

Dialogues @ RU

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FOREWORD

Please enjoy this collection of student essays from Rutgers undergraduate research and writing courses. Every semester the Writing Program issues a call for papers from students enrolled Research in the Disciplines sections. While course topics vary widely, as evident in the just a few of this volume's titles, all "English 201" sections share a common pedagogy focusing on developing a critical analysis of texts, and a strong student voice. The work does not end when students find appropriate sources, in fact, that is the beginning. Critical insight, reflection, contemplation, and a thorough analysis of the texts, all contribute to the process of developing an independent and original idea. In learning how to craft an academic essay, students find themselves contributing to a scholarly discourse unfamiliar to them only months before. The best of this research is then selected for publication by an entirely undergraduate editorial board.

A quick sample of topics in this volume spans broad areas of interest and includes: notions of interiority and identity as expressed in fan-based narratives; the intersection of race and class in volunteer placement programs; a deconstruction of the model minority myth; textile waste and the second-hand clothing industry; and a critique of New York City's climate change plan. The essays here are the products of incredible effort and deep thought.

The authors work closely with student editors who are enrolled in the Writing Program's Editing Internship or Editing and Conference Planning Internship. All phases of the editorial process are collaborative as student-authors and student-editors revise papers for Dialogues@RU. A tremendous amount of work and dedication, from both authors and editors, is what makes this undergraduate journal proud to showcase its 14th volume.

I would like to acknowledge the Writing Program's continued commitment to Dialogues@RU, and the editing internships that produce it. A special note of thanks to Lynda Dexheimer, Executive Director of the Writing Program, editor, associate teaching professor, and most-beloved colleague. Her tireless efforts and constant problem-solving make her invaluable.

Tracy Budd
Co-editor
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Qurratul Akbar

Episode IV: A New Home

ABSTRACT

As the threat of the climate crisis continues to grow due to overpopulation and overexploitation of the planet, scientists have suggested the idea of extraterrestrial settlements as a solution. Current plans for this undertaking include the colonization of Mars or construction of space habitats similar to existing space stations. By considering the events that followed the voyage of Christopher Columbus from Europe to the Americas in 1492, hereafter referred to as the Columbian Exchange, this paper explores the possible benefits and risks of interfering with the natural course of the human population. Although space colonies would be an unprecedented scientific breakthrough that would ultimately resolve the climate crisis, the foreign location would prompt lasting effects on human civilization, such as potential disease outbreaks, development of slavery, and mutation of the human species. Alternatively, rather than repeating history once again, this paper emphasizes the importance of rectifying societal attitudes and stances regarding the treatment of habitats.

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away... The planet Earth is on the brink of falling apart. Due to the devastating effects of exponential human population growth, Earth is struggling to sustain life. Humans are now left with the choice of establishing colonies in outer space in order to escape their planet's destruction. However, history (in particular, the Columbian Exchange) demonstrates that when humans colonize a new environment, disastrous events occur. For example, European colonization of the New World led to the enslavement of Africans as well as exposed Native Americans to virulent diseases that ravaged their populations. Using the Columbian Exchange as a guide to enlighten their understanding on how space may not be their new home, the human population must decide to what extent the benefits outweigh the risks of venturing into the unknown ...

INTRODUCTION

Unlike any other groups of living organisms that have existed on planet Earth, the human species has continually manipulated its environ-

ment to exceed its carrying capacity. However, there seems to be an end in sight. The resources required to sustain the human population's uncontrolled growth surpass the supply of natural resources provided by Earth. Along with overpopulation, there are dozens of consequences that come along with the exploitation of the planet. In recent years, some scientists have begun to look beyond the limits of Earth as the solution to this crisis. Nevertheless, much controversy surrounds the idea of extraterrestrial colonies. Many wonder of possible threats that may arise from settling in space, while others believe it is the only chance of survival for the human species and thus worth the risk. To make this determination, this paper will use the Columbian Exchange as the theoretical framework to examine arguments for and against human existence in outer space. First, I will touch on the potential effects of interfering with the natural course of the human population, and provide a brief background on the various forms of extraterrestrial human settlement. Then, I will address the advantages of settling in space as a potential solution to Earth's overpopulation crisis. The paper will then identify the potential negative effects of space usage, namely disease, physical harm, and slavery, which I conclude pose a much greater threat to humans than is worth the risk.

UNNATURAL SELECTION

Due to resourcefulness and usage of tools, the human population was able to exceed its carrying capacity, or "the average population density or population size of a species below which its numbers tend to increase and above which its numbers tend to decrease because of shortages of resources" as defined by *Britannica*, and become the most evolved and superior species on the planet. Primitive species without access to tools can only rely on natural selection—the "natural process that results in the survival and reproductive success of individuals or groups best adjusted to their environment and that leads to the perpetuation of genetic qualities best suited to that particular environment," as defined by *Merriam-Webster*—to advance. Natural selection is the driving force of evolution. Although the human species is also affected by natural selection, it has the ability to *intentionally select for desirable traits*. This process of interfering with the natural mechanism of evolution is referred to as *unnatural*, or human-induced, selection. Whereas with natural selection, in which a population would have to depend on natural processes to select which genetic traits are best deemed fit for their environment, unnatural

selection eliminates this reliance on nature by substituting it with human influence. Due to this practice of unnatural selection, humans have been able to break free of natural limitations by changing their environment to meet their own needs. Proponents of extraterrestrial colonization thus argue that human-induced selection will allow us to travel space. Even though we are unable to accurately predict future outcomes, we can anticipate for potential possibilities through analysis of similar cases and situations. History has given us examples of the negative effects of altering the natural course of events. For example, an instance of this altering would be the Columbian Exchange of the 15th and 16th centuries. Nunn et al. in their work, “The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas,” describe this occurrence as “the exchange of diseases, ideas, food crops, and populations between the New World and Old Worlds following the voyage to the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492.” The “Old World” refers to the entire Eastern Hemisphere, while the “New World” refers to the newly founded Americas. Though introducing humans to a new environment will resolve the overpopulation crisis and bring about the discovery of new technology, the events following the Columbian Exchange—transfer of diseases, decimation of natives, enslavement of African populations, etc.—reveal very possible consequences of interfering with natural selection: that venturing into an unknown environment will create lasting detrimental effects on the future of humanity.

BACKGROUND OF SPACE COLONIES

What exactly would extraterrestrial human settlement entail?

There are two potential proposals for developing space settlements—colonization of Mars and space habitats. Due to its natural resources that can provide for biological life, Mars is likely to be the most suitable destination for human colonies. Nations such as the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and China have announced their plans of exploration to Mars. In addition, companies such as SpaceX, Blue Origin, and Google have made several discoveries in the hopes of achieving the same goal. The CEO of SpaceX, Elon Musk, has stated in a press conference: “History suggests there will be some doomsday event, and I would hope you would agree that becoming a multi-planetary species would be the right way to go. I want to make Mars seem possible... like something that we can do in our lifetimes” (Mack, “Elon Musk...”). Although plans to travel

to Mars are underway, due to the current inadequate technology, unresolved health harms, and expenses of terraforming, or transforming a planet so that it resembles the Earth in order for it to support human life, another suggestion is that of creating orbiting space habitats (Williams). These habitats would be similar to current space stations, but would serve as permanent settlements. Globus et al. in their article, “Space Settlement: An Easier Way,” simply describe space habitats as “a home in space where people go to work, live, and, for those who wish, raise their kids” (2). They argue that space settlements are a much more viable option for human expansion than Martian colonies. Without describing the minute details and technicalities, there are advantages and disadvantages of both proposals, however, both likely routes would have their own impact on the future of humankind. The potential positive and negative effects of these plans need to be taken into account before determining whether extraterrestrial human settlement is the solution for current environmental concerns.

ADVANTAGES OF SPACE COLONIES FOR THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

Overpopulation—and its consequential environmental effects—is one of the primary reasons behind the growing interest in space colonization. The article, “The Benefits of Colonizing Space: Space Habitats and the O’Neill Cylinder,” explains that space habitats will solve overpopulation for many nations on Earth. It states:

Using the materials available in the Solar System, there is the potential to build enough surface area within space habitats to possibly house billions and even trillions of people. Populations would have the space to expand sustainably without destroying any current ecosystems, as well as relieving the pressure off Earth to provide resources. The planetary population could be stabilized and supported with the extra space to inhabit and develop agricultural plantations for food. (Futurism)

Since the scope of the universe is incomprehensibly huge, it stands to reason there is enough space and resources to sustain the human population, rendering the issue of overpopulation completely null. Outer space can hold trillions of people, which makes the issue of overpopulation nonexistent. Complications of overpopulation include loss

of fresh water, reduction in biodiversity, decline in air quality, depletion of natural resources, emergence of new diseases, increased deforestation and habitat loss, and elevated global warming. (Baus 26-36). Ultimately, expanding into space would lower demand for Earth's natural resources, resulting in reduced environmental exploitation, and thus creating a safer, cleaner Earth for those who remain.

Along with resolving the central crisis of overpopulation, human settlement of outer space could result in other unintentional benefits. For comparison, the Columbian Exchange initially brought about the trading of crops, ideas, and technology, which then led to the progression of human civilization. Nunn et al. explain:

Using a difference-in-differences estimation strategy, we compare the pre- and post-adoption differences in population growth of Old World countries that could adopt the potato with Old World countries that could not. We find that the potato had a significant positive impact on population growth, explaining 12 percent of the increase in average population after the adoption of the potato. We also estimate the effect the potato had on urbanization, a measure that is closely correlated with GDP. We find that 47 percent of the post-adoption increase in urbanization is explained by the potato. (Nunn 170)

As the results indicate, the parts of the world that were directly involved were transformed in a way that would not have been possible if this introduction to a new environment did not occur. The adoption of the New World crop not only increased the population of the countries that integrated the potato into their agricultural production but also influenced urbanization. Particularly at this point in time, urbanization, or the development of cities, could be correlated to economic growth that resulted in the Industrial Revolution, which was, according to Britannica, “the process of change from an agrarian and handicraft economy to one dominated by industry and machine manufacturing.” Furthermore:

Historian Alfred Crosby (1989, p. 666) describes the significance of the transfer of food crops between the continents, writing: ‘The coming together of the continents was a prerequisite for the population explosion of the past two centuries, and certainly played an important role in the Industrial revolution. The transfer across the ocean of the staple food crops of the Old and New Worlds made possible the former.’ (qtd. in Nunn 167)

As Crosby, and thus Nunn et. al explain, without the meeting of the Old and New Worlds, there would not have been this revolutionary change that would have a far greater impact than anticipated for centuries onward. Besides the fact that New World crops transformed the Old World economy and brought forth the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, the crops had transformed the Old World diet due to caloric and nutritional improvements, complementing existing foods by increasing vitamin intake and improving taste, as well as evolving local cuisines (Nunn et. al 167). These changes in diet led to overall improvement of health and better living standards. Based on this historical account of the economic and lifestyle benefits of the Columbian Exchange, it is possible that discoveries made in outer space can transform and progress human civilization due to economic benefits and lifestyle changes.

Just as the Columbian Exchange had a great impact on the progression of the human population, so too can the implementation of unnatural selection. Many people fear the unforeseen and irreversible consequences of human intervention in natural and biological processes, however, if humans were limited to the natural progression of events, then recent advancements to improve humankind would not be possible. For example, Linda Groff discusses the biotechnology revolution in her article “Future of Evolution of Humanity,” stating: “[t]he biotechnology revolution involves various aspects, which all raise important ethical questions, and which all involve humans ‘playing God’ and intervening in what were previously natural processes of biological evolution” (Groff 64). Due to our resourcefulness and innovative technology, humans have the unique ability to increase our chances of survival by eliminating possible diseases and improving overall fitness and health. Gene editing, the intentional changing of human DNA, is an example of how unnatural selection leads to the success of the human species. Howard et al. in their article, “One Small Edit for Humans, One Giant Edit for Humankind?” describe some of the ways gene editing is being used in the scientific community:

With some clinical trials underway, somatic genetic editing for therapeutic purposes is certainly much closer to being offered in the clinic. For example, several clinical trials on HIV are ongoing [3, 4]; in 2015 an infant with leukaemia was treated with modified immune cells (using TALENs) from a healthy donor [5]. Moreover, in the autumn of 2016, a Chinese group became ‘the first to inject a person with cells that contain genes edited using the CRISPR-Cas9 technique’ within the context of a clinical trial for aggressive lung

cancer [6]. With such tools, gene editing is being touted as a feasible approach to treat or even cure certain single-gene diseases such as beta-thalassaemia and sickle-cell disease through somatic gene editing [3]. (2)

Rather than being wary and cautious of what the vast cosmos holds, humankind should view the exploration of space as a scientific breakthrough, which contains infinite possibilities and opportunities to advance human civilization. Unnatural selection can in fact create a positive impact on human civilization while providing insight on the benefits of changing human history. Extraterrestrial human existence can change the course of human history beyond what would be possible if the species were to be bound to Earth. For example, just by beginning to plan for the possibility of space exploration and settlement, there have already been several advancements to human information and understanding. In his article, "Spaceward ho! The Future of Humans in Space," Mark Heppner discusses hibernation, a concept that seemed unlikely outside of science fiction, as a possible way for humans to extend their lifetimes during space trips. He explains, "In fact, space agencies... have identified specific chemicals that trigger hibernation and synthetic derivatives have been shown to be effective in non-hibernating animals (Heppener S12)." Evidence points to the realization of ideas that were once considered fictional, like human hibernation. Imagine how human civilization would transform and progress if we decided to settle on Mars. Through analysis of the positive effects that can stem from unnatural selection events and the Columbian Exchange, we can arrive at the conclusion that expansion into outer space can lead to improvements in human lifestyles and scientific breakthroughs.

DRAWBACKS OF SPACE COLONIES FOR THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

Critics of space colonizing argue that the risks of space travel must be heavily considered before reaping its benefits. Dirk Gibson in his book, *Terrestrial and Extraterrestrial Space Dangers: Outer Space Perils, Rocket Risks and the Health Consequences of the Space Environment*, discusses the various threats of outer space such as intrinsic space phenomenon (asteroids, near-Earth objects, comets, meteorites, meteoroids, space debris, satellites, radiation, black holes, space weather, centaurs, supernovas, superbubbles); transportation difficulties (rocket dangers, rocket

take-off dangers, in-flight and landing accidents, space saturation), and space-induced health degradation (sleep deprivation, bones degradation, vision degradation, flattened eyeballs, cataracts, mental health disorders, sensory deprivation, loneliness, cardiovascular issues, brain damage, space sickness, digestive and immune disruption, muscular atrophy, etc.) (iii). If technology were to advance to the point where some of the effects of these risks could be reduced, humans would still need to adjust to these drastic conditions.

Yet, humans do have the potential to adjust, assimilate, or evolve. Since humans do have the potential to eventually evolve permanently if exposed to these threats of the new environment for a greater duration of time, there would be many adjustments made by humans. Although it is impossible to know exactly how the human body would change, since such an event has yet to occur, there would reasonably be some adaptation to the conditions of space. In their article “Human Microevolution in Outer Space,” Saniotis, Henneberg, and Ebrahimi state:

The nature of outer space travel removes humans from the terrestrial environment and places them in an artificial one where there is micro-gravity, confinement to small spaces, no diurnal/circadian patterns, disruption to circulation, vestibular and visual systems which may cause changes in function and neurohormonal activity in the human brain, especially centres such as the hippocampus. Moreover, assuming increased significance in the long-term isolation, there is limitation of social contacts to a very small group that is artificially structured and likely multicultural. With increasing distance from the Earth, immediate communication with friends and relatives becomes difficult and social separation increases. (Saniotis et al. 63)

As evidenced, critics are wary of the potential dangers of space exploration on the body. NASA has conducted studies that aim to identify the changes that would occur to genes if humans were to settle in space, such as the case study of the NASA twins. In this study, the changes that occurred to the genes of a pair of identical twins, as one remained on Earth and the other traveled in space for a year, were measured. Kelli Mars reports:

Scott’s telomeres (endcaps of chromosomes that shorten as one ages) actually became significantly longer in space. While this finding was presented in 2017, the team verified this unexpected change with multiple assays and genomics testing. Additionally, a new finding is

that the majority of those telomeres shortened within two days of Scott's return to Earth. Another interesting finding concerned what some call the "space gene", which was alluded to in 2017. Researchers now know that 93% of Scott's genes returned to normal after landing. However, the remaining 7% point to possible longer term changes in genes related to his immune system, DNA repair, bone formation networks, hypoxia, and hypercapnia. (Mars)

Some may argue that if there were changes to the DNA of someone orbiting the Earth in a space station for a year, the changes presented for just the three-year travel time to Mars, not including settlement in space, could result in even more damaging genomic changes. It could be argued that these risks would otherwise be avoidable if humans were to remain on Earth, however, Marc Heppener and many other proponents of space colonies argue about possible biological adjustments. He states:

The most remarkable outcome of these studies, however, is our understanding of the ability of the human body to adapt to the new environment. After a few days of space flight, most adverse effects are usually compensated for and humans are able to survive well in space for prolonged periods of time. After a few weeks, the situation of weightlessness has almost become as natural to the body and mind as the normal Earth environment. (Heppener S7)

In the span of a few weeks, the human body can adjust to sustain its life processes even in an environment drastically different from Earth. Humans have a natural ability to change to whatever external stimuli they are presented with, whether it be in Mars or a space habitat.

However, due to this ability to biologically adapt, many fear for the possible mutation of the human species. Groff explains that "[t]he outer space revolution... extends our human habitat from an earth only to an extended earth-space environment. Some have said humans going to space is as big an evolutionary leap as when the fish first came out of the sea onto the land." (65). As with the transition from sea to land, there could be a similar emergence of new species if humans were to go beyond the extent of what is naturally defined for them. Groff further expands this idea by stating:

...Their own physical bodies may change and evolve, as they respond to the zero gravity and weightlessness of space (or to the created, artificial gravity of a space colony or station), where constant exercise

will be necessary to prevent their bones from atrophying, and where their bodies may become elongated, to the point where eventually their bodies would not be able to tolerate the greater gravity of earth, making it impossible for them to return to earth to live. Their offspring might also evolve physically, in ways different from humans on earth, creating the seeds for a possible new humanoid-type species to emerge in future. (68-69)

Many would argue that humans may evolve into a new species, potentially endangering the original human population. Groff proposes the idea that war could result between the two species, stating "... followed by increasing interaction, it could initially lead to conflict, and even war (as noted above) - if not carefully managed on all sides (due to people's initial fear of the unknown)" (71). Therefore, although the introduction to a new environment produces initial benefits, the downfalls are potentially devastating.

The Columbian Exchange provides examples of one of the most devastating inadvertent consequences of unnatural selection: disease, both bodily and environmental. Foreign diseases brought to the New World by invaders and the slave trade decimated the Native population. To predict what could occur if humans were to live in a new environment, Gibson discusses this idea of foreign microbes:

McGarrigle provided an assessment of the risk posed to the Earth by extraterrestrial microbes... 'An intentional or accidental release of microbiological organisms could have severe consequences: physical, environmental and economic. In the worst case there could be physical infection and possible death to the researchers, astronauts, or persons on celestial bodies such as Earth.' (Gibson 297)

Gibson further explains that not only could foreign microbes in outer space pose a threat to humanity but also how microbes of our native environment become much more virulent in outer space, as was the case of Salmonella bacteria. These bacteria in outer space "responded to the altered gravity by becoming more virulent, with changed expression of 167 different genes" (293). Evidently, placing microbes in a new environment can create damaging genetic changes.

Similarly, these damaging microbial changes can have negative consequences on our ecosystem and environment. In their article, "Evolution: Unnatural Selection," Stenseth et al. describe these consequences:

Using a meta-analysis of previously published data, the authors compared the rates of phenotypic change in 40 populations subject to human harvesting with the rates seen in 20 systems that experienced selection from natural forces (for example, Darwin's finches) and with the rates in 25 systems that experienced other human disturbance (for example, pollution)... The recorded rates of change in harvested populations were astonishingly high, outpacing changes arising from natural agents by 300% and those from other anthropogenic causes by 50%. The changes were both rapid and dramatic in magnitude: declines in morphological traits (such as body size) averaged about 20%, and shifts in life-history traits (such as reproductive age) averaged nearly 25%. (803)

Nunn et al. extend the effects of environmental disease to the rise of slavery:

Native American populations were decimated by Old World diseases. This depopulation along with the production of valuable Old World crops like sugar cane and coffee then fueled the demand for labor that gave rise to the transatlantic slave trade. The result was the forced movement of over twelve million slaves from Africa to the Americas and devastating political, social, and economic consequences for the African continent. Following the slave trade, the African continent was divided and brought under European colonial rule, an event that some have argued would have been impossible without the discovery of quinine in the New World. Moreover, the knowledge of how to harvest and process rubber, learned from natives of the Andes, had particularly regrettable consequences for those in Africa's Congo region. (Nunn 183-184)

The effects of the Columbian Exchange still impact our socio-political world today, and hint at the consequences of human settlement in outer space, from the spread of disease to the development of slavery.

Therefore, even though there are benefits of changing our surrounding environment to fulfill our own human needs, we need to take into consideration the negative impact these actions have on our surrounding ecosystem. In the case of space exploration, we may reap the initial benefits of extracting resources, however, there may be lasting effects that can disrupt the natural environment and in turn, cause even greater complications.

CONCLUSION

Although the events of unnatural selection and the Columbian Exchange do not equate to exact predictions of the effects the development of space colonies would have on humanity, they convey an important idea for any serious endeavor: the significance of taking into consideration inadvertent consequences. Just as the Columbian Exchange and events of unnatural selection have proven to provide initial benefits such as improving technology and lifestyles, there are greater lasting effects that humans do not take in account, such as devastation of native populations, slavery, and detrimental changes to the environment. The current state of Earth's environment suggests that human beings do not comprehend the consequences of their actions. It stands to reason that before we attempt extraterrestrial colonization, we should analyze how our current home has been and will continue to be affected by natural and unnatural selection, scientific and evolutionary advancements, and of course, colonialism. Ultimately, the humans need to completely understand their current home before blasting off to find a new home, a new hope...

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Marianna Allen

Saving Dance

ABSTRACT

This paper will explore why it is necessary for dance performance to shift away from the concert setting and towards the inclusion of technology in order to maintain relevance in our technology-saturated world. Through the use of technologies such as video and animation, choreographers are able to foster creativity in dance works through the manipulation of space and time. Further, manipulating physical elements of performance through the use of technology allows dance performance to address issues that are relevant in today's society, and maintain familiarity with a present-day audience. These technologies will also allow choreographers and dancers to connect with each other online and will lead to a larger, global audience through the Internet. While this may lead to a loss of the physicality of experiencing dance, it is necessary, given that future generations will only continue to advance technology, and will become less and less interested in concert dance. Therefore, dance performance must shift towards the world of technology, so it is able to adapt to society over time. Perhaps in the future, research may explore the results of this shift in dance, including the re-creation of physicality through virtual reality systems or other innovative technological systems.

SAVING DANCE: A SHIFT FROM THE THEATER TO THE COMPUTER

Over the past ten years, audience attendance rates for dance performances have dropped drastically. Even well-known dance companies such as the Cedar Lake Ballet have been forced to close due to lack of funding and minimal audience presence. A recent study showed that only 5.6% of the adult population attended any type of live dance performance in the year 2012, compared to the whopping 59.3% of the adult population that attended at least one movie showing in a theater (Cohen). Perhaps the reason for this decline is the ever-increasing integration of technology within our society. As explained by Sergio Basbaum in his article regarding technology and perception, the saturation of technology within society has led to a change in the way individuals interact with the world. We have become so accustomed to technological stimulation that experiences which do not possess this technological media become

less interesting, or harder to process in their true form (Basbaum, 132). As technology becomes a more integrated part of our daily routines, audiences become accustomed to technologically-stimulating media, or forms of online interaction with simulated visual content, not excluding various forms of performance art, making traditional concert dance seem less intriguing, inventive, or up-to-date in comparison. The introduction of technology into every facet of our daily lives has not only affected the way we behave, learn about, and perceive the world around us, it has also created a new lifestyle that seems to hold the performance arts in lower esteem. If this is true, it is possible that the most viable way to preserve the art of dance performance is to combine it with technology, creating a new multi-faceted form of art that fits into the technologically-infused twenty-first century. In fact, a shift towards the integration of technology in dance has already begun over the past decade, as new inventions and applications of technological systems within dance have created a whole new type of art: one in which space and time can be technologically manipulated to fit a choreographer's vision, and dance performance can be accessed online by virtually anyone at any time. This paper will explore how the utilization of technology within dance may be the most viable way to preserve the art form as a performance art. Further, it will discuss how the use of technology not only makes dance performance more relatable to an audience, but also allows for a deeper and more immersive form of the art, one with possibilities that concert dance does not provide.

TECHNOLOGY AND MANIPULATION: RELATING TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The constant influence of technology on our sensory perception characteristic of the twenty-first century alters the way we respond to dance as audience members, decreasing our interest and curiosity in concert dance performances. The immersion of technology within society creates an environment in which we become accustomed to a constant high rate of sensory reception. As explained by Sergio Roclav Basbaum, the "pervasive presence of technological (or digital) mediation in all aspects of our lives takes us to a condition... where all of our senses are attracted to normalized experiences of coupling with similar pixel screens and their derivatives" (Basbaum, 132). Therefore, because we have assimilated technology into every facet of our lives, we do not even realize that the way we live life is being altered as we immerse ourselves further

into technological systems. Even simple tasks, such as communication, shopping, and gaining information about the world around us, now include technology. Because of our “coupling” with technology, humans now naturally gravitate towards objects and events which use technology over ones that do not have a digital influence, because of their familiarity (Basbaum, 129). This familiarity comes as a result of frequent and meaningful interactions with technology on a daily basis, as is characteristic of life in the present day. Proof of Basbaum’s claim can be seen in all aspects of life, as humans seem inextricably connected to technologically stimulating items, such as phones, computers, and televisions, choosing video games over board games, EDM over classical music, and movies over books. The same is true for dance: our society is increasingly less interested in attending and viewing live dance performances. In fact, attendance to a live dance performance dropped by almost 2,000 individuals per year from 2003 to 2013 (“Population in...”). Thus, it is clear that without a shift in the format of dance performance to include the technological stimulation that has become integrated into today’s world, dance may not be able to survive as a performance art.

This imperative shift in the format of dance performance alters the way dance is perceived, opening the doors for a new environment to exist in which the audience can interact with art that is more relatable to twenty-first century audiences. This can be stated simply as what Birringer outlines as an imperative for a new “intelligent stage” (Birringer, 85). An “intelligent stage” is the context out of which a piece of art is created, as well as the environment in which it is perceived and evaluated (Birringer, 85). The current “intelligent stage” of dance is a way of constructing movement and coordinating the setting (theater) and conditions (elements such as costuming, lighting, sound) under which it will best convey the choreographer’s intended message to an audience. This means of creation, however, does not fit the paradigm of today’s society, as the culture of attending live performance slowly dies out. With easy access to the arts on social media and the internet, physical attendance to live productions is becoming less common. In addition, live concert dance tends to focus on the surreal or physical elements of humanity, rather than technology. Performances that do not use or address technology seem foreign and leave a large portion of today’s culture unaddressed. Therefore, a new “intelligent stage” must be utilized in order to allow dance to reinstate itself as a societally relatable art form for twenty-first century audiences.

This new “intelligent stage” not only addresses the technological sensory reception that is now integrated into human perception, but also provides a more relatable context for dance to be created and viewed in an updated fashion (Birringer, 87). This shift towards using technology to affect audience relatability and sensory experience can be seen in the technology-based performance *Ghostcatching* by Bill T. Jones, in collaboration with Riverbed Design Company. In this technologically-rooted dance performance, computer systems were used to track a dancer’s movements, which were then saved as objective data. This data was then uploaded onto a computer and converted into animation, portraying a sketch of the dancer’s body and movements without the physical presence of the dancer (Birringer, 89). In this riveting performance, outlines of a body, which appear to be sketched in chalk, move and interact with the space, a black screen, leaving lines and scribbles of chalk in the space around the moving “body.” The drawings sometimes multiply, and the space becomes more and more filled with lines, scribbles, and moving chalk-personas. Meanwhile, voice recordings of childhood experiences and personal encounters echo in the space, creating a compelling piece of art which tells the story of being haunted by one’s past, as the animations relive and interact with their own past actions (“13. Ghostcatching”). By transferring movement into animation, Jones allows the audience to see the figures interact with their own past movements, commenting further on the way we relive childhood and past experiences. In this case, the “intelligent stage” of technological creation and viewing of the performance not only creates a piece that humans are inherently more interested in watching, but also ensures that Jones’ commentary is presented to an audience in a way that is relatable and understandable. Since the outlines interact with the visible markings they leave behind, it allows the “body” to travel through its own past. The movement of the figures through their past actions creates a visible and concrete message about dealing with one’s past, as the audience physically sees the marks left behind from the figure’s original movements. This manipulation is made possible by technological systems, allowing the space utilized over time to remain visible. In addition, its commentary on technology’s ability to document and preserve our past, never allowing any post or picture to be completely erased from the history of the internet, is a message relevant to today’s society. Jones uses technology to comment on this, as the chalk lines left by the movement of the dancers remain in space instead of fading with time. As the dancing figures travel through the lines left behind by their

movements, it is as though Jones charts the baggage carried around by each individual from their cyber footprints over time.

In addition, technology provides choreographers with the means to visually manipulate performance elements such as time, space, and the body. These manipulations, only possible through technological means, further allow the art form to evolve and break boundaries set in place by physical limitations. This makes dance more accessible to its audience, as it allows for a clearer expression of a choreographer's message. As Birringer explains, "the question is not whether human bodies are obsolete, but how they can be redesigned, and how such incorporations of technologies change the stories we tell and dance about 'being human' in the twenty-first century" (Birringer, 92). Here, he explores how manipulating space and time, as well as the image of a body, can drastically change a choreographer's message, allowing elements to be changed to create a relevant piece of art. Further, the physical human body is not lost in this process, but instead manipulated to be more applicable and relevant to the art being created. As seen in the dance video performance *Rapid Still* by Brian Brooks, choreographer of dances for film, the manipulation of time and space is sometimes vital to the message of the dance. This nearly two-minute solo consists entirely of extremely short video clips that have been linked together into one film. The video captures moments of the dancer's suspension in the air, making it appear as if the dancer is constantly in a state of either suspension or free fall, as he contorts his body in the air and hovers around the space within the camera's view (Brooks). This performance uses video splicing to connect clips of movement, completely altering space and time, which would not be possible without the use of technology. Consequently, Brooks' visual manipulation of space and time acts as a social commentary on the grasp of technology on the human mind and our way of life, given that once the dancer finally falls to the ground, a sigh of relief is let out, as if he has been physically released from the grip of technology (Brooks). Brooks' commentary on the control of technology over the way we think and behave in society is thus explored, somewhat ironically, through the use of technological manipulation. This irony displays Brooks' intended message clearly, showing that technology is inherently inescapable in today's day and age. This in turn allows the performance to possess relatability in today's society, and reinforces the idea that technology controls our lives by mandating that the performance be viewed via video, rather than live performance. Brooks' use of technology for the manipulation of time and space allows the piece

to maintain relevance with regard to what Birringer puts forth as one of the most important elements of dance performance today: addressing what “‘being human’ in the twenty-first century” really means (Birringer, 92). Brooks uses this piece to break barriers set by physical limitations in order to address the presence of technology in our society, while using technology as its main choreographic and structural element.

The ability to manipulate elements in order to create more relevant and artistic performances acts as a catalyst for the perpetuation of technology within dance. This concept of technology’s self-perpetuation is best articulated by Basbaum, who remarks that “technology” inherently refers to anything that seeks to gain “control of nature and matter” (Basbaum, 128). With the ability to control physical elements that are otherwise invariable, we begin to push the limits of how much we can manipulate and control the world around us. This leads to a “context in which technology is inescapable,” because it creates a cycle that brings about more and more technological influence (Basbaum, 129). While manipulating physical elements to reach a given outcome may have a negative connotation in society, in various forms of art, including dance, it fosters innovation and creativity. As dance scholar Marcia Almeida observes about our assimilation with technological systems in dance, “it is from experience (sensitive knowledge) that this new body technology is formulated, which will serve to increase body potential and lead to the acquisition of other skills” (Almeida, 53). The use of technology allows for manipulation of elements in art to become habitual learned behavior, opening the doors for new types of dance to be created. This self-perpetuating nature of technology is one of the most compelling reasons that live concert dance may not continue to thrive in a world where a new technologically-inclined “intelligent stage” for dance performance exists. As seen in both *Ghostcatching* and *Rapid Still*, the use of technology is what makes dance performance relatable to an audience. If they had not been produced with technological influence, these pieces would lose their meaning as works of art and would fail to reflect the culture of the twenty-first century. Technology makes dance relevant to a modern-day audience. As indicated by Basbaum’s theory of technological “coupling,” concert dance that does not make use of this technology will be outdated, and unable to address current issues and concepts in society, as it will no longer fit into our technologically-stimulated world.

ACCESSIBILITY AND THE REPLACEMENT OF PHYSICALITY

Accessibility is a key element in maintaining an audience for dance, and technology opens up a wide variety of access points to dance performance. The presence of dance on the Internet drastically broadens the potential audience of a dance performance in comparison to a live concert performance. In her article about the preservation of dance performance, Jess Allen discusses this concept at length, describing how the “versatility of navigation between different media” allows us to address the problem of accessibility in dance performance, widening the possibilities of how we are able to access the performance, as well as “*who* is able to ‘view’/interact with it given their level of (dis)ability” (Allen, 67). The internet provides the easiest and most accessible way to view dance performance, compared to live performance, based on the criteria of expense, travel, and physical advertisement. In addition, formats in which performances can be viewed electronically allow for anyone with access to the technology to view a performance, regardless of factors such as socio-economic status, physical disability, or geographical location. For example, a hip-hop performance from the Royal Family Dance Crew aired online as the music video for Justin Bieber’s “Sorry,” receiving over 2.99 billion views by August of 2018 (Fitz-Gerald). Likewise, Michael Jackson’s dance video for “Thriller” currently has over 500 million views, even though it was created in a time when technology was not as integral into society as it is today (Jackson). In comparison, one of the largest dance theater spaces in the country, Radio City Music Hall, contains only roughly 6,000 seats. This means that in one live performance, any given dance show can only be experienced by about 6,000 people, while one performance posted onto YouTube can potentially be viewed by billions of individuals, because it is accessible to a broad audience. With this broadened margin of accessibility, dance performances available on the Internet have much larger and more diverse audience demographics than in-person performances, because nearly anyone can access these performances. This drastic change in accessibility means that dance performance could reach a significantly broader audience through the Internet if it embraces this new “intelligent stage.”

The access provided by the Internet also allows for artists from different locations to connect with one another, making it possible to create meaningful, immersive art with diverse artistic influences, which

can then be viewed by a more diverse audience. Ivani Santana describes how technology can be used to connect dancers to one another, exploring the mechanisms by which technological systems connect dancers and audiences worldwide, such as through moving images, videos, or avatars which enable “their body to travel through cyberspace, reaching their remote partner wherever they might be” (Santana, 191). The use of video conferencing as an immersive dance technology has added a new dimension to the traditional idea of dancers existing in one shared space to perform together. In a video conference performance called *Escape Valley*, the Australian Company in Space created a duet of two dancers, one performing in Arizona and one in Melbourne. As the dancers completed their own choreography on separate continents, a video camera linked the two together, layering the videos to make it appear as if they were performing cohesively in one shared space (Birringer, 92). Birringer describes this piece, writing that the performance mixed the “movement of the bodies in a spellbinding, transparent symmetry across a vast spatial and temporal gap” (Birringer, 92). As Birringer notes, the ability to connect dancers through video allows for enhanced creativity in performance and creates a surreal transportation of the body through time and space. This utilization of technology to bridge the gap between dancers on opposite sides of the globe demonstrates the ability of our ever-growing and evolving technological systems to make dance performance more accessible to humans all over the world, a concept that has never before been plausible. This kind of technology within dance performance serves as a valid way to create performances for more than one geographical audience and allows for the collaboration of diversely influenced choreographers. By connecting with other artists, choreographers and dancers can broaden their own understanding of dance and add new life to their artistic creations. This technological connection not only allows different genres and types of dance to be spread more quickly and fully across the globe, but also allows for a larger and more diverse audience. This in turn could encourage dance performance to be broadcast throughout the world, greatly expanding its accessibility and exposure without mandating physical presence from an audience.

Although technology allows for wider accessibility by removing the mandate for physical presence, some argue that virtual reality systems remove a vital element of human physicality for the audience, creating a “threat to replace embodied human experience” (Allen, 62). However, with new software and technology systems, human physicality is not

completely removed from dance. As stated by the philosopher Andy Clark, “the sense of location is a mental construct, one formed by our implicit awareness of our current set of potentials for embodied action” (qtd. In Santana, 192). Virtual reality systems, in fact, promise the reinstatement of embodied experience through technological dance. In her article, Sita Popat explores new virtual reality technologies, and their uncanny sensory resemblance to physical experience. She further explains how the “mental construct” of location is broken down through virtual reality, as “these environments allow us to ask questions about embodiment and humanity through the experiences of our individual bodies in a way that has never been possible before” (Popat, 359). This ability to experience all of the physical sensations of being present in a certain environment without actually being there could allow virtual reality users to have virtually the same experience as an individual watching a live dance performance in a physical theater without ever having to leave their homes. Virtual reality systems are constantly evolving to incorporate more realistic physical sensations, even though our bodies are in a completely different environment physically.

While virtual reality systems have not yet been fully explored with regard to attending a live dance performance, other video games and real-life reenactments of various situations, such as war-torn environments and hot air balloon crashes, suggest that the creation and use of these systems to replace the theater is not too far from the present (Popat, 366). Further, the more virtual reality experience we have, the more we experience real levels of stress, fear, and other natural reactions in virtual settings, despite our awareness that we are not physically present in that simulated environment (Popat, 368). Popat describes her experience with a simulated hot air balloon crash within a virtual reality system, explaining that she physically braced herself for impact when the simulated hot air balloon neared towards a steep mountainside, even though she was aware that she was not physically present in the situation (Popat, 362). This type of technology could easily transform the world of dance performance, given that its realism makes its participants perceive themselves as truly present in a contrived situation. This could mean that by allowing us to become accustomed to virtual reality systems to view and interact with dance performance, the world of VR could replace the embodied experience of dance without us ever feeling that we are “missing out” on physical experience, allowing dance performance to exist in a physical sense, while maintaining its ability to be accessed at any time by any audience.

Physical simulations of performance can eliminate the barriers to attending live dance performances, such as price and location, which increases the likelihood that performances will be seen by a larger number of people than they would in theaters.

In addition to recreating the physicality of dance performance, technology allows dance performance to be more immersive, encouraging the audience to partake in the creation of dance and control of various performance elements through online systems. As stated by Pauline Brooks, "technology can be seen to be a partner in our exploration of live and virtual human bodies, space and movement" (Brooks, 134), allowing for a more immersive and exciting audience experience, given that the audience plays a role in the actions that are performed in front of them. As described by Birringer, an immersive website designed by Richard Lord does just this, creating an experience in which the audience's "point-and-click interaction with the site and its QuickTime movies that open up and assemble the motion of the dance images" allows the audience to control their own performance experience (Birringer, 91). This online performance follows dancers throughout five sections, each performed in a different water-based environment. The audience members, users of the website, have direct control over the dances that are performed, as they "use the mouse to explore the environment and see how the dance and dancers respond" ("Waterfall"). This immersive website allows the audience to actively participate in the performance themselves, directly manipulating the dance environment through the internet. In systems such as this, which allow for a deeper interaction within dance, the audience can not only experience a performance from any location, they can also interact with art in a creative format in which they personally affect the performance, rather than just sitting in a theater and viewing it. This online formatting, which resembles that of a video-game, allows for dance to be viewed in a more familiar format to which individuals of today's generation can directly relate, while encouraging an interactive artistic experience for the audience.

Despite technology's numerous benefits for the creation of more relatable, accessible, and immersive art, some argue that physical attendance at a live dance performance is an experience that cannot be transferred into an online format without losing its value. Dance critic Chris Jones describes the performance of Crystal Pite's "Grace Engine" by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, a renowned contemporary dance company. Jones states, "I swear you can feel the blood pumping through the

dancers—but you also intuit that the forces you’re watching are far larger than anything in your mind’s eye” (Jones). Jones’ review of this fantastical embodiment of dance is expressed in a way that shows the incredible impact of experiencing a live dance performance first-hand. In viewing the physical dancers on a stage, one is reminded that dance is a physical art form: the embodiment of an artistic vision portrayed through the human body. This experience may be an element of dance performance that is impossible to articulate empirically, evoking feeling and physical connection between audience and performer that cannot be captured through a video or simulation. Anyone attending a performance by the famous Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, for example, can note that seeing the sweat fly off of the dancers into the air or the heaving of their chests while they breathe are elements of physical performance that cannot be replicated. Despite this irreplaceable physicality, Jones states in his article that while Hubbard Street’s performance transcended the corporeal experience, and “dehumanize[d] the human body,” the theater seemed “less than one-quarter full,” revealing a “depressingly thin crowd” (Jones). Despite the undeniable impact of physically attending a dance performance, this physical experience does not currently exist in a way that is realistic for its preservation in the twenty-first century, as appreciation for the performing arts continues to drop, regardless of the improvement of art-focused educational systems and Internet exposure. While transferring dance performance into an art form that is inseparable with technology could lead to the loss of the physical experience that is characteristic of dance, it seems that this physicality alone is not enough to keep dance relevant. It is necessary to redefine dance as an interface with technology in order to re-contextualize it to relate to twenty-first century audiences.

Because of the current shift in society towards technology, there must be a change in the way dance performance is created and perceived by an audience. Through the inclusion of technology in dance performance, artists have the ability to utilize systems of video, sound, and animation to enhance creativity in choreography. As a result, performances inclusive with technology are much more relatable to twenty-first century audiences. This technology will further connect dancers and choreographers worldwide to transform dance into a globally collaborative art form, as well as launching dance onto an accessible platform for all audiences. Unless dance is able to update itself to fit the influences of technology in the twenty-first century, it is possible that dance performance will become extinct in the future. While many would like to hold

out hope that our generation will inherit the same appreciation for dance as previous generations did, it is unrealistic to assume that technology's importance and relevance in society will decrease in the near or even distant future. Therefore, in order to preserve dance performance, the field must shift from the theater to the computer screen in order to remain relevant in our technology-obsessed society.

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Identity Displacement: How Psychological and Social Factors Intertwine to Impact Refugee Identity

INTRODUCTION

Although civilian displacement has been a recurring issue, the world has witnessed a sudden influx of mass civilian displacement in recent years, primarily due to violence and conflict in the regions from which people flee. This conflict encompasses both international conflicts and a nation's internal affairs, which can include internal civilian oppression and civil war, but are both characterized with physical violence that causes the area to become unsafe for innocent civilians to peacefully reside. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2017 Global Trends Report states that a total of 68.5 million people have been reported to be forcibly displaced from their homes by the end of 2017, with 40 million classified as internally displaced people and 25.4 million international refugees.

As expected, a crisis of this scale has attracted the attention of much scholarly research, along with ample media attention, but most of this attention is directed towards the physical, political, and humanitarian ramifications of the entire situation. Prior research delves into the political causes of conflict, and the socio-economic factors that force individuals to make the decision to leave their homes, which include physical threat and loss of economic opportunity (Adhikari 82). Other research focuses on understanding the relationship between the various types of political violence and massive displacement, along with illustrating displacement characteristics that may impact international security (Lischer 150). However, there is a lack of analysis on the relationship between displacement and psychological, behavioral, and identity changes in the individuals who are displaced.

While previous research has focused on the external context that surrounds massive displacement, this paper will use a psycho-social lens to focus on the consequences that conflict-induced displacement has on the displaced individual's identity. In my first section, the definition of

identity is established, which will lay down the groundwork for exploring the relationship between the psychological and social consequences of conflict-induced displacement and the displaced individual's identity. These theoretical concepts will be further analyzed in regard to Syrian and Rohingya refugees. This paper hypothesizes that the refugee's identity is not only shifted by the initial conflict experienced, but more importantly, is heavily displaced by the resettlement stressors that exist before, during, and after displacement. The external social factors that are significant to the individual's life incite psychological and behavioral responses, which shape the very core of who an individual is.

IDENTITY: A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

Before delving into the personal consequences civilian displacement has on the individual, it is necessary to define what an individual's identity entails. Identity will be defined using social identity theory, which states that identity is composed of psychological responses to social factors surrounding an individual. An individual's identity can be divided into two major components: one's internal psychological elements and the external social groups that one associates with (Costabile & Austin 51). Both psychological and social components of the individual's life heavily shape the very core of his or her identity. The psychological components of one's identity include one's psychological and mental state, along with one's internal thoughts and personal beliefs. Social factors include any external situations that involve other people, ranging from mundane daily activities to the social groups that the individual is directly intertwined with. The social identity approach, which is a "meta-theory that aims to link the sociological with the psychological," further explains this by establishing a causal relationship between the psychological and sociological (Muldoon 935). These components are not mutually exclusive, but rather have a tightly intertwined relationship, as the psychological elements impact the way one views social events, and the individual's social groups impact one's psyche.

As explained by the social identity theory, one's social architecture, which is composed of the social groups that an individual associates with, impacts one's psychology due to its emotional significance to the individual. It is innate human nature to associate with other social groups, due to their "capacity to enrich our lives in various ways: they are a source of personal security, social companionship, emotional bonding, intel-

lectual stimulation, and collaborative learning” (Haslam et al. 2). These social groups make up a significant component of the individual’s life, due to the many benefits that the person receives in return. The intimate feeling of companionship, followed by personal and intellectual growth, leads people to establish a complex network of social connections, which is defined as their social architecture (Smith 12). Social identity theory states that “a person’s psychology often depends on the state of the groups that define the self” (Haslam et al. 5). Because these social groups hold so much significance to the individual, the individual’s psychology is directly influenced by the state of these groups. This psychological dependency on one’s social architecture directly aligns with social identity theory, which also states that one’s identity is composed of the psychological responses to social factors. The identities of refugees are shifted through this cyclical pattern established by social identity theory, due to the many social resettlement stressors that arise throughout the displacement process, and the psychological responses that ensue as a result.

RESETTLEMENT STRESSORS

Resettlement stressors are external sociological elements of the resettlement process that increase mental distress in refugees. Refugees, “unlike survivors of most discrete traumatic events, [...] experience diverse stressors that accumulate over the preflight, flight, exile, and resettlement/repatriation periods” (Porter & Haslam 603). These stressors begin when the refugees initially experience conflict in their hometown, and continue to escalate even after they have escaped physical threat. Resettlement stressors can be categorized into two major divisions. The first is security stressors, which include “lack of physical security, limited freedom of movement, limited funding for basic needs including food aid, and a lack of wage-earning opportunities” (qtd. in Riley et al. 320). These stem from the fundamental physiological needs that people have, and are of most concern to refugees in the earlier stages of displacement, which include fleeing their homes or residing temporarily in refugee camps that often lack the basic necessities for long-term survival. The second category of resettlement stressors is social stressors, which include “marginalization, socioeconomic disadvantage, acculturation difficulties, loss of social support, and ‘cultural bereavement’” (qtd. in Porter & Haslam 603). This set of stressors is rooted in the struggles that arise in the displaced individual’s social context after displacement. Refugees in the later stages

of displacement, which may include being displaced for a longer period of time or being relocated to a permanent residence, are more likely to be influenced by social stressors as they reintegrate into a foreign society and a radically new way of living. Both security and social stressors significantly influence the physical and social context that surrounds displaced individuals through their journey, and thus impact their mental health as well.

Resettlement stressors are directly intertwined with one's mental health and psychological state through a causal relationship which parallels the social identity theory. Resettlement stressors are "important contributors to the persistence and increase in mental distress in refugee populations" (Lindencrona et al. 121). Because these stressors continue to escalate throughout the displacement process, their significance in molding the external context also increases. As stated by social identity theory, social factors incite psychological responses, so these resettlement stressors incite negative psychological consequences that directly tie back to the individual's very identity. It is also important to note that because these stressors are consistent throughout the displacement process, there isn't enough time for the displaced individual to heal from the initial stressor before being exposed to the next one, which may hinder long-term psychological recovery in refugees. Additionally, the psychological state of the refugee that has been damaged by witnessing initial conflict and experiencing resettlement stressors will influence the way the individual responds to the next stressor (Riley et al. 322). This creates a causal cycle between the social resettlement stressors and the individual's psychological state. The individual's psychological state is directly impacted by an external resettlement stressor, and it is with this altered psyche that the refugee faces the next social hurdle, which will consequently worsen the refugee's already damaged mental state along with slowing down recovery.

PSYCHOLOGICAL & BEHAVIORAL IMPACT OF INITIAL CONFLICT

The physical conflict experienced by displaced civilians in their area of origin, which is the first in a long stream of resettlement stressors, causes long term psychological and behavioral effects that directly impact the individual's identity. This conflict ranges from international war to a country's internal violence, but in either case, innocent people are caught in the crossfire and are left without a safe place to reside. Previous re-

search has “established high rates of psychological disturbances among persons exposed to trauma through war and disaster” (Porter & Haslam 605). These psychological disturbances stem from the conflict-ridden societies that witness moral atrocities, but are not always characterized as mental health disorders. A manifestation of this psychological disturbance “in armed conflict settings are loss and grief, whether for missing or deceased family members or for other emotional, relational and material losses” (Hassan et al. 130). Conflict-ridden societies witness the destruction of key social and material elements of their home, along with witnessing the often-violent deaths of their loved ones. These traumatic experiences cause long-term feelings of grief and loss, which are also translated into extreme feelings of despair, hopelessness, and demoralization. Although these severe emotions may not be diagnosed as a mental health issue, because they do not entail symptoms characteristic to mental health disorders, they are still significant causes of emotional pain, and consequently disturb the psyche of the individual who is experiencing them.

In addition to causing psychological disturbances, experiencing traumatic events also leads to severe mental health disorders in displaced individuals, which directly influence their identities. Previous research states that the “most prevalent and clinically significant problems among [refugees] are symptoms of emotional distress related to depression, prolonged grief disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder and various forms of anxiety disorders” (qtd. in Hassan et al. 131). These mental health implications stem from the initial feelings of loss and grief that the refugees may have when experiencing violence and witnessing the destruction of material belongings and social architecture. While these traumatic experiences cause new mental health issues amongst those impacted, they can also stimulate previously existing mental health issues into more extreme cases. These mental health implications can be better understood in a study conducted on Rohingya refugees residing in the Kutupalong and Nayapara refugee camps, where 36 percent of participants admitted to symptoms characteristic to post-traumatic stress disorder, and 89 percent of those who participated acknowledged symptoms associated with depression (Riley et al. 316). The refugees had recently escaped extreme violence from their hometown in Myanmar, and the impact of their traumatic experience is reflected in the mental health symptoms they display. These mental health consequences are the refugees’ psychological responses to the external trauma they have experienced, and therefore,

play a role in their shifting identities.

The psychological effects of being exposed to consistent violence are manifested through long-term behavioral and attitude changes. Exposure to consistent violence may cause civilians to habituate, which is defined as the psychological distancing from violence due to long-term exposure to conflict (Muldoon 937). This is an adaptive response to psychologically ease the stress and pain that comes with living alongside conflict, and is done in an effort to normalize the abnormal conditions in which they live. However, normalizing a conflict-ridden environment could lead to long-term desensitization of violence in these individuals, because they are gradually decreasing the moral significance of the atrocities they are witness to. Constant exposure to violence also causes shifts in behavior, and these “social and behavioural manifestations of trauma-related disorders include withdrawal, aggression and interpersonal difficulties” (Hassan et al. 131). Negative consequences in behavior are caused by psychological reactions to the violence that has been consumed for a long period of time, and is also fueled by the gradual desensitization to violence that occurs as a result. The psychological disturbances and adaptations to the conflict are manifested into the individual’s behavior, which reflects a change in identity. The refugees enter resettlement with the disrupted psyches that were altered in a variety of ways due to the conflict, and also take with them the behavioral and attitude changes that resulted.

DESTRUCTION OF SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE DURING RESETTLEMENT & ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Losing one’s social architecture during the resettlement process incites a negative psychological response in the individual, which consequently displaces the refugee’s identity due to the social groups’ significance to one’s self-identification. After experiencing significant social and material loss in the area of conflict, displaced individuals do not have access to their previous social networks while fleeing for safety or safely relocating to a new area. “In displacement settings, the social fabric of society is often severely disrupted,” which causes refugees to “become isolated from larger support structures” (qtd. in Hassan et al. 131). Fleeing the area of conflict causes refugees to separate from family members and loved ones due to the chaotic and frightening atmosphere.

Even after relocating to an area that is physically safe, many of the social relationships with which they had established an emotional connection are not found, due to either death, physical or mental harm, or physically separating without a means to reconnect. Because the social groups that an individual associates with are closely intertwined with the individual's psychology and self-identification, a compromise in this social context "tends to have negative psychological consequences" (Haslam et al. 5). A considerable shift in social context incites a psychological response due to the fact that an individual's psychology is directly linked to external social factors. The social groups that an individual interacts with hold extreme emotional significance, so losing these interactions/connections/associations/etc. creates a void in the emotional support necessary to the well-being of a person. This emotional void escalates the psychological distress the refugee has already experienced, which has been fueled by a number of resettlement stressors, physical and emotional loss, and now a lack of social architecture.

Losing one's social architecture as the result of physical displacement causes a displacement in identity. As mentioned above, social identity theory asserts that the individual's identity is heavily influenced by the social groups that one associates with, and losing these social groups causes negative psychological consequences and creates an emotional void that the person now has to cope with. During displacement, "for the refugee, her sense of personhood has been displaced" due to being "evicted from her native social architecture" (Smith 12). Conflict-induced displacement forces people to abandon their native social architectures, and encounter a completely new social atmosphere that does not include any previous social connections. Losing these strong social groups in such a chaotic way leaves the identity of the refugee vulnerable. In addition to losing their social architecture, the refugees are stripped of their political identification as well, because they are now legally considered 'stateless'. The Rohingya studied in Bangladesh's refugee camps express their frustration "at having no identity or belonging in the legal sense: 'if we aren't Burmese, who are we?'" (qtd. in Riley et al. 306). The Rohingya originally lived in Myanmar, but due to military oppression fled their nation of origin, leaving them stateless and without a permanent place to reside. For these refugees, not only have they witnessed the loss of their social architecture, but they have also lost their political identity, which holds a degree of emotional significance. One's country is another social group that an individual associates with, and the forced dissociation of this so-

cial group also leads to a displacement of identity, as asserted by the social identity theory. It is with these fractured and vulnerable identities that the refugees enter a new cultural and socio-political context, where they lack significant social connections.

SOCIAL STATUS IN DISPLACED SOCIETIES

Refugees struggle with their social significance in post-displacement societies due to their new social attribution, which causes feelings of marginalization and alters the behavior of others towards refugees. After losing a majority of their social identity due to the destruction of their social architecture, displaced individuals are considered 'refugees,' which is a "group that is seen as in some way inferior to others" due to the negative connotations that are associated with the term (Haslam et al. 6). The refugee, who was previously a member of many emotionally supportive social groups, has now lost all of these connections and is instead attributed to one that delivers an inherently disadvantaged perception. Being a member of a social group that is deemed socially 'lower' than others will affect the individual's identity by having a "negative impact upon personal self-esteem and psychological wellbeing" (Muldoon 935). The association of oneself with any social group incites a psychological response, and in this case, due to the negative connotations associated with the term refugee, a negative psychological response is incited. Using the social identity approach, these negative psychological responses to the new social group plays a role in forming the new identity of the refugee after it has been damaged throughout the displacement process.

The displaced individual then enters a new socio-cultural context with this identification tag, which causes others to adjust their behavior towards the refugees accordingly. This term that the refugee enters with causes people to perceive all displaced individuals equally due to their equivalent refugee status, and consequentially adjust their behavior towards refugees as well in light of their 'lower' social status. (Muldoon 935). The displaced individual, who has lost a majority of previous social connections and is now attributed to a new social classification, will now be associated by others under this massive generalization that does not consider other elements of his or her past or personality. This generalized term delivers a disadvantaged perception, which alters the way people behave towards refugees, even if they have good intentions. The term 'refugee' also portrays refugees as strangers in society, which may lead

to “discrimination against refugees and social tensions,” and consequentially “contribute to additional stress and isolation” in refugees (Hasan et al. 131). When refugees resettle into new societies, they may fall victim to systematic discrimination and negative behavior by citizens due to their foreign and disadvantaged perception. This discrimination causes refugees even more psychological stress, as their negative self-perception gets encouraged by an external society, which increases the psychological distress that has already been accumulated until this point to another degree. The resettlement stressor ties back directly to social identity theory, where external situations, which in this case is discrimination, worsen the already damaged psychological state of the individual, and trigger an identity crisis. This manifestation of social neglect and generalized negative perceptions causes refugees to be in a state of liminality, which is the feeling of marginalization characterized amongst refugees resettled in new societies, due to their lack of social significance in this new location(?) (Smith 12). Being treated in a foreign manner in addition to lacking significant social connections causes refugees to question their social significance in new societies, and feelings of marginalization and loneliness increase the psychological distress that has already accumulated from the previous stages of displacement.

While in many cases, the term refugee brings about disadvantaged perceptions and generalizes this group of individuals, being collectively identified by their struggles can also help refugees in re-establishing a proper social network that will provide emotional support to these displaced individuals. When displaced individuals resettle into foreign communities, they are seen as ‘refugees’ by native citizens. However, due to this identification, “refugee families are often located together and families may find comfort in the company of others and be aided by outside agencies as a consequence of their increased visibility” (Muldoon 935). Being housed with people of similar experiences and backgrounds will assist in rebuilding the missing social network and fill the emotional void that was created when previous social networks were lost. Although group housing does generalize all refugees as similar, it unites them in their similar experiences and creates a supportive network that is free from the discrimination and judgement that native citizens may have. In a study done on the correlation between housing and well-being in refugees, one refugee expressed how his neighborhood impacts his mental health and makes a difference to his well-being (Ziersch et al. 10). The refugee’s immediate living situation and neighborhood directly impact his

or her psychological well-being. Therefore, being housed in an area where a strong and empathetic social architecture is present will positively influence a refugee's mental health. As established by the social identity theory, the presence of a positive social architecture incites positive psychological responses, which will thus aid in the re-consolidation of the refugees' fractured identities.

CONCLUSION

The displacement process for refugees is littered with resettlement stressors that negatively influence the psychological well-being of refugees at each stage, from the initial conflict experienced to the permanent resettlement into a foreign community. As asserted by social identity theory, each social experience incites a psychological reaction. This cycle of external situations impacting one's psyche heavily influences the refugee's identity, which is constantly being shifted throughout the physical displacement process due to the continuous psychological responses to the external stressors. The refugee's identity is first impacted by the initial conflict itself, damaging the refugee's psychological state and acting as the instigator of other significant resettlement stressors, such as the loss of one's social architecture. The loss of social architecture is another major factor in the displacement of refugee identity due to the emotional significance it holds to self-identification. While these findings support my hypothesis by illustrating the way resettlement stressors influence refugee identity, research on group refugee housing complicates the argument by illustrating a means of reconsolidating the identities of displaced individuals. This research paper can aid in creating an empathetic understanding of the individual plight of refugees amongst civilians, policy makers, and scholars.

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Benjamin Barnett

The Soggy Apple – Misaligned Incentives in NYC Climate Change Protection

ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that we have seen more frequent and intense weather in recent decades, the New York metropolitan area has not made nearly enough progress to guard against damage from flooding and strong storm surges. The New York City government developed a plan called PlaNYC in 2007 to address the threat from global climate change. However, instead of developing strategies to meaningfully protect NYC against rising sea levels and other weather-related dangers, PlaNYC focuses more on other matters, including making repairs to the transportation infrastructure, creating additional parks and open spaces, redeveloping industrial and waterfront land, reducing vehicle greenhouse gas emissions, and planting trees. This research paper explores and analyzes some of the possible factors that are preventing more significant action from local governments that defends and protects the metropolitan region. It claims that the creation of climate change policy is highly dependent on behavioral, economic, and political motives. It also asserts that a stronger alignment must exist between these motives and progressive climate change initiatives to achieve purposeful and vital progress toward mitigation and protection. The argument of this paper consists of four main points: 1) our natural inclination to deal with short-term goals (and maintain the status-quo) prevents effective climate change policy; 2) politicians are motivated to emphasize and cultivate projects that offer direct benefits to their constituents; 3) the incentives of politicians and fossil fuel companies are closely intertwined; and 4) we are inclined toward individual interests rather than the collective community, due to the effects of capitalism and consumerism. Without understanding the motivation behind our actions, we are bound to suffer the negative consequences from our rapidly-changing climate.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change policy has a critical impact on our environment. From more frequent and severe weather to dirtier air, higher wildlife extinction rates, more acidic oceans, and rising sea levels, it is clear that

climate change has the potential to significantly harm all peoples and societies. Nevertheless, despite a rise in weather-related hazards, we have accomplished little to guard against damage from flooding and stronger storm surges. For instance, in New York City, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) emphasizes environmental sustainability and resiliency regarding climate change but tends to focus less on specific action plans to protect this geographic area. Based on these considerable and impending threats of our changing environment, an important question arises: What factors are preventing more swift and meaningful action from state and local governments to defend the metropolitan region against climate change?

In this paper, I will first use behavioral theory to argue that our natural inclination to deal with short-term goals over longer-term objectives prevents the implementation of effective climate change policy; I will refer to this inclination as, “status quo bias.” I will then argue that, due to their positions that last no more than a few years, politicians feel inclined to enact climate change policies with immediate benefits to earn the trust and confidence of the public. Furthermore, I will use political theory to argue that the incentives of politicians and fossil fuel companies are inextricable from one another. For instance, because fossil fuel companies have large quantities of capital and impose adverse effects on the global environment, politicians may be motivated to dampen the public’s concern about climate change, to sustain advantageous and lucrative relationships with these prominent firms. Lastly, I will examine carbon dioxide mitigation as a public good to demonstrate the flaws of the current economic paradigm. I propose that effective climate change policy development is heavily dependent on economic and political motives. For there to be significant, purposeful progress toward mitigation and protection, there must be a much stronger alignment between these motives and progressive climate change initiatives.

THE PREFERENCE OF SHORT-TERM INTERESTS

Our predisposition toward the present prevents the implementation of effective climate change policy. People tend to place more importance on short-term events compared to long-term events. This tendency is in part derived from the evolutionary nature of our species. In Elke Weber’s article, “Climate Change Demands Behavioral Change: What are the Challenges?”, she explains that with “homo sapiens ... [the] problem

is typically not that we do not know what we want; instead decisions are often difficult because we want too many and at times conflicting things” (Weber 564). People are prone to not only rationalize self-interest, but also to socialize and process goals. In other words, we need to feel that we are in control of the future. This can lead to the undertaking of ambitious, long-term projects. Because the short run offers many more quickly accomplished goals than the long run, people are more inclined to worry about the present. In Thomas Dietz’s article, “Bringing Values and Communication to Science Deliberation,” he argues that “. . . humans have trouble thinking about uncertainties, nonlinear systems, and complex adaptive systems, all of which are involved in problems like climate change” (Dietz 14082). Considering that long-term projects and policies frequently involve many factors and complex uncertainties, it is difficult to grasp their consequences. Even when there is agreement on what needs to be accomplished, it may be difficult to implement such an array of changes. For instance, in 2007, the New York City government launched PlaNYC to make the city “greener and greater” and address climate change issues facing the region (*PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York*). However, as Thomas Angotti mentions in his article, “Is New York’s Sustainability Plan Sustainable?”, the 2007 administration was inclined to “. . . deal with simple cause-effect relations that [had little to do with] environmental health issues or community well-being,” rather than approach the problem holistically (Angotti 8). Although objectives such as providing every district with a public plaza, planting more trees, or developing parks are helpful for enhancing the city, they fail to address the complicated projects necessary over the long term to shield New York City and its coastlands against severe damage. Hence, we are inclined to delay long-lasting decisions in favor of simplistic, short-term pursuits that offer instant gratification. However, since short-term goals also tend to conflict with long-term objectives, there is a strong tendency to veer away from such goals.

The incentive to address short-term initiatives can lead to systematic deviations vital to addressing climate change. Most times, the decisions necessary to accomplish long-run projects are at odds with gratification in the short run. In their article, “Implementing Long-Term Climate Policy: Time-Inconsistency, Domestic Politics, International Anarchy,” Jon Hovi, Detlef F. Sprinz, and Arild Underdal observe that “[w]herever the cost/benefit calculus for individual micro-decisions deviates significantly and systematically from that pertaining to the program as a

whole, there is a real risk of defections, the [cumulative] effect of which may be a significant loss in goal achievement” (Hovi et al. 22). Due to the fact that politicians need to worry about their public image, it is in their best interest to develop policies with clear, immediate benefits for their constituents. As a result, even policies meant for sustainability can cater to the desire for instant gratification. For instance, the New York City government created the *PlaNYC* plan to implement effective climate change policy. But rather than focus on large-scale carbon emission reduction programs, the program focused on the redevelopment of the waterfront and industrial zones, the addition of bike lanes and trees, the creation of new parks and open spaces, and other aesthetic adjustments—all of which were immediate, noticeable changes to the city. Therefore, the political motivation to promote short-term improvements and acquire re-election can prevent the endeavor of effective, large-scale projects. In addition, short-term policies tend to suffer from huge impending costs and uncertain future benefits. As a result, there is a high motivation amongst politicians to leave the challenging issue of climate change for other policy makers. Thus, “[c]limate change action is difficult because our focus . . . is on the here and now, and in the here and now reside the costs of action, not the benefits. The benefits lie in the future” (Weber 566).

Furthermore, because humans “have finite processing capacity as well as emotional capacity,” they analyze climate change based on individual beliefs and the perspectives of close friends and acquaintances (Weber 566). Status quo, or status quo bias, is formally defined as a preference for the current state of affairs while having a strong opposition to any kind of change (Weber 567). Due to the fact that it is custom to follow the status quo, we are inclined to trust the current baseline and avoid change. Thus, not only can short-term incentives prevent the success of a long-term project, but the status quo bias to prioritize short-term goals can be responsible for consistent, deviant behavior. John Gibbons notes in his article, “Climate Deniers Want to Protect the Status Quo That Made Them Rich,” that “[o]rdinary [people] are [well-equipped] to discern which stances towards scientific information secure their personal interests” (Gibbons). Thus, it is evident that public policy depends on the reinforcement of commonly-held beliefs. This suggests that to acquire public support, it is crucial to implement policies that adhere to the status quo.

POLITICS AND TRUST

The political motivation to implement policies with immediate benefits that earn trust and support impedes the implementation of long-term planning necessary for effective climate change policy. Trust is crucial for the success of a campaign. However, for politicians to acquire public trust, it is necessary for them to succumb to their voters' biases. In their article, "Sleepwalking into Catastrophe: Cognitive Biases and Corporate Climate Change Inertia," Daina Mazutis and Anna Eckardt note that people are inclined " . . . [to] consider immediate consumption more attractive than delayed gratification without taking into consideration the consequences of our immediate actions" (Mazutis and Eckardt 88). People usually oppose effective climate change policies because these policies would require drastic modifications to the current state of affairs. To account for this bias, politicians tend to focus on other issues. Sydney Sauer concurs in her article, "Why Aren't Politicians Doing More on Climate Change? Maybe Because They're So Old," when she states that "[i]t's much easier to improve areas that [politicians] can measure and use for reelection, like unemployment and health care. Environmental issues, on the other hand, pose a measure of success that they won't be able to experience or quantify" (Sauer). However, due to the unquantifiable nature of climate change, it is difficult to assess the benefits of mitigating carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Because other issues such as economic health offer quicker benefits that are relatively straightforward to analyze, there is a strong motivation amongst politicians to institute policies irrelevant to benefitting the environment.

Politicians are not only motivated to appease the public but also to maintain their elected positions. Therefore, the risk of obtaining few votes amplifies the political incentive to avoid the issue of climate change. In considering the widespread existence of status quo bias, "reform [frequently] requires courage, [because political leaders] can lose their jobs if [the] opposition to a policy they introduce does not shift to acceptance before the next election" (Weber 570). For example, when the former New York City Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, proposed to eliminate smoking in all workplaces in 2002, he received great backlash from bars and restaurants afraid of losing business (Weber 569). As customers also did not want smoking restrictions, Bloomberg's approval rating dropped below 35 percent and the viability of his political future seemed uncertain (Weber 569). Therefore, we can conclude that environmental policy can invoke

severe consequences to one's political career, should it not pertain to the status quo. Thus, the issue behind climate change policy is twofold: 1) climate change policies tend not to align with public interests and biases, and 2) the implementation of these policies can risk a politician's prospective career. With strong incentives to avoid climate change, political leaders systematically tend to leave the issue for others to handle. This structure in turn creates and reinforces a time-inconsistency problem. In economics, time-inconsistency refers to an individual's contrast between his present preference and his future preference. Due to the structure of politics, time-inconsistency plays a major role in climate change policy. Successful mitigation of carbon emissions needs consistent long-term behavior. However, "... multiple shifts in government [and] political concerns and priorities" over a long period of time cause effective environmental policies to experience lags in development (Hovi et al. 26). Moreover, the dominant ideology present in the status quo intensifies these lags. In his article, "A Radical World Order Challenge," Richard Falk claims that "... strong *ideological* opposition in the United States to increased government regulation ... expresses, in part, a lingering societal optimism that the alleged risks will be addressed down the line by technological fixes that obviate any need for economic sacrifices" (Falk 144). Due to the fact that the status quo opposes any legislature that induces short-term costs, many politicians focus on alternative policy options. As a result, people place less concern on climate change, which suffers from a time-inconsistency problem.

Lobbyists also delay effective climate change policy because they seek to promote their own vested interests. In her article, "What Drives Climate Change Denial? Campaign Donations and Lobbying," Ciara Torres-Spelliscy writes: "... many American politicians feel comfortable sticking their heads in the sand on climate science ... [due to] donors [who] insist on this stance and then spend millions (and sometimes billions) lobbying for a dangerous denial of the overwhelming evidence" (Ciara Torres-Spelliscy). Because fossil fuel companies rely on the success of climate change delay, they prefer to hire lobbyists that convince politicians that environmental policies are unimportant. Therefore, these corporations have an incentive to devalue climate change action.

COUNTER MEASURES TO CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

Incumbent firms, or influential companies in the market, have the incentive to downplay the effects of climate change. In their article, "Humanity at the Crossroads: The Globalization of Environmental Crisis," Jan Oosthoek and Barry Gills theorize: "Corporations are, on the whole, not very sensitive to environmental arguments. The main aim of large corporations is to [obtain] a profit for a limited number of people, normally the shareholders. In principle, corporations have no . . . regard for the environment if it interferes with the business of profit-making" (Oosthoek and Gills 286). Policies that mitigate carbon emissions will impose heavy costs on the many firms that have capital in fossil fuels. Such environmental policies run counter to these firms' primary objective, which is to maximize profit. Therefore, these companies lobby against policy changes and sow distrust toward the science of climate change. However, not all firms feel inclined to fight carbon dioxide mitigation. Insurgent firms, or companies that are new entrants to the market, tend to have disruptive technologies that lower carbon emissions (Aldy 159). As a result, they tend to favor climate change protection policies, which would expand their businesses. However, the dominant authority of incumbent firms prevents the adaptation of climate change policy. In his article, "Mobilizing Political Action on Behalf of Future Generations," Joseph E. Aldy explains: "Given that incumbent firms have long experience in using policy and regulatory processes to their own ends, designing a policy that would enhance the influence and investments of insurgent firms . . . represents a tall challenge" (Aldy 159). While the political interests of incumbent companies are heavily entrenched in the status quo, insurgent firms have only started to develop. Thus, insurgent companies pose a disadvantage against incumbent firms.

However, because politicians are also inclined to promote policies that favor the status quo, they inadvertently encourage fossil fuel use. According to Feygina et al. in "System Justification, the Denial of Global Warming, and the Possibility of 'System-Sanctioned Change,'" "for many people, acknowledging and addressing environmental problems appears to [threaten] the very foundations of the [current] social, economic, and political [affairs]" (Feygina et al. 328). Should politicians promote climate change policy, they would possibly face severe opposition from the public. On the other hand, issues such as employment and the economy

can be dealt with through regulations that pertain to the status quo. This suggests that political leaders and incumbent firms have aligned interests—both groups desire to appease the public and are inclined to avoid climate change action. Thus, the incentives of politicians and companies with fossil fuel interests are closely intertwined.

Politicians and incumbent firms work together to mitigate climate change action. Because companies with fossil fuel interests dominate the political atmosphere, they can effectively lobby against climate change and maintain the status quo. Due to their accumulation of vast wealth and power, these corporations “. . . now have virtually free reign and can use and deplete natural resources at will, as well as pollute the planetary environment” (Oosthoek et al. 286). Because these corporations can tap into political debates and effectively promote anti-climate change policy, politicians can, in turn, earn their trust, money, and votes. Thus, politicians have the incentive to match the interests of incumbent firms, and these firms are motivated to promote arguments in favor of the status quo. Thus, there is a tendency for politicians to either ignore or downplay the effects of climate change since “. . . many of are in thrall to large multinational corporations that make commodities of human beings” (Searls). Political leaders and companies with fossil fuel interests view the public as a source of monetary gain and wealth. Politicians and incumbent firms use the media to amplify their downplayed climate change message. The politicians’ lies concerning climate change come at the expense of community welfare. In the book titled, “How Culture Shapes the Climate Change Debate,” Hoffman notes that “[t]he ability of [these] economic and ideological interests to cast doubt on science in the public debate is greatly aided by the . . . widening availability of information sources. Through the media, scientific issues become transmitted in a way that amplifies or reduces the associated risk perceptions and concerns” (Hoffman 41-42). Since media sources are interconnected, implanted political arguments can quickly spread to large populations. For instance, when the New York City government publishes resiliency documents, they lead their constituents to believe that the government is capable of providing protection from climate change’s most severe weather-related hazards and damage. Political leaders and incumbent firms take advantage of such a malleable public concern, driving interest away from climate change and continuing the status quo. This process results in the prevention of carbon mitigation. This suggests that the very nature of the political and economic regime is flawed, namely in that the ideals of capitalism and consum-

erism negatively impact the political drive for action. Because politicians value their own welfare over the community's, and material production over delayed gratification, they implement policies that influence the public's behavior and encourage suboptimal over-consumption of natural resources.

THE EFFECTS OF CAPITALISM AND CONSUMERISM

Climate change policy suffers from the free-rider problem, a market failure that occurs when people take advantage of a common resource without paying for it (McConnell et al. 91). In their article, "Why Politics is More Fundamental Than Economics," Gary Miller and Thomas Hammond note that "[w]ith public goods, there seem to be built-in incentives for misrepresentations of preferences. If people are asked to contribute toward the provision of public goods, then each individual has a reason to disclaim any interest . . . in the hopes of [gaining from other] contributions" (Miller and Hammond 8). Because the mitigation of carbon emissions is a public good, the implementation of these new policies is costly to their constituents. Therefore, both incumbent firms and the public are inclined to oppose such regulations. However, they also have the incentive to exaggerate burdened costs. The structure of a public good and the ensuing free-rider incentives motivate individuals to accomplish less than their peers. As a result, people put minimal effort into climate change policy. However, communities also tend to express self-centeredness—even if they sacrifice future benefits. In his book, "Political Economy in Macroeconomics," Allan Drazen theorizes: "Societies, like individuals, put off making [hard] choices, even though they know they must be faced and will only become more difficult with time" (Drazen 410). This delay in difficult decisions can be applied to the behavior of local states and governments. Because individual states tend to have a stronger claim in politics than the collective government, ". . . there is little confidence in legal constraints and a limited willingness to subordinate national interests to the wider claims of international law or . . . morality" (Falk 145). Rather than focus all effort on countries that need the most support, nations have focused on their own political agendas, despite collective concern. As a result, each nation (and ultimately, each city) has resorted to amending the mitigation of climate change at an individual level with the hope that a technological breakthrough will solve the problem. This

shows that, due to misaligned incentives and the free-rider problem, it is difficult for individuals to productively work together and create effective climate change policy.

While capitalism and consumerism foster innovation and industrial growth, they impose incentives that conflict with mutual human interest. In their article, "Humanity at the Crossroads: The Globalization of Environmental Crisis," Oosthoek, Jan, and Barry Gills write: "The primacy of the economy and the idea of limitless expansion of production and consumption regardless of the real environmental costs and consequences is the root cause of our present global environmental crises. This central idea has led to short-termism, as long as wealth . . . is more important than the health of the planet" (Oosthoek et al. 288). Due to the notion that unlimited economic growth will maximize public satisfaction and well-being, natural resources tend to be overused. Simultaneously, a select group of people accumulate wealth and use it for self-interest. As a result of these two aspects, capitalism ideology produces ". . . policy guided by special interest groups and degrees of profitability rather than global public interest," which in turn, evokes big environmental costs and minimal policy action (Falk 146). Furthermore, because aspects of capitalism and consumerism emphasize the production and consumption of material goods, they create incentives that deviate from moral and environmental concerns. An example of this is the overdevelopment of the land around New York City, especially the areas that are prone to heavy flooding and storm surge. Despite the threat of many more devastating hurricanes in the near future, real estate development is booming in ". . . areas threatened with [water] inundation" (Dawson 33). This would imply that there is more concern over income and profitability than the safety of the public. Therefore, it is clear that the very nature of the system creates problems for climate change mitigation.

CONCLUSION

Climate change policy heavily depends on political and economic incentives. These motives are in part derived from our natural behavioral inclinations and biases. With a preference toward the status quo, we prefer environmental policies that have little impact on our daily lives. For instance, the public initially opposed Michael Bloomberg's new regulation to ban smoking in restaurants and other open areas because of the status quo. The human preference for instant gratification and preservation of

the status quo over long-term benefits explains why politicians have done little to mitigate carbon emissions—politicians, to appease the public, place concern on other issues. In addition to our non-ideal behavioral tendencies, we have placed high credence to incumbent firms (fossil fuel companies in particular), who downplay the effects of climate change. Because incumbent firms tend to have more resources than insurgent firms, they dominate the political atmosphere and effectively lobby against climate change policy. Therefore, it behooves politicians financially and politically to appease incumbent firms' interests. Thus, the motivations of politicians and incumbent firms are deeply intertwined. As a result, there is a strong resistance to climate change policy and a strong preference for the status quo.

Without understanding our own motivations, we are inclined to deviate from long-term goals and objectives, in favor of quick gratification. This can have serious consequences on the health of our planet as well as on the prosperity of all peoples and societies. If we do not act now, we are bound to suffer more frequent and severe weather, higher death rates, dirtier air, and more acidic oceans. Perhaps, we need to change our attitudes toward consumption and our ways of living. Because we emphasize profitability and self-interest in the free market, we consume resources at the expense of the environment. A possible solution to addressing our environment misuse is to abandon the idea of limitless economic growth in favor of a paradigm that respects environmental limitations; this way, we could potentially improve our lives—not only physically, but also morally and mentally. To accomplish these improvements, we must first overcome our biases—as we are otherwise likely to delay effective policy until it is too late.

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Emma Barr

Hearing ≠ Listening: Reconciliation of Hearing and Deaf Cultures

ABSTRACT

Throughout history, deaf individuals have been drawn to each other. Because they were historically unable to talk to others and learn traditionally, this common hardship compelled the Deaf to congregate and develop their own forms of communication and cultural idiosyncrasies. In the 1800s, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet founded the American School for the Deaf, and since then, deaf individuals have continued to cultivate a sense of pride and representation (Murray). Deaf communities possess a level of intimacy that the Hearing world can only marvel at. However, when it comes to integrating the Deaf and Hearing communities, complications arise. This paper seeks to identify the Deaf community's struggles of obtaining equal rights and representation that are not paired with disability. Even more importantly, this paper contemplates the effect of a Deaf-Hearing duality between family members. If deaf parents have a hearing child, or if hearing parents have a deaf baby, it is hard to determine which culture should dominate the child's life. For the sake of maximizing opportunity for the Deaf, this paper seeks to propose reconciliatory interactions between the Deaf and Hearing communities without the sacrifice of either party's important cultural values.

INTRODUCTION

Helen Keller once said that “blindness separates a person from things, but deafness separates him from people” (Miles). The Deaf community is separate from the rest of society because, by design, it does not allow its members to communicate on the same platform as others. The distinct partition between the Deaf and Hearing serves as an influence of Deaf culture because differences between the two communities shape how the Deaf approach education, family, community, and other aspects of life. A unique form of language is not all that connects the Deaf; deaf individuals' shared experiences in hardship and marginalization secure amongst them a level of intimacy and pride nonexistent in most other communities. Because of the differences between the Deaf and Hearing communities, there is constant debate over how these communities

should interact. The surgical cochlear implant allows the possible integration of the Deaf into the Hearing world, for it enables deaf individuals to “hear” sounds. This technology does so by allowing sounds to bypass damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulate auditory receptors in the brain; this stimulation is perceived as sound (Patterson). If installed during infancy, the cochlear implant allows a deaf child to develop hearing and speech skills equivalent to those of a hearing child. Yet, many deaf families see the cochlear implant as a cultural genocide and prefer the cultural partition. This controversy regarding cochlear implants presents complex inquiries: how have deaf individuals used their physical impairment to develop community-level intimacy, and how does this unique bond amongst the Deaf impact the rift between the Deaf and Hearing? Furthermore, how would the implementation of hearing technology impact the rift between these communities?

By analyzing the aspects of the Deaf community and how they affect a deaf individual's sense of personal identity, we can begin to unite the Deaf and Hearing. One way to examine these aspects is through the lens of social identity theory. Social psychologists Jan Stets and Peter Burke describe this theory as one's proclivity to identify oneself with a unique social category or group. The theory accounts for Deaf empowerment, which is the natural tendency for the Deaf to rally behind individuals who have undergone similar hardship. According to Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke's article “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory,” this self-categorization results in “an accentuation of the perceived differences between self and other in-group members, and an accentuation of the perceived differences between the self and out-group members” (Stets and Burke 225). As a result, social identity theory effectively explains the sources of Deaf intimacy, as well as the logic behind a polarized Deaf-Hearing division. In-group bias and intolerance are byproducts of developing a strong sense of cultural identity, and they blind both parties from seeing the benefits of integration. Social identity theory effectively describes aspects of Deaf culture, such as the proclivity to be intimate and prideful in the face of marginalization, but not the Deaf community, for the Deaf have become too intolerant of the Hearing culture and of technologies such as the cochlear implant. This intolerance, along with the lack of communication between the Deaf and the Hearing, has developed the false, Deaf perception that acceptance of multiple cultural values, or cultural pluralism, is synonymous with the betrayal of one's culture or community; an increase in cross-cultural communication can help amend

this misconception.

Before explaining the mechanisms that separate Deaf and Hearing cultures, I will use social identity theory to analyze the intimacy of the Deaf community. Deaf culture is a supportive outlet used to validate self-esteem for the Deaf and empower their sense of cultural identity. However, it is important to address the byproducts of developing a strong cultural identity, and thus I will subsequently describe the defensiveness and intolerance of other cultures external to and within the Deaf community. Out of pragmatism, we must consider integration of the Deaf and Hearing communities as important to ensuring equal opportunity. By design, integration will increase cultural pluralism—the ability to maintain one’s cultural identity in the context of a larger social community—and thus increase communication, awareness, and acceptance between the Hearing and the Deaf.

CULTURAL IDENTITY DEFINED BY DEAF EMPOWERMENT

Understanding social identity theory is essential for understanding the strong bonds within the Deaf community: Deaf culture satisfies the need for validation and the desire to belong within an idiosyncratic group of people. In their article, Stets and Burke introduce social identity theory to explain how a community compels its members to “self-categorize” themselves into social groups and then “derive their identity or sense of self largely from the social categories to which they belong” (Stets and Burke 225). Not only has the Deaf community offered a greater sense of belonging to its members, but it has also compelled them to directly apply the qualities characteristic of Deaf culture to their own personal identities—such as a pride in the use of sign language. Deaf individuals have the same yearning for communication as other humans, in their desires to understand and be understood. Thus, the Deaf community uses sign language to validate its ability to communicate and overcome a perceived impairment (a deficiency or deviance from (socially-defined) normal human capabilities). In the *Journal of Social Work in Disability & Rehabilitation* article “Deaf Families’ Unique Experiences and Obstacles,” a deaf child explains his home situation, giving readers insight into the importance of universal access to communication. He says, “Because I have deaf parents, I was lucky to have early language acquisition at an early age and never struggle with my language and identity. Always have been

proud to be deaf all my life” (Frank 221). American Sign Language (ASL) is the means through which this boy facilitates and legitimizes relationships with his family and those around him. As a result, it is only natural that he feels a strong affinity as well as an elevated empowerment for his community of deaf individuals. The use of sign language as a practical means of communication is also symbolic of deaf individuals having the same desire for communication as other humans. Sign language is only one example symbolizing the adaptability of the Deaf community; but it is ever-present and celebrated throughout their culture because it is an example of how the Deaf community has grown closer in the face of social hardship.

While access to a supportive Deaf network increases a deaf person’s sense of belonging and validation, a lack of access results in the opposite effect. If deaf individuals have hearing parents that do not know sign language and do not have a deaf role model, they are more likely to be exposed to marginalization. A heart-wrenching story about a deaf child trying to lip-read a message from his dying mother in “Culture and Empowerment in the Deaf Community: An Analysis of Internet Weblogs” published in the *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, is a perfect example of the harmful divide between the Deaf and Hearing:

Towards the end, she [my mother] wanted to tell me something. I didn’t understand and asked her to repeat it. Twice more I asked her to repeat. . . before her eyes closed and the deep sleep of coma overtook her. . . I’ll never know her last words to me. . . It made me think of all the other things she might have told me over the years, but didn’t. . . I can’t go back and make her hands fly easily. But I can make a plea to other parents of deaf children: LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE. . . if you want fluent communication and a meaningful exchange of ideas, emotions, thoughts and love with your child, sign it. (Hamill and Stein 400)

Even when individuals are as biologically close as they can be, a severe lack of communication can drive them apart. The inability to operate within the same culture was detrimental to this mother-son relationship, emphasizing the values of sign language and a supportive Deaf community. According to Root’s *The Politics of Visual Language; Deafness, Language Choice, and Political Socialization*, this mother-son relationship is just one of the roughly 90 percent of deaf children who have hearing parents and

therefore a higher likelihood of growing up without the Deaf community (Roots 43). Furthermore, the scarce communication between the Deaf and Hearing gives rise to the decline of the Deaf community in general. According to Robert Sparrow's article "Implants and Ethnocide: Learning from the Cochlear Implant Controversy,"

As the community of people who use the language grows smaller, the opportunities for those within it grow fewer and the social disadvantages they face larger. This in turn increases the incentives for the next generation to learn the majority language and leave the minority culture behind. Over the longer term, this policy is likely to result in *ethnocide* – the destruction of a people's culture. ("Implants and ethnocide" 457)

This quote reveals the vulnerability and impermanency of the Deaf community—without loyalty and strong motivation to perpetuate the Deaf culture, it is likely to die out. This fragility largely contributes to the overwhelming sense of empowerment and protectiveness within the Deaf community.

PREJUDICE COMPROMISES RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

The primary catalyst for Deaf marginalization is the Hearing community's notion that deafness is a "disease" to be cured. This attitude exists in "audism," the perceived notion that one is superior based on the ability to hear (Bauman 2). Bishop and Hicks's *Hearing, Mother Father Deaf: Hearing People in Deaf Families* states that Audists "[legitimize]" the Deaf; and, "[a]s a consequence of this legitimization, deaf people, much like natives and others, fall into the category of animals and are thus denied a moral and social subjectivity. Without hearing, you can reproduce, like animals, but not parent, like human beings" (Bishop and Hicks 252). The severe prejudice of hearing people against the Deaf makes one question if the Hearing and Deaf can be reconciled. Even if the Hearing community is not outwardly discriminatory toward the Deaf, there is still an instinctive bias against Deaf ability. In her article, "Deaf Families' Unique Experiences and Obstacles," Audrey Frank features a few parents of deaf children whose hearing peers unintentionally make them feel marginalized: "Professionals, including doctors and social workers, would say, 'Oh I am sorry that your baby is deaf.' . . . I had to tell the doctor off for

giving me an inappropriate message when I told him that I was thrilled to have a deaf baby. . . . They [professionals] try to tell us what to do with the deaf baby. They need to know that we have our own choices and know what we are doing, instead of looking down at us because we are deaf” (Frank 224). Individuals who can hear usually have more control over the cultural values that their hearing children are exposed to. Deaf parents do not have the same luxury when they give birth to a hearing child, because hearing is a physical attribute that sways an individual toward the Hearing community and away from the community that Deaf families often rely on. As long as the Hearing community takes this advantage for granted, it will never be able to understand why preservation of Deaf pride is so encouraged.

Cultural bias can impact the work, education, and identity of the Deaf as well— according to Mitchiner’s article “Deaf Parents of Cochlear-Implanted Children: Beliefs on Bimodal Bilingualism,” for parents wishing to raise a bimodal, bilingual, (fluent in both English and ASL) deaf child, “[t]he biggest challenge was finding a school or a daycare. It was either fully ASL or fully spoken language. So which is it? There is no meeting halfway to meet my needs. None at all” (Mitchiner 60). In choosing a school for a hearing child, parents usually do not have to consider if there is an appropriate communication means available for their child. However, in choosing a school for a deaf child, parents are forced to put their child in a position in which he must choose between his native language and a higher equality education (or they choose for him), because there are not many teachers who are fluent in sign language. The quality of Deaf schools should be no less compared to the Hearing public schools’ standard, and the modern society’s drive to rectify social inequality especially overlooks this educational injustice.

The educational inequity between the Deaf and Hearing jeopardizes Deaf identity. Social identity theory introduces a discrepancy with mainstreaming Deaf children into public school (which is catered to the Hearing), by claiming that individuals rely on uniformity of a group for support. According to O’Brien et al.’s “Deaf Culture and Academic Culture: Cultivating Understanding Across Cultural and Linguistic Boundaries,” to achieve uniformity, group members develop “‘mental partitions’ that strengthen the elite communal ethos through shared understandings of reality and belonging. These partitions draw a ‘symbolic set of parentheses’ around the community, markers that become more rigid in group cognition over time” (O’Brien et al. 105). Despite the theory reinforcing

group-level support and belonging, it simultaneously reveals the risk of isolating deaf children by surrounding them with hearing individuals instead of deaf friends. The “mental partitions” that reinforce Deaf community support now lead deaf children to feel detached from hearing children in public schools (O’Brien et al. 105). The Hearing will never be able to understand Deaf culture if they continue to perceive deafness as a disabling medical condition rather than an opportunity for social development.

THE BYPRODUCT OF INTOLERANCE

It is not solely the prejudice that hearing people hold against the Deaf that polarizes these two parties. There have been many occurrences in which the Deaf have been given an opportunity to integrate into a larger social context and they opt against it, for the sake of preserving their own pride or Deaf identity. In their article, Stets and Burke state that the remarkable pride in deaf individuals exemplifies social identity theory in that “one’s self-esteem is enhanced by evaluating the in-group [in this case, the Deaf community] and the out-group [in this case, the Hearing community] on dimensions that lead the in-group to be judged positively and the out-group to be judged negatively” (Stets and Burke 225). Furthermore, a sense of “in-group identification leads to greater commitment to the group and to less desire to leave the group, even when the group’s status is relatively low” (Stets and Burke 226). In other words, deaf people are so enduringly devoted to their community because it reinforces their self-esteem and grants emotional support.

Some deaf individuals may see Deaf integration into the Hearing world as a betrayal of the Deaf community. Some Deaf see no need to integrate themselves, but this is not necessarily beneficial to them. For example, according to Sparrow’s article “Defending Deaf Culture: The Case of Cochlear Implants,” in an age of new reproductive technologies, “[d]eaf couples have been known to seek genetic counselling and testing in an attempt to ensure that their children will be born deaf. Other sources suggest that Deaf parents may celebrate in neonatal wards upon learning that a child will be unable to hear” (“Defending Deaf Culture” 137). In other words, some deaf parents are so adamant about preserving deafness within the family that they are willing to actively control their child’s biological capabilities. While it is important to preserve a sense of community within a family, it is also crucial to keep in mind the ethical

debate: deafness may not be a devastating disability, but it may be unfair to revolutionize a child's life and force him onto a constrained path. Although the Deaf community's group status is relatively low, deaf individuals continue to ignore the social opportunities external to their culture for the sake of in-group loyalty.

Not only has extreme Deaf pride pushed away external social opportunities, but it also has outcast certain deaf individuals from the community. For instance, Murray's "History of the Deaf" states that the Deaf community possesses infinite pride regarding Gallaudet University, the only existing liberal arts college for the deaf (Murray). However, Frank's article describes how Gallaudet has cultivated a prejudice between deaf individuals:

[I]t became clear that there were two subgroups: those who graduated from Gallaudet University and those who did not. . . . One [deaf individual] said: Because my husband and I did not graduate from Gallaudet, we felt disrespected by the deaf community until my children graduated from Gallaudet. We were not invited to many events. We now have started feeling respected only because our children graduated from Gallaudet. (Frank 222-223)

The same in-group bias of superiority that isolates the Deaf from the Hearing is a catalyst for a pseudo-Deaf hierarchy. Deaf pride is usually the primary influence on a deaf individual's personal identity, but this same empowerment hinders him from integrating into a larger society and maximizing his opportunities for success. Deaf pride—or rather, the Deaf social identity—has become too confining to properly benefit its people. McIlroy and Storbeck's article "Development of Deaf Identity: An Ethnographic Study" states, "the Deaf Pride narrative is restrictive as an essentialist discourse in that it does not tolerate movement beyond Deaf identity politics with an acceptance of the bicultural lives of deaf persons" (Mcilroy and Storbeck 208). In other words, a deaf person does not have the freedom to adopt a bicultural life without the Deaf perceiving him as a betrayer of Deaf pride. Intolerance within the Deaf community is partially responsible for the inability to reconcile the Deaf and the Hearing communities. Rather than provide a platform for social change and opportunity, the Deaf community has allowed a sense of in-group bias, intolerance, and defensiveness to dictate and constrain Deaf ways of life.

COCHLEAR IMPLANTATION: CULTURAL GENOCIDE OR DEAF ANTIDOTE?

If current social structures are incompatible with integration, how do we reconcile the Deaf and the Hearing? In this current state, the Deaf interact with the Hearing world by succumbing to Hearing customs because there are so few accommodations for the Deaf, such as the presence of sign language interpreters. However, the cochlear implant creates a possibility for integrating the Deaf and Hearing worlds. It will be much easier for a deaf person with a cochlear implant to directly express his frustrations to a hearing person once communicating in the same language. However, in Hamill and Stein's article "Culture and Empowerment in the Deaf Community: An Analysis of Internet Weblogs," one Deaf pride activist "discussed oralism (teaching children only to speak and lip-read rather than sign) [as] being a form of child abuse for some children . . . because [he] felt oralism deprived children of linguistic competence and communication. Others stressed language as an important part of cultural identity and viewed ASL as binding the community together" (Hamill and Stein 395). The cochlear implant takes away the core characteristic of being deaf—the inability to hear. As a result of the cochlear implant forcing the Deaf to give up something that they consider to be part of their personal identity, its opponents believe that it is far from being a reconciliation of the Deaf and Hearing. In Sparrow's article, opponents of cochlear implantation "reject the very idea of trying to find a 'cure' for deafness. Indeed, they have compared it to cultural genocide. They argue that deaf people should not be thought of as disabled but as members of a minority cultural group" ("Defending Deaf Culture" 135). In other words, they believe that the presentation of cochlear implantation as a solution characterizes deafness as a condition and not a culture, which is hardly reconciliation. Deafness is hardly a condition—it is a cultural way of life.

Yet, the cochlear implant offers opportunity and independence to deaf individuals. The cochlear implant debate triggers the conversation of the definition of "normal." Sparrow states, "The limits of normal human capacities will be the result of who we consider to be part of the range of normal variation amongst persons. If we include the deaf, then hearing will not be something that all normal people have. It will instead become a less important mark of difference, like hair or eye color, and our account of what it is to be normal will not mention it" ("Defending Deaf Culture" 138-139). If we reevaluate the status of "normal," and the ability to hear

becomes less important regarding the ability to participate in a social context, then cochlear implantation can be considered with a more practical approach. Deafness may not be a disability, but the ability to hear must have at least some effect on the ability to maximize social opportunities. Historically, the Deaf community was opposed to the cochlear implant, but more deaf families are investing in the surgery for the sake of practicality. In Mitchiner's "Deaf Parents of Cochlear-Implanted Children: Beliefs on Bimodal Bilingualism," one pair of hearing parents reflect in their backing of their deaf daughter's cochlear implant the most common perspective for parents of deaf children: "[The cochlear implant] gives her an opportunity to participate independently 100% in the hearing community, including our families without interpreters (able to socialize and have deep conversations with hearing people directly). It also enables her to speak and hear on the cell phone" (Mitchiner 58).

Additionally, the lack of communication can sacrifice a deaf individual's safety. In an online forum for the Deaf recorded in Hamill and Stein's article, "one blogger reported about a Deaf woman calling the police after being assaulted by her brother. Due to lack of communication, the police arrested her when her brother told the officers she was 'crazy' and had tried to stab him. The woman was not provided effective communication nor told why she was arrested" (Hamill and Stein 402). One of our fundamental needs as human beings is the capacity to communicate. In the prior example, the deaf woman who was arrested lacked the skills to exchange conversation with the people who determined the outcome of the situation—she, literally, had no say in the result. Ultimately, the inability to hear should not coincide with the lack of a voice. The usefulness of the cochlear implant brings a new perspective to the conversation of integrating deaf individuals into the Hearing world. To some deaf individuals, the cochlear implant may interfere with cultural identity, but there is no doubt that it makes the Deaf more versatile in a social setting. The cochlear implant does not necessarily imply that a deaf individual is sacrificing his own culture to fit in. Rather, the cochlear implant presents new values that were previously ignored in Deaf identity: choice and autonomy.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY FOR RECONCILIATION

The Deaf and Hearing have never been able to reconcile their differences because they have been communicating on two completely

different platforms. Dr. Stephen Wilbers in his article “Why America Needs Deaf Culture: Cultural Pluralism and the Liberal Arts Tradition” states,

In the minds of many hearing Americans, the deaf community simply does not exist. While prejudice may be a factor in this perception, the cause, I believe, runs deeper. It has to do with how we see ourselves as Americans. It has to do with our traditional assumptions about who we are as a people, about how we define our national identity. And it has to do with our feelings and thoughts about diversity, about people and cultures that differ from the mainstream. (Wilbers 195)

With greater patience and acceptance of multiple cultural values, it will be possible to create a more socially-constructive atmosphere. If hearing individuals are more open to learning about Deaf culture, it will be easier to integrate deaf individuals into mainstream society. America will advance from a separate coexistence of diverse communities to a setting in which these diverse cultures complement each other—a key element of cultural pluralism. Pluralism is not a threat to cultural identity—rather, it provides a wider range of skills and a capability to communicate. Vangen’s study “Culturally diverse collaborations: a focus on communication and shared understanding,” concluded:

culturally diverse insights, skills and experiences are in effect resources that can be brought to bear on a collaboration’s tasks, enabling it to find new and alternative ways of addressing issues and producing collaborative advantage. . . . For example, while heterogeneity within teams can cause tensions and conflicts, diversity can also heighten team performance, as too much comfort and familiarity can reduce productivity. (Vangen 308)

Surrounding oneself with similar individuals offers a support network almost like family—one feels indebted and connected to family in a unique way that does not extend to other people. However, families in which individuals are too comfortable with each other are subject to complacency. Greater communication, greater diversity, and greater exposure will compel the Deaf and Hearing communities to improve each other.

The stereotyping, prejudice, and in-group bias that characterize the Deaf-Hearing integration debate are all byproducts of a lack of com-

munication between social groups. The difference in languages accentuates this lack of communication and loses essential arguments to translation. These facts do not necessarily imply that every citizen should be bilingual or multilingual. The ability to engage in two cultures allows deaf individuals to maintain a sense of Deaf pride as they seize opportunities in the Hearing world. In the future, as Vangen states, it is important to see value in a “framework of ‘culture as a kaleidoscope,’ which takes into account multiple cultural dimensions, each of which may help unify or divide a team. ‘The culture of the global team is thus a constellation of all these [cultural] factors, being shaped by, as well as shaping, the communicative interaction of its team members’” (Vangen 307). Just as deafness is not synonymous with a disability, the integration of the Hearing and Deaf does not entail sacrifice or betrayal of one’s cultural identity. That deaf people cannot hear does not imply that they cannot listen to others. Furthermore, hearing people’s inability to understand sign language should not hinder them from understanding the person beneath the Deaf identity.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the reconciliation of the Deaf and Hearing communities cannot occur without increased exposure between parties. It is impossible to amend misconceptions without the ability to communicate such injustices. While social identity theory explains a beneficial phenomenon that reinforces the intimacy of the Deaf community, it also describes an opposite and unfavorable effect when associating Deaf and Hearing cultures together. In the face of marginalization, deaf individuals may feel too much pride for their own culture to tolerate those external, such as members of the Hearing community. Meanwhile, cultural pluralism has the potential of revolutionizing the Deaf community. Integration into the larger Hearing world can maximize social opportunities to learn from and accept others. The invention of the cochlear implant introduced the first opportunity for true integration, but even today, its concept is controversial. Regardless of the implications of the cochlear implant, however, it—at the very least— provides the convenience of hearing. Cochlear implantees will still be able to sign and participate in the Deaf community, but they will have greater resources and opportunities to mitigate social inequity. There is a concern that as cochlear technology

advances, Deaf individuals will more easily abandon their cultural origins and associate only with the Hearing community. Above this potential cultural imbalance, however, exists a need for both the Deaf and Hearing to maintain an open mind. Just as technology is always developing, so should the outlook on the Deaf culture. Regardless of the social tensions at play, children should be able to speak to their parents. People should be able to explain themselves if accused of a crime. Communication is a fundamental need for humans, hearing or deaf. With greater acceptance, both communities will be able to realize that the ability to listen is not reliant on the ability to hear.

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Kenneth Basco

Pokémon Go Dissociate: Cognitive Dissonance in the Mind-Body Relationship in Virtual and Physical Representations of AR Games

ABSTRACT

Pokémon Go is an augmented reality game involving players to engage with their physical space by using GPS technologies facilitated by their phone to interact with Pokémon creatures. Despite the ethos of adventuring into the outdoors, the human computer interaction nuances of its 3D oriented map interface obscures the sentiment of players participating in a dynamic involved with the physical world. The digital representation of a unified Pokémon adventure narrative alongside a real-life gamespace neglects the cognitive loads, engagement and separate channels of digital/physical player narrative, where player embodiment and beautification of a space is compromised. The translation of player cognition to a dual physical-digital system is evaluated. Upon these frameworks, solutions to aestheticize the space via spatial data in a reformed Pokémon Go is proposed in consideration for the respect of beauty being harnessed from the space, rather than something replicated and isolated into a portable game world the player uses to disembodiment from the physical world being inhabited.

INTRODUCTION

Pokémon Go is one of the latest augmented reality (AR) games on the market. Its use of AR technologies involves overlaying and abstracting physical spaces to create the experience of characters from the popular franchise, Pokémon inhabiting them. The interaction between players and fictional creatures meet on the phone's artificial, 3D rendered game overworld, where the player is embodied by a 3D walking avatar that moves in correlation to their GPS location logged from the real world. AR games are a new way of engaging with the physical realm in a game-based context.

In Smith's "Monsters in Our World: Rethinking Narrative Transportation in Pokémon Go's Mixed Reality: An Abstract," Smith refers to

the experience of playing Pokémon Go something local to its medium as “geo-media” where “Geo-media enable a form of dual-move transportation: the narrative moves into the physical lifeworld of the consumer, just as the consumer moves into the story world” (Smith, 2018, p. 870). This movement of geographically relevant information to mediate augmented reality experience through maps adds a layer of information, or context, to the space the user is inhabiting. The space in which “One of the main characteristics of [these devices] is their ability to locate and contextualize one’s engagement with the web” (Cabañes, 2014, p. 11). The user’s engagement is not only involved with the space they embody, but in the retrieval of locational information dependent on the use of a spatial technology intermediary. In the case of AR games, the user is interacting with game objects, and mechanics in this digital data associated-physical signified shared space.

Both Smith and Cabañes agree that geographical mediated information technologies establish a dichotomy of interacting with the physical world while also providing digital meta information about said world. However, Smith illustrates that there is a role a consumer must take in interactive media like augmented reality, as Cabañes articulates the onset of geo-media as a marriage between the two worlds. This juxtaposition of a Pokémon Go world mimicking reality and the reality the player must inhabit to transport their Pokémon Go self creates a cognitive load on the player. It can be called to question: How can Pokémon Go be acclaimed to be a means to interact with the physical world when the player simultaneously embodies a digital and physical space? This paper reviews how the player’s cognitive self is dampened between the externalization of the real world motor functions, and consumption of in-game information. It is a call to action for games designers to blur the boundary of physical space and AR games, for the enrichment of an AR experience that focuses on real-world immersion over the spatial-media based game constructed world. The purpose of this paper is to assess the digital-physical marriage in Pokémon Go’s design since it is currently the most thriving AR game right now. Despite AR technology making information more tangible and familiar to players, the neglect of human factors in AR games—selective attention, and sustainable use of the public space—are design choices to be weary of as mainstream mobile computing that will be inherited in future generations of AR. This paper first discusses how game immersion in Pokémon Go’s digital space occurs, then how current representations of digital media perpetuate this existence of digital-physical immersion,

and finally proposes a solution to re-work Pokémon Go's representation into one that immerses the player in the beauty of its public space from existing literature. The danger in current AR gaming conventions within Pokémon Go is that it could represent gamespaces as something to be immersed in a removed digital plane, rather than being used to beautify and enhance the engagement of the physical space.

The dual-move transportation Smith mentions is something foreign to other types of media in that the player switches from embodying the physical self moving, to the game world self that has a locality, and intractability to the Pokémon represented in the digital world. Huang would assess this phenomena as stressful to the player from how "The separation between information and physical spaces produces 'cognitive distance' for users since they have to switch across spaces to extract targeting spots from information displays and then apply the information to real-world situations (Huang, 2013, p. 113)." This remapping of context and functions create a cognitive dissonance in the player physical and digital self. There is a cognitive distance because the information of the physical space and digital space are occupying and demanding the player's attention through the game's finding mechanic of monitoring and interacting with Pokémon spawns from the digital space tasks, along with the task of moving in the physical space. Pokémon Go's finding mechanic involves moving the player avatar's body by changing their physical location according to an in game map where Pokémon game objects only become intractable and visible upon the Pokémon and player avatar intersecting proximate global positioning coordinates. Since the game information is anticipatory due to this "finding mechanic" as well as always available, the player has a bigger cognitive load.

The intensity of Pokémon Go's sense of immersion is further articulated in Jennett's study on the effects and role distractors play when people play games. Distractors are ideas—such as actions, queries, or objects outside of a system a subject is primarily participating in that have a threshold of deterring the subject's attention to said system. The study involved creating two different versions of space invaders in which one was titled a "feedback" version and the other the "no feedback" version. The difference between the two was that the feedback version established a score being tracked for how many stars collected as well as meteors dodged, while the no feedback version did not have a scoring system, but more dynamic animations where meteors conveyed a sense of danger and movement. "Rather than processing all distractors equally, participants in

the ‘feedback’ condition were particularly less likely to process irrelevant distractors to the same extent as game-relevant or person-relevant distractors” (Jenett, 2010, p. 124). Player performance as well as immersion scores were higher in the feedback version. This means that game immersion comes from a responsive sense of progression, or player narrative. The narrative in the feedback version was players’ scores getting higher as they collected stars. In the case of Pokémon Go, player narrative is attentive to Pokémon spawns on the screen, where narrative is illustrated through the causation of physical walking, to the effect of Pokémon digitally spawning. Player engagement and selective attention is beget from a familiarity of progression in the system they are immersed in.

Jenett and Huang would agree that subtraction of physical attentiveness exists due to the simultaneous occupation and compartmentalization of digital and physical cognitions. Variables such as participants of the physical space not engaging with any kind of game, or meta information of the physical locations are filtered out by the player as game-irrelevant distractors. The switching of tasks only occurs if the summation of physical and digital game objects are on different ends of game relevancy. If there are objects that affect the player narrative, it is distanced away from the objects that the player uses to inscribe their narrative in the game world. Although game objects such as Pokestops provide information about the spaces in-game, there are no in-game narratives relevant to the physical space when served with the digital game-relevant information.

It can be argued that there is engagement with the physical world, where the player is inscribing their narrative as a player in the physical world due to the change in surroundings as the player walks. Farman attempts to illustrate the inscription of self in the physical world as ‘the sensory inscribed self’ where “The sensory-inscribed body is simultaneously produced through the senses and through the cultural inscriptions both written on and written by the body.” (Farman, 2014, p. 386). The sensory-inscribed body Farman describes is the nature of assigning a narrative to the self via the “sensory” or processes of a third party potentially experiencing the primary party’s actions. The cultural inscription Farman mentions is not something written in the physical space of the player’s narrative, but of observers inhabiting the physical space alongside the players. Farman elaborates by describing external agents witnessing these player’s as “phone zombies”, where the player is foreign to pedestrians, bubbled into their own narrative disregarding the shared space as if

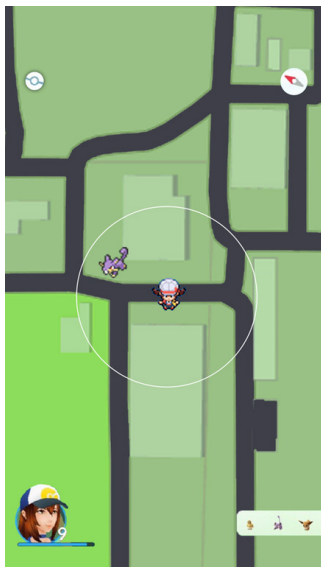
opting into a self constructed stupor. The consequence of players inscribing themselves is not fed back to them, but instead lost among onlookers who inhabit physical space. However, the inscription of the player onto the world is a feedback of different channels. The feedback of the digital space is both read and written, while the feedback of changing the physical surroundings are only read rather than written.

Instead of attempting to make the physical space as reactive as the digital space, or the channels of feedback to compete with each other, designers should do away with representing digital feedback as a game world altogether. The game world should be grounded to the physical world, rather than have an artificially represented one. The purpose of this is so that the player only embodies their body, rather than a 3D avatar in a 3D rendered Pokémon Go world. Pokémon Go's means of representing geo media is through a 3D space represented on the phone. The experience of watching a 3D representation of the player inhabit another 3D world creates the player's role as a God-like onlooker, rather than an inhabitant of the game space. Lei's study on the use of 3D maps illustrates this phenomenon: "When using 3D maps, people switch their viewing angle to a 'bird's eye view.' Therefore, at the psychological level, they are constantly switching perspective" (Lei, 2014, p. 162). 3D maps enable the player to take on the role of a God-like entity that can switch perspectives of the 3D rendered avatar's body. The excess of information represented as 3D removes the player from the physical realm by the game enabling their ability to look around their surroundings on a vertical axis. This removes a sense of agency similar to how third person point of view game where "Playing in third person POV distances the player from perceiving themselves as having direct action in the game world, as they watch their character perform actions and make decisions from the viewpoint of somebody who controls the avatar" (Denisova, 2015, p. 147). The experience of 3D maps, Lei conveys is one outside of a player's body. This is further elaborated where Denisova describes the role of the player's physical self, as someone viewing and controlling their character avatar rather than an agent immersed in their game space.

Pokémon Go's 3D map gives the player the ability to navigate the map from multiple angles, when presented with a 3D view. The complexity of information presented gives another layer of mental load for the player as the 3D map represents its space and the means of feedback as a world on its own. The range of perspectives dissociates the player from taking on the role as an inhabitant of a Pokémon world, but as an observ-

er of someone [the player avatar] inhabiting said world. The player is not grounded to the physical world. Not only are the actions of the player no longer theirs as Denisova states, but is also dissociated as the player is looking externally from their own 3D model. The role of God is communicated by their ability to switch from different perspectives, displacing their experience somewhere between a watcher in the physical realm, and a walking animated avatar. This third person view distances the player from their own body due to the experience of watching their actions being executed by the 3D avatar.

I propose that designers make future augmented reality games like Pokémon Go first person point-of-view by making the player avatar the player itself. Instead of the player experiencing the Pokémon Go world in a third person view by the observation of their 3D avatar interacting with game objects, the experience can be represented as a first person view. In order to achieve this, the game world contained within the player's phone must become a 2D map, a game object immersed and existing in the physical realm, rather than a window into a 3D rendered game world. This creates the sensation that the player is playing in first person view as the game becomes an object the physical player interacts with rather than another world their mind is projected onto.



(Left)2D Pokémon Go Mock-up <https://www.giantbomb.com/Pokémon-go/3030-50840/forums/i-made-a-dumb-little-concept-image-of-a-2d-Pokémon-1799591/>; (Right) Screenshot of Pokémon Go <https://thirdpersonblog.wordpress.com/2016/07/27/early-impressions-of-Pokémon-go/>

2D maps strip away the implications of a nuanced, potentially separate world for the coherence and punctuation of abstracted information of a real one. 3D maps try to imitate and create a world separate from our own, where the replacement of nuance obscures the world attempting to be represented. Treating the game as a map grounds the player into physical space by imposing a limitation on how much the player can see, and also how the player's ability to inscribe the physical realm is concentrated. When Denisova acknowledges that the problem lies in where the ownership of player actions is communicated, Lei elaborates on how ownership is reclaimed by the subtraction of information in a 2D map further. "2D maps are a conceptualization of the actual environment that display information in a more simplified manner" (Lei, 2014, p. 164). This simplification of map reading not only leaves room in the player's mind to engage with the physical space they inhabit, but also closes off immersion with another world since a 2D map is not as detailed, where the player consequences of moving as Jennett's idea of feedback are contained. The theme of inhibition in the representation of game feedback as something in reality is prevalent in Farrow's idea of familiarization with a world. Farrow proposes that the role of the game world is not to give us abilities outside of ourselves, but to ground us in the physical space we inhabit through our limitations. "Familiarity with a game world is developed through extending one's intentionality to the actions of the avatar and appreciating the limits of their agency within the game environment" (Farrow, 2013, p. 225). The simplification of a 2D map is an imposed limit that lets the player appreciate their agency as their body inhabits the physical game space. This simplification lets the player familiarize themselves in the real world, as the role of reorienting and experiencing the vertical depth of buildings that have game context value is expressed through the player's body, making the physical space a game environment. Although the player is empowered by finding Pokémon in this game environment, the means is limited to further appreciate the physical player's connection to the physical world as well as the Pokémon that inhabit it.

It can be argued that reducing the game's expression of a world to a physical object as a 2D map may make the game more mundane. There is an inquiry that asks what makes a 2D map have any playable value when it is so close to 2D maps in common GPS. A 2D mapped Pokémon Go is different from a GPS in that it builds beyond the use of communicating locative data. When locative data is represented through the placement of providing Pokéstops to collect items, and Pokémon to collect

Pokémon to battle with, the game provides a lasting purpose beyond the fulfillment of trekking to these locations. I argue that the agency of the player is still expressed as the game becomes an instrument of navigating the player space not only as a guide similar to GPS, but also has the potential to be an empowering narrative reading and writing device in which the behaviour of visiting a public space is a reaction to player-specific game states (the demand to find resources to heal Pokémon, as well as the demand to battle with Pokémon for more resources after battling gyms). The game becomes more of a functional object in that it empowers a means of interacting with locations. Radvansky explains the difference between the relationship between player and environment related objects, and functional objects. Radvansky's study on the environmental effects of forgetting a train of thought upon walking through doorways, where objects are more remembered or immersed in the player's narrative when they serve a functional purpose. "Carrying an object provides a functional interaction between the person and the object; just having an object in the room that is not being carried does not provide such an interaction" (Radvansky, 2006 , p.1154). Radvansky is explaining that the memory or train of thought is effectively retained when the person is carrying an object outside of the room it was originally from. However, this object must be associated with a purpose or contextualized connection to the thoughts of traversing rooms. Looking at an object associated with a room but not contextualizing an action or purpose does not facilitate a dynamic between the object to person to environment transaction. GPS presents objects in a room because all the locations are static, unchanging in their value. A supermarket will always be a supermarket just as a school will always be a school. The object carried [Pokémon Go map] exceeds its function of being an object that conceptualizes a room or environment by also providing events to catch Pokémon and collect items. The game is functional as it initiates and provides a means of interacting with Pokémon collected by healing or catching with resources from prior trips to locations. While the game provides a functional relationship to the player, it can be taken a step further by providing a functional relationship to the environment.

While buildings occupy a space as non-game functions, their variance can be mapped to game relevant ones. The inscribed function of the physical building should be more accessible to the player. The ideas or function imbued in thinking about building are what makes it inviting for pedestrians to overcome the mental threshold of trekking a distance. The

more ideas present in a space, the more flowing of the space is incentivized. Giles-Corti understands that players “Geographers conceive of accessibility as a measure of the spatial distribution of facilities adjusted for the desire and the ability of people to overcome distance or travel time to access a facility or activity” (Giles-Corti, 2005, p. 171). This distribution of facilities can map to the physical realm counterparts. There should be as many diverse ways to interact with locations as there are as diverse buildings in the real world. An example of this could be making eateries only provide items that heal Pokémon, and convenience stores provide items that catch them. In this way, the game world narrative is just as immersive and in depth as in real life while also enhancing the already present diverse qualities and relationships between these buildings. The experience of AR gaming does not have to be restrained to presenting itself as a separate world with rooms the player only mentally occupies. The AR experience could be making the game an inhabitant of the physical world so that said world becomes a game space.

The experience of playing Pokémon Go can be described by Smith and Cabañes as two narratives of a physical and digital nature respectively. The game objects that are interactable, Pokémon and Pokestops, are displayed on the 3D map of Pokémon Go as digital images, while the locations and surroundings of the player are physical. Although these objects are based on their shared locative data, the means of representing them are separated, only to be occupied in the player’s mind concurrently. Jenett and Huang reveal that having two streams of feedback or narrative structures is stressful due to the switching of motor functions to move the 3D player avatar via walking, the cognitive function of interacting with Pokémon, and managing resources collected through the game. The solution is to treat the digital world as a non-spatial representation. It must be ethereal, supplementary to reality rather than something separate or a 3D mirrored world. The player must be separated by any mediary of projecting themselves onto another active agent in gamespace such as a 3D avatar. By abstracting the gamespace into a map rather than a window after removing this mediary, the map is now an object or means to express agency for players inhabiting physical space with them. If AR game designers choose to represent their games as tools that can exist within the physical world rather than separate entire 3D worlds, then player agency is reclaimed by the player. In order for the digital narrative to retain its interest to players compared to that of the physical world, its variance in systems parallel the multiple functions different types of people can inter-

act with in the placement of buildings. This not only enhances the beauty of the public physical space's variance by adding a game function associated with it, but also reminds the player to appreciate variance in non-game contexts.

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Jensen Benko

Constructing Diverse Queer Identity Through Writing Fan Fiction

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the possibilities for queer youth to actively construct queer identity through writing fan fiction online. Since LGBTQ+ identities are still not widely accepted in many places, researchers have studied how young LGBTQ+ individuals look for resources to learn about and validate their identities. Most of this research has been done on television and film, as researchers feel as though representations within those mediums help LGBTQ+ youth learn about themselves, form group norms, and receive validation of their identities. In this paper, representations of queer identity are critiqued using Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality. This framework reveals that there is a lack of diversity in queer media. By recognizing the limits of television and film, this paper explores how the new medium of online fan fiction can help queer youth actively construct a more diverse queerness. The final portion of the paper looks at how the anonymous aspect of writing fan fiction online and the nature of repeating ideas from source material allow the practice to be repetitive and proliferate, which Judith Butler suggests is necessary for displacing norms.

INTRODUCTION

Within the discussion of how to help queer youth explore their identity, a lot of attention has been given to queer representation in television. While representation in television is one component to consider, it is also important to look at new modes that have come about, and what those modes have to offer. For example, online fan fiction has become increasingly popular with adolescents over the last few years. While fan fiction—the practice of creating new texts based on existent literature, movies, or television shows—began in the 1970s with zines, its popularity on the Internet surged around 2007 when Fanfiction.net was ranked 159th out of over 1 million websites based on number of visits (Tancer). Then in 2013 Time Magazine listed fan fiction site Archive of Our Own in its list of 50 best websites (50 Best Websites). Fan fiction websites are a relatively new phenomenon, and have not been studied in connection with queer identity construction. Due to the existence of queer content

on these fan fiction websites, it is important to explore how the practice of writing fan fiction impacts queer youth identity formation.

In exploring this practice, I first look at who writes fan fiction and why they write it. I argue that fan fiction often addresses problems within queer television representations, which are revealed when television representation is looked at using the theory of intersectionality from “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color” by Kimberle Crenshaw. I also contrast producers’ intentions with those of fan fiction writers, and argue that writing fan fiction online can serve as a tool for queer youth to take a more active role in identity construction, as compared to being shaped by queer television. I then turn to the work of feminist philosopher Judith Butler, specifically her theories about gender performativity and subversive acts in “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory” and *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. I connect her ideas about the power of repetition and proliferation to fan fiction in order to argue that the content and scale of fan fiction allows for a more diverse queerness, in addition to allowing an active role in identity construction. Finally, in order to argue how fan fiction can be a tool for the active construction of diverse queer identity, I explore the anonymity of fan fiction websites on the Internet using Sherry Turkle’s foundational theory about the Internet’s ability to impact identity from her essay “Cyberspace and Identity”.

I want to start though by defining the scope of this project. First, I am choosing to focus on queer youth’s construction of identity. The process of building identity continues throughout one’s lifetime, but the majority of sexual identity exploration and formation occurs in adolescence (Bond 38). Secondly, as fan fiction scholar Francesca Coppa noted in an interview, teenagers write a lot of fan fiction, and so I explore adolescent identity development specifically (Beaton). This paper also focuses specifically on online fan fiction in order to consider the roles of the Internet and anonymity in shaping the content within fan fiction. I apply existing theories on identity construction and the Internet to the practice of writing queer fan fiction in order to explore ideas about creative control in building identity. In the first part of my paper I explore what fan fiction is and why people write it. The second section compares fan fiction and television in terms of how the motives of creators impact how the medium can be used as a tool for queer identity construction. The section also problematizes queer representation on television using inter-

sectionality and looks at active versus passive construction of identity. In the last section, I use Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and Sherry Turkle's theory about how the Internet can serve as a tool for users to explore a multitudinous identity. I use these two theories to make my argument that the practice of writing fan fiction online can be used as a tool for queer youth to actively explore more diverse queer identities.

WRITING FAN FICTION: WHO WRITES IT AND WHY

Before I explore how fan fiction can help build queer youth identity, I want to first define fan fiction and give an overview of why people write it. The book *Illegal Literature: Toward a Disruptive Creativity* by David S. Roh, a professor at the University of Utah who specializes in media studies, explores the phenomena of fan fiction. He defines fan fiction as "a text written by an amateur writer that directly lifts characters and settings to create new narratives...[and which tries] correcting a perceived flaw or deficiency or re-presents a direction that may be subversive, outrageous, or nonsensical" (Roh 64). Although it is important to note from this definition that fan fiction is the work of amateurs, fan fiction should not be dismissed as unimportant. Indeed, the majority of fan fiction writers are teenagers, as Roh mentions, and these writers try to correct something they find unsatisfying from the original source. Yet, as fans, their dissatisfaction is also accompanied by appreciation of the source material they work with. In the specific example of fan fiction on queer television, television representation can be simultaneously important to the fan fiction writer, but also have deficiencies that the writer addresses.

In addition to writing fan fiction as a way to address perceived flaws in source materials, writers also look for a sense of community. Both writers of fan fiction and television producers use their respective platforms to create artwork. However, fan fiction production is driven by the hope of engagement and community, while television production is driven largely by economic motives. Roh ascribes that fan fiction writers primarily create their works "without any expectation of financial reward and instead only ask for a readership to respond with feedback regarding their shared obsessions" (Roh 65). Fan fiction writers usually do not intend to commercialize their work or receive payment. Instead, they seek a sense of community built through other fans engaging with their works. Without concern for profit, fan fiction writers can produce content that pushes boundaries more than television does. Television producers' con-

cerns about making profit limit the risks that they are willing to take to have an impact on representation, as will be discussed in the next section. Thus, due to the lack of economic motives, fan fiction is a better tool than queer representations in television for exploring diverse, queer identities.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF FAN FICTION VS. THE LIMITS OF TELEVISION

While I argue that fan fiction can be a better tool than queer television for exploring and constructing queer identity, it is important to first understand what television representation offers queer youth. In his study “Portrayals of Sex and Sexuality in Gay- and Lesbian- Oriented Media: A Quantitative Content Analysis,” Bradley J. Bond explains the importance of GLO (gay and lesbian oriented) media for queer identity formation. He gives a brief history of how television has been used to form identity, and a content analysis of GLO media, which is media made specifically for a gay and lesbian audience. Bond states that “the salient role that media play in the lives of LGB youth is largely due to the absence of any interpersonal resources willing to provide information, validation, or support for this vulnerable population” (Bond 38). Since identifying as part of the LGBTQ+ community is not the ‘norm’ in our society, there are not always resources available for queer people to address their needs. When they are unable to turn to school professionals, parents, or friends, queer youth turn to television for validation of their identity. Bond argues that GLO media helps these queer youth in their identity formation process because “LGB adolescents also have a niche media industry to turn to for information and validation” (Bond 39). While media traditionally focuses on casting a wide net to be relatable to the most people, niche media uses a strategy to target specific demographics not currently represented within traditional shows. Though Bond feels as though queer adolescents can use niche media when exploring their identity, limitations still exist within GLO media that exclude certain members of the queer community based on other identity factors, such as race or class.

Both Wendy Peters and Kelly Kessler use an intersectional lens in their analyses of queer television to find that queer television is largely white and wealthy. In her article “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” legal professor Kimberle Crenshaw explains that she created intersectionality to address the ways in which gender and race come together to create oppression

that is different from racial or gender discrimination. While she uses her theory to discuss violence against women of color specifically, it can be applied to the queer community, as well. The main tenant of Crenshaw's theory is that "[t]he problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences... Moreover, ignoring difference *within* groups contributes to tension among groups" (Krenshaw 1242). When describing a group identity, such as sexuality, it might be common to talk about the shared characteristics of the group while ignoring how each individual experiences the shared identity. In the case of queer representation in television, for example, the focus on exploring sexuality leads to a lack of nuance in race, class, and other representations within the queer community. It is crucial to recognize how other components of an individual's identity create a unique experience. So, when talking about LGBTQ+ representation in television, it is important to complicate the analysis and look at multiple identity factors to see which individuals in the queer community receive TV representation.

In her article "Pink Dollars, White Collars: *Queer as Folk*, Valuable Viewers, and the Price of Gay TV", Wendy Peters uses intersectionality, explores the economic motives of TV executives, and finds that the show's queer representation is limited to featuring wealthy, white gay men. Producers use niche media to target members of the LGBTQ+ community that they felt had money to spend: white, wealthy gay men (Peters 194). When Peters interviewed viewers of *Queer as Folk*, it was wealthy, white gay men who felt they could build their identity through the show, which conflicts with Bond's argument that niche media can help all queer youth learn about their identity and receive validation. Two years later, Kelly Kessler studied the show *The L-Word*, another GLO-media television show, and she also found that the representation is limited. In her article "Showtime Thinks, Therefore I Am: The Corporate Construction of 'The Lesbian' on Sho.Com's the L Word Site," Kessler finds that the show's characters are predominately white, wealthy, lesbian femmes. Again, the choice in representation is done for economic motives as Showtime's then-president of entertainment is quoted saying, "[i]t must be liberating for Illene [Chaiken] to do a series about her own experiences, but ultimately, we want people everywhere to buy it. So yes, the women are all attractive and we make no apologies about that. It's television. Who wants to watch unattractive people, gay, straight, or whatever?" (Kessler 129). The Showtime executive bluntly states that *The L-Word* is intended

to make money, and deems that certain identities are more valuable and sellable. Then, the intention is not to improve queer representation to help youth, but to make profit. Economic motivation drives the production of queer television content as executives try to reach the white queer community, which has not previously been tapped into. This contrasts the motives that Roh sees in fan fiction writers. While fan fiction writers do seek approval from the fandom community, their content production is mostly informed by their personal connection and feelings around the source text. In this way, fan fiction is motivated by a desire for creativity that is not limited by what is most profitable.

In addition to the diverse possibilities available in fan fiction, the practice also allows for queer youth to take more control in constructing their identity. Peters argues that “as media conglomerates consolidate the power of popular representation within privatized neoliberal markets, they gain further influence in the production and shaping of the personal and collective identities of their viewers” (Peters 195). She notes that, in the neoliberal market system, media conglomerates control how viewers build their identities, and warns readers that the influential power of media conglomerates is growing. Since the process of identity is being influenced by television representations, media becomes the active agent in identity construction, and the person being influenced becomes passive. By allowing media executives to create the narratives and norms around queer identity, queer youth viewers are part of a system in which they passively absorb how to be queer. In order to take more control in the construction of their identity, queer youth can write fan fiction online. When writing a piece of fan fiction, the writer can challenge the narrative of the source text and actively build their own sense of queer identity. Instead of passively being influenced by the limited portrayals of queerness on television, queer youth can use the practice of writing fan fiction to, as Roh notes, correct the flaws in television, and actively build a more diverse idea of queerness.

I want to clarify that there are some television producers who are queer themselves, and have the intention of creating helpful queer content for the queer community, but their portrayal of queerness is limited as well. In his article “Reading Queer Television: Some Notes on Method,” Daniel Marshall looks at the show *Beautiful People*, which was created by queer producers. Marshall quotes the writer of the show Jonathan Harvey who says that “as a gay writer [Harvey] was working with a gay producer and a gay exec producer and [they] talked a lot about [their] childhoods

so [they] had the freedom...to sort of put a lot of [their] lives into it" (Marshall 93). In this scenario, all the producers and writers were male; so, although they are incorporating their own queer experiences, their lived experiences would differ from other queer individuals with a different background. Although the show may portray a more authentic queer narrative, since it has been developed by queer producers and writers, it is still a narrative that looks at the similarities between the creators. This goes back to Crenshaw's ideas about the issue of focusing on group similarity, over group differences. As queer creators focus on the similarities of their experiences, viewers will lack a diverse offering of queer representations. One method to solve this could be to encourage queer individuals to become television producers, and diversify the medium by telling their individual stories. However, the television industry remains difficult for people to enter who are not well connected, white, male, or wealthy. In contrast, the Internet is much more accessible. The accessibility of the Internet allows for queer youth from different backgrounds to create texts that displace old norms, and create a larger queer perspective.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY AND THE FUNCTIONS OF THE INTERNET

In her works on gender performativity, Judith Butler looks at how historical representations of gender influence gender identity and how individuals can work creatively with historical representations to displace norms. I am going to discuss Butler's ideas about gender construction, and then apply her theory on gender to queer identity. In her essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," Judith Butler argues that no preformed gender identity exists in relation to the body. Instead, individuals construct their gender identity based on their readings of historical gender representations which means that "one is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one's body and indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well" (Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution", 521). What Butler emphasizes about constructing a gender identity, is the activeness, or 'doing', of gender performance. First, the individual actively observes the norms presented by historical representations, and then the individual actively does their gender in a different and unique way. I argue that the same process is undertaken when an individual constructs

their sexual identity. Historical ways of doing sexuality influence people's current expressions of sexuality.

However, the historical norms attached to either gender identity or sexual identity cannot be lost completely. In thinking about the influential power history exerts over current doings of gender and sexuality, some might question how we become original in our identity constructions and how we stop the cycle of repetition. However, in her book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler says this is an impossible feat and that "the task is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat or, indeed, to repeat and, through a radical proliferation of gender, to displace the very gender norms that enable the repetition itself" (Butler, "Gender Trouble", 148, emphasis in original). When discussing repetition, Butler is referring to the ways people act out and embody gender norms. For example, the way people dress, walk, talk, or wear their hair are examples of repeated norms. It is through repetition that a sense of gender identity is constructed. But to challenge norms, people can repeat in a radically proliferate way. In other words, people can repeat norms on such a scale that it becomes subversive and the act of repetition makes people question what started the repetition. While Butler is talking specifically about the way people repeatedly embody gender norms, I argue that her ideas about creative repetition and radical proliferation can apply to fan fiction writers addressing norms about sexual identity in their works. By strategically, playfully, and creatively repeating norms in multiple ways, the writers can destabilize the norms themselves and point out how unnatural they are. Specifically, I argue that it is online fan fiction which can accomplish this repetition and proliferation, due to its use of the Internet.

The online space in which fan fiction is written provides writers with a sense of anonymity that allows them to repeat and proliferate norms in more creative ways. The idea of repetition is central to fan fiction since, by Roh's definition, it is based on art that already exists. Online fan fiction is a great tool for queer youth to confront the norms of sexuality since, as fan fiction scholar Francesca Coppa said in an interview, "there are some artworks where you have to squint to see the antecedents and others [such as fan fiction] where it's open, declared and obvious" (Beaton). The open nature of fan fiction's repetition makes it a strategy that queer youth can use for the creative and strategic repeating that Butlers says is necessary for displacing norms. Fans as a community have the ability to rewrite the narrative and choose whether the original narrative or the fan work has more importance in their own identity con-

structions. While the fan fiction community is open about its repetition, writers rely on anonymity to do so. Psychologist Sherry Turkle researches how technology impacts an individual's identity in her essay "Cyberspace and Identity". She explores what anonymity affords users of the Internet and argues that "[t]he relative anonymity of life on the screen—one has the choice of being known only by one's chosen 'handle' or online name—gives people the chance to express often unexplored aspects of the self" (Turkle 643). On the Internet, anonymity gives users a sense of protection. As mentioned earlier in Bond's assessment, many queer youth do not have friends or family who support their identity. However, these queer youth can explore their queer identity online in an anonymous way. Fan fiction is a good way to anonymously explore queer identity since the fandom community can provide the support and validation that writers seek. The online validation that young queer writers receive help them to accept their offline identities. This is because their online creations are not separate from their offline identity. Rather, online creations give the writers the opportunity to creatively explore identity in a safe way, which may not be an option in their offline lives. I argue that online fan fiction allows for a radical proliferation of queer identity because writers engage in creative repetition due to the anonymity the Internet provides. Fan fiction websites give queer youth the space and anonymity to explore their sexual identity, which they may not be able to do in real life.

CONCLUSION

This paper explores how writing fan fiction online can serve as a tool for queer youth to explore and construct their identity. Fan fiction writers' lack of economic motives, their repetition of source material, their community, and their ability to be anonymous allows them to develop a more diverse sense of queer identity. Fan fiction is the work of amateurs, and addresses the writer's dissatisfaction with something from the source material. One possible dissatisfaction can come from the lack of diversity in queer representation on television. Fan fiction can address this issue because it does not have the same profit motives that television executives and producers have. For example, in the cases of *Queer as Folk* and *The L-Word* the queer representation focused on white wealthy queers specifically, thus lacking an intersectional understanding of identity. However, even in the case of producers who are queer themselves, such as for the show *Beautiful People*, the narratives still focus on communal-

ities among queer experiences, instead of diversity within the community. In order to challenge this lack of diverse queer identity, queer youth can use the practice of writing fan fiction to achieve the repetition and proliferation that Judith Butler claims is necessary for displacing norms. Ultimately, fan fiction's ability to accomplish this displacement is due to the repetition central to its creation, and the anonymity of the Internet that allows for creative and thus diverse queer portrayals.

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Simran Bhatia

Modern Maps and Their Detrimental Effects on Politics, Culture, and Behavior

INTRODUCTION

At the mention of the word “maps”, most people imagine a physical paper with a worldview of coordinates, road exits, and the cardinal directions. Before the new millennium, learning to drive included learning how highways and local roads connected. It was customary to have a book of interstate highways in every car. Planning routes before getting on the road was key to every trip that stretched beyond local roads. In addition to their real life use, maps have repeatedly appeared in fictional works. Maps appear in movies like *Indiana Jones* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*, adventure films that portray maps as primitive and fantastical tools for solving mysteries or for avoiding death. Furthermore, children’s television cartoons like *Dora the Explorer* turn the map into a friendly character who sings and asks questions, encouraging young children to learn navigation skills. The portrayal of maps on screen, while sometimes exaggerated for entertainment, emphasizes their importance for understanding movement and location. This importance has only increased with time, as maps are no longer restricted to physical and fictional representations. From navigating through traffic, to visualizing data, maps are a cornerstone of how humans in our developed world get through their day.

This paper will discuss how modern American society uses, and consequently abuses, modern maps in politics, culture, and behavior. The term “modern maps” refers to modern uses of maps, from typical two-dimensional maps to innovations in map technology. I will use two distinct theories to explain the effects of using modern maps. The first theory is the importance of privacy versus the importance of safety and government intervention. I will use this theory to discuss the government’s utilization of map technology in surveillance programs, and its questionable legality and effects on citizens. I will use Consumer Behavior Theory and instant gratification to explain the abuse of modern maps by Americans

and the effects of this abuse on culture and behavior. In the first section, *Navigating the Maps of the Past Two Decades*, I will chronicle the technological development and expansion of maps from the late 1990's to modern day 2018. In the second and third sections, *Politics and Maps*, I will examine the political implications of the current use of maps on society. These implications vary from the surveillance of citizens to redistricting voter maps. In the third section, *The Culture of Maps for Modern America*, I will explore the different ways maps have permeated American culture. This directly leads to the fourth section, *Behavior and Modern Maps*, in which I will examine the anatomical and behavioral changes associated with society's rapid adoption of map technology. I will reference the works of certain scholars throughout, including Hiawatha Bray's book *You Are Here: From the Compass to GPS, the History and Future of How We Find Ourselves*. Bray discusses the several ways in which maps have developed over the decades and each development's cultural and political implications. I will reference Paul Roberts' book, *The Impulse Society: America in the Age of Instant Gratification*, to explain the cultural changes in modern maps that are driven by human behavior. These sections will attempt to support a unique theory: while modern maps are incredibly important for society to grow, they have also made privacy and human connection nearly nonexistent.

This framework of politics, culture, and behavior highlights the large impact that modern maps have had on our interactions with the world and why these effects are harmful. Some of these detrimental effects include voter suppression, mental illnesses, and biological changes to the human brain. While maps have granted people freedom and increased locational accessibility, they have also dehumanized Americans and disconnected them from the world.

NOTE ABOUT GPS AND MAPS

It is important to this paper to distinguish maps and GPS. Maps are representations of a physical space, such as a map of local roads. The National Geographic states that "a map is a symbolic representation of selected characteristics of a place, usually drawn on a flat surface. Maps present information about the world in a simple, visual way" ("Map" 1). According to NASA, GPS is a "space-based radionavigation system that helps pinpoint a...position to about a meter of accuracy (for example latitude, longitude and altitude) and provide nano-second precise time any-

where on Earth” (“Global Positioning Systems” 1). The term GPS is used interchangeably with maps because GPS has been a technological add-on feature to maps over the past two decades. GPS enables real time physical representations of places. While the two are different by definition, GPS is one of the modern applications of maps.

NAVIGATING THE MAPS OF THE PAST TWO DECADES

In the past few decades we have seen rapid advances in the development of modern and digital maps. The use of systems like GPS began in the Space-Race era, namely with the launch of Russia’s Sputnik satellite in 1957. The government spent years refining the technology into a two-tiered service. There are two frequencies, named L1 and L2. There is SPS, standard positioning service, which uses the L1 frequency, and PPS, precise positioning service, which uses the L2 frequency (“Global Positioning System History” 1). These GPS frequencies are like radio channels, but instead use different satellite frequencies. SPS provides basic GPS capability on the L1 frequency, while PPS provides highly specific locational information on L2. PPS has been and will continue to be reserved for government use due to its precision and confidential use. See Figure 1.1 below for a breakdown of the GPS tier system:

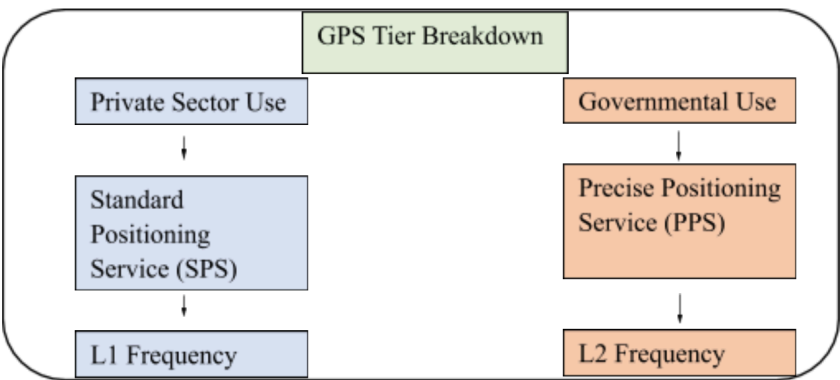


Figure 1.1

Until 1983, basic SPS access was given to specific organizations on a selective availability basis, where only certain organizations had access to the technology. According to Juquai McDuffie at Popular Mechanics,

The military originally had no intentions on opening [GPS] to the public. But then in 1983, a Soviet SU-15 shot down a Korean passenger jet as it strayed from its intended route into Soviet prohibited airspace. Realizing world-wide GPS could have prevented the tragedy...President Ronald Reagan opened this system to the public [on a selective availability basis] on September 16, 1983. [However], the public version would have its accuracy fuzzed...to ensure that only the U.S. military had the best data available, (McDuffie 1).

This was the reason for the L1 and L2 differentiation and also marked one of the first times that proprietary military technology was made accessible to the public. Although the frequency available to the public was less accurate, the government recognized the important role GPS played in preventing dangerous accidents.

While the airplane tragedy was unfortunate, many companies and businesses would not exist without the incident. Allowing the private sector access to GPS boosted the technological advancement of many of the tools we use today, including laptops, cell phones, and smartphone applications like Google Maps. The immediate effects of public access to GPS technology are analyzed by University of Texas in Austin Professor Brendan Christopher Gaughen's dissertation, *Practices of Place: Ordinary Mobilities and Everyday Technology*. Once "selective availability was turned off by executive order, [it] instantly [increased] the accuracy of GPS receivers and [provided] a number of civil applications that had not been possible before. Within a few years, GPS receivers grew to be one of the best-selling consumer electronic devices along with personal computers and mobile phones" (Gaughen 159). With public access to GPS, applications like Google Maps, Apple Maps, and other navigation applications became the standard for smartphones. Without the Space Race and airplane crash, GPS would have reached the private sector at a much later time, and many of the tools we use today would not be as advanced.

POLITICS AND MAPS – SURVEILLANCE

Just as modern maps can be used for convenience and accessibility, they are also being used by the government to monitor citizens. By being able to track location constantly, the government can now monitor people without an official warrant. The American people have a reasonable expectation of privacy and an expectation of safety precautions taken by the government to catch criminals. The balance of privacy and safety

is delicate, as both concepts are important to a functional relationship between citizens and the government. However, without clear legislation on location tracking and how it impacts the right to privacy, it is a tool that can dehumanize Americans in the eyes of the government. According to Bray's analysis, while it is remarkable that humans can now find any place or anyone, "it is just as easy for government agencies and corporations to track us... Phones are being supplemented with other location methods that are even subtler, and often far more insidious" (Bray 143). The legality of surveillance and location monitoring is increasingly debated in this cyber age. The United States Constitution's 4th Amendment states that citizens have the right to be "secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures... and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause... particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized" (Constitution of the United States). The terms "unreasonable searches", "probable cause", and "place to be searched" are now controversial, given the development of new mapping technology. For instance, the legality of tracking citizens by their phone's locational data to create a map of their movement and to use that as evidence for probable cause is questionable. In this modern age, can movement and location be a "place to be searched"? The answer remains unclear as there are several differing opinions on the use of surveillance and tracking by the government. Even with various court precedents, it is difficult to say if a warrant is legally required to obtain information that can be traced with computer software. The reason it is difficult is because there are no laws that outline legal procedures for locational data tracking. For example,

In April 2013... [New York police officials] received a tip about a person who was running a drug lab. The information was not enough to establish probable cause. However, by obtaining the suspect's location data from his cell phone provider, the detectives were able to figure out the address of the lab and stake out the place. The surveillance produced enough evidence of drug activity to get them a search warrant (Bray 153).

In this case, the police investigated further into the private details of the citizen to receive a warrant. This process is usually, and legally, done in reverse – the private details are obtained after a warrant has been created.

Regardless of the availability of information, many citizens

assume this data is private, and therefore a warrant should be mandatory. As “security becomes future-focused [on] attempting to monitor what might happen”, Americans and legislators must implement controls around what information can be accessed by the government (Gaughen 178). Relying on government insiders to prevent the abuse of power is an unchecked system that can quickly become tyrannical. Moreover, the mapping of movement in such a manner dehumanizes the citizen to a data point or an object. It is impossible to say how much and what kind of data is collected on our movement, but the fact that it is easy to track anyone at any time could violate fundamental rights for citizens. Tracking is a slippery slope. What may begin as selective tracking of suspicious citizens who have motive behind their movement could easily turn into mass surveillance without true purpose. This would not only be a violation of the 4th Amendment, but also a violation of basic human rights to privacy.

COUNTER ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF SURVEILLANCE METHODS

On the other hand, some argue that government surveillance is an important tool to decrease crime. In the article “Benefits of Surveillance” by Eugene Volokh, the UCLA professor proposes a contrary perspective to Bray’s caution. “The solution...is not to reject the useful technology, but to set up administrative control mechanisms to prevent its misuse... Because [these tools] are evenhanded and catch the rich and powerful alongside everyone else, there are bound to be strong political forces pushing for such control mechanisms” (Volokh 1). Instead of viewing tracking as a negative tool meant to terrorize citizens, Volokh proposes that it helps the government catch criminals. Cameras that are meant to track cars passing through intersections will catch everyone, and in Volokh’s opinion, there are greater legislative controls that will make sure the technology is used fairly. Bray agrees that surveillance and monitoring without warrants could reduce crime, as “requiring [warrants] to get basic, limited information about a person’s historical location would make it significantly more difficult to solve crimes and seek justice” (Bray 153). However, “many lawmakers dread the alternative: a world in which police agencies [do not need a warrant and] can obtain at will detailed information on the location and movements of every citizen” (Bray 153). There are currently very minimal and unknown controls in place for surveillance. Additionally, many Americans have a limited understand-

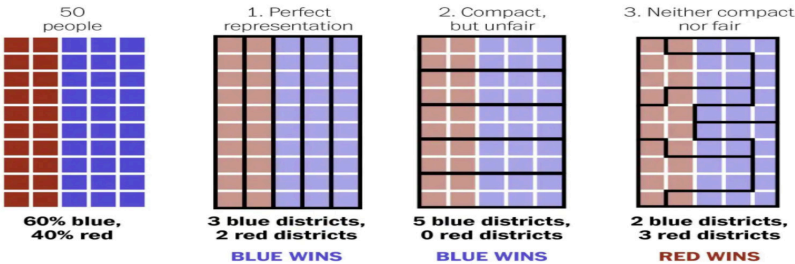
ing of the technology. Surveillance methods need to be well understood by citizens and legislators before boundaries are made. Citizens cannot rationally vote on regulating the use of a technology they do not understand. Moreover, continuing to monitor citizens without legislative controls dehumanizes individual Americans into mass statistics. Despite the potential to increase efficiency in law enforcement, location-tracking and surveillance remains an abuse of power by the government until laws regulate their use.

POLITICS AND MAPS – VOTER SUPPRESSION THROUGH GERRYMANDERING

In addition to utilizing map technology, the government still uses two-dimensional maps to organize voting districts. Voting districts define the geographic area from which votes will be proportionately weighted towards candidates for office. The drawing of these voter district lines has unfortunately been used as a voter suppression tool, also known as gerrymandering. Professor John Mackenzie from University of Delaware defines gerrymandering as the “redrawing of election district boundaries to give an electoral advantage to a particular candidate or party” in order to “maximize the number of legislative seats that can be won by the political party in charge of redrawing the district boundaries” (Mackenzie 1). Essentially, gerrymandering is a way for the party that oversees the drawing of voter district lines to ensure that their party stays in power for a long time. The geographic area is divided into compact sections that include more of the desired voters and minimize the opposite voters. Below, Figure 1.2 from The Washington Post provides a visual aid for understanding gerrymandering:

Gerrymandering, explained

Three different ways to divide 50 people into five districts



WASHINGTONPOST.COM/WONKBLOG

Adapted from Stephen Nass

Figure 1.2 (The Washington Post)

Although gerrymandering was first recognized in 1812, it is still an oppressive use of maps in the 21st century. Over the past two decades, some states have created legislation and independent commissions to prevent gerrymandering. However, the success of these controls in those few states has not been enough to encourage other states to adopt them. This may be because the same officials who vote on creating such measures are the ones who still benefit from gerrymandering. While this abuse of modern maps is still a thorn in democracy today, the tide is slowly turning. An example of an attempt to correct gerrymandering is the Supreme Court case of *Harris et al. v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission et al.*, which addressed Native American voter suppression in Arizona. The original voter district map was diluting the voice of Native Americans by placing their small population into larger Republican districts. The independent commission in charge of drawing voting districts wanted to create a new map that was more inclusive of the Shoshone-Bannock tribal nation of Arizona (*Harris et al. v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission et al.* 1). Unfortunately, this landmark case of corrective redistricting was met with backlash. The same Arizona Republicans who had previously benefited from gerrymandering argued that the attempt to correct and equalize the map was unfair. According to Mark Trahan, Professor of Journalism at the University of North Dakota, “the [Arizona Republicans] argued that the commission packed more people into Republican districts than Democratic ones” to try and dilute the Republican voice (Trahan 1). The Supreme Court found their argument unsupported, and unanimously ruled in favor of the commission’s decision to correct the disenfranchisement of Native American voters. This case was an important step towards election reform. It proved that redistricting could be nonpartisan and inclusive of minority communities. Trahan supports this conclusion, stating that “political districts are... a reflection of a community and making certain that every community has a voice... and the opportunity to win” (Trahan 1). Unfortunately, Arizona is one of just seven states that have commissions in place to prevent gerrymandering. Most states place the power of redistricting in the hands of state legislatures, where the majority party grabs control of the voter district map. Those who benefit from gerrymandering will oppose reform, as was the case in Arizona. When abused in this way, modern maps prevent the progress of society by disconnecting the minority voice from the government and disenfranchising certain communities from voting. Until election reform is adopted nationally, gerrymandering will remain a destruc-

tive use of modern maps with severe political implications on minorities.

THE CULTURE OF MAPS FOR MODERN AMERICA

Beyond politics, the second branch of infiltration by modern maps is American culture. After the creation of navigation tools like Google Maps, Generation Y, Z, and thereafter have become adept at using these applications. Using map technology for basic tasks such as driving to work or finding food nearby is now part of common culture. The adoption of modern maps into daily life is a sign that humans are dependent on and trust the technology with their lives. This dependency was initiated by businesses who realized that live-tracking their services would set their company apart from competitors. A prime example of modern maps infiltrating culture is food delivery. GrubHub, a food delivery service launched in 2004, was one of the first to allow people to order food remotely from restaurants around them (“Grubhub History” 1). People were thrilled to have this service available to them, but GrubHub lacked the ability for the customer to see where their food was on its travel journey. Uber, a popular ride sharing service, decided to bring GPS tracking to food delivery with the launch of UberEats. Business Insider’s Biz Carson explains that “once you place your order, a specially trained Uber driver carrying lunch bags to keep the food warm or cold will deliver it while you track their progress on your screen” (Carson 2). In response, food culture has been permanently changed by the convenience of food delivery. While the accessibility of mobile devices created the perfect environment for developing these applications, their impressive selection and tracking accuracy has been the key turning point for popularizing their use. Many restaurants have stopped spending money on ambience and takeout menus and instead place their menu on food delivery applications. As more restaurants change, consumers respond by ordering more deliveries. The cycle of increasing dependency throughout the past decade directly ties into the trust that humans place in modern map applications. People’s belief that these services will deliver quality food and their ability to track progress down to the exact GPS location of the car is just one area of this trust.

Much of this dependency, trust, and need to fulfill desires immediately through map applications can be explained by the concept of instant gratification. Paul Roberts, author of *The Impulse Society*, defines instant gratification as “the tendency, wired in by evolution, to prize

immediate rewards and ignore future costs. [We] can see this in the way our entire consumer culture has elevated immediate gratification to life's primary goal" (Roberts 9). I will explore the medical aspect of this phenomenon in a later section, but the choices that are driven by this behavior define modern culture and consumerism. American consumers make choices based on what will fulfill their desires immediately, even if it is not necessarily the best option. If low quality food is closer than high quality food, the consumer is more likely to choose the item that takes less time, even if it is unhealthy. The consumer satisfies their hunger and learns that they can be instantly gratified by using a map application. Evidently, companies and innovators have tapped into the human need for instant gratification through maps. By teaching consumers that they can have whatever they want, whenever they want, wherever they are, the culture of living has changed. As consumers disconnect from real experiences and increasingly value instant gratification, companies continue to exploit consumers to a point that has become intrusive. Roberts supports this idea, stating that "we are in the midst of an invasion – the end stages in an accelerating drive by the marketplace to break down all barriers between itself and us" (Roberts 6). Without barriers, there is no differentiation between humans and the companies that seek to gain from us. While consumers become more dependent on modern map applications to deliver instant gratification, companies have become comfortable breaking the barriers between humans and the market. One major example of removing the barrier is AT&T's new marketing technology.

AT&T recently unveiled ShopAlerts, a geo-fencing" service...[where] marketers can create a geo-fence around an event, a retail location or a geographic area, and when a person with a smartphone steps into the geofenced area, he is bombarded with offers of products to buy. This is but one example of how [modern maps have deepened] the commercialization of public space, moving it from mere ads and billboards to a point where every individual...becomes an opportunity for targeted commercial exploitation (Rosen 41).

Exploiting consumers through geo-fencing is an innovation rooted in tried and tested marketing practices. Marketers have developed these location-based applications in accordance to Consumer Behavior Theory, which studies how and why consumers respond to stimuli. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, a subset of Consumer Behavior Theory, marketers should not give consumers the time and headspace to make

decisions. When marketers bombard consumers with deals based on their location, they reduce the lag between intent to purchase and buying, so that consumers do not talk themselves out of a purchase (“Four Consumer Behavior Theories...” 1). The lag between intent and buying is the essence of being a human, which is thinking rationally about the consequences of an action. Decreasing the lag and increasing consumerism is therefore a disconnection from being human. Rather than being connected to one’s surroundings, Americans and companies have normalized purely digital experiences. Modern maps detach Americans from the physical world, whether it is through food delivery, faulty directions into rivers, or being bombarded with location-based advertisements.

SUBSET OF CULTURE - TOURISM AND MODERN MAPS

As a subset of culture, tourism culture has also been affected by the permeation of modern maps and the negative effects of modern maps on tourism cannot be overlooked. In line with instant gratification theory, Americans now judge places by their geographical images through the convenience of their smartphones rather than visiting the place. This is a detrimental change to tourism because humans are less inquisitive, pickier, and lazier with exploring. As discussed previously, earlier generations learned how to navigate areas with physical maps and received directions on the ground. This is no longer the case given the technological advancements of the twenty-first century. Caroline Scarles, author of *Mediating the Tourist Experience: from Brochures to Virtual Encounters*, supports the argument that modern mapping tools have given humans the privilege of aerial views, which have made them less experientially focused. For example, “the development of StreetView on Google Earth ...allows users to explore a virtual world, and to arguably dwell within it. Whilst such virtual experiences may make accessing places easier, it does not replicate the sensual experiences or connections with locals which define the destination” (Scarles 163). Experiential travelling allows humans to receive a “true feel” of the location, through interacting with locals for directions, recommendations, and history. Consumers deciding where to explore prior to the physical act of exploring is counterintuitive to the tourist experience. Authentic experiences allow humans to connect with a place emotionally, and inauthentic digital experiences bear the complete opposite effect. Professor Stig Hjarvard of University of Copenhagen draws the

same conclusion, stating that “[the] map of the world that has become so vivid, so detailed and comprehensive that it appears more real than the world it was created to represent”, thereby raising “questions surrounding concepts of authenticity” (Hjarvard 110). Overall, interacting with places through digital maps and discounting the value of authentic tourism has further disconnected Americans from experiencing the world around them.

BEHAVIOR AND MODERN MAPS

Finally, the advancement of maps into all spheres of daily life can be explained through changes in human anatomy and behavior. The influence of modern maps on navigation has changed the way humans visualize their journey. In 1948, UC Berkeley psychologist Edward Tolman coined the term “cognitive maps”. His experiments with rats in mazes showed “that in the course of learning [the maze] ...a field map of the environment gets established in the rat’s brain” (Tolman 1). This field map, or cognitive map, is the evolutionary ability to navigate to our destination based on environmental clues. By relying on GPS systems, humans have become ignorant to such clues and instead focus on a two-dimensional digital map. Humans place so much faith in map technology that many have driven into rivers and lakes just because the GPS application provided faulty directions (Kircher 1). While driving into lakes is not the fault of the map, the faith that humans have in maps – a faith that has been taught and conditioned through the decades – is certainly at fault. Consequently, “a growing number of researchers now agree that reliance on GPS essentially erodes our ability to build our own cognitive maps” (Milner 1). Some may question the importance of being able to build cognitive maps when digital maps exist. However, when humans accidentally find themselves on the road without digital maps, they will have to rely on their biological abilities. This is apparent in the case of London taxi drivers, as their mastery of city roads proved that “humans have a remarkable capacity to acquire and use knowledge of a large complex city to navigate within it” (Maguire 1). A study of their brains showed that they possessed greater gray matter in their brain’s hippocampus, a part of the brain associated with memory (Maguire 1). Essentially, the brains of London taxi drivers were anatomically smarter for navigating. As Americans increasingly rely on modern maps to navigate, their ability to build cognitive maps and maintain grey matter in their hippocampus

deteriorates. Beyond navigation, the dependency on map technology for instant gratification can be explained by reactions in the limbic system of the brain. “When it sees something it wants, the limbic system calls on a host of powerful mechanisms to provoke us to take quick action. It can unleash neurotransmitters ... which stimulate arousal [and] pleasure” (Roberts 68). Similar to the effect of cocaine, these chemicals push humans to act quickly to obtain what is in sight. The limbic system fuels instant gratification, whether it is ordering food on UberEats or viewing digital images of a tourist destination. With all the anatomical changes considered, emotional disconnection remains one of the most important negative effects of modern maps. Although we are digitally connected to our location, destinations, and have everything at the touch of our fingertips, “large numbers of Americans report feelings of loneliness [and] fewer families sit down together to share meals.” (Rosen 42). Conclusively, digital connection through maps pales in comparison to the emotional power of physical connection. Modern maps simply do not provide the experience needed for emotional wellbeing. Tremendous biological changes in cognitive mapping, hippocampal gray matter, the limbic system, and emotional processing are just a few of the behavioral effects caused by modern maps.

CONCLUSION

Modern maps have been essential for the growth of American society. They have turned the historically complicated process of navigation into a simple smartphone application. The government has been able to reduce crime through surveillance methods that were never possible before. Food delivery from popular restaurants has made meals accessible and enjoyable within the comfort of a home. However, with these developments in modern maps, Americans are more disconnected than ever before. Research and observations have shown that modern maps have detrimental effects on society that are demonstrated throughout politics, culture, and human behavior. Within politics, the battle between privacy and government surveillance programs show that Americans have been dehumanized and reduced to moving dots on a map. Without proper legislation outlining the legality of surveillance, our locations are not ours to know alone. Correcting the disenfranchisement of minority voters caused by centuries of gerrymandering has been a slow change through the court system. Not enough states have implemented controls against

gerrymandering because many state officials benefit from this practice. In addition to politics, American culture has also suffered from the adoption of map technology into daily life. Navigating roads has become more about listening to directions from a phone than about understanding one's surroundings. Food delivery services show how convenience and instant gratification combine to disconnect Americans from physical experiences. Marketers have used Consumer Behavior Theory to exploit the consumer's need for instant satisfaction through location-based advertisements, which break the barrier between humans and the market. Many consumers will forgo touring a place to instead satisfy themselves with satellite images of a destination. However, satisfaction does not imply that consumers are better connected to the world. In fact, this research proves that it has limited the connection between humans and authentic experiences. Understanding the space around us is integral to maintaining the cognitive mapping mechanisms and gray matter in our brains. Connecting with people and places to understand the world is essential to emotional wellbeing. With these harmful effects on politics, culture, and behavior considered, modern maps are just as destructive as they are useful. Americans must consider the damaging consequences of connecting to digital maps and disconnecting from each other. Perhaps, by looking outside of the digital reality that modern maps provide, Americans can rekindle their relationship with themselves and the real world.

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Maya Bryant

The Gentrification of Harlem

ABSTRACT

Gentrification in Harlem has greatly affected the neighborhood and its original residents. As new, wealthy gentry move in, the neighborhood has become increasingly inhospitable for the original residents, causing mass displacement, job loss, and a sense of alienation within their own community. Harlem's gentrification creates an ethical dilemma due to the negative impact it had on the native residents and the overall positive development and improvements that happened in the neighborhood as a result of the reinvestment in the neighborhood's infrastructure. Through an analysis of Harlem's gentrification process and the subsequent impact it had on the community, I have found that the gentrification of Harlem was unethical due to displacement of original residents and the irreparable social, cultural, and economic repercussions.

INTRODUCTION

During the second half of the twentieth century as gentrification began spreading throughout New York City, no one expected Harlem to be affected. Harlem is a historic neighborhood, internationally renowned for the Harlem Renaissance and as a pillar of Black culture, but it's also known for being an impoverished ghetto, riddled with social problems. Since the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920's, Harlem's population has been almost solely Black which has cultivated a sense of cultural unity, racial pride, and a tightknit community in spite of the waning conditions of the neighborhood. The historical significance of Harlem, and the subjugated racial group it became home to, made gentrification in Harlem particularly controversial, leading many to question whether Harlem should have been gentrified and the ethical implications of gentrifying the historic community. Gentrification is usually defined by the influx of a middle class, often white, demographic into a low to working class community. Under the scope of Utilitarian ethics, the ends justify the means and the ethical solution is the action that does the greatest good for the greatest number of people. In contrast, under Deontological ethics, the ends may never justify the means and people should never be used as a means to

an end. Minimax theory defines the ethical solution as the decision made in the interest of maximizing the benefits for those who have the least in society and the theory of a Non-Zero Sum Game, like the moral codes outlined in Steven Pinker's "The Moral Instinct", defines moral action as cooperation and striving to work towards a mutual benefit. When applying these ethical theories to the gentrification of Harlem, most find the gentrification of the renowned, disenfranchised community to be unethical. The overall negative impact gentrification has on the original community, specifically the displacement and the sense of subjugation in the disadvantaged residents, violated moral and ethical principles.

THE BEGINNING OF CHANGE

During the early twentieth century, the Great Migration of southern Blacks to northern cities brought a large influx of migrants to Harlem, due to a lack of white renters and the resulting oversupply of housing. As Black people began settling in Harlem, they placed roots through the establishment of Black churches, political organization, and a vibrant culture generated through artistic and intellectual production. By the 1920s, Harlem had officially begun its renaissance and the community had transformed into a predominantly Black neighborhood. Despite the poverty many residents were experiencing, the connectedness within the community and the cultural renaissance of the time lifted the residents of Harlem.

But even with the cultural renaissance, the predominance of Black people in the area led to discriminatory policies and the successive disinvestment in Harlem's infrastructure, creating the Harlem ghetto. Throughout Harlem's history, there were numerous attempts to reinvest in the neighborhood's infrastructure, but time and time again, funds were cut and the neighborhood retained its status as a ghetto. In Matthias Bernt's article, "The 'Double Movements' of Neighborhood Change: Gentrification and Public Policy in Harlem and Prenzlauer Berg," he analyzes the attempts to invest in Harlem, the failures that fostered the conditions leading to the change of public policy, and Harlem's subsequent gentrification beginning in the 1980s. After its renaissance, when Harlem became predominantly Black, "maintenance of neighbourhood buildings was successively neglected and overcrowding, disease and crime became widespread" (Bernt, 3048). Before its gentrification, Harlem's infrastructure fell into disarray during the 1930s causing a drastic need for the

government subsidized renewal initiative that occurred from the 1940's to the 1960's. This "Roosevelt era" (Bernt, 3048) initiative aimed to revitalize the neighborhood while also providing housing for the low-income residents of Harlem. While the renewal was well intentioned, it was known as "slum clearance" (Bernt, 3048) and destroyed neighborhoods deemed to be decaying, in spite of the fact that people were residing in many of the buildings marked for demolition. The project caused mass displacement and was eventually abandoned after the construction of super blocks of public housing, which later became the focal point of the social problems like crime and drug use.

By the 1980s social issues within Harlem intensified and gained political traction triggered by public outrage over the neighborhood's deteriorating conditions. The lack of affordable housing in the city led to the homelessness crisis and politicians shifted their focus to the neighborhoods plagued by poverty due to disinvestment. In 1986 Mayor Koch proposed a ten-year housing plan "to revitalize the neighbourhoods that had been devastated by abandonment and decay" (Bernt, 3050). Due to the ramifications of the "Roosevelt era" initiative, the city owned a majority of the housing stock in Harlem, making Harlem an ideal recipient of the federal funds allocated through Mayor Koch's revitalization effort. The government's ownership of a majority share of Harlem's housing stock lowered the cost of renewal and strengthened their commitment to the regeneration of Harlem's economy and real estate. Harlem's reconstruction was, "...catalyzed by the establishment of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone in 1994" (Bernt, 3051), that sought to rejuvenate the area. The programs initiated in the 1980s and 1990s revived Harlem's commercial infrastructure and its housing stock while accommodating the low-income residents by establishing rent protections, providing occupational opportunities, "and at the same time stimul[at]ing greater community control" (Bernt, 3051). Unlike the Roosevelt era initiatives and the twenty-first century investment in Harlem, the 1986 and 1994 investment in Harlem considered the needs of the community and implemented change that was in their interest.

When considering the renewal that occurred in Harlem in 1986 and 1994 alone, the development would be seen as ethical from a Utilitarian and Deontological perspective. The programs implemented aimed to serve the existing community with a particular focus on the low-income residents who have historically been pushed out by such revitalization efforts. The renewal of 1986 and 1994 also aligns with Minimax ethical

principles because they established protections for the low to working class residents to ensure that the improvements wouldn't cause displacement. However, as Harlem's markets thrived, the city began to control less and less of the housing stock and private investment in the neighborhood increased. Despite the efforts to avoid displacement during the renewal processes, Harlem's revival became the reason for its gentrification.

CONTROVERSY OF BLACK GENTRIFICATION

When Harlem's gentrification began, it was brought on by an influx of Black gentry into the community. In Monique Taylor's article, "Can You Go Home Again? Black Gentrification and the Dilemma of Difference," she outlines the positive motives of the Black gentry's migration to Harlem, shedding a positive light on Harlem's gentrification. Through her analysis, she found that, "...the move to Harlem is a strategy of cultural survival rooted in the search for the positive meaning and support that the black community might provide" (Taylor, 109). Black gentry see Harlem as a place where they won't experience the alienation or discrimination they're often subject to in their daily, professional lives. Gentrification is often framed in a negative light, but the arrival of Black gentry gave the community political and economic power that it was lacking while also providing the gentry with the community and solidarity they lacked elsewhere.

Gentrification induced by the Black middle class can be viewed as positive, but in contrast to Taylor's notions of racial solidarity, Derek Hyra analyzes the conflict caused by Black gentrification in the article, "Racial Uplift? Intra-Racial Class Conflict and the Economic Revitalization of Harlem and Bronzeville." Hyra claims that, "Certain scholars contend that the black middle class is 'saving' these communities from a white takeover and thus contributing to the preservation of black history in the United States" (Hyra, 73). While some may perceive the migration of the Black middle class to Harlem as a better alternative than it being gentrified by the White middle class, the decisions lobbied for and made by the Black gentry often resulted in the displacement of low-income residents and promoted further gentrification. "The paradox of these communities, in regard to racial uplift, is that individual success and achievement by the black middle class have made the redevelopment possible, but as a consequence the most vulnerable members of the race are displaced to other high-poverty localities" (Hyra, 86). By displacing members of the

same historically disadvantaged community, the gentrification by the Black middle class violates the moral principles of Loyalty to Community, Freedom from Harm, and Fairness.

The gentrification brought by the Black middle class is very controversial and ethically perplexing. From the perspective of the Black gentry, Harlem was a haven where they would have a community and feel connected without having to experience the alienation or discrimination they often face. Migrating to Harlem was a chance for them to give back to the community and provide role models and advocacy for their fellow Black people. Others saw their presence as the chance to bring the necessary changes to make the neighborhood safer, cleaner, and more prosperous. From the perspective of the residents of Harlem, some enjoyed the improvements being made but most feared the displacement the increasing cost of living would bring. While some gentry genuinely wanted to become a part of the existing community, most used the power ascribed by their socioeconomic status and, often, prestigious occupations to lobby for improvements to the detriment to the existing community members. Those who wanted to become a part of the existing community and advocated in their interest fulfilled the moral codes of Loyalty to Community and Freedom from Harm as well as Minimax, and Deontological ethics. The gentry who viewed the displacement of the lower class Black residents as necessary progress used a Utilitarian ethical framework due to their belief that they were making improvements that would result in the greatest good for the greatest number.

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF GENTRIFICATION ON NATIVE HARLEM RESIDENTS

As Harlem's conditions improved and its revitalization was advertised, gentry began to flock to the neighborhood. Richard Schaffer and Neil Smith examine the initial migration of the gentry into Harlem and the significance of their impact on the community in the article "The Gentrification of Harlem?" While Schaffer and Smith recognize the detrimental effects gentrification can have on the residents of the neighborhood undergoing change, they were skeptical about how far Harlem's gentrification would go, given its historical and cultural significance. The first signs of gentrification didn't cause a shift in the racial demographics of Harlem, leading them to believe that the racial and cultural solidarity paired with the gentry's perceptions of Harlem, made it impervious to the

influx of the White middle class, which is usually synonymous with gentrification. The beginning of Harlem's gentrification was met with mixed reactions, as some people looked forward to the improvements while others dreaded the consequences. While gentrification improved the quality of life within Harlem, "for Central Harlem residents, gentrification is a 'Catch 22.' Without private rehabilitation and redevelopment, the neighborhood's housing stock will remain severely dilapidated; with it, a large number of Central Harlem residents will ultimately be displaced and will not benefit from the better and more expensive housing. They will be victims rather than beneficiaries of gentrification" (Schaffer & Smith, 363). For residents with economic security, gentrification was the desired developmental path for Harlem, but for most of Harlem's residents, the gentrification wasn't in their social or economic interests.

In Shellae Versey's article, "A Tale of Two Harlem's: Gentrification, Social Capital, and Implications for Aging in Place," she emphasizes the importance of social capital within the Harlem community while also displaying its deterioration, caused by gentrification. Through an analysis of the changing neighborhood demographics and testimonials from members of the community that predate gentrification, Versey shows how the differing social capital has changed the community of the original residents, specifically the overwhelming sense of alienation and loss of cultural and community connectedness. In a neighborhood like Harlem social capital was an integral factor of daily life "that facilitated survivability to overcome historical inequalities" (Versey, 2).

As Harlem gentrified, the residents who still hadn't been pushed out felt alienated in their own home. The lack of social integration between the gentry and the rest of Harlem has led to reciprocal animosity. Many residents feel the gentry treat them like they're inferior or out of place and older residents especially feel as if they've seen their home dismantled block by block. The gentrification of Harlem cannot be ethical under Deontological principles because of the irreparable harm it caused to the social and cultural cohesion of the neighborhood. The class division caused by the increasing presence of middle class gentry introduced cultural and normative values that were different than those fostered in the original Harlem community, which only heightened the discord. As more residents were pushed out by gentrification, that community connectedness began to slowly but surely erode.

IMPACT OF GENTRIFICATION ON SMALL BUSINESSES

Gentrification affects every aspect of the neighborhood being gentrified but the economic impact is particularly significant when deriving the ethical nature of the development. Pre-gentrified Harlem provided an economic necessity for many residents who relied on the neighborhood for affordable housing and occupational opportunities. Some residents owned stores and ran a small business as their main source of income; others relied on the businesses in the neighborhood for jobs or affordable merchandise. Trenessa Williams and Charles Needham explore the impact gentrification has on businesses in, "Transformation of a City: Gentrifications Influence on the Small Business Owners of Harlem." Harlem's commercial and real estate recovery lead the city to rezone parts of the neighborhood, making them "developer-friendly" (Williams & Needham, 3). By opening the neighborhood to commercial retailers, "many of the business owners in the small business community were forced to relocate or go out of business because of the rise in the prices and the entrance of big chain stores in Harlem" (Williams & Needham, 5). While some restaurants and stores survived the gentrification, the mass displacement of the community robbed small business owners of their customer base. "Disney, Old Navy, HMV Records, The Body Shop, and Marshalls, as well as Starbucks, Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, and a host of restaurants have encroached upon and gradually replaced numerous 'Mom and Pop' businesses" (Prince, 395) making the area lose its original culture to the generality of large corporations. The loss of clientele and the influx of new stores made many small businesses in the area obsolete, leaving them unable to compete with larger corporations. Meron Werkneh, in the article "Retaking Mecca: Healing Harlem through Restorative Just Compensation," also notes forms of entrepreneurship that played a significant role in the cultural fabric of Harlem that were made obsolete by gentrification. "Street vendors are a staple of Harlem and contribute to the cultural vibrancy of the neighborhood. Concentrated along 125th Street, vendors sell literature, art, natural body care products and various fashions which 'reflect the culture of Harlem and the African diaspora'" (Werkneh, 248). The small, locally owned businesses in Harlem held an economic and cultural significance for those that owned the business and those that frequented them. Small businesses provided jobs and affordable merchandise while street vendors contributed to

Harlem's vibrancy. Each was deeply ingrained in the original community's social and cultural life and provided goods and services that were within the means of the poverty-stricken residents of the community. Harlem's gentrification put small businesses in harm's way, violating Deontological ethics and the moral code of Freedom from Harm. Gentrification's impact on small businesses also violates the Minimax principle because the residents who needed protection from commercial retailers, such as the small business owners, their employees, and their clientele, weren't benefitting from the commercial development. Fear of displacement due to the rising cost of living was only compounded when small businesses were threatened.

21ST CENTURY GENTRIFICATION

As Harlem started improving and the neighborhood was being talked about with "headlines like 'rebirth,' 'recovery,' 'boom' or even 'gold rush'" (Bernt, 3053), the neighborhood garnered the attention of more commercial retailers, politicians, and White gentry. Sabiyha Prince discusses the 21st century changes in the article, "Race, Class, and the Packaging of Harlem". As the establishment of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone in 1994 drew commercial retailers and contributed to the economic turnaround of the neighborhood, Harlem experienced its most noticeable changes. "Those familiar with the Harlem of the 1980s and early 1990s will find its landscape of the twenty-first century almost unrecognizable" (Prince, 395). During his presidency, Bill Clinton was a huge proponent of Harlem's revival efforts. In 2001, after his presidency, Clinton moved his Foundation's office to the neighborhood and continued to champion Harlem's economic revitalization. Clinton's association with Harlem's late twentieth century renewal, which focused mainly on providing housing and security for the low income residents of Harlem, led many residents to believe his presence in Harlem would act as a protective barrier from the emergence of development and demographic shifts that threatened to push them out. But some original residents were honored by the attention and believed his advocacy would incite meaningful change. But it ended up having the opposite effect. Clinton's presence in Harlem increased the cost of living, priced out the small businesses surrounding his new 125th street office, and once again brought Harlem into the public eye, grabbing the attention of more gentry as well as commercial retailers and developers.

Twenty-first century Harlem's development shifted its focus from the lower income original residents to the middle class potential residents. In Michael Henry Adam's New York Times article, "The End of Black Harlem," he discusses the effect policy shift towards attracting wealthy residents and commercial development has on Harlem's original residents. Although the residents who hadn't been displaced were able to enjoy the benefits of Harlem's gentrification, they realized that the improvements weren't for them. From the aesthetic improvements to the commercial development targeted at the middle class like Whole Foods, the residents who predate gentrification feel, "Harlem is being remade, upgraded, and transformed, just for them, for wealthier white people" (Adams, 2016). From the arrival of Bill Clinton to the housing and commercial development geared toward people on the higher end of the socioeconomic spectrum, Black Harlem is now a thing of the past.

CONCLUSION

After thoroughly researching Harlem's gentrification, my supposition of its unethical nature was confirmed. While not all aspects of the neighborhood's gentrification process were unethical, the myriad of negative impacts it had for the original community violated more moral and ethical principles than it met. The renewal efforts that revived Harlem's real-estate and commercial market in the 1980s and 1990s met the standards of Utilitarian ethics, Deontological ethics, Minimax theory and Pinker's moral code of Freedom from Harm. The renewal efforts of the late twentieth century were aimed at the lower income residents of the neighborhood and went as far as to establish programs and offer-services that ensured the lower income residents weren't pushed out of their revitalized community.

In the midst of Harlem's progress, the economic rebirth attracted Black gentry who came under the pretense of Loyalty to Community. The Black gentry, who migrated for the racial pride and solidarity Harlem's community has historically fostered, saw their gentrification as a Non-Zero Sum Game, where in order to become part of the fabric of the community, they must cooperate with the existing community rather than acting in their own selfish interests. A way these gentry were able to become a part of the community was by following the principle of Minimax, seen through their advocacy for the interests of the original residents. However, not all Black gentry's actions can be viewed as ethical and

most stopped advocating for the lower class residents when it no longer suited their interests. Many used their power to bring changes that made the neighborhood safer and more aesthetically pleasing and they took a Utilitarian perspective by viewing “people who [could not] afford to stay in the community [as] a ‘casualty of development’” (Hyra, 85).

Eventually more gentry began violating the principles of Deontology, Loyalty to Community, and Minimax and their decreased advocacy for the community caused further social and economic harm seen through mass displacement. Long time residents could no longer afford to stay, small business and street vendors began to disappear, and a connected community began to fragment. The changes to Harlem are not only visible to the original residents they are palpable, and in most cases, irreparable.

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Emily Carlos

Autistic Expression: Technology and Its Role in Identity Construction

ABSTRACT

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a cognitive impairment that alters the social development of adolescents. This essay aims to further establish the impacts that access to certain technologies can have on children who struggle in social situations. Applying the Cognitive Theory of Mind as well as Social Theory helps to further analyze the impact that technology has on social identity in cases of children diagnosed with Autism. The essay examines different variables such as social patterns, video games, and family relationships to develop a deeper understanding of how screen-based media can be beneficial for identity construction. Overall, the mission of this paper is to bring a growing social trend that can allow for inclusion for children facing this disability to light.

INTRODUCTION

Disabilities that affect the cognitive ability of adolescents have an impact on the way that children are able to communicate and interact with the world. Autism can be defined as an intellectual disability that causes challenges with social skills, issues with developmental language, and rigid repetitive behaviors. This disorder commonly occurs at a young age, which affects the developmental process of the child as they begin to integrate into society. Since children have a difficult time communicating and reaching out to others, varying methods of communicative outlets are being researched to increase their ability to socialize. It is important to note that autism lies on a spectrum and each individual has a unique experience; however, in terms of this paper I am going to be focusing specifically on children with higher functioning cases of autism. High functioning is an informal phrase that refers to the cognitive ability of individuals on the spectrum who have an IQ greater than 70. Technology has been one of the most controversial and relevant treatment options recently being explored in hopes of giving children with high functioning Autistic Spectrum Disorder, otherwise known as ASD, a more prominent voice in the world. A major question that presents itself when research-

ing this topic is how the use of technology allows children with autism to construct their own authentic identity. Applying the Cognitive Theory of Mind as well as the Social Identity Theory provides an extensive framework for understanding the relationship technology has with the developing autistic brain. Looking primarily into resources, such as technology use, in children with ASD is crucial in providing insight on how people living with a mental disability can engage with the rest of the world and as a result develop meaningful relationships. In this paper I will argue that technology, specifically screen-based media, or technology that requires a screen, gives autistic children the ability to create their own independent and unique sense of self emotionally, as well as the ability to shape their own social identity through interactions with the outside world.

COMBATING PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED STIGMAS

Children facing circumstances of severe cognitive disabilities, such as autism, are often overlooked and left out of the social narrative due to their inability to communicate. The children who are diagnosed with autism face unique difficulties in social situations due to the symptoms of their disability and the innate way their brain functions; however, many outsiders are quick to disregard these struggles and make uneducated judgements. Unlike children that many deem to be “normally” functioning, autistic children interact with the world in their own way that may be off-putting to some. This, in turn, feeds into social stigmas. Analyzing the power of social stigma has revealed, “These feelings of isolation are also intrinsically connected to the amount of stigmatization that an autistic individual receives from those in the surrounding environment. Studies have shown that a sense of stigmatization felt by those with ASD is directly linked to their self-esteem, as those who perceive a greater amount of stigmatization have lower self-esteem” (Martin 164). Instances of uneducated opinions and judgement being placed onto children diagnosed with autism further alienate them from the social community because they limit autistic children and strip their individualism. These limitations and feelings of inferiority due to stigmatization result in children viewing themselves as inferior to their peers and acting out to receive the attention they desire. Children dealing with ASD are often categorized as socially alienated, fussy, and uncooperative in terms of their behavior by onlookers and the general public. On the surface, these generalizations may seem to be accurate but, with deeper understand-

ing of these childrens' situation, it is revealed that there is an underlying issue stemming from their lack of ability to socialize. Looking into their specific behaviors reveals that, "It is likely that children with ASD engage in a number of problematic behaviors related to emotional reactiveness (e.g. crying, whining, temper tantrums) that are not inherently indicative of defiant behavior and may instead be related to difficulties with communication or sensory concerns" (Jeter 1365). Since children who have been diagnosed with ASD have difficulties conveying and expressing their feelings, they attempt to communicate in other ways that may seem abnormal or inappropriate. Claiming that these children are acting out or being defiant completely undermines the detrimental effects caused by the inability to self-express. The "average" child might be able to tell their parents or peers how they are feeling or what they are thinking when faced with confusing or emotionally demanding situations, but many children with ASD do not have this luxury. Children with ASD struggle to make sense of how to effectively express the emotions they are experiencing, which causes them to turn towards other behaviors such as throwing tantrums and misguided aggression in attempts to have someone understand. The symptoms of their disability often give onlookers grounds to make judgements and this, in turn, strips away their ability to create their own identity as well as further alienates them.



Figure 1

The picture incorporated is a painting that artist Donna Williams painted, depicting her upbringing with autism. Here, you can see a child painted blue as well as a mix of cool tones

to represent a sense of loneliness and isolation that is often associated with ASD. The way the arms are wrapped around the child allows viewers to perceive this child as feeling cold, even though the child is surrounded by warm colors and what appears to be a sun. The subject of this painting has very closed-off body language which aids in demonstrating how distant they feel from the rest of the world.



*Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2*

This second painting is by the same artist and incorporates multiple children who are painted with the same cool-toned color palette present in the artist's previous work. However, in this depiction the surrounding environment's color scheme is also ex-

tremely glum and dark. Even though there are multiple children present, none of them are touching or showing much emotion, exemplifying how socially alienating the disorder truly is.

Children with autism often feel alienated and trapped, and thus it is crucial that a social platform that accommodates their specific personal needs be developed. From an emotional standpoint it is clear to see that these children need to turn to an alternative method of self-expression due to the frustration and emotional disconnect that accompanies their inability to shape their own identity. When examining ASD through a physiological perspective, the cognitive disconnect associated with this disorder becomes more apparent. The Cognitive Theory of the Mind highlights the disparities present between an adolescent brain with ASD and the difficulties with communication when applied to children with autism. The framework of the Cognitive Theory of the Mind refers to the ability to "make sense of other people's beliefs, desires, and feelings that motivate their actions" (Chown 145). Since children with ASD have an altered Theory of Mind, this in turn affects the way they are able to communicate with others and comprehend varying types of emotions. Their altered cognitive functions result in difficulties with processing certain information and then knowing how to apply this information in a way that is not only socially accepted, but also reciprocated by others. Without the basic compositions of social skills and personal interactions, these children need to find a substitute source to fulfill these tasks, since they are unable to do so independently. Media Professors Pinchevski and Peters advocate that, "The story of autism and new media provides a lesson in social epistemology: the ways in which the social is discovered and becomes known- through media- by those previously excluded from the social" (Pinchevski 2510). As the cultural importance of new media expands each day, autistic children are now open to the possibility of inclusion in the progressive narrative that these technological platforms

provide. Technology has the possibility to change the way that adolescents with high functioning ASD create their identity not only within themselves but within the world by filling in the missing gaps that autism can cause. Since the Theory of Mind in these children may not be as sufficient as it is in individuals who do not have autism, the struggles autistic children experience requires them to turn to other methods of communication and self-expression besides just verbal interactions.

WHEN DISABILITY BECOMES ABILITY

Screen-based media allows for children with high functioning ASD to create their own sense of self through technology by making use of their perceived disabilities. Having the option to turn to another source for help in areas which these children struggle with by nature is crucial for their social development because it allows for inclusion in an otherwise distant world. As noted in the Theory of the Mind, since individuals diagnosed with ASD never fully develop the understanding of social and behavioral interactions that come with possessing a fully functioning ToM (Fletcherwatson 8), an outside aid such as technology needs to be introduced during their adolescent development. Implementing technology will not only help those with autism to navigate means of communication, but can also help compensate for their inability to effectively communicate with others and analyze situations in their everyday life. Technology is the perfect candidate for this role because of the direct nature of messaging which promotes engagement with others in ways better suited to an autistic child's skill set. Technology, specifically screen-based media, is able to bridge the gap between social involvement and the alienation commonly associated with ASD by extending an alternative and more direct approach to communication. Screen-based media refers to any technological engagement that requires a device with a screen such as a television or computer program. Researchers at Yale University have also found that, "The internet and online social media may offer ways for adolescents with ASD to significantly expand their opportunities for social engagement, through platforms that may be better suited to these youths' unique communicative style - with more structured rules of engagement and less reliance on non-verbal information" (van Schalkwyk 2805). The guidelines as well as the structure of screen-based platforms change the previously determined rules of socialization that depend on social norms which are often intimidating and foreign concepts to autistic

children. Since these children have a difficult time relating to others and forming social relationships on their own, the barrier of the screen actually enhances their ability to socialize. To elaborate, child psychologists argue that these resources provide a structured experience for these children as, “Asynchronous online communication, such as email, instant messaging, and text messaging, offer users the benefit of maintaining more control over social interactions than do face-to-face or real time online interactions. These technologies offer opportunities for social interaction in a format that does not require attention to non-verbal cues, gestures, facial expressions, or vocalization” (Mazurek 1260). Children with ASD are more successful at communicating and relating to others through social media because they do not need to analyze other peoples’ feelings or body language. Social media opens up a communicative line for these children to develop meaningful friendships because they can share their ideas and thoughts through text and words without having to worry about analyzing socially universal conversation cues or tone of voice. Children with ASD should have the ability to turn to media outlets because they are likely to find comfort in the controlled and limited methods of interaction. When there is a sense of comfort present, there is room for immense growth and the development of social confidence. If the personal expectations of in-person social interactions are removed, children can focus primarily on expressing themselves organically without their disability getting in the way.

The positive outcomes of childrens’ interactions with technology have ignited interest in creating personalized platforms specifically tailored to ASD. A real-world example of this can be seen through the creation of the H.A.N.D.S. project. H.A.N.D.S. is a mobile device application that aids autistic children in everyday tasks, so they can have an easier time communicating and navigating the social world. Dr. Joseph Mintz and colleagues have examined this correlation and argue that, “Our analysis indicates that there are potentially a number of key interlinked factors which mediate engagement and use of mobile technology to develop social and life skills functioning in school settings... This model proposes that Kairos, that is delivering persuasive messages at the right time and place, as a central concept in the design of mobile persuasive systems to develop social and life skills functioning in young people with ASD” (54). In relation to this quote, Kairos refers to the importance of finding an optimal time or setting to present information, which makes it more effective. Presenting technology such as the H.A.N.D.S. platform during

an appropriate developmental stage and in a structured environment such as a classroom makes its effects more beneficial. The H.A.N.D.S. project is deemed to be a more innovative program since it really aims to provide these adolescents with a sense of independence. Access to handheld social media grants children with ASD a tool that not only connects them digitally online, but also gives them a stronger foundation of in-person communication skills. They are less constricted by their social anxieties and limitations when initiating and understanding social situations because they can now use technology as an aid. Applications such as this project can help replace specific elements of the ToM that are missing in children with autism. For instance, “Theory of Mind is a way of describing the needs for individuals to develop an understanding that objects and other persons have separate existence and that other persons have their own mental state that differs from theirs, and to be able to ‘put on the shoes’ of another person mentally” (Chown 145). In instances where cognitive ability is altered, adolescents can have a difficult time understanding other individuals’ positions and emotions especially in social contexts. This can make conversations and interactions with peers awkward and unfulfilling in terms of identity formation. However, the H.A.N.D.S. project has included these missing elements in their application to alleviate these discrepancies when children communicate with others. Referring back to Mintz, in terms of this application it has been found that, “In social skills, these included prompts to support children in remembering to consider other people’s perspectives and short sequences to help children calm down in situations likely to lead to emotional outbursts. Teachers also used the personal trainer function to adapt “social stories” to an electronic platform. Developed by Gray (Gray & McAndrew, 2001), social stories present a narrative about a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses” (Mintz 55). The application has strategically integrated missing socialization skills to derive the most beneficial experience for these children. Having the integration of understanding others’ separate feelings as well as beliefs and giving these children access to appropriate responses has made reaching out to others extremely structured and efficient. The development of applications made for autistic children has made social outlets and social skills more easily accessible, which prompts inclusion. The creation of a personal identity becomes open to these children because they can turn to methods of communication and media that are directly geared to resolve the issues of socialization that their disability causes.

CREATING A DIGITAL WORLD OF THEIR OWN THROUGH VIDEOGAME USE

Examining specific types of screen-based media, videogames have garnered attention since they provide a direct line to the social world and the aspects of creative development that are often unreachable to autistic children. Studies have shown autistic children to have an extremely high level of interest in video games. This can be attributed to the creative freedom provided through multiplayer games which allows for autistic adolescents to shape a virtual world as well as form a social community. Video games exemplify their desire to engage with outlets that highlight their innate skills of logical thinking and as well as their desire for a platform for interaction with a community that is completely impacted by their direct interactions. Experts believe that, "Children with ASD often show deficits in both functional and symbolic play (Jarrold et al. 1993); however, they are able to demonstrate pretend play activities. Video games offer inherent structure and prompting, and the present circumscribed, yet imaginative experiences for the user" (1266). Even though the games have an inherent organized structure, they still provide room for children with ASD to expand their imagination and individuality since there is individual choice present within the game. They are capable of solving problems, forming teams with peers, and directly influencing the results of the games which are abilities they might not experience otherwise. In addition, the unambiguous directions and functions of video games provide structures for these children to excel which then elevates their social standing, promoting social identity. The Social Identity Theory which focuses on how individuals form their own sense of self through social interactions with others stresses that, "It is...worth noting that the strength of identification with the identity group is related to several of these functions: specifically, to self-understanding, ingroup cooperation, collective self-esteem..." (Capozza 24). Video games allow for children with ASD to create comprehensible communities with others since children are coming together to complete shared goals and objectives. When they are able to succeed and accomplish these goals as a community, or even individually, they are then able to build their own self-confidence and social standing. The presence of possessing shared meaning as well as obtaining a place in the institutionalized social hierarchy of society results in the spark of social identity which is required for identity formation.

Even though video games provide a positive outlet for social

relationships, many individuals fear that excessive use of video games can be damaging for children who have been diagnosed with ASD. Child Psychologists have found that, “boys with ASD were reported to have significantly greater problems than typically developing boys in getting angry when interrupted from games, playing games to “get his mind off things” and playing longer than intended” (Mazurek and Wenstrup 1266). Parents and other onlookers might see this as a disadvantage since this type of behavior raises concerns of further isolating these children because they may become too involved with online peer relations and negate in-person connections. However, the benefits of providing a place where these children can express their interests and interact with the world seem to make up for the possibility of this potentially negative side effect. It can also be argued that since they do not excel or typically participate in face to face interactions which we’ve already established, then there is little evidence that videogames will do more harm. In fact, their ability to become involved and create a virtual identity entices them to continually partake in gaming and becoming involved with virtual communities which does promote social relationships even if they are centralized around screen-based media.

RELATIONSHIP FORMATION’S IMPACT ON IDENTITY

Creating relationships and communities with others plays a major role in the creation of personal identity as well as self-expression. Autistic children are able to utilize social media in unique ways to enhance their relationship with others and shape their own identities. The Social Identity Theory proposes the idea that, “Most identity categories exist not only as a group or label with which the individual can identify, but also as a recognized social category or stereotype invested with shared meaning” (Capozza 20). If the creation of identity relies heavily on relationships and group interaction, this leads to the notion that socialization is a key factor in the construction of how children develop their sense of self. Holding a position in society allows for adolescents to begin to see themselves as integrated within a group and understand where they fit, as well as allows them to be accepted by their peers. Close relationships are a leading contributor to identity formation, since self-image and -esteem is sparked by the meaning derived from group inclusion, which, in this case, can be provided through online communities. In addition, understanding the type of relationship that is most efficient and impactful for children

with ASD reveals the specific benefits derived from the creation of bonds through technological platforms. Danielle Martin has taken a deeper look into the possible correlation between social perception and ASD. According to Martin, “While it is often the wish of an autistic individual to become more emotionally and physically connected with another person, the basic limits of his/her own tolerance for emotional probing and physical touch become a fundamental problem. Then, it may be understood that it becomes important to develop relationships that are fulfilling yet still leave a significant amount of personal space” (Muller, Schuler, and Yates 2008, 163). Video games exemplify their desire to engage with outlets that highlight their innate skills of logical thinking as well as their desire for a platform for interaction with a community that is completely impacted by their direct interactions. The less stressful and direct approach has been found to be better suited for these children rather than physical and highly engaging interactions.

Even though it has been found that friendships developed through screen-based media are well suited for children with ASD, individuals may still worry that social media could cause more isolation and further issues with communicating with peers. However, through numerous studies researchers have come to believe that children with ASD will not experience more isolation than is already present due to their condition. Van Schalkwyk is a child and adolescent psychologist working at Yale university. She has found that, “adolescents with ASD have fewer offline interactions than their peers, perhaps reducing the likelihood that Facebook usage will displace richer, offline social interactions. Taken together, it is plausible that Facebook is a platform which may be well suited to facilitating social engagement in adolescents with ASD” (Schalkwyk 2806). Online communities like Facebook actually promote friendship development for these children because they interact more frequently with these platforms compared to in-person situations. In fact, social media such as Facebook may be one of the most prominent ways children with ASD choose to express themselves and form relationships since the burdens of their disability do not interfere here with their ability to do so. The likelihood that children with autism will engage in social situations online with their peers is higher than the likelihood that they will engage in social situations with them in person. Therefore, their access to these forms of social media strengthens the possibility of them forming their social identity through group interactions. If there is no threat of them being more isolated than they already are, the benefits of connecting with

others through technology opens up endless possibilities for these children. To fully understand the ways in which children with ASD interact, it is crucial to look at the very first relationships they form with their family.

Relationships created within the family dynamic are one of the most important aspects in the creation of identity as well as the formation of healthy relationships, especially for children with autism. The Social Identity Theory states that, “Questions of meaning need to be developed in such a way that we can see the roles played by individuals experience as well as by social construction. Further, to handle adequately the full range of social identity possibilities outside of the laboratory, we need to move beyond individual traits to the more social and contextualized meanings that importance identities carry with them” (Capozza 22). Family is arguably one of the strongest factors in the teaching of emotional connection and social integration for adolescents with ASD and is highly significant in these youths’ developments. This is due to the fact that relationships developed within family structures set up the guidelines for how to make meaningful connections with others, as well as shape their sense-of-self understanding. Since the home is one of the first communities to which children are exposed, the social norms taught here dictate how they then learn to relate to others and view themselves in terms of group identity. The emotional influence and social support incorporated in the home also impacts the identity these children develop due to the interpreted understanding of themselves they receive through familial interactions. Garnett Kelly has studied the social relationship between children with ASD and their family in terms of social growth. She expresses that, “There is also evidence that having high quality peer and family relationships characterized by closeness and support provides a buffer for children, lowering the likelihood of developing depression or anxiety (e.g. Bollmer et al. 2005. Bukowski et al.1994. Hay et al. 2004; Kashani et al. 1995.)” (Kelly 1070). In instances where there is strong emotional support and acceptance in the home, children with ASD are likely to feel more included and confident with themselves. When these children have a strong sense of emotional attachment and acceptance, it is less likely that the mental health issues typically associated with autism will stunt their social growth.

However, autism can cause difficulties between family members due to the struggles and disconnects that come with the disorder as discussed previously in this paper. As can be expected, family members and

caregivers of children with ASD are extremely protective and cautious about the wellbeing of their children. Many of these caregivers worry that the use of technology might not be the most productive outlet for their children since they may not be as informed or open to trying alternative methods of communicating. However, it has been found that using technology to aid children with autism can benefit the family as a whole. Studies that have been conducted by Mazurek and his research partners have shown that, “Several themes emerged, including the use of television to distract and minimize behavioral outbursts as well as family difficulties and stress associated with managing television and video games” (Mazurek 1758). Television for example can be utilized by parents of these children to help alleviate some of the symptoms caused by autism that typically alienate their child from the central family dynamic. Watching television can get rid of some of the stress these children are feeling as well as override the issues that trigger disruptive behavior while providing a basis for family bonding. This in turn allows for the family to have an easier time preventing isolating behavior and helps give the children an outlet to prevent them from acting out in frustration. Activities regarding the use of screen-based media, such as watching television, allow these children to connect with their family members by building common ground and similar interests within the family. When the dynamic of the family is solid, children with ASD have an easier time connecting to others because they are early on grasping social connection as well as relationships in the household. Strong familial bonding through technology gives autistic children the ability to connect to a central support system, allowing them to establish a strong sense of self and relationship to others

CONCLUSION

Technology is a key factor in allowing children with autism to express their own identity through social interaction with the world, while providing the possibility of personal identity construction. The Theory of Mind exemplifies the factors that biologically cause children with ASD to struggle socially and emotionally. The specific guidelines and structures of screen-based media highlights the parallels between the autistic brain and methods of socialization on technological platforms. In terms of self-expression, technology allows for a creative and social engagement that children with autism do not experience independently. Whether it be playing an online video game or simply sitting down and watching a

movie with their family, these outlets provide a social connection that is typically unavailable to these children without the presence of an additional tool. Social identity stresses the importance of building social relationships with others since these relationships make up a large portion of how we form our own identity. Providing a platform for these children to begin to form these relationships with their peers and specifically their family is crucial to their own emotional development since the disabled are typically left out of the narrative. However, through the use of technology and media they are not perceived as the “other” and can begin to see themselves becoming more integrated with the social world. Technology provides inclusion and a level playing ground for children who do not typically have the means to insert themselves in social situations and make these deep emotional relationships. In the future it is important to research new technological platforms to see how audiences and methods of communicating impact socialization for autistic children. Currently there are many apps such as First-Then and iPrompts which help create schedules and structures for individuals with ASD. There are also other apps rising in popularity that help to alleviate some of the negative symptoms associated with their disorder, such as anxiety. Hopefully creators will look into developing more platforms for social media that can bring these children together as well as connect them with the world as a whole. Including these children in the social world as well as giving them the ability to form their own identity is crucial because they have feelings and needs just like everyone else. Having a platform for children with ASD to spark self-expression and identity formation will bring us all one step closer to being equal and seeing these children as just children, not solely their disability.

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Eliot Choe

Modern Day Eyes on the Street

ABSTRACT

This research will address different urban crime prevention methods such as CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) Cameras, and Stop-and-Frisk policy through the lens of Jane Jacob's idea of Eyes on the Street, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling's Broken Windows Theory, and the ethical theories of Loyalty to Community, Freedom from Harm, Purity, Utilitarianism, Deontology, and Minimax. As safety is one of the most basic human desires and an important aspect of urban lifestyle, crime prevention methods play a vital role in creating a community within a neighborhood. Through examining different policies that were installed in Seoul, South Korea, and New York City, United States, this research will demonstrate which of the crime prevention methods are the most effective and ethical.

INTRODUCTION

The key element of building a community is the feeling of safety among its members. Safety is one of the most basic human desires, and it is what various urban planners and local governments aim to achieve when planning for an urban neighborhood. Recent advancement in technology and data management have improved various crime prevention methods by incorporating equipment such as Closed Circuit Television cameras (otherwise known as CCTV cameras) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (also known as CPTED). Despite these advancements, traditional policing practices such as Stop-and-Frisk, in which the police are allowed to stop, question and search any civilians, are still relevant in the field of crime prevention. This research paper will focus on the impact and ethics of the listed prevention methods in two target cities: Seoul and New York City. While New York City has mainly focused their prevention approach on the traditional Stop-and-Frisk procedure until recently, Seoul took the initiative to implement more sophisticated and interdisciplinary approaches such as installing CCTV cameras and adopting CPTED policy in certain neighborhoods. Through the lens of ethical theories such as Utilitarianism, Fiduciary Duty, Deontology, and famous psychologist Steven Pinker's five Moral Spheres that are

introduced in his article “The Moral Instinct,” this research will examine the ethics and impact of each crime prevention method in neighborhoods of target cities. Based on the findings of this research, implementation of CPTED proves to be the most ethical in creating the safe environment of an urban neighborhood.

EYES ON THE STREET

Jane Jacobs’ 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* introduces the concept of Eyes on the Street. While explaining the three qualities of what makes a successful city street, Jacobs elaborates that, “...there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. The buildings on a street equipped to handle strangers and to insure the safety of both residents and strangers, must be oriented to the street” (35). Jacobs suggests that in order to create a vibrant and safe atmosphere for an urban neighborhood, there must be a natural permanent presence of the eyes. This presence cannot be institutionalized and must form an organic mutual respect and trust among the residents and strangers that pass by the block (Jacobs 60). This is a vital concept for examining the thesis of this essay. Often security measures such as CCTV and installment of Broken Windows Theory rely heavily upon institutionalized authority figures and underestimate the power of natural surveillance. Furthermore, these theories ignore the consequential impact they may cause within the neighborhood due to the policy being abused by the police, which in case of New York City, resulted in increase of police misconduct cases, and room for racial profiling (Vendentam, et al and Sewell, et al).

EYES ON THE STREET: SHORTCOMINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

As influential and monumental as Jane Jacobs’ idea is, it still has its limitations once it is applied in real life. Mitchell Duneier, a sociologist and ethnographer, conducted research on sidewalk dwellers of Greenwich Village, the birthplace of Jacobs’ Eyes on the Street. In one of the chapters of his book *Sidewalk*, “The Construction of Decency,” Duneier illustrates two similar stories of Greenwich Village residents that showcase the limitations of Jacobs’ theory. He focuses on both the Romps, a family who live in a camper on the streets of the West Village selling Christmas trees during the holiday season, and Hakim, a book vendor on Sixth Avenue

who has held the court in the street for years. Both Hakim and the Romps fall under the category of Jacob's idea of public character. Jacobs writes in her book that, "[a] public character need have no special talents or wisdom to fulfill his function—although he often does. He just needs to be present, and there need to be enough of his counterparts. His main qualification is that he is public. That he talks to lots of different people" (Jacobs 68). Due to their nature of spending most of the time out on the street selling merchandise, both families are frequently in contact with strangers and residents of the area. However, the main difference between them is their race. While the Romps are white, Hakim is an African American. Duneier elaborates, "The Romps are relatively similar in class to the people of Jane Street, whereas the men of Sixth Avenue are not. But Hakim, who is surely as educated, articulate, and well mannered as Billy Romp, tells me that he has never once been offered keys to an apartment, even though he has many long-standing friendly relationships with whites on the streets" (Duneier 304). Even though the only qualification to become the public character is a simple and consistent physical presence in Jacobs' book, Jacobs neglects the social prejudices. As shown in Duneier's research, despite being equally educated, articulate, well mannered, and providing the same physical presence in the streets, Hakim is not able to form the same friendly connections as the Romps due to his race. Duneier argues that over time, either other mutual trust will develop between residents and figures like Hamkim or the residents will see those black street dwellers like Hakim, "urinating in cups, or become known to have no ways to bathe their children, making it less likely that local residents would regard them as decent person" (Duneier 305). This issue can be related with the ethical concept of Purity, introduced by Pinker. Purity is the idea that there are certain things which fill us spontaneously with disgust, and this idea can sometimes be a useful warning that this particular thing might be impure, and therefore unethical (Pinker). Surpassing race, while the Romp family has a trailer that they inhabit on the street, most of the public inhabitants of the sidewalk like Hakim introduced in Duneier's study are homeless and may leave the impression that their hygiene is not well taken care of. Consequently, with the concept of purity, it might affect the sidewalk dwellers' ability to become a public character that unites the community. Regardless, Dunier's case shows that Jacob's idea is not absolutely inclusive when applied in real life situations. Comprehensive factors such as race, economic class and perception of certain groups of people may have an impact on the concept of public character.

Broken Windows and Stop-and-Frisk Policing of NYC

First introduced by public administration authority James Q. Wilson and criminologist George L. Kelling, the Broken Windows Theory provides a foundational background for criminology. Malcolm Gladwell, the author of “The Power of Context” defines the theory in his article by saying, “Wilson and Kelling argued that crime is the inevitable result of disorder. If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge. Soon, more windows will be broken, and the sense of anarchy will spread from the building to the street on which it faces, sending a signal that anything goes” (Gladwell 152). He also states that according to Wilson and Kelling, graffiti, public disorder, and aggressive panhandling could all be equivalent to broken windows (Gladwell 152). This concept of minor physical disorder that sets up the tone and becomes an invitation to more serious crimes is important in terms of understanding the fear of crime. Criminal justice scholars Joon Tag Cho and Jisun Park’s article defines this fear as a “psychological and emotional reaction such as anxiety or worry concerning the possibility of harm resulting from crime” (36). Broken Windows Theory indicates that the physical disorder of a neighborhood can cause this fear of crime among its residents, which interferes with their emotional and psychological well-being.

However, research by sociology scholars Abigail Sewell and Hedwig Lee and public health scholar Kevin Jefferson shows a contradicting result to what the Broken Windows Theory suggests. Their research focuses on the psychological impact of Stop-and-Frisk policing on New York City residents. Stop-and-Frisk is a method that “enable[s] police officers to stop, question, and frisk citizens if they have reasonable suspicion to believe that a citizen was, is, or will be involved in the commission of the crime” (Evans and Williams 688). This practice originally finds its roots in the Broken Windows Theory. Kelling and Wilson, the two brains behind the theory, proposed that it could be applied in New York City policing strategies in order to drop the high crime rate. Instead of focusing on major crime, the two suggest that the police department should allocate their resources to keep the streets clean by cracking down on subway fare beaters and keeping people from smoking pot in public (Vedantam et al). Rudy Giuliani, the mayor at the time, adopted this proposal in 1993 and immediately installed the practice in an attempt to reduce crime. The result was promising. While the city struggled with one of the worst crime epidemics during the 1980s, the crime rate dropped dramatically

in 1990. During this period, murders dropped by two-thirds and felonies were cut in half (Gladwell 151). Due to such initial effectiveness, Stop-and-Frisk policy was adopted as the primary crime prevention method of the New York City Police Department up until 2013, when it was ruled unconstitutional for ethnic profiling (Vedantam et al).

However, there are more stories to uncover from the initial statistics of this practice. The study of Sewell et al shows how such aggressive policing can cause a negative psychological impact upon groups of certain gender and race. Their finding indicated that 88 percent of pedestrian stops were comprised of men (Sewell et al. 1). Additionally, they write that, "Men living in highly policed neighborhoods, especially men of color indicate high levels of worry and anticipation caused by the possibility of being stopped by the police at any time, as well as anger, frustration, and resentment caused by the perception that police unfairly target them" (Sewell et al 2). Their research reveals the violation of ethical theories such as Freedom from Harm and Fairness based on Equality. Fairness based on Equality is the idea that everyone should be treated equally. Although it is important to ensure safety and prevent crime from happening, the practice is bound to be unfair if the prevention method is only targeted and biased towards a specific group. Sewell et al also elaborated that, "Perceived unfairness not only is linked to poor mental health...but also creates a 'climate of fear' in which residents live with knowledge that they could be criminalized at any moment and in turn feel more vigilant" (2). This is a critical point of argument to indicate that stop-and-frisk violates ethical theory of Freedom from Harm, which states that people should not cause harm to others, thus making this practice immoral. The biased practice of stop-and-frisk resulted in unfair treatment of a specific population, ultimately causing a negative impact on their mental health and forming a climate of fear where their emotional distress gets amplified.

In addition to Sewell et al's research, criminal justice scholars Douglas N. Evans and Cynthia-Lee Williams' study finds that young ethnic minorities are more subject to Stop-and-Frisk. Despite this group only representing approximately 5 percent of the NYC population, they are subject to Stop-and-Frisk at a rate of 41 percent (Evans and Williams 704). They also state that, "Stop-and-Frisk may weaken the community's trust in police, which could reduce citizen willingness to report crimes and could create conflict and mistrust between police and citizens, particularly minority and youth citizens" (Evans and Williams 705). The

practice of Stop-and-Frisk violates the ethical concept of Equality, crumbling the Loyalty to Community aspect of ethics. Loyalty to Community states that one shall not betray or harm someone within one's community. However, as Evans and Williams' study shows, the distrust towards police reduces the willingness of reporting crimes and creates conflict among members of the community. This consequence is due to the unethical nature of Stop-and-Frisk.

Furthermore, the two studies prove that Stop-and-Frisk violates the theory of Minimax as well. Minimax, a theory developed by moral philosopher John Rawls, states that everyone should put a veil of ignorance over their faces, so as to forget their social position and therefore not be biased when making a decision for the good of society. However, as seen in both studies conducted by Sewell, et al and Evans and Williams, the police enforcing the Stop-and-Frisk policy does not put a veil of ignorance when judging if an individual may be involved with crime. In the endeavor of crime prevention, the police only encouraged social stigmatization based on gender and race of certain citizens towards the authority. Stop-and-Frisk policy leaves the community worse off as it negatively impacts the resident's mental health as well as their willingness to report crimes.

CCTV AND CPTED: SEOUL'S MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH TO CRIME PREVENTION

While New York City's crime prevention method until recently focused on in-person policing based on the Broken Windows Theory, Seoul took a more technological approach. Those methods include usage of Closed Circuit Television cameras (CCTV) and installation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policy. Adopting the ideas from Broken Windows Theory, the two methods aim to revitalize a target urban neighborhood through altering the built environment, which will result in a decrease in crime rate in the area. The CPTED policy relies on the idea that the orderly physical environment will invite people out and increase the usage of sidewalks, which will bring the natural surveillance advantage of Eyes on the Street. Some examples of CPTED policy could be installing CCTV cameras, street lighting, transparent fencing, community parks, and maintenance (Lee et al 2). Unlike Stop-and-Frisk, which requires an active participation of the police to reduce crime itself, CPTED policies focus on mitigating some physical factors

that may encourage criminal activities and the residents' fear of crime. There is a difference between crime and fear of crime. Whereas crime is an actual action caused by an individual to harm others, fear of crime is a psychological reaction concerning the possibility of harm from criminal activities. However, there is a direct relationship between the two. An area with high crime rate and physical disorder will have a greater chance that residents can experience fear of crime (Cho and Park 37). This argument regarding the relationship between crime and fear of crime is only valid on the logical level as the Broken Windows theory suggests that physical disorder invites criminal activities as it signifies the message that there are no consequences for such behavior (Gladwell 152).

One of the exemplary cases of CPTED policy can be found in Yeomri-dong, Mapo-gu in Seoul. Yeomri-dong is a neighborhood located in central Seoul. The area is not exclusively residential, yet CPTED was implemented in the hopes of mitigating the fear of crime (Cho and Jung 47, Kwon). The area also had an "unsavory reputation as a high crime district. Its many homes, the result of delays in an anticipated redevelopment project, and dark narrow alleyways created an undesirable and potentially dangerous residential environment" (Koehler). The CPTED policy that was installed in Yeomri-dong increased the number of CCTV and street lightings in the area. A specific case study of this area conducted by public administration scholars Il-hyung Cho and Kyujin Jung states that, "The target area of Yeomri-dong exhibited a decreasing trend in sexual assault occurrences after the CPTED policy was implemented in October 2012" (48). Furthermore, the general research on CPTED conducted by scholars of urban design and planning Jae Seung Lee, Sungjin Park, and Sanghoon Jung, states that "The [structural equation model] reveals that sufficient CCTV coverage, street lighting, and maintenance play a significant role in mitigating fear of crime" (12). The combination of physical alteration such as increase of streetlight and increase in surveillance technology such as CCTV had a positive impact on mitigating the fear of crime among the Yeomri-dong residents. In an interview with Arirang News, resident Gyung-won Cheon says, "I'm aware it's a potentially dangerous area, but if there are more lights I definitely feel subconsciously that it's safer and that I'm being looked after" (Kwon). Through both academic research and interviews with local residents, it is shown that CPTED brings a benefit of both mitigating the crime rate and fear of crime.

The ethical concept of Utilitarianism, first introduced by philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham, states that one should

choose that which provides the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Additionally, applying the ethical concept of Loyalty to Community, CPTED is one of the most effective and ethical approaches for surveillance. CPTED applies the idea of Eyes on the Street and the natural surveillance that stems from the residents of a neighborhood. As seen in the case of Yeomri-dong, alteration of physical space can mitigate the fear of crime and provide a sense that there is someone looking after for the safety of visitors and residents. Also, in the research of Lee et al, they state, "According to [the concept of territoriality], a place with close-knit social network can develop voluntary community guardianship. A place that is continuously controlled by its own residents, who share a sense of community, can be more effective than police enforcement" (Lee et al, 2). The practice of CPTED aims to encourage constructing a tighter community within a neighborhood, which enhances the sense of Loyalty to Community among the residents and can potentially bring the effect of natural surveillance. This is the most ethical method of crime prevention as it achieves the utilitarian idea of greatest good for greatest number of people.

SHORTCOMINGS OF CCTV

CCTV is one of the integral parts of CPTED as indicated by both Lee et al, and criminal justice scholars Jyungjin Lim and Pamela Wilcox's research (Lim and Wilcox 43, Lee et al 2). The ability of constant surveillance grants more effectiveness over any in-person surveillance due to its simple installment of camera which can cover the area and serve its purpose restlessly until it needs to be replaced. The recent improvement in digital technology also resulted in downsizing CCTV cameras with higher resolution. They can now process and recognize details such as face and iris information and license plates in real time (Sasse 22). Additionally, due to realistic limitations and resources, the police do not have to be everywhere constantly surveilling the areas with high risk of crime. In this respect, the increase of CCTV may sound like an attractive solution for increasing surveillance. As seen in both research done by Cho and Park and Lim and Wilcox, CCTV has a great impact on reducing crimes such as theft and burglary (Cho and Park 35, Lim and Wilcox 600). The accumulated data generated from the surveillance can be strategically adopted by the police to efficiently station officers and other security measures (Lim and Wilcox 599). On the other hand, this suggests that

CCTV alone may only be effective with a specific task and cannot be a comprehensive solution to reduce crime.

Furthermore, the constant surveilling nature of the method raises the question of invasion of privacy. This debate is mainly prevalent in the United States where the citizens have a constitutional right to be protected from being searched unwantedly by the fourth amendment. Jim Harper of the Cato Institute says in an interview with CBS that, “As these cameras network together, and as they are better capable at recognizing individual faces, people will realize just how they are being watched” (Moriarty). Although Harper acknowledges that there are still benefits of the technology, the invasion of privacy aspect is worth consideration as it contradicts John Rawls’s ethical theory of Deontology. Deontology, first thought out by philosopher Immanuel Kant states two things: First, that we should never lie, and second, we should never use others as a means to an end. CCTV cameras, although they come with the Utilitarian benefit of having a more effective and strategic measure of security, which overtime may bring the greatest number of good for the greatest number of people, can result in unwanted searches and consequences that may contradict with the right to ensure one’s privacy. Therefore, a more interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach that takes in consideration the impact of different methods such as CPTED is preferable over just sole implementation of surveillance technology such as CCTV cameras.

Conclusion

There are different considerations when analyzing Seoul and New York City. Although the types of crime that occur are similar, the two cities differ in demographics, the perception of crime, and how crime is portrayed in the media (Patino 156, 157). While New York City has a massively diverse demographic with 42.73% white, 24.19% black, 13.34% Asian, and 18.43% of other races (“New York City Population 2018”), Seoul’s demographic only comprises of mere 2.49% of foreigners (Byun 28). Due to this drastic difference, factors such as race relations have a stronger presence in New York City’s public opinion towards certain crimes. Patino also elaborates in her article that, “New York officials seem to be concerned with presenting a ‘good face’ to the public to hide their criminal statistics, while in Seoul officials are more concerned in coming up with ways to address their problems” (Patino 157). This affects the way crime is perceived and handled in a specific city as the presence of advanced communication technology, such as social media, allows the public to form an opinion faster than ever.

Based on the analysis of research done by Gladwell, Sewell et al, and Evans and Williams, Stop-and-Frisk had an profound impact on reducing violent crimes over a short period of time. However, the practice also caused a racial and gendered stigmatization and psychological distress of certain demographics of the New York City population. From a Utilitarian perspective, Stop-and-Frisk may appear to have achieved the greatest good for the greatest number of people but only with a highly diverse demographic of New York City. Based on the demographics and the findings from different articles by Duneier, Sewell, et al, and Evans and Williams, we can conclude that at least one-third of the city's population may experience the negative psychological impact and have a negative opinion against the police. Having such a high number of people impacted, the result can no longer be measured with the Utilitarian idea but rather with a Deontological perspective of whether the method uses others as a means to an end. Applying the five moral spheres of Pinker and the idea of Eyes on the Streets, this research concludes Stop-and-Frisk to be unethical and ineffective.

CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) can be deemed ethical from both the Utilitarian and Deontological aspects, although there is a hint that revitalizing aspect of the policy may lead to gentrification as shown in the case of Yeomri-dong (Koheler). After the implementation of the policy, Yeomri-dong had an increase of venues such as trendy cafés and pubs that provide a “youthful vibe,” inviting non-residents to the area. However, there have been no findings of original residents being displaced into other areas. Thus this gentrification effect will require further research to measure the ethicality of it. However, as shown in a neighborhood study and research on effectiveness in reducing sexual assault, CPTED successfully mitigates the fear of crime, reducing the crime rate of the area (Cho and Jung 53). Furthermore, CPTED results in a cleaner neighborhood that encourages the walkability of the area for residents, breeding the natural surveillance that is heavily emphasized by Jane Jacobs. With such benefits that the policy grants, the method deems to be the most ethical in a Utilitarian perspective as it ensures the greatest good for the greatest number of people, and from a Deontological perspective, improves the overall living environment of the neighborhood.

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Kajal Desai

THE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF THE BLACK FEMALE PERFORMER IN HIP HOP

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research paper is to identify the practices and characteristics upon which black female artists build their identities and public personas and what the implications of those constructed identities are in relation to female empowerment and gender equality. It is concluded that black women in hip hop construct their identities based on hyper-masculinity and over-sexualization. Hyper-masculinity occurs when black female hip hop artists write and perform misogynistic lyrics used by their male counterparts, as well as when black female artists in hip hop act with hostility and aggression towards one another. Over-sexualization can be seen by analyzing the sexually suggestive lyrics said by black females in their music as well as the sexually explicit photography and videography in which they feature. A counterargument is presented in this paper, which claims that female empowerment is achieved by black females participating in these practices due to the monetary gain that is made by exhibiting such behavior. However, the evidence and analysis presented disprove this argument and illustrate how black female artists in hip hop who represent hyper-masculinity and over-sexualization regress genuine female empowerment and gender equality by reinforcing the degrading stereotypes placed upon women of color.

INTRODUCTION

Hip hop is a musical genre that has been a significant and controversial component of American culture since its creation in the 1970s in New York City. Hip hop music has gone through much evolution through its life time, including the division into many subgenres. However, the industry has been, and remains to be, male-dominated and perpetuates misogyny, the hyper-sexualization of women of color, and gender inequality. Hip hop's deep-seated hyper-masculinity and the hostile behavior directed towards one another by hip hop artists has created a competitive environment for artists to thrive in, especially for female performers who are already highly underrepresented. Evidence of this includes rap battles, artist conflicts, and the explicit lyrics omnipresent in this genre. Specific

case studies that will be analyzed in this research paper include world renowned female rappers Nicki Minaj and Lil Kim. These inescapable influences of the genre, paired with its competitive nature, cause black female performers in hip hop to construct their identities and personas in a way that assures their success in the musical environment. So, the ultimate question is posed: how and why do female performers in hip hop construct their identities to represent the overexertion of masculinity, emphasizing their sexual appeal instead of their musical artistry? It is critical to investigate this question as hip hop and its female performers play a fundamental role in influencing feminism, female empowerment, and the movement towards gender equality. Furthermore, it is important to note how black female hip hop performers are viewed by their audiences because of hip hop's ever-growing popularity and influence in modern day culture. The theoretical framework that will be used in this research paper is Clare Chambers's feminist book *Sex, Culture, and Justice*, which focuses on male domination, feminism, the social construction of women, and the obstacles present to foster change in a world of gender inequality. Chambers defines domination "as 'structural or systematic phenomena which exclude people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions'" (Chambers 102). This domination applies to males over females in the realm of hip hop, in which a misogynistic patriarchy prevents females from constructing their identities and public personas by way of self-realization and introspection. Instead, they are forced to adhere to the rigid standards that are necessary for success as females in the hip hop industry: hyper-masculinity and hyper-sexualization.

This argument is further complicated by the fact that black female performers in hip hop are profiting immensely off of the self-imposed degradation that comes with their portrayal of hyper-sexuality and hyper-masculinity. This monetary compensation also brings up the issue of true payoff: is the monetary profit black female performers gain from participating in self-degrading practices worth the regression it causes for the entire female gender in terms of equality? Although the mirage of empowerment that comes from such financial success is alluring, and self-degradation is an effective way for black female artists to enter the hip hop space, the practice of hyper-sexuality and hyper-masculinity among black females in hip hop sets back the female gender even further into the depths of male patriarchy and female degradation. This influences the current and upcoming generations of hip hop audiences to develop these

same misogynistic thought processes and practices. The black female hip hop performer constructs her identity around hyper-masculinity and over-sexualization due to the perpetual misogyny and patriarchy ingrained within the industry as well as the temporary monetary gain that can be made out of these practices, which regress gender equality and genuine female empowerment.

HYPER-MASCULINITY: FEMALES BEING “HARD” TO STAY RELEVANT

The hyper-masculinity present in hip hop has caused female figures in the genre to develop so-called “male” characteristics, such as aggressiveness, to compensate for their predisposed lowered feminine state in this male-dominated industry. Aggressiveness, more commonly called “being hard,” is manifested through lyrical content and behavior. Hyper-masculinity is defined as the over-prominence of male stereotypes of aggressiveness, sexuality, and overall manliness, which creates a fear of appearing weak and pathetic to those who do not fit the standards. Chambers states “As women progress through their professional training, they are making adjustments and learning to manage the masculine culture into which they are entering” (Chambers 69). Chambers emphasizes the need for women to conform to hyper-masculine practices, which is necessary to stay relevant in a cut-throat environment like hip hop. Stephens and Few’s “The Effects of Images of African American Women in Hip Hop on Early Adolescents’ Attitudes Toward Physical Attractiveness and Interpersonal Relationships,” published in *Sex Roles*, elaborates on the concept of black women being put into one of eight sexually-fueled rigid images to define their identities. This concept not only undermines the true fluidity of one’s identity but also perpetuates the omnipresent stereotype of black women behaving aggressively as well as being over-sexual. Dispelling these stereotypes is made even harder when some black women craft their personas around them for temporary monetary gain, such as in hip hop. These racially-based stereotypes have been, and still remain, so ingrained in hip hop culture that they have established an innate mode of behavior within black female hip hop artists. This is because it is the only accessible structure of entrance and relevance the industry’s patriarchy allows. According to “In and Out of Love with Hip-Hop: Saliency of Sexual Scripts for Young Adult African American Women in Hip-Hop and Black-Oriented Television,” “What makes racially-gendered

stereotypes about Black women particularly insidious is that Black women themselves oftentimes internalize and unconsciously manifest these stereotypes in their own lives. Internalisation leads to negative self-image and unconscious reinforcement of racially-gendered stereotypes” (Coleman et al. 1176). Internalization, in this sense, is defined as black women following the so-called normality or negative stereotypes associated with black women and weaving these regressive practices into their identities and personas. Stephens and Few state that the incorporation of masculinity into a black female’s personality for compensation purposes is a component of the “Dyke Image” and the incorporation of the aggressive behavior and lyrics into a black female hip hop artist’s persona exemplifies aspects of the “Gangsta Bitch” image: “The Dyke image projects a self-sufficient and ‘hard’ woman who has rejected sex with men and may have adopted masculine postures. The image of the Gangster Bitch shows a ‘street tough’ woman who has sex to demonstrate solidarity with or to help her man; she may also be involved in gangs or gang culture” (Stephens and Few 252). The amalgamation of both these images together gives black female performers the illusion that they will be respected as equals by their male counterparts if they take on some of these stereotypical male qualities. White states “As rap became more mainstream than ever, and ‘ironically’ appropriating the misogynist, violence-tinged lyrics of their hip-hop colleagues, artists like Missy Elliott, Lil’ Kim (and Nicki Minaj), tried to appeal to fans with music similar to their male contemporaries” (White 619). Thus, black females donning this “Gangsta Bitch” image, along with hyper-sexualized lyrics, are more aimed at achieving conformity to male artists rather than female empowerment. However, it is important to note that society grouping black women into these eight images parallels the making of a person into a caricature. The conversion of a person into a caricature oversimplifies more complex underlying issues, which is exactly the case with black female performers. Black female performers, their artistries, and identities are reduced to hyper-masculinity and over-sexualization to gain popularity, stay relevant, and make money. This latently showcases and perpetuates the more complex issues of patriarchy and misogyny woven into hip hop. This causes black women to objectify themselves and compete against one another for attention, thus degrading black women even further and setting back female empowerment and gender equality tenfold.

The misogynistic competition and patriarchal structure of hip hop causes black female performers to develop a personality that consists

of hyper-masculinity and hostility. This is displayed through the use of derogatory terms towards other women, thus perpetuating the practice of misogyny. Female artists conform to masculine standards in the hopes of pandering to males, which is necessary to stay relevant not only in the male-dominated environment of hip hop but in spaces beyond that, as seen with young adolescent girls. According to “Hip-Hop Women Shredding the Veil: Race and Class in Popular Feminist Identity,” “Considering the powerful language of male discourse and the overall protection that it receives, it is not surprising that research...finds that adolescent girls unselfconsciously rejected constructs of feminism in favor of ‘benign versions of masculinity that allowed them to be ‘one of the guys’” (Morgan 436). An example of this pandering is found in male hip hop artist Ludacris’s 2010 song and video “My Chick Bad” with Nicki Minaj acting as a prime feature in both. Seen below is an image of Minaj in the video, posed in an aggressive manner with claws ready to strike:



“MY CHICK BAD LUDACRIS Feat. NICKI MINAJ.”
 MY CHICK BAD MY CHICK BAD LUDACRIS Feat. NICKI MINAJ
 LUDACRIS Feat. NICKI MINAJ, Riveting Entertainment, 2016,
rivetingentertainment.com/ludacris-my-chick-bad/.

The bloodthirsty look Minaj is giving in this image from the music video is in correlation to the violent lyrics she is rapping in her verse geared at other women, referring to them as “bitches:”

Now all these bitches wanna try and be my besty
 But I take a left and leave then hangin’ like a teste
 Trash talk to ‘em then I put ‘em in a Hefty
 Runnin’ down the court I’m dunkin on ‘em. Lisa Leslie
 It-it-it-it’s goin down, basement
 Friday the 13th, guess who’s playing Jason
 Tuck yourself in, you better hold onto your teddy

It's Nightmare on Elm Street and guess who's playin Freddy
("My Chick Bad Ludacris Featuring Nicki Minaj." *Rap Genius*,
Genius, genius.com/Ludacris-my-chick-bad-lyrics.)

Upon examining these lyrics filled with anger and violence, hyper-masculinity and misogyny are at the forefront of Minaj's verse. She is referring to other women she knows as the derogatory term "bitches," talking to them in a demeaning manner ("trash talk"). She even goes as far as to threaten her fellow women with violence, referring to herself as horror movie villains like "Jason" and "Freddy" while donning a pair of razor sharp claws in the music visualization. However, this aggressive language, rapped by Nicki Minaj and other black female performers alike, further reinforces the long held second-class treatment of women and keeps them in a descended state compared to their male counterparts. According to "Unladylike Divas': Language, Gender, and Female Gangsta Rappers," "The discourse that takes place in this genre imposes upon certain women categories of status that are taken to be lower than the statuses that the men themselves take (e.g., *bitches* and *hoes*, etc. vs. *pimps* and *hustlers*, etc.)" (Haugen 429). While Minaj is looking fierce and empowering at the surface, she is indeed showcasing hatred towards women, which does nothing but set back the progression of gender equality and female empowerment, especially when hip hop audiences are being influenced in their views and behavior by her widespread popularity. This can also be seen in other black female artists in hip hop, such as those on the reality television show "Love and Hip Hop." On the show, black females constantly refer to one another using derogatory terms such as "bitch." According to "My Job is to Be a Bad Bitch: Locating Women of Color in Postfeminist Media Culture on Love and Hip-Hop: Atlanta," "Karlie, Mimi, and Rasheeda were criticized throughout the sample about their ages, often being referred to as 'old ass bitches' among other disparaging remarks" (Williams 77). Black female artists perpetuating misogyny prevents the rise and success of other black female artists because it fosters a more competitive environment fueled by the antagonistic behavior among black women in this genre.

Female artists in hip hop try to both reach gender equality within the genre and counter the hyper-masculinity male rappers exert by taking on similar qualities and lyric styles as a way to emasculate their counterparts. However, these efforts are in vain as they play into the trap of perpetuating the patriarchy of hip hop. This can be seen in the lyrics

females use to counter the derogatory terms males aim at them: “This emasculation can occur when sistas with attitude refer to their male competitors or suitors as ‘motherfuckas’ or ‘niggas.’ Because the element of signifying is aesthetically appealing in this style of rap, these terms may have both negative and positive meanings depending on context” (Keyes 266). This quote by Keyes symbolizes black female hip hop artists adopting hyper-masculine practices male rappers use, such as terms with a negative connotation, in hopes of garnering an equal amount of respect and popularity as their male counterparts. However, as Chambers states, this attempt at acquiring the same pedestal the males are placed upon in hip hop is actually counterproductive: “Such manipulation of traditional female roles is not, Adkins suggests, indicative of a progressive transformation of gender but is rather indicative of the entrenchment of traditional gender difference” (Chambers 62). This is directly observed with the public perception of black female artists that depicts this aggressive and masculine approach in their personas. According to “Do These Sequins Make My Butt Look Fat? Wardrobe, Image, and the Challenge of Identity in the Music of Black American Women,” “Accepted version of black female reality’ that has prevailed in mainstream popular culture, we find that black women have often been depicted negatively...the stereotypes of black women as ‘hard, low down, mean, nasty, and bitchified”” (Woldu 121). This is the “entrenchment” that Chambers mentions in the previous quotation; it is also known as the lowered female space and is fueled by how a female hip hop performer’s value is determined by her obnoxious masculinity and sexually-objectified self instead of her lyrical ability and talent.

HYPER-SEXUALIZATION OF BLACK FEMALES: SELF OBJECTIFICATION FOR POPULARITY AND PROFIT

The racially-based hyper-sexualization of black female artists leads these artists to sexually objectify themselves and make it a fundamental piece of their identity, thus devaluing the other more critical characteristics of a woman and reinforcing misogyny and the patriarchal structure of hip hop. Black women have historically been objectified and made out to be hyper-sexualized, as compared to women of other races, for generations in the United States. These stereotypical notions are rooted in the dehumanizing practice of slavery over a hundred years ago, from which complete repossession of the respect towards black women

has been far from met. According to “Putting Hypersexuality to Work: Black Women and Illicit Eroticism in Pornography,” “African American feminist scholars have written a great deal about the issue of sexual representation, focusing on the exploitation of black women’s bodies within patriarchal, racial capitalism in the USA. They have examined how African American women’s sexualities are inherently informed by the objectification of their bodies necessitated by the sexual economy of slavery” (Miller-Young 222). This quote by Miller-Young describes how far back the degradation and over-sexualization of black females goes, dating back to the times of colonialism and slavery. Stephens and Few describe this hyper-sexualized persona created years ago that has continued to be represented and perpetuated by black female performers in the genre as the “Freak” image: “When an African American woman is portrayed as desiring and engaging in ‘wild and kinky’ sex with a multitude of partners for her own gratification, the Freak image is being enacted” (Stephens and Few 252). The “Freak” persona is a much talked about concept in gender studies focused on hip hop. Professor Nicole Coleman of the University of Houston states “The Freak script, reminiscent of the Jezebel stereotype, is viewed as sexually open and often engaging in what can be considered high-risk sexual behaviour. She views sex as a means by which she can gain and maintain sexual control over her partner while also satisfying her own sexual needs” (Coleman et al. 1167). This “Freak script” is taken on by black female artists to put over-sexualization at the forefront of their personas to gain the control and attention of the hip hop audience, thus increasing their popularity and success. However, the reason for the constant representation of this overly sexual persona and image in black female performers is due to the desire for validation of males and to stay relevant in an environment that leads black females on a narrow path of success in hip hop, only through sexual self objectification being a fundamental aspect of their persona. Miller-Young states “Black women are devalued as hyper-accessible and super-disposable in an industry that simultaneously invests in and marginalizes fantasies about black sexuality” (Miller-Young 231). The term “super-disposable” that Miller-Young uses conveys the immense pressure and competition placed on black female performers that forces them to conform to misogynistic practices of hyper-masculinity and over-sexualization in fear of being rejected by the hip hop industry. In conforming to these practices, such female artists can appear “hyper-accessible” in terms of performing sexual acts for men. A prime figure in hip hop who practices these two patriarchal actions of

hyper-masculinity and self sexual objectification is rapper Nicki Minaj: “In terms of gender and body politics, Minaj inhabits centuries-old tropes assigned to Black female sexuality, often embraces the phallic idioms and lyric violence of her male peers” (Jackson 127). Minaj realized she must conform to and take on the over-sexualization placed on black females by male hip hop artists to compete for relevancy and interest from audiences in the genre. This is shown through her sexually explicit and obnoxious lyrics and body image, a specific instance being in her 2014 song and music video for “Anaconda:” “In the case of ‘Anaconda,’ offense with its visually ‘explicit’ content was the means to articulate discomfort with the voice on the track: more specifically, the crazy and disruptive and amazing laugh sandwiched between hails to the ‘big fat ass’ (Nicki Minaj 2014) the song celebrates” (Jackson 127). The example of Nicki Minaj further illustrates the domination of males in hip hop. Minaj has crafted her whole hyper-sexualized persona based on the preferences of the male patriarchy to ensure her relevance in the genre as opposed to constructing her identity on her own unique and personal introspection, which could be a catalyst for change in an ever-stagnant misogynistic genre. Chambers’s statement regarding male domination and the patriarchy being synonymous with female hyper-sexuality complements the previous statements. According to *Sex, Culture, and Justice*, “The eroticization of hierarchy pervades sexuality within patriarchy and, moreover, defines patriarchy politically. Men’s power over women writ large is structured around male sexual power. Power and sexuality are intimately intertwined for Mackinnon, with power structuring sexuality and sexuality reinforcing power” (Chambers 51). Chambers states above that this empowering sexuality “defines patriarchy,” thus recognizing the fact that over-sexualization leads to the progression and reinforcement of female degradation. Without female artists in hip hop like Nicki Minaj ceasing to use their sexuality as a fundamental means of keeping relevance and using it as a “cash cow,” there will be no permanent movement towards true female empowerment in hip hop. Another female hip hop artist who employs over-sexualization for male-targeted marketing, Lil’ Kim, is also known for her suggestive visual presentation: “Rapper Lil’ Kim, hip-hop’s self-proclaimed ‘queen bitch,’ built a career based on the vulgarity of her music and the distastefulness of her attire. Of the many photos of the rapper posing suggestively, two are particularly well known: in one, she is squatting, legs wide apart, wearing a leopard bikini thong; in the other, she is dressed up like a giant, blow-up porno doll” (Woldu 128). Lil’ Kim’s

marketing antics are an example of black women using their predetermined hyper-sexuality in hip hop as a mechanism of monetary gain. According to “Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin, Hair, Hips, Lips and Other Parts,” “‘The highest paid video girl to date’ (p. 219) who describes her vulnerability on video shoots, objectification by men, and the process of reclaiming power over her own body, which she describes as her commodity” (DeLoach 733). This quote by DeLoach describes the illusion of empowerment that is created when a black female sexually objectifies herself to gain attention and success. But instead of empowering, she reinforces the restrictive stereotypes and bounds the industry has placed upon her and the black females around her.

The monetary gain by black female artists through their misogynistic tactics can be seen as a way of empowerment. However, although these black women in hip hop are using hyper-sexuality and hyper-masculinity to make a profit, it is detrimental in progressing the roles and perspectives of women (black women specifically) as it perpetuates the cycle of misogyny and male domination in hip hop. Chambers states “The slight shifts in representation and small victories of empowerment that the regulated liberties achieve tend, in the long run, to reinforce structural inequalities” (Chambers 65). Although female artists in hip hop acquire the temporary gain of money and superficial attention by expressing hyper-sexuality and hyper-masculinity in their song lyrics and music videos, they are continuing the cycle of female degradation and pandering to the desires and standards set by men, thereby reinforcing male domination. The practice of self-sexual objectification by black female hip hop artists for cash not only negatively affects other women and the gender equality movement but is detrimental to the actual female artist’s personal life and relationships. According to *In and Out of Love with Hip-Hop: Saliency of Sexual Scripts for Young Adult African American Women in Hip-Hop and Black-Oriented Television*, “In addition, women highlighted several consequences of using their sexuality strictly for monetary gain including creating a power struggle in relationships that may result in an unhealthy union” (Coleman et al. 1174). In addition to this, black female artists over-sexualizing themselves deteriorates their own self esteem by basing their worth as a woman off of patriarchal ideologies like male desires and validation instead of their non-tangible characteristics and qualities: “Women high in appearance orientation tended to be very self conscious about how their body appeared to others, in particular, to men. Men’s attention, especially their sexual attention, was the gauge of

women's self-esteem and self-perceptions of attractiveness or desirability" (Stephens and Few 253). Rap megastars Nicki Minaj and Lil Kim are both guilty of over-sexualizing themselves, each artist having posed in sexually suggestive ways for their album covers. One pose in particular that both artists have shared in their respective album covers is seen below:



"Lil Kim's 1996 Album Cover and Nicki Minaj's 2007 Mixtape Cover."

The History Of Nicki Minaj And Lil Kim's Beef, Capital Xtra,
www.capitalxtra.com/artists/nicki-minaj/lists/lil-kim-feud-history/birman-song/.

This over-sexualization implies that their value as hip hop artists lies in their sexuality and physical appearance rather than in their musical talent and lyrical ability. The behaviors of these past and current female artists in hip hop perpetuate the notion that black female sexuality is worth monetary value, thereby dehumanizing this aspect of a woman and her femininity. Coleman states that these women are guilty of "falsely encouraging young women to manipulate interpersonal relationships by utilising sex as a negotiation tactic" (Coleman et al. 1168). This creates an issue within female presentation in hip hop, where females are conforming to the misogynistic standards placed in front of them instead of forging a new path for black female performers to be respected for their musical ability not for their sexualized marketing. PhD candidate Lauren Michele Jackson of University of Chicago notes Nicki Minaj as a key symbol of this: "The problem, according to Cartier, 'is that Minaj apparently jumps over the politics of respectability without ever traversing through

it” (Jackson 127). Minaj also has the disadvantage of her race working against her in this case. Minaj being a black female in hip hop aligns with the stereotype of black females being readily accessible for sexual acts and desiring wild and kinky sex to satisfy themselves and the men to which their performances are directed. Miller-Young states “The perceived easy accessibility of black women’s sexuality organizes how hardcore media produces and markets black female bodies as well as how it treats black women workers at worksites.” (Miller-Young 226). Various forms of media, such as television shows, have not yet moved away from portraying the negative stereotypes regarding black women and black female performers in hip hop who progress misogyny and female regression even further. In fact, these shows, and the female performers on them, have reinforced these stereotypes. According to “My Job is to Be a Bad Bitch: Locating Women of Color in Postfeminist Media Culture on Love and Hip-Hop: Atlanta,” “It is important to emphasize that the representation of these women of color on *Love and Hip-Hop: Atlanta* did little to foster a positive counterstereotype to the degrading representations of women of color in Hip-Hop media and reality television” (Williams 85). For black females to reach the same level of respect as men in the hip hop industry, black female artists must not conform to the misogynistic standards that dominate the genre due to their appeal to male audiences. This conformity must not be followed as it regresses true female empowerment further by degrading women of color into following the notion that their only appeal is in being hyper-sexual and hyper-masculine.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical framework states “As people respond to the circumstances within which they live, they become accustomed to those particular responses and, over time, repeat them with little or no conscious awareness or choice—whether or not the conditions that first made the response appropriate actually pertain” (Chambers 53). Misogyny and male domination is so ingrained into the genre of hip hop that both females and males in the hip hop climate behave and react in ways that exemplify these attributes without even knowing how they personally are perpetuating the cycle of misogyny and female degradation. Black female performers in hip hop build their identities based around hyper-sexuality and hyper-masculinity to gain popularity and stay relevant in the cut-throat and brutal environment of hip hop, which encompasses female

regression and the sexual objectification of black women. In doing this, black female performers in hip hop can earn substantial monetary profit, however they set back women in advancing to a place where they are respected and held to the same value as males. The implication of black female performers constructing their identities in this way is that those who listen and watch these artists' videos will use notions of misogyny and disrespect of women in their own lives. In turn, this perpetuates and passes on misogyny, the patriarchy, and unrealistic ideologies regarding sexuality to the next generation. This pushes forward the regression of females once again as these black female artists are so influential in modern day culture. "Adolescents develop perceptions of their sexuality and beliefs that address desired sexual needs by using self-comparison and relying on messages about appropriate or desirable sexual and physical traits from peers, family members, and other cultural influences" (Stephens and Few 252). In this context, the term "cultural influences" represents female hip hop artists because they have a massive influence on modern day culture and a direct influence on how adolescents develop their perceptions of sexuality and perceived gender roles. In conclusion, if hip hop is to finally break free of its perpetual cycle of female degradation, patriarchy, and misogyny, black female performers in the genre must stop building their public identities on hyper-masculinity, racially-based hyper-sexuality, and sexual objectification.

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Mohammed Farooqui

Segregation in New York City Education: Why a Colorblind System is not really “Colorblind”

ABSTRACT

*The presence of a “colorblind” education system in New York City favors those with privilege, and inevitably imposes segregation that separates affluent, white students from minority students. As a result, there are disparities in the development of both populations, giving rise to the overall inequality of the city. Such disparities are reproduced through generations as wealthy, white families exercise their privilege in order to select elite schools for their children that bolster their hierarchical advantage over minorities. The emphasis on capitalism greatly diminishes the role of the government in school choice and reintegration, and instead serves to reinforce segregation through cases like *Rau v. New York City Department of Education*. By separating majority students from minorities, officials and policy makers hamper each population’s development and capacity to feel empathy for one other, thereby ensuring inequality is transmitted to future generations. To counteract segregation, officials must promote the reintegration of schools and provide minority students equitable opportunities to succeed and develop in a constructive manner. Reintegration will ultimately increase understanding between students of different backgrounds and can potentially dismantle the ubiquitous social hierarchy that pervades New York City. Enacting such a policy poses challenges, and government officials must take care to address the needs of students of all races. Moving forward, future research should consider the effects of academic tracking in schools, and the efforts needed to create diversity in individual classrooms after schools have been reintegrated.*

INTRODUCTION

In New York City, the increased emphasis on school choice in K-12 education is marred by privilege and serves as the primary source of the personal and professional gaps between upper-class white students and their minority counterparts. The perpetuation of discrimination in the education system raises issues relating to social inequality and ste-

reotyping. These two processes stem from *de facto* segregation, where sociopolitical inequality serves as the driving force for segregation rather than the law. In this paper, I will address the question: How does the New York City school system act as a significant factor in the identity construction of different demographics and minorities? More specifically, I will inquire why a sole focus on achieving an excellent, “colorblind” education inherently deprives public-school students of exposure to a diverse student body and impacts the development of their identity? I will be using social reproduction theory as discussed by John Fitz et al. in *Educational Policy and Social Reproduction: Class Inscription and Symbolic Control* to dissect how this colorblind education system transmits social inequality through generations. In addition, I will utilize critical race theory based on the essays in Angela Harris’s book, *Crossroads, Directions and a New Critical Race Theory*, in order to highlight the structural flaws in educational policies that preserve such disparities in New York City. By coupling both these theories with the issue of privilege, which is analyzed in Greg Wiggan’s *Power, Privilege, and Education: Pedagogy, Curriculum, and Student Outcomes*, I will deconstruct the weaknesses and foundations of the colorblind education system.

The capitalist approach to education allows those with the most privilege to attend the best schools and obtain the most useful resources. In these supposedly “colorblind” education schemes, the market is the primary factor that decides school placement rather than the state, thereby diminishing the issue of racial segregation in policy. As a result, advantaged, white parents feel pressured to place a greater value on the prestige of a school over its diversity in an effort to protect their privilege. In New York City, policy makers and admissions officers have long been a catalyst for the colorblind education system, and are therefore implicated in the problem. Governmental policies have gone so far as to actively promote a marketplace education system through meritocracy, which ends up benefitting and protecting the entitlement of overrepresented populations at the expense of minorities. Such favoritism can have adverse effects on the identity construction of both white and minority students, who begin adopting generalizations at a young age, and are therefore stunted in their ability to connect with people of different backgrounds. By reintegrating schools, it is possible to bridge the gap between students of different races, and allow for them to develop their identities in an equitable manner.

HOW THE MARKETPLACE INCITES SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS

The heavy influence of capitalism in the education policy of New York City prevents minority students from attending superior schools, and serves to reinforce the privilege of advantaged, overrepresented families. In neoliberal multiculturalism, which is the contemporary approach to an antiracist education in New York City, capitalism is the main force that regulates access to different qualities of schooling and education. In this sense, the education system is ‘colorblind,’ and although the “educational marketplace may be open to the public, [...] it privileges certain groups of consumers” (Friedus and Noguera 413). This “privilege” that Friedus and Noguera refer to provides white students an advantage over their minority counterparts simply due to their socioeconomic status, which affords them more opportunities and options in regard to schooling. Fitz et al. explain how protecting privilege “for social and financially advantaged parents at least, has been to ensure a superior education for their children” (75). Capitalizing on the colorblind education system, advantaged students with the highest academic standards can get into the schools they desire and seize opportunities. When examined with social reproduction theory, which Fitz et al. define as the degree to which factors like education transmit disparities through generations, the wealth and resources that these students procure can then be passed on to their own children in the future, thereby preserving the foundation of social inequality (64). Wiggan goes one step further by rationalizing why advantaged white families possess this privilege when discussing how “America [...] poses that whites possess an ‘unacknowledged inheritance’ that they receive from four hundred years of practices and decision making, which today benefits their education, social class status and social mobility” (xii). Given the extensive head start white families have, it is clear why they would dominate in an education system that favors “survival of the fittest.” These racial disparities have been passed on for the entirety of New York’s—and America’s—existence such that they have permeated even the education policy, in the form of a marketplace education. However, the capacity to blame white families becomes blurred when looking at their intentions.

Although it is simple to blame the parents of white, advantaged students for perpetuating this cycle of social reproduction where social inequality and *de facto* segregation are passed on from one generation

to the next, much of their decision-making in schooling their children is rooted in the marketplace education system which focuses solely on promoting social mobility over diversity. Before looking at the issue of segregation at the micro-level, it is necessary to understand its foundations, which lie predominantly in institutional policy. Using social reproduction theory, Fitz et al. illustrate how privileged families dominate the capitalist society, where “their position [is] maintained and reproduced via their capacity to manipulate and be at ease with cultural and symbolic goods” (83). As such, by utilizing their inherent advantages to secure admissions to the most prestigious schools for their children, it may appear as though such parents are neglecting the benefits of diversity in education. Their actions in turn transmit inequality between generations through social reproduction, since the students are also developing in a capitalist system that concentrates on social mobility. However, Roda and Wells contend that white parents may actually value diversity for their children but cannot pursue it, as they must “simultaneously weigh their choices, worry about their children’s chances in a competitive and unequal educational system, and consider the benefits of racially diverse schools in preparing their children for a global society” (264). Due to the pressures of the marketplace education system, parents are often forced to treat diversity as an afterthought. As such, white, upper-class parents who place their children in racially segregated schools can also be viewed as victims of this discriminatory system, and their children’s identities are constructed in a similar fashion. However, the desire to seek out the most prestigious school often influences the direction of educational discourse, where advantaged populations call for the maintenance of meritocracy and colorblind education, indicating an internal discrepancy in thoughts and highlighting the symbolic value of diversity for such parents.

The push by advantaged, white parents to maintain the colorblind system of education demonstrates the employment of their privilege and illustrates a dissonance from their supposed desire to nurture diversity. Friedus and Noguera dissect the current educational discourse and how attitudes have shifted from “previous constructions of the public good founded in the principles of democratic equality...[to] a new understanding of a public good located in a color-blind marketplace” (413). Although this transition does not explicitly imply racism or unjust intentions, it still suggests negligence on the part of parents who do not value diversity in education. In their efforts to capitalize on the marketplace education system, advantaged, white parents adhere to the neoliberal

notion that preserving meritocracy is the government's responsibility. In effect, the idea that "desegregation was a 'constitutional imperative' had become a minority opinion and was itself seen as an anachronism" (Friedus and Noguera 397). It is ironic that in the one of the most segregated education systems in the country, individuals are claiming desegregation is not necessary. The disposition of advantaged parents functions as the impetus that preserves *de facto* segregation, and isolates overrepresented and minority students from one another. In addition, Roda and Wells admit that privileged white parents may implicitly adopt stereotypes and "play a role in legitimizing and perpetuating the situation by buying into the use of race as a signifier of good or bad schools" (284). The biased attitude of white parents stands distinctly in contrast to their desire of seeking out diversity for their children, which Roda and Wells also highlight, revealing the cognitive dissonance and conflict within their own implicit beliefs. Therefore, the support of diversity by advantaged, white parents appears to be only symbolic in nature, a dispassionate attempt to rationalize and resolve the tension of their neoliberal and discriminatory sentiments. Since academic prestige and diversity appear to be mutually exclusive in the majority of schools in New York City, advantaged parents simply exercise their privilege in order to provide a better education for their children, thereby isolating the students from other demographics as a byproduct. It is clear that the underlying source of this issue lies with the process of choosing schools, which inherently pushes advantaged, primarily white students to segregate themselves.

THE INEFFECTICACY OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

The political power of upper-class white parents and the negligence of government officials in New York City in recognizing the ineffectiveness of a "colorblind" education validate the privileges of majority populations and illustrate how minority voices are not being heard. In understanding and addressing the political cracks of the education system, it is essential to apply critical race theory, which interprets race and racism from a legal context. Whereas social reproduction theory accounts for the nature of colorblind education, critical race theory examines the institutional policies and roots of segregation. The efforts by the government to counteract the flaws in the education system have not been effective, as Friedus and Noguera note "the city's failure to address the

question of racial equity—the original goal of the desegregation order—has not been acknowledged by the courts, educational policymakers, or public discourse that focuses on the impact of these policies on individual educational consumers” (413). Such negligence brings into question the intentions of policymakers and the government, and whether or not they actually care about the value of reintegration. Roda and Wells explore the origin of governmental inaction and find that it lies with advantaged “parents who have the most political power within the educational system and who often work within and around that system to make their school choices” (264). By placing power over educational policy in the hands of the majority demographic who seek to retain their privilege, it is no surprise that discriminatory policy pervades schools. As such, when viewed through critical race theory, there is a clear political tension that favors the inclinations of white parents. The product of wealthy white parents’ political work is a contemporary approach that focuses on guaranteeing “that the educational marketplace offers equal access to social mobility, not to regulate the disparate impact of these markets on children or communities of color” (Friedus and Noguera 398). This policy effort fails to recognize how the marketplace is actually inequitable and creates a system of meritocracy in which advantaged students with the highest test scores succeed. H. Richard Milner critiques the disregard of minority, lower-class students by policy makers and officials, who often “fail to recognize [the] systemic barriers and institutional structures that prevent opportunity and success, even when students are hard[-]working” (704). If such a movement towards inclusion was truly colorblind, it would also take into consideration the marginalization of African-American and Latino students. Instead, in its effort to uphold the marketplace, current legislation has failed to address the real issue at its core, why certain races dominate the best schools, by positing test scores as a measure of a student’s worth and therefore, a major component of his or her identity. Schools can then utilize the colorblind education system as a means of discriminating against students and upholding segregation.

Due to governmental ineffectiveness regarding the issue of segregation, schools can take advantage of the policies in place in order to prioritize overrepresented demographics, thereby advertising their supposed “prestige.” The prejudiced actions of schools epitomize the tenet of critical race theory that rejects the fanciful notion that a legal “‘blindness’ to race will eliminate racism” (Harris et al. 1). When applied to the colorblind education system, such thinking has encouraged the opposite of its original

intention: instead of eradicating race as a factor in pushing for equality, it has simply entrenched racial divisions in school. Friedus and Noguera indicate how schools generate segregation by actively favoring white students, since “according to the ascendant logic of the educational marketplace, white families may have been valued consumers, but children of color were cast as marginal goods” (408). The tendency of school board members to view white, upper class students as more “valuable” clearly contains racist suggestions and shows how much the education system largely caters to their specific demographic. When contrasted with “marginal goods,” there is an insidious implication that minority students are treated as unequal and burdens to be carried. When interpreted with critical race theory, there is a strict social hierarchy that places advantaged, white students above minorities, highlighting the racism that is deeply ingrained in American culture and bolstered by the political system. The underachievement of minority students can therefore be attributed to institutional discrimination that stems from this hierarchy. By associating their worth with their capacity to elevate a school’s reputation, students’ identities are constructed in a manner that implicates their socioeconomic background. As such, the stagnancy of legislation that addresses the flaws of the marketplace, or “colorblind,” education system allows schools to prefer white students who develop their identity with access to more resources, and deters minority students from doing the same.

Most attempts at rectifying the situation of minorities have not been entirely inclusive and support colorblind education, as was observed in *Rau v. New York City Department of Education*. The case of *Rau* and the prestigious Mark Twain Intermediate School shows how, despite having constructive intentions, officials and their policies that actively support a “colorblind” education system have not thoroughly improved the demographics of schools. In *Rau*, an Indian family filed a successful lawsuit with the city’s department of education after claiming their child, Nikita Rao, was unfairly passed over for white students with lower academic standards, due to racial quotas set in Mark Twain’s admission system. The family’s argument is a bit ironic considering those same racial quotas originally intended to facilitate complete desegregation were now viewed as anachronistic and harmful towards the very people they were meant to help. Friedus and Noguera suggest how the usage of an Asian-American student by Judge Jack Weinstein to rule in favor of a colorblind education through meritocracy is cleverly imaginative, considering Rao is not white, and is therefore “an ideal candidate to advance the cause that any

policy besides color blindness violates the principles of meritocracy and the fundamental liberties of students of color as well as white students” (411). Rao therefore stands as a champion for the colorblind education system, and her status implies that attempting to make a similar ruling with—perhaps—a white student would not garner as much widespread support. Yet, follow-up studies indicated that the demographics of Mark Twain barely fluctuated to match the diverse demographics of New York City, and that there are more Asian-Americans in selective schools like Mark Twain when compared to African-Americans and Latinos, despite the latter groups having greater populations in the area. Through the lens of critical race theory, and the case of African-Americans, Mari Matsuda points out the hypocrisy of the discourse of individuals who wish to “reconsider the category of race all together, since race [...] is a constructed category, and thank God [they] don’t have to take those angry Black people seriously anymore” (395). In the pursuit of neoliberal ideals, policy makers effectively suggest that the current plight of minority students, like African-Americans, is embellished and unimportant in modern times. Matsuda’s assertion connects back to a key principle of critical race theory which rejects “blindness” to race as the solution to racial discrimination. As such, although Judge Weinstein’s ruling intended to supplant a previous ideology that was supposedly obsolete, its benefits are clearly not wholly inclusive and hurts disadvantaged populations. It sets the precedent that meritocracy is beneficial and that traditionally advantaged students, whether white or Asian-American, have a right to be admitted just because their test scores are higher than under-privileged students. The notion that Asian-American students—or any race—serve as the standard for the struggles of all races is a generalization, and fails to consider the disparities between individual students and populations.

The case of *Rau* demonstrates how there is no straightforward solution to the underlying problems associated with the capitalist education system, as there are nuances that must be considered to make education equitable for all races. Friedus and Noguera show how from the perspective of Rao, the colorblind education system is favorable since “schools are, first and foremost, obligated to provide opportunities for individual students to achieve social mobility” (410). Although at face value such a desire is reasonable and beneficial towards students discriminated against in a similar manner, it ignores the situations of individuals from other populations. Therefore, by creating policy that addresses half of the issue for minorities like Asian-Americans, the judge effectively

exacerbates the problem for other minorities like African-Americans and Latinos. Julie Su and Eric K. Yamamoto illustrate the effects of such a tension through critical race theory, as they explain that “as communities of color struggle against white racism and corporate domination, they at times tend to replicate oppressive social and economic structures to oppress others” (388). In the case of *Rau*, Asian-American students like Nikita Rao succeeded in legally asserting their right to attend prestigious schools like Mark Twain, but it was at the expense of African-American and Latino students who continue to be marginalized by the colorblind education system. The duality of this issue highlights the complexities and subtleties that permeate long-term desegregation. Policy makers and officials must not only address the difficulties of disadvantaged minorities, but also those of overrepresented minorities like Asian-Americans in order to gain traction and support.

THE EFFECTS OF SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION ON STUDENT IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

When segregation is viewed from the perspective of minority students, there is a clear desire for reintegration as a means of attaining better resources, opportunities, and a more diverse educational experience. In her article, “New York City Students Share Why They’re Fighting for School Integration,” Christina Veiga highlights the testimonies of students critiquing and speaking about their experiences with segregation to the New York Council’s Education Committee. One student, senior Wyatt Perez, discusses how “every time [he] see[s] large groups of Caucasian teenagers on the train, there are usually two reasons why: the Yankees are playing or the kids from Bronx Science have been dismissed” (1). This scene illustrates the state of segregated public schools, where inter-racial contact is clearly minimal. Students like Wyatt are unable to have meaningful interactions with advantaged, white students who attend prestigious schools like Bronx Science. This segregated environment is vastly different from the actual demographics of New York City, which are very diverse. Glover and Stover show how access to supplies is only one manner through which advantaged, white individuals exercise their privilege to obtain higher quality education, as “poor African American and Latino/Latina students regularly contend with scripted school reform programs, inexperienced teachers, overcrowded school buildings,

high drop-out rates, and an overemphasis on test taking skills" (9). As such, a clear dichotomy exists in the experiences of white and minority students, due to the different environments that both populations are exposed to and the social hierarchy that is omnipresent in New York City. The suppression of minority students can also be related back to social reproduction theory, as schooling conditions and resources have "a direct influence upon the relative performance of schools, [...] [and] also [have] an important impact on social mobility, citizenship and social exclusion/inclusion" (Fitz et al. 121). Thus, there is no surprise that all the student testimonies that Veiga relates call for reintegration; these students wish to develop with the same privileges that their often white, wealthy peers do. With the current social hierarchy, their futures and the generations that follow them are stunted and limited by the lack of quality education and opportunities. The generalizations both they and their white, advantaged counterparts develop are also influenced by segregation, due to the lack of communication between students of different backgrounds.

Separating students at a young age based on their race affects which kind of beliefs and assumptions they adopt, and prevents them from developing an identity capable of connecting with the multicultural population of New York City. Bigler and Liben show this when discussing how children "notice perceptual similarities among those who live, work, and socialize together and then infer that the social divisions they observe must have been caused by meaningful, inherent differences between groups" (164). For white students, this process is especially troubling as the system of segregation may cause them to internalize certain generalizations about their often less advantaged, minority counterparts, which are then integrated into their identity. Such discrimination also plays a role in the personal development of minority youths as well, as Stevenson et al. point out that in the case of African-Americans, "racism experiences may ignite or act as a trigger to 'open the eyes' of black youth to see their social world differently" (134). With social reproduction theory, the diverging identities of both demographics can be seen as a major stimulus for the cycle of implicit discrimination that plagues New York City. Majority and minority populations are not able to interact with one another in school and develop in a manner that promotes understanding. Roda and Wells identifies this as a cause of discrimination "within so-called global cities such as New York," in which "hourglass labor markets require both well-paid, highly educated, and mostly white professionals and poorly paid, poorly educated service workers, many of whom are black or

Latino immigrants” (270). Patterns of inequality are therefore reproduced from generation to generation, and individuals mature from an inferior education to an inferior professional life. Without a break in the current colorblind system of education, disadvantaged minorities will continue to be marginalized as their identities are shaped in a manner that inculcates failure as their inevitable future.

THE IMPACT OF DESEGREGATION

Integrating schools and exposing students to diverse populations can allow for more positive identity development for minority youths. It can also nurture the pride and confidence of one’s race, ultimately helping to lower the social and academic gap between students of different backgrounds. Although black students may find diverse settings intimidating at first, Marsh et al. illustrate that their “resilience [...] allow[s] these high [-]achieving high school scholars to navigate their racially homogeneous home world and their racially diverse school world” (47). As such, this movement towards integration is not a means of homogenizing the population and eradicating other cultures, but rather using those cultures to help minority students succeed and contribute to the multicultural setting at school. Harris describes the benefits of culture and its recognition through critical race theory, since “self-conscious racial identities can be – and have been– the source of individual fulfillment, collective strength, and incisive policymaking” (1). As such, when applied to the black students that Marsh et al. refer to, the strong association to their African-American identity is what allows them to develop in such a positive manner. By involving and honoring race within schools, students are given the capacity to express themselves comfortably and can use their racial identity as a means to succeed. Their confidence and achievements thus enable them to challenge social hierarchies and continue to grow despite policies that produce social disparities. Furthermore, Suad Nasir et al. point out there is a clear gap in the identity development of high-achieving and low-achieving black students in urban settings, as “lower-achieving students defined being African American as related to street activity and having a negative relationship with school (consistent with both their local experiences of school and the broader media messages about African Americans)” (107). The prevalence of colorblind education therefore perpetuates this line of thinking, as it places segregated black youths in New York in situations where they are unable to demonstrate the same

academic progress as their high-achieving counterparts. As such, Nasir et al. and Marsh et al. show how racial integration in schools is the key to promoting healthy identity development for minority students like African-Americans. By emphasizing desegregation in the education system, policymakers may allow minority students to catch up to upper-class white students, which can potentially introduce equal opportunities. In addition, desegregation can catalyze more communication between races, and enhance the quality of education in classrooms.

The presence of diversity within schools stimulates more meaningful inter-racial interactions and a heightened educational experience, thereby contributing to positive identity construction and justifying reintegration. Amy Wells et al. highlight the benefits of integrated schools, discussing how classrooms with students from various backgrounds and experiences “are beneficial to all students, including middle-class white students, because they promote creativity, motivation, deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills” (1). These productive attributes are crucial for development and later success, and are accessible to both overrepresented and minority individuals in diverse classrooms. Reintegration will also help prepare students for the diverse demographics of New York City by encouraging them to “think critically about their own views and to develop greater tolerance for different ways of understanding issues” (Wells et al. 1). Through critical race theory, it is apparent that this line of thought can help address the social hierarchy that traditionally prevents many minorities from attaining the same level of success as wealthy white individuals. Students of various backgrounds can grow up and harmoniously dismantle both legislative and cognitive biases that sustain racial prejudice. The discussion of Wells et al. serves as evidence for the idea that diversity and educational quality are indeed compatible with one another, which assuages the concerns of parents mentioned by Roda and Wells who are “conflicted over their blatantly race-conscious decision making in a system that relies on their colorblindness” (289). As such, in their extensive remodeling of educational legislation, schools and officials should advocate for diversity using the benefits highlighted by studies such as Wells’.

CONCLUSION

The emphasis on providing a colorblind, marketplace education to all students in New York City allows white families to exercise their

privilege in order to maintain an advantage over minorities. My findings and analyses support the notion that although white parents symbolically wish for diversity in the classroom for their children, their anxiety over losing their socioeconomic status propels them towards valuing academic prestige instead. In this regard, they simply take advantage of the capitalist system set in place as a means of protecting their privilege. Despite the blatant consequences observed with neoliberal education policies, the government, influenced by politically powerful and advantaged families, has not effectively dealt with segregation, leading to some schools actively prioritizing white students over minorities in admissions. When applied through social reproduction theory and critical race theory, the nefarious activities of such schools demonstrate the racism that is subtly instilled in the social hierarchy, which perpetuates through generations and indicates institutional discrimination. In addition, the government's support of colorblind education through Rao sets a precedent of meritocracy as the primary indicator of success, thus hurting minority students. The case of Rao reveals that desegregation is not a black-or-white issue, and that there are various intricacies, including the bias against Asian-Americans, that must be addressed.

By applying social reproduction theory to my discussions, I find that the colorblind education system causes a lack of inter-racial communication, which is a primary source of the longstanding social inequality in New York City. Critical race theory shows how to address this kind of prejudice, asserting that racial identity cannot simply be ignored, as that will inevitably lead to inequity. My findings show that segregated students yearn for diverse classrooms, and remaining in segregated environments can potentially limit the interactions between white and minority populations. Using critical race theory to examine the perspectives of academically successful minorities, I concluded that race can instead be a source of strength in diverse schools, with students exercising resilience and obtaining more opportunities. Diverse classrooms promote healthy communication between individuals of differing backgrounds, and stimulate more complex modes of thinking, therefore preparing students for success. Such students can mature and develop strong, resolute identities, allowing them to challenge the social reproduction and hierarchy in New York City.

Although my investigations express that completing desegregation in a wholesome and constructive manner is possible, it still requires a significant amount of investment and time. From convincing adamant

white parents that their children should attend diverse schools, to managing the reintegration of hundreds of public schools, this process will no doubt be arduous. Nonetheless, it is still necessary in order to facilitate stronger connections between the different populations of New York City, and to curb the social reproduction that prevents many minorities from achieving success. However, with the rise of issues such as racialized housing patterns and academic tracking in schools, it is clear that simply reintegrating schools will not be enough. Many individuals in 1960 felt that *Brown v. Board* was the culmination of Civil Rights and reintegration in education, but they were clearly thinking in haste. Just as much work needed to be done after the ruling of *Brown*, a similar push must be made even after schools in New York City have been integrated. In other words, the act of desegregation is only one piece of the puzzle, and additional research and work must be done with other components of the underlying issue.

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Reading Versus Watching: Narrative Fiction Consumption and Theory of Mind

ABSTRACT

One of the most common areas of study when considering the human response to fiction is on matters of content or overall genre. Less commonly discussed is the way the format of a fictional narrative affects its consumers. This paper addresses such discussion, accounting how the format of a story, specifically comparing text-based with on-screen fictional narratives, affects an individual's ability to recognize the emotional and mental states of others. The ability to recognize another person's mental and emotional states based on visual depictions or written descriptions of a character's situation or appearance is referred to as theory of mind. Theory of mind is the primary framework of this paper, first used to examine how fiction consumption, regardless of format, yields theory of mind improvement. This paper also uses the analysis of the creative writing process and biological reasoning for humanity's hunger for storytelling as evidence to support that fiction consumption improves theory of mind ability. This leads to the central focus of the paper: the format of fiction and how it affects theory of mind improvement. Evidence of how narrative engagement and mental image generation processes impact theory of mind improvement and overall behavior change is included to examine the differences between the effects of consuming text-and screen-based fiction formats. The findings of this paper suggest that consumption of text-based literary fiction is able to improve one's theory of mind skill more than the consumption of on-screen fictional narratives.

INTRODUCTION

Consuming narrative fiction, such as plays, novels, and films, is a pastime people have been drawn to for centuries. Research conducted around the mental and behavioral effects of reading books or watching movies or television shows primarily focuses on matters of genre and content. For example, studies on the content of fictional works have both supported and refuted common parental fears of children becoming

more violent after their exposure to fiction containing violence. Elements of genre and content in fictional works are important to address when determining how the work leads to behavior changes. While these factors alone create controversy over how fiction affects behavior, the format of the work must also be acknowledged. Since there are countless ways to present narrative fiction in both visual and non-visual formats, I chose to narrow the scope of my research to reading in text format versus watching films and television shows. I chose this to discuss the higher level of engagement required in reading compared to the more passive experience of watching a story. For example, how does the visual aspect of film affect moviegoers' experiences of engaging with stories and how do these experiences compare to those of the readers, who view the scenes of the novels they are reading through the sole use of their imaginations? Furthermore, how does the format of a fictional narrative affect behavior changes or increase certain skill sets?

The above questions guided me to debates over how literary style, found in written literary texts, is more likely to improve one's theory of mind skill. Dr. David Comer Kidd, doctor of social psychology and postgraduate fellow at the Harvard Graduate School for Education, and his colleagues define theory of mind as "our ability to represent others' mental states" (Kidd et al., 2017, p. 43). This claim links the theory of mind skill with one's ability to empathize with others, suggesting that with increased theory of mind comes increased empathetic behavior. Theory of mind improvement after fiction consumption has been tested many different ways through case studies in which participants were exposed to different forms of fictional narratives. The studies' primary goal was to determine if the skill can be improved through exposure to other people's trials and tribulations, even if the people and emotions they experience are purely fiction. A strong body of research has concluded that exposure to literary style, through reading literary fiction, leads to the greatest improvements in the theory of mind skill. Others claim that elements found in literary fiction are also found in film and television, making the novel format of the work irrelevant to the level of theory of mind improvement. To combat this claim, I researched the mental processes involved in comprehending stories in both text format and visual format. I discovered bio-informational theory, which explains how generating mental images is crucial to behavior change. This led me to the conclusion that, while many forms of fiction can improve theory of mind, written literary fiction exercises theory of mind the most due to the intense mental and emo-

tional engagement its consumption elicits, causing such fiction consumers to be more skilled in theory of mind and behave more empathetically.

OVERVIEW

This paper will compare the processes of consuming different genres of narratives, including non-fiction/documentary style narratives, literary fiction, and popular fiction examples, but mainly focus on the format of the narrative. The differences in the way stories are consumed through reading text versus watching films or television shows will help determine the way both presentations affect theory of mind and empathetic behavior development. First, I will analyze why people consume fictional stories and how fiction consumption relates to the theory of mind skill. *The Psychology of Creative Writing*, a book written by Scott B. Kaufman and James C. Kaufman, doctors of cognitive psychology and professors at Yale University, provides information about the creative writing process and the psychology of creative writing. This will be a crucial source in this section as it provides biological and sociological reasons for why humans are drawn to fiction and how theory of mind is impacted. I will also include studies, such as psychologist Dr. Maja Djikic and colleagues' "On Being Moved by Art: How Reading Fiction Transforms the Self," on how fictional elements, present across different fiction mediums, contribute to theory of mind development. In addition to the effects of fictional elements, I will discuss elements specific to text-based and screen-based storytelling and the effects both have on theory of mind. The primary element will be the presentation of characters and their emotions. This will include discussion on the concept of physiognomy, how characters' emotions are portrayed through the detailed descriptions or visual displays of their physical and mental states, in different formats of storytelling. An argument that supports my claim that reading literary fiction yields greater theory of mind improvement than consuming other forms of fiction appears in the article, "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind," written by Dr. David Comer Kidd and colleagues. Based on results gathered from conducting the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (RMET), "an advanced test of ToM [theory of mind] that requires integration of affective and cognitive ToM processes," the scholars propose that a strong focus on the lives and feelings of characters is unique to literary form (Kidd et al., 2017, p. 45). In the study, Kidd and colleagues describe theory of mind as "the psy-

chological capacity to explain and predict others' behavior on the basis of their intentions, knowledge, and emotions" (Kidd et al., 2017, p. 43). This paper will use the given description, along with the case study on theory of mind provided in the article, to analyze how written and on-screen storytelling exercise theory of mind. By both proving the significance of the mental image process required for text-based narratives in theory of mind improvement and combining that significance with Kidd's case study, I will counter an argument presented by Dr. Jessica Black, doctor of philosophy, and Dr. Jennifer L. Barnes, doctor of psychology and cognitive science, in their study, "Fiction and social cognition: The effect of viewing award-winning television dramas on theory of mind."

The different levels of emotional and mental engagement of each type of storytelling can also affect theory of mind and empathetic behavior. This paper will discuss how engagement with a narrative is not only taking in the story, but also reflecting upon what the reader or viewer is consuming. It will go on to discuss how mental image generation, creating images in the mind, is a process central to reading fiction and can lead to the development of altruistic behavior, also referred to as prosocial behavior. Dr. Peter J. Lang's bio-informational theory, discussed in Dr. Julie Lin Ji's article, "Emotional Mental Imagery as Simulation of Reality: Fear and Beyond—a Tribute to Peter Lang," also proves to be useful in supporting the idea that reading fiction causes readers to behave more empathetically. Lang's theory delves into the way behavior changes occur after exposure to certain stimuli, including written text, audio samples, and photographs. A study by Brendan Gaesser and colleagues, titled "Moral imagination: Facilitating prosocial decision-making through scene imagery and theory of mind," highlights the importance of mental imagery in comprehending fictional scenes and will be used to support the idea that mental image generation increases prosocial behavior.

FICTION CONSUMPTION AND THEORY OF MIND

To understand the effects any creative work can have on a fiction consumer's mental state or long-term behavior, one must examine the elements of creative writing that entice people to both produce and consume it in the first place. In their book, *The Psychology of Creative Writing*, Dr. S. Kaufman and Dr. J. Kaufman propose that the reason humans are drawn to fiction is due to "our sociality, our theory of mind, and our capacity for language" (S. Kaufman & J. Kaufman, 2009, p. 103).

Through production and consumption of fictional narratives, these three elements of human nature are exercised due to the use of language to tell a story, the simulated social interactions presented in the narrative, and the theory of mind process involved when creating or understanding complex emotions of fictional characters. Looking at human biology provides further understanding as to why sociality, theory of mind, and language are so important to mankind, and thus why storytelling is important to mankind. S. Kaufman and J. Kaufman address this when discussing the social brain hypothesis, which describes how humans are in need of high amounts of social interaction due to the large size of the brain (S. Kaufman & J. Kaufman, 2009). Simulated social interaction is a key element in constructing fictional worlds and narratives, and “narrative improvisation in the fiction world, often involving taking a character’s viewpoint, is a feature specific to the creative writing process” (S. Kaufman & J. Kaufman, 2009, p. 156). This evidence offers biological reasoning for humanity’s hunger for fiction, because creative writers provide a sense of social interaction in their work that we humans crave due to the large size of our brains.

A study conducted by Dr. Maja Djikic and colleagues observes the effects of engaging in the creative writing process. In their study, each participant first completed a set of questionnaires and an emotion checklist, then half of the participants read a short story in literary form and the other half consumed the same information of the short story in documentary (non-fiction) form. After consuming the story, participants completed the questionnaires and emotion checklists again, which revealed that those who read the narrative in literary format experienced significantly greater self-reported changes in personality and emotion than those who read the documentary style narrative (Djikic, Oatley, Zoeterman, & Peterson, 2009). While both formats of the texts in Djikic’s study included accounts of social interaction that humans need according to social brain hypothesis, the results on the readers of literary form support S. Kaufman and J. Kaufman’s idea that narrative improvisation and showing a character’s viewpoint is the reason humans ultimately seek out stories and are impacted emotionally by them. The reasoning for this result stems from the higher development of sociality, theory of mind, and language found in literary fiction. This is observed in the reading samples provided in Djikic’s study in which the literary style sample included heavier use and more artistic manipulation of language than the documentary style sample that simply recounted the events of the narra-

tive in factual format. The questionnaire results of Djikic's study report that more detailed use of language through the use of stylistic techniques, leads to a more vivid sense of sociality and understanding of emotions, contributing to a greater impact on theory of mind.

PHYSIOGNOMY ON-PAGE VERSUS ON-SCREEN

Although the social brain hypothesis and Djikic's study support the idea that consuming fiction in general leads to theory of mind improvement, different forms of fiction use different stylistic techniques to present their stories, which elicit different effects on fiction consumers. The most polarizing differences appear to occur in written and on-screen formats because of the mediums themselves: text on pages versus moving pictures and audio. Textually formatted fiction conveys the elements on-screen fiction would show through images and sound by using physiognomic cues to make readers feel the characters' emotions, setting, and action, making words "go beyond their dictionary definitions by transmitting a penumbra of feelings and moods" (S. Kaufman & J. Kaufman, 2009, p. 122). Examples of physiognomic cues in literary fiction include detailed descriptions of facial expressions, physical sensations, and inner thoughts, which transform words into stories with realistic settings and fully fleshed characters (S. Kaufman & J. Kaufman, 2009). The use of physiognomic cues in literary style provides further support for why the participants in Djikic's experiment were more emotionally and behaviorally affected by reading the text, rather than merely comprehending the events of the story in documentary style.

While the use of physiognomic cues in text-based fiction makes an audience feel connected to the characters and settings of the stories, research in Dr. van Mourik Broekman, behavioral and social sciences professional at the University of Groningen, and colleagues' study testing social structure between actors and observers suggests that witnessing physiognomy through human interaction in performance arts, such as on-screen acting, "can bring individuals together and shape social structure" (van Mourik Broekman et al., 2018, p. 19). After watching or performing in an imaginary concert performance, participants of the study rated statements of their engagement and solidarity levels via a seven-point scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Through the results of the participants' ratings, the scholars discovered that observers watching actors were more engaged and developed a stron-

ger sense of solidarity than those who imagined acting out a scene (van Mourik Broekman et al., 2018). This supports the notion that watching another human on-screen would lead to deeper emotional connections, greater understanding of human emotions, and, therefore, greater theory of mind improvement. Such results also provide support for an argument discussed by Dr. Black and Dr. Barnes in which “some scholars have argued that screen media may be even more effective than books at placing the audience in the relational world of the protagonists by showing the story from a character’s point of view and limiting real-world self-awareness” (Black & Barnes, 2015, p. 424).

Despite this argument mentioned by Dr. Black and Dr. Barnes, visually observing human interaction is only one technique that strengthens an audience’s connection to fictional characters and is likely not the most influential when it comes to theory of mind. Evidence gathered by Dr. Kidd and colleagues using the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (RMET) suggests that the development of characters and their emotions is a more effective element of fictional work in theory of mind improvement (Kidd et al., 2017). By examining participants after having them read samples of popular fiction and literary fiction, Kidd and colleagues tested the idea that “the relative greater emphasis on the inner lives of characters, rather than plot development in literary fiction” is the reason literary fiction yields the greatest theory of mind improvement of fiction genres (Kidd et al., 2017, p. 44). They describe popular fiction to be plot-centric and literary fiction the opposite, because “plot is often secondary, primarily serving to develop characters and reveal their psychological complexity” (Kidd et al., 2017, p. 44). After the participants read the different genres of fiction, Dr. Kidd and his colleagues administered the RMET, which “includes 36 trials in which an image of an actor’s eyes are shown, and the participant must choose which of four complex emotion terms (e.g., sympathetic, irritated, thoughtful, encouraging) best matches the actor’s mental state” (Kidd et al., 2017, p. 47). Through the results of the test, the researchers discovered that those who read literary fiction improved their theory of mind skill more than those who read other types of fiction. This discovery supports the notion that focusing on character emotion and development, as opposed to focusing on plot, is more important in improving theory of mind skill because of the way it enhances readers’ engagement with characters’ mental states.

NARRATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Much like the differences text-based and on-screen fictional narratives have in terms of style, the two fiction mediums have their own levels of engagement with the narrative that lead to different effects on theory of mind. In their study testing theory of mind improvement after exposure to on-screen narrative fiction, Dr. Black and Dr. Barnes discuss the level of engagement audiences of screen media experience, arguing that watching film and television is not as passive an act as it may seem. Based on RMET results recorded after participants watched fictional television shows or documentary style narratives, Black and Barnes propose that, while consuming screen media, viewers are “filling in narrative gaps, parsing out subtext, debating the meaning of ambiguous facial expressions and dialogue, and participating in the construction of characters in a writerly manner” making the effect on theory of mind similar to that of reading literary fiction (Black & Barnes, 2015, p. 424) Their claim that film and television audiences are engaged with what they are watching is supported by psychological sciences scholar Dr. Tim J. Smith’s report on eye tracking when watching visual content. In his article, “Watching you watch movies: Using eye tracking to inform cognitive film theory,” Smith provides examples of eye movement tracking recordings to prove that viewers’ eyes are drawn to faces to discern expressions and human emotion. Smith states that the reason people watch film and television is because “we want to follow the narrative, comprehend the actions of characters, feel the intended emotions”, further supporting the notion that the watching process does elicit mental and emotional engagement from viewers (Smith, 2013, p.33).

While it is true that viewers of on-screen fictional narratives can be both mentally and emotionally engaged in the story, the medium does not offer consumers the ability to reflect on what they are watching as much as text-based stories do. This is because readers control the pace at which they process the story in their minds, unlike a movie or show that plays at the pace its director has predetermined. Dr. Raymond A. Mar, an associate psychology professor at York University, and his colleagues address how this factor is specific to reading in their study, “Emotion and narrative fiction: Interactive influences before, during, and after reading.” In the study, Mar and colleagues explain that, while viewers of fiction may have the option to pause their show, it is not commonplace to the watching experience. The scholars state that “reading, on the other hand,

is frequently marked by regressions to earlier parts of the text, re-reading a portion of the text to clarify or re-experience what is described, and almost always by pauses,” which allows for emotional reflection on the work, often measured via self-reported questionnaires or surveys similar to those used in Djikic and van Mourik Broekman’s studies (Mar, Oatley, Djikic, & Mullin, 2011, p. 821). Eva Maria Koopman, Ph.D. student at Erasmus University Rotterdam, and Dr. Frank Hakemulder, specialist in psychology of literature, argue in their article, “Effects of Literature on Empathy and Self Reflection: A Theoretical-Empirical Framework,” that this emotional reflection time that they refer to as “stillness” is what allows readers to engage more deeply with the story. The scholars state that “it is stillness, we propose, that gives readers the opportunity to reflect: to reflect on what the events really mean to the characters, time to consider several options for appropriate inferences (theory of mind), and time to let empathy emerge to its full extent” (Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015, p. 101). While television shows may offer a period of stillness between episodes, this is often predetermined by the show’s airplay schedule. In reading, however, readers have complete freedom in choosing the amount of stillness or reflection time that they need. Because of this, freedom of stillness is a quality unique to the reading process and allows for more intense and personal involvement with the narrative over time. With stronger mental and emotional engagement occurring during these reflective periods, it can then be proposed that theory of mind is exercised more heavily and, therefore, is greatly improved.

The effect of freedom of stillness on theory of mind supports Kidd and colleagues’ argument, which proposes that mentalizing networks, a term that refers to cognitive processes in the brain, are more active when reading literary descriptions of characters and their emotions than physical descriptions because literary descriptions allow for more reflection and mental processing time (Kidd et al., 2017). Koopman and Hakemulder discuss elements of literary style (metaphors, rhymes, and so forth), referred to as “foreground features,” elicit defamiliarization in readers. Defamiliarization is defined as a technique that causes readers “to become unsettled and to start looking at things differently” (Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015, p. 94) which causes them to become more reflective on the work, and thus more engaged. The concept of defamiliarization provides further reasoning as to why the mentalizing networks Kidd and colleagues discussed are more active in reading literary fiction. Also, because on-screen media is not paced by the viewer, defamiliarization

cannot occur as strongly for such consumers, resulting in less theory of mind improvement. Koopman and Hakemulder support this claim by stating “it is the fast-paced media that causes emotional confusion, because a full empathic response requires some 30 seconds to emerge” (Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015, p. 101). With viewers’ eyes constantly tracking faces on-screen to discern emotions as mentioned by Smith, it is sometimes difficult for viewers of fiction to fully reflect on all of the emotional content they are taking in, which leads to emotional confusion. This is ultimately why reading, in which the pace of the story is to the readers’ liking, causes less emotional confusion while providing more time for readers to connect to characters in an empathetic way.

MENTAL IMAGE GENERATION AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Another factor of narrative engagement that sets the mediums of reading and watching fiction apart is how mental image generation processes occur and how these processes affect consumers’ behavior after taking in a story. Because there is an absence of audiovisual content in text-based narratives, as opposed to film and television, readers must generate mental images in their minds to process elements of the story. A report written by Dr. Julie Lin Ji, doctor of philosophy and professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, observes the importance of mental image generation in altering behavior and, in turn, theory of mind. Ji’s report accounted studies that tested bio-informational theory, a theory Dr. Peter J. Lang developed during his experimentation on emotional and behavioral response to imagery. Bio-informational theory proposes that “a mental imagery representation of an emotionally charged stimulus (e.g., a spider) activates an associative network of stored information that overlaps with that activated during actual experience of the stimulus in reality (e.g., encountering a live spider)” (Ji et al., 2016, p. 703). In the case studies included in Ji’s report, participants suffering from fear-based behaviors were repeatedly exposed to different stimuli that provoked them to generate mental images associated with the fear. Over time, this led to the extinction of participants’ fears when they encountered the subject of the stimuli in real life. This was because “imagined interaction with a stimulus can evoke corresponding emotional responses associated with real interaction with that stimulus” (Ji et al., 2016, p. 703), which suggests that repeated exposure to the stimulus of literary fiction can

change behavior as well. Dr. Mar and colleagues support this reasoning in their discussion about how readers develop images of the stories they consume in their mind's eye, leading to anticipated emotional reactions. The scholars state this occurs because "people are more in control of the representation of characters, objects, and events in a book" (Mar et al., 2011, p. 821). It can then be argued that because readers anticipate their emotional reactions, they have had time to reflect more deeply on their emotions, and thus will have a stronger emotional experience than those who watch film and television. The concept of stillness, proposed by Koopman and Hakemulder, also supports this notion because a period of stillness or extra time to reflect on anticipated emotions while reading leads to a stronger emotional experience than watching a narrative.

Although it is still debated whether higher theory of mind skill causes one to behave more empathetically, there is strong evidence that suggests it does. A study led by Dr. Brendan Gaesser, assistant psychology professor at the University of Albany, tested how simulated exposure to prosocial behavior can facilitate such behavior from participants in real life. Participants were asked to read stories that depicted characters in need of help, then visualize themselves helping the characters in need. Through self-reported questionnaire results, Gaesser and his colleagues found that "people are more willing to help others after imagining specific helping episodes—particularly when those episodes are set in strong spatial contexts, as well as prosocial behavior" (Gaesser, Keeler, & Young, 2018, p. 191). This means that after people take in scenes with vivid imagery (strong spatial contexts) in which characters are shown helping each other (demonstrating prosocial behavior in helping episodes), they are more inclined to mimic the prosocial behavior they witnessed. The concept of spatial awareness Gaesser and colleagues discuss in this study connects to S. Kaufman and J. Kaufman's explanation of how physiognomy is used to make readers visualize the scene better as well as Koopman and Hakemulder's argument about foreground features in writing. This is because elements like physiognomic cues and foreground features make it easier for readers to generate mental images of the story events, scenes, and characters, which offer better spatial awareness. Since Gaesser and colleagues' study supports the link between spatial awareness and increased empathetic (prosocial) behavior, this offers further reasoning as to why readers of fiction tend to behave more empathetically than watchers of film and television, who do not have to generate such vivid and spatially aware mental images to fully understand the stories they consume.

CONCLUSION

Although the artistic nature of any fictional narrative aids in the theory of mind improvement, the form in which a story is presented to consumers affects the level of such improvement, and in turn, the increase in empathetic behavior. Through strong emphasis on character emotion and development, found in the form of literary fiction, readers of fiction are able to recognize characters' frames of mind and feelings on a deeper level than those who watch films. Text-based creative writers use physiognomic cues to bring characters to life for readers. Such techniques allow readers to activate mentalizing networks and generate mental imagery that strongly correlates to both theory of mind improvement and behavior change. This intense level of emotional and mental engagement in a story is unique to the text medium of storytelling due to the necessity of such engagement to keep the story progressing. Also, the ability to stop or slow down to reflect on character emotions and plot elements, which contributes to advanced theory of mind development, is specific to literary format. While it may be argued that consumers of fiction in on-screen and text-based formats are equally engaged in the story and experience the same levels of theory of mind improvement, mental and emotional engagement are shown to be highest during the consumption of narrative fiction in written format. This ultimately leads to a more advanced theory of mind skill and more frequent acts of empathetic behavior in readers of fiction as opposed to those who watch fiction on-screen.

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Connor Kaminski

**“I’m your boyfriend now!”
A Queer Analysis of A Nightmare
on Elm Street 2:
Freddy’s Revenge**

ABSTRACT

*When evaluating a piece of art or media, it is essential to be aware of one’s own biases. The lens by which we view something critically is so often tinted by the colors of our own subjective experiences and lives, resulting in a sort of skewed and perhaps limited view of the work. Luckily, this lens can be changed, or at least modified, by expanding our intellectual and empathetic horizons. One such lens that can be used to look at films specifically is queer theory, a critical theory that aims to look at media from a “queer” angle. In her book *Out Takes*, Ellis Hanson collects an anthology of essays from some of the earlier queer theorists who look at film in this manner, including some written by her herself. Using this collection, one can begin to look at films in a real critically queer light. One film is especially appropriate for such an analysis: the 1985 slasher *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy’s Revenge*. This film is popularly known as the “gayest horror film of all time,” and the goal of this paper is to use queer theory to look at the movie and its associated reputation and assess the value of both.*

SYNOPSIS

Freddy Krueger is back on Elm Street. After Nancy Thompson had seemingly defeated Freddy and left Elm Street in the original *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Jesse Walsh and his family move into the house Nancy left behind. Jesse has trouble fitting in at his new high school, but soon becomes friends with the jock Grady and develops feelings for the popular girl Lisa. Soon enough, however, Jesse begins experiencing strange dreams where a burnt man with a clawed hand taunts him about taking control of his body. Then, an increasing pile of corpses begin to appear wherever Jesse goes, and he realizes that Freddy Krueger is actually inside of him and is using his body to come back to the real world and kill more teenagers. Jesse must find a way to stop Freddy from taking com-

plete control before he kills someone that he loves...

PART 1: QUEER THEORY AND HORROR

As a relatively new and young field of criticism, queer theory is complicated and its theories are unstandardized. The exact goals of the critical theory and what actually constitutes the “heteronormative” that it attempts to discredit remain controversial. However, the essential idea behind queer theory is to reframe the scholarly narrative so that it includes a more open view of sexuality instead of just the heterosexual norm, which is a rough interpretation of the “heteronormative” as assuming the audience to be heterosexual or cisgendered people. Queer theory “submit[s] the various social codes and rhetorics of sexuality to a close reading and rigorous analysis to reveal their incoherence, instability, and artificiality” (Hanson 4). Importantly, this idea is not the same thing as just analyzing films with gay or lesbian characters in it; these films do not necessarily have to challenge the heteronormative (and, in fact, can reinforce them), and films with no overtly gay characters can also be queer. Films that file under this queer distinction are somewhat rare yet are so important to understanding the desire of the queer eye, queer identity, and queer style. Truly queer films show something “about queer made culture that is in some sense explicitly queer, whether, as with camp, insistently deriving from a queer perspective on the world, or, in clothes style, signaling the fact of queerness.” (Dyer 8). These films do not just show gay characters; they show an inherently queer lifestyle. In this way, a film viewed under the queer lens will reveal some incorrect assumption about sexuality viewed by society at large, and it will challenge what the audience assumes to be sexually normal or deviant, i.e. gay sex is normal while unwarranted straight flirting is deviant. The analyses of films in this matter are important as it deconstructs sociological assumptions that have no real basis in biology or morality.

Traditionally, the gay and lesbian analysis of films has been about positive representation, as in showing gay characters as complex human beings who do good things, but queer theory aims to go beyond that. It is not simply the idea of political agitation about the portrayal of homosexuality in film but the creation of real criticism and new art. In gay and lesbian analyses of film, there are “no concern for aesthetics or cinematic form, no discussion of the complexities of desire and identification, no appreciation of political nuance, no understanding of homoeroticism be-

yond the representation of gay characters, and no attention to Hollywood styles or genres that are popular with queer audiences even when there are no ostensibly gay characters” (Hanson 7). This last point is especially relevant when considering *Nightmare on Elm Street 2*, for, at least at the surface level, there are no gay characters, yet there is undeniably some homoerotic subtext, and the film remains popular within the queer community. In a blog focused on gay horror, one user points out, “I love this movie a lot. I relate to Jesse, having had a pretty girlfriend in high school that I refused to have sex with. . . . *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy’s Revenge* exemplifies that a slasher film is primarily about penetration and the fear of penetration. When a man is the protagonist in a slasher movie, the final girl—so to speak, it is a gay movie. Men being penetrated is gay. But I digress.” (“Jeffreyggm”). In a commercially successful film that, at first glance, does not seem to be queer, the queer community has found something to love and celebrate. It seems that this film is the epitome of the extremely niche genre of “gay horror”, despite not overtly depicting anything “gay”.

Indeed, many films of several genres that do not have gay or lesbian subject matter nevertheless are rich for a queer analysis. Melodramas, musicals, and noir films remain popular amongst queer audiences despite an ostensibly lack of gay characters in the traditional manifestations of these genres. It does not seem entirely too ridiculous to add a horror film to that list. After all, the central question posed in *Out Takes* is “How do I look?” in multiple senses. This question is about “either cultural representation (as in ‘what am I supposed to look like?’) or spectatorship (as in ‘is the cinematic look queer?’) . . . How can I possibly recognize myself, given the circumstances of my oppression? How can I see myself if I am invisible?” (Hanson 6) The answer is through film, not through necessarily gay characters but through a queer cinematic gaze. Representation in culture is not just about good gay characters, but about showing the queer style, the queer desire, the queer taste, and even queer fears.

Furthermore, the very concept of fear and horror films is a rich field of study. The genre of horror can portray fears and criticisms of society in a less direct way so that it remains culturally acceptable, like with capitalist anxieties in 1978’s *Dawn of the Dead* or homosexual sympathies in 1935’s *Bride of Frankenstein*. Furthermore, the horror genre has a history of being queer, like again with *Bride of Frankenstein* where the monster is a (sexual) outsider from society or the trope of lesbians in vampire

films. In general, the horror monster represents “an encounter with the ‘other’—ideologically derived and produced anxieties about the culturally/sexually ill- or non-conformed threat to heteronormative, enlightenment, sanctioned order” (McDougald 3). In the context of this genre, the villain in horror films has tended to represent gay and other queer ideas in abstract terms. This idea has been fervently attacked as homophobic in more recent critiques of these films. However, it is just as valid to critique more modern “positive” portrayals of queerness that conversely make a fantasy out of the gay experience (Dyer 10). Queer films do not have to fit into this neat mold of gay protagonists overcoming some external struggle that others put on them because of their sexualities. Additionally, movies do not have to portray gay characters in a necessarily “positive” light, whatever that means in objective terms, to be a queer film. Historically, the term “queer” has been a derogatory term that relegates homosexuality and other non-traditional gender and sexual practices to a second-class that is “strange” or “wrong” (Dyer 1-3). By “queering” something, specifically a nonhuman or monster-like being, we “explore how the Human acts as an umbrella signifier for a diverse amalgam of acts, identities and bodily manifestations by attending to the ‘human’ body.” (Giffney & Hird 7). Sexuality and the human body itself are inherently “nonhuman,” meaning there is a strong connection between inhuman killers and human desire. As a result, films with gay murderers, monsters, and even rapists can be just as open to queer analysis since they can portray queer desire. Conversely, films with upstanding “gay” characters with traditional morals that act straight in every respect yet are just given the title of gay are not queer, since they only show sexuality and desire in superficial ways.

When films like *Philadelphia* (1993) or *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) try to portray homosexuality with “good-gay clichés”, they are really just entertainment for non-queer audiences; they are for the once homophobic supposedly recently stripped of their homophobia, not for the gay and lesbian communities they aim to portray. As Ellis Hanson says, “these films are supposed to please us, and yet I find myself feeling nostalgia for queer villains. Ironically, some of the films that I found the most stimulating . . . have depicted queer people as stylish and violent criminals” (Hanson 9) When you restrict the artistry and types of characters queerness can inhabit, you end up with stale and meaningless films. There is no single queer experience in America, and the queer experience in one country certainly does not translate to others very easily. If one is

to restrict films to a notion of “right” gay portrayals, this variety of experiences and stories is lost. Horror films portray the often taboo nature of the gay lifestyle, whether it be the prevalence of rape within the gay community or the self-hatred and shame experienced by some members of the community resulting in sexual repression. This is why queer horror films are so essential. A good horror film “succeeds in weaving together the affective and the sensory, so that every image on the screen evokes the emotion that fits the narrative” (McGinn 104). The horror and fear felt by the characters on screen are shared by the audience through the language of film. This sensory-affective nature of films is key to queer films since one of its goals is to incite empathy in the audience toward its gay subject matter, whether it is overt or subtextual. On the other hand, films with just nominally gay characters only show what is “culturally constructed as queer... [it] always, like all imaginings, falls short of the complexity, fluidity, sheer extensiveness of reality” (Dyer 11). By portraying violence towards queer people or horror in a queer context, the filmmaker is portraying a more accurate picture of reality and a version of queerness that is perhaps more appropriate to the gay experiences of the time period.

Consequently, by allowing the monsters and killers to be freely gay, you are allowing for gay people to inhabit all walks of life and for people to be gay without assuming what morals or lifestyles they have. That is the heteronormative: by assuming all queer people are necessarily good people, as films with “good-gay clichés” do, you fail to recognize the realities of life in queer America (Dyer 10). There are indeed queer criminals and queer victims and they exist in a marginalized community simultaneously. Thus, by portraying queer monsters, you may be opening the gates for interpretations of queerness as “monstrous” or dangerous as many authors have noted (e.g. McDougald), but you are also allowing for a complete picture of queerness. There must be a balance between these two portrayals. As McDougald writes, “while the queer monster is a disruption to and [an] exposure of that [gender] structure, it is not from within it as subject but from without it as representative of the real, that the monster disrupts” (McDougald 18). However, what happens if a horror film has both? This dichotomy between good and evil in relation to queerness is what makes *Nightmare on Elm Street 2* so interesting: the intertwining of the gay victim Jesse Walsh and gay killer Freddy Krueger instills a complicated and compelling dynamic into the queer analysis of the film.

PART 2: GAY NIGHTMARES

The plot of *Nightmare on Elm Street 2* is simple: Freddy Krueger is trying to possess teenager Jesse Walsh's body so that he can invade the real world and start killing once again. So where does this homoerotic subtext come from? In truth, it is actually built in that very premise itself. In one scene, Freddy prevents Jesse from having sex with his girlfriend Lisa Webber by possessing him in the heat of the moment. Jesse then runs to his guy friend Ron Grady and spills his fears to him, "Jesse: I'm scared, Grady. Something is trying to get inside my body. Grady: Yeah and she's female, and she's waiting for you in the cabana. And you wanna sleep with me" ("*A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*" 00:55:00-08). Indeed, something is "inside" Jesse, i.e. Freddy possesses him, but Grady interprets this sexually. Interestingly though, Grady's reply is not really heterosexual; why would Lisa want to be "inside" Jesse? Since this relationship is quite heterosexual, should it not be the other way around? Then, Grady implies, perhaps as a joke, that Jesse wants to have sex with him. Additionally, the queer imagery in this scene is almost overwhelming. Grady is attractive, buff, and half-naked, and the whole scene takes place in the bedroom: all of this has a very erotic feel. In this scene, "we are seduced not merely by the spectacle of [homosexual] sexuality, inviting and unusual as that might be in a popular film, but also by the very conditions of our looking, by the somewhat paranoid sensation that the gaze of desire, like the gaze of the camera, is never quite our own" (Hanson 3). This theme of desire is continued later in the same scene when Jesse demands Grady to watch him as he sleeps, a strange and erotic request outside of the context of Freddy Krueger, a context that Grady does not have. Yet he agrees anyway, if only to calm his friend down. But he falls asleep, as everyone *always* does in these films.

As the audience, we are left to interpret this scene for ourselves, and the intense homoeroticism that is clearly present has led to a general consensus that Jesse is a closeted gay character. He runs from sleeping with his heterosexual girlfriend, who was mainly acquired for social status as Lisa is popular (compare gay men marrying to avoid social stigma), to sleeping with his male friend, Grady. In these scenes, the filmmakers are using montage "to impose his own imagination on photographically recorded reality, and to juxtapose images never found together in nature but possessing emotional or symbolic significance" (McGinn, 111-112). By stitching these moments together, we can piece together the image of

Jesse's sexuality and interpret the film in a queer sense from there. However, if Jesse is a gay man, it then becomes interesting to look at what Freddy inside of him could represent.

To understand the image of Freddy, it is important to remember the time period this film was made: the middle of the 1980s. This time was the height of the AIDS crisis, and thus the fear and suffering of the gay community was unimaginable, as well as the stigmatization of AIDS by the straight community. In the film, Jesse begins to be possessed by Freddy again while Grady sleeps next to him. It is a disturbing and painful process by which Freddy emerges from within Jesse. Understandably, Grady begins to freak out and tries to escape, but cannot and starts banging on the door. Grady's parents come to his bedroom and his father demands, "Ron! Open this door!" ("*A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*" 00:59:45-47). It is notable that the father is the one who speaks, like the classic conflict between the patriarch and gay son, and that his tone is not one of concern but of anger. He is suspicious of what is going in the bedroom between his son and his male friend. Inside the bedroom, Jesse struggles to fight Freddy, but cannot stop him. Jesse's struggles "serve as a space where gay audiences of the film are able to relocate and indeed re-evaluate a sense of their own (formerly?) repressed (homo) sexualities" (Scales 33). Jesse has nightmares of being gay, represented by Freddy himself, and Jesse fails to suppress him. Freddy Krueger represents the queerness within Jesse and this queerness cannot be hidden, especially around his attractive male friend. Jesse, or Freddy, or both, proceed to murder Grady by penetration with Freddy's iconic claws. Therefore, is Jesse's queerness dangerous? This consideration can be expanded by considering Freddy not just an image of repressed sexuality but of AIDS itself. Jesse is gay and has the illness of Freddy within him that kills Jesse's male friend. In the typical interpretation of horror monsters, Freddy "serves a bizarrely apotropaic function: his savage presence wards off the far more unsettling circumstance of unknown evil, of personal guilt and social indifference." (Gill 17). Interestingly, when you interpret Freddy queerly, you can refute this quote. If he represents the struggle of figuring out one's sexual identity and self-hatred, then he does not ward off "unknown evil" and "personal guilt" but is the embodiment of that very fear. Thus, this queer interpretation of Freddy seems to be refuting the (hetero)normative one. Overall, we can consider both Jesse and Freddy as images of queerness, but they inhabit completely different sides of the spectrum: Jesse is the innocent closeted gay man while Freddy is the monstrous repressed

sexuality and the spread of disease that elicits intense fear among the gay community (or in this case, Jesse).

PART 3: "HE'S A FAG!"

This queer reading of the film brings up problematic and complicated themes when it comes to the interpretation of Jesse Walsh as a gay character, especially in terms of audience. Since this movie was made in the homophobic 1980s, how positively can it really reflect a gay character? If slasher films' primary audience is the teen dating crowd, it seems more likely that Jesse is a stock character, a male "scream queen" who is an object of derision for the audience. To what extent does the subject of representation matter in a queer theory of film? As Ellis Hanson puts it, "the political importance of this effort to make filmmakers say nice things about gay people is obvious: it has had the salutary effect of getting queer people to speak out against their oppression. . . Critiques of stereotyping are most valuable in their grassroots appeal to the rage of a community that is offended by what it sees as an insult" (Hanson 7). While it is certainly valid for the queer community to criticize Jesse as a negative representation, as it allows for this oppressed group to fight against homophobia, there is something deeper here. The politics of representation is just that: politics. When analyzing a film in terms of queer theory, a superficial discussion of representation is not enough to completely dismiss a film as non-queer, homophobic, or damaging to the queer community. This queer community, as Adam Scales defines it, is a type of "interpretative community" where cultural groups produce their own modes of receptions, that is, receive meaning from a film based on what they believe and what their lived realities are (quoted in Staiger 23). "These 'interpretive communities'. . . seek to interrogate the narrative of the film, cultivating their own meanings as they resonate with their homosexual lived realities." (Scales 30) Viewers' identities and whom they watch the film with affects the meaning they find, especially with gay audiences. Gay spectators of this film see their own, possibly former or current, struggles in Jesse's nightmares with homosexuality. Something that may seem quite problematic or even homophobic to a non-queer audience may, in fact, be portraying a gay character in a way to which gay audiences can relate.

Consequently, Jesse may seem at first glance to not be a positive representation of a gay man, with the monstrous Freddy inside him and his often-ridiculous reactions. However, his character may just be a real-

istic portrayal of being queer in the 1980s, with its inner struggles, shame, and faux masculinity. Scales makes use of online blog posts of self-identified gay men who react positively to the film as portraying their sexual insecurities in the 1980s accurately as evidence for this argument. Reacting to a scene where Jesse seems to almost be sexually assaulted by the school coach, one gay user says, "Though it is not politically correct I think the story rings true for young men conflicted with their homosexuality. Sure, the coach is a fiend but he represents the seedy and actually a realistic aspect of gay life" (Anonymous). Another gay horror fan reflects that "Many horror fans who grew up homosexual look back on *Nightmare on Elm Street: Freddy's Revenge* with a sombre understanding. . . Being bullied by a testosterone charged coach and teased by your fellow classmates was, for some of us, a nightmare not exclusive to Elm Street." (quoted in Scales 36). The film clearly accurately portrays the difficulties of being gay in the 1980s, so much so that it strikes a chord with these viewers. This effect on the audience supports the value of this film in the canon of queer films since queer viewers find themselves in the film. Furthermore:

Haunting the streets, dormitories, and dreams of the protagonists are less figures of patriarchal control and punishment than the ogres of childhood nightmares and the social hell of adolescence, which remain undiminished because no parent comes round to dispel them. If the monsters are the products of the parents, it is as the residue of their absence, indifference, and failure to understand (Gill 23).

The parents of Jesse fail to listen, be empathic toward, and help him with the very real threat that Freddy poses. This failure of the traditional American family causes the monster like Freddy to exist in the first place, by not allowing Jesse to express his sexuality and allows him to take the lives of several teenagers before Lisa and Jesse are able to defeat him. This failure of the family is such a key feature of the homosexual experience in the 1980s, and that is the theme at the core of this movie. The movie, perhaps, is not homophobic but portrays homophobia in a realistic and nuanced way so that gay adolescents can see even more of their experiences in Jesse's. Despite some problematic themes through our modern lens, the film has retained a sense of fondness for its audience. As a result, the film has enduring popularity as a cult film to gay teenagers who grew up in the 1980s, as it portrays their struggles when no other film would.

In this manner, a gay character like Jesse can be seen as some-

one identifiable amongst audiences. Then, perhaps, Jesse is not so much a pathetic sissy but a young man overcoming astronomical odds and a lack of support mechanisms or tolerance for his sexuality. Maybe Jesse can be seen as some sort of symbol for gay youth empowerment. Early on in the film, when Lisa finds Nancy's diary, she reads the heavily erotic description of Freddy in a sultry tone: "Sometimes when I'm lying here in bed I can see Glen in his window across the way getting ready for bed....I know I shouldn't watch him....That's when I weaken. That's when I go to him.....He comes to me at night - horrible ugly, dirty....under the sheets with me...tearing at my nightgown with his steel claws. His name is Fred" ("*A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*" 00:21:38-00:22:22). Before Jesse and Freddy even meet, the sexual overtones of their struggle are already established with this description. Once Freddy starts possessing Jesse fully and starts murdering people with his body, including Grady in the scene described earlier, Jesse comes to Lisa in a panic, and as DeGraffenreid describes it, "Hysterical now, Jesse returns to his bewildered girlfriend, telling her that Freddy is 'inside me - I'm scared' that 'he wants to take me again' and that he 'owns me.' Such language is typical of rape - it is as if being at the mercy of libidinous anxieties has feminized Jesse" (DeGraffenreid 960). The intertwining of Freddy and Jesse in their sexual struggle is continually reinforced throughout the film. This struggle is what gay audiences seem to self-identify with in relation to their internal struggles. This is how a film like *Freddy's Revenge* can be seen in a positive light despite it potentially reinforcing negative stereotypes. As DeGraffenreid concludes in his analysis, "Ultimately, though the horror film has been reviled as mindless slaughter, the Nightmare films appear to preach a positive message of group sexual awareness and understanding" (DeGraffenreid 967). While many adults do not "get" the horror genre, it has thrived among teenagers as a positive portrayal of them working together, like with Lisa and Jesse, to figure out the scary world of sexuality. Lisa helps Jesse figure out his sexuality and understands him, even when no one else does, like his parents (who assume he is on drugs) or his best friend/gay crush Grady (who jokes about him being gay). Lisa and Jesse, therefore, are some of the few survivors against Freddy who confront him directly. In this way, the film portrays teenage discovery and sexuality as a positive experience (despite all the death in the film) that teenagers can work through together.

However, it is essential to consider the ending of the film. In the same style as the other films in the Nightmare series, it ends ambiguous-

ly: Freddy is not really defeated, and he takes our protagonists off into the sunset in a school bus presumably for more torture. The film tries to restore the heteronormative balance by bringing Lisa and Jesse back together in the final scene, but this is once more interrupted by Freddy. Jesse cannot escape from the gayness inside of him, no matter how hard he tries to repress it. It is simply part of who he is. The true horror of the film comes not from Freddy himself, or the repressed sexuality of Jesse, but the failure of everyone around him to help Jesse, to allow him to explore his sexuality openly. Even Lisa, who seemingly accepted him for who he was earlier in the film, tries to force him back into a heterosexual relationship with her, and this is what reawakens Freddy. Perhaps the real nightmare is not that of Freddy, but of the 1980s conservative America that alienates Jesse and makes him feel not normal. In the end, this is the goal of queer theory: Jesse is, in fact, a normal and healthy teenager, and we can now see that through our modern lens. By examining the film with queer theory, we redefine the sexual norm and reject heteronormativity. As for the non-queer audience's reaction to Jesse: it actually does not really matter. Even such, it seems that the straight reaction was rather ignorant and lukewarm to the film, either not catching onto the homoeroticism or just ignoring it entirely in the reviews. In one review, Janet Maslin simply comments on the film that, "Mr. Patton and Miss Myers make likable teen-age heroes" (Maslin 10). Her review contains no comments on the implications of Jesse and Freddy. However, this film was not really made for them; it was made for the gay teenagers. Mark Patton, the actor who plays Jesse, is gay, and has stated on his Facebook page that he and other members of the cast were aware of the subtext in the film they were making (Patton). Patton has even said he wanted to make the subtext more explicitly sexual (Fuente). As Ellis Hanson accurately points out, when people call for more accuracy in the portrayal of gay characters, "What is the truth of homosexuality? Whose experience is genuine and whose is merely a stereotype? . . . Furthermore, the very notion of an image that is inherently homophobic or inherently positive strikes me as naive, since the political effects of an image are contingent upon the context of reception" (Hanson 8) Thus, as this film and Jesse as a gay character have been so important to numerous queer teenagers over the decades since the film's release, I argue it is of great value in queer theory, as it challenges what non-queer audience may perceive as a positive gay film (the "heteronormative"). When a gay audience watches *Freddy's Revenge*, "what we see on the screen is intended to engage our emotions directly"

(McGinn, 104). The filmmakers knew what they were doing, that much is clear, and the emotions created in queer audiences are very real, as shown by the blog posts discussed above. Even if the heterosexual teenage dating crowd in the 1980s may have laughed at Jesse in the theatres when this movie came out, Jesse clearly meant a lot to that one closeted gay kid sitting in the back, which is meaningful for the film's value in queer theory and in the history of film in general.

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Amateurs Abroad: An Ethical Investigation into Volunteer Placement Organizations

ABSTRACT

This paper examines Volunteer Placement Organizations (VPOs) as they relate to prospective medical students aiding in developing countries, with the main focus being on the mentality of volunteers and the treatment they receive while on these trips. Largely influenced by privilege and race (Loiseau, et al., 2015; Sullivan, 2017), volunteers carry narcissistic mindsets which allow them to perform unethical acts while in developing countries of placement. These acts include performing procedures which they have no training to do, lying to achieve what they want, and abusing the privilege that comes with originating from a developed country (Sullivan, 2017). Each of these acts puts the health of those receiving treatment at risk. The concepts of the Third World Other (Simpson, 2004) and White Industrial Savior Complex (Cole, 2013) will be examined through the lens of medical voluntourism. In addition to the actions by individual volunteers, it will be argued that the advantage that these students receive stems from the immoral practices of VPOs (Perold et al., 2012).

INTRODUCTION

With the growing demands of medical schools and the intense competition from applicants, prospective medical students are going to great lengths to stand out. Extracurricular activities and volunteerism in local hospitals are no longer impressive enough, forcing students to go elsewhere in order to gain hands-on medical experience. One industry that is feeding off of this desperation is Volunteer Placement Organizations. VPOs are tasked with the job of placing medical volunteers into developing countries in order to supply aid to local populations (Sullivan, 2017). Although their intentions seem noble, these organizations sacrifice the health of those in developing countries in order to provide a worthwhile experience for those who have paid them to do so. By abusing the inability of third world countries to enforce regulations, these organizations are able to give prospective medical students practice in the med-

ical field, allowing students to perform procedures they are not qualified for (Evert, Todd, MPH, & Zitek, 2015). Although mission statements of VPOs boast of them acting for the greater good and aiding the less-fortunate, it is not as selfless as it seems. Testimonies from returning students have shown them to question whether the experience helped themselves more than the people who they were there to aid (Sullivan, 2017). The medical volunteerism industry puts the health of those in developing countries at risk by abusing the privilege that many of their volunteers have and further develop while practicing abroad.

In this paper, I will analyze the arguments of Sullivan, Loiseau, and Singer as they relate to the problems negated by VPOs. The first section, “We Don’t Need Another Hero”, examines the ego volunteers must have in order to be willing to risk the lives of the local patients, compared to my next section, “A Matter of Trust”, which takes a deeper look into the way race plays into the treatment volunteers receive. For the purpose of this essay, the volunteers referenced will refer to undergraduate students who are interested in pursuing a medical career. While white volunteers will be highlighted, the races of these volunteers are representative of the attitude of students applying to medical schools.

MORE TROUBLE THAN IT’S WORTH

Key Terms and Concepts

Third World Other – A title given to residents of developing countries to enforce the idea of ‘Them and Us’. Volunteers will use this separation to distance themselves from patients they aid in order to maintain a superior mindset (Simpson, 2004).

White Industrial Savior Complex - Refers to the rationalization of commonly white and privileged groups who take it upon themselves to “save” those in developing countries despite lacking the understanding of the complexities that the communities have (Cole, 2013).

HISTORY OF VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Dating back to the 1800’s, medical mission groups set out with the intention of spreading western medicine and providing medical resources to those seen as less fortunate. With strong religious motives, early missionaries sought out not only to aid others, but also to spread their beliefs. Native life began to drastically change when missionaries began

converting, civilizing, and eventually exploiting the local people: themes that carried over to colonialism which occurred soon after (Kothari, 2006). During this time, ruling empires drained the home country's natural resources and enslaved the indigenous people, leaving the remaining citizens largely dependent on their invaders (Langer & Jackson, 1995). With the fall of colonial rule and eventual attainment of political independence, these developing countries have been left exhausted of their means of development, being forced to continue the strong reliance on the countries which once had power over them.

The emergence of VPOs began with the intention to further assist developing countries (Sullivan, 2017). Often seen as helpful and generous, the purpose of VPOs is to provide volunteers and materials to regions in need. Modern day VPOs can be separated into three categories: voluntourism, short-term international volunteerism, and long-term international volunteerism (Lough, 2013). The differentiating factor is the length of time that volunteers spend in their country of placement. The VPO of focus for this paper will be voluntourism, where a maximum of three weeks is spent in the country and volunteers cover their own costs. For this branch of VPOs, there are very few requirements to enroll and the trip is catered to the volunteers' interests, in this case, medical health (Lough, 2013). As these experiences grow in popularity, it can be seen that the impact they are having on local populations is greatly increasing.

WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER HERO – SULLIVAN

Due to the lack of development, many of these countries have become a blank canvas for volunteers to project their ideals of heroism and selflessness, a feeling further propagated by VPOs. This concept of superiority can relate back to the White Industrial Savior Complex, or the impression that those from developed countries must "save" those with lower living standards (Sullivan, 2017). A person who is traveling from a developed country will be held in a divine regard by the local community members, giving them a heightened ego. The VPOs fuel this ego by promoting the personal growth that their volunteers will experience while abroad. Through marketing troupes, VPOs depict those they are aiding as helpless and portray the volunteers as selfless teachers, who despite lacking skills, knowledge of language, and context, are saving lives (Sullivan, 2017). In reality, this puts the health of the local patients at risk. The original desire to aid quickly develops into deeper feelings of entitlement and

volunteers may feel as if they have the right to perform procedures for which they have no formal training. Students can feel slighted when they are restricted and will show a lack of morals as they decide to push the limits (Singer, 1972). For example, workers in the local hospitals will limit the freedom volunteers have, understanding that they lack the experience needed to work independently. In this case, some of the students will find a way to circumvent the restrictions placed on them by the hospital, in order to continue to practice medical skills (Sullivan, 2017). Testimonies from local medical workers have shown students to choose to work at night, when less staff is scheduled, because the chances of them operating or assisting in births increases. If not tactically avoiding the rules set in place by the hospital, it has been shown that students will blatantly lie in order to attain what they desire. An undergraduate pre-med student will claim they are further in their medical career to gain more access to restricted procedures (Sullivan, 2017). Being willing to lie in order to gain experience shows that these students are experiencing a moral decay in order to invest in their own personal gain (Singer, 1972). Rather than viewing the patients as individuals who deserve the best quality of medical aid, they view them as bodies to practice on to better themselves and their careers.

For many of these volunteers, the desire to be the sole reason that a difference was made outweighs the honorable reasons for volunteering. This leads to problematic results that are not much different than the consequences of colonialism in the past. They are clearly sacrificing morality in order to advance their careers and these students may acquire the belief that they know more than the patients, doctors, and other advisors who they are intended to learn from (Singer, 1972). In the context of medical volunteering, the students use this advantage to do questionable things abroad while enrolled in these programs. These acts can range from delivering babies to performing lumbar puncture procedures, actions which have had detrimental effects on the patients (Evert et al. 2015). One testimony explains a student who was in a country where she was not familiar with the native language of the patients or doctors, but was given the task of diagnosing and prescribing medicine to patients. In one case, she thought the dosage was approved by the physician, however, it was 100 times stronger than what it should have been (Evert et al. 2015). This is putting those receiving care at serious risk. In addition to the risk of medical students performing procedures that they are not skilled to do, patients must be fearful of overdosing and misdiagnosis at the hand of

these volunteers. These examples endorse the idea that practicing on the poor is acceptable because they hold less importance than someone from a developed country.

While one can attribute the mistakes made to basic ignorance of medical knowledge required to provide proper aid, it can be argued that the prospective medical students view their mistakes to be necessary as they develop their medical career. It has been justified by saying that their care is “good enough for the poor” (Feierman, 2011). If they practice on low-income individuals, when it comes time to perform a surgery on someone who holds power, through money, influence, skin color, etc., they will be prepared. This reinforces the same colonialist ideas in which America’s forefathers used to justify their massacres hundreds of years ago (Kothari, 2006). It was acceptable to sacrifice poor people of color for the greater good of the civilization that those carrying out these acts identify with. These parallels to colonialism are a distinct demonstration of how the egos of volunteers are having significant negative effects on the communities and how VPOs are not only allowing this to happen but also strengthening the mindset of superiority.

A MATTER OF TRUST – LOISEAU ET AL.

Community members from developing placement countries put their health at risk by trusting the volunteers due to the color of the volunteers skin. This is known and exploited by VPOs. Although the race of prospective medical students varies, white volunteers are perceived differently by those living in developing countries. Testimonies from community members explain that they view white volunteers as wealthy, powerful, and intelligent (Loiseau et al., 2015), which can be largely due to the engrained mentality that they have learned to associate with white individuals over time, dating back to colonialism (Kothari, 2006). To dive even deeper into the connections between the white volunteers and the people of color they often aid, one must question if this may actually be a perpetuation of racism. A comfortable way of life is taken for granted in our society (Singer, 1972) which allows racism to be broadly ignored in white America. It is not until these individuals are the minority that they are faced with the reality of white privilege and must consider the advantage they have because of their skin color. Due to this privilege, white volunteers distinguish the local individuals as a ‘Third World Other’ (Simpson, 2004). This is the mentality where volunteers are able to separate

themselves by viewing their differences as stark binaries of ‘Them and Us’. Volunteering medical students are able to separate themselves from the group they are aiding and generalize those in developing countries as people of color who need aid and while they represent white individuals who provide aid, this subconsciously relates race to capability (Raymond & Hall, 2008). If not placed in check, these views will continue to develop and volunteers will look down on the individuals that they are meant to help. This can go even further if the volunteers continue down the path of a medical career. They will use this mentality to mistreat patients of color, a recurring theme which has been put into light in recent years (Scharff et al., 2010). Current events have shown several examples displaying how medicine has learned to dismiss African Americans, putting their lives in serious danger.

To examine the attitudes in the communities of developing countries, local individuals feed into the trust in the white volunteers, allowing them to even go as far as caring for their children (Loiseau et al., 2015). By being trusted to look after children and provide medical attention to the local community, volunteers gain the reputation of being trustworthy and capable. By giving them titles they have not earned, such as ‘caregiver’, ‘doctor’ or ‘teacher’ they have gained trust that is largely dependent on the skin color of the volunteer. This can have detrimental effects on local doctors who are trying to provide authentic care to their community members. They are held to a lower regard than the inexperienced students who come to volunteer due to the differences in race. This prevents local doctors from providing the proper care, explained clearly by a member of a Tanzanian host organization, stating, “Most people in Tanzania have a tendency to listen to a person from abroad than a local person, even though both of you might carry the same message. So, when international volunteers say something, there is a great[er] possibility of people believing and acting on it than local people” (Perold et al., 2012). This displays that the trust gained from merely being associated with a developed country will trump the advice given by local doctors.

VPOs should be cautious of this misplaced trust and should operate in a way that would give aid without demeaning local doctors. Instead, they are using this to their advantage. Although they do not make a point to exclude non-white volunteers, the overrepresentation on their websites, catalogs, and interviews, clearly show that these organizations have a type of person they prefer (Raymond & Hall, 2008). A British student in the program explained how she felt as if she was back

in boarding school, due to the fact she was surrounded by volunteers that were the same nationality, age, and background (Raymond & Hall, 2008). VPOs understand that the addition of white volunteers increases the credibility of their organization and even increases their appeal to those who would want to donate (Perold et al., 2012). This is greatly due to the stereotype that white members are more likely to listen and abide by the rules put in place by large donors and company chairmen, while local activists would be more likely to have resistance (Perold et al., 2012). By taking advantage of the privileges white volunteers receive due to their skin color, VPOs are acting only out of self-interest. They create profit by taking advantage of the neglected aspects in low income countries (Sullivan, 2017) and do not consider what is best for the people they are aiding. There are serious moral implications in the acts VPOs are carrying out in local communities (Singer, 1972) and are displaying a clear perpetuation of racism through their actions. Furthermore, the knowledge that white people bring a sense of security to locals is being abused by these corporations. They let their volunteers perform botched operations and communicate incorrect information to patients (Evert et al., 2015). This is a clear example of how this industry takes advantage of a post-colonial mentality that is ingrained in the local population from centuries of manipulation. It also shows how they continue to control the local population using the undeserved trust the volunteers have received due to the color of their skin.

COUNTERARGUMENT – LEE & CHANG

Some critics may argue that the influx of volunteers to these countries is necessary for development. Encouraging volunteers to travel and partake in the voluntourism industry produces an increase in overseas spending thus stimulating economic growth. In addition to foreign income growth, voluntourism also creates local job opportunities (Lee & Chang, 2008). Volunteers buy food and goods, pay for places to stay and for tour guides to show them around the area. While this may be considered a negative effect of voluntourism due to the dependence it perpetuates (Sullivan, 2017), for locals, it is a way for them to provide for themselves and their families. This can also positively affect the local medical clinics because the resources and money the volunteers bring provides a better quality of care for patients. In testimonials, local community members point out that viewing the poor conditions will bring awareness and

inspire more aid groups to come (Loiseau et al., 2015). Numbers make a difference (Singer, 1972), so one can assume that the more volunteers that come to aid, the better off these countries will be. Without a constant influx of aid groups, the industry that has grown around providing for them will diminish and community members will be left struggling. Tourism made up 10.9% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014 and has been proven to have an even greater impact on the GDP of less developed countries (Lee & Chang, 2008). It has been shown that voluntourism has become a sustainable form of tourism (Pompurová et al., 2018) and with tourism steadily increasing, developing countries who rely on the industry are given the opportunity to grow their country's wealth more than ever before. Overall, it can be argued that VPOs are supporting the local capital by increasing tourism to these countries and without them, the materials and aid the healthcare facilities have become dependent on will no longer be donated.

Although it may be true that tourism largely influences the GDP of developing countries, one should also examine who is the one actually supplying aid. While it has been widely accepted that rich nations share wealth, supplies, and people to aid in the development of poorer nations, it has been shown that the flow of money from rich countries to poor countries pales in comparison to the flow that runs in the other direction (Hickel, 2017). This contributes to the perpetuation of poverty in low income countries. In 2012, developing countries distributed \$2 trillion more than what was given to them. This large outflow is due to debts, incomes on investments, and capital flight. Also known as trade mis-invoicing, the main purpose of capital flight is to evade taxes, but in 2012, this cost developing countries \$700 billion (Hickel, 2017). Developed countries are choosing to grow their personal wealth by sacrificing the lives of people in need. This trend has been seen countless times throughout history (Singer, 1972) and is another example of rich nations exploiting those in need. The idea of exploitation for the sake of medical advances is commonly related to the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. Although the purpose of the study was to gain more information on the syphilis, which holds benefits for the world of health, morality was sacrificed when it came to withholding knowledge from their black participants (Scharff, 2010). This is another example of individuals who consider themselves superior, using poor people of color as their personal tools for learning.

On a smaller scale, it would be beneficial to examine what is occurring in the local communities. While enrolled in these programs,

volunteers pay for everything required, which could total a few thousands of dollars. Meanwhile, a mere \$100-\$150 is being received by the facility for each volunteer they take in. In addition to that, no amount is given to the staff tasked with assisting these volunteers while in a foreign country (Sullivan, 2017). This can be a serious burden to a local health care worker and calls into question how much these organizations are actually helping the economy of the local population. When considering the long-term impact that these groups have had, it is hard to find one, besides the dependent economy that has arose from the voluntourism industry. Ethically, one must question whether the volunteers are only perpetuating the dependent economy in a country that has faced this struggle since colonialism.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, it is important to review the reoccurring themes of superiority and misplaced trust that occurs in the volunteer placement industry. Stimulated by the organizations themselves, volunteers develop egocentric mentalities that lead to unethical practices in the countries that they are supposed to aid. Their actions are reminiscent of the White Industrial Savior Complex (Cole, 2013) as they attempt to fulfill their fantasy of being a hero. These views develop deeper by taking advantage of the trust locals have bestowed on the students, often dependent on their race (Loiseau et al., 2015). The volunteers, with support from VPOs, play into the racial divide, leading to serious consequences in the local community. Through examples that demonstrate both ignorance and privilege, it is clear that the approach taken by this industry is reinforcing negative principles rather than fostering positive ones,

Lastly, it must be questioned whether the care for these patients would be better if foreign volunteers were not involved at all. While critics argue that although they are unskilled, the aid volunteers provide is better than nothing. What they fail to realize is that without them, the patients are not left defenseless. Volunteers drain resources as well as energy and time from local caretakers and less care is able to be given to the patients who need it. It is clear that the money spent to bring volunteers to these low-income countries would be put to better use if it were given directly to the local facilities. Ethically, this would remove many moral questions from the situation (Singer, 1972) and allow those who donate money and supplies to empower local healthcare workers rather than strip them of

their authority and respect.

A change like this would be difficult to implement due to the decades of dependence developing countries have grown to have and the booming industry that VPOs have created. But there are other ways to transition away from the negative effects VPOs are having on developing countries. By putting the power back into the local communities and offering better communication between volunteers and health workers (Perold et al., 2012), the relationship will be placed on a more equal ground. Through a thorough and effective volunteer selection and a more intensive preparation program, countries will be able to set boundaries on what is and is not allowed to be done while volunteering overseas. Through these changes, volunteer placement organizations will allow developing countries more freedom and stray away from an environment tainted by superiority and undeserved trust.

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Adam Mir

Understanding Polarization in the Age of Social Media

INTRODUCTION

The present issue of political polarization represents, to many, a crisis in which partisans and independents today are seemingly unable to agree upon baseline facts, let alone engage in productive debate. Among the American electorate, countless studies on the perception and reality of polarization have shown that the divide on current events is the largest it has even been in modern political history (Smith, “The Partisan Divide”). The perception of division is apparent in day-to-day life, with implicit and explicit instigation from politicians such as members in Congress and the sitting president to personal friends and colleagues who we hold in high esteem. Despite it being easier than ever to expose oneself to alternative perspectives on political topics via social media, on average Americans are less willing than ever to interact with those with different political views. Drawing on several theoretical frameworks, I will show that the advent of social media as a means of political communication has accelerated pre-existing trends towards polarization across the political spectrum and has reduced the quality of such communication to the point where it is largely ineffectual in consensus building and policy generation.

In this paper, I will argue that social media has accelerated the gamification of politics, where individuals seek to ensure that their “side” wins no matter the cost, akin to a sports team. To prove this, I will demonstrate how the concepts of political identity and political ideology are no longer aligned, to the point where policy reversals are accepted to maintain political identity even if it violates ideological principles. Secondly, I will question the established consensus that social media is simply an accessory to increasing polarization in America. Instead, I will show that social media is now a fundamental medium in the way politics is argued. I will then show how individuals, especially political partisans, are liable to selective filtering and cognitive bias through the tailoring of personal feeds, which creates alternative narratives that are contrary to reality and lead to informational asymmetry which ultimately harms the debate process. Finally, I argue that the advent of social media has ampli-

fied the spread and impact of political scandals where human nature is drawn towards the salacious and deviant rather than toward important policy. The proliferation of such practices is exhibited through the unregulated nature of social media and the lack of willingness to stymie mis-truths from these companies, which facilitates the spread of misleading or false conspiracy theories about a candidate or party and can hold serious political or even physical consequences to the willing and unwilling.

GAMIFICATION OF POLITICS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The ability of social media to communicate and organize with politically like-minded individuals has publicly exposed and simultaneously accelerated the shift towards personality over policy, incentivizing Americans to portray politics as a game with clear victors and losers. This trend denotes in more explicit terms, the separation of political ideology, which primarily focuses on issue-based politics such as healthcare and reproductive rights from political identity. As Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels note in defining political identity, “[political identity] is not primarily about adherence to a group ideology or creed. [It involves] emotional attachments that transcend thinking” (226). The strong emotional attachments that can develop with political identity are what inspire loyalty towards a cause or individual, and through the encouragement from like-minded individuals on social platforms, convinces adherents that their cause is a moral imperative. Therefore, an individual or subgroup places more importance on attachment to emotions rather than factual evidence that potentially may question an established narrative. Lilliana Mason delves further into the ramifications of this shift in American politics and hypothesizes that the chasm between political and ideological identity “demonstrate[s] how Americans can use ideological terms to disparage political opponents without necessarily holding constrained sets of policy attitudes” (281). The assertions from Mason are interlinked to psychological phenomena including the Dunning-Kruger Effect where individuals are unaware of their lack of knowledge in a particular issue and simultaneously hold a false sense of superiority. The platform of social media provides an equal medium where anyone can post or discuss political matters relevant to their identity. Unfortunately, the false equivalency of the medium gives the mistaken impression that partisan, uninformed posts on mediums such as Twitter and Facebook are equal to the opinions of knowledgeable experts in their academic

disciplines or professions.

The separation of ideology and identity can, at the very least, explain sudden shifts in policy incongruent to ideological principle. This is exhibited in today's politics, most notably with the current presidential administration, as oftentimes key policy can shift within the timeframe of days or even hours (Carroll, "Tracking Trump's"). The lack of knowledge about a particular subject, in tandem with holding strong political identification, is what allows for the acceptance of polar shifts in policy. In one particular example, two surveys were conducted by the Washington Post in coordination with ABC News regarding the public support of Syrian airstrikes. In 2013, when then President Obama was in his second term as President, the support for the proposal of airstrikes among identified Republicans in response to the use of chemical weapons on civilians by the Syrian government was at twenty-two percent, while in 2017 for the same exact reason Republican support was at eighty-six percent after President Trump tweeted his justification of the Syrian airstrikes. In addition, Democratic support stayed within margin of error at thirty-eight percent in 2013 and thirty-seven percent in 2017 (Clement, "Poll"). The inconsistency of Republican support for a policy that was panned by individuals such as Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) as "[Obama] had no clear objective. They wanted to blow up some things to send a message" (Carroll, "Trump's Syria"). While in reality, the proposed airstrikes under Obama and the Trump ones (launched without Congressional approval) were targeting the same exact objective and target for the same reason. This phenomenon strongly suggests that policy or ideological consistency is not relevant with this issue. The lack of knowledge or unwillingness to acknowledge hypocrisy regarding the circumstances in Syria with the use chemical weapons against its own civilians confirm the separation of ideology and identity, and that at the very least, self-identified Republicans are more open to rapid shifts in policy that are antithetical the traditional conservative beliefs if it means defending their "side" at cost to principle.

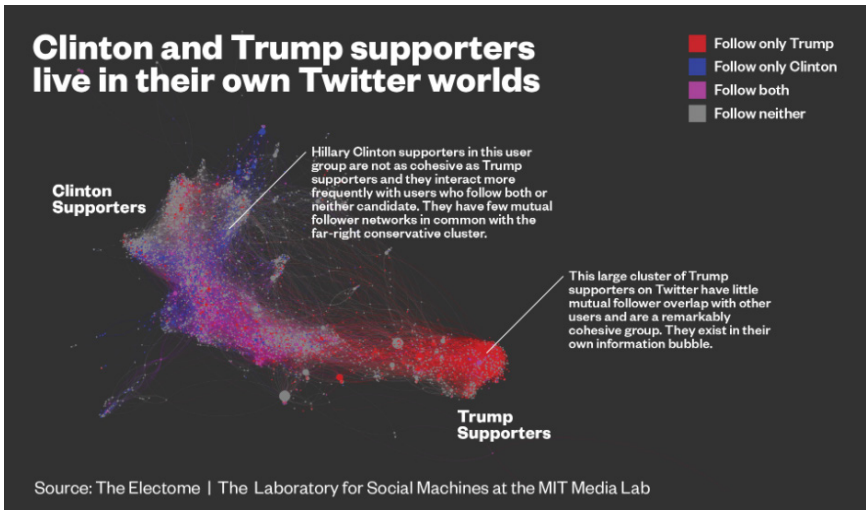
UNDERESTIMATING THE ECHO CHAMBER

While the phenomenon of the "echo chamber" is well established within the field of political science, well established and older studies on the measurements of polarization have underestimated the impact social media holds in the formation and solidification of political identity. Among older metrics of the measure of polarization before the campaign

and ascension of the current presidential administration, consensus among several studies where datasets are constructed through means of surveys have indicated that “[polarization] can occur, but perhaps the range of socially relevant lines on which such cleavages occur is smaller than thought” (Tewksbury and Riles 394). There are several factors, however, that challenge such consensus, compounding with several key developments in online political communication. Barbera et al. questions what is established as older studies on the echo chamber and polarization have “relied either on self-reported survey responses, which are subject to measurement error and social desirability bias, or on behavior exhibited in laboratory experiments, which may be low in external validity” (1531-1532). Furthermore, and perhaps even more egregious within the context of the present day, several studies completely ignore social media platforms from their analysis of political polarization, such as Matthew Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro’s “Ideological Segregation Online and Offline,” even though over two-thirds of Americans receive at least some of their news from social media (Matsa and Shearer, “News Use”). With numerous trends including the rise of non-traditional media and the proliferation of use of social media as a form of news consumption and activism, established studies on polarization cannot accurately provide a snapshot of American political identities.

Using metrics and analyses with focus on social media, the results from modern studies indicate unique behavior among partisans, especially among conservative leaning social media users, indicative of a strong presence of an echo chamber within these spheres. Bail et al. surveyed individuals across the ideological spectrum on recidivism to alternative political perspectives and discovered that “Republicans who followed a liberal Twitter bot became substantially more conservative post treatment” while the ideological shift for Democrats was “not statistically significant” (9920). A potential explanation to the asymmetrical response to the exposure of opposing viewpoints is that “conservatives—because of heightened epistemic, existential, and relational needs to reduce uncertainty, threat, and social discord—would be more likely than liberals to prefer an echo-chamber environment” (Barera et al. 1532). There also exists the possibility that the issue may be attributed to the delivery of liberal leaning individuals which can be construed to become counterproductive. The results from Bail et al. strongly suggests that an echo-chamber is present in social media and was the reason why then candidate Trump had such a cohesive and unified base. Contextualizing this assertion, an

analysis conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab provided to Vice News tracked millions of Twitter users and the political networks that they followed during the 2016 General Election as shown below:



Upon initial analysis, it appears that this separate “bubble” within Trump supporters supports the assertions made by Barera et al. and Bail et al. regarding both the retreatment to an echo chamber and the asymmetrical sophistication of such. At least part of this is due to the atypical yet effective methods that then candidate Trump used during the 2016 Presidential Election. Primarily using the medium of Twitter to relay campaign messages and talking points, the Trump campaign was able to provide a more direct link to its supporters and see real time feedback on what generates the greatest possible impact on the platform. The open-endedness of his tweets left many to interpret specifics, and his vocal base network of supporters were able to relay their message through social media, even if misleading or lacking veracity, without the need for editorial standards of traditional media. This creates a feedback loop in which individuals with political identities receptive to Trump’s message are able to articulate and defend their inherent inclinations. Between the influencer/pundit and the individual exists a symbiotic relationship, where in exchange for increased exposure in the form of likes and retweets, individuals hold the means to justify the extraordinarily simplistic answers that Trump provided to complex issues. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter currently hold little incentive

to curb damaging mistruths. As Zeynep Tufekci bluntly puts it, “they’re [social media platforms] ad brokers. To virtually anyone who wants to pay them, they sell the capacity to precisely target our eyeballs” (51). In addition to the symbiotic exchange between influencer-consumer, social media companies gain significant amounts of revenue as advertisers seek to micro target as many niches as possible, whether to push a product or an agenda. As feeds are tailored towards a user’s inclinations, there is the strong inclination for an individual to follow those with similar views, even if they know what they are consuming may be misleading as “consumers cannot costlessly infer accuracy, and because consumers may enjoy partisan news. Fake news may generate utility for some consumers” (Allcott and Gentzkow 212). Through the self-imposed construction of an alternate political news feed, aided by the unregulated and paradoxically insular nature of social media, individuals, especially partisans, are now more liable to fall into echo chambers where the narratives are not congruent with reality, harming the political policy stream and encouraging the belief that one’s feelings matter more than statistical fact and the truth.

DEVIANCE AND SCANDAL-BASED POLITICS

The rapidly changing and unregulated nature of social media incentivizes sensationalism in the form of political scandal to damage an opposing candidate, reducing the quality of political debate and willingness to debate with the other side. Hinda Mandell and Gina Masullo Chen in *Scandal in A Digital Age* explain the effectiveness of scandal as a weapon in politics “by its very nature is deviant news because it violates norms and moral codes and involves secrets that once revealed provoke outrage and damage to reputation” (212). The interest by the greater public in the illicit and tantalizing is a far from new concept, especially as it is a powerful weapon for political use to discredit individuals or subgroups. On open mediums such as social media where politicians and normal citizens interact, trending stories provide a central base and means of spreading political and non-political talking points. The use of “scandal politics” has transferred to social media effectively as character limits often restrict messages on mediums such as Twitter, which place an emphasis on providing the catchiest or most alluring tweet in order to garner retweets and likes. Few politicians within the case study of the 2016 Presidential Election have been comparatively adept as that of the Trump campaign. Through the use of bombastic language and the capi-

talization of the ongoing investigation of Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server, Trump was able to relay his simplistic messages to the widest audience possible, allowing him to sidestep traditional media outlets and easily reaching trending pages, to further relay his messages to individuals who did not follow or were not even interested in the presidential election. This also has the detriment of spreading false or misleading news stories, as Trump has retweeted questionable posts including a false Twitter account of the Vice-President (Morin, "Trump Retweets Fake"), far-right extremist groups (Stracqualursi et al., "White House"), and a meme calling for the imprisonment of his then-own Attorney General (Rupar, "Trump Retweets Meme"). By reiterating partisan or incorrect talking points in favor of pushing their narrative, the President is directly muddling the policy generation stream by altering the baseline of facts in which issues can be resolved and mitigated.

The use of negative campaigning was not limited to Donald Trump as an analysis conducted by Wesleyan University's Media Project determined that "nearly half of all [Hillary] Clinton's campaign airings were negative whereas over half of Trump campaign airings were contrast spots, which discussed Clinton negatively but also provided information about Trump" (Fowler et. al 457). Lau et. al builds upon these emotional reactions which are elicited upon viewing: "when a candidate criticizes an opponent, people want to see the supporting evidence (and/or possibly experience anxiety about their choice of candidate), and that could motivate subjects to seek out additional news stories to confirm or disconfirm the claims made by candidates in their attacks on their opponent" (238). The potential anxiety and distress caused from negative campaigning can lead to the citation of misleading or outright fake news in order to conjure a counternarrative against an opposing candidates' criticism. This assumption holds credence as a 2017 analysis of the economic repercussions of "fake news" from Allcott and Gentzkow denote that "of the known false news stories that appeared in the three months before the election, those favoring Trump were shared a total of 30 million times on Facebook, while those favoring Clinton were shared 8 million times" (213). The lopsided nature in the interest of the differing subcategories of Fake News clearly shows a bigger market for anti-Clinton articles, which can be explained as to the significant amount of negative coverage of the Trump campaign, driving incentives to defend the Trump campaign regardless of whether what is shared is verifiable or not.

Given the unorthodoxy of the 2016 Presidential Campaign with

one of the candidates and the convergence of the widespread adoption of social media, there is an argument to be made that given the rapidly changing nature of politics, the previous election is an anomaly and should be treated as such. There is some merit to this argument, as both candidates suffered from negative perceptions from the American public as consulting firm Gallup asserts that their results on public perception “far outpace any Gallup has recorded before for a major-party presidential nominee” (Saad, “Trump and Clinton”). The overwhelmingly negative perceptions of both candidates would, therefore, center the debate on who is “worse”, Trump or Clinton. In addition, given the confirmation from national and international intelligence agencies that there was a coordinated effort of election interference from hostile foreign powers, social media companies should now understand the legal and financial ramifications of inaction. While these counteracting points may be verifiable and factual, it is simply too early to determine whether future elections, especially presidential elections will be more civil or more uncivil. Therefore, more case studies will need to be analyzed to determine the extent of social media’s influence on political polarization.

CONCLUSION

In the end, a deep analysis of this topic leads to several assertions regarding polarization, the most important being: social media as a form of political communication has exacerbated pre-existing trends towards polarization among partisans, where natural instincts towards familiarity and comfort are exploited through content filtering and algorithmic tailoring to effectively lock individuals into echo-chamber environments. Those locked within these echo chambers place emotional attachment onto their respective spheres, viewing those who disagree with their assumptions as illogical or even antagonistic. These existing political spheres, combined with recent trends towards emotional adherence to ideology rather than factual evidence, makes individuals more vulnerable to misleading or false news stories, especially those which disparage individuals as there is now a larger market for such hostile narratives on social media. More research needs to be conducted on the ways social media are affecting dialogue and discourse among non-partisan or non-affiliated independents on social media. In addition, given the newness of social media in the context of academic research, there is not a significant body of prior work upon which to draw. As a result, current

research regarding the polarizing effects of social media is in its infancy. Therefore a significant amount of research conducted in this field is more speculative than factual so that the underlying causes are not as solidly-defined.

Understanding the potential ramifications of the migration of politics toward a less restricted environment and its increasing usage by activists to convince the public offers many unique insights. It can provide new frontiers in how data is extracted and how American identity has evolved in the past few years. The increase in polarization and the seeming inability to “reach across the aisle” can be construed as antithetical to American identity, where a fundamental aspect of the American identity is one of diverse, multifaceted perspectives that can at least somewhat come to compromise in the form of legislation such as timely appropriations bills and . An unwillingness to compromise or even agree upon baseline facts means we, as a nation may no longer be able to generate consensus in the form of policy to meet and resolve America’s challenges. Providing a potential solution to the ongoing increase in political polarization in American society means both parties must acknowledge the most controversial dilemma of our time: that the status social media companies hold in our election cycle must be discussed and understood at the academic level if there is any hope for solutions to eventually trickle down through the policy stream to affect real and lasting change in our political system.

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Kristen O'Mara

That's a Latte Caffeine: Why the NCAA Turns a Blind Eye

ABSTRACT

Athletes have long sought out ways to better their performance, whether through new training methods, technologies, or diets. One way to improve athletic performance that has become highly debated is the use of ergogenic drugs in sport. Given the term "doping", this method has been largely condemned by critics. Clashing philosophies on the pureness of sport led many to find doping to be unethical and fundamentally wrong. However, doping remains a consistent mode of athletic performance enhancement. Aiding in its unwavering presence is caffeine, the ergogenic drug that passes under the radar (McDaniel et al. 33). Despite its common use, caffeine is a stimulant and therefore banned by the NCAA. An addictive chemical, caffeine has been given much more lenient regulations compared to other performance enhancing drugs by the NCAA. Furthermore, caffeine shares many characteristics with other drugs that are given much stricter treatment. It is able to produce effects that can greatly improve not only physical ability, but mental dexterity as well. The NCAA lists a number of drugs on its banned substance list; however, the rules vary depending on the particular drug. Caffeine is given exception compared to other drugs on the same list (Wilfert 7). This paper will explore the ways in which caffeine really is an ergogenic, or performance enhancing, drug, and the reasons behind the difference in rules depending on the drug in question.

INTRODUCTION

In the world of athletics, the competitor who appears to be the most talented is recognized as the victor and is rewarded for their feat of athletic achievement. While many athletes never compete after the high school level, a select few attain coveted positions on college teams. College athletes may be given large scholarships for their efforts and often must maintain both athletic and academic excellence in order to reserve the right to these privileges. With these pressures, many athletes may feel as though they will not live up to these expectations through hard work alone, and as a result, turn to drugs in order to fulfill the demands placed on them by their universities and coaches. Drugs allow athletes

to improve their performance and appear to be the most talented, thus granting them the recognition required to guard their scholarship or position on a team. They can use a number of drugs including steroids, amphetamines, and hormones to improve athletic performance. However, athletes are regularly tested for these drugs. One substance that has remained relatively ignored by the NCAA is caffeine. This leads to the questions: how might caffeine be considered a performance enhancing drug, and why is it regulated differently than other drugs in the NCAA? These questions have implications for why American society reveres athletes as role models for children to look up to if it allows them to use potentially dangerous methods in order to achieve success, such as caffeine. It begs the question if athletes should be used as role models if they are partaking in objectionable activities such as doping. Caffeine can be considered a performance enhancing drug due to its properties of improving athletic results in a variety of ways and its alterations to the natural state of the body. Caffeine, despite its nature as a drug, has been accepted and embraced by American society, contributing to its acceptance under the NCAA's rules.

The first section, *View of Caffeine in the United States* will attempt to diagnose why behaviors surrounding caffeine consumption are the way they are, and why lax rules about caffeine are permitted to exist. The section *Nature of Caffeine* will give the reader background about the drug and detail the characteristics that define it as performance enhancing. Then, in order to support the idea that caffeine should be considered a true danger, it will be compared to other drugs in the section, *Caffeine's Similarity to Other Drugs*. Finally the section *NCAA's Regulations on Caffeine* will discuss the current rules regarding caffeine that NCAA athletes must follow. This will allow readers to understand the threat to athletes' health that current regulations pose, and why they should be amended.

VIEW OF CAFFEINE IN THE UNITED STATES

The acceptance of caffeine consumption in athletes is due in part to the trend in consumption of Western society. Until 2001, a large-scale study of average caffeine consumption had not been attempted. For ten years, researchers conducted a study to determine the average caffeine consumption of United States adults aged 19-71 years of age. They found that, "About 89% of the adult US population is a caffeine consumer on any given day" (Fulgoni et al. 1083). This study demonstrates that the vast

majority of United States adults consume caffeine in some form. These results show that caffeine has been integrated into everyday life despite the addictive nature and negative side effects it possesses. Going to get a cup of coffee with a friend has become a common practice, and many students are found studying in coffee shops where they will have easy access if they should need another caffeine fix. Business meetings or interviews are commonly held in cafes, as Wagner states in his article, "Coffee houses have a long tradition in American society as a place where people could meet and discuss ideas or just enjoy each other's company. They were the Facebook of an earlier generation" (Wagner 2). As described, coffee houses are frequented not only by those looking for a place to work, but a setting where people can come together and innovate. Comparing cafes to a prodigious social media platform depicts how important coffee shops are socially. For the workforce, purchasing coffee on the morning commute has become a ritual. D'Costa article "The Culture of Coffee Drinkers" states, "The idea of the morning person aside, morning commuters seem to fall into one of two categories: the Caffeinated and the Un-caffeinated—the latter category being those who intend to consume coffee, but haven't quite gotten their morning java yet. And they're easily recognizable as such" (D'Costa 1). D'Costa goes on to describe the differences between these two groups, and how the caffeinated appear productive, bright eyed, and ready for the day, whereas the un-caffeinated seem sluggish and tired. Caffeine use has even become a sort of marker of growing up, as children begin drinking coffee in their teenage years as they enter adulthood. The overwhelming presence of caffeine consumption among adults leads to society's acceptance that athletes would naturally also consume caffeine.

The perceptions of the effects of caffeine on the body also play a role in how people view the importance of regulating it. As with anything, how one perceives something is a determining factor in how much thought or care they will put towards it. In the case of caffeine, a study of college freshmen showed a consistent knowledge about how caffeine effects the body and what side effects it can have. The study by McIlvain et al. states, "Approximately 76% of students believed caffeine would keep them awake and the same percentage had actually used caffeine to stay awake... An even higher percentage of students (80%) believed that 'caffeine can be harmful to my health and can hurt me' and that caffeine is addictive (82%)" (McIlvain et al. 238). College freshmen (some of the population that makes up student athletes) are aware of the effects caffeine can have. However, this same population was unaware of how much

caffeine they were drinking, as they were reporting having experienced caffeine intoxication and withdrawal. This combination of knowledge of caffeine's effects in addition to consuming too much is indicative of a certain attitude described in the article:

Respondents reported that they believe caffeine can be harmful (80%), addictive (82%) and disrupt coordination (57%). Yet, respondents still exceeded by 3-5 times the recommended maximum amount of caffeine. This suggests that even though respondents felt that caffeine has negative health effects, the desire to use caffeine to stay awake or to wake up in the morning was more important than health concerns. (McIlvain et al. 240 – 241)

Since attitudes like this one in regard to caffeine exist among college students, it is logical to assume that similar ideas exist among the general United States population considering the similarities in consumption patterns. This also shows that the lack of interest in changing the NCAA's rules does not simply stem from a lack of knowledge, but something else. It is possible that the effects that caffeine has on users are too valuable for them to risk putting it at stake by arguing for stricter control. Caffeine's addictive nature may even be a cause of this disregard for one's health in order to continue to consume it.

Similar to substances like nicotine and cocaine, caffeine has been shown to have addictive properties. However, this fact is debated among the scientific community. Dr. Sally Satel argues in "Is Caffeine Addictive? - A Review of the Literature" that caffeine is by no means an addictive drug, but rather a mild stimulant. While acknowledging the side effects of caffeine consumption, she states, "Is caffeine addictive? Is it a harmful substance that compels the consumer to use at the risk of his well being and despite a stated desire to refrain? Is it a 'model drug of abuse' as the National Institute on Drug Abuse put it? The answer is no." (Satel 493). This quote aims to negate the addictive effects of caffeine by stating that users are able to stop using caffeine when they desire to do so, and thus does not fit into the National Institute on Drug Abuse's definition of a "model drug of abuse". It attempts to persuade readers that caffeine users can easily control their consumption despite side effects similar to those of nicotine, amphetamines, cocaine, and opioid withdrawal that make it very difficult to quit. These ideas are contradicted by an article by Meredith et al., stating:

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of any Substance Use Disorder is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control use. In a general population survey conducted in the State of Vermont, this criterion was the most frequently endorsed diagnostic criterion for caffeine dependence, with 56% of caffeine users reporting a desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down. (Meredith et al. 120)

Here it is seen that in a case study of real caffeine consumers, many reported feeling a dependence on caffeine. In contradiction to Satel's article, this study shows that users did have a desire to cut down use and were often unsuccessful in doing so. Additionally, Meredith et al. states, "In the general population survey conducted in the United States, 14% of caffeine users endorsed use despite harm" (Meredith et al. 120). Contradicting Satel, Meredith et al. states that a percentage of the US population continues to use caffeine despite knowing its potential negative effects. Satel uses the lack of criteria to define caffeine as non-addictive. However, Meredith et al. displays here that there is a population of caffeine users that fit this description of addicts exactly. The fact that caffeine users are aware of the effects yet continue to use it is also corroborated by the previously discussed study by McIlvain et al. Therefore, caffeine is shown to be addictive, which may be a contributing factor to its acceptance in society and in the NCAA. Since caffeine is addictive, people who use it may fear that if it is questioned, they will no longer be able to use caffeine at their will. This is driven by the desire to consume caffeine that accompanies caffeine addiction, as well as a dependence due to the need to counteract its negative effects.

Caffeine can be considered a performance enhancing drug due to its chemical composition, metabolism, and through examining how it coincides with current accepted definitions of what constitutes a performance enhancing drug. Caffeine is not regulated like other banned substances in the NCAA despite its similar and potentially dangerous side effects shared with other banned drugs due to American society's overall acceptance of caffeine as part of an everyday diet. The research in this paper has served to prove how caffeine is a danger to athletes, and how insufficient the NCAA's rules are in regulating caffeine consumption among its athletes. Looking at the data as a whole shows a need for stricter rules and a new way to test for caffeine that will more effectively prevent athletes from using it to improve their performance. Additionally,

the majority of Americans consume caffeine regularly in some manner, leading to a less severe attitude towards the stimulant. The acceptance of caffeine does not appear to be from a lack of knowledge, however. This raises the question: If Americans are well informed on caffeine's effects, why is there a lack of motivation to change the rules? Could Americans be avoiding this topic out of fear of having to change their habits, or are they possibly concerned that their practices will be condemned as wrong? Might fervent caffeine users not even be open to discussing a caffeine ban? These questions are important to ask because they have implications for how Americans view drugs. It appears as though rather than treating drugs based solely on their physical effects, society allows emotions to come into play. Moreover, the fact that athletes are allowed to use drugs like caffeine but not other drugs demonstrates that society is unable to regulate drugs in a strictly objective manner. Nonetheless, the NCAA's caffeine rules must be changed if Americans wish to maintain the "pureness" of sport. If not for that reason, these rules must be changed to safeguard athletes' overall health and wellbeing.

NATURE OF CAFFEINE

A point of confusion that arises when discussing the difference in regulations between drugs is how to define what constitutes a performance enhancing drug. Due to the lack of definition provided by the NCAA, for the purposes of discussion the definition established by the Oxford English Dictionary will be examined. This definition states, "performance-enhancing (*adj.*) that enhances performance; (*Sport*) designating or relating to a substance (frequently one proscribed in competition) which improves athletic performance" ("performance-enhancing"). An autological word, the definition provided here seems obvious. However, one important detail is that the definition includes that the drug must be *proscribed* in competition. Therefore, two essential qualities can condemn a drug as performance enhancing: the substance must improve performance and simultaneously be banned by the ruling authority of the sport. However, it is difficult to clearly deem certain drugs as "performance enhancing" because they are not banned outright by the NCAA. Several drugs that appear on the list of prohibited substances are allowable in certain doses. For example, THC is allowed in the urine of athletes in concentrations of up to 15 nanograms/ml of THC metabolites. It is not accurate to give an estimate to the amount of marijuana needed to fail this test

due to the large variation in types and the difference in the way the drug is metabolized. However, caffeine also falls in this category, and athletes are allowed 15 micrograms/ml in a urine sample (*NCAA Drug-Testing Program 2018-2019*). Thus, caffeine can be considered a performance enhancing drug only when it is consumed in amounts that would cause the caffeine content in urine to surpass the limit set by the NCAA, as this is the only time it can be considered illicit. Furthermore, caffeine has been shown to have beneficial effects on both athletic and mental performance. This aspect of caffeine's effects serves as further evidence of the fact that caffeine is a performance enhancing drug, as it fulfills the second stipulation brought forth by the Oxford English Dictionary.

The way that caffeine is metabolized also greatly contributes to its existence as a performance enhancing drug. When caffeine enters the body, it is metabolized by the liver. The caffeine molecule is broken down into three components: theobromine, theophylline, and paraxanthine. It is demethylated (a methyl group is removed) into mostly paraxanthine (84%). Theobromine accounts for 12% and theophylline accounts for the remaining 4% of caffeine broken down by the liver (Goode 1). This is significant in showing that caffeine is a performance enhancing drug because the American Chemical Society directly defines paraxanthine as, "Improves athletic performance by releasing fat to fuel muscles" (Goode 2). In addition, both theobromine and theophylline produce effects that improve athletic performance such as increasing concentration and oxygen delivery to the brain. Therefore, caffeine is a performance enhancing drug simply by nature of how the American Chemical Society, the governing chemistry organization of the United States, defines caffeine and its constituents.

Caffeine has been shown to have drastic effects on the results of athletes' training and competition, further supporting its identity as a performance enhancing drug. It is classified as a stimulant in the NCAA's list of prohibited substances and has a number of effects on athletes in several areas of athletic competition and training. In a paper by McDaniel et al., a variety of studies displaying the ergogenic, or performance enhancing, qualities of caffeine are brought to light. They write:

Researchers have studied elite skiers on a 20-23 km course at both high and low altitude. The ingestion of caffeine resulted in faster performance times at the halfway mark and the finish line. The total time was about 55-67 minutes, while caffeine resulted in times of 33

and 101 seconds faster for low and high altitudes. The caffeinated athletes generated 7.3% greater total power output. (McDaniel et al. 35)

Athletes who ingested caffeine were able to greatly improve their performance in a single session in an endurance event. An improvement of 33-101 seconds is enough to change the results of a race in cross country skiing, as demonstrated by the 9 second difference between the second and third place finishers in the women's 30km race in the 2018 Pyeong-Chang Olympic games (Cross Country Skiing *Olympic.org*). Caffeine's demonstrated ability to change the results of athletic competition not only shows how it is a performance enhancing drug, but also why athletes would choose this drug. These results show how caffeine is both able to change the outcome of a competition and is also allowed by the NCAA, making it a perfect choice for an athlete feeling pressure to improve. This fact correlates with data collected in a 10-year study on the caffeine consumption in US adults, stating:

Although the mean 1-d caffeine intake among US adults was 186 mg/d, an amount well within the moderate chronic intakes of 400 mg/d identified by Health Canada as safe (6), the 90th and 99th percentiles of intake were more than 2.3 times and 5.7 times higher (436 mg/d and 1066 mg/d, respectively), and 50%–60% of this was being consumed in a single consumption event (Fulgoni et al.1085).

The mean intake of caffeine among US adults is within a safe range; however, individuals who reported higher caffeine intake were well above the standard of safety for this substance. The presence of this type of caffeine consumption by individuals most commonly occurred in a single event, or in a single consumption during the day. This is significant because it shows that statistically, NCAA athletes who use caffeine consume it more often at a single event during the day. As seen in the study by McDaniel et al., it only took one session of caffeine consumption in order to see athletic improvement. Therefore, athletes may be choosing caffeine as a performance enhancing drug because they are able to see results without needing to continually take it, but rather, can use caffeine on short notice to improve results. Moreover, these statistics also tie back to the idea that caffeine is an addictive substance by showing that the average American consumes caffeine on a given day. Due to its commonality in everyday life, however, it is not regulated like other drugs.

CAFFEINE'S SIMILARITY TO OTHER DRUGS

Despite its many similarities to banned drugs, the NCAA has a tolerance for caffeine consumption in its athletes. Caffeine is very similar to several other drugs that appear on the NCAA's banned drugs list, as stated in McDaniel et al., "Caffeine has the same effects that amphetamines and cocaine have, just to a lesser degree. Caffeine crosses the membranes of all the body's tissues. It can exert effects on the central nervous system and the peripheral tissues that result in physiological effects" (McDaniel et al. 33). This demonstrates that caffeine is able to produce the same serious effects as other drugs that are considered more dangerous. It is allowed in large concentrations simply because the effects are not quite as severe as those resulting from illicit drugs. Western society does not question the allowance of caffeine use for NCAA athletes regardless of the possible long-term effects it could have on the athlete's body.

Caffeine is also similar to cocaine in the ways it acts on the brain. Both cocaine and caffeine use dopamine to cause effects on the user, with cocaine actually increasing dopamine levels. Similarities are also observed where both caffeine and cocaine affect the adenosine receptors. In his article, Shaw states, "Cocaine and caffeine both heighten sensory alertness, although cocaine does this with smaller doses than caffeine. In addition, both of these substances can result in symptoms listed in the DSM-IV. Both can be addictive, caffeine can cause anxiety, agitation and caffeinism" (Shaw 2). Since more caffeine would be needed to produce the same effect as cocaine, it would seem as though it is of much less concern. However, the NCAA outright bans cocaine, whereas a large dose of caffeine is allowed. Therefore, with the currently implemented rules, caffeine users are able to produce effects similar to those of cocaine and are still able to compete.

NCAA'S REGULATIONS ON CAFFEINE

The limit of caffeine that the NCAA allows in urine samples permits athletes to consume large amounts of caffeine that could greatly affect their performance. For 15 micrograms/ml of caffeine to be present in urine, the athlete would need to drink about 6 to 8 cups of coffee 2 to 3 hours before an event (USOC Caffeine Factsheet). *Caffeine for the Sustainment of Mental Task Performance: Formulations for Military Operations* states, "Because caffeine is readily reabsorbed by the renal tubules, once it is filtered by the glomeruli only a small percentage is excreted

unchanged in the urine” (*Caffeine for the Sustainment of Mental Task Performance: Formulations for Military Operations* 2). This shows that the amount of caffeine an athlete would need to ingest in order to fail would be very large, allowing athletes to consume caffeine in large amounts while staying within the limit. The same evidence about caffeine excretion is supported in Geiger’s article, as it explains caffeine is mainly excreted through urination. The article suggests it takes 3 to 5 hours to excrete 50% of the caffeine ingested, but only 0.5 to 3 % of the caffeine is excreted as such” (Geiger 2). Geiger points to the fact that it takes at least 3 hours for caffeine to be excreted in the urine, and even then, it only shows in small quantities. Athletes could therefore consume caffeine right before an event and still be able to pass any tests they may need to. The proximity of caffeine consumption could be very close to an event, as the effects of caffeine can be seen almost immediately “Caffeine is absorbed rapidly and totally in the small intestine in less than 1 h and diffuses rapidly in other tissues” (Temple et al. 3). Due to these mechanisms of metabolism, it would be very difficult for an athlete to fail a drug test for caffeine. They would need to consume a very large quantity of caffeine several hours before being tested. Thus, athletes are essentially being given the permission to use doping methods through caffeine use because of the methods of testing.

Similarly, the amount of caffeine deemed safe for ingestion is less than what the NCAA allows its athletes to use. Only a certain level of caffeine may be consumed without the user resulting in caffeine overdose or other side effects that come with it. Fulgoni et al. states,

A comprehensive review of the effects of caffeine consumption on human health, commissioned by Health Canada, concluded that for the healthy adult population, moderate chronic intakes of caffeine up to 400 mg/d are not associated with adverse effects on cardiovascular health, calcium balance and bone status, behavior, cancer risk, and male fertility (1081).

This describes the max caffeine intake considered safe by Health Canada. At 400mg/day, this number comes in below what would be needed to surpass the max allowable caffeine level in urine as established by the NCAA for its athletes. Only a small percentage of caffeine that is ingested is detectable in urine, allowing athletes to consume large quantities and still pass drug tests. The NCAA is therefore allowing athletes to

use an amount of caffeine that has been deemed unsafe. The use of these levels of caffeine in conjunction with increased heart rate during exercise can also elicit dangerous effects on athletes as described by Temple et al., "...consuming caffeine immediately before or during exercise can be harmful and may increase the risk for myocardial ischemia" (113). "Indirect laboratory measures indicate that caffeine consumed immediately before exercising substantially reduces myocardial blood flow in healthy individuals" (Temple et al. 5). Thus, athletes in the NCAA are permitted to consume large volumes of caffeine, levels even beyond what may be considered safe. The rules put forth by the NCAA are allowing athletes to face serious harm. The combination of extensive exercise and caffeine consumption poses real risks to athletes' health, yet it is not questioned. The prevalence of caffeine in the diet of Americans can help describe this phenomenon.

These rules must be taken seriously, as NCAA athletes have shown they actually do consume caffeine. In a study conducted on energy drink consumption both in conjunction with alcohol and ingested alone in college student athletes, 48% of athletes drank energy drinks alone while 37% drank energy drinks and alcohol together (Woolsey et al. 65). This large percentage of athletes consuming caffeine shows that the NCAA's rules actually can make a difference and be put in practice. Athletes have proven that they use this stimulant, and whether or not it is for the purposes of performance enhancement, they should have stricter rules regarding caffeine. Caffeine rules should be tightened based solely on the fact that it poses a danger to athletes' health. One of the main arguments as to why doping should be banned is in order to preserve the "pureness" of sport and maintain an even playing field for all competitors. Thus, rules on caffeine are clearly not strict enough since it is so greatly able to improve athletic performance.

CONCLUSION

Caffeine can be considered a performance enhancing drug due to its chemical composition, metabolism, and similarities to current accepted definitions of what constitutes a performance enhancing drug. It is not regulated like other banned substances in the NCAA, despite its similar and potentially dangerous side effects to other banned drugs, due to American society's overall acceptance of caffeine as part of an everyday diet. The research in this paper has served to prove how caffeine is

a danger to athletes, and how insufficient the NCAA's rules are in regulating caffeine consumption among its athletes. Looking at the data as a whole shows a need for stricter rules and a new way to test for caffeine that will more effectively prevent athletes from using it to improve their performance. Additionally, the majority of Americans consume caffeine regularly in some manner, leading to a less severe attitude towards the stimulant. The acceptance of caffeine does not appear to be from a lack of knowledge, however. This raises the question: if Americans are well informed on caffeine's effects, why is there a lack of motivation to change the rules? Could Americans be avoiding this topic out of fear of having to change their habits, or are they possibly concerned that their practices will be condemned as wrong? Might fervent caffeine users not even be open to discussing a caffeine ban? These questions are important to ask because they have implications for how Americans view drugs. It appears as though rather than treating drugs based solely on their physical effects, society allows emotions to come into play. Moreover, the fact that athletes are being allowed to use drugs like caffeine, but not other drugs, demonstrates that society is unable to regulate drugs in a strictly objective manner. Nonetheless, the NCAA's caffeine rules must be changed if Americans wish to maintain the "pureness" of sport. If not for that reason, these rules must be changed to safeguard athletes' overall health and wellbeing.

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Jason Park

Afrofuturism: A Movement of Rebellion

ABSTRACT

This paper offers an explanation on how the emerging social movement, Afrofuturism, is a liberating new hope for the Black community. Afrofuturism as a whole provides a new form of expression for Black bodies that allows them to regain and redefine their citizenship, which has been destroyed through colonialism and systemic, historical oppression. This paper uses multiple critical works including the works of Antonio Gramsci, W.E.B. Du Bois, Octavia Butler, Nato Hopkinson, and the film, Black Panther in order to develop its argument. History reveals how Black people have experienced immense emotional and physical trauma and thus they are in desperate need for a new hope. By providing case studies on all of these critical authors and scholars, this paper argues that the cultural frameworks of citizenship is ultimately created by those in power, which has historically been white men. This paper then shows how Afrofuturism is a new form of expression that defines Black bodies outside of their relationship to white men.

INTRODUCTION

People of color, specifically African Americans, have been searching for ways throughout history to reclaim their identity, which has been ravaged by the dominant cultural hegemony. This destruction was ultimately rooted in slavery, an era where White men not only owned Black bodies, but also erased their culture. However, this reclamation has proved to be a difficult feat, especially when understandings of race, class, sexuality, and gender have been interpellated into our epistemologies by the ruling class. Understanding theories of interpellation, or how we are affirmed into existence by structures of power, and epistemologies, or how we know what we know, must be understood. Marginalized communities are losing their sense of agency. While there have been many movements in the past that attempted to do so, “Afrofuturism,” is devoted to redefining the destructive narratives created by white cisgender males about people of color that were created during their historical reign of

dominance. The research presented in this paper is thus focused on Afro-futurism, and rooted in the following question: How is Afrofuturism fully inclusive - as opposed to other forms of feminism - and how does it allow women to redefine themselves in whatever way they want? Then, how is Afrofuturism a movement of rebellion against White patriarchy? This paper will use the theoretical frameworks of Cultural Hegemony and ideas of the 'Self,' and 'Other,' relationship along with case studies drawn from W.E.B. Du Bois, Octavia Butler, Nato Hopkinson, and the film, *Black Panther*. Overall, Afrofuturism breaks the socially constructed nature of the 'self,' and liberates the Black community to see themselves beyond the systems of oppression that have defined them.

ROOTS OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

At the core of Western philosophy and behind the façade of capitalism, Western culture and thought is inherently centered on White patriarchy. This White patriarchy is rooted in slavery and has been used to systematically oppress the Black community not just through blatant racist acts, but through subtle language in policy. There have been many examples, such as the "Separate but Equal," doctrine which declared that racial segregation did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment, thus making segregation constitutional. Furthermore, oppression of the Black community can even be seen through social institutions such as the Church. Christianity has been used to justify the exploitation and subjugation of slaves. Rudyard Kipling, a famous English poet during the Philippine-American War, perfectly summarizes Western sentiments in his poem titled "The White Man's Burden." Kipling calls his White Christian readers to "Take up the White Man's burden—/ Send forth the best ye breed—/ Go bind your sons to exile/ To serve your captives' need" (Kipling l.1-4). In the opening lines, he creates a clear dichotomy between the "best breed," which are White Christians, and the "captives," who are African slaves. In creating this contrast, Kipling demonizes Black bodies and makes White Christians appear to be "good." Therefore, the issue and danger with Western Christianity is the fact that people have used it to justify systemic oppression and destruction, viewing it as their divine duty to purify the rest of the world. Finally, these sentiments can be seen in movements such as the Enlightenment which had an enormous influence in America's development. Famous Enlightenment thinkers often accepted slavery as a natural process, and even defined citizenship

exclusively only for White men, thereby excluding slaves. Unsurprisingly, at the basis of this oppression lies a contradiction: America boasted to be the “land of the free,” and even fought viciously for its own freedom when it was under the control of Great Britain. During the Revolutionary Era, Patriots knowingly chose to leave the slavery question unanswered. Nancy Morrow, a professor from University of California Davis, mentions how this is similar to the Enlightenment thinkers who were “concerned with the abstract notions of submission and domination, not with the case of black Africans transported to American colonies” (Morrow 237). Therefore, White men made a distinction between themselves and the Other and subsequently ignored the plight of Black bodies. This left Black bodies powerless under the dominant cultural hegemony.

CULTURAL HEGEMONY AND POWER

America’s history of cultural violence against minority groups proves that White men hold a dominant status according to the social caste system of the Western world. Logically, people are obedient to those in power and are often manipulated to accept oppression in their own lives. This relationship - between the oppressor and the oppressed - is highlighted in Antonio Gramsci’s theoretical perspective on cultural hegemony in the article by T.J. Jackson Lears, “The Concept of Cultural Hegemony,” which is the idea that those in power dictate the culture of a society. Gramsci argued that patriarchy has a distinct relationship to capital in the sense that White men, who have had historic control over resources and money, subsequently produced a male dominated society. Margaret Ledwith, a professor from Cumbria University, claims that Gramsci’s theory has allowed her to understand how race and gender relationships are not based on privilege, rather they are based on power. Ledwith notes that according to Gramsci’s theory, the White man’s “domination permeates the most intimate aspects of our being through our interactions in civil society, for example, the family, community, schools and formal religions which remain key sites of male domination” (Ledwith 687). Within all the examples that Ledwith mentions, there is a distinct patriarchy embedded into each one. Men are expected to be dominant leaders, not because they are inherently better, but because they were able to control the production of cultural capital all around the world. Lawrie Balfour, a professor at the University of Virginia, studies the effects of cultural hegemony further by offering an analysis of the chapter “Damnation of Women” from W.E.B.

Du Bois's book *Darkwater*. Du Bois is a prominent figure in post-colonial and civil rights activism. Du Bois reinforced the idea that the relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed was rooted in power differences. In her analysis of Du Bois's work, Balfour states that "the languages of citizenship' have been intertwined with definitions of race and gender and mobilized to demarcate full members of society from those ineligible for such membership" (Balfour 127). Balfour not only confirms Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony as the producer of Western philosophies of the self, but also brings an interesting new intersectional perspective. According to Balfour, Du Bois understood that both Black men and Black women were struggling to gain agency, yet women were also struggling to break the notion that they had to be dependent upon men. Balfour highlights that women of color have been the greatest victims of power differences. Therefore, feminists and feminist allies alike must understand that power is the main reason why White men have been able to control history.

Other factors also contribute to the subjugation of Black bodies. An excellent example is cultural appropriation, which is a power dynamic wherein a dominant culture steals part of the culture of a group which has been systematically oppressed by that same dominant group. It becomes dangerous because it belittles oppression, perpetuates stereotypes, and spreads lies about marginalized groups. Cultural appropriation is an important term to understand because it is often those who thrive with power that distort the culture of the oppressed. Joanne Stato, in the women's journal "Off Our Backs," makes an excellent analogy, "if heterosexual women began wearing labryses, I think many lesbians would feel culturally ripped off, since the labrys is not only a symbol which helps us identify each other, but also stands for the struggle we have endured in a heterosexual society" (Stato 20). Therefore, appropriation is damaging because it ruins the intent and beauty behind various aspects of one's culture.

WHAT IS AFROFUTURISM?

"Afrofuturism" was coined in a 1993 essay written by Mark Dery, as an offshoot of science fiction rooted in futuristic themes, technological innovation, and Black culture. It has been adopted by many artists, writers, and filmmakers who have been transforming Black culture. The late musician Sun Ra incorporated jazz and space into his music and was one of the biggest figures of Afrofuturism even before it had a name. Octavia

E. Butler, a Black female science fiction author, wrote many novels that redefined womanhood through her female protagonists and their relationships with the supernatural. Her famous short story, *Kindred*, is one example. Finally, there are films such as the recent movie, *Black Panther*, that incorporate science fiction themes and have changed the way Black women are portrayed in films. In all of these Afrofuturist works, writers, musicians, and actors frequently use elements such as techno culture, extraterrestrials, space, and even superheroes in order to reinvent and re-imagine Blackness. Through these elements, Afrofuturism has an intense focus on imagining a new future, while simultaneously reexamining the Black past. Afrofuturism is difficult to replicate because it belongs to the Black community, who is able to escape a historical narrative in which Black stories were warped by colonialism and told from a Western context. Instead, it gives them the space to explore a new identity. According to Mark McCutcheon, author of “Afro Future Females”, “Afro-Futurism destabilizes the ideology of racialized subjectivity and the hegemony of cultural production’s historical and hierarchical distinctions” (McCutcheon 247). Returning to Antonio Gramsci, where he believed that culture is created by those in power, Afrofuturism is groundbreaking because it challenges the power of White men who have controlled the cultural products of society. Afrofuturism is a reminder that it is important to create safe spaces for people to express themselves.

HOW DOES AFROFUTURISM INTERRUPT WESTERN PHILOSOPHIES? ESCAPING THE PAST

African Americans must challenge history which was created by the White ruling class. Throughout history, African Americans were told that their voices and their lives do not matter. There is an inherent conflict between what society and history define someone as, and who one understands themselves to be. Therefore, Afrofuturism is important because it allows the Black community to tell their own story and declare their existence outside of the definition which White males placed on them. *Kindred*, by Octavia Butler, is an excellent example of how Afrofuturism reconciles the past with the present. According to Philip Miletic, a journalist who provides a case study on *Kindred*, “The unexplained mechanism of time travel that Butler utilizes in *Kindred* is an Afrofuturist tool that further challenges this notion of “blowing away” the

past” (Miletic 266) This tactic of time travel that Miletic elaborates on is crucial for two reasons. First, it recognizes that slavery is the foundation of Black oppression. Second, by time travelling out of the past, it gives Black audiences the understanding that they are not bound by their past. Through Afrofuturism, slavery is no longer a definitive narrative allows African Americans to declare that they exist outside of their cultural subjugation to White men. Ultimately, this freedom that Butler explores in *Kindred* allows audiences “to carve out a space through literacy... for all Black women as well, an otherwise male-dominated practice and form of liberation” (Miletic 264).

This new-found liberation also allows Black bodies, according to journalists like Susana Morris, to “[examine] the current problems faced by blacks and people of color more generally and [critique] interpretations of the past” (Morris 153). This freedom is a formidable tool because it challenges the dominant hegemony which has distorted the past of oppressed groups and disabled them from utilizing their voices. It also gives African Americans the creative space to express themselves however they want. Therefore, through Afrofuturism, power is restored and placed back into the hands of the Black community who have a new-found freedom.

NEW FORM OF CITIZENSHIP AND HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Afrofuturism is a bright hope for a better future, because it allows people of color to see beyond the systems of oppression that bind them. Imagining a new future is crucial because it expands imaginations and allows Black communities to envision a new, better society. William Bainbridge, the author of “Women in Science Fiction,” states that Afrofuturism “has become a forum for women authors’ uninhibited public analysis of contemporary sex roles and consideration of options for the future” (Bainbridge 1081). Bainbridge recognizes how Afrofuturism gives African Americans the power to use their imagination, as exemplified with authors such as Octavia Butler. Barbara Hilton, the author of “Afrofuturism - Language of Rebellion,” uses an excellent quote from her interview with Ytasha Womack:

Talking about the future fundamentally changes you. It transforms the present. It expands your imagination and you start to imagine new societal scenarios... The power of imagination creates hope and reminds you that society isn’t permanent, but always in flux: that you,

as a person, possess the drive and the power to influence society... But for many black-bodied people that means they have to push past the idea that they don't think they have any influence on their own future (Hilton).

Womack excellently identifies the power of imagination for Black bodies who have been told throughout history that they cannot be anything more than their status of slavery. By imagining a better future, Black people can advocate and fight for change. This completely shifts the future that White men have laid out for Black people under Western culture. White men have forced the Black community into believing that they are inferior and have predicted them to fail. Under Afrofuturism however, Black people are able to simultaneously bring attention to issues that are important to them and also reclaim their identity. It takes traditional tropes and stereotypes and turns it on its head. Black people, through science fiction, are whatever protagonists they imagine themselves to be.

To display the effectiveness of Afrofuturism, Nalo Hopkinson uses Afrofuturistic themes in her work. In her short story "A Habit of Waste", main character Cynthia, is able to leave and take control of new bodies as if she is putting on a new pair of clothes. According to Faucheux, a journalist who provides a case study on *A Habit of Waste*, she states that:

In the story, the decentralization of the body as a stable signifier of identity is a profoundly queer rhetorical move; the subject's race, gender, and sexuality become entirely irrelevant precisely because the body is no longer an inescapable prison of flesh. Thus "A Habit of Waste" illustrates queer Afrofuturism's potential to reveal the absurdities of the hold social constructions have on the body (Faucheux 573).

Faucheux reveals that Cynthia's supernatural ability to change bodies was a tool that Hopkinson used in order to empower African Americans to believe that they are able to define their identity however they want. This is a powerful tactic Hopkinson uses that reminds African Americans that under Afrofuturism, their future is not defined by the typical narrative that White men have created. Just like Cynthia, African Americans are no longer prisoners under the control of the way the dominant hegemony gives people their identity. Cynthia, who represents the liberty of expression, gives African Americans autonomy in determining

their own future.

INCLUSION DOES NOT ALWAYS EQUATE REPRESENTATION

The danger of Afrofuturism however lies in the assumption that if Black bodies are being represented in the media, then these media platforms are inclusive and beneficial. This sentiment however can be problematic because people of color can still be misrepresented. An example of misrepresentation is in *Black Panther*, a recent Marvel superhero blockbuster considered to be an Afrofuturist work. *Black Panther* is problematic not because of its Afrofuturist themes, however, it is inherently dangerous because the movie is backed by Marvel, a company owned by White males with the goal of making revenue.

BRIGHT SPOTS

Before examining its flaws, it is important to highlight that this movie is groundbreaking. From the opening scenes, the audience is captivated by the Afro-futuristic themes and breathtaking culture of the nation of Wakanda, a fictional country. Western culture is not included in the movie, and the characters of Wakanda even scoff at how obsolete western culture is. Not only does the film excel in incorporating Black heritage, music, and art into the movie, it is mainly revolutionary in its portrayal of women. Christopher Lebron, a journalist from the *Boston Review*, summarizes the movie's representation of women by stating that, "They are the film's brightest spot: the black women of Wakandan descent are uniformly independent, strong, courageous, brilliant, inventive, resourceful, and ethically determined" (Lebron). The typical racist trope of Black women appearing in films as "sassy," or a woman dependent on a man is nowhere to be seen. Instead, the women are not only strong, but they drive the plot and the brilliance of the film. However, this film does have flaws that are unnoticeable at first glance. This can be clearly seen in the characters Okoye and Nakia, who are soldiers in the Black Panther universe. There are multiple scenes throughout the movie where they are unwaveringly strong and fierce, completely negating the inferior woman stereotype.

MAIN ISSUES OF THE FILM

The movie is problematic because it pits Black bodies against each other. On one hand, the main character, Prince T'Challa, is portrayed to

be a sophisticated Black noble who is intelligent and well mannered. He is the hero of the film using the alias of the Black Panther, and he is the supposed savior of not only Wakanda, but the entire world. On the other hand, we meet his cousin, Killmonger, who is portrayed to be T'Challa's foil and the main villain of the movie. Killmonger is a product of hatred and Black anger because his father was killed by T'Challa's father and subsequently, Killmonger was left alone in a broken urban community and became a "product of American racism and T'Chaka's [T'Challa's Father] cruelty" (Lebron). Therefore, we are met with two sides: T'Challa, who wants to protect his country and the entire world, and Killmonger, a man who is consumed by hatred towards Wakanda and their complacency. In theory, both sides appear to have good intentions on the surface. However, Marvel, following the typical hero/villain dichotomy, paints Killmonger to be a psychotic character who is keen on destroying the world. Therefore, Killmonger is depicted to be evil and dangerous whereas T'Challa and his allies are the team that Marvel wants us to root for. Inherently, *Black Panther* forces the audience to pick sides. This is dangerous according to Lebron:

viewers have two radical imaginings in front of them: an immensely rich and flourishing advanced African nation that is sealed off from white colonialism and supremacy; and a few black Wakandans with a vision of global black solidarity who are determined to use Wakanda's privilege to emancipate all black people. These imaginings could be made to reconcile, but the movie's director and writer... makes viewers choose. (Lebron)

This contrast between the characters "suggest[s] yet another racist trope, the fractured black family" which is "a microcosm of the black community's" supposed "inability to get it together" (Lebron). This seems to reiterate the trope of the absent Black father and the necessity of heteronormative family structures. Furthermore, Killmonger appears to be a violent, gangster-like character which further perpetuates stereotypes. To make matters worse, one of the film's only White characters saves the day by utilizing his Airforce experience to save the mess that the Black characters create. Despite all this, it is unfair to label Killmonger as a villain. The film attempts to make audiences realize that Killmonger is a sad product of a fragmented world that systematically oppressed Black men. Killmonger's anger and hatred is more than justified. However, this analysis is overwhelmed by the fact that audiences must pick a side.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS CASE STUDY

Is Afrofuturism flawed if Black bodies are still misrepresented in Afrofuturistic works? No. While Black Panther is problematic, it is crucial that audiences understand its context. Black Panther was used as a cultural-political tool. Marvel is a company that is controlled by Walt Disney, a company run by powerful white men. Therefore, their main agenda is to produce revenue rather than promote a message. It is well known that Marvel films must follow a generic formula and must be based on the original comic book, which was created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. It is crucial that the movie's problematic issues are not overlooked. However, to attribute the flaws of the film to Afrofuturism is foolish and shortsighted, considering that the Afrofuturistic themes are the movie's bright spots. It is ultimately the greed of enormous conglomerates and oligopolies that cripples the movie. Black Panther teaches audiences an important lesson overall: misrepresentation is damaging to many communities, specifically people of color. It often leads to the creation of stereotypes which often labels people of color in a negative light. These labels thus become normalized through culture and through the media and thus contributes to the subjugation of the black community. However, despite the movie's flaws, the Afrofuturist aspect of Black Panther promises hope for the black community.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Afrofuturism is a practice that serves as a direct challenge to White patriarchy. Based on all the research and analysis, Afrofuturism breaks Western construction of what constitutes a human, and ultimately gives the African Americans a way to reclaim their identity. It can be concluded that slavery allowed White men to control cultural production, who worked to subjugate and silence Black bodies and systemically create a social caste system where White men are. It is fitting that in many Afrofuturistic works, African American artists refer to themselves as aliens, such as Mshindo Kuumba, who refers to himself as "Elf-Ra" (Kuumba) in his own painting. History reflects how Africans were indeed stripped from their homeland and forced to live in a foreign country where they became aliens. Therefore, the science fiction theme within Afrofuturism is a fitting, yet sad metaphor. However, this metaphor also reflects how African Americans detach themselves from their identity of non-human, and instead identify as new, unique beings. Now,

within Afrofuturistic work African Americans, in particular Black women, find agency and significance. Why does all of this matter? More and more, Black bodies are told every day, whether explicit or not, that their lives do not matter. This narrative has become so destructive that Black people struggle to be optimistic and hopeful. Afrofuturism however tells African Americans that their lives more than matter – in fact their culture is celebrated and adored. Afrofuturism is entirely inclusive and necessary - Black people with their power can enact a once hopeless vision.

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Dhara Patel

The Effects of Partisanship on the Progress of Women in Congress

ABSTRACT

The domain of American politics has been male-dominated for hundreds of years. The emergence of women as representatives in institutions such as Congress has increased diversity in the political realm. This increase of gender diversity in Congress yields the question: with the increase of female congressional representatives, is there truly gender equality within Congress or are there institutional biases inhibiting equity? This paper demonstrates that partisanship—the political affiliation one has toward a certain political party—is significant in regard to political gender equity. Specifically, it will detail how the partisan institutional biases of the Democratic and Republican parties hinder the ascension of female congressional representatives. The beliefs of the Republican and Democratic parties will be analyzed to determine the effects of these ideologies on the various phases of a Congresswoman's career, from the election process to her eventual retirement from Congress. The historical context in which women first obtained congressional positions is also relevant because the original partisan influences on female representatives established them as secondary or temporary options in terms of representative selection. This paper discusses the intricacies of the election process in terms of organizational support and funding and highlights the variation in difficulties in obtaining funding between female Republican and Democratic candidates. Continuing past the election process, the use of elected female representatives as indicators of the lack of gender discrimination within the Republican political party and its inherent effects will be observed to indicate how it impacts female representatives' influence on legislature and retirement rates.

INTRODUCTION

On August 18, 1920, Congress ratified a revolutionary document that finally gave women the right to vote. The 19th Amendment allowed for women to enter the domain of politics by giving them the authority and influence to be able to choose their elected officials. With encouragement from the feminist movement and gender reform, women have made further political progress by achieving leadership opportunities such as

positions in the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives. Together these female representatives are known to the public as Congresswomen, and as representatives they manufacture and rectify legislation for the benefit of the American populace. These female representatives signify the progress that the United States has made in gender equity. This influx of elected female representatives increases the amount of female influence on the legislature and thus implies that further advancement within gender reform will take place.

Although there has been a positive trend in the number of female representatives within Congress, there still is a disproportionate ratio between male and female members elected into these positions. This disproportionality suggests that campaign efficacy and electoral success are heavily dependent on the gender of the candidate. These discrepancies within gender ratios are not only apparent in the overall Congress population but are also ingrained into Congress's structure such as in the two presiding political parties. This is shown by how "women now make up nearly 30% of the Democratic delegation; by contrast, the proportion of females in the Republican Party has hovered between 6% and 10% since the 1980s" (Thomsen 296). Due to the fact that the congressional gender disparities run even deeper within the Republican and Democratic parties, this phenomenon displays how party affiliation reflects a bias that impacts the election of female representatives into office.

Currently, the realm of academia has been eagerly discussing the unequal representation of women in Congress. Scholars have deduced that the once extremely small population of female congressional representatives has increased after each successive election. Although academics have noted the gendered gap between representatives, a greater division exists between the proportion of Democratic Congresswomen and their Republican counterparts. This occurrence is thought to be due to a lack of applicable female candidates for these congressional positions, especially in the Republican party: "... the probability that a 'Republican type' will be elected to Congress and be a woman is low, because there is a dearth of conservative Republican women in state legislative office who are well situated to run for Congress" (Thomsen 303). The issue with this assumption is that most of the studies concerning this topic diminish the impact of partisanship and party values on the electoral success on female candidates. Despite the increasingly high percentage of women in Congress, party loyalty and partisan agendas between the Republican and Democratic parties have also become more prominent, and thus need to

be fully accounted for when considering the discrepancies between the representation of both genders and their electoral success.

The goal of this research paper is to elucidate how the restrictive and steadfast nature of American political parties hinders female politicians and their ability to be elected into Congress. Additionally, this project will further develop how the Republican and Democratic party agendas not only impact the campaign process, but also affect the overall efficacy and efficiency of Congresswomen in terms of legislative progress. A pertinent question to be considered throughout this paper would be: *How has the rapid polarization and distinct ideologies of political parties affected the election process and efficiency of female members of Congress?* To set the foundations for these questions, I will introduce different theories and case studies about female oppression. For instance, the Marxist idea of cyclic oppression will be used to correlate how the effects of repetitive biased practices and ideologies by a certain group can prevent the upward mobility of another group of individuals. Famous philosopher Karl Marx's theory states, "The modern bourgeois society [. . .] has but established [. . .] new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones" (Marx 14). Although the basis of this Marxist ideology lies in the realm of economics and social hierarchies, this principle will be applied to gender-related inequalities present in issues of socio-political power. Likewise, political science expert Lonna Rae Atkeson's case study "Not All Cues are Created Equal," elaborates on the role of gender performances in congressional politics and how it leads to a perpetual subconscious mentality of female inferiority. Atkeson states, "Specifically, the lack of political women leaders sends a cue to women citizens that they are more subjects than citizens, fit to be led, but not to lead, and better ruled, than rulers" (1043). With the lack of female representation present in Congress, the female population feels isolated from the realm of politics, which precipitates into the perception that women do not belong in leadership positions such as congressional office. This leads to a cycle of demotivation and suppression of the present and future generations women, which fortifies the gender disparity in Congress.

Research has established that there are stagnant gender disparities present within the United States Congress and that some structural aspects of this institution might be prolonging these inequities (Thomsen 295). Political party ideology and affiliation are key foundational elements of Congress to be scrutinized because these partisan loyalties reduce the election of women into congressional positions. Furthermore, the rapid

polarization of partisanship systematically prevents elected women from being effective in their positions, leading to earlier retirement rates for these representatives. The steady supply of deterrents supplied by party antics throughout the various stages of a female representative's career de-motivate and hinder women from being successful as congressional representatives, which results in the unfortunate prolongation of the disproportional representation of women in Congress.

DISADVANTAGEOUS ORIGINS

Although the 19th amendment allowed for women the right to choose their elected representatives, these representative positions were only available to male candidates until the Widow Effect became popular. This trend eventually became the foundation for the current gender disparities present in Congress. The Widow Effect entails the process whereby if a male representative dies mid-term, his wife can take up the vacant position with the representative party's support. This phenomenon laid the basis for women's entrance into Congress, although it was solely dependent on the merits and success of their late husbands.

Gertzog [(a political science professor and past U.S. congressman consultant)] (1980, 1995) provides an examination of widow succession by looking at factors that determine whether the party will consider a widow to replace her deceased husband. He gauges the effect of the seniority of the husband, his leadership position (if any), the competitiveness of the district, and the age of the widow, as considerations that the political party will take into account when deciding whether or not the widow would be a good replacement (Soloweij and Brunell 284).

The expertise and abilities of the women potentially instated into office are not factors to be considered in this replacement process, due to the fact that the political parties validating these women also objectify them as mere placeholders or a simple means to an end. This end being the retention of political dominance in a certain geographical location. To maintain influence on certain voting districts, parties need to ensure the elected representatives of that district and the political party are politically aligned. Once there is a spontaneous cause for vacancy in a congressional position, the partisanship of that previous representative needs to be maintained by bolstering support for someone who can easily access the voting base of the previous representative. This notion led to the use of

widows as perfunctory placeholders to access the network of supporters left by the widow's late husband and thus retain the power of the political party in the district. This demeaning use of women cements the image of female politicians as secondary or even illegitimate representatives with no real authority or value. Karl Marx's outlook on female exploitation resonates with this image of female politicians: "The bourgeois sees his wife a mere instrument of production [...] to be exploited in common, and [he], naturally, can come to no other conclusion that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women" (25). The objectification of women displayed in this statement eludes to how the accumulation of these dehumanizing acts leads to the formulation of gender role foundations that explain the disadvantages women face when entering the domain of politics. By viewing women as tools, this perspective takes away the importance of the female's own intelligence or abilities that are necessary in leadership positions. Similarly, when Marx states "the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women," he indicates that the idea of women being inferior will not only come from male oppression but from oppression by all—including other women. This concept can be applied to the unjustifiable deprecation of ability that has become the norm for most, if not all, Congresswomen (Marx 25). Whether it be the bourgeois or a political party, this view on the use of women leads to the chronic devaluation of this population which persists this image of female congresswomen as disposable, secondary level officials. This explains why the number of female representatives elected into our partisan-polarized Congress is relatively low.

This misuse of female representatives resulting from distinct partisan beliefs also explains why some widows' terms are brief and create little legislative change. Since these female representatives are commonly used as figureheads under the instruction of their political party, they have no need for an extended or complete term because they are quickly replaced by male candidates. Although the widow's terms are relatively short, widows of the Republican party had longer and more dynamic terms than compared to that of their female Democratic counterparts. According to different studies (qtd. Fogarty, et al.), "Among Southern widows prior to the 1970s, most were elected on Democratic tickets, which was a time when the Democratic Party was the primary party in the region ... widows from non-Southern districts amassed their own political resources and skills, allowing them lengthier tenures" (Fogarty et al. 300). The Republican party, which controlled many of the non-Southern

regions, judged the widows' term lengths on the basis of the women's distinct political abilities as opposed to the remnants of their late husbands' reputation.

The Democratic party, on the other hand, viewed widows simply as temporary substitutes whose congressional positions were completely reliant on their late husbands' political standing rather than their own individual potential. Gertzog explains that when the widow replaced her husband, the party immediately looked to find an adequate male candidate for the representative position (qtd. Fogarty). This reveals that Democratic widows lost their congressional seats in relatively short amounts of time and thus lacked the ability to influence legislative change. This partially accounts for the lack of female representation in legislation. The focus on Republican Congresswomen's political abilities over their late husbands' reputations has led to more political opportunity for these widows. This focus ensures that these female representatives have greater political aptitude and skills and thus could serve more effectively and for longer terms than their Democratic widow counterparts. Furthermore, with extended terms these Republican widows have a greater opportunity to advance in the legislature. Thus, the steadier term lengths of Republican widows will have allowed female representation to be a stronger influence in Congress while the short-lived terms of Democratic widows will generally have had less authority due to the fleeting nature of the widow's position as a Congresswoman. This discrepancy between the lengths of terms for congressional widows explains how influential partisanship can be on female representatives' effectiveness in Congress.

According to Matthew Wasniewski—the current fourth Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives—there has been an increase in partisan competition starting two decades ago: “In 1998, the partisanship in the closely divided Congress reached a new level of rancor as the House impeached President Clinton based on his testimony about his extramarital relationship with a White House intern.” (550). As partisan competition continues to increase, the need for political dominance also increases. This perpetuates the original purpose of Congresswomen to maintain the political party's influence in certain districts instead of being used to create change in legislature. The presence of this surge in partisanship negatively affects the efficacy of women in Congress by prolonging the archaic original notions of women's political roles.

CAMPAIGN INHIBITIONS

Monetary support greatly influences candidates' abilities to obtain congressional positions. Greater funds allow candidates to publicize themselves and gain the public's favor. Female congressional candidates face additional obstacles in these crucial fundraising attempts due to the biased nature of the networks of (partisan) donors. Specifically, Republican women find the most difficulty in raising funds because the Republican party's most influential members generally favor male candidates. This preference can be seen in Georgetown University's assistant professor of American government Michele Swers's work, "Women & Legislative Leadership in the U.S. Congress: Representing Women's Interests in Partisan Times". Swers states, "Further, social conservatives—a core constituency of the Republican Party—hold more traditional views about gender roles" (47). This statement implies that the archaic gender norms of female inferiority still preside over the Republican partisanship, which renders female politicians less eligible for Republican monetary backing (in Republican eyes).

The tendency for Republican females to support less conservative values than that of Republican men can further enhance the Republican party's male preference (Thomsen 303). The repetitive bolstering of male exclusivity by these dominating social conservatives prevent women from breaking through the cycle of female oppression. Many female Republican candidates refrain from campaigning for congressional office because they understand that they will have to work significantly harder than their male counterparts in order to secure the same amount of monetary support. Jennifer Lawless, an assistant professor of Political Science at Brown University, and Sean Theriault, an assistant professor of Government at University of Texas, Austin, state, "potential women candidates remain less likely than similarly situated men to receive encouragement to run for office and to deem themselves qualified to hold elected positions" (Lawless and Theriault 590). This lack of encouragement for Republican women can be seen by the additional obstacles these women face in order to gain fundraising assistance from their party. This tendency to female isolation also subconsciously sows seeds of doubt and inadequacy in the minds of these female candidates—causing them to "deem themselves [un]qualified to hold elected positions" (Lawless and Theriault 590). This lack of partisan monetary support does not only practically prevent the Republican female candidate from campaigning, but also psychologically

makes her feel inferior or unfit for the position.

Some organizations, such as EMILY's List, enhance the impact of both Republican and Democrat ideologies. EMILY's List funds and supports Democratic women in favor of the pro-choice stance on abortion. Groups such as EMILY's List help Democratic women get elected, but Republican women struggle to find the same type of reinforcement due to the lack of strong female-oriented Republican organizations. Burell, Cooperman and Elder, professors of political science at Northern Illinois University, University of Mary Washington, and Hartwick College respectively (qtd. Kitchens & Swers) elaborated on the original lack of organizational support by stating:

The Republican Party has only recently focused more attention on recruitment of female candidates, and allied party groups looking to elect more conservative women such as Maggie's List and the Susan B. Anthony List have not developed their female donor networks to the level of Democratic-aligned groups like EMILY's List (Kitchens & Swers 674).

The conservative tendencies of the Republican party have restricted the organization of female Republican support groups. Men are seen as the primary choice for monetary sponsoring—inspired by Republican partisanship— and so there is little development of the necessary networks for Republican women.

Along with a lack of organizational support, the overwhelming trend of a female democratic majority further inhibits Republican women's success. For instance, Michele Swers claims that "[In] the 1992 Year-of-the-Woman elections . . . the number of Democratic women in Congress jumped from twenty-two to forty, while only four new Republican women were elected, increasing the presence of Republican women in Congress from ten to fourteen" (Swers 47). This indicates that if a Republican Congresswoman wished to voice the rights of her electorates, she would have to overcome an overwhelming female Democratic majority. Republican Congresswomen's relative lack of representation decreases their probability of creating effective change and in turn, could lead to a loss of faith in these women due to the lack of legislative change. In this case, Republican ideology acts as a filter to sift out the female Republican politicians from the pool of worthy congressional candidates, continuing its cycle of partisan-driven female oppression.

Similarly, Democratic ideology further develops this phenomenon by rendering the efforts of the few female Republican representatives useless, painting these Republican women as incompetent or ineffective. This image resonates with the sexist mentality reinforced by the Republican social conservatives and perpetuates female Republican candidates' difficulty in gaining election funding. Overall, the nature of these partisan ideals systematically represses a large group of female politicians from getting the necessary funds and resources to secure a congressional position. This reveals a lack of gender equity between female Congressional representatives.

COUNTER ARGUMENT: ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

It has been established that the partisan lack of governmental, legal, ideological, and financial support has disadvantaged women in the world of politics. However, Vicky Randall, an Emeritus Professor at the University of Essex, believes that the National Women's Party is an essential landmark and indicator of political progress in female equity (Randall 224). Gertzog confirms this notion, stating the strategic goals of this National Women's Caucus (also known as the National Congresswomen's Caucus), which are:

To make the group's membership bipartisan... [and] the caucus as inclusive and as representative as possible...to accommodate the diverse views congresswomen held about women's roles in society, and to help them realize their disparate objectives...to maintain good relations with House leaders, particularly majority Democrats...[and establish] rapport with the newly installed Carter administration [to ensure] that statutes already on the books would be administered in a woman-friendly way. (Gertzog 9-12)

In order to achieve these goals, this caucus must have the means to organize funds and resources to support female candidates' campaigns so that these women may gain political positions. This idea dissuades the notion that lack of party funding handicaps women during the electoral campaign. Additional analysis shows that women have an available network ready to financially support them which can increase their probability for electoral success.

The Congresswomen's Caucus promotes even greater progress by ensuring both state-level and federal-level female participation. It facil-

itates a constant stream of trailblazers to pave the path for other women to obtain high-level political positions. These trailblazers motivate and reassure future female congressional candidates that success in this partisan-riddled field is possible. These trailblazers also affect women without government careers, for “viable women candidates lead women to feel more connected to and a part of the political system in a way that they do not when they look around and see only men” (Atkeson 1043). These role models encourage women to further their efforts in their emanation into politics without fear of impracticality impeding their aspirations.

An important characteristic of the Congresswomen’s Caucus is its bipartisan ideals. The bipartisan teamwork of the Congresswomen’s Caucus promotes inclusivity so that it can rise above party antics, thus ensuring efficiency. Wasniewski states that “By the late 1990s...[a]s Congress generally became more partisan, the caucus retained its bipartisanship, partly by keeping the co-chair structure, moving further from the divisive abortion issue, setting a working agenda at the start of each Congress, and pairing women from both parties to work jointly on introducing relevant legislation” (548). The Congresswomen’s Caucus bipartisan teamwork ensures that party ideology and competition cannot interfere with the legislative process, increasing the efficacy of Congresswomen dissipating the biased connotations of incompetence associated with female politicians. This caucus creates a sanctuary for incumbent female candidates to gain the support needed to overcome their societally-determined, partisan disadvantages and eventually become effective legislators.

At first glance, it may seem like the implementation of the Congresswomen’s Caucus provided campaign support and encouraged bipartisan cooperation for Congresswomen, the lack of strength and execution of these ideals makes the efforts of this caucus futile. The Congresswomen’s Caucus does not possess the independent authority to avoid the pressures of partisan strain. These pressures became apparent “when the Republicans gained control of the House in 1995, [and] the GOP leadership eliminated LSOs [legislative service organizations], forcing all caucuses—regardless of party affiliation—to operate without resources from the House” (Wasniewski 548). Although this policy change affects groups from all political parties, the overall cutting of House spending is a key conservative tenant maintained by Republican partisans. Hence, the Republican ideal of cutting costs dominates the power of the Congresswomen’s Caucus by weakening its financial stability, which diminishes the overall positive influence of this group on female politicians. Addition-

ally, due to the scarcity of available funds, this organization was forced to include members of both genders and rename itself the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues (CCWI). The disabling of the Congressional Caucus for Women's budget suppresses its game-changing effects on potential female political candidates. This lack of funds makes this organization unable to support future female congressional candidates in their elections, hindering the chances of their electoral success: "[I]n the case of women citizens it is not simply the presence of female candidates that helps to mobilize them into greater political engagement, but the presence of viable women candidates" (Atkeson 1045). The lack of funds toward the Congresswomen's Caucus both hinders female success in government discourages overall female interest in government. Since female politicians have to be viable--not just present--to inspire women to become involved in politics, then the lack of viable female politicians (resulting from the lack of appropriate funds) leads to female disinterest in government. Therefore, ironically, the Congresswomen's Caucus had to rely on men (and their financial contributions) in order to ensure the political success of its female members.

Partisanship not only dominates the overall schema of Congress, but it is also high between the members of the Congressional Caucus for Women's issues. The caucus's message of bipartisan communication is simply a façade masking the true tensions lying within the group. For instance, Democrat members shared the view that "Republican destruction of the LSOs had so weakened] the CCWI that it was pointless to continue the charade of bipartisanship" (Gertzog 110). The fact that Gertzog calls the CCWI's bipartisanship a "charade" shows its deeply-rooted partisanship (Gertzog 110). This statement also highlights how the members, rather than sharing the cooperative relationship the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues had idealized, actually promote a power complex determined by the dominating political party in legislation. The caucus's goal of bipartisanship is inconceivable when there is little administrative authority controlling these discriminatory behaviors toward the minority party. Without the necessary discipline present in the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, the partisan animosity present within the overall schematic of Congress will seep into this supposedly bipartisan organization. Additionally, the contamination of polarized partisanship within this caucus will eventually produce partisan legislature. This legislature will solely advance the agendas of these parties instead of benefiting the populace as a whole, regardless of partisan affiliation. The creation of

ineffective legislature will create ill-will or distrust of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and this could eventually catalyze the loss of votes and support of female politicians as a whole.

The lack of strength and stability in the bipartisan nature and funding of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues elucidates why this group is considered unreliable to combat the discriminatory obstacles that future and present Congresswomen face in their political careers. This unreliability, produced by partisan tensions, leaves female representatives unprotected from their overwhelming plethora of opposition. This is why the increase in partisanship has so deeply affected the political power of Congresswomen.

EXPEDITION OF RETIREMENT RATES

The election process for congressional positions is a spectacle that elicits a great deal of attention and scrutiny. This emphasis is placed on the campaign process and the election itself comes when there is a vacancy in a congressional seat. These vacancies can occur due to term completion, which occurs every 6 years for Senators and 2 years for House representatives, but there is always the option for these representatives to run for reelection. As a result of the unlimited number of terms a congressional representative can partake in, a representative only truly retires when they lose reelection or when they choose to refrain from engaging in another term. Seeing as the retirement rates for Congresswomen are significantly higher than that of their male counterparts, this leads to the assumption that something is preventing these women from continuing their careers in Congress. Jennifer Lawless and Sean Theriault blame these, "significantly shorter terms" on a "career ceiling" (590). The nature of a "career ceiling" prevents any further growth and progress in the development of one's career in a specific workplace (590). Although men may also face career ceilings, women face these career standstills to a greater extent. This extent can be seen in Congress due to partisan processes that affect the overall efficiency of Congresswomen in their positions. Partisan tensions bolster these career ceilings by preventing Congresswomen from influencing legislature, by using them in a more symbolic manner. For instance, "when Democrats accuse the Republican Party of being antiwomen, Republican women are called on to defend the party against these charges" (Swers 51). The role of Republican women in this scenario is to defend the image of the Republican party. The men of

the Republican party lack the capacity to fortify the claim that their party has no discriminatory values against women, making them dependent on the women of their party to be superficial emblems of gender equality. This implies that the use of these women is dependent on the sheer fact of their gender, making their own legislative capacities irrelevant in the eyes of their political party's partisans and perpetuating their early retirement rates.

The fact that these women are not selected for their intellectual and legislative capabilities displays the true effects of partisan mentality on the roles of the Congresswomen. The Republican and Democratic parties believe that women should be used in an emblematic fashion to ensure the party's image of inclusivity and non-discriminatory practices and thus manufacture more sympathy and votes for the next election. This is not the true role of congressional representatives. The purpose of any congressional representative is to be able manufacture and pass effective legislation for the benefit of his or her constituents. The bolstering of partisan support should be secondary to the production of effective legislature. When partisanship takes away the opportunity for Congresswomen to fulfill the true purpose of their positions, it can decrease these women's motivation and thus leads to early retirement rates. Lawless and Theriault (qtd. Fogarty) prove this notion when they state that "[w]omen are more than 40% more likely than men to retire when their ability to influence the legislative process stalls" (Fogarty 300). These Congresswomen's higher rates of voluntary retirement stem from their lack of progress in legislature and in other realms of politics, which is due to partisan bias.

Higher female retirement rates can also be associated with the differences in authority or influence Congresswomen have compared to their male counterparts. This authority or influence is not only given by official legislative power, but also by the amount of respect the congressional representative gained in the eyes of their peers and political party. The partisan opinion of Congresswomen is particularly demeaning and biased, thus the female representatives in Congress struggle to achieve their goals without higher official authority. For instance, when "[a] male legislator moves from being a chair of a policy committee [...] to simply being a member on that committee, then his probability of retirement increases nearly 40%. The same position change yields a 60% increase in a female member's likelihood of leaving the House," (Lawless and Theriault 587). When a Congresswoman realizes that she might not be viewed as legitimately as a Congressman with the same demotion, she is more likely

to enter early retirement. Along with the dominant partisan method of using female representatives as symbolic measures, these Congresswomen understand that without the additional power of a high-level position to assert their control, they are unlikely to be able to voice their opinions and influence any legislature to the same extent as their male counterparts. These partisan ideologies lead to the formation of a career ceiling, where the effectiveness of the Congresswomen is compromised simply due to their gender.

The increased proportion of Congresswomen departing Congress at earlier rates extends the gap between male and female representatives. The prolongation of this gap along with the emblematic roles of these female representatives send a subliminal message to all future generations of Congresswomen: by identifying as female, there are an overwhelming number of challenges that will prevent these generations from entering and being successful in Congress. Atkeson promotes this idea: "When the contextual environment is diverse and viable cues are sent that politics is an acceptable and appropriate place [for politically underrepresented populations (such as women)], mobilization [of their political engagement] occurs" (1053). The lack of representation and mistreatment of these female representatives portray Congress as an environment that is not viable for the success of female politicians. This "cue" will lead to fewer women who try to overcome these adversities and engage in a congressional career (Atkeson 1053). The lack of "appropriate place" mentioned by Atkeson is caused by the repetitive tactics political parties resort to in order to maintain their dominance (1053). The rapid polarization of the political parties increases their detrimental ramifications, especially regarding their ill effects towards congresswomen.

Political party dominance comes at the price of gender equity in Congress. This cycle repeats itself throughout the generations which allows these parties to solidify their superiority or "political power," similar to the actions of the classes described by Karl Marx. He describes cyclic oppression of certain social classes in history: "Political power, properly so called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another" (Marx 27). The Republican and Democratic parties can be viewed as the "classes" battling for superiority or political power. The synopsis of these proxy wars results in the inhibition of female Congressional representatives as collateral damage. The recurring complex of political party dominance explains why partisan tensions repeatedly affirm the presence of gender disparities. Furthermore, the prevention of elected women's

success ensures the future female politicians' lack of motivation, making them unable to overcome this inequity and spurring early retirement.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, the significance of the gender disparities within Congress was highlighted. Specifically, this analysis of research indicates that the polarization of partisanship yields negative effects on the success of female congressional representatives. The impact of these consequences can be seen throughout the various stages of a Congresswoman's career, and thus can perpetuate gender inequity in the congressional institution. Due to biased ideologies of political parties, many female congressional candidates find difficulty in accessing the funds needed to launch a successful campaign, which could lead to the loss of the election. If female congressional candidates manage to overcome this first obstacle, the partisan-fueled use of Congresswomen in a symbolic manner diminishes the representative's value and efficacy. This reduced level of efficiency can decrease female congressional representatives' motivation, which results in high rates of premature congressional retirement. Along with the low influx of women entering Congress and the rapid efflux of women departing from Congress, partisan tensions and ideologies ensure the persistent disproportionately large representation of men within this legislative body.

Marxist cyclic oppression suggests that the constant oppression of a certain class will become the norm in order to maintain the superiority of another greater body (Marx 14). In order to maintain political dominance or majority in Congress, partisan ideology relies on the demeaning use of women in order to protect its own self-image in the hopes of garnering additional votes for the next election. Political parties with their ideas of male exclusivity prevent women from campaigning for these elections due to the belief that these women are not capable enough to win the campaign for their party. These degrading notions about the abilities of women even seep into the subconscious of the general populace, and thus encourage the repetition of this oppression throughout the generations. Thus, Marxist cyclic oppression reinforces the effects of partisanship on the progress of women in Congress, emphasizing the systematic methods with which the two political parties' competition suppresses the advancement of female congressional representatives. Marxist cyclic oppression in Congress also manifests a constant oppression of a

minority group (Congresswomen) by a majority group (Congressmen) that maintains the majority's dominance.

Further extrapolation on this data is needed to understand how this phenomenon might explain our lack of a female president. It could be said that entrance into the Oval Office would be the highest glass ceiling to break for female politicians, but since most presidential candidates stem from congressional representatives, the hindrances that prevent Congresswomen from being successful in their positions affect their chances in the presidential election as well. An investigation should be conducted to determine if there are similar disadvantages female presidential candidates face compared to their congressional counterparts. Further questioning on whether partisanship is the greatest obstruction these women face, and if they indeed face these disadvantages in the campaign for the presidency is also essential to ensure gender equity is bolstered and maintained in this country's highest level of government.

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Nina Petracca

Aang-Sty Journey of the Avatar: The Journey for Taoist Immortality

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how the Nickelodeon cartoon Avatar: The Last Airbender portrays Taoist belief in immortality, and how this theory relates to the viewers of the show. Taoist philosophy on immortality states that transcendence of the soul and prolongation of the body are the goal for immortal life. For Taoists to achieve immortality, they must become one with Tao through a moral discovery of self. Although Buddhist and Taoist followers share the similar belief that there is one ultimate being, they differ in the idea of the afterlife and how to obtain it. These differing ideas will be compared to better show the strength of Taoism within the cartoon. The basis for Taoism is the yin-yang partnership that emphasizes the importance of internal balance needed to achieve immortality. The Avatar and other characters in this cartoon signify the importance of gender within the yin and yang balance. Confucianism discredits the importance of gender roles within yin and yang, while Taoism defines the universe's beginning as a fertile female entity. The show goes on to mock Confucianism through character interactions and discredits the Confucian belief of the female role within the universe. Avatar: The Last Airbender will be compared to these theories to further discuss Taoist philosophy.

INTRODUCTION

In the ancient Chinese religion of Taoism, the internal balance of the body is the ultimate goal to gain spiritual immortality. The journey for inner balance (or tranquility) within one's self, is how Taoist followers gain the ability to become one with Tao and achieve everlasting life. Yin and yang are harmonizing ideologies consisting of feminine and masculine attributes of consciousness that are directly related to the formation of the Taoist philosophy of balance. The teachings of Taoism are an inspiration for the Nickelodeon cartoon *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko. The show is an American cartoon aimed at children. It follows the journey of the Avatar, named Aang, and his friends, Katara, a water bender from the water tribe, Sokka, a warrior from the water tribe, Toph, an earth and metal bender from the

Earth tribe, and Suki, a Kyoshi warrior. Their journey takes them around the world as they try to defeat the Fire Nation and restore balance to the human race. The Fire Nation is trying to conquer all other bending nations through brute force. Aang must discover his inner balance by opening his Chakras, seven centers within the body associated with different aspects of life. The Avatar spirit is reincarnated, representing a Buddhist belief that the soul goes through phases of birth and rebirth, into a new mortal body after the death of the previous Avatar with spiritual connections to all other Avatars.

According to the show, the key elements that comprise the Earth are the organic material of earth, wind, water, and fire. In the Taoist belief, these natural elements are a part of the cosmic universe. The elements are presented in the show through the different nations of element benders and are collected in the Avatar. The Avatar holds infinite wisdom while controlling the elements through bending, which can be described as the alteration of the earth's elements through psychokinesis, based on the ancient Asian martial arts forms. These elements along with meditation are ultimately the methods the Avatar uses to maintain balance for all living beings within the universe, by discovering his internal tranquility. Inner balance for the Avatar is his ability to become one with Tao and control the Avatar state, a meditative state that brings the Avatar advanced powers. Aang is only a child, so he has to discover his spirituality and master the art of bending to save the world from the Fire Nation, a metaphor not just for reaching adulthood, but for Taoism as well. Through Aang's discovery of his role as the Avatar, he will be able to achieve his immortality and reside among the past Avatars after he has left his physical form, representing the Taoist beliefs of transcendence and immortality. The viewers of the show can relate to Aang through the struggle in discovering themselves and their place in the world. Through my research, I have found that The Avatar is a depiction of the Taoist belief in immortality through transcendence, prolongation of life and internal balance, exposing children and young adults to Taoist ideas that are vital to their development as community members and compassionate human beings.

Taoist teaching portrays the Avatar's role as an immortal force. In this research paper, I will show that the Avatar and other essential characters embody the Taoist teaching and belief in immortality. The first section of this paper addresses Taoist teachings of transcendence, the soul's ability to live beyond the body in the likeness of the universe, through the discovery of Tao. The following section discusses internal balance and the

role yin and yang plays in that balance and within the show. Confucianism, an ancient Chinese religion that gained popularity around the same time as Taoism, will then be compared to Taoism through the lens of gender dynamics within yin and yang, making clear that the show mocks the Confucian belief in gender treatment through Sokka and Suki's characters and showing young viewers the importance of gender equality. The main texts used to make these claims are "Eternal Life in Taoist Mysticism" by Livia Kohn to define Taoist beliefs; "Understanding of Death and Dying for People of Chinese Origin" by Chiung-Yin Hsu to talk about different death rituals; and "Towards Body-Mind-Spirit Integration: East Meets West in Clinical Social Work Practice" by Pamela Leung to define yin and yang. The English translation of the "Tao Te Ching" by David Hinton, a book of Taoist teachings, accurately represents Taoist beliefs and will be used to compare to the show. In other words, I will be exploring the claim that the Avatar in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* represents the religion of Taoism, and the moral path Taoist followers take to gain spiritual immortality.

DISCOVERY OF "SELF" AND THE AFTERLIFE

The Avatar's physical abilities beyond the human body's normal capabilities represent the Taoist ideology in physical immortality. The first episode takes the viewer to the ocean in the South Pole where Aang is frozen in an iceberg in the Avatar state, a meditative experience that causes the avatar to have magical strength and powers. The Avatar has limited awareness of his actions in this state, except for the events of a later season, when he opens all his Chakras. Aang is frozen for 100 years in the iceberg, but still has the features of a twelve-year-old boy. The Avatar, Aang, is the only being in humanity with the ability to enter the Avatar state, and without it, Aang would not have been able to survive in the ocean and preserve his young body. The Avatar state is an explicit representation of immortality within the show. According to Taoist teachings, "immortality is the prolongation of physical life and the ultimate achievement of human beings" (Hsu 167). Followers of the Avatar receive the confidence that the Avatar is a higher being than any average human since this prolongation of life, an example of immortality, is not likely for the non-mystical mortal human. In agreement with Hsu, Kohn describes physical properties that immortal beings possess: "[Transcendents] are seen to be long-lived and beyond death, they have magical powers and

can control nature” (622). The Avatar shows all of these physical traits that Kohn states are transcended, or immortal, being possessed. The Avatar’s ability to control nature by bending all four elements and controlling the Avatar state portrays these magical powers. The Avatar’s body is seen as long-lived; however, his physical being is still perceived as mortal with the ability to prolong his life, and this mortality is evidenced by previous Avatars that have passed before Aang. For the Avatar to successfully guide the human race, he must cast his spirit in human form. The Avatar being human makes him more relatable to other humans and more capable of dealing with Earthly problems. A relatable example of this to the American public is the idea of Christians following Jesus, a mortal with mystical powers, spreading the word of God. The Avatar shows physical immortality through the mystical capabilities his body possesses beyond the average human capacities, while still being relatable to humans in a mortal body.

The Taoist belief in transcendence is more prominent in the Avatar’s incarnations than the Buddhist path to Nirvana. Reincarnation is a Buddhist belief that the soul goes through continuous stages of “birth-death-rebirth,” that the same soul is continuously born into a new body after the previous one dies, taking on a new personality and having little to no knowledge of the previous persona (Hsu 161). The Avatar’s character is the only character in the show that is said to experience the cycle of reincarnation. The Buddhist ideal of the afterlife contrasts the Taoist belief that the transcended soul becomes one with the universe. Nirvana is the end goal for Buddhist immortality where “humans travel the Path of Liberation to Nirvana, escaping the endless cycle of birth and death” (qtd. in Hsu 162). In other words, the goal Buddhists strive to attain is to escape the universal soul connections and be one individual soul in Heaven as the current personality (Nirvana). By contrast, the universal Avatar soul is one with the cosmic universe and therefore the soul is no longer one identity. One identity is never a goal for the Avatar. Their spirits thrive as one. Taoists believe that “the mind is made one with true spirit, with the functions of the Tao; the adept survives in eternity as a spirit being,” and when the Taoist followers become one spiritually with Tao they will gain an everlasting and eternal soul among the cosmic and universal spirit (Kohn 629). This idea is similar to the Buddhist belief in Nirvana but differs in the sense of the spirit becoming a part of Tao instead of achieving Nirvana and residing alongside a God in Heaven. The Avatar spirit serves a higher purpose within the universe than most humans.

Therefore, the Avatar spirit needs a permanence within the universe as opposed to the individual satisfaction of residing in Heaven. As long as the natural world is vulnerable to destruction, the continuous cycle of the transcended Avatar spirits will persist on Earth and in the spirit world, becoming one with Tao and diluting the idea that the Avatar should reach individual Nirvana.

The Avatar's individual incarnations and personalities show the Taoist belief in transcendence. Transcendence is the ability of the soul to live beyond the body within the universe. The individual spirits of the previous Avatars live within Aang, but also inhabit the spirit world. The spirit world in the show is a realm within the universe that is only inhabited by spirits, and though spirits can freely pass to and from the human world, humans cannot enter the spirit world. The Avatar is the only human with the ability to enter the spirit world through meditation. Taoists believe transcendence is "a permanence on earth and a freedom from all mundane strife" (Kohn 623). In other words, the transcendent, who within the show are represented by the incarnated Avatar spirits, are still inhabiting the earth in spirit form and within Aang, but no longer share the burden of protecting humanity as they had in their former life. The role of the past Avatars is to guide the current Avatar in protecting the universe. Similarly, the ever-changing Avatar role represents that "both individual and universal soul are eternal and inextinguishable" (Jones 141). Each separate Avatar identity makes up the individual soul. The totality of reincarnated Avatars residing in one body make up the universal soul, and this soul transcends to become one with the universe. The Taoist belief in transcendence is apparent through the many different Avatar spirits that freely flow from the human world into the spirit world, and transcendence gives the viewers comfort in the idea that a spirit world exists for souls that have departed beyond the body, along with the idea that there is a place within the universe that these spirits inhabit after death.

The Avatar must become one with Tao to gain spiritual immortality and connect with his past reincarnations. According to the *Tao Te Ching*, Tao stands for "ultimate being" and the "path" that is followed to maintain harmony with all that is natural within the universe. The art of bending within Avatar manipulates the natural forces of the universe to create or disrupt the Earth's balance, and the Avatar is the only bender with the ability to master all Earth elements in one physical body. The unity of all elements in one being is important in discovering awareness

to defeat the Fire Nation, the main antagonist force within the show. To master this quality of unity, the Avatar must establish complete oneness with Tao. Discovering the Tao is how Taoists achieve immortality, and Taoist teachings describe immortality in a way that “means an eternity, an everlasting life of the individual mind and body as they were meant originally: replicas of the universe, parts of primordial energy, spirit, and the Tao” (Kohn 638). Through the *Tao Te Ching* it is taught that Tao has no beginning and no end, and within the show, the Avatar must embody and develop as a part of the timeless energy. If the Avatar becomes one with Tao, his spirit will exist forever within the universe, allowing for continual reincarnation. In order to gain a full understanding of the universe, the Avatar must connect with and be guided by his previous incarnations. Humans need a guiding force to gain Kohn’s representation of Taoist immortality, and the current Avatar is the steward of the Tao for mortal humans and is of human form himself. In order to teach the way of harmony to the human race, the Avatar must “not preach morals or compliance with convention but demonstrate by example and live in accordance with eternal Tao” (Roberts 946). The way of Tao cannot be taught through conventional teaching methods like preaching, rather, the role of the Avatar is to guide humanity toward the “path” by the example of his own Tao discovery. The Avatar’s teaching method leads by admirable example in order to show his followers that they are equals and his actions should be emulated by all humans, in other words, in becoming one with Tao and passing on its teachings to others, the Avatar spirit and his followers become a part of an endless universal being that is the Tao. Viewers of the show learn how to be an outstanding and compassionate human by learning from the Avatar’s journey in discovering Tao due to his positive actions toward humanity and the Earth.

One prominent example of this positive action within the show is as follows: through the Avatar’s compassion and ability to forgive, he helps Zuko’s character, an antagonist and prince of the Fire Nation, discover the path of Tao and accepts him as his fire master. Zuko is a misguided soul in search of his destiny. At the start of the series, Zuko’s prerogative is to hunt the Avatar. By the end, his goal changes. He seeks out the Avatar to help stop his own nation from spreading hate. Zuko’s internal struggle with morality is imperative to the plot of the show because it shows that anyone can gain internal balance related to Tao and peace, gaining the ability to forgive and the skill to want beyond his own selfish desires. Kopf describes this same achievement of self-discovery by stating,

“self-awareness reveals not only the elusiveness of what we call “self” but also its intimate relationship to the totality of existence” (qtd. in Kopf 51). Self is one being that, as a collection, makes up the total existence of the cosmic universe. One must find themselves to become one with the universe but must have the ability to let go of selfish desires. For Taoists, finding Tao is the highest achievement in the discovery of self. When Zuko discovers his place in the universe he learns to become one with the Avatar spirit, promoting peace for the world as a whole, and Zuko’s character development shows that “the way to ease suffering begins with cultivating an insight into the impermanent nature of the universe and the practice of non-attachment, an attitude of letting go and following the flow of life” (Leung 304). Leung describes the process that it takes to release the mind from selfish attachments and how to allow yourself to flow with natural order. Zuko’s character struggles with this at the beginning of the series. His ability to forgive himself and let go of the attachment to his past—in other words, learning to become one with Tao—grants him the ability to find his true internal happiness. Zuko’s struggle and the Avatar’s acceptance of him leaves viewers with the idea that forgiveness and acceptance are more powerful than holding on to regret.

INTERNAL BALANCE

The Avatar achieves internal balance, gains immortality, and saves the universe because of the presence of yin and yang. According to Leung, yin is the female entity that is cold, distant and dark; yang is the male entity that is warm, welcoming and light. The Avatar, figuratively, possesses these male and female characteristics within himself, as in season two (*The Guru* 00:09:45-00:10:45), when Aang allows himself to experience dark thoughts within his mind in order to release them and let his seven Chakras flow openly, which allows Aang to control the Avatar state. Leung explains how human order is defined through stating “the yin-yang perspective is a challenge to the neatness of dichotomy and an emphasis on the importance of dynamic balance” (Leung 304). In other words, yin and yang are opposing forces which flow harmoniously between one another to create balance within, and the Avatar needs this internal balance of light and dark in order to be aware of the decisions he is going to make, become one with Tao, and save humanity. To emphasize the importance of the dynamic free-flowing change, Kohn states that “he or she rides on the changes and joins in the interplay of yin and yang”

(629). In other words, Kohn is implying that yin and yang are free-flowing and ever-changing entities representing different emotions, and since the Avatar is of the human form, he experiences these changes of warm and cold emotions, ultimately making it harder to react to events that teach him how to control his awareness. Aang experiences an internal struggle throughout the series relating to his emotions as a mortal human and his role as the immortal Avatar, and without the yin-yang balance, the Avatar cannot make the best decisions for humanity and the universe. Aang's character constantly encounters situations regarding the safety of humanity that require his mind and emotions to be free-flowing. For the Avatar to achieve perfect balance and become one with Tao, he has to begin by fostering his inner yin-yang balance through meditation, awareness, and action. It is Aang's awareness of the yin-yang binary within himself which demonstrates to young viewers that in the development of themselves, they must find emotional balance to help them decipher right from wrong.

Viewers not only see the balancing characteristics of yin and yang within the Avatar's personality but also in the representation of yin-yang entities as immortal characters in the show. Yin and yang are represented in the show as immortal spirits of the moon and the ocean, "dancing in an eternal relationship" for all time. Iroh, the former Fire Lord and Zuko's uncle, states in the show that "the Ocean and Moon gave up their immortality to become a part of our [mortal human] world" (*The Siege of the North* 00:07:36-00:07:43). The cartoon clearly states the Taoist belief that yin and yang are immortal entities. The teachings of the *Tao Te Ching* describe the separation of the yin-yang spirit as follows: when "yang rose up to become sky and yin sunk down to form earth," and this is shown in the cartoon through the two spirit's separation of moon, or sky; and ocean, or earth; exactly as Iroh states within the show (Hinton 125). The ocean and the moon are spirits of the earth that control the movement of water; without this balance the ocean would overrun the land, making it nearly impossible for humans to inhabit the earth. The spirits of yin and yang also take a mortal form in the bodies of two Koi fish, one black with a white spot and the other white with a black spot. These colors represent the characteristics that each being has of the other; this represents balance. Olesia states that in ancient China, to be near a Koi fish symbolized the attraction of good fortune and spiritual benefits. In other words, good fortune and spiritual benefit are brought to the earth through the spirit's acceptance of a mortal form. As just one example, human life can now

survive on earth because the moon controls the tides, and in the show, the physical Koi fish represented gain a prolonged life dating back to the creation of the earth to help balance the natural world. Similar to the yin-yang spirits, the Avatar resides in his mortal form on Earth, giving up his immortal place in the spirit world for the betterment of the human race. In becoming mortal, the spirits of yin and yang show selfless action. They show the Taoist belief of prolonged life through their mortal bodies, which are still capable of death. They may have given up their immortality in the spirit world to inhabit the mortal world, but their bodies still represent the Taoist belief in immortality through prolongation of the physical body. By explaining the characters of yin and yang through a literal representation, a younger viewer gets a better understanding of the concept of balance and the importance of selfless action.

CONFUCIAN AND TAOIST DIFFERING GENDER BELIEFS

Viewers are taught the importance of gender equality through the show's Taoist portrayal of gender importance in the yin-yang balance. Confucianism and Taoism are based on the teachings of the yin-yang balance, but they do not see eye to eye on the importance of gender clarification in these entities. Gender plays an essential role in both Taoist teachings and yin and yang. By contrast, Confucianism denies the importance of distinguishing gender in the yin-yang partnership, and the difference between Confucian and Taoist beliefs of yin and yang illustrate societal views in China on gender during the period these philosophies gained popularity. The Confucian importance, or lack thereof, placed in gender relating to yin and yang is that "the yin-yang binary was not intended to signify any human relations (gender)...but the harmony of human nature" (Yun 585). In other words, Confucian philosophy suggests that human nature does not need to be defined by gender, removing any sexuality that may encompass the balancing interplay and any power that may be given to the female role. During the rise of Confucianism, women were not thought of very highly, which may explain why the need to eliminate important female qualities existed. According to scholars "the differential, secondary, and often brutal treatment of women in China over the centuries had its support, if not its origins, in Confucianism" (Nyitray 145). The negative treatment that women dealt with in ancient China during the Confucius reign was emphasized by the removal of

female importance from the yin-yang spirit. On the other hand, in the Taoist teaching, the male and female balance is represented as a relationship between the genders, which helps make women human for Taoist followers. To justify the importance of the female role in yin, women in Taoism are “represented as the cosmic force of yin, complimentary of the male yang, reflecting both the universal presence of yin and its expression in sexuality and fertility” (Despeux 6). Sexuality and fertility are idolized throughout history in the female body. Taoists find fertility so important because the female form gives birth to the universe. The gender of these entities is evident through the balance that the many characters in the show depict. The importance that Taoists place in the female role in fertility disproves the Confucian idea that gender is not significant within the yin-yang cosmic force.

In contrast to Confucianism, the show’s Taoist representation in celebrating the female form, viewers learn from a young age to respect and place the same importance in both male and female genders. The balance of human sexuality within the cartoon is seen through Aang and Katara’s character relationship; they share an innocent chemistry that young viewers relate to when experiencing their first crushes and love interests. Yin or yang traits are not limited to one gender or the other; they are simply more dominant in some. The characters each contain both parts of the yin-yang balance. Dominant female characteristics that are representative of yin are visible through the strong and sometimes hard-headed personalities of the main female characters: Katara, Toph, and Azula. Aang, Sokka, and Zuko are the main male characters of the show and possess passive qualities relative to yang. Azula and Zuko’s sibling relationship portrays this balance well: even though Zuko is hot-headed, his character development shows his ability to gain balance and foster his inner yang. Taoist views toward women within the show are represented by the mocking of the Confucian treatment of women through character interactions. Sokka’s character development shows his personal growth from the Confucian ideology of the belittlement of women to the Taoist belief in gender equality and admiration. Sokka’s view toward women stems from the way his tribe views women, evident in *The Siege of the North* episode. Women of the Northern Water Tribe are not permitted to use their bending skills; they are limited to only using their gift for healing. Sokka’s original view toward women supports the Confucian theory that women are inferior to men and that “the female ideal had been that of virtuous wife and good mother, meaning

it was a woman's duty to create the optimal family and home environment necessary to build a harmonious state" (Nyitray 150). The idea of a harmonious state represents the home that was made comfortable for men by the labor of women. In the episode *The Warriors of Kyoshi*, Sokka is challenged to fight the character, Suki, after he mocks her ability to fight better than him. Sokka's attitude in dismissing the female warriors as "just girls" represents the Confucian ideology, in other words, that only men can be strong warriors, which the show mocks when the Kyoshi warriors "sneak attack" Sokka in the woods. The Kyoshi warriors symbolize the strength that Taoism believes the female role incorporates. Yueh-Ting Lee compares gender significance among ancient religions by saying, "if many philosophical and religious ideas tend to maintain male superiority or dominance, directly or indirectly (e.g., Confucianism...), Daoism differs because females play a more important role in humanism than males" (73). In this context, humanism is the pursuit of human interest based on the religious journey. Taoists believe that female cosmic energy is the source of the universe. Lee supports this comparison of religions by stating the belief expressed in the Tao-Te-Ching that women and mothers are the creators of all things, including the universe through fertility, whereas in other religions the creator is usually presented as a male figure (72). The exposure to strong female characters and the character development of Sokka shows young viewers that all genders are capable of anything if they work hard enough.

CONCLUSION

The show, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, represents Taoist belief in immortality through character interactions and internal self-discovery. The Avatar's journey in discovering himself teaches viewers how to be strong and participatory members of a group. The Taoist belief in immortality promotes community and forgiveness. When characters Toph and Katara get into an argument about doing their fair share of work when setting up camp, they apologize to each other and express why they were feeling so strongly in their stance as the episode progresses. Exposing children to characters who are around their own age acting with emotional maturity makes those traits relatable and desirable, and the good behavior of the characters sets an example for how humans should treat other humans and how they, the viewers, themselves want to be treated. Their development and maturity seen by viewers give them insight into

handling their own daily struggles. Additionally, throughout the gang's nomadic journey, they are constantly tested and called upon to help different communities, and without hesitation, they rise to the challenge and do all that they can to help. In acting in this selfless manner, as Taoist teachings promote, viewers learn to act compassionately and genuinely. Balance, self-awareness, unity, and equality are the main teachings of Taoism that are represented in the Nickelodeon cartoon. *Avatar: The Last Airbender* breaks down complex Taoist teachings into relatable situations for children, to help make them better human beings for one another and for the Earth.

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Janelle Raymundo

Under Pressure: Influence of Culture on Mental Health for Asian-American Honors Students

ABSTRACT

Mental well-being is an increasing concern across institutions of higher education in the United States, particularly for those in the highly competitive, top programs and universities. But, as these colleges and programs become more diverse, new approaches to mental health are necessary. Using the theory of ethnic identity and the model minority myth, this paper explores the cultural influences of mental health for honors students, focusing on Asian-Americans specifically. Parallels between the honors student population and Asian-American population will be drawn in order to illustrate the variety of challenges faced by these students. The key cultural and societal factors that negatively impact Asian-American honors students' mental health will be addressed, as well as how culture can be utilized to promote mental well-being.

In the United States, collegiate honors programs are typically thought to be beneficial experiences for high-achieving students. In consideration of the intensity of these honors programs, more research has focused on their psychological impact on students, particularly in regard to students' mental well-being. Much of the research has been dedicated to exploring the issue of mental health among honors college students in terms of psychological risk and protective factors, but few studies have focused on the influence of cultural background. Institutions of higher education have become more diverse over the years, but Asian-American students tend to have a larger presence in top programs and colleges. According to an analysis of federal data on 100 universities by the New York Times, "Blacks and Hispanics remain underrepresented at other top universities... The largest growth has often been among Asian students" whose enrollment at many of these top universities are more than double that of Blacks or Hispanics (Ashkenas et al. 6). Despite their prevalence in

higher education, fewer studies have been dedicated to the Asian-American student population. This is perhaps due to the model minority myth, which perpetuates the belief that these students are naturally successful and do not struggle in school. Examining Asian-American students would provide a more accurate depiction of their experiences in honors programs and how culture affects their mental health.

To examine the role of culture in Asian-American honors college students' mental health, this paper will use Schlesinger and Devore's theory of ethnic identity. This theory asserts the importance of ethnicity and culture to one's identity, and has been widely applied to culturally-sensitive social work practice (Schlesinger and Devore). Asian-American culture, the model minority myth, and the honors environment cause high expectations from family, school, and society, resulting in increased risk for poor mental health. In consideration of these complex factors, culturally-appropriate mental health services and support is necessary for improving the mental well-being of these students. This paper will begin by examining the honors college environment and discuss the ethnic identity theory as a lens with which to analyze the honors student experience. Next, this paper will review common psychological explanations for these students' mental health issues and how culture may offer a better perspective, then delve into the role of the model minority myth as a specific cultural factor influencing mental health, followed by an illustrative case study on Asian-American honors students. Rather than inherent psychological factors, cultural values and perceptions in conjunction with the honors setting negatively impact Asian-American honors students' mental health.

HONORS COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

Understanding the role of culture in Asian-American honors student experiences first requires an understanding of what honors colleges and programs entail. Honors colleges and programs are believed to be beneficial spaces for high-achieving students to thrive in higher education settings. Nicholas Bowman and KC Culver from the University of Iowa's Center for Research on Undergraduate Education found that most honors colleges "provide smaller class sizes, more interaction with tenured and tenure-track faculty, and greater challenge for students with high academic ability" (Bowman and Culver 250). Researchers of issues higher education from Indiana University and the University of South Florida Angie

Miller and Amber Dumford found that fundamental aspects of honors programs and colleges also include “distinct and more academically rigorous versions of general education courses” which can lead to even more demanding advanced courses in the future (Miller and Dumford 219). Furthermore, Bowman and Culver found that honors students spend significantly more time and effort preparing for and participating in class and internships (252). Meeting all of these requirements for a collegiate honors program may be too difficult, strenuous, or time-consuming for students, as “only 41% to 50% of students who started in the honors college actually completed all of the requirements for the program” (Miller and Dumford 232). This suggests that the honors environment can still be challenging for students, even if they are seen as high-achieving, and require support in order to succeed.

Honors students’ rigorous coursework, increased faculty interaction, and greater academic effort create an environment of high expectations. According to Bowman and Culver, “honors students defined themselves as ‘more likely than the non-honors student to be intellectually curious, highly motivated, possessing good study habits, and having a tendency to be compulsively driven to work hard’...[T]hey also point to the possibility that students’ behaviors and attitudes are shaped by being labeled as academically gifted” (252). Thus, being labeled as an honors student creates certain expectations to excel and succeed, whether self-imposed or imposed by others. This type of atmosphere, however, can have negative consequences for students’ well-being if they are unable to meet these expectations – a common stressor for Asian-American honors students that will be discussed later on in the paper.

ETHNIC IDENTITY

The honors environment itself can be seen as a stressor that impacts honors students’ mental health, but cultural factors may uncover a deeper understanding of what else might contribute to poor mental health outcomes among honors students, specifically Asian-American students. To examine the influence of cultural background on Asian-American honors students, this paper will use the theory of ethnic identity, which was first applied by social worker researchers Schlesinger and Devore. According to Schlesinger and Devore, “Ethnic identity essentially involves a sense of belonging... As we go about our lives—as women and men, significant others, children, parents, workers—we approach life

from some sense of who we are at core, a part of which is ethnic identity” (9). Ethnic identity is also a vital aspect of personal development, influencing behavior and perspectives of life. Schlesinger and Devore explain that “as children become more aware of their ethnic identity, they are likely to experience racial and ethnic discrimination... Adolescents, who have such experiences, may develop incidents of depression and a pessimistic attitude” (9-10). Ethnic identity is highly salient in the United States, where many immigrants must balance their different cultures. For younger generations, they may face “parental pressure to retain the ‘old ways,’ including retention of the native language, staying within the ethnic community, and engaging in familiar behaviors. At the same time, as they are trying to develop a sense of self that includes the habits and customs of this country, parental pressure appears to stand in their way” (Schlesinger and Devore 10). While ethnic identity can be a source of confusion and discrimination, it can also provide “a source of strength highlighting the group’s resources as a way of dealing with the problems” (Schlesinger and Devore 11). Thus, ethnic identity theory can reveal the complexity of culture, and examining Asian-Americans’ ethnic identity can provide new insight into the potential mental health challenges and solutions for Asian-American honors college students.

PSYCHOLOGICAL VS. CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH

The mental health issues that arise in the honors college environment discussed by Bowman and Culver and Miller and Dumford are commonly attributed to psychological explanations, but Schlesinger and Devore’s theory of ethnic identity offers a different perspective. Given the challenging and rigorous environment of honors colleges and programs, the mental health of honors students has become an increasing concern, with much of the current research examining specific psychological factors that may lead to mental health issues. Tracy Cross, executive director of the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William & Mary, and her team identified five different personality profiles of honors students with a range of maladaptive characteristics that increased risk of suicidal ideation. Students with high perfectionism, neuroticism, and introversion “had very high expectations for their own perfect behavior and believed that others have high expectations for their perfect behavior. Although they appeared to be model students, the neuroticism and high SPP [so-

cially prescribed perfectionism] could make them vulnerable to depression” (Cross et al. 263). Cross et al. gives a compelling argument for the impact of personality on honors students’ mental health outcomes since personality is generally thought to be stable throughout an individual’s lifetime, but this perspective does not consider the influence of culture on personality. While it may seem that perfectionism, introversion, and neuroticism are only natural for intelligent, high-achieving students, cross-cultural studies that show cultural influences on personality traits may suggest that these traits can be a result of culture, not inherent psychology. In one study on Japanese, Japanese-Americans, and European-Americans, the authors found that Japanese-American “immigrants’ personality seemed to become more ‘American’ and less ‘Japanese’ as immigrants participated in the mainstream culture in the United States” (Gungor et al. 711). This study refutes the idea that personality is constant, and reveals that personality can be influenced by culture. Moreover, while European-Americans viewed Japanese-Americans as maintaining their native cultural background, native Japanese viewed Japanese-Americans as “Americanized” (Gungor et al. 712). Thus, culture plays a key role in personality, and immigrants’ culture remains a salient part of their identity in the United States. Schlesinger and Devore define this process as assimilation, or the extent of “the persistence of ethnicity, and whether and to what extent immigrants retain a sense of identity with their original ethnic groups” and their theory of ethnic identity “supports the view of the persistence of ethnicity” (12). Therefore, culture is an important factor that contributes to immigrants’ sense of identity, ability to adjust to a new environment, and in turn their mental health, which is especially important for Asian-Americans who balance their two cultures.

To further illustrate the importance of ethnic culture, other studies on Asian-American college students show that they face similar struggles with mental health as honors students do. A study led by Y. Joel Wong, a researcher on Asian-American health at Indiana University, asked participants why Asian-American college students might consider suicide. High expectations and meeting the high expectations of others was a common risk factor of suicide ideation that both Cross et al. and Wong et al. found in their students. According to Cross et al., honors students “had very high expectations for their own perfect behavior and believed that others have high expectations for their perfect behavior” which contributed to increase risk in suicidal ideation and depression (263). Likewise, Wong et al.’s participants explained that “...expectations

that one's family imposed, especially in the area of academic achievement" could lead Asian-American college students to consider suicide (204). Whereas Cross et al. attributed these issues to personality, Wong et al. identified that Asian-American culture's emphasis on family and interpersonal relationships are important contributors to mental health issues. This suggests that culture must also be taken into consideration when examining the sources of honors college students' distress.

MODEL MINORITY MYTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

The perception described by Cross et al. that honors students are more successful or superior than non-honors students is actually quite similar to the model minority myth, indicating another area in which culture is relevant to the mental health considerations of honors students. Hyung Chol Yoo, an associate professor of Asian Pacific American Studies at Arizona State University, offers a closer inspection on the impact on the model minority myth's impact on Asian-American college students by measuring the internalization of the model minority myth. Yoo et al. states that the model minority myth "suggests that not only are Asian Americans successful, but they are more successful than other racial minority groups... [which is] attributed to stronger values emphasizing hard work, achievement, and belief in the American dream" (114-115). Honors students face similar perceptions, as they "defined themselves as 'more likely than the non-honors student to be intellectually curious, highly motivated, possessing good study habits, and having a tendency to be compulsively driven to work hard'" (Bowman and Culver 252). Even Cross et al. found that honors students "had very high expectations for their own perfect behavior and believed that others have high expectations for their perfect behavior" (263). These expectations of achievement, perfection, and strong work ethic are shared by Asian-American students and honors students, indicating a potential double burden placed on Asian-American honors students to be successful.

Unlike Wong et al., who suggest that the model minority myth is an Asian cultural phenomenon, Yoo et al. attributed it as an American one. Wong et al. argue that the interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior is particularly relevant for Asian-Americans because "its emphasis on negative interpersonal states as suicidal desire risk factors is congruent with Asian cultural norms, which place interpersonal relationships as paramount" (198). Wong et al. found that "unfulfilled

expectations influence Asian American college students' suicide ideation (endorsed by 99.7% of participants, $n = 287$),” with unfulfilled family expectations being the most commonly endorsed risk factor (204). For Wong et al., the source of these expectations is cultural values, but for Yoo et al., it derives from American society's misconceptions as illustrated by model minority myth. Yoo et al. argue that the idea of the model minority is a myth because it “ignores the heterogeneity of Asian American groups and their varied levels of success,” “neglects history and the role of selective immigration of Asian Americans,” “overlooks social and cultural context factors,” and “minimizes actual experiences of racism” in order to promote the idea that the U.S. is “truly color-blind and racist free” (115). Furthermore, Yoo et al. focuses on how American society's misperceptions of Asian-Americans' success through the model minority myth negatively impact Asian-Americans' well-being, rather than Asian-American cultural values only. As the authors explain, “Asian Americans who internalize the model minority myth... falsely endorse their racial group as problem-free and successful may be at greater risk of not seeking help to deal with their personal academic and mental health problems, at the cost of embarrassment or shame of not living up to the model minority myth” (Yoo et al. 116). This can be extremely isolating, as these individuals may believe that they are the only ones who are struggling due to the widespread belief in American society that Asian-Americans are supposed to be successful. Thus, the model minority myth can be viewed as an American cultural phenomenon that can be internalized by Asian-Americans as they live within the dominant American culture. This perhaps indicates a combined pressure from both American society's image of Asian-Americans and Asian-Americans' own perceptions of themselves that may put them at greater risk for mental health problems when unable to live up to these images.

ASIAN-AMERICAN HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS

With a better understanding of the implications of culture through the ethnic identity theory, this section will examine one of the very few studies on Asian-American honors college students, tying together the themes of rigorous academic environment, struggle with high expectations, and pressure from stereotypes and perfectionism for both honors and Asian-American students. Malik Henfield and his research team from the University of Iowa interviewed Asian-American honors

college students to understand their experiences in honors programs. Based on their analysis of the interviews, the authors concluded that Asian-American students experience stress due to several factors within their environment. According to the authors, "Setting and achieving high academic goals, meeting parents' expectations, and balancing academic requirements and social needs were also common phenomena. To obtain a high GPA, participants reported having to work hard and be self-disciplined, which led to feelings of extreme stress and very little social life" (Henfield et al. 142). As previously discussed, researchers found that honors students' belief that others expect perfection in their academic performance and Asian-American students' familial expectations of academic achievement both contribute to negative mental health outcomes, such as suicidal ideation (Cross et al. 261; Wong et al. 204). Therefore, Asian-American honors students face multiple obstacles to a positive mental state: ambitious personal goals, familial expectations, and honors academic requirements.

Lack of diversity and cultural sensitivity on campus, including issues with stereotyping and racism, were also sources of stress for Asian-American honors students. The students interviewed by Henfield et al. described being stereotyped, explaining, "The worst thing was that I felt like a stereotypical Asian student... I was stereotyped as a nerd . . . I felt pressured to destroy such stereotypes, but I also took a little pride in being a nerd because being smart was a major part of my identity and the best way to survive" (Henfield et al. 144). This stereotyping can be dangerous since "Asian Americans who internalize the misleading model minority image, even if positive, can be damaged psychologically if he or she cannot live up to his or her own and society's expectations" (Yoo et al. 115). Yoo et al. also expands on this feeling of pride described by the student in Henfield et al., explaining that the model minority myth's positive view of Asian-Americans' work ethic and success "may have some benefits related to ethnic group pride" (Yoo et al. 123). This ties back to Schlesinger and Devore's theory of ethnic identity, which suggests that ethnic and cultural identity can be a source of strength (11). Overall, Henfield et al.'s study illustrates the complex situation created from both environmental and cultural factors that Asian-American honors students may find challenging to navigate, thus impacting their mental health.

CULTURALLY-APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS FOR HONORS STUDENTS

In consideration of these various cultural factors influencing students' mental health, culturally-appropriate services and support is necessary for improving the mental well-being of Asian-American honors students. Samuel Museus, the founding director of the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Project at Indiana University, provides recommendations for practices that could improve outcomes for this population. The difficulties associated with being labeled as "a stereotypical Asian student" may be addressed by "strengthen[ing] epistemological connections to their home cultures and communities" to ease any shame that students' may feel from discrimination (Henfield et al. 144; Museus et al. 496). For example, a student said that in her Asian-American ethnic studies class "...we learned about different stereotypes of Asian students... I learned a lot... of things that I felt growing up or now that I didn't necessarily know how to explain or understand... [I]t helped me gain a better understanding of my background... [I]t also tied me to the [campus] community" (Museus et al 496). These cultural connections also address issues that arise from internalizing the model minority myth, such as the lack of help-seeking behaviors when struggling with academic and mental health problems (Yoo et al. 116). Connections with other Asian-Americans can help dispel this myth and encourage help-seeking behaviors, as one student describes his Vietnamese student organization, "We try to reach out to people so they can feel there's more, you're not just alone, you can come to us any time for help, or you can try to express yourself to other people who are like you, get to know new people, expand contacts, get more friends, and just really have a good time" (Museus et al. 496). Asian-American students' on-campus cultural community can also act as a source of support and comfort where students can find others who accept and understand them, which can even serve as a protective factor against mental health issues. The authors also suggest offering opportunities for "problem based research projects and service... [A]ctivities that promote transformational connections can have a positive impact on students' motivation to succeed, as well as their knowledge of how they can utilize education and knowledge to make the world a better place for their families and communities" (Museus et al. 501). In their research on honors programs, Miller and Dumford found that a majority of programs have research components, indicating a po-

tential compatibility for incorporating cultural learning opportunities for students in honors college programs (219). Empowering students to use their education to help their own communities can help prevent negative self-perceptions of Asian-Americans which may result from being unable to meet certain expectations stemming from cultural and societal pressures. Positive self-perceptions and views of their ethnic identity and culture can also improve mental well-being while correcting misconceptions of Asian-Americans. Through increasing cultural connection on campus, Asian-American and other ethnic minority students may find a more welcoming environment where they can succeed and promote their mental well-being.

CONCLUSION

While mental health has been a growing concern among honors college students, few studies have been dedicated to examining the role of culture, and even fewer have analyzed Asian-American students' experiences. Schlesinger and Devore's theory of ethnic identity provides a meaningful perspective on the issue. The commonly accepted psychological explanation of personality factors negatively impacting honors students' mental health may actually have cultural influences that are more prominent, especially among immigrant populations who must balance their ethnic identities as they assimilate to American culture. The model minority myth is closely related to the high expectations of perfection and success among Asian-American students, similar to the expectations placed on honors students. Asian cultural values of family and interpersonal relationships combined with American cultural misconceptions of Asian-Americans fuel high expectations from family, school, and society for Asian-American honors students. Therefore, these students face more risks for their mental well-being. Based on these findings, ethnic and cultural identity remains a salient and influential factor that must be accounted for when working with honors students. Culturally-appropriate support on campus through social and co-curricular opportunities is necessary for improving the mental well-being of Asian-American and other minority honors college students.

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Brandon Wang

The Death Penalty: A Construction of Humane Punishment

ABSTRACT

Over the past several decades, the constitutionality of the death penalty in the US justice system has been the subject of intense debate. While anti-death penalty sentiments have gained traction, the Supreme Court and pro-death penalty activists continue to defend its legality staunchly. Out of all Westernized developed nations, the US remains the one country that has yet to abolish the death penalty. This paper weighs the ethical and constitutional standing of the death penalty and offers insight on the future implications of the death penalty's multitude of controversies. Through research-based scholarly analysis, 8th Amendment violations, Hippocratic Oath infringements, and racial discrimination concerns are investigated. Ultimately, a strong argument supporting the abolition of the death penalty is developed, and the life without parole sentence is offered as its ethically and constitutionally sound replacement.

INTRODUCTION

Since capital punishment (e.g., the death penalty) was first implemented in the US justice system in the 17th century, its ethics and constitutionality have been questioned and debated up to the present day. Despite growing anti-death penalty sentiments in the past 20 years, state legislatures continue to hold power over capital punishment and its use in state law. Though measures have been taken to make the death penalty more “humane” and adhere to constitutional principles along the lines of the 8th Amendment with the introduction of lethal drug injections, questions over its ethics persist. Groups opposed to capital punishment advocate for the replacement of lethal injection with life sentences without parole. While the death penalty remains constitutional in 31 states and US federal jurisdiction, many ethical concerns such as racial discrimination and the vague interpretations of capital punishment eligibility continue to be used to argue against the justifications for capital punishment. Out of all developed Western countries, the United States remains the one country that continues to maintain the institution of capital punish-

ment for crimes such as murder (Alper 28). In order to further examine the ethics of lethal injections and capital punishment within American society, other controversies and debates must be addressed. This paper will weigh the negative impacts of capital punishment on American society through judicial, ethical, financial, and constitutional lenses, using scholarly articles and case studies to provide a basis for debate over topics such as the Hippocratic Oath and drug shortages. Because 98 percent of death penalty indictments involve a lethal injection in the US, the validity and legal standing of lethal injection in the justice system will be brought to question, and possible alternative punishments to the death penalty will be discussed (Harrison and Melville 170). Based on scholarly analysis, this essay will argue that capital punishment should be completely abolished and replaced with the life without parole sentence.

THE FANTASY OF A PAINLESS DEATH

In the ongoing debate over capital punishment, the constitutionality of the death penalty in relation to the 8th Amendment, which prohibits “cruel and unusual punishment,” has been the focus of heated debate (US Const. Amend. VIII). At the time of ratification in 1789, the 8th Amendment was devised in order to ban excessively cruel forms of capital punishment such as disembowelment and burning (Banner 54). Over time, the US has seen gradual changes in preferred methods used for the death penalty from hangings, firing squads, gas chambers, and electrocutions to lethal injections in order to compensate for changing interpretations of what “cruel and unusual punishments” are defined to be. As stated by Supreme Court Justice Chief Justice Warren in *Trop v. Dulles*, “The Amendment must draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society.” (*The American Journal of International Law*, 783). Though capital punishment was acknowledged and deemed constitutional in the 1958 court ruling, it is evident that capital punishment has fallen out of favor globally as shown by the outlawing of capital punishment in all non-US Western developed countries and 19 US states. Because the 8th Amendment is interpreted using the evolving standards of decency of current public sentiments, the degree of cruelty and constitutionality of capital punishment will be examined.

While lethal injections continue to be touted as the lone humane and painless method of capital punishment by advocates, strong evidence

supports the possibility that “painless” lethal injections are nothing but idealized fantasies. Lethal injections involve the use of three distinct drugs with specific roles to attempt to facilitate a pain-free and humane death. The first drug, sodium thiopental, renders the person unconscious. The second, pancuronium bromide, inhibits muscle and lung function. The third and final injection, potassium chloride, causes cardiac arrest, ultimately killing the person (Harrison and Melville 171). Kelly Oliver, a philosopher of ethics, highlights this painless illusion by describing how:

The Supreme Court’s 2008 decision upholding the use of tripartite lethal injection... ruled that there is no cruelty in execution as long as the prisoner is unconscious while being killed. This so-called ‘clean death’ sterilized with high-tech medical apparatus, including intravenous injections (IVs), syringes, and hospital gurneys, supposedly sanitizes death; and like the surgical strike in high-tech warfare, it focuses death into an imagined instant, but only by dividing into the three stages of lethal injection that ensure that the prisoner will look dead before he actually is dead. (Oliver 139)

Oliver challenges the Supreme Court’s ruling that “there is no cruelty in execution as long as the prisoner is unconscious while being killed” by stating that humane lethal injection is an imagined construction falsely justified by making the injected inmate appear dead while the person is, in fact, not. Ideally, the inmate is supposed to die instantaneously and painlessly in order to maintain ethical standards. However, this theoretical “clean death” is impossible using lethal injection and is merely masked to hide the slow death of the inmate. If lethal injections truly gave inmates “instantaneous and painless” deaths, the injection of pancuronium bromide would be irrelevant being that the first injection of sodium thiopental already renders the inmate unconscious and “unable” to experience pain. Because this form of “humane” execution is falsely built on the assumption that the injected victim experiences an instant death, it can no longer be deemed constitutional along the lines of the 8th Amendment. By injecting the first two doses that render the individual unconscious and paralyzed, the administrators of lethal injections can prevent the victim from expressing any form of pain or suffering. This ultimately creates the illusion for spectators that the individual dies instantly without any suffering. Thus, the death penalty fails to express legitimate regard for humane punishment. In a post-mortem toxicology study of lethally injected individuals in 4 states, conducted by law scholars Kath-

erine Harrison and Caroline Melville, it was found that blood concentrations of sodium thiopental were highly varied and were significantly lower than the state-mandated protocols. Based on the data, the researchers found that 43% of the deceased individuals had sodium thiopental levels that were consistent with consciousness. (Harrison and Melville 177). As shown by Oliver's discussion of what defines a "clean" death and the post-mortem study, it is evident that current interpretations of the 8th Amendment are solely dependent on the appearance of a painless death as opposed to the actual suffering of the injected individual.

LETHAL INJECTION DRUG SHORTAGES

As a result of growing anti-death penalty sentiment, states that continue to administer lethal injections have begun to find it difficult to obtain the proper drugs to use when carrying out capital punishment. Because pharmaceutical companies are increasingly pressured to dissociate themselves from lethal injection drug production, a majority of states have turned to illegal and unapproved Federal Drug Administration alternatives for drugs such as sodium thiopental from overseas. Amber Widgery, a legal researcher, has found that other states have ultimately reverted to outdated and previously deemed cruel forms of capital punishment, using electrocutions, lethal gasings, firing squads, and hangings to execute inmates. (Widgery 30) Furthermore, clinical professor of Law, Ty Alper, states that instead of deterring pro-lethal injection states from exercising capital punishment, pharmaceutical companies have instead worsened the current state of capital punishment by pushing state prisons towards methods of capital punishment that explicitly inflict pain and suffering on indicted individuals (Alper 27). Though the three-drug lethal injection comprised of sodium thiopental, pancuronium bromide, and potassium chloride was deemed constitutional by the Supreme Court in the *Baze v. Rees* ruling, the three-drug lethal injection has become increasingly difficult to administer due to major drug shortages. (Alper 29) Instead of sticking to the Supreme Court sanctioned protocol of capital punishment, states have turned to illegal or outdated alternatives. Unsanctioned execution methods and unregulated drug alternatives for lethal injections cannot be considered within the bounds of the *Baze v. Rees* ruling and therefore are unconstitutional.

The use of unregulated and unapproved alternatives for the trio of lethal injection drugs not only speaks to the evolving standards of

decency towards capital punishment but also increases the likelihood that lethal injections are botched, causing additional unnecessary pain and suffering for individuals stripped of their 8th Amendment rights. Unlike normal executions, botched executions describe lethal injections that cause the victim to express suffering explicitly. According to James Welsh, the medical coordinator at human rights organization Amnesty International, many states have blatantly ignored mandatory FDA approval of potentially harmful and unpredictable alternative drugs—therefore directly violating the Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act, which mandates FDA regulation of the drug. (Welsh 88) Botched executions also occur due to a lack of standardized protocol of procedure and training of drug administrators. In a study of the adequacy of anesthesia in lethal injections, medical and legal scholars found that:

No direct observation, physical examination, or electronic monitoring took place for anesthesia; and there was no data collection, documentation of anesthesia, or post-procedure peer review. No assessment of depth of anesthesia or loss of consciousness was done; apparently anesthesia is assumed because a relatively large quantity of thiopental is specified. (Koniaris et al. 1412)

Without any proper procedure to select a correct and patient-specific dosage of anesthesia nor any means of ensuring that the individual is unconscious, botched executions are almost inevitable. This massive flaw within the institution of lethal injection has largely gone unnoticed due to lack of accountability and media exposure of these botched executions. With no means of testifying against lethal injections, inmates that receive botched injections are left to die cruel and painful deaths that are often explicitly seen by witnesses due to the poor dosage procedures of prisons in various states. Evidently, all capital punishment alternatives to the sanctioned three-drug injection fail to address the cruel and inhumane nature of lethal injections properly. Thus, capital punishment cannot possibly exist under the current evolving standards of decency.

THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

Though 28 pro-capital punishment states require or allow the presence of physicians in order to promote smooth and un-botched lethal injections, these physicians are placed in positions that directly violate the Hippocratic Oath, which states: “I will prescribe regimen for the good

of my patients according to my ability and my judgment and never do harm to anyone. To please no one will I prescribe a deadly drug, nor give advice which may cause his death.” (Clark 96) In addition to the Hippocratic Oath, the American Medical Association, state medical societies, and licensing boards strictly prohibit member involvement in any form of capital punishment. Despite clear ethical contradictions, physicians continue to be involved in a majority of lethal injection procedures. In order to bypass the Hippocratic Oath and medical society guidelines, state governments have passed laws that ensure the confidentiality of the names of physicians that participate in lethal injection procedures to protect physicians from licensing board and professional organization discipline. Though blatantly false, pro-capital punishment states have declared that lethal injections “shall not be construed to be the practice of medicine” (Levy 266) Because proper lethal injections involve the precise monitoring and administration of the three highly sensitive and lethal drugs, physicians are necessary for the promotion of smooth and un-botched executions. However, the very ethical foundations that define physicians and their roles in society are tarnished and cannot be simply ignored by pro-lethal injection state prisons. Though the American Medical Association states that “the specific procedures can be performed by non-physicians with no more pain or discomfort for the prisoner” (Clark 97), it is not ethically plausible to designate the administration of lethal injections to individuals that lack the proper training and certification to carry out the injection process effectively. The replacement of physicians in lethal injection procedures with prison employees significantly increases the chances of botched injections and cannot be considered as a solution to solve the ethical limitations of physicians in lethal injection. In order to protect the ethical foundations and guidelines of physicians and to avoid unprofessional and potentially harmful procedures, the only plausible solution is to completely abolish lethal injections and look towards alternative forms of punishment that are both ethically and constitutionally sound.

DEATH ELIGIBILITY AND RACE

While the death penalty seeks to provide proper punishment only for the most heinous of crimes, capital punishment indictments are inconsistent from state to state and are given without any specified guidelines, resulting in biased and unpredictable trials. When discussing

criminal activities eligible for death sentence consideration, professor of law Brandon L. Garrett, empirical research librarian at the Virginia School of Law Alexander Jakubow, and law school graduate Ankur Desai describe death eligibility as:

“...an elusive concept. Definitions of death eligibility vary from state to state. In many states, the criteria include quite vague standards that provide prosecutors with substantial discretion in deciding whether to seek the death penalty. Some states have definitions of death-eligibility that are so broad that most murders are death eligible. Studies have found wide variation in how many murders are death eligible, ranging from 20% to 90% of all murders. The well-known study led by Professor David Baldus of Georgia death sentences found that 86% of murder convictions were death eligible.” (Garrett et al. 578-579)

Garrett et al. examine the vague definitions of eligibility for capital punishment that often vary greatly from state to state. Due to these vague definitions, prosecutors have the ability to use their own interpretations of what defines a death-eligible crime to decide the punishments of criminals. As a result, criminals may be death ineligible in one state but death-eligible in another. Due to the lack of a clear and uniform definition of death eligibility, prosecutors have the ability to incorporate prejudice into the judicial court systems, unfairly putting certain criminals from certain minorities at disadvantages.

In a statistical study done by legal scholars Frank Baumgartner, Emma Johnson, Colin Wilson, and Clarke Whitehead, a significant disparity in United States execution rates for African American and Caucasian murderers between 1976 and 2014 was found (Baumgartner, et al. 802). Although black and white homicides account for 46.23% and 50.77% of all homicides in the US respectively, executions of killers of white victims account for 75.81% of all executions as opposed to 15.19% for killers of black victims. (Baumgartner et al. 802) Assuming the trials were completely unbiased execution rates of killers of both black and white victims would be expected to be near equivalent. Evidently, killers of white victims face significantly more scrutiny and risk of capital punishment in the US judicial system than killers of black victims. Due to loose and vague guidelines for death penalty indictments, courts are easily swayed by racial bias and discrimination, providing unfair protections for white victims and criminals alike. From this evaluation, capital

punishment as a whole can be deemed unconstitutional in that it is in direct violation of the Equal Protection Clause in the 14th Amendment, which guarantees equal protection, privileges, and rights to all citizens. (US Const. Amend. XIV) While federal government-mandated guidelines for death eligibility would increase consistency and reduce bias in state courts, racial discrimination over death penalty indictments would remain unaddressed. Thus, the Supreme Court must not only reexamine capital punishment under the lens of America's evolving standards of decency but also regarding the 14th Amendment.

LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

While the arguments supporting the abolition of the death penalty remain clear, solutions for US justice system reform post-abolition stand up for debate. Designated as the ultimate punishment for the most heinous of crimes, the death penalty and its abolition brings concerns over equally retributive replacements. Though the substitution of the death penalty with life without parole has been proposed, pro-capital punishment activists argue that anything less than death would fail to do sufficient justice for the victims of these crimes. In discussion of the applicability of life without parole (LWOP) in the justice system, legal researcher Catherine Appleton and legal consultant Bent Grøver state: "LWOP offers a persuasively harsh alternative to a broadly pro-death penalty public, while, at the same time, neutralizing claims that abolitionists are 'soft on crime.' A key research finding is that support for the death penalty drops dramatically if its proponents are offered LWOP as an alternative. This was first publicized in May 1990 in *The New York Times* by William Bowers—a leading researcher on the death penalty." (Appleton and Grøver 605). In response to opposition from death penalty supporters, the authors examine a study by Herbert H. Haines, an Associate Professor of Sociology, that found that a majority of death penalty supporters favored the use of life without parole in place of the death penalty (Haines). Though life without parole lacks the definitive satisfaction of death by the family and friends of victims, criminals are harshly left to live the rest of their lives in jail without any possibility of early release. In the US justice system, which emphasizes controlled and fair retribution over retaliatory vengeance, heinous acts of crime must be handled with impartial discernment – free of emotionally charged bias and constitutional ignorance. It can be argued that the abolition of the death penalty

would significantly diminish the deterrent crime factor that comes with retributive execution. However, research has ultimately failed to scientifically support the common misperception that executions have a greater deterrent effect than life without parole. (Welsh 92) Ultimately, the death penalty's primary purposes of retribution and deterrence fail to be proven diminished once replaced with life without parole.

Not only does life without parole effectively match the retributive purpose of capital punishment, but it also provides additional benefits. Like capital punishment, life without parole provides harsh retribution and permanently removes dangerous criminals from society. However, the risk of wrongful and irreversible execution is eliminated. In a study of false conviction rates of defendants sentenced to death, Samuel R. Gross, a professor of law at the University of Michigan, found that innocent death-row individuals often are cleared of their charges long after they are executed for their accused crimes. (Gross et al. 7230) Life without parole provides indicted criminals the possibility of release for false charges as information post-trial is uncovered and as forensic technology advances. Against common public opinion, studies of the financial costs of capital punishment and LWOP have shown that the entire process of multiple capital punishment trials, death row imprisonment, and the execution cost significantly more than the simpler and cheaper process of LWOP sentencing and life imprisonment. McFarland, a scholar at Susquehanna University, exposes how due to the drawn out and complex process of capital litigation, the process of court trials cost as much as \$3.5 million, upwards of \$2.5 million more US dollars wasted than in life without parole trials. (McFarland 58) While pro-capital punishment activists resort to emphasizing the annual cost of life imprisonment, death-row inmates are kept in more costly high-security jails for up to 20 years before they are executed. Once the net costs of capital punishment and life without parole are taken into consideration, the death penalty reveals itself as a massive waste of taxpayer dollars on a small minority of inmates. Life without parole is an equally harsh but constitutionally sound alternative to the death penalty that is more ethically and financially palatable to American society.

CONCLUSION

By continuing to use the death penalty to punish capital crimes, the US justice system has failed to ultimately provide fair and constitu-

tional retribution and has succumbed to retaliatory vengeance. Instead of providing inmates with “clean and humane” deaths, the lethal drug injections merely create the illusion of a painless and instantaneous death by preventing inmates from expressing suffering. Due to America’s evolving standards of decency, pharmaceutical companies avoid associations with capital punishment and no longer sell lethal injection drugs to state prisons. While drug shortages have discouraged the use of the Supreme Court sanctioned three drug injection, pro-capital punishment states have resorted to illegal and FDA unapproved alternatives that greatly increase the risk of botched executions. Others have returned to outdated forms of capital punishment such as electrocutions and hangings that no longer meet America’s standards of decency. Though prisons often require the presence of physicians in lethal injections to promote swift and unbotched executions, states ignorantly infringe upon the ethical commitments of medical professionals that bar physicians from participating in death penalty procedures. State courts express high levels of inconsistency in terms of what defines death-eligible crime due to the lack of federal regulation in capital punishment trials. Because prosecutors are given the freedom to use their own interpretations of death eligibility, courts are easily swayed by racial prejudice, providing white victims additional retribution in capital punishment trials. The replacement of capital punishment with life without parole negates ethical and constitutional concerns while providing added benefits that add to the strong and compelling case for death penalty abolition.

Through judicial, ethical, constitutional, and financial evaluations of capital punishment, a strong research-based argument for the abolition of capital punishment was developed. Based on research and analysis of the legal and ethical standings of the death penalty, capital punishment should be completely abolished and replaced with life without parole. As it no longer meets current American standards of decency, capital punishment as a whole is outdated and unconstitutional in terms of the 8th Amendment. Thus, judicial punishments for the most heinous crimes must both provide sufficient retribution and uphold current ethical and constitutional foundations of society.

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Zijun Xu

An Unsustainable Relationship: Fast Fashion and the Second-Hand Clothing Industry

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the effects of fast fashion and the growing issue of textile waste. The purpose is to investigate the impacts of the fast fashion industry on textile producers in African nations and the environment, through the lens of corporate social responsibility. The current donation and recycling processes of used textiles are examined to determine whether or not they are viable long-term solutions for dealing with textile waste. It sheds light on the used clothing bans in some African nations and the negative impacts that the second-hand clothing trade is having on African fabric manufacturers. Furthermore, this paper questions the effectiveness of H&M's textile recycling program and sustainability initiatives on reducing the environmental impacts of producing and disposing of apparel.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Fashion is an ever-faster operation of designing, manufacturing and buying. Fast fashion is the business strategy summarized by providing “cutting-edge” apparel at an affordable price (Mehrjoo, Pasek 1). While most garments sold in the United States used to be made within the country, for the past three decades most garments are made in developing nations throughout Asia to cut production costs. New styles are appearing on retail shelves, ready for sale, ready to be bought, and consumers are ready for last season's trend to be left behind. The fashion cycles have sped up twenty-four times, from two seasons a year to fifty seasons a year or almost a season a week (Drew). Anguelov, an assistant professor in public policy at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, points out that “for customers, choices not only provide style options, but also lead to lower prices, because increasing choices increases the competition for sales among retailers” (22). Fashion retailing has become a race for the lowest price, sometimes with price-match guarantee. The low prices at Zara, H&M, and other fast fashion retailers, however, are paid for by environmental destruction and the exploitation of people living in devel-

oping countries. The US Environmental Protection Agency estimated that Americans “throw away 12.7 million tons, or 68 pounds of textiles per person” annually (Cline 122). This enormous amount of textile waste is caused by the degrading quality of garments, the high speed of style obsolescence, and the fact that fewer people know how to repair their clothes. It is commonly believed that donating unwanted clothing will make fast fashion more sustainable or socially and environmentally responsible, but “Americans [already] donate such an overwhelming amount of clothes to charity that more than half are not needed” (Angelov 109). As thrift stores take in more than they can sell, the remaining donations are passed on to exporters who sell throughout Africa and the Middle East. This research will examine how current trends in fast fashion and second-hand clothing trade are causing harm to the environment, Western consumers and Africans living below the poverty line.

Fast fashion has transformed consumer culture throughout the world, especially in developed countries like the US and UK. The central question of this research is to analyze the impact of fast fashion on Western consumer behavior, the African second-hand clothing industry, and the environment. This research will examine the impact of fast fashion in capitalist economic systems through the lens of corporate social responsibility, or CSR. Corporate social responsibility is “corporate actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law” (Zyglidopoulos, Stelios C., et al.). The cases that will be examined include: H&M advertising; the East African ban on second-hand clothes; and examples of the throwaway mentality in fashion.

LOSS OF SKILLS IN SEWING AND GARMENT-MAKING WORK WITH FABRIC

To understand fast fashion in the United States and the UK, it is essential to consider the historical changes in textile purchases. Elizabeth Cline, a New York-based author and journalist, points out that “[during] the Christmas shopping season of 1902...department stores sold enormous volumes of lace and embroidery, ... Department stores of the day had bigger fabric departments than ready-to-wear sections” (80-81). In the early 1900s, people would buy materials to sew their clothes from scratch. The fact that department stores sold “lace and embroidery” in massive volumes meant that there was a prevalent do-it-yourself mental-

ity in fashion. As opposed to the throwaway mentality, the do-it-yourself mentality encourages the reuse of materials and repairing of clothes. It is difficult to imagine how the fabric section, a department that is now becoming non-existent, could be larger than the clothing section. It demonstrates how far Americans have come, from producing our clothes to consuming “ready-to-wear” clothing. Roughly 60% of UK residents do not know how to sew, which makes them unable to mend their clothes (Paige). Quilting is another way to remake clothes. The art of patchwork quilting reuses pieces of worn out clothing to make quilts. Unfortunately, quilting has also been on the decline as the average person who quilts is 64 and has 20 years of experience (Moore). If quilting and other forms of sewing cease to be a fiber art taught to young generations, then soon there will be “no fabric manufacturers, no new sewing machines, and no making things out of a needle and thread” (Moore). As sewing and quilting disappear, the businesses that make the fabric and sewing machines for non-commercial customers do as well. In that event, it is not unrealistic to envision a point where simple fixes like small rips or a lost button will lead to the disposal of the article of clothing, further contributing to the throwaway mentality of fast fashion. While it may be cheaper to mend clothes ourselves, consumers in developed countries still prefer to buy new wears off a shelf or order online to stay in style.

Fast paced garment production reduces the quality of clothing which makes it even more difficult for those who are not skilled in sewing to mend or alter their clothes. Cline mentions that “Without loose material left on the side seams or hems, as used to be the standard, clothes can no longer be let out, and few people make an attempt to get them altered. ‘My dolls wore clothes that were better made than today’s clothing,’ says Whitaker [a 67-year old woman]” (Cline 82). In the past, “loose material left on the side of clothes” provided people with the opportunity to customize and alter the appearance and design of the clothing that they purchased. Customizing garments was required for clothes to fit correctly and made them more unique and meaningful to the individual. When an article of clothing is unique and useful to an individual, he or she is more likely to keep it for an extended period and wear it more frequently than if it were generic because it is fit for his or her taste. Since fast fashion does not allow for customization in the same way as clothing of the past, people rarely form meaningful connections with their clothing which causes them to develop a throwaway mentality. The loss in the ability to alter garments has led to a decline in craftsmanship and quality as cloth-

ing production is outsourced and made in ready-to-wear sizes.

The inability to mend and repair garments and the degrading quality of clothing thus causes more textiles to be thrown away at faster rates. In a capitalist economic system, the constant buying of new garments leads to higher profits for fashion producers. When clothes are being mended or made at home, there is little need to buy new ones frequently. Fast fashion is a very lucrative business model because the “needs and desires of heterogeneously distributed consumers are better satisfied by higher product variety” (Mehrijoo, Pasek 2). Offering a wider variety of merchandise at a faster rate allows fashion producers to reach a broader customer base and encourages customers to come back to shop for the latest trends frequently. When analyzing the marketing aspect of fashion, brands often use advertisements to suggest people will feel left out or lonely when they do not have the most up-to-date apparel. Apparel ads from brands like Banana Republic, Levi’s, etc. frequently depict friends enjoying themselves on a tropical island or a man and a woman showing affection in their flattering clothes. In this way, fashion brands can draw on people’s desire for romance, friendship, and enjoyment by suggesting that the hottest look is a gateway to happiness.

SECOND-HAND INDUSTRY

A common misconception is that the trade of second-hand clothes will increase the profitability of thrift stores. However, thrift stores only sell a small percentage of the donations that they receive. Some of it is sent to outlet stores to be sold by the bag, but most of it goes to textile recyclers. Textile recyclers then grade the clothing to export it or recycle it into wiping cloths and fibers for filling. According to Trans-America, a large textile recycler based in New Jersey, about “45% of usable clothing is exported” while 20% is sold as fiber for insulation and 30% is made into wiping products (Trans-Americas Trading Company 2018). The exported clothes are sold in large bales to developing countries where merchants select garments for resale to local people at a steep discount.

The major increase in imported used clothes from fast fashion has led to economic and trade catastrophes in African countries. Andrew Brooks, a lecturer in Development & Environment at King’s College London, points out that “Money previously spent on domestically produced goods was diverted to purchases of imported clothing and profits flowed out of African economies to the commercial exporters and

charities operating in the global North as well as Chinese and other Asian manufacturers” (145). Second-hand clothing is very cheap compared to new clothing. Purchasing domestically produced clothing brings money into the local economy and creates jobs for the local people. There are more jobs created in manufacturing new clothes than in selling used ones because there are more steps involved. When buying imported clothing, the money is “diverted” or taken away from the local textile producers in Africa, which makes local producers less profitable. For this reason, some African countries like Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe have even banned the import of used clothing (Brooks, Simon 1273). Unfortunately, such bans are not well enforced as there is a thriving black market for second-hand clothing from the West. By hindering the domestic capacity to produce clothes, sellers of used clothing harm the economies of these countries, even though they are providing clothing for the people. This trend presents a serious dilemma because the demand for cheap used clothing among impoverished people is a genuine need. The “United Nigerian Textiles (UNT) closed in October 2007” and blamed “the activities of smugglers” of used clothing as one of the factors for closing (Brooks, Simon 1273). UNT is a major trade organization for textiles, and its end indicates the precipitous level of decline in the Nigerian clothing sector. It shows that donating is ultimately not a sustainable solution to fast fashion as there is so much clothing at low prices that it harms the economic development in these developing countries.

The importation of cheap fabrics also harms local textile production and diminishes the cultural significance of locally made clothes. One example of a local manufacturer that failed due to the importation of cheap fabrics is Syntexkin textile factory. This factory produced a myriad of uniquely African designs that are colorful, bold, and come in an array of patterns from everyday objects to swirls (Chutel). Since the early 2000s, Chinese dealers have imported similar fabrics for half of the price. The ones made in China may look similar but do not have the same level of craftsmanship or cultural significance as the locally made ones. The unique and colorful fabrics place an “emphasis on the specialized skills and cultural significance of a product that has been a part” of the culture of the Congo (Chutel). Local artisans like Wa Mwenze criticize the Chinese for copying their designs (Chutel). Textiles from China had to be tracked by barcode numbers to find out which is authentic. This loss of African artisans and businesses represents a blow to the local cultural identity. As the presence of these businesses and experienced artisans de-

clines, the skill sets required to create authentic and culturally significant work will less likely be taught and passed on. The one-of-a-kind indigenous apparel is disappearing, and inferior imitations from abroad replace it. It shows that capitalism in the developed world is indirectly contributing to erosion of cultural apparel.

TEXTILE RECYCLING

If donating is not a solution, what about recycling textiles? Unfortunately, textile recycling is not that simple, as putting fibers back together is a complicated process. Turning textiles into insulation, for instance, is better than landfilling it but is still not ideal because the recycled product cannot be recycled again. In recent years, some companies have experimented with remanufacturing. Remanufacturing is the process of transforming a used product into something that has the same or higher value as the product when it was new (Dissanayake, Sinha 95). The remanufacturing of clothing can entail either washing and repairing it or cutting the article apart, adding accessories or different fabric, and adjusting the tightness. According to Geetha Dissanayake, from the Department of Textile & Clothing Technology at the University of Moratuwa, and Pammi Sinhab, an associate professor School of Design at University of Leeds, “fashion remanufacturing is relatively a new business” and “most companies operate in niche market” (Dissanayake, Sinha 97). The fashion remanufacturing industry has not been around for a considerable amount of time. Operating in a “niche market” means that the products made by these businesses are primarily for a small portion of the population that have specific expectations and interests. In the case of remanufactured clothing, the niche market is people who prefer vintage and sustainable products. The problem with the niche market is that these sustainable products are not widespread or widely used. In a capitalist economy, businesses must compete for sales, and if demand for a product is low then the business has less of an incentive to produce more of it. While remanufacturing textiles is a more environmentally friendly option for producing clothes, it can only go so far if it is in a niche market. Most people are not able to find those items at big chain retailers and must go out of their way to look for them.

One of the main reasons why large retailers are refusing to sell remanufactured clothes is because there is a lack of product consistency. Dissanayake and Sinha state that “Remanufactured fashion is becom-

ing more acceptable among consumers, but still fails to reach the mass market because, for the retailer, those products can only guarantee a design but not a standard fabric” (Dissanayake, Sinha 101). When utilizing textile scraps and used garments for the raw materials, the supply of each color, pattern or texture varies significantly in each batch. It is not as easy to acquire a specific quantity of a fabric scrap as it is to procure virgin cotton. Larger retail stores want to be able to offer large amounts of each style and type of clothing. The biggest problem with remanufactured garments is that Americans demand uniformity and even small imperfections in appearance, color and sizing are considered flaws. For these pieces to become widely accepted, consumers need to learn to take these variations as a regular part of each unique piece of clothing.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Garment production is not an environmentally sustainable process — it is the second most polluting industry in the world following oil (The Economist). Top artists, fashion models, and Hollywood actors and actresses enjoy bragging about their philanthropy and lecturing the public on global warming and pollution. These same celebrities are wearing a luxury brand and custom designed apparel to shows, parties, and ceremonies. There is a paradox between their words and their attire. Cotton farming is both a pesticide-and water-intensive process. Roughly 25 percent of pesticides used worldwide goes into cotton, but cotton takes up only 3 percent of the world’s farmland (Chen, Burns 249). It takes an estimated 2700 liters of water to produce the amount of cotton for a single t-shirt (Drew). In the processing of cotton, sodium hydroxide is added to allow dyes to penetrate the material; cotton is bleached to achieve better coloration; formaldehyde (a carcinogen) is used in “the durable-press finish to improve the wrinkle recovery of the fabrics” (Chen, Burns 249). The combination of synthetic chemicals turns once biodegradable resources into non-biodegradable ones. While polyester production does not use as much pesticide and water as cotton, it requires petroleum products derived from drilling and creates 5.5 kg of carbon emissions per shirt, which is double the emission of a cotton one (Drew). The dyeing process creates toxic chemical waste that is often poorly managed. According to the World Resources Institute, “About 20 percent of industrial water pollution is due to garment manufacturing” (Drew). Industrial water pollution has become more prevalent in developing countries as

regulations are lax and poorly enforced. This data demonstrates the irony between fashion-loving celebrity “environmentalists” and the reality of what they are wearing every day.

The demand for environmentally responsible goods is rising as more consumers are becoming aware of the negative impacts of their apparel. Today, about 75% of Americans are willing to take corporate social responsibility (CSR) into account when they are making purchases (McCormick). Businesses are working to improve their CSR because of the demand for more ethical and sustainable products. Most ethically and environmentally conscious consumers want the brands they buy from to go beyond high quality and low price. Some companies can be proactive about their social and environmental responsibility and spend more money. On the other hand, other companies take token actions that are more about virtue signaling than anything else. Pookulangara and Shepard note that “Carrigan and Attalla (2001) had suggested that consumers tend to make ethical purchases when they are not required to pay more, suffer a loss of quality, or make a special effort” (Pookulangara, Shephard 205). If consumers could make ethical purchases without paying more, losing physical appeal, or taking more time to search for them, everything would be ethically made and sustainable. If two products are the same price but one states that it is eco-friendly, then it’s likely that the more “sustainable” one is either “greenwashed” or poorly made. Greenwashing is the dissemination of distorted information by an organization to promote positive environmental public relations (Peeters, Fleskens 10). Even if ethical alternatives have similar prices and are the same quality, the moral option will likely to go out of stock quickly or require additional effort to locate. For consumers to become more likely to buy ethically made merchandise, they need to understand and put a higher value on paying the full cost of producing responsibly with better quality.

CASE: H&M

In response to the pressure of corporate social responsibility, some fast fashion retailers have developed ways to convince consumers that they are taking successful action to fix the sustainability issues they cause. Fast fashion retailer H&M used an advertisement called “Bring It On” to promote its textile takeback program. According to H&M’s website, the program takes clothes and textiles from any brand and in any condition and will give you a voucher for dropping off your clothes

("H&M Conscious: Bring It On"). The online video starts with clips of people partying, someone dropping a plate of spaghetti on himself, a woman relaxing in a lake with a dress on, and a man putting on a button-up shirt and then realizing that it has a hole. Many of these clips depict people destroying their clothes while having a good time. The last scene shows a girl standing by a tree in a forest and then goes through the process of collecting, sorting, storing, grinding, and shredding material to show the recycling process. The video states: "Rip it. Grind it. Tear it. Tear it into smaller fibers. Let's shred it into fibers and stitch it into something new," (0:49-0:54). The program looks convincing in the video, and their practices do divert waste from landfills. At the same time, however, the ad does not show that most of the used textiles are being sold for overseas export or converted into non-clothing products that have reached the end of their recyclability. Turning shredded fibers into new fabric is currently neither cheap nor scalable.

H&M's self-congratulatory 2017 sustainability report tells a very different story. The report stated that 35% of materials procured "included recycled or other sustainably-sourced materials" (34) and 59% of cotton is certified organic, recycled or Better Cotton (28). The graphs on the same report show that the 35% of materials are broken down to 35% "other sustainably sourced" and 0.5% recycled content; 59% is divided into 12.1% organic cotton, 47% Better Cotton, and 0.2% recycled cotton (36). These numbers essentially mean that H&M incorporates only a minuscule amount of recycled materials in its apparel, only 0.5% of all fabrics and 0.2% of cotton, yet the ad said that the recycled fibers could be "stitched into something new" with, for instance, footage of a man putting on a jean jacket that is the same color as the torn up jean fibers. The term "other sustainably sourced" is very vague. To what extent are the standards for "sustainably sourced" enforced and verified? How much improvement is needed for materials to be considered sustainably sourced?

Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), a non-profit based in Geneva, Switzerland, and London, UK, is responsible for certifying the cotton for brands like H&M, Levi Strauss & Co, Adidas, and Nike (Bettercotton.org). BCI cooperates with a multi-stakeholder group of organizations around the world, and is headed by Alan McClay, who spent 25 years in leadership positions in the consumer goods industry (BCI). In a study of BCI done by Wageningen University & Research, researchers found that BCI implements a "one-size-fits-all model" (Peeters, Fleskens 41) for numerous regions across the world and "little differences can be found in

soil conservation practices” between BCI farmers and non-BCI farmers (Peeters, Fleskens 42). Therefore, BCI is greenwashing its cotton with sub-par standards for companies like H&M to boast about their corporate social responsibility.

CASE: SENEGAL

The documentary “Senegal’s Second-Hand Clothing Boom” (2016) discusses the impact of second-hand clothes on Senegal’s economy. Senegal grows cotton and supplies it for clothing production in Europe and Asia, but there are no businesses to spin the cotton or produce textiles from that cotton. Aïssa Dione is a Franco-Senegalese entrepreneur who currently owns the only textile manufacturing business in Senegal. Her factory employs 90 local workers and incorporates both traditional and modern processes at her facility (21:00). Her company produces high-end upholstery fabrics for global export. Dione’s greatest challenge is obtaining spun cotton because all the local spinning mills have shut down. Most of the cotton must be sent to Morocco to be spun and then returned (22:30-22:40). She also sources a fraction of her spun cotton from spinners in remote villages, which are hundreds of miles away, where the cotton is hand-spun. The spinners produce only about 40 kg of spun cotton a month and require non-profit support to stay in business (24:10-25:30). The competition comes not only from used clothing trade, but also from competition with imports and American cotton.

From this single textile factory in Senegal, we are offered a broader picture of the difficulties involved in producing fabric locally. Virtually no cotton is spun in the country because of competition with used clothing from the West and imports from China. Senegal is missing a link in the textile supply chain- spun cotton. Without spun cotton, textile businesses cannot produce fabric products. As much as Dione’s plant is an innovative attempt at reviving local industry, it is not viable in the long-term because domestically spun cotton must be bought in meager quantities at a cost that is subsidized by a non-profit (25:00-25:10). Aïssa Dione’s textiles must be sold abroad because the low price of used clothing coupled with imports of cheap textiles from China makes domestic demand almost nonexistent. The local Senegalese people are not affluent enough to buy them. Domestic production creates more local jobs than the vending of used clothes because it requires people to grow and spin the cotton, make the fabrics, create the designs and sell the products- not

just brokers and vendors.

CONCLUSION

Upon analyzing and piecing together this research, the conclusion is that the fashion industry's fast fashion business model is not sustainable. By making clothes inexpensive and abundant, consumers are encouraged to buy new apparel instead of making their own or mending them. The process of producing textiles is energy, water, and chemical intensive. Instead of remanufacturing or refurbishing clothes to be sold domestically, used clothes are often sold in bulk to African countries where they can harm local textile industries and local cultures. The question now becomes: how can we bring back quality garment production, and its profitability, in local economies for a truly sustainable fashion industry? One small beginning is to teach sewing in public schools so that younger generations will continue to know how to make and mend textile products. Another possible solution is to use a slow fashion model to turn the fashion industry towards a socially and environmentally responsible direction. The slow fashion system emphasizes ecological design with craftsmanship and skilled labor, and consumer education (Pookulangara, Shephard 202). For slow fashion to become mainstream throughout the U.S. and U.K., Western consumers must be willing to pay the full cost of the merchandise that they are buying. How much more are consumers willing to pay to place durability and sustainability at the forefront of their decision-making concerning clothing purchases?

Instead of passing used clothes to a third-party recycler, fashion retailers would be more sustainable by taking back their own branded clothes to refurbish or remake them for resale at their stores. Patagonia has already embedded a trade program, called Worn Wear, that takes back, cleans, and resells used Patagonia apparel on its website (Drew). E-commerce will play a critical role in expanding the markets for handmade, sustainable merchandise that were previously difficult to come across. "African Blooms," for instance, is an e-commerce site that provides a venue for artisans in Africa to sell their hand-crafted apparel and other products globally online. African Blooms also provides vendors with free unlimited listings, communication, and support (Africanbloom.com). With the reintroduction of sewing and fiber arts at the public-school level, slow fashion, and the creation of new trade-in programs and online venues to sell, consumers have the option to shop for unique

and long-lasting garments while mitigating their negative social and environmental impact. Reversing the effects of fast fashion and retrofitting the fashion industry is going to take new level innovation in design and remanufacturing processes, together with a willingness to pay a higher upfront cost for natural resource conservation and the benefit of diverse cultures involved in the supply chain.

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The Westernization of Turkish Fashion

Abstract

The history of Turkey is oftentimes acknowledged as complex and consisting of many periods of political turmoil. These periods of turmoil are associated with change and reforms and one way of observing these changes is through fashion. Fashion trends have changed significantly throughout different periods in Turkish history such as Turkey's transformation from the Ottoman Empire into a secular Republic and also its current phase of renewed Islamization. Clothing in Turkey reflects political and social changes as well as issues between modernity and traditionalism which have surrounded Turkish society throughout its history and are still present in Turkey today.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey is a nation with a long and compelling history. Its people have lived through years of political turmoil, seen military coups, and experienced drastic reforms. One way to observe these social and political changes is through clothing. Clothing is a significant aspect of an individual's personal appearance and can symbolize one's personal beliefs, political status, and modernity. When changes in fashion sweep an entire nation, this often results in the formation of a collective identity. Throughout Turkish history, dress reforms can be seen as a mechanism of changing traditions for modernity. During the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey in 1923, clothing reforms played a large role in the attempts at Westernization by Atatürk and his colleagues. Reforms such as the Hat Law and the ban on the Islamic headscarf were steps to modernize through the abolition of Ottoman customs. Thus, clothing becomes a marker of social change, symbolizing collective changes embraced by a nation. However, reforms are also commonly associated with rejection and opposition. The support for versus the opposition towards the new clothing laws in Turkey can be seen as a conflict of modernist versus traditional modes of thinking. The controversies that have emerged in Turkey's long history of change can still be observed in

its modern state. Analyzing clothing reforms and contrasting modern and traditional styles, allows for a better understanding of the changes Turkey has undergone throughout the many significant events in its history from the end of World War I to today. By analyzing various sources, this research paper will try to answer the question: What role does fashion play in Turkey's history of political turmoil?

Theoretical frameworks will be utilized to further evaluate the sources used in this research. Mary Louise Roberts' claim that fashion serves as a marker of social change will be analyzed in order to interpret the significance of dress reforms that took place in the Republic of Turkey after World War I, indicating that fashion is a highly charged issue that greatly impacts the social and political stability of a country. In *Samson and Delilah Revisited: The Politics of Women's Fashion in 1920s France*, Mary Louise Roberts discusses the political significance of women's fashion in the 1920s. She notes that many historians view the changes in fashion during this time period as a derivative expression of social change: "Fashion is thus denied a historical dynamic of its own; it becomes a 'marker' but not a 'maker' of social change" (Roberts 662). Fashion in itself was not a social movement in the 1920s; rather it was a representation of the socio-cultural changes after World War I and the redefinition of female identity.

Similarly, during the transition stage from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, the European hat challenged the Ottoman Fez as a revolt against Ottoman and Islamic traditions. This shows how clothing laws and dress reforms are markers of social change as they reflect issues beyond that of mere dress reform. This paper will use the concept of fashion as a marker of social change to interpret Turkish dress reforms in the 1920s as representative of periods of political turmoil as these reforms have generated controversies beyond simple questions of style. The ideas of Hale Yilmaz, a history lecturer with a focus on Middle Eastern studies, in her book *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey*, will be used to create a framework for modernity versus traditionalism in Turkey. In her book, Yilmaz argues that dress reforms that took place during the 1920s have created issues of resistance between state and society, men and women, and people of different classes. Thus, clothing becomes an issue of modernity and traditionalism. In addition to Yilmaz's book, the contrasting arguments, based on the idea that changes in clothing cannot change individual thought, in *You are what you wear: Clothing/appearance laws and the construction*

of the public citizen in Turkey by Mary Lou O'Neil, will be evaluated. This analysis will illuminate the controversies that have resulted due to dress reforms generated by the Kemalists and will further show how these controversies are still present in Turkey today.

To better understand the effects of clothing styles on the social and political structures of Turkey, some terms must be defined in the context of its history. First, modernity must be seen within a 1920s Turkish frame of reference. World War I was severely damaging to the Ottoman Empire both economically and politically. Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues believed that in order to survive in the post-World War I world, it was very important to reinvent Turkey as a modern nation-state. This resulted in Westernization attempts in an effort to be deemed a modern state and to re-enter the international power circle. After a long history of Ottoman rule, Turkish communities continued to accept Ottoman traditions. Revolutionaries at the time believed in the adoption of European modernity and aspired to reach equality with European nations. Atatürk believed that by changing Ottoman appearance, Turkish people would consequently change their methods of thinking as well. Thus, modernity in Turkish terms was equivalent to Westernization. Moreover, it is likewise important to define secularism from a Turkish point of view. Secularism in Turkey not only separates religion from the state but also removes all aspects of religion from the daily lives of Turkish citizens. In this way it is defined as the elimination of religion from all public life by the state in order to westernize the nation. This is a crucial point to understand, as it was used as a mechanism by traditionalists to criticize the Kemalist attempts at secularization.

The various sources used in this research provide historical background to years of political turmoil, present arguments from multiple modernist and traditional perspectives, and illustrate a combination of modern and traditional styles of clothing in modern-day Turkey. Thus, clothing reflects conflicts in Turkish society as the nation modernized after World War I and has served as a marker of historical change while creating controversies continuing through to the present day under the new Islamic regime in the Republic of Turkey.

In this paper, arguments that clothing reflects and influences modern and traditional values and the counter-argument that clothing laws are unable to change personal attitudes will be analyzed as they relate to the idea that clothing plays a large role in Turkey's long history of political turmoil. The first section, Historical Context, will provide the histor-

ical background to lay the foundation for the argument about clothing as serving either modernization or traditionalism as well as the counter-argument of clothing's inability to transform a nation as discussed in the next two sections, Modernization and Clothing and Renewed Islamization.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A historical context is crucial to this research as it is necessary to understand why changes in clothing emerged at various points in Turkish history. To clarify, this research will focus on two different periods in Turkish history. First, it will evaluate changes during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey at the end of World War I. Then, the focus shift into modern-day Turkey as the country is currently reverting into a nation ruled by Islam. After Constantinople (Istanbul) fell to the Ottomans in 1453, the Ottomans started growing their nation into a large empire. While they reached great heights in the years leading up to World War I, at the start of the war, the Empire was declining. The Central Powers, which included Germany, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and others, were losing. The tremendous amount of violence and suffering of World War I brought changes to the new post-war world. In his book on the history of Turkey, Howard describes the problems Turkey faced after the war. He says that "the new nation faced enormous human problems of refugees and displaced people, of an economy crippled by war, and the breakdown of political institutions" (Howard 91). This means that there was a large amount of changes to be made to reintroduce Turkey as a significant country in the post-war world. With the loss of the Central powers, the Ottoman Empire fell under foreign rule by the winning Allied powers of the war. However, Turkey established its independence through a war spanning 1919 to 1922. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first president of the Republic of Turkey, was largely responsible for Turkey's newfound independence. In the years following the formation of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk transformed the country by introducing reforms that would modernize it through Westernization. Dress reform was one of the significant contributors to the transition to a secular Republic. In *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey 1923-1945*, Hale Yilmaz argues that "dress was significant for the new Turkish regime in the early decades of the Republic for its symbolic and transformative functions in making a

modern, Western, secular nation” (Yilmaz 14). The dress reforms contributed to the creation of a unified, modern nation by eliminating visible markers of ethnicity, religion, occupation, and other differences. As a result, after a long history of Islamic Ottoman rule, Turkey was declared a secular nation where religion and the state were separated.

The effects of Atatürk’s attempts at Westernization on Turkish culture and dress can still be seen in Turkey today. Currently, while Turkey has no official state religion, the majority of its citizens, approximately 99%, follow the religion of Islam. The issues surrounding conservatism versus modernism, created as a result of secularization, still subsist in Turkish society. Since 2002, the conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP), which came into power with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s leadership, has held a strong presence in modern day Turkey. The beliefs of Erdoğan support conservative Muslims whose voices have been silenced by the secularization movement. Through their beliefs on conservative democracy, the AKP has earned widespread support from the large Muslim population of Turkey. Meanwhile, with their newfound voice in administrative rule, the conservative traditionalists have begun transforming the country once again, moving away from the rules of the secular constitution established in 1923 and toward Islamic rule governed by Erdoğan’s conservative beliefs. The clothing regulations established in 1923 are also slowly being abolished with the reemergence of conservative dress in Turkish society. A fashion empire has been built on the basis of conservative dress, mainly characterized by the veiling-fashion industry. In *New Transnational Geographies of Islamism, Capitalism and Subjectivity: The Veiling-fashion Industry in Turkey*, Gökırıksel and Secor describe the veiling-fashion industry that has emerged after economic reforms during the 1960s and 70s due to the creation of an Islamic culture of consumption. They say that, “In short, veiling-fashion remains controversial because it combines two systems that are seemingly incompatible: veiling, with its powerful set of religious, cultural and political references, and fashion, an unmoored system of self-referential change associated with capitalism, modernity and a particular kind of consumer subject” (Gökırıksel and Secor 7). Once again, fashion becomes a marker of social change and represents issues surrounding modernity and traditionalism. The argument here is that joining the veiling-fashion industry is joining the ongoing debate about what it means to be a woman, what it means to be Muslim, and what it means to be modern, while contributing to the controversies surrounding changes in Turkish clothing. There

are numerous debates regarding the actions of AKP, with its supporters encouraging conservative dress while the modern Turks choose to dress in a modern, western manner. Hence, issues of modernity versus traditionalism remain apparent in modern-day Turkey.

MODERNIZATION AND CLOTHING

Clothing styles of the time period between the end of World War I and the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923 are symbolic of the drastic changes the country underwent during this period as it transitioned from a conservative, Islamic society into a secular, modern state. Roberts' ideas on fashion as a marker of social change are crucial to this area of the research as dress reforms at this time can be seen as markers of modernization in the form of Westernization introduced by Kemalists. Yilmaz's *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey 1923-1945*, examines the ways in which



dress reforms such as the Hat Law and the ban on the hijab can be seen as markers of modernization and changes in ideals for Turkish citizens. The image provided below is that of Atatürk on his Kastamonu trip where he promoted the use of Western hats in order to abolish

the use of the Ottoman fez, signifying a departure from Ottoman traditions. He can be seen in the front of the photo holding a Western-style hat alongside fellow Kemalists. This had caused numerous oppositions from the traditional Muslim community as most individuals were accustomed to the use of the traditional fez, supporting the argument of clothing as modernization. Yilmaz highlights the ways in which Atatürk wanted to change personal beliefs through dress reforms. She says that, "Modernizing or revolutionary states, on the other hand, have used clothing regulations to erode old social and communal distinctions and to create and promote new social distinctions and new identities" (Yilmaz 23). This demonstrates that clothing regulations were utilized as an attempt to move away from Ottoman customs and traditions and form new identities characterized by modern thoughts. In his book, *The History of Turkey*, Howard also mentions that in the Ottoman Empire, some elements of dress were symbols of conservative, religiously-minded people. In order

to separate religion from the state and modernize the nation, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk publicly denounced the use of the fez, a customary Ottoman hat signifying Islamic beliefs, and the veil, which “had come to symbolize the subordinate status of women in the ideology of reactionary Islamic politics” (Howard 97). As a result, these changes in dress can be seen as markers of historical change as religion lost its value in politics and the nation moved toward the inclusion of both men and women as significant members of Turkish society. Dress reform thus becomes a symbol of modernization in the form of westernization.

In contrast, in her discussion regarding clothing as representative of individual or national beliefs, O’Neil asserts that, “Dress codes, in the case of Turkey, are dictated by the state; therefore, the appearance of students and state employees does not necessarily represent their belief but that of the state” (O’Neil 66). This undermines the relationship between appearance and personal belief. With the reforms introduced after World War I, Atatürk wanted to transform personal thought as well as appearance to create a Westernized, modern state free from religious rules. However, in *You are what you wear: Clothing/appearance laws and the construction of the public citizen in Turkey*, O’Neil concludes that dress codes are imposed on the citizens by the state meaning their physical modern appearance does not represent their personal beliefs of modernity, but those of the state. This is an example of how fashion represents political changes by creating contrasting arguments. Another argument from within the Muslim establishment is mentioned in Camilla Nereid’s *Kemalism on the Catwalk: The Turkish Hat Law of 1925*. She argues that, “Modernization does not equal westernization and thus differs from Kemalism,” asserting that clothing is a matter of political concern and that traditional dress is a marker of authenticity, vital to achieve the true modernization of Turkish society (Nereid 709). The arguments that have emerged as a result of Atatürk’s dress reforms contribute largely to the numerous social and political issues surrounding the nation today, where there is a significant division between conservative supporters of Erdogan and modernist supporters of the secular state. This supports the argument that clothing acts as a marker of social change as it signifies the growing division between modernists and traditionalists which began in the early days of secularization in Turkey to the Islamization found there today.

RENEWED ISLAMIZATION

The rise of the Ak political party reinvigorated controversies between modern and Islamic dress. The large Islamic population in Turkey had been silenced by Atatürk's reforms.

However, the emergence of a new political party supporting Islamic rule has restored voice to the major population. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Turkish economy underwent major reforms resulting in its economy changing from a state-led import-substitution industrialization to open markets and production for export. With these changes, a new Islamic culture of consumption emerged. This resulted in traditional, conservative dress transforming into consumerist fashion. These reforms aroused a large amount of opposition from both modernists and traditionalists. The veiling-fashion industry brought up ongoing debates about what it means to be a woman in Turkey, what it means to be Muslim, and what it means to be modern. Gökarıksel and Secor's *New Transnational Geographies of Islamism, Capitalism and Subjectivity: The Veiling-fashion Industry in Turkey* shows how the veiling-fashion industry has come to be controversial. They say that "veiling-fashion remains controversial because it combines two systems that are seemingly incompatible: veiling, with its powerful set of religious, cultural and political references, and fashion, an unmoored system of self-referential change associated with capitalism, modernity and a particular kind of consumer subject" (Gökarıksel and Secor 7). Once again, this shows how modernity and traditionalism clash in modern Turkey as the country reverts to conservative, Islamic rule. Women are seeking a voice through a combination of their religious beliefs and adaptations of conservative dress, but often encounter great opposition from both modernists and traditionalists. This emphasizes the importance of clothing in Turkey's history of political turmoil as it reflects the various arguments from supporters of traditionalism and modernity.

In his news article, *Faith, Fashion, and Freedom*, Kevin Whitelaw examines a fashion show in Ankara that incited a collision between traditionalists and modernists and garnered much media attention. He maintains that clothing symbolizes religious and political beliefs, insisting, "For the many devout Muslims living under Turkey's aggressively secular government, the head scarf is a symbol of religious freedom. For the urban Turks who call themselves "modern," it marks a potential retreat from Turkey's modernization and a subtle form of intimidation" (Whitelaw 28). This demonstrates the controversy rooted in the veiling-fashion industry. Once again, fashion takes on political controversy and serves as a symbol

of social change as the veiling-fashion industry has created ongoing debates about what it means to be a modern woman in Turkey as its political state reverts to Islamic rule.

Turkey's long history of political turmoil and drastic reforms has created a society where beliefs and cultures coalesce. As mentioned in Kılıçbay and Binark's article *Consumer Culture, Islam and the Politics of Lifestyle: Fashion for Veiling in Contemporary Turkey*, the practice of veiling has gained a new meaning: "the articulation of a religious practice to the consumption culture" (Kılıçbay and Binark 498-99). This reflects Turkish society's combination of a secular, modern state resulting from Atatürk's reforms and an Islamic community based on Muslim traditions. Religious practice has been adapted to fit into the modern world characterized by consumerism. Islamic fashion has adjusted to accommodate women in a way that differs greatly from Ottoman traditions. For example, Tekbir is a clothing brand promoting conservative dress. A commercial for Tekbir shows colorful patterns and designs of headscarves and advertises the idealized image of a covered woman to promote the use



of Islamic headscarves among women (Esnek, 0:00-0:26). The phrases, "Tekbir when dining," "Tekbir at work," "Tekbir on vacation," and similar other phrases resound in the background while videos of women dressed in conservative-style clothing amongst attractive males are shown. An image

from the 2017 Fall/Winter collection of Tekbir shows a fashionable yet conservative woman in high heels and a colorful hijab. These strategies promote veiling as attractive and fashionable ("Tekbir Giyim"). The Tekbir commercial supports arguments that the changing veiling-fashion industry is creating new roles for women in Turkish society. The commercial promotes a new lifestyle for women; it is a life where Muslim women are allowed to attend school, enjoy vacations, participate as major parts of public life, and join the workforce. However, this new lifestyle is against Islamic traditions as it is based on beliefs that place women in discriminatory settings where their main roles accede to those of men. An ongoing struggle persists in Turkey to define what it means to be modern and Muslim today. The use of headscarves in the fashion industry is against

many Islamic beliefs as well as secular beliefs, making it a symbol of the changing representation of religion and women in modern day Turkey where Islam has been reincorporated into public life following the Secularist movements of the 1920s. This new, dynamic fashion style for Muslim women is similar to the short hair trend in 1920s France observed in Mary Louise Roberts' article as it represented a new modern woman who was "comfortable, practical, and compatible with an 'active' life" (Roberts 667). Similarly, supporters of the veiling-fashion industry believe that the new styles for a traditional piece of Islamic headwear is representative of Muslim woman joining the modern world where they play larger roles in society. Hence, it becomes a marker of social change as it symbolizes the developing gender roles and conflicts of modernity and traditionalism.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, clothing reflects conflicts in Turkish society as it modernized after World War I; it has served as a marker of historical change and has created ongoing controversies under the new Islamic regime in the Republic of Turkey. By analyzing resources that maintain that clothing represents modernization and traditionalism and the conflicts that arise from the divergence of these two schools of thought, this research has argued that clothing holds great significance in Turkey's history of political turmoil. Roberts' argument that fashion marks social change accords with Turkish history of dress reforms and changing styles. During the secularization movement, Atatürk believed in transforming the country through reforms that would modernize the nation which subsequently transformed Turkey into a secular nation. The changing styles were representative of the changing political and social state of the country, making fashion a marker of modernization and secularization. However, the major population of Turkey remain Muslim traditionalists. As a result, Turkey continues to experience turmoil, with ongoing debates about what it means to be modern, what it means to be secular, and what it means to be a woman. These are reflected in current Turkish fashion trends where traditional-style dress has been adapted to fit a modern society, thus supporting Yilmaz's ideas of fashion as modernization and traditionalism. A counter argument reflects beliefs of many traditionalists as they believe that fashion is representative of government control rather than personal attitude. These contrasting arguments undermine the relationship between appearance and personal belief. O'Neil's argument

states that clothing dictated by the state represents the beliefs of the state as opposed to the individual. Overall, fashion plays a large role in Turkish history as it serves as a marker of social and political change and has created multiple arguments and debates between modernists and traditionalists which began with the secularization movement of the 1920s and continues through to the present day where Islamization reemerges.

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