we humans can be pretty awful from a moral standpoint. As much as we do not want to admit it, we secretly *enjoy* witnessing negative outcomes for people, especially if by our own judgement they deserve the consequences. This is why it is far easier and socially acceptable to laugh at articles, like Kevin Mackle's, featured on the Darwin Awards than say, someone who died from natural causes after living a morally good life. One stupid, irrational action, especially when

alcohol is involved, can change the perception of the deceased. Further, because no one wants to declare that anyone deserves to die, when someone brings death upon themselves through poor reasoning, it complicates the statement and, thus, humor swoops in to defuse the situation. There is a German term, *schadenfreude*, that sums up this common conflicted reaction to death. It roughly translates to "malicious joy" in English. If you have ever secretly been happy at someone else's pain, be it the most popular girl in school "accidentally" tripping or watching someone get hit in the head with a ball on Youtube, you have experienced schadenfreude.

Schadenfreude gives us a feeling that justice has been served to the deserving and a pleasant sigh of relief that we have lived another day without succumbing to irrationality, unlike the guy featured in a Darwin Award. So yes, humans can appear malicious for smiling at others' rash decisions and subsequent fatalities, but perhaps the humor we allow ourselves at the expense of our foes or Darwin Award recipients' pain can help us confront the reality of impending death without fearing it.

In Conclusion: Do. Not. Shake. The. Vending. Machine.

Luckily, engineering advancements have made vending machines heavier and most are now anchored to walls. Vending machine deaths are incredibly rare, however, risks can be taken anywhere and with anything; the vending machine deaths are just one perfectly irrational example of how stupid we can be. But stupidity allows an entry point to discuss death and breathe a sigh of relief (secretly) and proclaim, "thank God that wasn't me under that vending machine!"

The vending machine crush is not a subtle death. To be killed from the innocent action of quenching a junk-food craving must leave the family and loved ones of the deceased reeling from the immense senselessness of it all. Fortunately, our human impulses and behaviors, hard-wired in over the millennium, also includes humor and empathy, and hopefully an ability to learn from others. So, the next time your Cheetos get caught in the corkscrew vending mechanisms, remember you are only a buck away from Fritos, B8, the safer option. Otherwise Darwin's Law of Natural Selection will have the last laugh.

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Tumblr: Where *Everyone's* Got Groupies
Isabella Sims

"He kinda cute tho," a blog that idolizes Parkland school shooter, Nikolas Cruz, is only one amongst the many dark fandoms that can be found plastered on the walls of Tumblr. They call themselves "Cruzers," but they are not alone; these communities coexist with others in support of a variety of famous killers, including Charles Manson, Ted Bundy, and Jeffrey Dahmer. But how is it that anyone could idolize a murderer? Outsiders regard these fandoms as incomprehensible and obscene, but to members, they provide an outlet for expression by the rest of popular media. In this essay, I begin with psychological evidence that explains why the human mind is able to regard mass and serial killers in a positive light. Then, with evidence from various blogs I both observed and interviewed, I explain how emotional facilitation and group mentality may lead one to join a fandom in support of them.

The human brain is constantly making connections that are unseen by the conscious mind. When in contact with another person, these connections allow us to answer the question: are they friend or foe? Waytz and Young, as cited by the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, explain that in social situations, our minds are predisposed to seek affiliation with who we determine to be a friend, and to monitor and anticipate the actions of those we deem foe (278). In their study they found that when evaluating the potential for social connection, people tend to focus on others' feelings and emotions, but if we feel the need to anticipate dangerous actions, we evaluate their intentions (282). But what happens, psychologically, when we attempt to

evaluate the mind of someone we will never meet? When deciding whether or not to seek affiliation with a murderer, we need not anticipate their actions nor evaluate their intentions when there is no chance of face to face interaction ever occurring. This means the choice of affiliation can be solely determined based on an analysis of the murderer's emotions, and if one experiences a significant emotional connection with a killer, they are vulnerable to regarding them as friend, rather than foe. This is not to say that just because you relate to the feelings of a murderer, you instantly

view them in a positive light, but rather that the absence of potential for physical interaction allows you to do so. Moving forward, I will discuss how strong emotional connections can motivate one to join a fandom in support of a murderer.

Connecting to another individual on an emotional level is imperative to the development of relationships as well as the decision to form one with a murderer. One might choose to seek affiliation with a murderer if they can relate to their character as portrayed through media, and thus join a fandom to discuss and support them. Because these individuals will never come into physical contact with famous killers, as they are either dead or imprisoned for life, they are left to make assumptions based on what the media chooses to present. Some scholars believe that fans of criminals are created by a fascination with what people do not understand rather than what they can relate to. Namely, Christine M. Sarteschi, Associate Professor of Social Work and Criminology, claims that true-crime narratives focus so much public attention on murderers because they illustrate hardships "that most people never experience in their own lives" (2). While I agree that viewers are initially drawn to these stories by their curiosity, this claim does not explain the continued devotion exhibited by the members of online fandoms.

These narratives have a much more significant effect than appealing to curiosity; they facilitate an emotional bond between the viewer and the murderer being depicted. For example, popular film *My Friend Dahmer,* and TV show *Manhunt: Unabomber,* portray Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Kaczynski as mistreated, troubled souls, making it difficult not to feel some level of empathy for the characters. Other narratives spark compassion by merely reporting on challenging aspects of killers' lives and can be found both presently and within the archives of news outlets. I argue though that momentarily feeling sorry for a murderer could not be enough to forgive such abhorrent crimes. Instead, one must relate to their emotions to consistently regard them with sympathy. This, likely in combination with varying degrees of mental instability, can inspire admiration for criminals who struggle with one's same, troubling emotions.

Public examples of this phenomenon can be found on Tumblr, where many users openly express their affection for various killers. For example, many murderer-supporting blogs post photos of love letters they

have sent to the killers they admire. Scholars like Sarteschi, who believe murder interest derives from a fascination with the unknown, would likely assume that these blogs are intended to explore what people do not understand, rather than what they are able to relate to. But as evidenced by Harrysimpact[1], these blogs have no interest in discovering what makes them different from the killers they feature: "Nikolas is an outcast, like us. The outcasts, we have to save our fucking selves man." Though interest in the unknown might explain mere fascination, Sarteschi's argument is incomprehensive because it does not recognize individuals like these who become fans of killers due to experiences and emotions that they *share.*

Nikolas Cruz, Parkland school shooter, is quite popular amongst these fandoms. Because details of Cruz's struggle with social rejection became public knowledge (via multiple news outlets), strong, emotional connections to him can be formed by those who share a similar social identity. According to Karina Korostelina, Professor at George Mason's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, "Social identity is based on the belief that a person belongs to a particular group, shares common ideas, values, and feelings with other group members, and differs significantly from members of other social groups" (216). I would not argue that supporters necessarily have the same values as their icon, but it is evident in these blogs that a deep understanding of their emotions and shared feelings of isolation can cause individuals to seek affiliation with killers that share similar social identities.

Websites like Tumblr offer a platform that allows users to discuss these feelings through mass murderer and serial killer fandoms; thus, fostering emotional connection not only with the killer but also with peers who feel the same. In a survey conducted by Lisa Smylie, Ph.D., participants claimed to have stronger relationships with those they were able to connect to emotionally. Furthermore, these relationships need not be based on positive emotions, and according to Smylie, they can also be "...fostered within an emotionally 'negative' climate" (143). The influence of the emotionally negative climate surrounding mass and serial killer empathizers is proliferated by the dissenting voice of the media. When big-name news outlets like *The Washington Post* publish quotes like "It scares

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[1] The username of a fan page I discovered a blog post from.
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me. It's perverted" (Rosenberg), about these sympathizers, they unknowingly strengthen a bond founded on being outcasts of society. These comments have powerful impacts on an individual's emotions, and as noted by Bialostok and Aronson[2], emotions are capable of "...preventing the mind from functioning objectively and rationally" (96), and therefore, could facilitate the aberrant decision to join one of these fandoms. Furthermore, based on the research of Korostelina, who found that "insults can strengthen in-group/out-group boundaries and can escalate conflict" (227), I regard these comments as vehicles that intensify the common bond of shame that is central to this group's social identity. In fact, when I asked a creator of one of these blogs if these comments made them want to be any less involved in their community, they responded with "more, if anything" (alright-Cruz[3]).

Blogs like these place a high emphasis on maintaining a specific social identity, which as explained by Korostelina, has polarizing consequences: "In-group members feel that, by being similar to the out-group, the in-group may lose its essence" (218). This creates an "us vs. them" dynamic, in which the values of in-group members become dependent on opposing those of out-group members. The emotional bond of being a social reject is strengthened through a mutual disdain for a common enemy, in this case, being typical members of society. Thus these fandoms regard mass shooters like Eric Harris and Nikolas Cruz as crusaders of their kind: iconic examples of good people, good people who could have been different if only our society didn't ignore the warning signs of depression, if only we had cared about them just a little more, if only they hadn't been bullied.

Skeptics may say that my explanation is incomprehensive due to the fact that not all mass murderers who were social rejects garner such a fanbase, but what is unique about shooters like Cruz and Harris is that they attacked high schools, where being bullied and outcast by peers is most impactful. By college and beyond, most adults have more to worry about than where they stand socially and are emotionally intelligent enough not to believe that the slaughter of innocent victims should be supported. This can explain why shooters like Stephen Paddock, Las Vegas shooter, and

[2] As published by the American Anthropological Association
[3] The username of a fan page I interviewed through Tumblr's chat box.

Seung-Hui Cho, Virginia Tech shooter, have not garnered such sympathy. Additionally, those who have murdered children, like Adam Lanza, Sandy Hook shooter, have also been less successful in attaining fans because humans associate children with innocence, making Lanza the bully himself rather than a crusader for those who fall victim to them.

Fandoms such as the ones found on Tumblr are not just created for any killer, but rather those whose identities can be used as an explanation for their crimes. High school shooters are so prevalent in fandom media because they tend to be so close to the age of those who create them and are therefore more relatable to users. These shooters are extreme examples of the actions one might be driven to take when they are not accepted by or continuously feel different from their peers. They also give victims of bullying a platform to capitalize on the destruction that they believe is a product of bullying, and can use the death of innocent civilians as a symbol of caution to motivate others to prevent it from occurring in the future:

> Usually these mass murderers have some type of mental illness, so like Nikolas for example. He had these mental illnesses and he obviously needed help for them but no one actually did anything. Everyone here seems to support the idea of providing mental help for the ones who were failed in their life, whether it be by the system, their families, or even classmates (nikolasjc[4]).

To users like nikolasjc, these massacres represent an opportunity to raise awareness for those who are impacted by mental illness. This account also briefly features other high school shooters, Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold, and TJ Lane, all of whom have been described by the media as social rejects.

> Other skeptics have argued that mass shooters lack the capacity that serial killers have to generate continued interest from the public: While the interest may be intense shortly after a massacre, it quickly fades. Some refer to this as the routinization of mass murder. Although it has not been thoroughly tested empirically, recent analyses of Google Trends data supports the notion that mass killings have become routine and that the American public is

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[4] The username of a fan page I interviewed through Tumblr's chat box.

becoming desensitized to these violent events. (Sarteschi 2) Though I agree that famous serial killers like Jeffery Dahmer are more likely to attract a broader fanbase, I have found evidence that for many, their intense interest in mass murderers is not short lived. For instance, one blogger I interviewed, who requested to remain anonymous, informed me that they think about Cruz an average of three hours per day. Over a month after the attack, and this individual continues to spend over an eighth of their day just thinking about the killer, and even more time posting about him and communicating with other blogs centered around <u>him</u>. This quote shows that although mass shooters may have fewer fans than serial killers, the interest of their fans does not lessen in intensity quickly after their attack, and they exhibit consistent devotion to their idols in order to adhere to their shared social identity.

Though social identity explains what may drive an individual to connect with murderers as well as other members of these fandoms, it does not fully explain what phenomenon causes one to join and participate in them. I argue that the theory of groupthink provides insight into an individual's decision to associate with and contribute to murder fandoms. Irving Janis originally coined the term "groupthink" as a way to explain why policymakers often blindly agree on important decisions without rational consideration, but it has more recently been applied by scholars to explain the mentality of groups outside the political sphere. According to Janis, groupthink is "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action" (Hart 247). Moving forward, I will use this theory to explain why isolated individuals, such as the ones who join these fandoms, consistently place their membership in these communities above their values.

When influenced by a group, individuals tend to disassociate with their own personal values. Modern psychology explains that group think often leads individual members to forget and ignore their morals, mature judgment, and ability to recognize consequences to actions (Hinshelwood[5]). In the context of murder fandoms, this information presents both good and bad news. Fortunately, this may mean that these blogs do not fully represent the logic of individuals that create them; that

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[5] Professor of Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Essex.

if taken out of their group context, they would no longer be able to justify what they post.

To test my assumption, I asked an individual why they had put a heart symbol next to the name of a mass murderer on their blog title. I found countless blogs with hearts by killers' names, but I specifically chose to ask this question of the only blogger who requested to remain anonymous. Their response was truly nonsensical: "to attract people to look at my page, most people don't want to learn about the victims just the gunman (but) I post information about both." By removing this individual from the context of their group, I argue that because they were stripped of the usual group mentality they experience on this website, they were reminded of their *own* character; and thus, unable to explain the rationale behind their actions. Moreover, this is the same account that assured me they were not a "fan" of Nikolas Cruz, despite the abundance of hand-drawn portraits and love letters of him featured on their page. To further test my theory, I asked nikolascruzedits[6] what made them a fan of Cruz, to which they replied "If you can't tell most things I do are based off of sarcasm I don't consider myself apart of this fan base I am kind of mocking it and the sick children that decide to join this community," but much like the other account, their response was incongruent with what they featured on their page.

What I found most interesting is that no individual was willing to acknowledge that they were a "fan," but all were perfectly comfortable admitting that they were part of a fandom. This is discouraging because though it supports that these individuals' morals are likely more intact than the fandom they belong to, it also reveals how powerful the mindset it creates can be. This claim is evidenced by an interviewee, who moments after claiming they were not a fan, expressed how their membership in this *fandom* is like having a family. So, what makes these individuals so willing to participate in these communities? I argue that these communities are so important to their members because each shares a common bond of being different. It is likely troubling to them to feel such a deep emotional connection to a killer, and the hate they receive for feeling this way can only further instill a disconnect to society:

> Many of us know that its not "normal" to like these sort of
> things (murders & mass shooters) so we keep it on the down

[6] The username of a fan page I interviewed through Tumblr's chat box.

low or dont reveal our identities here... Its so strange to most that we find these killers psychology interesting that we need to stick together or no one else will be there for us (dylandeadbolt[7])

Because they are the minority in their beliefs, they experience more rejection than most and therefore place a higher value on creating an identity consistent with fellow minorities (Dundes[8] 150). This is not to say that these blogs should be excused of their offensive posts, but rather that many of them may be a desperate attempt to belong somewhere in society. Unfortunately, group mentality cannot disprove that members of these fandoms genuinely believe in the messages they promote, but it may show that when users are removed from their community, they are at least conscious that their actions are morally flawed.

Through shared social identities, the individuals I interviewed and otherwise observed on Tumblr forge emotional connections with both murderers and other members of the site who share this bond. These connections foster a community, or a fandom that is facilitated by a group mentality that motivates members to further separate themselves from those who do not exhibit the same social characteristics as those demonstrated by in-group members. The fandoms I analyze in this piece are prevalent examples of how powerful emotional and social connections can be to those who have been outcast by society. They explain that though members of these groups demonstrate erroneous, misguided morals, more caution should be taken when criticizing them in order to avoid pushing them further into such deviant communities. There has been no scholarly work to date which discusses murder fandoms native to Tumblr, and I implore scholars to join my conversation to further uncover what might cause one to openly show support for mass and serial killers.

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[8] The username of a fan page I interviewed through Tumblr's chat box.
[9] Folklorist at the University of California, Berkeley

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Investigating Culture

Invis-ABILITY
Christie Na

"Nobody's free until everybody's free" -Fannie Lou Hamer

I have a secret. I have a superpower and there are millions of us with the same "gift" in America. About eighteen million, according to population statistics. To those that know about their ability, I believe we should plan to conspire together to help reshape this country. Our superpower is Invisibility.

Within America, there are other Asian Americans who grapple with their Invisibility on a daily basis. For one, my nationality is usually invisible. Oftentimes I am not seen as "American," and told to "go back" to a continent (Asia) that I have never even been to before. Additionally, in nearly every history class, I've hardly learned Asian history let alone Asian American history; I rarely see myself accurately depicted or frequently represented in the media, and because the national race conversation is typically Black and White, I'm often erased as a person of color and pinned as the "model minority."

Introduction

In *We Gon' Be Alright*, American journalist and music critic Jeff Chang (2016), highlights institutional racism through an amalgamation of various essays. Throughout his book, Chang illuminates the ongoing existence of resegregation and expounds upon the vicious cycle people of color (specifically Black men and women) continue to endure everyday. Chang includes an essay on Asian American "in-betweenness" with the current social and political climate, while insisting that Asian Americans join the conversation. Chang highlights his observations about Asian American "in-betweenness" to concretize Asian American existence and provoke Asian Americans to start holding accountability for their "Asian privilege." In this essay, I will be highlighting how Asian American invisibility has worked hand in hand with the model minority myth, granting Asian Americans privileges that have hurt and helped their

communities, and also stress how it's time they join the conversation and stand in solidarity with other people of color.

The Myths Construction

Before the 1940s, America had viewed Asians as sneaky, sly aliens who were perpetual foreigners. However, during the 1970s, *The New York Times* published an article declaring Japanese and Chinese Asian Americans as "an American success story" and the "model minority" (Wu, 2013). This change of view towards Asian Americans can be attributed to World War Two; according to Indiana University Professor Ellen Wu, the model minority myth was fueled by "American leaders and the American people to work on race relations" (Wu, 2013). During the 1940s, lawmakers had agreed that exclusionary policies towards Asian allied countries (ex. China) was "bad diplomacy." Congress had decided to create a "goodwill gesture" to China, who was an ally to America. White politicians decided to utilize a "positive" relationship with Asians for an opportunity to allow " the United States to proclaim itself a racial democracy…and to assume the leadership of the free world" (Wu, 2013). Soon afterwards, Asian Americans weren't looked at as sly or untrusting, but were painted as the "example" for other minorities; by the late 1960s, White America pinned Asian Americans as the poster child for the "successful" minority.

A study performed last year by a Brown University economist, Nathaniel Hilger (2016), has proved that contrary to stereotyped belief, Asian American financial success compared to other minorities has nothing to do with "educational values" or "Confucian family values." His research suggests that American society just became less racist towards Asians and Asian Americans, so they were therefore "allowed" into corporations and educational institutions in ways that other people of color were not (Hilger, 2016). However, once Asian Americans are in these spaces, they face a sort of "bamboo ceiling," where they are not expected to lead and expected to be more subservient (Gee, 2015). Because of the "positive" model minority stereotype, many Asian Americans (especially East Asians) are allowed in White institutional spaces, but also personal spaces like friends groups, affiliation groups/clubs, etc. Asians are not stereotyped as "angry" or "intimidating" to Whiteness, they are seen as wanting to assimilate, therefore, their race becomes invisible.

The Lack of History

Growing up, I used to believe Asian Americans magically appeared in the United States. I didn't know why or how my ancestors got here; I just knew that they weren't with the Pilgrims, and they got here...somehow. I always enjoyed history classes and reading about American history, but always wondered...Where were all the Asians during this? Many Asian Americans are not aware of how their position in society was shaped, or even how or why their ancestors immigrated here. This lack of information also causes Asian Americans to be unaware of the privileges they gained because of Black and Brown fight for liberation; they have not internalized how Black liberation has provided the space for Asian bodies to exist. Former Assistant Attorney General Bill Lann Lee stresses the beneficial impacts of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although African Americans were fighting for Black liberation specifically, they also paved the way for other minorities to be treated fairly regardless of the basis of "race, color and national origin" (Lee, 2014). Asians Americans were then granted more political rights and less discrimination because African Americans were at the forefront at fighting for rights. The lack of history, the lack of representation, and the lack of overall visibility contributes to the "in-between" feelings of Asian Americans. It only increases the divide between other people of color, as well as expands this state of confusion.

Lack of Solidarity

African Americans who fought for liberation during the 1960s started to make White Americans extremely uncomfortable. Professor at the University of California, Irvine, Claire Jean Kim (1999) in her journal, delves into the model minority myth and how White America started to make the unexplicit suggestion of why the Black community couldn't be like their model minority counterparts (Kim, 1999). I have realized that this myth has caused America to see Asian and Black individuals as polar opposites: Asians are stereotyped to be shy, docile, and studious, whereas Black and Brown individuals get pinned as loud, aggressive, and troublemakers. White acceptance of Asian Americans into institutionalized practices, while also leaving Black and Brown communities out, have only created more barriers for harmonious intersectionality. Ultimately, it has only pushed back African American liberation and created a further divide between Asian and Black solidarity.

Chang delves into the lack of participation from the Asian American community in times of social injustice. The Salt Collective Blogger Liz Lin describes how Asians do not fit into the "black and white binary that usually frames conversations about race in this country" (Lin, 2015), however it's important to recognize that a lot of the Asian/American identity does function in the binary with examples like achieving honorary whiteness or cultural Blackness. Many Asian Americans do not see themselves as people of color, which is problematic with goals of solidarity: this in-betweenness perpetuates Black and Brown struggle. As Chang mentioned, Asian Americans who sided with Peter Liang and chanted "Asian Lives Matter" have not internalized the rewards they receive for taking part in anti-blackness. As mentioned before, the model minority myth was constructed by Whiteness, in attempts to justify the mistreatment of Black and Brown individuals (Yang Stephens, 2016). Asians siding with Liang expected to gain the same privileges as White police officers and it is imperative to note that "if it was not for Ferguson...Peter Liang might have not been convicted" (Chang, 2016). Chang states that there are some in the Asian American community who "would use that power (model minority 'privilege') to make things worse for other communities of color" (Chang, 2016).

Chang highlights an interaction with an older Chinese American woman, who questions his point on the ongoing issue of resegregation. By getting rid of 'quotas' for Blacks and Latinos, she believes she is "supporting" Asian Americans. She continues by sharing that there is nothing wrong with "wanting to protect our people (Asians) from discrimination." Chang is shell shocked, unable to respond to her comment, which overarchingly highlights the misconceptions many Asian Americans have towards standing in solidarity with other people of color. Chang delves into how this woman does not understand that she is not "supporting" Asian Americans by keeping other people of color out of public school systems. She is unaware that her comments of "protecting" Asian Americans from discrimination is discriminatory itself towards Black and Brown people. Her point further reinforces how dangerous Asian American invisibility can be towards not only Asian Americans themselves, but also to other people of color. Asian Americans need to start joining the conversation and thinking outside of "their self-interest" and

they need to "think about what it means to fight for justice and equality for all" (Chang, 2016).

Asian American invisibility causes Asians to exhibit a feeling of being on the outside, looking in, unsure of how they are seen in society. In regards to appropriating Black culture, Jeff Chang mentions Eddie Huang and his inappropriate domination of Black culture. As Eddie Huang appropriates hip hop, he expresses vengeful feelings on Asian American emasculation. In an interview with Bill Maher, Eddie Huang stated, "I feel like Asian men have been emasculated so much in America that we're basically treated like Black women" (qtd. in Kuo, 2016). This comment further degrades Black women and highlights how Huang feels his masculinity should be "taken more seriously." Although Huang may feel connected with Black culture, there is a difference between appreciating it and pretending like he understands the same struggle. Huang uses hip hop as a platform and benefits from the profit. With little to no representation of Asian Americans in the media, Eddie Huang holds a major responsibility. Many people of color get pinned with being representative of their entire race; many times they do not get the privilege of individuality. His appropriation of Black culture in the media and claim to his authenticity and thereby success is an extremely dangerous adoption that stems from Asian American invisibility.

So What Now?

In many superhero movies and books, the protagonists grapple with the fact that it would be selfish of them to keep their powers to themselves. If I just use my Invisibility for my advantage, to step over Black and Brown people who aren't given the same credit from institutions and White Americans, then I am not using my abilities "for the world at large," let alone even for myself and other Asian Americans. Chang reinforces to his readers that it's time for Asian Americans "to get off the fence" and "declare their Asian Americanness." The model minority myth and Asian American Invisibility have given me and other Asians access to resources that should be allocated to other people of color, making it pay for what it has done to Asian Americans, and other people of color.

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Modern Bards on the World Stage: Capturing the Mysticism of Ireland

Hayli Spence

The first strains of sweet, light-classical instrumental music echo from the pit, tossed over the audience in an undulating wave of high and low pitches. Purple and blue light washes over the stage. A steady drumbeat starts up, the drummers on either side of the stage raising each arm high in between every beat, providing a steady undercurrent to the string instruments hidden from view. Four spotlights switch on over center stage, and from the wings step the women of the hour. In time with the drums they step, swinging their long, full gowns as they do so. The three vocalists let the first notes of their opening number slip past their painted lips. They all make a full turn towards the audience. Their voices blend seamlessly with the orchestra in a breathtaking harmony. The violinist places her bow upon the strings, waits a beat, then draws it dramatically downwards, her own notes adding to the growing pulse of the music. The music builds, taking off and carrying you with it. You feel yourself falling into every note, forgetting about everything except the mystical fantasy world that has been created onstage. This is Celtic Woman.

The Making of a Global Phenomenon

Celtic Woman is a popular group of light-classical Irish musicians, meaning the group is comprised of musicians who produce sentimental, positive, uplifting, and generally easy-to-listen-to Irish music. The origins of the group can be traced all the way back to a chance encounter in the lobby of a French hotel in 2004, where Sharon Browne, a founder of Celtic Collections records, had the opportunity to pitch her idea for Celtic Woman to then-vice president for PBS programming Gustavo Sagastume. At the time, Sagastume wasn't looking for a light-classical group, but when he saw Browne's set in-person approximately six months after their first encounter, he realized that Celtic Woman would be a perfect program for

PBS. At first, only one special was planned (Dederer 28). The group got together in Dublin for their first and supposedly last performance, only to be met with a full house. In fact, the performance was so well-received that it prompted an immediate concert tour in the United States. Now, after several international tours alongside the release of multiple albums and PBS specials, the group is highly regarded across the globe for their talent ("Celtic Woman Biography").

Unfortunately, even though Celtic Woman may seem harmless at first glance, I have to agree with some of the sentiments expressed by American novelist Claire Dederer in her early 2007 *New York Times* article about the group. One point in particular that I find myself agreeing with is Dederer's claim that it is actually quite "easy to make fun of Celtic Woman" (28). Indeed, when examined critically, the entire spectacle put on by the group is simply ridiculous; what self-respecting grown woman agrees to prance around a stage in an elaborate ball gown straight out of a Disney movie? This ridiculousness is actually, in part, the fault of the audience, as Celtic Woman has been purposefully produced to be "the very vision of what we want Ireland to be" (Dederer 28). The group gives the audience what it wants, using elements of fantasy in order to create a stereotypical construct of Ireland, which is inherently problematic because it has the ultimate effect of diminishing the status of Ireland on the world stage.

A Musical Foundation for Fantasy

Having established what Celtic Woman is, let's think back on the performance described in the introduction—and notice the word *performance* as opposed to *concert*. A concert, in the traditional sense of the word, is a musical showcase in which musicians stand up onstage and "wow" the audience with their talent. A performance, however, is something more. Performances consist of many elements which, taken together, enhance the audience's engagement with the world being built by the music—think about it like a Broadway musical. In every Celtic Woman performance, multiple elements of theater are utilized in order to fully flesh out the Irish fantasy being established through the group's songs. But before we delve into the theatrical elements that help build this fantasy, it is important to examine the role of the member's pretty voices in developing a strong foundation upon which the fantasy can be built.

For a moment, forget about the performance, and focus on the music. When we listen to a Celtic Woman soundtrack on its own, without watching the actual performance, it is clear that even without the extra theatrical elements, the music produced by the group is distinctly "Irish" in nature. But what makes it so "Irish?" Well, according to Helen O'Shea, an Irish music expert and author of the article "When Irish Eyes Are Tearful: Nation, Gender and Musical Stereotypes in Irish Music," Irish music tends to be either slow and melancholic or fast-paced and optimistic (1). Celtic Woman combines both of these categories; some of their numbers are comprised of swooping, haunting melodies associated with nature and sentiment, while other numbers are more fast-paced and joyous, associated with spiritual rejuvenation and Irish optimism. What this means is that Celtic Woman numbers draw heavily on historical and ideological constructs of Irish music in order to ground the audience in stereotypical fantasies of Ireland.

This stereotypical Irish fantasy world created by the music alone is very familiar, especially to those of us who grew up in a Western culture. In many Western cultures, that sense of familiarity that we have when we listen to Irish music is consistently described as a sense of authenticity, and therefore Irish music is almost always viewed as a form of authentic, traditional folk music (O'Shea 2). Each of these concepts, that of "authenticity" and "tradition," are important in examining the appeal of Celtic Woman. "Authenticity," according to O'Shea, means placing more value in nature, one's spirit, and one's emotions instead of in material objects or success (2). To put it plainly, O'Shea is saying that something is authentic when it is emotional, since emotions are seen as pure, natural forms of expression. Since Irish music oftentimes has swooping, haunting melodies that are evocative of nature and spiritual rejuvenation, it is typically seen as "authentic." Furthermore, Irish music that is more fast-paced and optimistic seems more "down-to-earth," or "traditional," like most folk music. The traditional and authentic aspects of Irish music are evocative of better times rooted in a mystic, ancient Ireland, and Celtic Woman not only recognizes this, but also recognizes its audience's yearning for those mythical days. Through their use of elements such as traditional Irish instruments, video backdrops featuring iconic images of Irish cliffs, a spritely fiddler, melodramatic harmonies, and long, full gowns reminiscent of those worn by elite women during the Romantic Period,

alongside many other, smaller things, Celtic Woman exploits their audience's yearning by building the very world the audience wishes it could visit, attracting people of all backgrounds who wish they could return to simpler times.

All of the above theatrical elements combined make a Celtic Woman performance very similar to a Broadway show in the sense that there is a world being built onstage. In the case of Celtic Woman, this world is the mystical, ancient Ireland that has been circulating in our popular culture for quite some time now. In fact, this world has been in the making ever since the British colonized Ireland hundreds of years ago (O'Shea 3-4). In order to prevent an Irish uprising during the pre-modern era, the British worked to create a unifying "Irish identity" within the Irish upper-class through music. In doing so, they created a strong association between Irish music and certain instruments, such as the harp, the fiddle, uilleann pipes, and tin whistle (O'Shea 1). In other words, the colonizers encouraged the Irish to use these "traditional" Irish instruments in their music and discouraged the English from using the same instruments, thereby making those instruments symbols of Ireland separate from England. Furthermore, the music produced by these instruments, primarily the harp and uilleann pipes (Irish bagpipes with a softer sound than Scottish bagpipes), was the sort of sweet, slow, melancholic music associated with emotion and, therefore, femininity (O'Shea). This was no accident, as during this time period women were seen as weak and in need of protection; therefore, by associating Ireland with feminine weakness through "Irish" music that was distinctly feminine, England was able to justify their control over Ireland by claiming Ireland was too weak to protect itself. England literally created the image of what they wanted Ireland to be, spreading that image and perpetuating it through stereotypes (O'Shea). In other words, England used music to create the image of a weak, feminine Ireland in need of protection, and this is the Irish fantasy Celtic Woman upholds.

The Role of the Fiddling Fairy

After all of this effort to associate Irish music with certain instruments and a certain sound, a small group of "Irish" instruments has been established. Included in this group are both traditionally Irish and non-Irish instruments alike, with the non-Irish instruments being

associated with Irish music because the sounds they produce are very similar to those produced by the recognizably Irish instruments. Almost all of these "Irish" instruments, including the flute, bombard, and bagpipes, are represented in a typical Celtic Woman performance ("Celtic Woman Biography"). The most obvious representation is found in the violinist. When she takes the stage, she presents the audience with an image of the "Irish fiddler," spry and alluring as she leaps and spins across the stage. Notably, the pieces she plays are complex and typically take on a rapid tempo, and yet her bow seems to dance across the strings as effortlessly as she dances across the stage. This gives the impression that playing comes naturally to her, and since she is Irish, the audience generalizes this assumption to all Irish people, perpetuating the stereotype that the Irish are, as a whole and without exception, wild fiddlers. This is problematic because the fiddle is negatively associated with the lower-class and lower-class entertainment. It is viewed as "informal" and, as such, does not command the same respect that violin music does. It does not help that the fiddler does not wear shoes when she is onstage—this only enhances the "hill-billy" connotations associated with the fiddle. These negative connotations associated with fiddling and the fact that the Irish are directly associated with fiddling strengthens the image of a backwards Ireland incapable of governing itself in spite of the fact that British colonialism ended nearly a century ago.

In addition to all of this, the way Tara McNeill (and more obviously her predecessor, Máiréad Nesbitt) dances around the stage while playing her fiddle is reminiscent of a fairy musician, which plays into the myth and fantasy of Ireland. Everyone knows that in Irish fairytales and folklore the court of the Fairy Queen is always lively, filled with music and dancing. The fairies are light on their feet, highly skilled, and have an ethereal beauty to them. With her skill, fancy dress, flying hair, and clever lighting, the fiddler looks like something straight out of a fairytale, reinforcing the fantasy that is built onstage. In large part, the creation of this fantasy is only possible because the fiddle works to bring the rural Irish stereotype to the forefront of the audience's mind before an attempt to create the fantasy world is made. In other words, the fantasy world Celtic Woman is working to create more closely resembles the stereotype of a rural Ireland rather than the reality of modern Ireland. Therefore, the group works to bring forward this

stereotype in order to more easily project the desired fantasy world onto the stage and into the minds of the audience members.

The Quintessential Irish Woman

While she definitely plays an important role in creating the strange fantasy of Ireland during a Celtic Woman performance, the fiddler is by no means the only member of the group with a role to play. The very name of the group, "Celtic Woman," implicates them all while helping to establish the foundation upon which the fantasy is being built. When I first heard of Celtic Woman, I thought it was weird that they were called "Celtic *Woman*" as opposed to "Celtic *Women*." Apparently, I'm not the only one who has been confused by this, given that during an interview for Canadian-based *Music Express Magazine* in 2014, host John Jacobson asked the group that very question. Vocalist Lynn Hilary chose to respond, claiming that the name was chosen to represent the "quintessential Irish woman... the all-encompassing... woman who kind of does everything... she sings, she dances, she plays music, and she's lovely as well."

To put it bluntly, what Hilary means is that Celtic Woman is meant to represent all of the Irish women out there, but more specifically the perfect, idealized Irish women who can sing, dance, play instruments, and look beautiful while doing all of this. This is important because it means the group's identity is effectively generalized to an entire population of Irish women. In claiming to represent all Irish women, Celtic Woman limits the audience's thinking, strongly suggesting that they, the members of Celtic Woman, are the reality and not the fantasy. And since Celtic Woman represents *all* Irish women instead of a single static group of performers, the members of Celtic Woman are more or less interchangeable. As it stands, the stereotype is fixed; so long as the group continues to represent the "quintessential" Irish woman, they will be Celtic Woman.

This concept of interchangeability is actually quite common in theater. For example, when you go to see *Hamlet* at one theater, a different actor than the one you remember from the last time you saw *Hamlet* may hold the namesake role. This does not change the fact that the character you watch onstage is the character of Hamlet, delivering the familiar lines and interacting with the familiar characters. The image of Hamlet is produced through the audience's negation of reality (reality being the actor) in order to view the character—the character being the thing that is

removed from reality and a part of the world created onstage (Gilbert 200). Similarly, the members of Celtic Woman provide a foundation on which the audience can build the fantasy of the "quintessential" Irish woman and, in doing so, allow for the members to leave the group and be replaced periodically. The women themselves become "unreal," in a sense, woven into the fantasy of Ireland they have created onstage.

Given the fact that the members of Celtic Woman are so similar to actors, one would not expect them to address the audience during a performance. In fact, according to Jean-Paul Sartre, a French philosopher and playwright credited in part for developing modern semiotic theory (the theory concerning the role of signs in theater), during a performance an actor should *never* address the audience directly because this causes the imaginary character to vanish and the real actor to emerge (Gilbert 202). However, the members of Celtic Woman are not technically actors, so they do address the audience from time to time—usually to thank them for coming or explain how the next song is special to them as Irish women. Incidentally, these brief interjections are actually important to consider because they reinforce the audience's notion that these are small-town Irish women onstage, even if they are not *all* from small towns, especially when one of them says something like "I used to sing this song every night with my family after dinner" before singing an entire song in Irish-Gaelic. This has the effect of making the audience believe that the "real actors" are these idealized Irish women, creating the impression that the "real" Ireland is that stereotypical rural environment from the group's songs. Since audiences project the fantasy onto the foundation of this world (Gilbert 200), it then follows that the audience is more easily able to project the fantasy of Ireland onto the performance itself, as the fantasy is more closely related to the stereotypical Ireland than it is to the modern Ireland.

The Role of Modern Technology in the Creation of the Pre-Modern Fantasy

While the fiddler is a complex vehicle for transportation into the realm of Irish fantasy, subtle and difficult to pin down, and the name of the group is an even subtler cue for stereotyping, the video images projected behind the women are very obvious cues for the audience. As the vocalists raise their voices in dramatic harmonies, video images of Ireland's craggy shores appear behind them, the sweeping landscapes reinforcing the ones that have already appeared in the minds of every audience member. These

images are iconic; they have been ingrained into our schema of Ireland through movies, travel brochures, folktales, and other media. For example, movies such as *Leap Year*, a popular romantic comedy set in Ireland, incorporate lots of shots of the Irish countryside and cliffs. At the end of the movie, the main female character finds herself at the edge of one of these cliffs, staring out over the crashing waves of the ocean as she holds back tears (she has just been rejected by her love interest). The lonely, ruggedly beautiful landscape is given, through movies and other media such as this, a dually sentimental association and Irish association. After being saturated with images such as these their entire lives, it should be no wonder why audience members can tell the video clips are of places in Ireland, even though there are no captions or explicit cues that this is the case. The audience is transported away from the grimy urban cities they live in. Through all of this, the physical Irish world is established as a rugged, nature-centric place, lonely and sparsely inhabited, quite contrary to the modern Ireland reality.

Fantasy as Escape

Incidentally, Sartre is not the only person who believes that the creation of fantasy is largely in the hands of the audience. Jack Zipes, in his paper entitled "Why Fantasy Matters Too Much," expresses his belief that we are constantly looking to "project our desires in the form of fantasies onto reality" (78) and that we have always tried to make sense of the world through fantasy, not reason, citing examples such as the Bible and fairy tales (78). Incidentally, as Dederer pointed out just a few years before Zipes made this observation, Celtic Woman is not a vision of the real Ireland, but rather the "very vision of what we want Ireland to be" (28). Celtic Woman *is* the fantasy that we have created in order to escape from the relatively bleak reality we live in.

In short, we use fantasy as a form of escape, projecting our desires onto reality so that we can realize our "most profound wishes and desires" (Zipes 78). Those who listen to and watch Celtic Woman performances have a desire to get lost in an "authentic" world that has not lost its integrity, as our world today is filled with uncertainty and conflict; it seems that the news is constantly informing us of another terrorist attack, school shooting, or natural disaster. This has resulted in a world where integrity is constantly called into question and little trust is put into anyone, including the ever-fickle Mother Nature. In order to cope with this

uncertain reality, people turn to fantasy in order to "enjoy a moment of calm estrangement or titillation" and "appreciate the extraordinary in the ordinary" (Zipes 79). In other words, we need fantasy not because life is boring, but because it allows us to "contemplate alternatives to our harsh realities" and engage in spiritual rejuvenation (Zipes 79). Through fantasy, we find a way to preserve our personal integrity (Zipes 78).

Incidentally, Natasha Casey also brings up this idea of preserving integrity in her own paper, "Riverdance: The Importance of Being Irish American," when she comments on the fact that those who write about Irish music and what it means to them have repeatedly stressed the fact that folk music works to preserve integrity, both in a cultural and personal sense (21). In other words, Casey has noted here that because traditional folk music is viewed as authentic, it acts as a sort of time capsule, or a vehicle for connecting those in the present to a simpler, less conflict-ridden past in which integrity was still abundant within society. As I have mentioned before, Celtic Woman recognizes its audience's desire to escape into a fantasy world full of the authenticity and integrity associated with the pre-modern era, and this is why the fantasy of Ireland as presented by Celtic Woman supports the stereotypes the Western world has assigned to the country.

Return to Reality

The final strains of melodramatic music soar over the audience as the members of Celtic Woman line up in a sweet embrace, their arms looping behind each other's backs and painted smiles turned on the audience: each of them the very image of the sweet, innocent Irish woman. You blink once, twice, pulling yourself out of the fantasy world you have been engrossed in for nearly two hours as the audience rises to its feet and ecstatic applause echoes throughout the packed theater. Without thinking you join in, pushing yourself up out of the cushy red chair and clapping your hands together in praise for the talent standing upon the stage. The members of the group curtsey. The lights come back on, flooding the theater with a harsh yellow glow that pulls you fully back to reality.

Or maybe it doesn't. It is very likely that you have never been to Ireland yourself, or even studied Irish culture and history in great detail. This means that your entire concept of Ireland is based upon the Irish stereotypes and half-truths that are perpetuated within Western culture by books, movies, and performance groups just like Celtic Woman. The link

between England and Ireland is still there, in the back of people's minds, because the fantasy of Ireland that England helped to create through music is still prevalent within today's society. Those who argue that Celtic Woman is harmless because they preserve Celtic traditions ignore the fact that the stereotypes tied into the traditions themselves are problematic. The fantasy created through this "preservation" enforces problematic Irish stereotypes that, in turn, perpetuate the pre-modern belief that Ireland is a weak, feminine, easy-to-make-fun-of country incapable of ruling itself, thus diminishing the status of Ireland on the world stage. The fantasy has, in effect, become the reality, without which Celtic Woman would never have become the global sensation that it is today. So, while it may not be in Ireland's best interests to keep the fantasy alive, it is in Celtic Woman's best interests; and as long as the audience remains ignorant, this will continue to be the case. One can only hope that, one day, the audience will fully return to the reality of the modern world.

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Engaging with the Scholarly Conversation

Analyzing 'Treat Yo Self' in Parks and Recreation as a Norm: An Application of Constructivism to Television and Beyond

Ellen Johnson

The International Relations Theory of Constructivism often involves conversation about norms and how they are spread. However, the theory rarely expands to describe norms outside of the realm of real life events and history. What if Constructivism could be applied at a smaller scale to norms that surround us in our daily lives, such as those on television? In this essay, I will answer this question by arguing that traditional Constructivist theory can be used to analyze how "Treat Yo Self Day" on *Parks and Recreation* is a norm that spreads throughout the show. I will then show how the norm was able to spread and influence young-adult culture. In doing this, I will show a new view: that traditional IR theories can be used to explain events in our daily lives, therefore connecting the international world to everyday society. This link could illuminate many unseen connections between what we watch, and what happens on the global stage. Although IR theory is not typically applied to pop culture, the models used fit almost perfectly to the norms analyzed in this essay.

Introduction

"Treat Yo' Self! It's the best day of the yearrr!", Donna (Retta) and Tom (Aziz Ansari) sing as they shoot off finger-guns into the camera (Yang, 2011). Both characters on *Parks and Recreation* (Gregg, 2009-2015), Donna and Tom are introducing a tradition of theirs: Treat Yo Self, a day in which you can buy yourself whatever you want simply because you want to. The annual extravaganza is always anticipated by both characters. "It's the one day of the year I can be selfish!" Tom exclaims as he slaps another character's hand away from a box of cupcakes he bought himself. Donna again adds, "It's the best day of the year!" (Yang, 2011).

So, what is the purpose behind "The best day of the year"? Other than being a move by the writers to produce humor and mock consumerism, Treat Yo Self Day, within the context of the show, releases Donna and Tom from the monotonous bureaucratic work they do day to day. The show often highlights such work as it follows the Parks and Recreation department of a small, weird, town: Pawnee, Indiana. The

characters of the show are constantly grappling with tasks that are bound up in bureaucratic red tape and dealing with demanding and often irrational citizens. However, the characters' relationships and personalities are often more important than the tasks at hand. Though the characters are all different, they always work things out together and function as a team (Gregg, 2009-2015).

In this particular episode, Donna, is worried about Ben (Adam Scott), a dorky accountant who is living in Pawnee temporarily to fix the city's budget issues. Ben is upset because of his failed relationship with Leslie (Amy Poehler), the ever-peppy boss who is the main leader of the office. While driving away from the office to start Treat Yo Self Day, Donna notices Ben and states, "Oh lord, is he eating soup, on a bench, alone? (Yang, 2011)" Donna then convinces Tom to bring Ben along for the day, to help him get out of his funk. Tom is not happy about the addition. So how then, is Donna able to convince Tom, a fashionably clad self-declared cool guy, to bring a dorky accountant along on "the best day of the year?"

We could ask a similar question about the episode's popularity, and find the same answer. There have been countless memes, blog posts, articles, and videos made about the episode, it has almost a cult following. The premise of taking a day for yourself and being able to do what you want is not only humorous, but relatable. Taking time to "treat yourself" is something that is becoming more and more accepted throughout younger generations, such as millennials. In fact, according to NPR, millennials are "the generation that devotes the most time and money to the $10 billon self-care industry" (Silva, 2017). Doing things or buying things simply for oneself has become a part of young adult culture. However, how does this relate to the way "Treat Yo' Self" has caught on within young adult culture?

The answer, surprisingly, lies within the international relations theory of Constructivism. Created in the late 90s, the theory attempts to explain events in the international community using social interactions (Adler, 1997). One of the main conversations within the Constructivist community involves norms, which are often thought to define social interaction (Ruggie, 1998). Questions involving norms—how they spread, what their functions are, how they perform these functions—are numerous and greatly debated. Traditional scholarship involving norms in IR either adds to the conversation about the function of norms or applies them to a specific situation, either past or present.

Norms in Constructivism, while often applied to historical events often, are rarely or ever applied to pop culture. This is not to say that IR and Constructivist scholars don't ever discuss pop culture; in fact, there is a whole sub-category of international relations studies dubbed "popular culture and world politics (PCWP)" (Caso and Hamilton, 2015, iii). However, the focus of these scholars typically rests on how pop culture influences world politics or how pop culture can mimic the world around it. It does not specifically apply the theories to the pop-culture texts, except to sometimes provide examples for teaching purposes (Caso and Hamilton, 2015).

The aim for this essay, then, is to apply norm theories in constructivism to a pop-culture text: to both the "Treat Yo Self" episode of *Parks and Recreation* and the responses to the episode itself. By doing this, I will answer both of the previously proposed questions: how the norm of "Treat Yo Self Day" within the show is spread, and how the episode and catch phrase caught on so well with millennials and young adults in the real world.

To accomplish this I will: 1) Explain the theories that will be used to analyze both the show and its responses, 2) clarify the methods of how the theories will be applied through the rest of the essay, 3) analyze the show and how the success of "treating yourself" can be explained using the methods I discussed, and 4) examine how "treating yourself" has emerged from the show into the real world. By doing this, I will show that Constructivism can be applied to the world of media scholarship and to IR theories alike, essentially turning the theory in the opposite direction to how it is usually applied.

Norms in Constructivism and Nations as People

Constructivism, as a school of thought in international relations, seeks to be the "middle ground" between the rigid ideas of realists who believe solely in behavior and the progressive thoughts of critical theorists who believe almost solely in ideas. The theory states that human nature and social cues affect interaction at the international level (Adler, 1997, 321). Since constructivism is concerned with social cues, norms are often a large point of conversation. Defined by Ruggie (1998), norms are "social facts" (13). Constructivists use these "social facts" to try and explain why countries react the way they do in the international system.

Within Constructivism, lots of research has been invested in the way norms spread and change, called "normative change" (Payne, 2001, 38). The foundational model for the spreading of norms, the life cycle model, was developed by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). In their model, norms begin their influence in a stage called "norm emergence", when "norm entrepreneurs" try to convince a large number of state leaders to adopt their norms (Finnemore and Sikkink, 895). The second stage involves a "tipping point" (895) as more and more leaders begin adopting the norm until a majority is reached. This is called a "norm cascade" (895). States may begin to accept the norm because they feel social pressure from other states to comply with it. After the norm is mostly accepted, the third stage is internalization, when the norm is "integrated" (895) into society and seems to be "taken for granted" (895). This model is the most widely accepted, although it has been re-interpreted and criticized by other Constructivist scholars.

One such interpretation involves adding to the norm emergence step. This step involves "norm entrepreneurs", or organizations that begin the spread of norms, engaging in "framing". Framing involves establishing new terms to "create" an issue and then repeating them over and over within the international community, to gain public attention (Finnemore and Sikkink, 897). One common example of a norm entrepreneur is a "transnational advocacy network" which is a combination of media channels, activists, and international organizations that push for norm changes using framing (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, 92). A "transnational advocacy group" is an example of how the norm emergence step has been interpreted or added to.

An additional interpretation by Payne (2001) argues that another angle should be included in the life cycle model to discuss not only persuasion by these norm entrepreneurs, as Finnemore and Sikkink's model does, but coercion as well. Within Finnemore and Sikkink's model, the way norms move from norm emergence to the tipping point is by convincing groups or countries in the international community using framing. There is not an option for any kind of coercion, or the idea that states may not always act freely but are under other kinds of influence, as Payne points out: "The normative developments constructivists observe often do not reflect persuasion, but instead result from a coercive mechanism" (42). Payne claims that by excluding the idea of coercion,

many of the analyses of norms are incorrect (2001). Therefore, a model where Payne and Finnemore and Sikkink's ideas are combined would allow for normative change that includes the ability to analyze coercion as well.

When discussing what states do with the norms, and how they react to situations, Constructivists subscribe to the idea that states can be thought of as people, as in they will act in similar ways as people when in similar situations. According to Wendt (2004), "To say that states are 'actors' or 'persons' is to attribute to them properties we associate first with human beings—rationality, identities, interests, beliefs, and so on. Such attributions pervade social science and International Relations (IR) scholarship in particular" (289). This assumption means that states can be expected to act similarly in situations as people would, or even the opposite, that people can act similarly to states.

An Example of Norm Application

Finnemore and Sikkink used the example of the founding of the Red Cross and the establishment of the norms involving fair treatment of wounded soldiers in their model. They described a man named Henry Dunant as being the first "norm entrepreneur" (897) They state that "Dunant and his colleagues had to persuade military commanders not to treat valuable medical personnel and resources they captured as spoils of war, to be treated as they saw fit" (897). They describe this as Dunant's form of "framing", as Dunant created an issue. They argue that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had to be founded in order to promote change at the international level and begin convincing states to adopt the norm. Then, they move on to step two by explaining that after the tipping point was reached following the Geneva Convention, the Red Cross continued "socializing" and spreading its norm as it did its international work (902). Next, step three, internalization, is explained as only being accomplished after the norm is "taken for granted" by states (905). This usually occurs when professionals are trained in the spreading norm. The example they give is that doctors are expected to save lives no matter what—they are simply trained that way. No one questions that a doctor should save a life, even if that life is an enemy solider and the doctor is working for the Red Cross. Therefore, the norm of life-saving is taken for granted. Once this level is reached, the norm is complete and the "life cycle" continues until it is disrupted by another "norm entrepreneur."

Methodology

With Wendt's idea that states can be people, and the idea that, therefore, people can act as states, Constructivism can be used to analyze the characters in *Parks and Recreation* by taking the way norms are spread at the international level, such as the Red Cross example, and bringing this process to the community level and examining the characters' actions. Using Finnermore and Sikkink's original model for normative change with the addition of Wendt's idea of states as people, I will seek to show how "treating yourself" spreads through the characters on the show, and then on to young-adult society. To do this, I closely examined the episode of *Parks and Recreation* that describes "treating yo self", Season 4 episode 4: "Pawnee Rangers" (Yang, 2011). I took note of all character interactions regarding the new norm and will now walk through the interactions from the show in this essay to show how "treating yourself" can be seen as norm.

After examining the episode, I will look at the impact on society, sharing data I collected regarding the usage of the terms "treat yo self" and "self-care" using Google Trends, noting that both have seen increased use since the episode first aired in 2011. I will then discuss how the term "treat yo self" has been able to spread as a norm due to an already established platform within millennial culture, again using Finnemore and Sikkink's model. I will add that Keck and Sikkink's model of a "transnational advocacy network" can be applied to show how broader pop culture helped spread the norm.

'Treat Yo Self' as a Norm

At the beginning of the episode, Tom walks into the office clutching a box of cupcakes with "Treat Yo Self" painted on them. He slams them down on Donna's desk and yells, "Donnatellaaaa, three words for you: Treat. Yo. Self" (Yang, 2011). Donna looks very excited and then, in unison, the two both sing "Treat Yo Self 2011!" The show gives no explanation as to how the tradition was started, or whose idea it was to begin the tradition. However, it is clear that the tradition is already accepted, at least within Donna and Tom's small community. No one in the office questions the behavior, indicating it has already been a part of their lives for years. In this case, Ruggie's definition of a norm as being a "social fact", within the context of the office, holds true, as it is recognized by the members of the office and affects social interactions in their community (1998).

At this beginning stage of the episode however, there is no way to explain the normative change through Finnemore and Sikkink's model as steps one and two are missing. Step one, introducing the norm, and step two, spreading the norm, have already occurred outside the context of the episode. It is apparent that either Donna or Tom acted as the original "norm entrepreneur", established the idea, and then made it a part of their daily lives, however this is never explicitly stated. There is no way to analyze how any of the events occurred.

The first opportunity for analysis occurs when Donna realizes the only person in the office who doesn't seem to accept the norm is Ben, the new accountant. Before Donna and Tom leave to start their day, Donna asks if they can take Ben with them saying, "He's a rubber band that's about to snap (Yang, 2011)." Tom protests and says that the day is supposed to be just him and Donna, and that no one else can possibly be as relaxed as them, especially Ben, and that having him around would ruin their day. Donna backs down and the two go on their way as planned.

In this instance, Donna acts as a "norm entrepreneur," much like Dunant in Finnemore and Sikkink's example. She attempts to re-start the process of spreading this version of the norm; this time to a different entity: Ben. Her task is now to convince the other entity involved in the issue, in this case Tom, to accept the changes to the norm. This is where scholars such as Payne might expect Donna to use coercion to continue to spread her norm. Instead of continuing to simply promote her norm by socializing in the way Finnemore and Sikkink describe, they would expect Donna to threaten or bargain with Tom to include Ben. However, she continues to follow a more traditional type of normative change by using framing. She is already using framing by creating the term "rubber band" to make an issue out of the current stress Ben is under, as Dunant made an issue out of the wounded soldiers. She is also using an already established organization—herself and Tom—as way to push for the norm. Dunant had to create a new organization to spread his norm to states, but Donna already has an established organization to spread her norm in the office.

Now, Donna moves to start step two. As the two are leaving, they see Ben again, this time alone on the park bench, in the scene previously described. Donna looks at Tom and asks again for Ben to come. Tom grudgingly agrees. Donna calls for Ben and says, "Come on rubber band!" (Yang, 2011). In this instance, Donna's framing tactic was successful: she

was able to create an issue and repeat it enough to convince Tom that it was in fact an issue. Now, steps one and two of Finnemore and Sikkink's model have been completed. Donna was successful in being a "norm entrepreneur" and therefore was lead to step two, the "norm cascade", or attempting to "institutionalize" the norm. In this step, a majority must be convinced in order to reach the "tipping point", when the norm can be rapidly accepted. This is synonymous with Dunant's Red Cross convincing the majority states to adopt his norms after the Geneva convention was signed. In the episode however, since the only communities involved were Donna and Tom, Donna only needed to convince Tom to reach a majority. Tom was convinced, the majority was reached, and the newer version of the norm where Ben is allowed is, for the most part, accepted.

The third step, "integration", however, must still be reached. This step proves to be most challenging for Donna, as Ben is not convinced as easily as Tom. Ben is not receptive to the "Treat Yo Self" norm at first. While seated on massage chairs at a spa he says with disappointment in his voice, "So Treat Yourself Day is just a day where you go to the spa and the mall?" (Yang, 2011). Ben is still looking for the reasoning behind it, therefore the norm has not been integrated. For Ben, his day only gets worse from there. He gets acupuncture, stating "this is the most stressed out I've ever been" (Yang 2011). He then gets taken to the mall and watches Donna and Tom buy cashmere and crystal, looking miserable the whole time. It seems as if Ben has rejected the norm. He does not appreciate the spa or the mall like Donna and Tom do, despite them continuing to act as "framers" and trying to convince him how good it is. Using persuasion tactics such as repeating the terms "relaxation" and "treat yo self", as both Donna and Tom do, aren't helping Ben accept the norm, and therefore, the norm has not yet been "taken for granted".

Finally, as the day is winding down, Donna attempts one last time to finish the final step. As Ben still looks miserable, Donna says to Tom, "Look, maybe this is our version of treat yourself day and he needs to do his version" (Yang, 2011). Donna is attempting to make the norm a little more inclusive, by adding another interpretation of the norm: Ben's. She's not suggesting getting rid of the norm, just that it should be able to be expanded from just a spa day and shopping for luxuries to other things as well. She is attempting to re-frame the norm to encompass something Ben would like.

This time, Donna's tactic works. Ben buys himself a Batman costume and Tom states, "You're part of the Treat Yo Self team now!" (Yang, 2011). Ben agrees, and thanks Donna and Tom for including him. The third step in Finnemore and Sikkink's model is completed. Ben accepts the norm, making it "integrated". It may also be said that the norm is "taken for granted." Now Ben, Tom, or Donna won't ever question "Treat Yo Self Day" as it has become a tradition for all of them, much like doctors don't question that they should save lives regardless of the country of the soldier's origin. Ben now feels better about Leslie, and the day has served its purpose for all that participated. Donna was successful in spreading her norm.

Treating Yourself: A Millennial Activity

It turns out that Donna was successful in spreading her norm outside of *Parks and Rec* as well. The term "Treat Yo Self" is now a part of young adult vocabulary. It can be found in a plethora of articles directed at younger generations. For examples, see: "Best Ways to 'Treat Yo Self' in San Francisco" (2013), "Treat Yourself L.A., a new food festival for millennials, is coming to Santa Monica" (Harris, 2018), "Treat Yo'self Spring Break 2016" (Follet, 2016), and "11 Ways To Treat Yo' Damn Self This Valentine's Day" (Bennett, 2018). All these authors, and countless others, use the term to discuss ways to practice self-care. Mostly, the term is used in student blogs or magazines directed at younger audiences around college age or just after.

The term is almost always used in situations revolving around self-care. The definition of self-care itself usually varies greatly depending on interpretation, but a general definition is "any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health" (Micheal, 2016). Self-care is a more recent addition to conversation. Its use has been increasing at a steady rate over the past few years. As documented on Google Trends, an online software that tracks the amount of times a phrase is googled, the term "self-care" has been googled more and more frequently since around 2011. Since "Pawnee Rangers" aired in 2011, the term "Treat Yo Self" has been googled a correspondingly increasing amount. The data suggests that usage, or at least a curiosity about the meaning of the terms, has been on the rise since the episode aired.

How then, was the norm of "Treating Yo Self" able to spread so easily alongside "self-care" after the episode aired? The term "self-care" existed before the episode aired. According to an article in *The Guardian*, self-care has been around since the ancient Greeks (Mahdawi, 2017). The article also states that lately, "self-care" has become a buzzword. NPR states, "There is one generation that has been consistently defined by its obsessions: avocado toast, memes, Harry Potter…and self-care (Silva, 2017)." So, self-care is a popular topic lately, and has been associated with a certain demographic: the millennials.

In this way, "self-care" and its associated audience, millennials, can be seen as providing a platform in which a "norm entrepreneur" could engage in "framing", as suggested in the first step in the model by Finnemore and Sikkink. The "norm entrepreneur" in this case is the episode, as it was the first to coin the term "treat yo self." While the episode did not actively try and convince people to adopt the term, it did engage in some of the elements of framing. The episode repeatedly used certain phrases, such as "treat yo self," to "create" an issue.

Also, the episode created a kind of "transnational advocacy network" as first defined by Keck and Sikkink in 1999. Usually "TANs" include a media outlet, international organizations, and activists. Some might say that the episode being at the center of one of these networks is far-fetched. Of course, not all that typically applies in the international community will transfer, but one concrete similarity between the two is the presence of media outlets. After the episode aired media outlets published reviews; content written about the episode was shared. There were also "activists"— fans of the show who promoted the episode by word of mouth or sharing on social media about it. As referenced earlier when discussing the NPR article, millennials also share content by creating memes. The huge number of memes that "activists" created and then shared with the internet regarding the episode all contribute to the spread of the norm. An example of a meme aiding in spreading the norm includes text that says: "me: I need to save money, me: gets money, me: 'TREAT YO SELF'" and includes a gif of Tom from the episode wearing a pink cashmere sweater. These kinds of promotions, which can be interpreted as part of the transnational advocacy network, contributed to spreading the norm and the completion of step two.

In this way, the episode was able to spread the norm to the already established audience of millennials, who were already familiar with the concept of self-care, and eventually reached a state where a majority of people had become familiar with the concept of "treating yourself". Then, as more and more people discussed it and used it in their daily vocabulary, the norm entered step three of being taken for granted and became a part of daily life.

Conclusion

Drawing on Wendt's idea that states can, and do, act as people, it's possible to infer that people can act as states do (2003). Using *Parks and Recreation* as an example, analysis of Constructivist norms has applications beyond the realm of traditional international theory. In this essay, it was used in place of a traditional media theory to analyze how an idea spread within a show and beyond. Constructivism was, in a way, applied backwards. Instead of looking to human interactions to explain international phenomena, such as the spread of the rights of wounded soldiers, this essay instead explained human interactions on a TV show and in real life to and applied it as an explanation of international phenomena. By using the "life cycle model" and "transnational advocacy networks" to look at an event on the show as a norm that then became a norm among millennials, I was able to show that traditional IR theory can be applied at a more micro level.

When looking at the way the norm of "treating yourself" spread throughout the show, it is clear that the norm followed the three-step process laid out by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). The norm was started by Donna, the "norm entrepreneur" and then went through the next two steps until it was accepted. Subsequently, the norm was able to spread to society because of an already established audience of millennials who are associated with self-care (Silva, 2017). In this case, the episode acted as the "norm entrepreneur", and followed the three-steps outlined in Finnemore and Sikkink's life cycle model. It was accompanied by a kind of "transnational advocacy network", as originally defined by Keck and Sikkink (1999). Media outlets published reviews and individual "activists" praised the show by writing blog posts and creating memes. This aided in spreading the norm, eventually resulting in it being absorbed into millennial culture.

There is an already established sub-field of PCWP, pop culture in world politics (Caso and Hamilton, 2015). However, the field is relatively new, and rather than use IR theory to specifically discuss pop culture, it uses teaches or explains situations in which pop culture can influence world politics. As this essay demonstrates, it would be possible for this field to begin directly applying theory to pop culture in combination with traditional media scholarship. By analyzing this relationship, it may become easier to understand how what we watch or consume relates to the world around us, and how similar it is or isn't. Making this distinction—how what we watch affects the world around us—is something people need in times filled with fake news and uncertainty. Understanding that what we say, and what we watch, can have larger implications, as can be analyzed by IR theories such as Constructivism, could help shed new light on many of today's problems.

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Reading Between the Lines: An Intercultural Pragmanalysis of *Icarus*

Tina Maglakelidze

1. Introduction

1.1 Fogel's *Icarus*

According to the Russian Sports Minister, Bryan Fogel's exposé of the largest scandal in sports history was awarded an Oscar in the wrong category. "It's a good fantasy film and maybe deserves an award, but not as a documentary," he added, saying that it was "a shame that such a respected organization as the American film academy mixed up the genres (qtd. Blake, 2018). While this comment is highly indicative of the political attitudes spewed back and forth by the United States and Russia, the Minister's comment also illustrates *Icarus*'s transcending, global impression.

Following *Icarus's* premiere at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, Netflix (outbidding Amazon and Sony Pictures) snagged the non-fiction film for only five million dollars (Lang & Setoodeh, 2017). Streaming in 190 countries, *Icarus* quickly accumulated critical acclaim from all over the world and, consequently, the film reigned supreme at the 90th Academy Awards ceremony as Best Documentary Feature.

An aspiring cyclist, Fogel, begins his film chronicling athletic doping with an approach similar to the famed documentary *Super-Size Me* – swapping Big Macs for intravenous anabolic injections to the buttocks (Gilbert, 2017). Fogel enlists Dr. Grigory Rodchenkov, Director of the Moscow Anti-Doping laboratory, to supervise his steroid regimen. Intended to be a commentary on the pervasive practice of doping in sports, the original plot is superseded by what Fogel stumbles upon about a quarter of the way into production. Between regular Skype calls with the often-shirtless scientist, it becomes increasingly apparent to Fogel that Rodchenkov is at the epicenter of a brewing maelstrom.

Captured in Fogel's film, the unraveling state-sponsored doping scandal derails it from its original route and towards a thrilling new direction – gripping its audience, the International Olympic Committee, the World Anti-Doping Association, and major stakeholders. Critics of the film regard Rodchenkov as a documentary filmmaker's dream come true:

he is a charming crook with a questionable moral compass that paradoxically makes audiences fall in love with him. Rodchenkov was recruited to ensure a high gold medal count and administer his signature three-drug cocktail to a range of Olympic athletes. (Ruiz & Schwirtz, 2016). As the story spirals out of control, two of Rodchenkov's colleagues and close friends, with no priors of heart disease, die of mysterious cardiac arrests within weeks of each other (Schmidle, 2018). It is his budding friendship with Fogel that ends up saving Rodchenkov's life as Fogel smuggles him out of the "Empire of Evil" and into the holy land: Los Angeles (Rodchenkov in Fogel, 2017). Currently living under Witness Protection, Rodchenkov has undergone multiple plastic surgeries to elude Putin's wrath and discovery by Russian intelligence (Schmidle, 2018). Despite its original trajectory, *Icarus* transforms into a gripping tale of a courageous whistle-blower and the incredible lengths Russia has gone to ensure leadership in the Olympic Medal counts.

Acting as a nexus between sports and international relations, the Olympic Games are the ultimate political weapon, and no one wields it more effectively, or takes it more seriously, than what-was-then the Soviet Union and now Putin's Russian Federation. Consider this quote by former Prime Minister Dimitriy Medvedev after the humiliating upset during the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics:

> To us sport is more than sport, and that is why we are so affected by the performance of our team. In other countries people watched television, turned it off and relaxed, but we discussed and were agonized for a month: who delivered, who did not deliver, who is to blame, how should they be punished and so forth…it shows that we, as they say, excuse me for the pathos, in our spiritual constitution are a nation of winners.

Granted this nationalistic rhetoric is not exclusive to the Russian narrative; however, a brief look at the state's historic relationship to sport offers insight into the central tenets of its culture.

After historically contextualizing the controversy, the colossal doping scandal is not as shocking as one might have thought. In an interview Fogel explains that, "when you look at how Russian sport is set up, […] unlike the U.S., where it's all private, in Russia, it's actually controlled by the ministry, and all Russian athletes…are essentially being paid by the Russian government" (Charlie Rose Interview). In fact, victory

bonuses for Russian athletes are higher than anyone else's in the world: gold medal winners are said to receive 4 million rubles, approximately $125,000 (Khostunova, 2012). Once the USSR recognized the potential of sports as a means of control, the public sector centralized and consolidated all sports organizations and the Soviet propaganda machine began selling athleticism to its people (O'Mahony, 2006). The regime's effective control over the national athletic curricula allowed it to command the emerging sports culture, or *fizkultura*, as an agent of social change and as a weapon against the West.

Furthermore, the Communist regime regarded the Olympics as the perfect platform to establish international superiority and fulfill its political agenda (Phippen, 2016). The ice rinks housed the ideological proxy wars and Soviets were steadfast to prove the inferiority of the West. Russian national identity is historically characterized by its insistence on being recognized as a great power. This sentiment is captured in one of Putin's famous ultimatums: "Either Russia will be great, or it will not be at all" (qtd. in Petersson, 2013). Russian citizens across different ethnic sub-groups collectively subscribe to the cultural myth that their motherland is destined for international prestige (Duncan, 2005).

Icarus accidentally documents this culturally-indicative scandal and in this paper, I will argue that there is another serendipitous dimension to Fogel's film. When using an intercultural communicational lens, or an ethno-linguistic kaleidoscope, one can distill linguistic idiosyncrasies within Dr. Rodchenkov's and Fogel's dialogue. These areas of disconnect can then reveal loci of potential minor cultural clashes. The emerging friendship between Dr. Rodenchkov and Fogel mitigated culture clash, but their dialogue offers a convenient platform to pinpoint cultural differences via their language-in-use, or pragmatics. Certain keywords, indicative of their native cultural scripts, as well as pragmatic patterns illuminate cultural concepts. Although they are often subtle, if we locate these ethnolinguistic pixels we can put pressure on them in the hopes of sharpening our global vision. *Icarus* is an accessible platform by which linguists can analyze intercultural discourse and gain insight into how an individual's native cultural scripts might influence their habitual thoughts and even their perception of reality.

In this paper I will first provide information relevant to understanding how the cultural codification within a language influences

one's perception of reality. Next, I will introduce the field of cross-cultural pragmatics by heavily drawing upon Polish linguist Anna Weirzbicka's concepts. Then, I will expound the method that I plan to use to conduct an intercultural pragmanalysis of Rodchenkov's and Fogel's dialogue from *Icarus.* This analysis will allow me to isolate culturally significant key-words as well as culturally-indicative grammatical structures. As a bilingual researcher, I can access both cultural scripts and use my "native speaker intuition" to illuminate the nuanced cultural markers in the dialogue (Weirzbicka, 1991). Lastly, I will argue that this type of analytic approach to pop culture texts is conducive for a more comprehensive cross-cultural understanding of the other – especially in the context of today's globalized society, rife with political tensions.

2. Theoretical Framework
2.1 *Linguistic Relativity*

The Linguistic Relativity Principle (LRP), better known as The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, states that "language has a non-negligible effect on cognition, combined with the claim that languages are non-trivially different" (Zlatev & Blomberg, 2015). This basically means that there are significant, culturally-indicative, differences between various languages and, beyond this, an individual's native tongue influences their thinking. This idea was first expressed by 19th-century German thinker, Wilhelm von Humboldt, who saw language as the expression of the "spirit of a nation" (Zlatev & Blomberg, 2015). American anthropologist Sapir expanded on this idea and posited that languages act as symbolic guides to culture and contain the key to understanding worldviews. (Lucy, J. A. 1997; Wierzbicka 1997). According to Humboldt and Sapir, all lexicons contain concepts and grammatical features which are so tightly woven into the individuality of a given language that they cannot be wholly transferred into other languages (Wierzbicka, 1991).

If each lexicon is imbued with a unique cultural matrix then it can be argued that no words or constructions of one language can have absolute equivalents in another. That said, the existence of perfect cross-translations is a hotly contested issue within the linguistic community (Lucy, J. A. 1997). Vigorous opponents of the LRP purport the existence of a Universal Grammar: an innate, underlying structure to all language. This universalist school argues that differences between specific languages are "surface phenomena" that do not affect the brain's cognitive processes (see

Chomsky and Pinker). On the other side of the spectrum, relativist scholars insist on acknowledging the cultural influences on perception and encourage a more "ethnographical approach" to exploring "language-in-use" (Hymes 1964). While universalism dominated the field of American linguistics from the 1960s through the 1980s, relativists maintain that it is extremely difficult to detangle cultural threads from their respective lexicons and therefore there is a need for a sub-field of linguistics to address cultural influence.

2.2 *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics*

The term 'cross-cultural' includes any communication between two people who do not share a common linguistic or cultural background (Tannen, 1984). Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that deals with "language-in-use", or simply the socio-cultural use of language (Yule, 1996). While some pragmatic elements are considered universal, the field of cross-cultural pragmatics mostly focuses on pragmatic elements specific to a certain language or culture. Anna Wierzbicka's book, *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*, offers a concise overview of the cross-cultural pragmatic field's main convictions: (1) differences between various languages and communicative styles are profound and systematic; (2) they reflect cultural values or at least different hierarchies of values and lastly; (3) they can be explained and made sense of in terms of independently established but different cultural values and cultural priorities (page 69).

In another one of her books, *Understanding Culture Through Their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*, Wierzbicka coined the term "cultural scripts" in reference to "tacit norms, values, and practices widely shared, and widely known (on an intuitive level) in a given society" (Wierzbicka, 1991). A native language does not wholly determine worldviews; however, every large community has distinctive habitual modes of thinking that become entrenched in language and in turn influence habitual cognition (Wierzbicka, 1997). Over generations, cultures accumulate and perpetuate particular "conceptual tools" that are imbued into the lexicon and manifest into "key-words." These key-words are often distorted via translation from one lexicon into another because the attached cultural connotations rarely have equivalents outside their respective frames of reference.

When a speaker's pragmatic patterns, indicative of their native language, emerge whilst speaking a second language it is known as "pragmatic transfer" (Kasper, 1992). This pragmatic transfer can be seen in the form of cultural keywords or even grammatical structures indicative of one's native language. Weirzbicka put it best when she said, "there is no such thing as 'grammatical meaning' or 'lexical meaning'. There are only lexical and grammatical means of conveying meaning — and even here no sharp line can be drawn between the two" (Weirzbicka, 1991). Pragmatic transfer can either be positive or negative. When pragmatic conventions are shared between two languages and the transfer does not constitute an area of potential misunderstanding, this is called positive pragmatic transfer. In contrast, negative pragmatic transfer occurs when pragmatic conventions differ between the two languages and native speakers attempt to translate cultural keywords, integral to their original cultural scripts, into their second language. The term 'pragmatic failure' illustrates an area of cross-cultural communication breakdown that occurs when an individual misunderstands "what is meant by what is said" (Thomas, 1983). Pragmatic knowledge from the first language, either in the form of cultural keywords or grammatical structure, often exerts influence on the use of a second language.

While 'cross-cultural pragmatics' and 'intercultural pragmatics' are used interchangeably in literature, there is a slight distinction to be made: 'cross-cultural pragmatics' is the umbrella term for discussing the linguistic phenomena relating to cultural differences, and 'intercultural pragmatics' is saved for when data is obtained when individuals from different cultural groups interact with one another. Furthermore, intercultural pragmatic research is often categorized into two different approaches: micro- and macro- (Keskes, 2013). While the macro-perspective focuses on establishing linguistic expectations amongst cultures, the micro-perspective focuses on interactions between individuals, and the culture underlying those interactions.

3. Method of Analysis
3.1 Intercultural Pragmanalysis

In this study, I borrow heavily from Wierzbicka's handbooks and conduct a micro-level intercultural pragmanalysis of the unscripted dialogue between Rodchenkov (R) and Fogel (F) from *Icarus*. My main focus is to underline instances of pragmatic transfers by Rodchenkov from

Russian to English that can potentially lead to pragmafailure, or a misunderstanding of what is said versus what is actually meant (Thomas, 1983). When native language pragmatics percolate into the second language it is sometimes too subtle to recognize; however, given my agency as a Russian native speaker, I have access to both cultural scripts and am therefore able to better pinpoint these areas. After transcribing the majority of the documentary, I localized culturally-imbued words that are integral players in the Russian cultural script and not transparent from an American frame of reference. Additionally, to conduct a more holistic pragmanalysis, I also shed light on grammatical structures indicative of the Russian lexicon. For the purposes of this paper I chose four examples and focus predominantly on the pragmatic transfers within Rodchenkov's speech. Arranged in chronological order, these examples illustrate that native pragmatics, keywords and grammatical structures, are culturally indicative and influence people's habitual modes of thought and perceptions of reality. I underline the pragmatic transfers in each example and subsequently elaborate on these areas of interest.

3. 3 *The Data*
(1) *32:07*
F: The race is tomorrow, I don't know, hopefully …
R: Bryan, I am now like a <u>priest</u>. I __ healing your doping paranoia. You are <u>free</u>. You have enough <u>power</u>, and <u>God</u> is with you. You are <u>sentenced to win</u>.

This above example is dialogue sourced prior to Fogel's first cycling race of the film. The entire first quarter of the film documents his steroid regimen in preparation for this race. Perceiving uncertainty on Fogel's end, Rodchenkov offers him a quintessentially-Russian pep talk. Linguists often synthesize a part of their pragmatic research of the Russian national character on an assessment of traditional proverbs. A substantial amount of these culturally-indicative phrases reflects a strong sense of religiosity (Kozlova, 2017). In fact, as evidenced by the aforementioned example, when a Russian speaker seeks to express encouragement it is not uncommon for them to draw upon their faith. Whereas in English, a pep talk indicative of Anglo-Saxon individualistic values would most likely emphasize the addressee's personal achievement and their capability to get through whatever obstacle lies ahead.

Instead, Rodchenkov encourages Fogel by saying he is <u>sentenced to win</u>. The use of the word "sentenced" implies that Fogel is predestined for victory. This word association goes hand in hand with the concept of *sudba* which is inherently pervasive in the Russian cultural script. It is roughly translated to destiny and fate, but these concepts are not exactly synonymous with each other. There is a characteristically Russian preoccupation with *sudba*, a predestined path for people that is not influenced by the subjectivity of an individual.

Russian syntax often acknowledges the limitations of human knowledge and in contrast, English syntax expresses a tendency towards "sober empiricism." The subjectivity of the individual is further minimized in grammatical structures and Russian is considered to be a "non-agentive" language in comparison to English. In example (1) we can see that Rodchenkov does not say the word "am" after "I". This is because if one were to say this same phrase in Russian there is no equivalent to "am" and instead it would be:

Ya escelayu tvouy dopengovyu paranoiuy.
I   heal (imperfective form) your doping paranoia.

This communicative feature is arguably representative of the culture. Russian has many impersonal dative infinitive constructions that express non-agentive actions. While the English nominative construction shifts a part of responsibility for success or failure onto the person being addressed, the Russian dative construction completely exempts the subject from any liability for the end result (Kozlova, 2017). English syntax places more attention on causal relationships while Russian grammar constructions focus on the interplay between human life and the forces of nature. Thus, a pragmatic analysis of grammar cases provides valuable insight into the common ways of thinking that are characteristic of the two differing given speech community.

Anglo-Saxon traditionally places special emphasis on the rights and on the autonomy of every individual (Weirzbicka, 1997). Freedom is considered to be an Anglo-Saxon keyword in the English cultural script. In America, the word free is imbued with cultural significance associated with the democratic creed that underpins nation (Weirzbicka, 1997). While Rodchenkov uses the word <u>free</u>, I posit that he is referencing the Russian cultural concept*, svoboda*, and not the quintessentially American one. While *Svoboda* is often roughly translated into "freedom", connotations of

"boundless space" or a "expandable space in which one can fully stretch" are attached to *svoboda* and not "freedom". In the Russian sense, <u>free</u> concentrates less on the individual and more the influence of the surrounding environment. The cultural idea enshrined in the Russian concept of svoboda suggests the image of some oppressive "straitjacket" being loosened, so that one's chest can fully expand (Weirzbicka, 1997). Unlike freedom, *svoboda* is associated with an "exhilarating sense of well-being" caused by the perceived absence of some external pressure. These incongruent cultural understandings of the concept of freedom between Russian and English are still close enough that Rodchenkov's statement makes sense in both languages, therefore there is no pragmatic failure, or communicational breakdown. That said, it is still helpful to point out the Rodchenkov most likely meant <u>free</u> in the Russian pragmatic sense of the word rather than the English one.

(2) *36:18*
R: Just stay optimistic. Because now we <u>cannot change nothing</u>.
F: I mean I felt pretty good but
R: No, no no. Bryan, <u>look at me, stop it</u>. <u>You are what you are. I am what I am</u>. It's a turning point what we are doing. <u>Be happy</u> that we have such fantastic material. You have ten times more information than Dick Pound and Lance Armstrong together.
F: Really?
R: We will continue, don't worry. <u>You are just like in a reception. You did not enter the first floor. There is a second and so on.</u>
F: What's on the second floor?
R: When you go to Moscow you will see.

In this second example, we see Rodchenkov giving Fogel multiple, short orders through. Normally, Russian directives are expressed in a straight-forward manner via "bare" imperatives (p. 44). On the other hand, English speakers tend to "dress their commands" in a form which offers an illusion of options (p. 45). Anglo Saxon cultural traditionally places special emphasis on the rights and on the autonomy of every individual, thus there are heavy restrictions on the use of the imperatives in English and speakers often pair them with the interrogative and conditional forms. In Russian, bare imperatives are a pervasive communicative structure and Weirzbicka posits that this explained via the cultural concept: *iskrennost* (roughly

sincerity/frankness/spontaneity). *Iskrennost* encourages people to share what they truly think, make frank critical remarks, and implement bare imperatives in their speech. Thus, what English speakers may perceive as too blunt, Russians perceive as genuine. Given this information, it is plausible that when Russian pragmatics are transferred into English the bare imperatives may translate into arrogance (Weirzbicka, 2002). This concept of *iskrennost* permeates throughout the whole Russian lexicon and cultural characteristics and is a potential locus of cultural clash as Americans may perceive these bare imperatives as rude. This "cultural clash" is innocuous in Fogel and Rodchenkov's scenario as the two of them have built a substantial friendship by this point and Fogel knows that Rodchenkov is well-intentioned; however, it is beneficial to acknowledge this potential culture clash.

Another case of negative pragmatic transfer from Russian grammar to English is exhibited in the underlined phrase: we <u>cannot change nothing.</u> In Russian, this statement would go something like this:

Me ne mozhem necheevo pomenat.

We not able nothing change.

Double negation is a communicative structure embedded in the Russian way of speaking and constitutes a common problem for Russian speakers, such as Rodchenkov, because their native pragmatics seep into their second language. In English, double negation transforms the phrase into a positive clause, whereas in Russian it is actually a way to intensify the negative. Rodchenkov uses his native pragmatics to intensify the idea of an inevitable fate. The idea that nothing can be changed, and that <u>you are what you are</u> also closely coincides with the cultural concept of *sudba* (see example 1).

In the last underlined portion of the example, Rodchenkov uses a metaphor to compare the stages of Fogel's journey to levels in a building. Fogel has yet to reach the first and second floors and Rodchenkov is telling him he must remain patient. "Boundless patience, [and the] surprising ability to stand difficulties" are characteristic of and permeate through Russian culture via proverbs and ancient folklore (Kozlova, 2017). This second example exhibits the pragmatic transfer of double negation, bare imperatives, and the cultural concepts of fate and patience.

(3) *1:22:40*

R: There is a top-level decision. You know who I mean. And big boss, Vladimir Putin, saying, "We have to show the best result in Sochi, we must show the others who we are."

We could make team clean in Sochi. One month. But it was decided to use PEDs during Sochi.

F: Through the competition so they could be at their very top level?

R: Right, right.

R: This was named Operation Sochi <u>Resultat</u>. In Russian, "resultat" means "to achieve positive results."

In this third example Rodchenkov actually provides Fogel with a sneak peek into the Russian cultural script. He mitigates the negative pragmatic transfer of the word <u>resultat</u> by complementing it with a cultural definition. *Resultat* does not exactly equate to the, arguably neutral, English equivalent "result". The cultural nuance attached to it signals that the given outcomes must be positive; so, logically if the outcome is negative then it is not the final *resultat* yet. Weirzbicka maintains that a common symptom of cultural keywords is that, upon translation into another language, their cultural connotations are lost. While Weirzbicka has not branded the word *resultat* as a cultural keyword in her book, I argue that this word is culturally significant because it has an attached connotation that illuminates another central tenet of Russian culture: the sense of pride and honor. Within the Russian lexicon, pragmatics are constructed and "tailored in a certain way to minimize any humiliation, shame or failure" (Wierzbicka, 1991). This word *resultat* complements the Russian cultural myth of *Smuta*. Literally translating to "foggy or unclear" in English, *Smuta* refers to the 'Times of Trouble' -- a period of famine and occupation from the years 1598 to 1613 (Petersson, 2013). In modern times it is still associated with "trauma and shame from recurring periods of weakness." That said, by overcoming these periods of weakness the nation cements its destiny for greatness. Obstacles are simply reminders that Russia has not fulfilled its natural destiny yet. This third example exhibits the negative pragmatic transfer of a plausible cultural keyword; however, pragmatic failure was avoided because Rodchenkov pre-emptively contextualized the concept.

(4) *1:54:00*

R: To understand the word doublethink involves the word doublethink. I was doing parallel two things which canceled out each other in being fully contradictory. Doping and anti-doping. It was <u>pure, exact</u> doublethink.

To someone outside of the Russian cultural frame of reference, the words <u>pure</u> and <u>exact</u> do not express any concept of great significance and may even seem redundant. This may be because he is trying to express a Russian cultural keyword in English. Weirzbicka concedes that one can almost always find a way to translate cultural keyword via circumlocution and contextualization; however, she argues that this can only by using longer, more cumbersome expressions than those which we can use relying on the habitual ways of speaking offered to us by our native language (Weirzbicka, 1997). In this last example, Rodchenkov uses two words <u>pure</u> and <u>exact</u> to translate one word in Russian that is considered to be a cultural key word *istina* (Weirzbicka, 2004). *Istina* does not merely refer to "truth"; rather, it alludes to the existence of "the ultimate truth," "the hidden truth," or even <u>pure, exact</u> truth. Russian culture is preoccupied with the concept of an underlying truth. While much of "English morality is essentially about fair play. Russians strive for Absolute Truth" (Kozlova, 2017).

4. Concluding Remarks

An intercultural pragmanalysis made it increasingly evident that one's native tongue lays down the framework for habitual linguistic patterns. Rodchenkov's translational slip-ups reflect how his native language pragmatics seep into his second language. After teasing out conceptual clues hidden within the Russian lexicon, it is possible to infer that the structure of the Russian language representative of the central tenets of Russian culture. Russians believe in the existence of an Absolute truth, specifically one that accounts for the nation's predestination for greatness. This concept emerges via not only cultural key-words but also through various communicative structures. The *sudba* of Russia is not subject to individual agency; instead, it is a collective subscription to this cultural myth that perpetuates the concept of predestined greatness. The Olympic Games act as a platform for Russia to showcase its destiny for international prestige and if the results are not great, then it has not yet reached the *resultat*.

4.1 Addressing Reflexivity

While research in this field remains largely speculative, Weirzbicka purports that no one is more qualified to make generalizations than "linguistic migrants" that inhabit both cultural spheres and rely on their native speaker intuition (Weirzbicka, 1991). Growing up in a Russian bilingual household, I am able to more easily recognize areas of negative pragmatic transfers. When I switch linguistic registers, the grids lines through which I dissect the world around me shift. I must consider what one language obligates from me relative to the other.

4.2 *Larger Implications and the Future*

The tendency to assess all languages using the same rubric is extremely counterproductive to achieving cross-cultural understanding because it neglects the cultural nuances unique to each language. If various languages codify concepts differently, then it is logical to assume that each language generates subtly different interpretations of reality. The Oscar-winning documentary *Icarus* is a surprisingly fruitful platform to extract significant cross-cultural insight. In a multiethnic country like the United States, cross-cultural pragmatics are not exclusively relevant to academia; instead, they bear immense practical significance. America is an arena of potential culture clashes between immigrants and the Anglo-Saxon population. While these clashes cannot be completely avoided they can be mitigated through multicultural education.

In his Oscar acceptance speech, Fogel expressed his "hope [that] *Icaru*s is a wake-up call — yes, about Russia, but more than that, about the importance of telling the truth, now more than ever." In an era of alternative facts, a singular truth remains elusive. Living in a postmodern society affords people a plurality of truths which makes it even harder to distinguish what is "real" from what is not. We use language to compartmentalize our perceptions of reality and given the inherent differences amongst cultures it would naïve to believe in the existence of a singular universal truth. While I agree that telling the truth is always a great take-away message, the truth is susceptible to cultural subjectivity.

The upside however is that this subjectivity, or linguistic relativity, can be momentarily tamed by using a cross-cultural pragmatic lens. I argue that this type of analysis should be conducted in more areas and more frequently as there is a lack of literature on the practical applications of the LRP and ethno-pragmatics (Goddard & Weirzbicka, 2004). The culturally-

indicative differences between languages offer us insight into which truths one culture holds to be "self-evident" relative to another. This paper does not argue that native languages constrain the concepts that one can possibly grasp, it acknowledges the role that habitual thought plays in terms of understanding ourselves and the other.

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Maybe You Can Sell It: The effects of secondary markets on dynamic pricing

Coralyn Maguigad

Abstract

In recent years, many sports organizations have started transitioning into Dynamic Ticket Pricing (DTP) strategies. Since the prices now fluctuate based on demand, consumers and their behaviors have a more significant impact on the way the market functions. The introduction of secondary markets, such as StubHub and eBay, have significantly complicated selling sports tickets. In this paper, I attempt to determine not only how these secondary marketing affects consumer behavior, but also consumers' perceptions of both primary and secondary markets. I have read and analyzed many studies that have tracked secondary source prices over the course of sports seasons and examined their effects on consumer behavior. I argue that secondary markets actually benefit the primary markets by producing new information to increase revenue. Moreover, I analyze the evolution of the relationship between secondary markets and dynamic ticket pricing and how that can impact other industries. Studies have shown that secondary sources can display a lot of patterns that help further understanding of consumer behavior. Sports tickets are not the only market that use dynamic pricing strategies. Hotels and airlines use the same strategies and more industries are transitioning into demand-based pricing, but do not have secondary markets. Hotels.com, Kayak, and other sites like this are not secondary markets; they just compare prices of different primary markets. If secondary markets have a significant impact on ticket sales, it could impact the perceptions of other industries and could be used to the advantage of these industries, especially ones with emerging secondary markets and transitioning demand-based pricing markets.

Background

I moved to California in 2012. Back then, my family could easily afford tickets to see the Golden State Warriors, a California-based basketball team, because they were only ranked 4th in the Western conference, the part of the league with all teams on the West Coast. Starting

in the 2014-2015 season, prices for Warriors tickets skyrocketed. Prior to this season, the Warriors got a new head coach. That season they only lost 15 games and were the National Basketball Association (NBA) Champions. That was also the year Stephen Curry, one of the team's best players, was named the league's Most Valuable Player (MVP) unanimously. Since then, the Warriors have been in every championship. They won again in 2017 (NBA, 2017). Because of their incredible success, a ticket in the worst seat for their game against the Wizards at Capital One Arena in February 2018 is already priced over $100, where tickets in January in the same seats for a game against the Oklahoma Thunder is priced at $31 (Ticketmaster, 2017). This is a great example of how dynamic ticket pricing, also known as demand-based pricing, works.

In 2010, the sports industry made a major change to the way they sell tickets to games. The San Francisco Giants baseball team was the first to start pricing their tickets based on demand (Shapiro and Drayer, 2012, p. 532). This is called dynamic ticket pricing and it has been implemented by most professional sports teams. In this system, many things can affect the price of sports tickets. Team performance, opponent, availability, and other things can contribute to demand and influence the prices of tickets (Dwyer, 2013; Rishe, 2014; Shapiro, 2016a). One of the newest actors impacting ticket prices is the presence of secondary markets (Shapiro, 2012). Sites like StubHub and eBay allow people to resell their tickets. This has caused economists to study the effects of these markets on the prices of sports tickets. After examining these studies, I have found that secondary markets are beneficial to primary markets because they provide more information to primary markets and will help increase revenue and adjust pricing strategies.

Imagine if movie theater tickets transitioned to demand-based pricing. What happened to Golden State Warriors tickets happens to tickets to see the new Star Wars? What if the flight you booked to go home conflicts with something and you cannot make the flight, but it is non-refundable? What if you could sell it? The implications from sports ticketing and the relationship between primary and secondary markets could affect how we purchase many other things, especially now that almost every market is evolving to generate the most revenue. These industries, as sports ticketing has, can use information from secondary markets to improve their profits.

The Effect of the Perception of Fairness

Consumers' perceptions of price fairness can be linked to the source of the product. In some instances, lowering prices can lead to a positive perception on the source of the product. A study was conducted by two researchers from the psychology department at Temple University, Carter L. Smith and Donald A. Hantula (2003). In this experiment, participants were told to shop for CDs in a simulated "internet mall" as the "bulk CD buyer for a fictional disk jockey company" (p. 653; p. 659). Participants were told to choose 40 CDs from a list of 60. When a participant would click on a store, it would take .5 seconds to get from the menu to the store (p. 660). When reporting satisfaction, many participants said the store with the cheapest prices had the fastest service, even though every store had the same speed of service (p. 667). This study was used to get a deeper understanding of consumer behavior patterns. What I find interesting is how consumers reacted to the different online stores based on pricing. Each of the stores were the same, other than prices. Still, participants were more satisfied with the cheaper stores. This demonstrates how price and source of product interact in the minds of consumers. Because of this, primary markets should keep their prices lower than consumers expect. However, this is not always possible. As will be seen later, secondary markets can help by providing more information on consumer decisions to know when tickets will still be bought at higher prices.

Consumers are more willing to pay high prices if they are expecting to pay them. Another study looked at the relationship between price and source. Stephen Shapiro, a sports market researcher at Old Dominion University, and his colleagues (2016) summarized another marketing researcher's work in order to compare those findings with their findings. Thaler (1985) conducted an experiment based on a consumer's willingness to pay for a beer on the beach. The consumer's friend was going to buy the consumer a beer and he had to give the maximum price he would pay for a beer at that moment. The same scenario was tested when the beer was being bought from a bar at a luxury hotel, and the maximum price was much higher. When the beer was thought to be bought at a grocery store, the maximum price was lower (Shapiro et al., 2016b, p. 228). Consumers already have a perception on the source selling a produce and make decisions of whether or not a price is fair based on these preconceived notions. This means that consumers have an idea of how much something should cost and how

much they will pay based on where the product is being sold. Relating this to sports ticketing, primary markets should keep this, and how this affects consumer behavior, in mind when pricing tickets, especially with secondary markets as competition.

Now we know that price and source are related: Consumers will pay more for something if they expect the source to charge more for it and perceive this transaction as fair. However, consumers also have more favorable perceptions of sources that offer lower prices. This is why you get beer from a grocery store or a liquor store more often than you buy from a luxury hotel. This is also why fans are willing to see the Washington Wizards play the Golden State Warriors for over $100, but only willing to pay $30 to see the Wizards play Oklahoma Thunder. The game against the Warriors is going to be a better game, so people expect the price to be higher than an Oklahoma game. The price would not be seen as fair if a ticket to see Oklahoma was over $100.

The Effect of Secondary Markets in Sports

Secondary markets can be used to alter the way tickets are sold over time by primary markets. By using information about secondary market behavior, primary markets can manipulate their prices so the market does not behave the same way. In 2013, Brendan Dwyer, an assistant professor at the Center for Sport Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University, conducted a study with his colleagues to explore the impact of time in consumer behavior. Participants were asked about estimations on change in price or availability between then and the game. They estimated that the probability of the seats and prices staying the same would increase as the game got closer. In other words, in the six days before the game, participants estimated about half the seats listed would be the same as on game day, whereas the seats 13 days in advance would most likely change before game day (p. 166-180). Essentially, if the game was a while away, customers thought there would be less seats available and prices would change as time went by. However, as the game was only a week away, consumers did not feel urgency to buy tickets because they did not predict a change in availability or price. Participants predicted higher probabilities of available seating if their tickets were on StubHub. Prices on StubHub dropped significantly close to the game. This means that closer to the game, people are probably more likely to buy from StubHub (p. 166-180). These perceptions about StubHub may be manufactured. In a study conducted by

Shapiro and Drayer (2012), they concluded that the San Francisco Giants may have altered their prices against demand. The scholars think the Giants do not want fans thinking ticket prices go down closer to the game. This way, "fans choosing to attend a game at the last minute are asked to pay a premium for that convenience" (p. 543). This is a good example of how primary markets can use information given to them through studying secondary markets to increase revenue. StubHub is operated based on demand only. If primary market tickets operated the same way, prices would also go down close to the game. By adjusting prices to avoid this pattern, primary markets encourage fans to buy tickets sooner rather than later. If fans decide to purchase tickets later, it is possible that they might not buy tickets at all. By examining a secondary market, primary markets can boost ticket sales earlier before the game.

It could be argued that secondary markets hurt primary markets because it is competition, and takes money away from primary market sellers. However, not as many people are familiar with StubHub, so people are more comfortable buying tickets from the primary market. The study mentioned earlier, by Shapiro et al. (2016b), ultimately illustrated the importance of familiarity in consumer decisions. The participants were split into four groups and were given the price of tickets, each group got a different set of tickets. Before shopping, the participants gave a maximum price they were willing to pay. Each group was offered a price 10% below their Willingness to Pay (WTP) price. Two groups were given prices from the sports team, and the other two groups got prices from StubHub. One group from each of the two sites received a reference price stating the face value was less than the actual value (p. 227-240). Prices were not listed in the article, but it would have worked like this: Each group stated they would pay $100, but received tickets priced at $90. The groups that did not receive a reference price thought this to be fair. However, two groups got their price ($90) but were also told the face value of the ticket was $50. These groups thought the price of $90 was not fair. That is totally understandable. Basically, in order for consumers to purchase tickets and accept the transaction as fair, the price has to be at or below the consumers' expectations and below what the consumer believes to be the value of the ticket. Relating this to secondary markets, people were originally not comfortable with StubHub, but over several trials, the people given StubHub got comfortable with the secondary market, so Shapiro saw no

difference in fairness between primary and secondary markets (p. 227-240). If people remained unfamiliar with StubHub, it would not be a significant competitor. However, more and more people are becoming familiar with it as a legitimate market. In order to combat the problem StubHub would be as competition, the primary market and secondary market made an agreement.

More and more sports consumers will grow familiar with purchasing from secondary markets like StubHub or Ticketmaster because in 2012, Major League Baseball (MLB) renewed an agreement with StubHub (Espn.com news services, 2012). The agreement legitimizes StubHub as a secondary market to buy and sell tickets (Watanabe et al., 2013, p. 129). Another part of the agreement gives MLB a certain percent of revenue from each StubHub purchase (Shapiro and Drayer, 2012, p. 543). Following the renewal of the MLB-StubHub agreement, Nicholas M. Watanabe, of the University of Missouri, did a study with his colleagues (2013). This study sought to find the impact of the StubHub-MLB agreement on ticket prices. It examined data from media guides from the two MLB Leagues and team websites. They collected information from 1975 until 2010. StubHub was found to be positive and impactful. Teams got more information from StubHub and were able to adjust prices accordingly. After the agreement, there were more price levels for each game. The inequality between each level also grew. These results can help generate revenue, especially with the new price dispersions. Price dispersions allowed the teams to get some of the surplus generated by consumers (p. 129-137). This is another example of how secondary markets can end up benefiting primary markets by giving them information about their consumers to improve revenue and profits.

StubHub is not the only site researchers have used to examine sports consumer behaviors. Secondary markets are really useful for this purpose and primary markets can use this research to improve pricing strategies in this new dynamic market. Thinking more globally in sports market research, Christoph Kemper, a sports researcher at the German Sport University Cologne, and his colleague (2015) based a study on Germany's main secondary market: eBay. Not only did the study seek to understand the behavior of secondary markets in Germany, but they looked at different factors to see which had significant impacts. German sports markets do not operate in a demand-based way as United States

sports markets have started operating. German secondary markets, however, do operate based on demand. This exploration delves into a kind of pricing unfamiliar to German markets. In the study, the scholars used many variables including ones related to team performance and weather. The data they collected was from the second half of the soccer season. The data accounted for 11,637 tickets sold in 6,510 eBay auctions. The average price per ticket sold was 69.40 euros, about twice as much as the face value of the tickets. The scholars also found the games that were in the highest demands were mid-day Saturday games (p. 142-158). This information can be used to the advantage of German ticket sellers. If Germany started transitioning to dynamic ticket pricing they could charge more for tickets, since people are willing to pay more, especially for mid-day Saturday games.

Similarly, Patrick Rishe, from Washington University in St. Louis, studied college sports tickets with two colleagues (2015). This study looked at the influences of secondary markets on college game tickets. College tickets are also not demand-based pricing as professional sports are. This study looked at data from SeatGeek and TicketCity, two secondary markets for college tickets. Interestingly, the study found that if people were travelling to the game from farther away, they were willing to pay more for tickets. This is because regular season games do not have the same draw that a big college game like the Rose Bowl has. This source and the German source were great for information to compare secondary markets in inelastic markets, as opposed to in dynamic markets (p. 357-374). In another study, Rishe and his colleagues (2014) studied secondary market prices during March Madness. In this study, they also found that "locals" paid less of a markup than "non-locals" (Rishe et al., 2014, p. 221). This further emphasizes location in relation to consumers' WTP. Taking this into consideration, major league, professional sports could price tickets for big games, like rivalries or championships, higher, especially if the team's fanbase is located farther from where the game is being held. This, too, could increase revenue.

These three studies found information about consumer behavior that might not have been found without studying secondary markets. In studying eBay in Germany, scholars can see when the highest demand is and how much some fans are willing to pay. When studying StubHub, scholars found information that teams could implement in their pricing

strategies which helped them make more money. If pricing managers in Germany used the information found in Kemper's study, they, too, could increase revenues. Comparably, Rishe et al. (2015), looked at a specific and famous college game. Rishe et al. (2015) recommended a "more comparative analysis across collegiate and professional sports" as changes in college sports "will likely affect secondary market pricing in the future" (p. 371). Between the two studies Rishe et al. (2015; 2014) conducted, they found information that would be helpful if NCAA decided to transition into dynamic ticket pricing the same way professional sports leagues have used secondary markets in pricing strategies.

Secondary markets have evolved radically. From being on their own to arranging business with professional sports leagues, the presence of secondary markets has grown in the industry. There are over a hundred different sites that resell tickets. The founders of SeatGeek, the ticket secondary market that was studied by Rishe et al. (2015), created a new app to help consumers navigate the secondary market. This app, much like Kayak or Trivago, sorts through each site's tickets to find consumers the cheapest price (Feldman, 2017). This development proves we cannot ignore the impact of secondary markets.

The Potential Effect of Demand Pricing and Secondary Markets in Other Markets

Other industries have been transitioning to dynamic ticket pricing. Some theaters across the country have been using demand to price their tickets. The show itself as well as which day in the week and what time are factors that drive price. Some shows will have matinee shows on a weekday and, for that performance, ticket prices are low because not as many people are available at that time. Still, many theaters struggle to keep people coming. A webinar hosted by an arts consulting firm, TRG Arts, claims that dynamic ticket pricing "is not enough" to bring in the revenue theaters desire (Nichols, 2017). For some venues, certain shows have tickets sold on secondary markets. The popularity of this is not as high as with sports, but, like in sports, the secondary market could grow quickly. Some venues, like DAR's Constitution Hall, have already begun to use Ticketmaster to sell tickets for events. If the secondary market continues to grow, it would be helpful to theaters to receive information on how tickets sell in secondary markets. This way, they will have more insight as to how consumers feel and can price tickets with more information.

Movie theaters have yet to start selling tickets based on demand. However, Regal Cinemas are supposed to begin to sell tickets using dynamic pricing beginning in 2018. This would make prices for big-budget, blockbuster films higher, but, on the other hand, smaller, lower rated films would be cheaper. It will be interesting to see if this tactic will increase revenue for movie theaters. Cinemas are an industry that have had external markets, separate from the box office, for a while. Fandango and other ticket selling services have been flooding the internet for years. While not a reselling service, some movie theaters do not sell tickets through Fandango, even though many do.

Not all scholars believe secondary markets are beneficial. Adrien Bouchet and his colleagues from the University of Tulsa (2016) argue that secondary markets can be disadvantageous for the primary markets. When consumers book hotels, flights, (industries that both use demand-based pricing), they do not have the option to look at secondary markets. Because of this, they do not know the number of available flights or how quickly the flight will fill up (p. 918-919). While this is probably true for flights and hotels, it had the opposite effect for movie ticket sales. This may be because movie tickets are not usually purchased as early in advance as flights and hotels. Consumers probably use the app or website for Fandango to buy tickets to make sure they have seats. It is not uncommon to get to the theater and have a movie be sold out, especially if the movie is new and popular. Sites like Fandango have actually increased revenues, especially after a slight slump in the early 2000s. However, recently, especially this summer, movies have not been doing as well in the box office (Wilkinson, 2017). This is why some theaters are changing pricing strategies to boost profits.

While hotels and flights may have advantages due to a lack of secondary markets, the internet is changing the game, especially for hotels. *The New York Times* (2016) wrote a piece on a new secondary market for hotel rooms. Roomer and Cancelon, two different sites with the same premise, allow consumers, who have missed the cancellation period, to sell the hotel room to someone else. This way they do not lose out on the entire the amount they spent on the room. The article quotes a Cornell Hotel Administration faculty member as an expert. According to the article, this could have a heavy impact on the hotel industry. On the other hand, someone who tried the service told *The New York Times* about its faults. He

booked a room and the reservation did not transfer to his name (Zipkin, 2016). News like this could prevent people from using this as a means to book hotel rooms. Most consumers are unfamiliar with the sites, and if what they do hear is negative, they probably will not feel comfortable buying from this source. However, as Roomer and Cancelon improve their services and gain publicity as legitimate markets, as StubHub has done, more people would book rooms through these services. Hotels, like other dynamic markets, will soon need to learn to work with secondary markets in the ways sports ticketing has. By examining consumer behaviors on secondary markets, hotels can also increase revenue by gaining insight on how to manipulate prices.

Conclusion

I still cannot afford tickets to see the Golden State Warriors, as fun as it would be to watch them play in D.C. Even after learning about secondary markets, I am still wary about purchasing tickets through resale markets. All tickets for events at Capital One Arena, the stadium in D.C. where the Washington Wizards play, are sold through Ticketmaster. Through Ticketmaster, you can purchase tickets from the primary market, but you can also purchase resale tickets. When I was buying tickets for Demi Lovato's concert in March, the cheapest tickets I found were actually resale tickets. Through Ticketmaster, I was comfortable buying the resale tickets because the primary market sold the tickets on the same site. After purchasing my Demi Lovato tickets, there was an option to automatically sell the tickets through Ticketmaster. If I end up not being able to attend the concert, I could sell the tickets from the click of a button. I like the options I have as a consumer to buy and sell tickets for different events.

As a consumer I look forward to having these same options for flights and hotels. As I bought my ticket home for winter break, I chose the cheapest option. However, since I got the cheapest flight, it is nonrefundable, no matter when I try to cancel my ticket. If an emergency were to come up, I would not have any options. I would lose $150 from that flight, plus however much a new flight would cost. There are obviously economic factors as to why airlines have these guidelines, but it is not flexible for consumers. There is not yet a secondary market for flights, and the secondary markets for hotels are, so far, unreliable. I think overtime these kinks will work themselves out and the secondary markets will be very successful.

This is great for us as consumers because we will have more options for buying and selling and making decisions that fit our busy and unpredictable lives. However, these secondary markets will also benefit ticket sellers as more information on consumer behavior can help them adjust prices for maximum profits. Golden States Warriors tickets are so expensive because sports fans are willing to pay so much to see that game. I was not surprised to see how expensive they were, even if I was initially a little disappointed. If I was a bigger Warriors fan, like my dad, I would probably consider paying to see them play. However, I am just as content watching the game in my pajamas in the dorm lounge.

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Reflective Essay on Research Process
Coralyn Maguigad

My college writing seminar went over the basics of library resources. In high school, my library did not have many databases, and none of my teachers required scholarly resources. The first time I had to write a research paper was for this class, and I really did not know where to start. My first research paper was a predecessor to the paper I have entered into this contest. I wrote about the cultural significance of the vinyl record. My paper uncovered some reasons present-day youth purchase vinyl records. That topic is extremely broad, and no good research paper is written about a broad subject. Since I did not know where to start, I went to the Research Assistance Desk at the library.

I told the librarian my topic, and he helped me come up with some strategies to get the best search results for my paper. He told me SearchBox sifts through most of the databases American University has for students to use. We went through the Boolean terms, such as AND, OR, the asterix, and quotation marks. Finally, we brainstormed combinations of words, or search strings, to use. After this visit, I felt confident I could find resources for almost any topic I needed to research.

The paper I have entered into this contest is called "Maybe You Can Sell It: The effects of secondary markets on dynamic pricing." It looks at the role of secondary markets, like StubHub and Ticketmaster, in dynamic ticket pricing in sports marketing and other fields. This paper is an extension of the first paper I wrote about vinyl records. It is probably confusing to understand how I got from vinyl records to sports marketing. However, using a series of search strings with various Boolean terms, one could get from one topic to virtually any other topic. More specifically, I was interested in how pricing affects consumer decisions. I was originally thinking of researching concepts like Buy One, Get One Free, or buying in bulk at Costco. Essentially, it would review how pricing makes people buy things they did not need or particularly want.

Moreover, I did not only use random search strings to get from vinyl records to sports marketing, but one specific database: *PsychInfo*. *PsychInfo* has a really cool advanced search engine. After one types in a search term, the database provides dropdown menus of other key terms to add to the string to filter out certain results. It is unique in this aspect from any other database. In this database, I came across an article that talked about consumers' experiences in buying CDs in a virtual mall. This article gave me new economic terms to use in my searches. Throughout my further searches in the SearchBox, *ProQuest*, and other large databases, I used

these terms. Eventually, I found many resources that discussed Sports Marketing, a subject I never even knew existed.

I came across several articles from various journals on sports marketing. The field is dense and there were countless directions I could have gone in terms of my research. However, the idea of dynamic ticket pricing resonated strongly with me. Dynamic ticket pricing is when the price of tickets fluctuates with demand. When the tickets are more in demand, they are more expensive. My family is made up of basketball fans. We went to games all the time, until the Golden State Warriors started winning and tickets got extremely expensive. As I read further, I realized this random economic concept applies to my life in many ways. Hotels, flights, and concerts all use the dynamic pricing system. When writing this paper, I ended up buying tickets from Ticketmaster for a Demi Lovato concert. I used a secondary market and it made me think about how secondary markets would affect other industries. This is where I started my paper. I knew I would not be able to write it if I did not have a connection to it. Economics is not my favorite subject, but I am honestly glad I wrote this paper because it made me a more conscious consumer and I know more about how the economy works and what the future of the economy looks like.

Colonial Discourse and Cultural Memory in Eurogames
Davidson C. Wilbourne

Introduction:

In studying the impacts of cultural artifacts on critical social discourse, one of the most unexplored areas remains analog games, and specifically board games. Long one of the more popular forms of entertainment, board games experienced a decline in cultural relevance during the latter half of the 20th century. Today, however, they are experiencing a renaissance spurred by both generational preferences and design innovations. New "Eurogames," based more on competition and resource management than direct conflict, have become the dominant type of game, with the most famous recent example being *The Settlers of Catan*. However, this type of competition often lends itself to colonial patterns of thinking. Especially when approached from a structuralist perspective, the theme and design of these games carry cultural and discursive implications for the generation of knowledge regarding indigenous communities and its translation into cultural memory.

This essay regards the intersection of postcolonial theory and game studies by identifying the formal features of games that contribute to colonial discourses within two board games: *Navegador* and *Archipelago*. First, I will discuss the implications of board games as artifacts of cultural memory through structuralist theory and will extend these implications by linking structuralism and material culture to Roger Caillois' theory of games. The second section provides an overview of the rules of each game to give context for the mechanisms relevant to the analysis. The third section contains a comparative analysis of the games' mechanisms, and posits that three primary features of these games embed colonial discourse in cultural memory: Orientalism in the textual discourse, abstraction worker placement mechanisms, and the semi-cooperative style of competition.

Structuralism, Material Culture, and Cultural Memory:

The field of structuralism provides a medium for analyzing the implications of Eurogames' discursive effects. Applied to material culture such as board games, structuralism is based on the notion that patterns of thought are implied in the construction of interactive artifacts, and that

one's interaction with those artifacts forces one to use those patterns of thought with which the artifact was constructed (Prown qtd. in Begy 721). Because the aim of structuralist analysis of material culture is to reveal subconscious patterns of thought, scholars like Prown believe that objects made without the intent to express a viewpoint provide the best examples for analysis (Prown qtd. in Begy 722). Board games are intended for sale, not to make a statement. This makes them ideal subjects for structural analysis.

Scholars have supported these theories with studies surrounding the acquisition of knowledge, like David Olson and Nancy Torrance's observation that learning "is tied to activity and experience in the world before it is learned in the form of facts and information," as they write in *The Cambridge Handbook of Literacy* (14). Board games serve specific roles within this real-world activity and experience which shape how we can learn. For example, they support the generation of what David W. Shaffer et al. call "situated understanding" by forcing us to make decisions as another person using the information they would have (106). Adam Chapman furthers this point, arguing that this situated understanding engenders the artifact's structural patterns of thought through the "approximation of experiential knowledge," which has the capacity to build empathy (qtd. in Begy 720). Board games can also serve to simulate historically situated structural metaphors; Jason Begy's cogent analysis of the metaphorical annihilation of perceived time and space in several railroad-based board games makes this clear.

When these structural patterns of thought are embedded in material culture like board games, they become part of what is known as cultural memory. Cultural memory concerns itself not with how the past occurred, but rather with how the past is recorded within culture (Begy 719); material culture is therefore both a recipient of and a driver of this cultural memory. When problematic themes like misrepresentations of colonialism are embedded in material culture, there are implications both for how that past is constructed in the present and for how those patterns of thought are transmitted to the next generation.

To more clearly understand the structural implications of discourse in board games, I here suggest extending Roger Caillois' theory of games to the concept of cultural memory and its intersection with material culture summarized by Jason Begy. Roger Caillois was one of the seminal scholars

in the field of game studies. In his book *Man, Play, and Games,* he outlines a theory of what constitutes play and some early frameworks for analyzing games, like the Paidia-Ludus continuum between games that involve improvisation and fantasy versus those that involve discipline and conventions. Though most of his work has been appropriated into more modern frameworks of analysis, one distinguishing attribute of his work was that he did not study games for their own sake; rather, he used games as a lens through which to view sociology, arguing that we play "games" even when we might not perceive ourselves to (Davenport 179). If, as scholars like Begy and Prown argue, board games impact cultural memory as a part of material culture, and, as Caillois argues, game structures are present in and applicable to other parts of life, then the structural patterns of thought altered by discourse in board games should carry through to games played in other areas of life. Thus, I propose that the combination of these theories confirms that patterns of thought engendered by games have non-diegetic impacts.

This becomes particularly relevant when considering the history of discourse in colonial contexts. Colonial discourses were created to legitimate the oppression of foreign peoples (Nayar 5). Ipso facto, they have always arisen *before* colonization as opposed to simultaneously. Regarding the British colonization of India, for example, discourses surrounding the purported tyranny of local monarchs and the so-called pathetic state of subjects arose as a way to legitimate British rule establishing order (Nayar 5-7). However, to view colonial discourses as purely historical is to reject the vast literature of postcolonialism. Because iterations of colonial discourses continue into today, these current colonial discourses therefore serve to legitimate continued oppression into the future. As such, these discourses embedded in cultural memory through board games – and extended to other areas of life through structural patterns of thought – have implications for the future of marginalized communities.

Summaries of Game Mechanics:

In order to comparatively discuss the features of *Navegador* and *Archipelago,* it is first necessary to describe their mechanisms in order to contextualize the analysis. These sections will briefly describe each game's features, to the extent that they are relevant to the following analysis.

Navegador

Navegador invokes both area-control and resource-control core mechanisms in its gameplay. These mean that the strategies of the game revolve around both controlling space on the board and managing in-game resources in the most economical way (Mayer and Harris 12-15). The easiest way to measure these aims is through the endgame: in *Navegador*, this occurs when one player has either explored the last region or run out of available buildings.

In the game, each player controls ships, workers, and buildings. These buildings can be either shipyards, factories, or churches. Using a combination of workers and ships, players have the opportunity to establish new colonies designated for gold, spices, or sugar. Ships are used to sail into new waters and transport resources, workers are used in both resource collection and building construction, colonies are used for the extraction of resources, shipyards are used for the creation of new ships, factories are used for the processing of resources, and churches are used for the creation of new workers. Resources can be exchanged for money, which can then be used to create new ships or workers.

The turn structure is controlled by a rondel, a wheel of sorts, which contains a list of possible actions: sailing, [creation of] workers, market, [creation of] colony, [use of a] privilege, [creation of] ships, market again, and finally [creation of] buildings. A marker is used for the current turn, and the next player can either place the marker on one of the next three options on the wheel free of charge or pay one ship per space past those three. So, if the previous player had chosen the action "sailing," then I could select "workers," "market," or "colony" for free, or pay two ships to select "ships."

When either all regions have been explored or all of a player's buildings used, one final round is played before victory points are calculated. Exploring regions allows a player to collect explorers, which give victory points. Cash and resources are also translated into victory points. While the specific calculations are not relevant to this analysis, it is sufficient to note that the player with the most victory points wins the game.

Archipelago

Archipelago is based on region tiles, resources, workers, and a rebellion level. The region tiles are hexagons, which players have the option to draw from a pile and add to the map. Resources are extracted from the regions upon discovery and can be extracted during a player's turn. Workers are used to perform actions and construct/control buildings. The rebellion level is determined by a combination of factors; if the rebellion level surpasses a certain threshold, the game is lost for everyone.

Each player draws an objective card at the beginning of the game, which remains secret throughout. On each card are end-game conditions and procedures for calculating victory points. When any player's end-game conditions are met, the game is over and players are assigned victory points based on the conditions of the card which triggered the game's end.

Each turn of the game is played in six phases, which I shall briefly describe here. In the first phase, all units are disengaged from their previous activity, rebels become active citizens, and evolution cards (which carry specific effects) on the card market are turned 90 degrees clockwise, which assigns a different price to them. In the second phase, players bet florins, the game's currency, for who will determine the order of play for that round. In the third phase, worker and rebel populations change. Having enough resources will increase potential workers, which can be recruited into the game for money; having too many excess resources and idle workers will increase the rebellion level. In the fourth phase, all citizens are temporarily laid down as rebels, and players must give up resources to stand citizens back up; citizens not stood back up at the end increase the rebellion level until the next disengagement. In phase five, players can perform a variety of actions, which will be described hereafter. Lastly, in phase six, players can purchase evolution cards, which have special impacts on the game.

There are a range of actions available to a player during the fifth phase: levy taxes, harvest resources, transactions, exploration, reproduction, recruitment, migration, and construction. Players use action tokens (of which they start off with three per turn) to perform any of these. Levying taxes gains florins from a player's citizens and buildings, but moves up the rebellion marker. Harvesting resources uses non-engaged units to extract resources from one of a player's regions. Transactions

allow players to buy or sell resources on the domestic or export markets. Exploration allows a player to take a new hexagon from the region deck and add it to the map. Reproduction allows a player to gain a new citizen, provided that he has two citizens in the same region. Recruitment lets the player pay to recruit new workers from the surplus workers board; this is like reproduction, but costs money. Migration enables the player to transport citizens across regions. Construction allows a player to build a port, market, temple, or town. These buildings require citizens to control them. Ports give the player access to two transactions on the export market without use of an action token, while markets do the same for the domestic market. Temples allow unlimited standing up of citizens in the temple's region during a crisis. Towns allow the control of all buildings in a region with only one citizen.

Comparative Analysis:

The following section will comparatively analyze the formal features of *Navegador* and *Archipelago* to identify the features' effects. The differences in the implementations of certain mechanics provide opportunities to draw conclusions surrounding their implementation, and thus form the backbone of this case study methodology. This section will discuss Orientalism in the textual discourses, abstraction within the worker placement mechanisms, and the semi-cooperative natures of the games as it relates to the differentiation of human processes.

Orientalism in the Textual Discourse

Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* gives a vocabulary with which to describe the construction of the identities of those outside the West. In this book, Said describes two spheres: the Occident (the West) and the Orient (everywhere else). Said's main thesis was that the Orient's identity was constructed in terms of the Occident, which contributed to a self-other dynamic that privileged the West as the default. He further argued that because of power dynamics, colonial discourse, which is simply the vocabulary we use to describe things as they relate to how we construct that knowledge and identity in our minds, flowed only from the Occident to the Orient (Said). Stuart Hall has extended Said's work in his book *The West and the Rest: Discourses and Power* to identify two primary features of colonial discourse: stereotyping and the creation of a good/bad

dynamic (205). Stereotyping involves the generalization of attributes surrounding the subaltern, while the creation of a good/bad dynamic positions attributes of the subaltern as good or bad in relation to their benefit to the Occident (205).

The very first sentence of *Navegador*'s description sets the scene by explaining that Henrique o Navegador has ordered his best sailors and cartographers to "explore" the African coast. Even from this sentence, the use of the word "explore" connotes a *terra nullius*, a term in postcolonial discourse studies that describes when a place is viewed as empty by the colonizer even though it is inhabited by indigenous peoples (Ashcroft et al. 257). As Mills notes in her work *Discourse,* the first step in colonization is making the colonized seem subhuman (97); discourses using words like "exploring" to describe what was essentially trespassing presents the rights of the indigenous as nonexistent from the very beginning.

The text also repeatedly refers to distant seas using only the word "unknown." While this word connotes less activity than the word "explore" and hence is less intrinsically threatening, it certainly demonstrates how the territory of the Orient is constructed in terms of the Occident. After all, these areas of the ocean were certainly not unknown to the Oriental peoples who inhabited them; the fact that these areas are still constructed through the Occident's perspective in the game is telling of the structural patterns of thought that shaped both colonialism and the creation of this specific game.

Archipelago demonstrates similar Orientalism in its textual discourse. It, too, uses the specific word "exploration" to describe the activity of creating colonies, just as *Navegador* does, both in the rules and on the board. It also uses words that create a general positive impression of the era, calling this period in history "the Great Age of Discovery." The positive aspects of colonialism were felt by the colonizer, while the negative aspects were shouldered onto the subaltern, the term used in postcolonial studies to describe a colonized people (Ashcroft et al. 244). Thus, by describing the time period of colonialism as a "Great Age," there is also a clear self-other dynamic of Orientalism because the entire experience is constructed in terms of the Occident, which reaped the benefits, as opposed to the Orient, which was subjugated.

My prior analysis should be sufficient to demonstrate the Orientalist tendencies of these games' textual discourses. However, it does

not yet prove why the textual discourse as an element of game design is particularly important in ingraining colonialism in cultural memory. The reason the textual discourse specifically is important is because it relates directly to the second part of Hall's concept of colonial discourses: the creation of a good/bad dynamic regarding stereotypes of the subaltern. I would posit that the textual discourse within the rules and nomenclature sets the context for the game, and thus tells the player how to interpret the patterns of thought they gain from the game's mechanics, adding to the mechanics' intrinsic discursive value. As such, the textual discourse serves as the game mechanism by which that good/bad dynamic is established.

Abstraction within the Worker Placement Mechanism

Abstraction, in game design, is the amount of overlap between what the rules of the game govern and all actions that one could imagine to be possible in the game (Fernandez-Vara 143). It would obviously be impossible to fully simulate every possible aspect of a world in a game. Moreover, one of the strengths of board games specifically is that they abstract more than video games do, and by simplifying those strategies they can allow players to engage more intensely with the strategy. Thus, a vital decision in game design is which elements to abstract and why. *Navegador* and *Archipelago* abstract worker placement elements in different ways, but to similar effects. *Navegador* abstracts out the entire notion of native peoples, while *Archipelago* abstracts out the difference in compensation between native labor and indigenous slave labor.

Navegador abstracts the entire presence of the subaltern from a physical perspective. Despite the fact that millions upon millions of natives were murdered in the expansion of Portugal's territory, there is no mention whatsoever of the natives or the violence inflicted upon them in order to secure resources. What makes this abstraction, specifically, and not a complete erasure is that one can still extract resources from the colonies like sugar, which necessarily would have been harvested by the natives. As a result, I would note that the game deems the products of subaltern labor important enough to include, but not their bodies themselves; this ingrains the thought of subjugating existence to labor in cultural memory through cultural memory's link to material culture.

Archipelago's worker placement mechanism involves the recruitment of labor from the potential worker board, but does not

differentiate between native and immigrant labor in recruiting new workers. During the colonial era, immigrants coming to the new world would be paid, while native labor would be expropriated (Seed 1). In the game, however, all labor taken from the potential worker board requires compensation. This imbalance represents a historical inaccuracy to which players of the game are forced to subscribe when playing.

To interrogate the relevance of abstraction to colonial discourse, I again will turn to Hall's two elements of colonial discourse: stereotyping and the creation of a good/bad dynamic. Abstraction within the worker placement mechanism contributes to the concept of stereotyping in colonial discourse; to put it simply, the creation of generalizations. The fact that the only relevant purpose of the natives is their ability to create resources in *Navegador,* despite their myriad roles both in their own societies and relating to colonialism, is a testament that abstracting some of their roles necessarily leads to generalization and stereotyping, and therefore contributing towards colonial discourse, which is embedded in cultural memory.

One might ask, however, why only I only discuss abstraction in the context of the worker placement mechanism as a contributor to colonial discourse in the game. After all, if abstraction leads to generalization, would it not be accurate to say that the more abstracted the game, the more problematic it will be? Games with more generalizations with regards to natives, one might argue, will necessarily involve the removal of their unique elements at the expense of game mechanics in all areas of their culture.

The reason why abstraction is only a driver of colonial discourse within the worker placement mechanism is because in other areas, significant abstraction outside of worker placement can actually clarify some discursive elements at the same time that it erases others. I will use the church's representation in both games to illustrate this. Historically speaking, the church was purported to be involved in Iberian colonization for the altruistic purpose of saving the natives' souls; the expropriation of their labor was necessary for the repentance of their sins (Seed 3). This pretext justified the slavery on moral grounds.

In *Archipelago,* the role of the church is much less abstracted than in *Navegador.* The church in *Archipelago* has an intimate relationship with the rebellion level, as churches are able to convert rebel citizens to active

ones (and therefore from bad citizens to good citizens in the game's discourse) both through their intrinsic function as well as through a number of evolution cards one can purchase. This role is very complex and involves more real elements than in *Naveagor:* the overlap between the rules and what the world permitted is greater. However, in the much more abstracted *Navegador*, no such altruistic purpose for the church exists. Rather, its sole function is to create workers. In this way, the game actually cuts through the colonial discourse of altruism and makes clear its true objective (the creation of labor), even if it still erases the element of indigenous slavery. This demonstrates how the erasure of some elements from the game design can actually necessitate that other elements be altered to reflect their true historical natures.

Semi-Cooperative Structure and Differentiation of Human Processes

The last major feature of the games that impacts their colonial discourses is the differentiation of the human processes of natives and immigrants, which relates to the semi-cooperative structure of the game. *Navegador,* since it does not include the presence of natives, is more difficult to address from this perspective. In *Archipelago,* however, the differentiation of human processes is apparent. Rebels, for example, cannot reproduce. They also are described as "lazy" people who "refuse to work," meaning that they do not pay taxes. Furthermore, they cannot own or use buildings in the same way that active citizens can.

From a game design perspective, the existence of the other (the subaltern) within a semi-cooperative or cooperative game design – meaning where there are scenarios that can result in positive payoffs for multiple players, incentivizing win-win cooperation (Zagal et al. 26) – necessitates the differentiation of human processes. Humans have complex decision-making processes within our minds which are very difficult to simulate, particularly within a board game as opposed to a video game. As a result, when some objects within the game are intended to be natives, it becomes necessary to simplify their characteristics rather than attempt to simulate such complex human processes.

What makes this context interesting is that the problem also hints at the solution. Rather than making a board game semi-cooperative, what if the game were instead competitive, where two players are competing against one another? This strategy of critical modification, or correcting

board games that are currently problematic by adjusting their game mechanics, could involve the inclusion of one player as the subaltern and the other as the colonizer. In this way, the human processes of each side would be equal in complexity and the subaltern would not be reduced to a figurine lacking agency. However, like all solutions, this comes with drawbacks. Board games are generally designed to involve many players; this is a part of their social value that makes them so appealing. Therefore, critically modifying a game to be competitive rather than semi-cooperative could decrease the group social appeal of these types of games.

Conclusion

I first contextualized this analysis through the concepts of structuralism and cultural memory, which scholars have linked to material culture. I then connected this concept of cultural memory to Caillois' theory of games to further situate the implications of colonial discourses in board games, arguing that if board games impact cultural memory as a part of material culture, and if game structures are present in and applicable to other parts of life, then the structural patterns of thought altered by discourse in board games should carry through to games played in other areas of life. After the case studies' game mechanics were described, I concluded that Orientalism in the textual discourse, abstraction in worker placement mechanisms, and differentiation of human processes between natives and colonizers drive the ingraining of colonialism into cultural memory.

Although the implications of this are rather extensively described through the connection of structuralism and cultural memory to Caillois' theory, they are worth repeating. The patterns of mind engendered by certain mechanics in games translate into games that we may subconsciously play in other areas of life. Because colonial discourses are used to preemptively legitimate oppression, these discourses furthered by games serve the roles of legitimating future oppression of indigenous populations.

While this analysis briefly described a critical modification strategy with regard to competitive versus semi-cooperative gaming, future research should aim to identify other ways that the mechanisms shown here to embed colonialism in cultural memory could be critically modified without losing complexity or appeal. Other research could choose to isolate

either mechanics or theme through case studies to determine their relative importance. Furthering Caillois' theory of games could be yet another area of future study, for example identifying game psychology in everyday life and applying these mechanics frameworks to those games to identify their relative strength and impacts.

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Navigating the Process

The following section presents one student's writing process beginning with a proposal, then an annotated bibliography, followed by the final essay.

Note from the professor about the assignment: Autoethnography is an important (and sometimes controversial) genre in many scholarly disciplines. When writing autoethnographies, scholars use qualitative primary research methods-- like notes, observations, and interviews-- to reflect critically on a personal experience, connecting it to wider cultural trends. However, successful autoethnography must do more than just tell the story of the writer's experience: it must contextualize that experience for its audience within a wider conversation. This requires using relevant secondary sources, like those Laura selects and analyzes for their revised proposal and annotated bibliography.

Proposal: Women, Females, and Gender Nonconforming Musicians in Punk Rock

Laura Sislen

In this research paper I will interview women, females, and gender nonconforming (GNC) musicians who have a growing presence and influence in the punk rock music scene. I will attend concerts near the Washington D.C. area. Events to consider include Girlpool (February 7th) and Diet Cig (February 28th). Concerts are one of musicians most visible and accessible interactions with the public. I expect the audience reflects what the musicians represent such as their attitude, worldview and presentation.

Bands with women, females, or GNC folks shaped my identity because of their true-to-self, empowering voice and presence. These musicians advocate for women by challenging structures of patriarchy, misogyny, and politics. Others in the scene create less political music that is equally as powerful. They do what they love, and they do it unapologetically. Of these musicians many practice radical vulnerability and intimate relatability. One side fights with an explicit voice, and the other with visibility, reminding women and society that girls, women, GNC, and female at birth folks can and will play music too. So, does gender affect how musicians, who are not born biologically male, navigate the punk rock music scene?

More specifically, do women, female at birth, and gender nonconforming musicians experience acceptance or rejection because of their gender? Are there perks, obstacles, and/or barriers, real or perceived, tied to gender as a women, female, NGC person? How does gender shape the experience of produced and touring musicians?

I will research concerts that fit the genre, buy tickets, and drive or carpool to the Venue, and assume an observational role at the show and take notes on my phone. I may take note of what people wear and how they present themselves (ex. various haircuts and stylistic choices). I will ask a sample of audience to answer a short three to five question survey or questionnaire and record their answers with a notepad. I will introduce myself, my pronouns, a brief description of my research and request consent. The observations will be recorded separately (ex. hair length)

from interpretation (ex. assumed gender or sexual orientation) using a double-entry note taking method.

Research includes searching for bands with women, female gender nonconforming folks in the punk rock music scene. I will then contact musicians via email, introduce myself and briefly describe my research. I will send a consent form, acquire consent, and agree on a date for an interview. The interview will be recorded and executed in person, on Skype, or by phone call.

If anyone declines I will politely accept and will not pressure or shame them. The consent form provides the interviewee's preference for confidentiality. My research questions will be reviewed by a variety of peers and my professor to expose bias and leading questions.

My research timeline begins with secondary research on the punk scene by February 17th. Research will include insight into the origin of punk, a condensed history, what the scene represents, and a brief look into male dominance in the scene. In that time frame I will create a list of eligible concerts to attend and musicians to contact. By February 24th I will create research questions and contact the musicians. Then I will review, refine, and edit research questions with assistance from my peers and professor by March 7th. For the next couple weeks, I hope to conduct interviews with the musicians (depending on their availability) and compile the information. By March 17th interviews will be transcribed. The next couple of days the data and interviews will be analyzed. The draft will be done on March 22nd and I will do peer reviews. Final revisions for the essay will be complete March 27th.

Final Proposal and Annotated Bibliography
Laura Sislen

Proposal

"Punk" is more than music and mohawks. Within it exists an attitude beyond the surfaces of image and style, a place that the misfits call home. I came to love punk music in my early 20s just a handful of years ago. There is that attitude I relate to, but a glaringly obvious contradiction. For a movement based on accepting differences and fighting socio-political power structures, there is an overwhelmingly white male population. The punk ethos is applicable to people of all sizes, colors, struggles, and identities. I know this because I am a queer, non-binary, female-at-birth, Asian-American adoptee who has found a place there.

Unfortunately, diversity is often underrepresented in punk history. I am conducting research on gender, punk, sexism, and feminism and looking at some successes and failures of the riot grrrl movement. My research questions include the following: Who and what is punk? How do folks gain access to the scene? How does gender affect visibility in the punk music scene? How does gender empower and inhibit women on this platform? Why does punk need marginalized folks and why do marginalized folks need punk? Lastly, how does punk succeed or fail at practicing what it's preaching?

Understanding marginalized peoples' exclusion from the scene exposes where the movement went wrong and how it can change. Inclusion is vital to a platform that preaches non-conformity, difference and resistance. Punk needs diversity and diversity needs punk. When I see myself represented on the stage I feel valid. When I see myself represented on the stage challenging oppressive power structures, I feel empowered.

My preliminary research started with Google searching for gender and punk. The primary research includes interviewing D.C. and Baltimore punk women musicians via Skype and attending several local concerts. I asked the musicians about navigating the music scene and how their gender affects their experiences. My secondary research is a historical approach to create context. What is punk? Is it relevant? What was riot grrrl? Why are men so prevalent?

Using *EBSCO*, *Proquest*, and the American University library SearchBox, I searched the keywords: sexism, feminism, and riot grrrl. I aim to expose how punk fell short, it's positive contributions, and how it can do better.

Due to time limitations and accessible interviewees, I have narrowed my research to women and their experiences as musicians in the scene. This also limits the conversation to punk music rather than punk in its entirety (i.e. lifestyle, living situations, occupations, activism, etc.). All of the musicians interviewed are actively creating and performing music. It is understood that groups other than white women have struggled to find a place in this scene, but they are not highlighted in this research. Although it is frustrating to exclude these folks, I have decided for time and space limitations to focus on a narrow subset.

Annotated Bibliography

Bag, Alice. "Work That Hoe: Tilling the Soil of Punk Feminism." *Women & Performance*, vol. 22, no. 2/3, July 2012, pp. 233-238. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1080/0740770X.2012.721079.

Alice Bag, a former member of "The Bags," one of the first L.A. punk bands, writes about punk as an attitude and that it is not dead. Since she was on the front lines of the movement she feels like it's important that she writes about her experiences there. Her conclusions are based on self reflections and the context of the socio-political climate she grew up in.

Bag's definition and origin of punk are important pieces of my research. It's a first hand, insider account of what punk is and how it came to be. She believes that it's alive and well "in the planned actions and protests of anti war organizations, in local organic farming co-ops who demand the right to take back control of their food supply, in the anarchic ideals of hacktivists who target corrupt governments and corporations under the flag of Anonymous" (234). She believes that punk also exists as it did in its peak and continues to live on because of social and political distress (why we still need punk). To Alice Bag, punk is a mentality and way of interacting against power structures to regain agency over our bodies and resources.

Bag describes the birth of punk in L.A. through her own story. As a first generation child of Mexican immigrants who attended an English-immersion school that wanted to erase her identity, who witnessed the

toxicity of the gendered power imbalance between her mother and father, and as a bisexual woman, Bag was always "othered" (235). Social turmoil and the lack of space for marginalized and rejected folks created the foundation of the punk rock music scene where Bag claims that in its early days there were no gender roles, race or class: "the earliest participants and movers behind the scene were united only in the sense of having been identified as 'outcasts,' either by society or by themselves" (236). Punk was born from the amalgamation of the outcasts from socio-political frustration and is still present in society whenever people fight against corrupt systems.

Bag discusses the time before punk was dominated by white men and stresses the importance of artists writing about their own spaces instead of the academics who did not live through it. She argues that punk had previously been inclusive and limits herself by talking about the early scene that lacked relevant controversy. For my research, I will use her claim that early punk was a band of outcasts that were "different, proudly different, and wanted to express our creativity through our art, our music, our fashion, our way of life," who were rejected by the status quo, to assert my belief that the punk music scene can return to that state of diversity and inclusion (Bag 236).

Berkers, Pauwke, "Rock Against Gender Roles: Performing Femininities and Doing Feminism Among Women Punk Performers in the Netherlands, 1976–1982." *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, vol. 24, 2012, pp 155–175. doi:10.1111/j.1533-1598.2012.01323.x

Pauwke Berkers provides insight on a group of women who are underrepresented in punk academic research: the punk women musicians of the late 70s and early 80s who did not ascribe to second wave feminism but were not yet a part of 90s riot grrrl. The author interviewed women who participated in all-women or mixed-gender punk bands in the Netherlands from that time period. The article was written in 2012 and the time period in question was several decades ago, so the data is limited by memory distortion and, thus, Berkers cross-references the interviewee's claims with fan-zines from the same era. The author leans on the foundation that feminism and punk have similarly challenged and inspired women to participate in traditionally male spaces (156). This article breaks down the ideologies and methodology of each movement and

concludes that despite their similar foundations, that they are rather different movements and had difficulty coexisting at the time. I plan to interview women in active punk and post-punk bands in the DC and Baltimore areas and ask them questions about their experiences as women musicians, what punk means to them, and how sexism and feminism do or do not fit into their lifestyles.

Berkers sheds light on conflicts between young punk performers and second-wave feminism "over how to perform femininity (both in terms of style and music) and how to reach gender equity (with or without men)" and claims that "this generational mismatch is due to the perceived rigidity of radical second-wave gender politics versus punk's playful engagement with difference, contradiction, and irony" (156). The punk women were multifaceted in expression and had an egalitarian ideology, while the second-wave feminists had a narrow, dualistic idea of gender and a separatist mentality (Berkers 164). However, women punk musicians were similar to feminists and often agreed with several feminist principles (but not the feminist *movement*) in that they strived to enter a male dominated scene (like rock) and gain equal access (Berkers 167).

Contrary to what the author was expecting, many of the informants mentioned that they were taken seriously as musicians regardless of their gender. Punk was not concerned with musical expertise and promoted the DIY ("Do It Yourself") ideology that provided a gateway for many women (Berkers 156). Sexism was still existent, especially in the audience and oftentimes through the practices of objectification (Berkers 155). Berkers noted that the scene opened the door and invited women in, but they often came across barriers that hindered the full inclusion, privilege, and accessibility that men had.

This article is (purposefully) limited to a previous time period since her focus is punk women who were stuck in between a form of feminism that they couldn't relate to and the next movement that had not arrived yet. The primary informants discuss that second wave feminism did not not co-exist with their ideologies and that punk was a better route to become involved in. The scene was a better space for the younger generation to challenge norms and express themselves and their femininities.

I will build upon this assertion by referring to the generations of punk musicians that came after riot grrrl rather than before it. I will use many of the same methods and approaches as Berker but relate it to

women, sexism, gender, and feminism in the contemporary punk scene. The primary and secondary data I gather will create an image of the current state of women in the punk scene and expand on how ideologies (of punk and feminism) claim to break down barriers of oppression but often fall short.

Dunn, Kevin and May Summer Farnsworth. ""We ARE the Revolution": Riot Grrrl Press, Girl Empowerment, and DIY Self-Publishing." *Women's Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2, Mar. 2012, pp. 136-157. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1080/00497878.2012.636334.

Kevin Dunn and May Farnsworth focus their research on the riot grrrl movement of the 1990s which spawned from zine and punk communities as a reclamation of space in the scene. The authors discuss the creators of zines and the products, like Riot Grrrl Press, rather than the more often, inaccurate representations depicted by mainstream media or the exclusive academic approach that is often entirely focused on the music produced by riot grrrl bands. These secondary and primary resources vary between interviews with early punk musicians, published literature, newspaper articles, and many zines.

My primary research is looking at relations between gender, feminism, sexism, and punk music. Just as Dunn, Farnsworth, and many others have noted, despite punk's anti-authoritative, anti-oppressive, anti-status quo ideology, it is susceptible to the mainstream patriarchal ways. I am conducting interviews with active female punk musicians to gather information on their current experiences with sexism and male dominance and how their gender affects or doesn't affect their experience in the music scene.

In its origin, young punks gathered in Britain as a response to working class culture and class politics (Dunn and Farnsworth 137). The authors describe how this evolved into a more generalized rejection of the status quo, utilization of the do-it-yourself (DIY) attitude and diverse group of participants (137). In early punk, everyone was encouraged to get involved with these ideologies, such as production of music, identity, and politics. Unfortunately, as time went on and the scene progressed, it became increasingly more male-centric. According to Dunn and Farnsworth's research, women like Jennifer Miro from the West Coast punk band The Nuns, in reference concert spaces, claim that women "didn't

even go because it was so violent and so macho that is was repulsive. Women just got squeezed out" (138). The 90s riot grrrl movement was, in part, a reclamation of punk spaces and voices and a response to the exclusive macho-hardcore scene from the 80s (Dunn and Farnsworth 138). Through the use of DIY feminist zines, Allison Wolfe, Molly Neuman, and Kathleen Hanna became several key players in the movement. Riot grrrl, as a movement, supported a DIY community, zines, bands, and a national convention in DC in 1992. All mediums covered topics including but not limited to: sexual identity, self-preservation, racism awareness, surviving sexual abuse, self-defense, and female empowerment (Dunn and Farnsworth 139). The main goal was reclaiming the female body under female terms against mainstream media, patriarchal, and capitalist standards. Other predominate concepts to the movement were girls seizing the means of production, girls creating their own cultural capital, and girls empowering themselves and each other (Dunn and Farnsworth 141). Despite their efforts against it, mainstream media caused great harm to the movement when it latched on and exploited, misrepresented, and commodified the riot grrrls, reducing them to a kind of superficial fashion statement (Dunn and Farnsworth 143).

Many participants and scholars can agree that punk is more than an image or musical style. Dunn and Farnsworth shed light on punk's origins as diverse and that it later developed into a male-centric scene. The 90s riot grrrl movement was a response to this exclusion. This project is restricted by time, with a focus specifically on the 90s riot grrrl zine culture. My research continues the conversation of women and their place in punk music using secondary research, definitions, historical accounts, and interviews with contemporary female punk musicians. I will also attend several punk music concerts and take notes on how women inhabit the scene's space.

Griffin, Naomi. "Gendered Performance and Performing Gender in the DIY Punk and Hardcore Music Scene." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2012, pp. 66-81, *ProQuest*, http://proxyau.wrlc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyau.wrlc.org/docview/1019284979?accountid=8285

In "Gendered Performance and Performing Gender in the DIY Punk and Hardcore Music Scene," Naomi Griffin utilizes published literature on

gender roles, how gender is performed, and an autoethnographic approach for research methods in her local UK, DIY punk scene. She chooses to use autoethnographic text to "put the researcher in the context of the research," thus strengthening the findings by translating the "personal into social and cultural" (68). Griffin stresses the importance of recognizing and reflecting on her own positionality for observational research because she is the lens and tool of measurement. The demographic consists of white, male, heterosexual, musicians and organizers because they are who dominates the scene in question. Therefore, Griffin primarily focuses on expressions of masculinity in addition to women and feminist politics. Her aim, which focuses on gender performance and relationships, "illustrates the complexity of the relationship between punk ideologies and practices and the ways that spaces can simultaneously offer contradictory and negotiable opportunities for empowerment and resistance, acceptance and exclusion" (65).(disconnect) By going to concerts, running a zine stand, and conducting secondary research, Griffin is able to observe and conclude that there is a disconnect in the punk scene between rhetoric and experiences, particularly surrounding social injustice.

I will also conduct autoethnographic research at concerts and utilize secondary sources to define terms. My research also includes interviews with female punk musicians and placing the punk ideologies and experiences in a historical context. Similarly, I have noticed some contradictions in the punk scene. Punk, which inherently rejects mainstream standards, like the means of production and oppressive standards, perpetuates mainstream sexist and exclusionary practices. Like Griffin, I will use my position in the punk scene, which is more limited than hers, to discuss my draw to its ideologies. I will attend concerts, take notes on how women take up space at the venues, and conduct interviews with several musicians.

Griffin deconstructs terms and defines punk as "generally characterised by fast, aggressive tones and often politically charged" (67). It rejects oppressive and exclusive parts of mainstream society and oftentimes focuses on social injustices and individual rights. Her observations, personal experience, and research conclude that within the umbrella of punk's anti-racism, anti-homophobia, anti-sexism stance, that practices and expressions of its ideals are not always true to the ideology (66). For example, personal presentation and image (ex. tattoos, piercings

and non-traditional clothing) are forms of resistance to traditional representations of female gender roles. This allows punk women to reclaim some agency over their bodies but become susceptible to the trappings of expectations to fit the non-traditional punk image and conform to nonconformist standards (Griffin 70). Griffin also found that women are seldom present as the voice of musicians or organizers of shows and are often viewed in terms of men when they are in the audience. In their most visible space, as an audience member, women are often reduced to "the girlfriend" of a man, in part due to the aggressive form of dancing at shows that simulate fighting, in which women rarely participate and are oftentimes pushed off to the side (Griffin 71).

As many participants and academic researchers observe, Griffin homes in on the scene's contradictory nature of anti-sexist rhetoric and its failure to contribute to anti-sexist practices and spaces. She makes a point in her conclusion that her aim is describing the complexity and difficulty of removing a scene from the dominant culture's narrative of patriarchy and sexism even when the scene is rooted in the rejection of it (78). Her research is limited by geography and time because it is located in a small contemporary UK DIY punk and hardcore scene and does not account for all DIY scenes. I am also spatially limited and will expand on Griffin's research in my area (DC and Baltimore) by interviewing several members of local punk musicians who are women to include their first-hand experiences from creating and performing music.

Pinterics, Natasha. "Riding the Feminist Waves: In with the Third?" *Canadian Woman Studies*, 2001, pp. 15-21, *ProQuest*, http://proxyau.wrlc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxyau.wrlc.org/docview/217463158?accountid=8285.

This article highlights the third wave feminist movement as a response to and criticism of second wave feminism. Pinterics notes that the reactive nature of the third wave is a "building upon" the previous generations. She attributes the assets and the baggage to each movement respectively and briefly discusses the anti-feminist movement that was born during the formation of the third wave. She references several big names in feminist theory, like Rebecca Walker and Audre Lorde, to hit the key points, perspectives, and attitudes of the different feminist models.

My research is based on sexism in the punk rock music scene. Sexism is of great prominence in the human experience and punk is an attitude that challenges societal norms (like sexism). As a response to second wave feminism and punk as their vehicle, the riot grrrl movement was born in the 90s. Pinterics' article nods to riot grrrl and the scene's grassroot and DIY creation of zines that "can include poetry, essays, interviews, rants, manifestos, and articles ranging from how to make your own pads and tampons, to information about date rape resources" (3). This article gives foundation to the facet of my research that deals with punk as a space for everyone in theory and that it falls short in practice, even in riot grrrl. Punk, sexism, feminism, gender, and inclusion cannot be talked about together without context and definitions of the terms. Since I will be discussing riot grrrl, I will talk about third wave and, in turn, talk briefly about second wave. I will also speak to the irony of the three divisions in the punk context.

In short, Pinterics describes second wave feminism as groundbreaking. The movement highlighted violence against women, began advocating for greater acceptance toward sexualities, and moved women "from the kitchen to the boardroom" (Pinterics 2). The third wave argues that the former focused too much on the "common, universal" experience of women and ignored the multitude of differences, especially those of oppression, that many women face. The latter advocates for the mobility of all women, a deeper exploration and understanding of gender, sexuality, race and class, reliance on personal experience, and "making room for difference instead of trying to build a cohesiveness" (Pinterics 3).

In closing, Pinterics quotes Lorde and describes criticism as constructive rather than destructive. People need to reflect as individuals, as a group, and as a movement. Critique is powerful because it can help propel us forward; it can act as tool to build upon the previous. It is a lost cause when critique is utilized through "argument for argument's sake." In my paper I will describe sexism in the punk music scene, analyze punk and riot grrrls strengths and weaknesses, and then assert a call for growth, a reminder that critique is healthy if it is used productively. If something falls short, then the next person can take on responsibility of doing better and openness for more critique. Where Pinterics is general about the strength of discomfort, I will, with my interviewees' assistance, discuss means of progression.

Thi Nguyen, Mimi. "Riot Grrrl, Race, and Revival." *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, vol.22, No. 2-3, 2012, pp. 173-196, *Taylor and Francis Online*, DOI: 10.1080/0740770X.2012.721082

Mimi Thi Nguyen's "Riot Grrrl, Race and Revival" dives into the 90s punk scene subculture, riot grrrl, and its complications. She draws on her personal experiences in punk, interviews with zinesters and musicians, and zines and scholarly articles for her research. I am utilizing the first piece of Nguyen's two-part article that interprets riot grrrl as a means of access and opposition to patriarchy that failed to address race in a constructive manner due to the movement's central concept of "intimacy" relating to access.

Nguyen discusses the riot grrrl movement belief that "doing it yourself made it possible to know yourself as a revolutionary act," that women's control of cultural capital, production, and expression reclaim their autonomy and thus resist patriarchal, sexist ideologies (175). She discusses how the third wave feminist riot grrrls believe that the personal is political and strength in coming to know self and others is through "intimacy." "Radical girl love" and "girl intimacy" is described by Nguyen as a "liberalist fantasy of self-actualization"(176). She suggests that the "intimate aesthetic" of riot grrrl, of transparency and self-actualization don't inherently create change in the nature of relationships and are destructive concepts. (extend to *see how to avoid this and not marginalize WOC, transpeople? Give them a voice, give them THEIR voice?) Be self-relective*

In the attempt to dismantle "white boy mentality," many of the women in riot grrrl would not address their own "white upper middle-class girl mentality" (180). According to Nguyen, the actualization of riot grrrl struggled to include POC. The movement wanted to address the patriarchy but failed to address racism which, in turn, created exclusionary spaces. The concept of riot grrrl intimacy and personal experiences as political, in regard to race, demanded the emotional labor of POC to "reveal themselves, to bear the burden of representation ('you are here as an example') and the weight of pedagogy ('teach us about your people')" (180). This reduced POC to the roles of teachers and examples as a token character in a sea of "allies" (180).

Her research relates to mine in that it addresses the pitfalls of the movement's ideologies. I will use Nguyen's critique of riot grrrl and discuss

the current status of punk music in the post-riot grrrl era and gender inclusivity, in part relating it to the necessity of equating feminism and equality to intersectionality. We extend the fight for inclusion, visibility and accessibility beyond white women to include all women, POC, and LGBTQA+ communities. She differs from many scholarly sources in that she focuses on race in punk rather than sex. The punk culture's contradictorily racist issues are highlighted rather than punk's view of the structures of racism as a power structure.

Successes and Failures of Punk Rhetoric and Practices: A look into Gender and Representation in Contemporary Punk Music Scenes

Laura Sislen

Introduction: How I Came to Know Punk

When I was 21 years old, I was uncertain of my ability to integrate into any music scene after a struggle with drug addiction. So, I armed myself with several friends and we hopped into my partner's spray-painted, 1999 Plymouth Voyager to see the Pennsylvanian folk-punk heroes, Mischief Brew, at a local dive bar. Self-conscious about how I looked and if I belonged there, I had no idea what I was getting into. There was no relief from the nearly debilitating jitter in my stomach until the band went on, and an immense weight was instantaneously lifted from my spirit. As the late Eric Peterson started belting rally songs against police brutality, war, and oppressive power structures, the crowd of die-hard fans and inebriated fools formed a mosh pit. I jumped right into it, and suddenly my insecurities were gone. I felt an energy in the pit where we shared our sweat, and occasionally blood, that was incomparable to any musical experience I have had. Our aggressive "dancing" was a mesmerizing form of comradery. The people, music, lyrics, and energy are stained into my memory as a defining moment that sparked my desire to seek out more music.

The punk music and image drew me in, but it was the *content* that made it resonate. The genre's ideology consists of social justice, nonconformity, and resistance that is informed, angry, and loud. I discovered powerful, unapologetic women and gender nonconforming folks, like those in California's short-lived hardcore-punk band G.L.O.S.S (Girls Living Outside Society's Shit), more of Laura Jane Grace from the renowned punk band Against Me!, L7 and Bikini Kill from the 1990s riot grrrl via online streaming services. These bands inspired a self-confidence I didn't know existed. Suddenly the "punk" thing seemed accessible, that I could be a part of it even though I'm not another hetero-cis-white male who I've seen dominate so many spaces.

Methods

My research for this autoethnography comes from the respect I have for the women and gender nonconforming folks in this scene who ignited a spark within me to think for myself, stand for what I believe in, and be unapologetically me as a queer, non-binary, female-at-birth, Asian-American adoptee. I began research on *Google* to formulate an idea of the conversations surrounding "punk" and gender which has been regarded by scholars, critics, and participants as another exclusive, hetero-cis-white-male dominated scene. I realized that my idealistic view of punk inclusion in the formative years of my "punk identity" was rather naive. Just like any countercultural group, regardless of the rhetoric and aims, there will always be gaps in the *practice* of an ideology, and the punk community is no exception to this. This is by no means a condemnation of the punk music scene. In this paper I explore scholarship and participants' understanding of punk, who respectively claim that the music scene has been both diverse and exclusive, and I synthesize these accounts to claim a "pendulum shift" that swings between various levels of inclusion. Specifically, I will extend the conversation to the importance of non-binary and trans people of color in the punk music scene, as well as the importance of the scene for them within this new "shift."

My findings are limited by the geographically small pool of informants and concerts attended over a short period of time. I have also analyzed numerous scholarly sources and magazine articles on punk, gender, sexism and feminism using *Proquest*, *EBSCO*, and American University Search-Box from February 2018 to April 2018. The primary sources consist of my personal experiences, attending two post-punk concerts, taking notes on how people inhabited that space, and interviewing five female musicians from three bands in the D.C. and Baltimore area who actively create music and play shows in punk and hardcore scenes. The semi-structured interviews were approximately 25 to 40 minutes long via internet video call platforms. The lack of information from informants and scholarship on nonbinary and trans people of color in punk experiences is filled by my authority as a non-binary POC in an autoethnographic approach.

What is "Punk"?

A brief definition of "punk" as it pertains to this project is necessary. Alice Bag, a former member of "The Bags," one of L.A.'s first punk bands, claims that punk lives "in the planned actions and protests of anti war organizations, in local organic farming co-ops who demand the right to take back control of their food supply, in the anarchic ideals of hacktivists who target corrupt governments and corporations under the flag of Anonymous" (234). Bag frames punk as a *mentality* and *way of interacting* against power structures to reclaim agency over our bodies and resources. The scholars Dunn and Farnsworth discuss punk's European musical origins, in which young punks gathered in Britain as a response to working class culture and class politics (137). They believe this evolved into a more generalized rejection of the status quo, utilization of the do-it-yourself (DIY) attitude and diverse group of participants (137). In early UK and US punk, *everyone* was encouraged to seize the means of producing music (although not limited to it) and challenge traditional exclusionary practices and politics of the mainstream (Dunn and Farnsworth 137).

Similar to Bag, Shawna Potter, one of the musicians interviewed from Baltimore hardcore band War on Women, describes "punk" as an *ethos*. Angie, an informant from Baltimore's post-punk band Post Pink, says it's "nonconforming, very much 'do your own thing', it gives you a way to talk about what people don't talk about." Punk *music* has been described loosely by a scholarly source as "generally characterised by fast, aggressive tones and often politically charged" (Griffin 67). Punk musical culture emphasizes the lack of importance of musical expertise. People of all levels are encouraged to play. These musical methods and broad generalized similarities (considering the variation within the music) manifest powerful feelings among those who participate on both sides of the stage. But before the musical genre, the *mentality* of punk was born from political and social unrest and frustration. According to Bag's definition, more people are "punk" than would likely identify with the term. The music scene that developed in the early 1970s as a vehicle to express frustrations quickly became a home for the misfits who were rejected from society at the same time as they were rejecting it (Bag 236).

As a bisexual woman, first generation child of Mexican immigrants, who attended an English-immersion school that wanted to erase her identity, who witnessed the toxicity of the gendered power imbalance

between her mother and father, Alice Bag was always "othered" (235). The lack of space for marginalized and rejected folks and social turmoil created the foundation of the punk rock music scene. She claims that in its earliest days there were no gender roles, race, or class, "the earliest participants and movers behind the scene were united only in the sense of having been identified as 'outcasts,' either by society or by themselves" (Bag 236). In fact, "punk was very gay in the beginning" claims Kid Congo, another musician from the punk frontier on the West Coast and gay Chicano man from the band The Cramps (Jackson).

These diverse origins of punk, where identity and "labels" didn't shape a person's validity or access to the scene diverge from the whitewashed history that many scholars and critics have depicted throughout my research. The real history of punk isn't as inclusive or exclusive as described, it has had several shifts throughout time. An *entirely* homogeneous scene never existed and subcultures within punk have risen as a response to the lack of space for marginalized folks, like Afro-punk and queercore.

Punk's Struggle with Inclusivity

Critics' discussion of the hetero-cis-white-male dominance in punk primarily refers to the scene in the 1980s. Regarding concert spaces, women "didn't even go because it was so violent and so macho that is was repulsive. Women just got squeezed out," recalls Jennifer Miro from the early West Coast punk band, The Nuns (Dunn and Farnworth 138). In "Rock Against Gender Roles: Performing Femininities and Doing Feminism Among Women Punk Performers in the Netherlands, 1976–1982," Pauwke Berkers' female informants, who participated in the 80s Netherlands punk scene, were able to enter the scene as musicians and were relatively accepted due to the punk rhetoric that promotes the DIY ideology (155). They primarily experienced sexism through objectification and other barriers that hindered the *full* privileges and accessibility men had to the punk scene.

A response to the exclusive macho-hardcore scene from the 80s was the 1990s riot grrrl movement (Dunn and Farnsworth 138). By using DIY feminist zines, Allison Wolfe, Molly Neuman, and Kathleen Hanna became several key players in the movement. With zines, music, and even a convention, punk women discussed topics of sexual identity, self-preservation, surviving sexual abuse, self-defense, and female

empowerment (Dunn and Farnsworth 139). Reclaiming the female body, under female terms, against mainstream media, patriarchal, and capitalist standards, was their main goal. Other dominate concepts in the movement included *girls* seizing the means of production, *girls* creating their own cultural capital, and *girls* empowering themselves (Dunn and Farnsworth 141). *Girls* were tired of their lack of representation. They were reclaiming punk as a space for anti-oppressive tactics and utilized this platform to challenge the status quo and empower themselves. Many of the bands mocked sexist rhetoric, called women to the front of mosh pits, and advocated for nontraditional performances of femininities and taboo professions, like sex-work (Dunn and Farnsworth 141).

This kind of rhetoric, energy, and solidarity solidified my draw to punk, when I heard *my* voice and saw *my* face. It was about holding sisters up, girl power, and loud, unapologetic existences. But my biggest disconnect to riot grrrl, a scene I did not directly live through, is this concept of "girl" power. I'm a female at birth, with a uterus and vagina, but I rarely identify as a "girl" and I'm not the only person who felt left out or was unsatisfied with the verbiage. Riot grrrl failed to effectively include women and gender nonconforming folks of color. The movement as it existed in the 90s was a space for cis-white women.

Many riot grrrl participants would not address their own "white upper middle-class girl mentality" when dismantling "white boy mentality," according to scholar and former zinester Mimi Thi Nguyen (180). They wanted to address the patriarchy, but failed to address racism which ironically reinforced punk spaces as exclusionary. Riot grrrl demanded the emotional labor of POC to "reveal themselves, to bear the burden of representation ('you are here as an example') and the weight of pedagogy ('teach us about your people')" because at the core of the movement was the concept of "intimacy" and the "personal experience as political" (Thi Nguyen 180). POC were reduced to the roles of "teacher" and examples as token characters in a sea of "allies" (Thi Nguyen 180). They were used to enhance the punk progressive rhetoric through friendship and proximity, more of a symbolic gesture or meeting a "quota" than a meaningful act of inclusion or diversity. Ironically, riot grrrl ended up exploited and commodified by one of the forces they were opposing: the mainstream media.

Bacchae, Post Pink, and War On Women on Representation in Punk

This is not to claim riot grrrl as an entirely negative movement. Katie, an informant from the D.C. post-punk band Bacchae, identifies as a "post-riot grrrl band" because they address similar issues, like anti-capitalism and harassment. The music from that time heavily influenced me to challenge the status quo, have stronger convictions, and live an unapologetic existence:

> I wish for a new [riot grrrl] every day, it was necessary and powerful for the people who felt included in it. A way to process anger and frustration over inequality. It was important for me, but I felt a little too young at the time and it had been co-opted by the mainstream, it felt like what should have happened is that women would have become more equal, but were instead tokenized, it felt like it took another 10 more years for women to show up on the scene again (Potter).

This is proof that the pendulum is swinging toward diversity. Shawna adds, "it's okay that we (women) progress and do better than riot grrrl. Let's not let it limit us, we are allowed to be different" (Potter). This sentiment, Nguyen's article, many folks of color, and my personal experiences, all call for a "new" riot grrrl, one that moves beyond the limits of the 90s movement. If a *new* riot grrrl means the reclamation of a scene that practices the rhetoric of nonconforming, anti-oppressive, D.I.Y., and strong community of *all* people, then that could propel punk to a new and non-condescending state.

"Representation is in an upswing!" excitedly claims Rena Hagins, also from the band Bacchae, in reference to the participation of transgender folks, people of color, women, and combinations of the three. She describes, "growing up as a teenager it seemed like a 'boys club,' not welcoming to women, 'you're there to gain social capital and seem cool.' Like no we are here because we enjoy the music. I'm not here to serve a purpose for you" (Hagins). Sam, from Baltimore's post-punk band Post Pink, also reflects on attending shows when she was 16, recalling that "it was all dudes" (Whitelaw). But according to Rena, Sam, and Angie, the toxic mentality, that keeps women away and contributes to the lack of

participation, has notably shifted in Baltimore and D.C. over the last several years.

They claim this shift is due, in part, through accessibility to the means of production via Internet, recording equipment, and sites like Bandcamp, where people can stream and sell their music and merch. This access gives marginalized folks, who may not be put on a punk show bill, agency from the people who have traditionally dictated "who's in" or "qualifies." Sam believes the "upswing" is because people are getting "bored of the same 'ol dynamic of a band, I want to see people more like me doing what I like to do" (Whitelaw). Shawna believes the scene isn't specifically in need of "women" so much as it is in need of *differences* and *variety* saying, "I don't think I write things so differently because I'm a woman it's just something that's different" (Potter). Every informant notices that the participation and representation of people from different backgrounds, does, in fact, produce a momentum of marginalized folks stepping toward the creation of music and being a part of the scene, like Rena (a woman of color).

Despite the progression the informants are excited about, the scene is far from perfect. Sexism is still prevalent, although it isn't as overt as it once was. Laura Jane Grace, the front women of the famed band Against Me!, who had a very public gender confirmation transition, says "punk was supposed to be so open and accepting, but when it came down to it, it was still hard to be queer in any way and not face judgment for it" (Farber). "Most of the harassment is verbal, dismissive, not being taken seriously, and the assumption that you don't know what you are doing or how your gear works," explains Shawna (Potter). It's confirmed by both Rena and Katie, that men, sound guys in particular, have assumed that they don't know the technical side of their instruments and amps. Verbal harassment occurs on sites like *YouTube* with comments like "she is just a stupid women who sucks at singing and is just straight up angry." CITATION

Harassment and critique is less prevalent and harsh as the pendulum gains momentum and more folks get involved, because their people are already there. Sam has been compared to another drummer she respects *without* the notoriously attached "you play well, *for a girl*" to the statement. The Post Pink show I attended had four bands on the bill, three out of four were mixed-gendered and two of four had more than one member who was not male. The audience, regardless of the gender I

perceived via presentation (which is admittedly a poor measure), inhabited the space evenly, and no perceived sex had a dominant presence. There were a handful of people of color and the women seemed to ditch the "girlfriend" or "to seem cool" image.

Now What?

The step necessary for the punk music scene right now is the inclusion of nonbinary and trans people of color. That is how punk can stay true to its rhetoric, live the practices of the ideologies it promotes, and possibly prevent the pendulum from a dramatic shift back to homogeneity. There's a whole breadth of angry and oppressed voices who could benefit from the community and platform of punk music. It's the perfect medium to discuss taboo subjects that feminists like Shawna have done. Nonbinary, trans gender, and people of color voices are notoriously silenced, manipulated, and erased. Punk is a (broad) type of music and space where folks can effectively express their contempt for society, challenge cultural norms, expose oppressive rhetoric, and, hopefully, do so safely. Along with Alice Bag's concept of "punk" as a mentality and way of living outside of and challenging society's conventions that transcends a musical scene, then nonbinary and trans people of color are *already punk.*

The ways to include nonbinary and trans people of color is similar to the actions for inclusion of (white) women. Shawna actively works with a Baltimore chapter that promotes bystander intervention, which she explains is reducing or preventing harm by stepping into scenarios of harassment. She believes that "communities need to hold harassers and abusers accountable through education, and mediators can help them find the tools to stop harassing and abusing rather than just shunning them. Take care of our own which include victims and abusers. We *can* do it, so let's do it" (Potter). Just because the scene's rhetoric calls for a crowd against any oppressive structure doesn't mean that every person that participates in that space will actualize it. Even the punk community, which was born from anti-oppressive standards, has bigots, and it's up to the community to call them out and *actively create* an inclusive space. This kind of action will create safer spaces.

All of the informants use their agency to support audience members and other musicians in the punk community. Members of Post Pink like to engage with the crowd and help them feel welcomed by hanging out and chatting, Bacchae promotes and supports other performers by posting

about their shows and attending, Shawna calms down the mosh pit from the stage if it gets too violent. In order to prove there is a demand for marginalized folks' voices, the consumers need "to put their money where their mouths are" (Potter). This means financially supporting nonbinary and trans people of color bands. If we want to see nonbinary and trans people of color create music and play shows, then there has to be fiscal proof; they need the financial support that is also moral support.

Safety, accountability, and financially supporting these acts proves there is a demand for their inclusion and music. And it is more than a demand, it's a *need*. It's fighting for the right to be yourself. It's more than a performance. Nonbinary and trans people of color do not take off their identity at the end of the day; it is who they are, it's their lives. Including nonbinary and trans people of color is vital to a platform that preaches non-conformity, difference, and resistance. Punk needs diversity and diversity needs punk. I feel valid when I see one of my identities represented on the stage. I feel empowered when I see myself represented on the stage challenging oppressive power structures. Visibility is proof of existence and a resistance against the systems that reduce transgender people to research subjects, manipulate representations of people of color and erase nonbinary experiences.

Conclusion: Up the Punx!

I started questioning whether punk *music* ever did anything to change anything they sing about. There's an anarcho-folk-punk band, Wingnut Dishwashers Union, who sings the lyrics, "a punk rock song won't ever change the world! But I can tell you about a couple that changed me!" ("Fuck Shit Up"). And with that, I can see that the music, people, and productive rage built up by the vehicle of punk music *will* change the world. If these songs have the power to change me, *and* inspire enough individuals, *and* we harness the energy to create real, withstanding change within ourselves and our communities, then a punk rock song *could* change the world.

Punk can transcend the image of some vapid challenge against the status quo, rooted in angst and nonconformity, performed by so many "punks." My non-binary existence as a queer person of color is highly personal and is almost inseparable from the political. The rhetoric that riot grrrl and Kid Congo believed in, and that Nguyen disagreed with, is that the personal *is* political. Living in the American society that preaches a pseudo-

individualism and freedom, that prefers its citizens to color within the lines, that decides who is the "in-group" and the "out-group," the decision to be myself to the best of my ability *is* political. If punk is going to speak with the anti-oppressive, "fuck the man" mentality against "society," then this counter-cultural movement needs to practice what it preaches, keep people accountable, put money where their mouths are, be active in their communities, and start from the bottom up with interpersonal relationships. They need to hand the mic over to transgender and nonbinary people of color and keep the upswing going.

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