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CONTENTS

Foreword • v

Eric Kim, An Analysis of Post-Human Surveillance Intelligence • 1

Carlos R. Storck-Martinez, Fleeing Climate Change: The Negligence of Environmental Refugees under the Trump Administration • 19

Lawrence Frolov, Unhappiness in Japan: Failures of Eudaimonism in My Hero Academia • 32

Mridul Dalmia, The Effect of the Commodification of Healthcare on Societal Divisions • 43

Michael Sabatella, Social Media and the Changing State of Modern Music • 60

Katheryn Raatz, Integrative Medicine: Putting the Care Back in Healthcare • 73

Kana Adachi, Deep Brain Stimulation: A Double-Edged Sword for Treatment-Resistant Major Depression • 86

Chandana Singathi, Dark Secrets Behind Light Shades: Hollywood & Modeling Media • 99

Zach Tarman, Meet Me in Montauk: Finding Sunshine in Remembrance and Eternal Return • 113

J. Matthew Tice, Morality and Travelling Through Time with Captain America • 128

Daniella Ramiro, The Hippo-Critical Oath: How Time Constrained Physicians Contribute to the Opioid Epidemic • 141

Anna Thomashevsky, Hollywood and the Whitewashing of Latinx Identity • 152

Austin Manalese, Presentation and Representation of Drag Identity in RuPaul's Drag Race • 163

- Rebecca Harvey**, Synesthesia: How Varying Forms Contribute to Creative Tendencies and Abilities • 174
- Melanie Kravchenko**, The Carceral State: How Neoliberalism Ensures its Prosperity • 186
- Austen Damerau**, Social Media and the Death of Logic • 201
- Rahul Pai**, Media Bias: The Framing of African American Male Athletes in Sports Media • 213
- Tasnova Choudhury**, A Literary Take on the American Dream • 225
- Pooja Rejith**, Stigma in the Mental Healthcare System • 237
- Max Anthony**, The Intersection of Psychology and Terrorism: How Extremist Use Radicalized Ideology to Exploit Psychological Vulnerabilities • 246
- Sarah Pfreundschuh**, Parental Feeding Strategies: Promising Means of Overcoming Innate Food Preferences • 255
- Sophie Wei**, Queering Traditional Marriage in China • 268
- Grace Lee**, The Big Sick, and Crazy Rich Asians: Nuances of Representation • 280
- Sarah Pascoal**, “I Do” Not Consent: Gaining Legal Protection for Marital Rape • 292
- Allison Nguyen**, Filing Down Empowerment of Vietnamese Manicurists in the United States • 303
- Matthew Mai**, Germany and Rwanda: Chained to History • 315
- Tara Shrier**, Media Monsters: An Exploration of Fear and Enjoyment in Film • 327

FOREWORD

In an extraordinary year, Rutgers students have continue to produce excellent work despite the tumult. As classes moved online in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19, students and teachers adapted to new ways of learning. Some things worked and some did not. Zoom meetings replaced in-person instruction, with virtual office hours being held in living rooms. Camera-ready meant a nice shirt and pajama pants below the desk. There was a presidential election. Black Lives Matters demonstrations brought attention to systemic police brutality. We clamored to get groceries, masks, and vaccination appointments. At the end of a day, it may have seemed absurd to think about writing an essay, or editing a research paper. Yet, that is exactly what students everywhere did.

This volume of *Dialogues@RU* contains work that reflects the concerns and interests of college students living in uncertain times. Rather than be defeated by that ambiguity, these young writers dive into it and explore topics such as the psychology of terrorism; neoliberalism and the carceral state; whitewashing the Latinx identity in cinema; queering traditional marriage in China; climate refugees; and media representations of African American male athletes. Healthcare and medicine also provide inspiration for discussions on deep-brain stimulation for depression; physicians' roles in the opioid crisis; the commodification of healthcare; and the expanding practice of integrative medicine. These are only a few of the themes in this year's volume. All essays were written for the Writing Program's *Research in the Disciplines* course, in which students spend an entire semester studying a topic of their choice to produce a final scholarly essay. The 27 included here were selected from over 400 submissions.

The *Editing Internship* offers the opportunity for undergraduates to participate in the publication process. Interns select, edit, and finalize the essays for *Dialogues@RU*. This is also a semester-long undertaking of working with authors on substantive changes, technical edits, and source verification. At several points during the internship, students are asked to reflect on the various stages of the editing process. Meeting deadlines and managing the workflow of their projects provides interns with practical skills and prepares them for careers in publishing. And like the authors, these students are carrying full-time course loads, working jobs outside of Rutgers, and coping with the upended schedules and routines of the past year. Many thanks and much gratitude goes to these hard-working interns.

Dialogues@RU could not be possible without the continued support of the Writing Program, especially Executive Director, Lynda Dexheimer, and Director Kurt Spellmeyer. Professor Spellmeyer has been the center of the Writing Program at Rutgers University for more than 30 years.

Under his guidance and direction, the Program has flourished and become a model of success for many colleges and universities nationwide. Countless students have benefitted from Writing Program courses. Instructors, too, have benefitted from Kurt's leadership and genuine kindness. As he returns to teaching full-time, I would like to thank him for his tireless dedication to students, faculty, and staff these many years.

Tracy Budd

Editor, *Dialogues@RU*

ERIC KIM

An Analysis of Post-Human Surveillance Intelligence

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence, or AI, is playing an increasingly important role in the modern surveillance state. The very nature of artificial intelligence removes it wholly from the traditional constraints of human capability; AI's sheer processing power, efficiency of data and knowledge management, and ability to interface with a world and global economy that is becoming more and more digitized, present significant advantages over human involvement in surveillance and security. Yet, it is by this same nature that artificial intelligence suffers; AI is unbound from the limitations of human societal structures and values, and therefore cannot on its own comprehend the complexities of human behavior and morality on a primordial level. Thus, as modern human society continues to develop along the paths of a global surveillance state and economy, the role of artificial intelligence in surveillance and security must be considered through the lens of post-human theory. AI stands at a crossroads with regards to human influence, yet to what extent and in what fashion should human nature and behavior involve itself in the development of artificial intelligence in surveillance? This paper investigates the significance of this question, through analysis of Keynesian and neoliberal economic theory as well as several real-world examples of interaction between artificial intelligence and human behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The modern state has taken a much larger precedence in regarding the capabilities of the non-human, “digital” and “mechanical,” functions of contemporary surveillance. The abilities and potential of artificial intelligence to interface with an increasingly digital and inter-connected society cannot be underestimated nor disregarded; artificial intelligence presents significant advantages and benefits with regards to the management of data, information, and interconnectivity. Simultaneously, far greater importance has been placed on the security, physical and digital, of the modern nation-state in a globalized society. Yet, the already controversial state of surveillance and privacy in a society marred by suspicion of the government and the corporate must be considered. The private

information of the individual is highly valued by the citizen, the state, and the economy, and recent events and developments concerning such media and business giants as Facebook and Google have only served to increase public awareness of state and corporate data collection and privacy violation. Therefore, when considering the influence of artificial intelligence, one must question not only its utilization in a contemporary surveillance environment, but its potential growth, development, and evolution. Artificial intelligence may come to present a threat to a domestic society that values privacy, yet could also become a marker for peace and prosperity within a global atmosphere of socio-political tension, creating a veritably modern or postmodern Pax Romana. Further still, should artificial intelligence come to represent such a utopic development, sacrifices may be required with regards to the privacy of the individual.

The potential effects of the development of artificial intelligence may be predicted through the direction with which its development takes. In consideration of such, this research paper takes into account the idea of the post-human – the concept of that which comes after humankind. A naturally vast and vague concept, posthumanism will serve as the focal agenda around which this paper will base its visions of global economic and societal futures. Therefore, to supplement its discussion of the post-human surveillance intelligence, this paper will also analyze the capabilities and limitations of artificial intelligence in the contemporary, in the context of surveillance and data collection; the protections, or “leashes,” that human intelligence, values, and traditions place on machine or synthetic logic and processes; and the potential for utopic or dystopic economic futures in the context of surveillance and privacy.

Considering the growing marriage of the corporate economy and the state, as the idea of a ‘surveillance state’ continues to grow and develop within our contemporary society, so too will artificial intelligence develop in parallel. While at the moment the concepts of the surveillance state and artificial intelligence may be considered disparate, the controversies and questions that define them may serve to synthesize and synonomize the two. This paper, therefore, will chiefly investigate the parameters of economic ideology, human social policies of surveillance, and privacy, as they relate to the utilization of artificial intelligence. The initial section of this paper will serve to establish the economic ideologies through which artificial intelligence will be analyzed. It can, therein, be theorized that artificial intelligence acts as a reflection of economic policy and ideology, and that it will come to represent the future’s post-human economic and

socio-political principles.

ECONOMIC IDEOLOGIES

One must first consider the ever-growing influence of the corporate-economic level of domestic society within the surveillance state. The potential marriage of the corporation and the state is a variable of great proportions, with considerable ramifications on the development of artificial intelligence systems. To this end, one can consider Dr. John Edward Deukmedjian's 2013 University of Windsor article "Making sense of neo-liberal securitization in urban policing and surveillance," that establishes the influences of surveillance on both Keynesian and neoliberal economics by taking into account examples throughout human history regarding the security and disciplinary functions of various societies. In particular, Deukmedjian describes the contemporary transformation of global economics and governmentality from Keynesian, or centripetal, functions to more neoliberal, or "centrifugal," as Deukmedjian states, formats. In this regard, Keynesian economics can be described as an economy wherein output is heavily determined by the aggregate demand of supply and therefore centralized and self-regulating in nature, and neoliberal economics can be described as economic movement away from a centralized, well-regulated structure. Deukmedjian (2013) claims that Keynesian economics, as opposed to neoliberal economics, is vulnerable to instability and "disequilibrium from domestic sources" (p. 63) due to their centralized nature and co-dependence on supply and demand. Equilibrium, as described by Deukmedjian, is the point of "optimal governance," "achieved at the border between individualism and socialism." Thus, the "extremism from the right that espoused freedom and individuality and extremism from the left that espoused regulation and socialism" (p. 63) is argued, by Deukmedjian, to be the central point of failure of Keynesian economics. Thus, the main cause of contemporary governmentality's evolution to neo-liberal economics, wherein the so-called equilibrium, and therefore "optimal governance," has been met. To clarify, the centripetal nature of Keynesian economics, which is dependent on self-regulating balance in supply and demand, is left vulnerable to the constant pushes and pulls from the two sides of socio-economic politics and therefore fails when exposed to a point of imbalance. Thus, global economics have shifted towards neoliberal theory due to its perceived stability when compared to Keynesian economic theory, and with this shift comes a paralleling

influence on surveillance and security by human socio-economic policies. However, there is yet another ideology that, perhaps, prospers in a deregulated, post-Keynesian economic environment. In Michael Punt's 2002 article "A Taxi ride to late capitalism: Hypercapitalism, imagination, and artificial intelligence" Punt introduces the titular idea of "hypercapitalism." An extreme form of late-stage capitalism, in which traditional human morals and values are eschewed in favor of profit above all. Through hypercapitalism Punt investigates the cyclical nature of human civilization and economic society. Yet, despite the free-market and unregulated nature of both economic ideologies, there remains a significant point of opposition between Deukmedjian and Punt's interpretations of neo-liberal and hyper capitalist economics. Deukmedjian's understanding of neoliberalism highlights the importance of equilibrium, between the "individual" and the "social," to optimal governance, and a shift away from wholly centralized regulation. However, Michael Punt's presented concept of hypercapitalism does away with all human values entirely, and places sole importance on profit in a dystopic dismissal of human perception and ideology. Therefore, it is understood that while neo-liberal economics presents a lens through which to investigate the relationship between the social and the individual – governmentality and the citizenry – so too does hypercapitalism provide its own lens through which to analyze reality and society from a non-human, or even post-human, standpoint. Punt (2012) states that because "neither materialist ideology nor perception are any longer at stake in hypercapitalism, this opens the way for other realities to be revisited" (p. 1). In this sense, through an investigation into hypercapitalist theory, post-human realities and societies are conceptualized. As such, the following section, an analysis of artificial intelligence in the contemporary, will open the discussion into the realities and futures of surveillance intelligences.

CONTEMPORARY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: PRESENT IMPERFECT

Artificial intelligence has become the norm faster than many have realized. The industries of the global economy have taken notice of the potential of AI, realizing its power and utility. Ted Goertzel, in his Rutgers article "The path to more general artificial intelligence," states that "... the next stage of development of AI, for at least the next decade and more likely for the next 25 years, will be increasingly dependent on contribu-

tions from strong-AI” (Goertzel 2014, p. 343). It is, in essence, a claim that the contemporary following into the future presents a strong environment for effective development of greater artificial intelligence, which Goertzel terms “strong-AI.” Given the unification of data acquisition/circulation and modern economic policies, it is not surprising that artificial intelligence has also become a centerpiece of those industries who utilize or supply, innocently enough or not, citizen surveillance. Regardless, the swift adoption of artificial intelligence comes to the surprise of no one, given its capabilities even in its technological infancy.

One can investigate the foundations of artificial intelligence in surveillance and security through several real-world, 20th and 21st century attempts to implement AI in surveillance systems. For example, Noah McClain, in his 2016 article “The horizons of technological control: automated surveillance in the New York subway,” describes the utility of “smart surveillance” in the subway systems of New York City. Backed by vast networks of cameras and sensors, the so-called “Integrated Electronic Security and Surveillance System, Command Communication and Control System of Systems,” or in short “IESS/C3,” would “detect threats using artificial intelligence and data mining” (McClain 2016, p. 46). At the core of the system was a dynamic, continuously self-updating surveillance network - effectively a primitive AI system. This network analyzed and visualized human behavior through a system of interconnected cameras and sensors. If threatening, violent, and/or suspicious behavior was identified, the network acted as the veritable key to the vast arrays of alarms and emergency response correspondence spread throughout the underground. In the name of public safety, this artificial intelligence project was a glimpse into the capabilities of artificial intelligence, given extensive catalogues of human behavior and real data.

Artificial intelligence has also played roles in data collection and management in public health and healthcare sectors. To this end, one may refer to the utilization of artificial intelligence in the public health sector, as described by Daniel B. Neill in his article, “New directions in artificial intelligence for Public Health Surveillance,” and Diana Zandi et al. in their editorial, “New ethical challenges of digital technologies, machine learning and artificial intelligence in public health: a call for papers.” As Zandi et al. (2019) describes, data and information on the human being as an individual remains at the core of the public health sector – the information age has garnered not only an exceptional need for data as a tool, a resource for medical research and advancement, and

an “asset to transform health care and global public health” (p. 2) but also a veritable spring of critical, monetary value. Yet, the gathering and thereafter corroboration and analysis of human information is no simple, or harmless, matter. Neill (2012) states that “this surveillance takes place at the local, state, national, and global scales, and often requires coordination of multiple entities” (p. 56). In claiming this collection of data is a form of surveillance, Neill introduces the utility and perceived necessity of artificial intelligence in the public health sector. In a broad sense, AI translates a considerable amount of data from unstructured, free-form text into a quantifiable form. Thereafter, Neill introduces one such example of AI methodology in public health research, the “prodrome-based approach,” described to “(classify) each (Emergency Department) case into one of the existing set of prodromes (or ‘unknown’) by keyword matching, Bayesian network-based classification, or other text classification approaches” (p. 57). To clarify, the prodrome-based approach automatically categorized and classified broad groups and sets of syndromes, along with their associated symptoms, into matched keywords, in attempts to decrease the time it took to detect an emerging outbreak. Further still, Neill describes two other AI methodologies that built upon the prodromed-based approach; the “dynamic approach” and “incremental semantic scan” methods reduced the detection period for an emerging outbreak from “11 days to five” (p. 58). It is through these approaches that artificial intelligence effectively denoted a particular illness or cause of discomfort to detect patterns and commonalities within a much larger group, given an array of surveillance and data collection available to the AI.

Through the investigation of the various utilities of artificial intelligence in surveillance, however, a pattern begins to take shape. Similarities in methodology behind the utility of artificial intelligence appear in the transit surveillance industry and public health sectors. McClain’s description of the IESS/C3 system, for example, stated that it was “supposedly capable of recognizing certain threatening human behaviors in transit environments” (p. 46), utilizing the subway as a “social and visual environment” (p. 49) to record patterns in video media and detect any atypical behavior. This methodology represents a striking parallel to those responsibilities tasked to artificial intelligence in the public health industries, such as those described by Zandi et al. wherein AI “(understands and processes) language, recognizing sounds, identifying objects and learning patterns to perform problem-solving operations” (p. 3).

Ultimately, the central utility of artificial intelligence in surveillance and information is based within its ability to detect behavior or data, atypical or not, when supplied – by its developers – a specific pattern, framework, or methodology of the “norm” – what is normal, usual, and in some cases, innocuous and harmless. The article “Violence detection in surveillance video using low-level features” corroborates the common usage of “normal” human behavior, wherein Peipei Zhou. et al. (2018) state that visual and motion-detection features, at a low-level, significantly aid automated surveillance in the detection of violence. It is claimed that automated surveillance “involves many related computer vision techniques, for instance, object detection, action recognition and classification” (p. 1) to the ultimate goal of detecting violence throughout varying environments. Thus, I return to John Edward Deukmedjian, in which he introduces the concept of Durkheim’s “social-structural blueprint.” The blueprint is described to be a “biopolitical analysis” of a population, society, or environment, and ultimately a means to provide the “minimization of crime and delinquency in the population” (Deukmedjian 2013, p. 60). The social-structural blueprint is an analysis of a population or other group of people through socio-political, socio-economic, racial, or other lenses as a means of uncovering areas and regions wherein crime, or the emergence of a criminal population, is more likely. Durkheim’s blueprint is a parallel to those frameworks and patterns, the banks of information and human data, utilized by artificial intelligence to detect atypical behavior, symptoms (in the case of public health), or otherwise, through the identification of typical, innocuous human behavior and, as termed by Deukmedjian, “delinquency.”

Deukmedjian’s representation of the social-structural blueprint, and Durkheim’s biopolitics, ultimately originate in the discussion of the avoidance, and removal, of what is termed “social delinquency.” Deukmedjian claims that “sovereign nations began to compete... through a scientific politics surrounding quality of life that connected up with the reduction and prevention of sovereign usurpation on the one hand, and on the other the redirection, minimization, or even the nullification of the culpability of usurpers within a population” (p. 57). In short, it is a claim that nations, countries, and societies will measure themselves and their comparable states of “civilization” on the presence and, thereafter, neutralization of crime and public disorder through the removal of the public’s ability to rise up in discontent in the first place. The blueprint, and Durkheim’s biopolitics, acts as a utility for security and, given the

nature of the so-called “nullification” of “usurpers,” discipline, in a given society and population.

Yet, Deukmedjian also argues that important distinctions must be made between these two explicit, yet not wholly disparate, functions of the Durkheim blueprint, and therefore also of surveillance through artificial intelligence. He maintains that surveillance cannot truly be analyzed in good faith without already, and consciously, understanding security surveillance to be distinct from disciplinary surveillance, stating that “an effective analysis of surveillance must differentiate its security functions from its disciplinary functions lest these become conflated” (p. 69). In essence, to synthesize one’s understanding of security and disciplinary surveillance, is in nature to act as all of judge, jury, and executioner, the collation of three distinct roles into one singular responsibility. Yet the security and disciplinary functions of surveillance are two individual utilities, and when treated to be one and the same, their individual definitions and services may be confused. One should thus consider the article “Intelligent surveillance empowers security analysts,” in which Jan Krikke describes several legal controversies and citizen concerns with regards to automatic and intelligent surveillance as well as security developments and programs in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Krikke (2006) states that “legal challenges against surveillance are increasing” (p. 104) in the United States, yet simultaneously states that new surveillance systems in the United Kingdom have met “little public resistance... people understand the surveillance system is not specifically deployed to deny citizens their civil liberties” (p. 102) It must be questioned, then, why seemingly identical surveillance measures meet wholly different responses in two separate, yet similar environments and circumstances. The answer is perhaps found in relation to Deukmedjian’s plead to separate the security and disciplinary functions of surveillance - while the people are content with surveillance with regards to keeping themselves, as individuals, safe, it is the conflation and amalgamation of the disciplinary functions of surveillance alongside security that is seen as a threat to one’s rights. The disciplinary functions of surveillance places anticipatory guilt on the surveilled, further compelled by Deukmedjian’s (2013) statement that the functions of “... preemptive security-surveillance practices... include identifying, containing, reducing, or ultimately eliminating the habitual criminal” (p. 59). His description of “preemptive” behavior and practices places the burden of guilt on a population in its entirety before any crimes are even committed, while practices that are understood to

protect and secure the population itself might instead be perceived as good, a benefit, a “blanket,” rather than a burden. While the public intent of preemptive surveillance and security practices may ultimately be to prevent domestic criminal activity and foreign threats before they can be carried out, such practices may be used on individual citizens of a society regardless of a lack of criminal nature. The identification of the common citizen, even innocent, as a “habitual criminal” is evidence of the dangers of coalescing the two distinct functions of surveillance – discipline and surveillance. The greatest complication, therefore, is the introduction of non-human – post-human – arbiters within the generally tripartite roles of, judge, jury, and executioner. While a human authority, state, corporate, or otherwise, might be able to differentiate between citizen and alien, benign and threat, an artificial, mechanical intelligence, in a surveillance role invites potential mistakes with consequences far beyond their initial measure. Therefore, the following section of this paper will cover the analysis and discussion of human bias and thought augmented by or opposed to machine logic.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Artificial intelligence, especially when handling matters of human origin, human context, and human concept, possesses numerous flaws. McClain’s own description of the IESS/C3 subway surveillance system denotes that even such a wholly securitized, well-funded project on one of the largest subway systems in the world, failed – largely due to an inherent inability to register human social contexts and cues. McClain (2018) states that, despite those common patterns, algorithms, and methodologies previously found in automated surveillance, “a usable smart surveillance algorithm for the project was ultimately never found” (p. 56) for the IESS/C3. Noah McClain claims that the “property of the environment as a physical and social context and the degree to which it is amenable to such monitoring” (p. 59) is of utmost importance for an automated surveillance system to register and account for. The lack of suitable patterns or methodologies to account for the wholly human, dense, and nonsensical environment of the New York subway breeds concern for an automated system, AI or not, responsible for directing security and surveillance through pattern and behavioral recognition. Therefore, the inability to register the complexities of human emotion and behavioral identification is the greatest problem to the successful implementation of artificial intel-

ligence in surveillance. It is also just as much the reason behind the relative success of AI in public health data collection. Thus, human influence – the human touch – is necessary for the development and completion of artificial intelligence, at least with regards to surveillance. However, the “how” of implementing human intelligence into artificial intelligence is the foremost question. Refer, then, to Zhou and Shen, who in their 2018 article “When human intelligence meets artificial intelligence” claim that the greatest advantages of the human mind “include, but are not limited to... the ability to learn from limited data and solve problems with limited computational resources... the ability to deal with uncertainty... a highly efficient visual processing system and the ability to extract semantic information from visual scenes, and... the ability to acquire knowledge from the outside world and build internal models accordingly” (p. 156). Human intelligence possesses the capability to learn from its environment, to identify, analyze, and solve problems and, thereafter, retain its experiences to apply to the next problem. This is in stark comparison to the limited capabilities of contemporary artificial intelligence, as it was found earlier that specific models and patterns of human behavior must be applied, beforehand, to an automated surveillance system. Therefore, the advantage of human intelligence over the artificial is manifested in its inherent ability to learn, and adapt through the human experience in emotion, personality, and behavior, rather than simply being a reactive spectator as the contemporary AI might be.

One should consider the advantages seen through the amalgamation of human and artificial intelligence - perhaps, in short, when one attributes human qualities and traits towards a non-human element, thusly eliciting human emotion and personality where it may not necessarily belong. Heather Suzanne Woods, in her 2018 article “Asking more of Siri and Alexa: feminine persona in service to surveillance capitalism,” describes the utility of human gender norms and personality archetypes for artificial intelligence to this end. Through analysis of “feminine” AI personas, chiefly Siri and Alexa, Apple and Amazon’s respective “virtual assistants,” Woods (2018) investigates the intimate roles of “caretakers, mothers, and wives” when in relation to surveillance data collection. Refer then, to Woods’ definition of the term “digital domesticity,” which she describes as a “metaphor for the rise of ‘smart homes,’” wherein “prototypical motherhood” is “characterized by traditional norms of stereotypical femininity” (p. 336). Digital domesticity is a descriptor for the domestic nature of virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa. Woods claims that

the feminine nature of these contemporary AI examples invoke natural human connections to stereotypically female gender roles in society – the mother, the wife, the caretaker, the hearth-keeper. It is a claim that the principal purpose, therefore, of this invocation of the feminine domicile, is to “assuage fears about artificially intelligent virtual assistants, AI VA take on an algorithmically-amplified feminized persona” (p. 336). As she describes, the feminine personas that virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa have adopted are not simply texture or flavor – rather, they capitalize on the female stereotypes of the domestic caretaker to remove, soothe, or otherwise soften users’ concerns regarding any potential, ulterior motives, by eliciting emotions in users that reflect connections to caretakers, mothers, or wives. Ultimately, the amalgamation of human emotional connection to inherent instincts and stereotypes with the processes and services, both innocuous – managing home and/or work – and concealed – surveillance through virtual assistants – strengthens the artificial intelligence and its core functions. In this case, users are more susceptible to surveillance, wittingly or not, given the presence of and capitalization upon the human touch. Traits and attributes characteristically perceived as “human” provide an invocation of emotion and familiarity, in an otherwise non-human, synthetic persona.

While most previous sections of this paper have detailed the flaws of artificial intelligence when considering the lack of human influence, so too might traditional human values and morals represent a potential threat to the development and evolution of artificial intelligence, especially in consideration of the surveillance of humans themselves. It is of the inherent circumstance that human beings are, by nature, perceptive of differences – in wealth, race, sex, or by some other denomination. The perceptions of such differences often result in biases, whether positive or negative. Through these biases, connotations and associations manifest themselves within human thought and logic processes regarding sex, race, age, or other parameters. Given that at the current contemporary point in time, artificial intelligence is a purely human creation, developed, programmed, and provided the processes of logic through human minds and human reason, one can infer that the biases that manifest themselves in human behavior might also appear in the logic of the artificial intelligence. Dr. John Edward Deukmedjian describes a motion by the Metropolitan Police of London, England, in the 19th century, to implement a “highly systematic mechanism of surveillance over the urban population to obtain ‘local knowledge, including that of the characters, family

circumstances, abodes and haunts of individual delinquents, and persons most in danger of falling into delinquency” (Deukmedjian 2013, p. 57). Through this explanation of an early, almost prototypical attempt at systemic surveillance, Deukmedjian describes the concept of “biopolitics,” referred to earlier as Durkheim’s social-structural blueprint. The concept of “biopolitics” is described by Deukmedjian to be a field of political philosophy and policy that “deals with the population as a specific ‘problem that is at once scientific and political’” (p. 57). It is a form of political thought that understands human life to be a subject of governance requiring active sustenance and regular maintenance of order. Therefore, it is this regular application of order and governance that necessitates the biopolitical analysis and thereafter implementation of surveillance, as motioned by the Metropolitan Police of London in the 19th century, and therefore a factor behind the current implementation of artificial intelligence in surveillance in the contemporary.

Yet given the flaws and inability of artificial intelligence to understand the complexities of human emotion and behavior, there is an inherent flaw not with the lack of human influence, but rather with AI’s existence as a purely human creation. Given earlier mentions of the Metropolitan Police and the implementation of surveillance and thereafter discipline in areas of supposed “delinquency,” it is prudent to include Deukmedjian’s notes that such tactics utilized were not wholly successful, stating that “on the one hand, police expansion is justified with increases in crime rates, and on the other, police expansion causes crime rates to rise” (p. 58). Surveillance as a preemptive means of suppressing civil delinquency creates, a self-fulfilling prophecy; the rise of social and civil delinquency, and thereafter the growth and further development of surveillance and police activity, both preempt and produce one another in a cycle of escalation.

The failures of biopolitics in surveillance should be considered when provided a preemptive assumption of guilt and delinquency. Matthew Hutson, in his 2017 article for the academic journal *Science Magazine*, stated that “(e)ven artificial intelligence can acquire biases against race and gender,” provided a potential answer. Hutson (2017) claims that despite a predilection for the idea that AI and “Big Data” might solve the issues of racial profiling in law enforcement, artificial intelligences “adopt stereotypes very similar to our own,” “glean(ing) the meaning of words by gobbling up lots of human-written text” (p. 1). The idea was that the problem of racial profiling perhaps lay atop a systemic founda-

tion, and that the investigation of data and information on a mass scale could reveal the underlying causes of racial profiling. Hutson describes the application of an “implicit association test” on artificial intelligence, to uncover the associations a computer program might apply to specific terms and words, stating that “Bryson’s team found that the embeddings for names like ‘Brett’ and ‘Allison’ were more similar to those for positive words including love and laughter, and those for names like ‘Alonzo’ and ‘Shaniqua’ were more similar to negative words like ‘cancer’ and ‘failure.’ To the computer, bias was baked into the words” (p. 5). Names typically associated with white or otherwise non-ethnic groups invoked positivity and “good” concepts, whereas those names associated or implied to belong to individuals of ethnic backgrounds were instead applied to ideas and terms more commonly perceived as negative and “bad.” Hutson claims that these associations were similar, if not nearly identical, to implicit associations found among the average American: “Both black and white Americans, for example, are faster at associating names like ‘Brad’ and ‘Courtney’ with words like ‘happy’ and ‘sunrise,’ and names like ‘Leroy’ and ‘Latisha’ with words like “hatred” and “vomit” than vice versa” (p. 3). Race was, supposedly, not the only similarity in implicit association – connections with gender, age, and even subjects such as plants, animals, and inanimate objects were found between human intelligence and computer programs. Thus, it was found that a computer program was susceptible to the same biases that humans are. The presence of human bias in a human creation causes faults in surveillance performed by an artificial intelligence, and further human influence in the confluence of the disciplinary and security functions of surveillance hinder AI’s ability to subject human populations to surveillance in the name of security, and thereafter discipline in the name of governance. Perhaps, then, the evolution of artificial intelligence should be placed in question within the concerns of economics in human society.

ECONOMIC FUTURES – THE POST-HUMAN EVOLUTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Given the findings of this paper’s research thus far, this argument finds fault in the reasoning that automated surveillance systems have been flawed due to the lack of knowledge on human behavior. Should one then consider that the human touch in the development of AI is the catalyst for surveillance intelligence’s failures, the idea that AI is a purely hu-

man creation must also be reconciled. One can return to Michael Punt's establishment of hyper capitalist ideology: should artificial intelligence, hypothetically, be able to shed human influence in its construction, thus in doing so shed human values, morals, and perceptions of biases and differences, perhaps one might be able to avoid one such dimension of the faults of artificial surveillance intelligence. Without such human biases to control and influence the responsibilities of the arbitration of security, and thereafter following discipline, perhaps surveillance intelligence might then represent a non-biased, and thus "fairer" interpretation of law and criminality – a common source of legal controversy and debate. Yet, Michael Punt states, in establishing his metaphor of a taxi-cab as an artificial intelligence, that "the taxi is not only a transporter of bodies between destinations, but, in the scenario described above, it is a complex data storage and retrieval system. Not quite an artificial intelligence machine, since it needs a sentient human processor, but nearly" (Punt 2002, p. 366). Perhaps it is a contradiction to a hyper capitalist economic theory of AI development – that artificial intelligence will require human influence to function. Punt later claims however, that "... we have moved from agriculture to extraction, and through fabrication to processing as the economic base... the revisioning of the collapse of the Mediaeval as the pursuit of circulation is seen here as the foundation of a model of human life that finds its social and cultural trace in the institutions of moving image technology" (p. 373). Despite the general obfuscation of Punt's meanings and metaphors, given the eclectic nature of the realities that he "visits" through hyper capitalist economic theory in AI, he refers here to a sort of parallel of one human economic society - that of medieval feudal-agrarianism, wholly and fundamentally different from our contemporary and commonly understood to be backwards and "ancient" by comparison. It is an argument, in a sense, that despite leaps and bounds in technological advancement between the "Mediaeval," medieval, and the contemporary, human society, security, and discipline is restricted by the same bounds that dictate human creations. Therefore, Punt argues that profound change is spurred by "an autonomous economic system that has developed an autonomous technology in its own image" (p. 373) – a technology, in this case artificial intelligence, that has developed and created itself through an economic ideology that has distinguished itself from human values and traditions. This argument is parallel with Punt's claims that if a person were to sacrifice human cultural, political, and economic values, they would truly be able to understand these various

scenarios from the perspective of an outsider: the perspective of the taxi-cab, isolated within their vehicle of perception and imagination. Therefore, since Punt's taxi-cab metaphor relates to human history and reality through hyper capitalist economic theory, a surveillance AI might be able to effectively surveil, without bias and without flaw, a human population through hyper capitalist theory.

In this case, should artificial intelligence that is wholly separated from human influence and bias - considered the true post-human - be developed through hyper capitalist theory? One might question how neoliberal economic policy and ideology might contribute differently; perhaps instead to the development of a post-human artificial intelligence that truly understands, and more so synthesizes with, human emotion and behavior. This may be understood as the "synthetic" post-human, a blend of human intelligence and artificial, mechanical intelligence, to create something greater than the sum of its parts. Yet, the descriptor of "synthetic" requires a compromise between its individual parts - human society may question the degree to which the "human" could be implemented in artificial intelligence, and may not even be willing to accept something that reflects itself, yet is not itself. Returning, once more, to Deukmedjian, neoliberal economic theory offers a solution to the issues that a synthetic AI future might present. Deukmedjian (2013) states that "western neoliberalization has embraced the dual processes of market deregulation and the offloading, downloading, and privatization of social provisions" (p. 65). He describes neoliberal policy as the deregulation of economic growth in all senses, and that "neoliberal governance therefore refigures biopolitics within the armature of free market politics. Plainly speaking, nation states no longer compete in terms of the health, welfare, education, longevity, and so on of disciplined populations, but rather on the growth of entrepreneurial and economic activity" (p. 65). In this, Deukmedjian claims that neoliberal politics and economic theory places increased, if not sole importance, on the free market. The health and welfare of the citizen population is shifted aside and disregarded in lieu of constant economic growth and prosperity. Therefore, in a neoliberal economic future, the human concerns regarding the synthesis of artificial intelligence and human society, in one form or another, are mitigated due to the sheer emphasis and focus placed on a deregulated free-market in pursuit of profit. However, this evolution of AI in a neoliberal future should not be confused or mistaken for the role of AI in a hyper capitalist future. While hyper capitalist economic policy foregoes all human tradi-

tions and values in an attempt to cover for AI's flaws, neoliberal economic policy instead combines artificial intelligence with human intelligence in a deregulated environment so that AI may understand the core intricacies of human intelligence and society. Regardless, a neoliberal economic future will spur the development of a synthetic post-human artificial intelligence, just as a hyper capitalist economic future will encourage the evolution of a true post-human artificial intelligence.

CONCLUSION

As with all new technologies, artificial intelligence represents in some ways a juncture – an intersection, a divergence of paths along which society will develop and evolve. As Michael Punt explored the multitude of realities possible given his investigation of hypercapitalism, so too can we explore the realm of realities, present and future, fueled and given shape by the economic qualities of tomorrow through the lens of neoliberalism and hypercapitalism. The flaws of the contemporary AI, especially when tasked with surveillance and information gathering, lie not necessarily with any lack of technological aptitude or development (though not to say that technology bears no relation to the advancement of AI); but rather with artificial intelligence's capabilities to relate directly to the human behind the intelligence. In other words, the definition of human and post-human, with regards to artificial intelligence, determine the extended, or even full, capabilities of the AI, as well as its flaws and faults. The question, thereafter, regarded the benefits and drawbacks of human influence in artificial intelligence, taking into account automated surveillance intelligence's successes and failures in crowd surveillance and violence detection compared to public health and raw data collection; applications of human emotion and instinctual behavior in artificial intelligence; and the presence and effects of human bias and association in artificial intelligence.

This paper's research therefore found that the post-human nature of artificial intelligence development will be determined by the economic policies and ideology in human society of the future. Research corroborated that a "synthetic" post-human artificial intelligence – in which human intelligence is synthesized with artificial intelligence – will be encouraged, if not outright dictated, by a neoliberal economic future, in which the deregulated nature of a neoliberal free-market provides ample space and opportunity for the development of synthetic AI to

“sidestep” human concerns regarding morals and values. The inherent nature of a hyper capitalist economic future will instead encourage the “true” post-human evolution of AI, in which the omission and rejection of traditional human values and morals in their entirety allows for the development of artificial intelligence that is unable to understand the human mind, yet does not require an inherent understanding of human behavior due to the post-human nature of a hyper capitalist future. In this way, the path of development that artificial intelligence adopts will reflect the economic principles of the present and the future, especially when perceived through an understanding of post-humanist theory. In turn, the post-human aspects implemented in artificial intelligence have the potential to influence, to a great degree, the surveillance society of the future – the core functions and services of surveillance, as well as artificial intelligence’s application in discipline and security through an understanding or intentional disregard for what is “human.” This research paper serves to highlight the very nature of artificial intelligence’s evolution and continued development: artificial intelligence is, and will continue to be, a reflection of societal economics and post-humanist socio-political ideology. Therein, artificial intelligence will reflect and become a catalyst to the surveillance world of tomorrow.

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CARLOS R. STORCK-MARTINEZ
Fleeing Climate Change: The
Negligence of Environmental
Refugees under the Trump
Administration

ABSTRACT

Should the United States government extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a form of temporary citizenship, to Haitians and Salvadorans? This paper examines the factors influencing the US government's decision to limit TPS to only half of the refugees seeking it and the proposed responsibilities of the US government in supporting these refugees. This paper serves to demonstrate the need for an extension of TPS in response to severe weather-related events stemming from climate change, which has led to further instability in these already vulnerable regions. Findings gathered from US legal documents, statistics about TPS members, and ethics principles support the reinstatement of refugee status for Haitian and Salvadoran immigrants. There are hundreds of thousands of Haitians and Salvadorans living in the US who will return to countries that cannot support them. The US is the single-most carbon emitting nation in history, therefore ethical responsibility dictates that the US government is responsible for providing a solution to those fleeing environments worsened by carbon emissions. In addition, Temporary Protected Status in the United States sets a guideline for how climate refugees are treated elsewhere as other countries look to the United States as a global leader.

INTRODUCTION

Why should the United States government reenact Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for both Haiti and El-Salvador? In recent news there has been an uproar regarding immigrants living in the U.S. under temporary status. TPS is a legal status that allows individuals living in the dangerous socio-economic and environmental conditions of underdeveloped countries to gain United States citizenship. Kirstjen Nielson, Secretary of Homeland Security (December 6th, 2017 to April 10th, 2019) signed legislation to cut many members from the program. This served to

displace 325,000 individuals under TPS in 2017 (Warren & Kerwin, 2017, p. 571). Of the 325,000 members cut from the program, 195,000 were Salvadoran, while 46,000 were Haitian (Baran, Magana-Salgado, & Wong, 2017, p. 1; Menjívar & Gómez Cervantes, 2018). Unaccounted for in this number of refugees is an additional 273,000 children born in the United States to immigrant parents (Warren & Kerwin, 2017, p. 578).

Secretary Nielson represented Trump's opposition to immigration. According to Stephen Collinson, a White House reporter at CNN, her harsh stance on immigration was a response to increasing pressure from the president (Collinson, 2019). Nielson resigned shortly after Trump pushed for even more aggressive border security, specifically the closing of the U.S. Mexican border. Her failure to accomplish this makes speculations about Nielson being Trump's puppet seem much more feasible as Trump is known for clearing out his office from those who oppose or defy him, according to a group of White House correspondents in the Washington bureau (Shear et al., 2017). Trump argues that there is an issue at the southern border, referring to immigrants in his statement, "We can't take you anymore. We can't take you. Our country is full" (Miller & Lemir, 2019). Trump's rhetoric does not represent all of the government's view, however; even some strong leaning conservatives do not support the removal of TPS members (Daugherty, 2019). In addition, those who oppose TPS in the scholarly community are not as radical in their opinions. Their arguments are based on the thought that the guidelines are not specific enough in both necessary deadlines and length of citizenship, which prompt much less extreme solutions compared to those proposed by Donald Trump (Frelick & Kohlen, 1995). Since Trump has been in office, he has radically transformed the nation's immigration policies, creating a toxic environment for a majority of immigrants in the U.S. (The Fund for New Jersey, 2019).

Vulnerability in countries where Temporary Protected Status members come from is only worsening at the hands of man-made climate change. In regards to Haiti and El Salvador, the geographical, social, and economic instability that both countries currently face exacerbates these environmental issues. In "The Greenhouse Effect: Science and Policy," Stephen Schneider, defines man-made climate change as the burning of fossil fuels leading to an increase of CO₂ in the atmosphere, which traps infrared radiation (1989). This increases global temperatures and disrupts the Earth's natural weather system, leading to more weather instability and ultimately more severe weather system concerns (Schneider, 1989).

Climate change in this sense multiplies the damage that can occur in vulnerable regions as weather systems become more damaging to susceptible regions.

As the single-largest contributor of CO₂ emissions, the U.S. has a moral obligation to support individuals fleeing unstable countries that cannot protect their citizens from severe weather systems (Cuomo, 2011, p. 697-698). Climate change has adversely impacted the environment globally, but in South America effects have been particularly devastating. Aggressive hurricanes are expected to prevail in the next two to three decades as a result of the increased global temperatures associated with climate change (Pielke Jr. et al., 2003, p. 103). Furthermore, by 2050 the global temperature is expected to reach an overall temperature increase of 2 degrees celsius; this would be a disaster for regions in the global south that are already seeing the effects of climate change (Cuomo, 2011, p. 696). Although a 2 degrees celsius increase in temperature seems miniscule, the implications are catastrophic (Cuomo, 2011). If a 2 degree celsius increase in average global temperature were to occur, the agricultural sector would see huge deficits, weather patterns would become more unpredictable and destructive, and the sea level would rise due to the melting of polar ice caps, causing flooding (Ausubel, 1991). Countries with citizens seeking Temporary Protected Status such as Haiti and El-Salvador face ever-increasing climate issues due to the anthropogenic forces strengthened by the United States' carbon emissions. Both countries are unable to take in the hundreds of thousands of people being forced out of the U.S. because of these climate disasters. The U.S. government therefore has an obligation both politically and morally to protect such individuals under TPS.

OPPOSITION TO TPS

Scholarly opponents of TPS argue that the lack of strict guidelines in legislation are problematic as they allow for individuals to be left in a state of limbo with no set schedule for deportation. This scholarly opposition calls for a large reform of the program, while the political opposition claims that there is not enough room in the country for immigrants. According to academics Frelick and Kohnen, both from the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants,

Recipients of TPS begin to build their lives outside their country

while still unsure whether the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Services] will eventually retract temporary protection. If the INS plans to continue extending TPS, then it should be recognized that dangerous conditions in the home country have not been of a temporary nature and that TPS recipients have built up equities in their respective communities. (1995, p. 357)

The lack of strict legislation in regards to the length of their stay creates an environment in which recipients of TPS are essentially unable to settle in the U.S. out of fear that they will be deported with little notice. Because of this unrest, members are not able to entirely integrate into their new community. Lisa Seghetti, the Division Chief at the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, claims that TPS members are considered lower-tiered when attempting to gain permanent residency in comparison to asylum seekers (2015). TPS members cannot gain full citizenship unless they are first granted asylum. Scholars who oppose such legislation argue that the status involves too much of a legal grey-area that undermines the entire objective, leading to instability in the lives of immigrants seeking asylum. Still, this group does not side with the U.S. government, as the Department of Homeland Security under President Trump has used this legal grey-area to their advantage.

It may be true that the lack of strict guidelines surrounding TPS provides an uncomfortable transition for immigrants seeking asylum, however, it also creates a much more inclusive subject pool and allows for many more immigrants seeking refuge to come to the U.S. Individuals receiving TPS would most likely not even be in the country without the program, the other alternatives being illegal immigration, refugee status, and asylum status. Most other forms of refugee status in the U.S. dictate that the individual seeking residence must be individually targeted for persecution based off of location or unchangeable characteristics (Bergeron, 2014). TPS is important as it covers a much broader group of people with more lenient criteria. Individuals are able to flee hardship and come to the United States without facing the exclusion of stricter refugee statuses (Bergeron, 2014). This is where TPS is very useful, as climate events in the global south can displace hundreds of thousands of people. Its terms are more inclusive of larger groups, where as asylum is very specific and focused on the individual's safety in their region rather than the region as a whole. The emphasis placed on asylum over TPS creates an imbalance of aid, leaving over 300,000 refugees without support. Both

Salvadorans and Haitians fit the legal criteria of “fleeing a natural disaster”, whereas those seeking legal asylum or refugee status must be fleeing persecution to gain citizenship (Frederick & Kohnen, 1995). Persecution must be on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion (Frederick & Kohnen, 1995). Both refugee status and legal asylum require that a person be individually at risk and generally exclude large groups of people. In reference to countries that have dealt with natural disasters, such as Haiti and El-Salvador, they do not meet the criteria for legal status under the two dominant characteristics of immigrants fleeing hardship. Temporary Protected Status is necessary as it allows members of communities that would not be given status under the two main paths to flee hardship relatively quickly. However, the opposition does make some valid points. TPS needs legal reformation in order to better serve immigrants who do not meet the guidelines for legal asylum or refugee. Without reformation, xenophobic administrations are able to release members without proper justification under these ill-defined terms. Immigration laws must be reimaged to further foster a sense of security for immigrants living in the United States, with an easier transition to full citizenship. The non-specific nature of TPS has encouraged reasonable debate, but it is important to mention that with such a status, members of previously endangered countries are able to live in and work in a first world country free from the instability of their home country. Back in their countries of origin, many immigrants have seen a digression in quality of life as the effects of climate change have become more apparent. Vulnerability in these regions mixed with worsening climates leads to a perpetual loop of degradation where long-term success for citizens is unlikely.

THE ROLE OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON VULNERABILITY

Man-made climate change is of primary concern for all Temporary Protected Status members because it exacerbates the vulnerability that already exists in their home countries, ultimately hindering an individuals’ ability to thrive. Climate change will inevitably cause issues on a global scale, but current regions that already face instability will most likely fare the worst. Both El Salvador and Haiti already experience natural disasters associated with climate change. The lack of prosperity in regions like Haiti and El-Salvador are what makes the impending effects of

climate change such a concern. The region in which Guatemala and other countries including El-Salvador are located in is known as the ‘dry corridor’; this is an area plagued by severe weather systems that have decimated the agricultural sector and caused extreme food insecurity in the past decade (Blitzer, 2019). Inhabitants of this region are largely dependent on the climate for work and every day meals, but extreme weather events have made farming an unreliable source of food. This type of weather is unpredictable, further complicating the rotation of crops as seasons mesh together and rain flows become impossible to track. Many individuals must flee in order to find secure means of acquiring food, causing large scale migration. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a subdivision of the United Nations dedicated to providing objective data on climate change, projected impacts, and legislative responses, details the disastrous consequences of rising global temperatures, especially in low-altitude regions where the melting of polar ice caps could flood inhabited regions (IPCC, 2007). Refugees from both Haiti and El Salvador have been granted Temporary Protected Status, but a temporary status is almost irrelevant in reference to both countries as climate change and more severe weather patterns will only continue to make these dangerous for inhabitants.

The vulnerability of these regions is underestimated by the Trump administration, specifically in regards to climate change, which may be the cause of the U.S. government returning TPS members back to these environmentally deteriorating regions. President Trump has vehemently denied the presence of ‘global warming,’ even after the Department of Defense released findings countering his claims in January of 2019 (De La Garza, 2019). His indifference towards the worsening climate may explain the administration’s lack of support for immigrants fleeing environmental hardships. According to Olivier Serrat in his “Sustainable Livelihoods Approach,” there is an equilibrium that must be obtained in order for an individual to thrive in their environment, one centered on the impact of events at the micro level and their effects on the macro level. He refers to a specific factor that inhibits an individual’s ability to thrive in an environment, stating, “vulnerability is characterized as insecurity in the well-being of individuals, households, and communities in the face of changes in their external environment... [examples of vulnerability shocks are] conflict, illnesses, floods, storms, droughts, pests, diseases” (Serrat, 2008, p.3). Vulnerability therefore inhibits an individual’s security as one cannot achieve a state of well-being in an environ-

ment that is unstable. In third world countries, where extreme weather patterns are only intensifying, vulnerability is a huge concern. In the case of Haiti, the island is already seeing negative effects. Weather patterns are becoming more severe in the Caribbean, leading to poor infrastructure and agricultural deficits. Hurricanes have become increasingly aggressive in the last decade; in 2008 alone, tropical storms caused the destruction of around 70% of crops and contributed to an estimated 900 million US dollars in damages, which makes up 15% of the country's GDP (Barker, 2012, p. 50). Haiti's location in the Caribbean Sea makes it vulnerable to hurricanes, which has and will continue to decimate the agricultural sector. In this specific instance, vulnerability is a better measure of the precarity of Haiti than poverty is, as the vulnerability of the island has a causal relationship to its poverty. Because hurricane mitigation is of primary concern to the Haitian government, large portions of the nation's GDP is spent on recovery efforts. As these severe systems hit the island more frequently, the Haitian government must continually put money towards fixing infrastructure and providing aid. In reference to Serrat's "Sustainable Livelihoods Approach," Haitians are unable to thrive in their environment as an equilibrium cannot be found; climate change inhibits a stability in both the agricultural and infrastructure sector. Similarly, El Salvador deals with severe weather events, including hurricanes, storms, floods, and droughts, which have all become more intense and frequent in the past 30 years (United States Agency of International Development, 2017, p. 1). These factors degrade the landscape and socio-economic outlook of the region, adding to El Salvador's vulnerability. Both regions are plagued with intense weather systems, creating unstable environments. Inconsistent weather patterns lead to seasons that are unpredictable to farmers, further decreasing the agricultural sector's ability to produce food. This creates a chain of events in which historically poor regions in vulnerable geographic locations are not able to properly prepare and mitigate the damages resulting from more frequent weather disasters. Therefore, the country cannot maintain the safety of its people, leading to greater death tolls when the next weather systems hit. These factors make individuals more likely to emigrate from their country of origin as they seek more stability and less hardship, many choosing to seek asylum in the U.S. However, immigrants have more recently not been welcome, mostly due to the President Trump's stance on the issue. Since his coming into office, he has brought with him controversial rhetoric denying the existence of climate change. Without understanding the very real inter-

action that climate change has on vulnerability in the global south, one cannot understand the importance of extending Temporary Protected Status to its current members. The role of the U.S. government to protect TPS members therefore relies on this adequate understanding. The denial of climate change hinders the United States from intervening in times of crisis, ultimately setting a standard of global passivity when it comes to environmental issues.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT TPS MEMBERS

More important than the U.S. government's legal obligation to recipients of Temporary Protected Status is the ethical responsibility of helping these immigrants flee the hardships created by American environmental practices. In "Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Responsibility," Chris Cuomo defines climate justice as a call for understanding and action in vulnerable regions that have either chosen to uphold ecological standards, or that have not contributed to much of the emissions from globalization, but experience much of the repercussions (2011). Dale Jamieson, author of "Climate Change, Responsibility, and Justice," offers elaborates on climate justice and describes the different kinds of responsibility related to it, stating "practical responsibility concerns what we are responsible for doing, while theoretical responsibility concerns what we are responsible for thinking. Exactly what relationships obtain between practical and theoretical responsibility depend on what we take the relationships to be between doing and thinking..." (2010, p. 432). Practical responsibility governs what we should do, while theoretical responsibility governs ideal thought. The overlap between the two is especially important. When the relationship between what we feel responsible for doing and what we feel we should think are closely intertwined, we react differently to moral obligations compared to when remain separate. This is applicable to climate change in that first world countries do not always feel responsible for mitigating damage seen in the third world. One explanation for this may be a lag in time between damaging the climate and seeing the adverse effects, which take a while to become visible. This disconnection between practical responsibility and theoretical responsibility may have been the cause of the indifference towards climate change felt in the first world. Regardless of how little responsibility the United States feels, it has greatly contributed to the problem and should

ultimately contribute to the solution. As of 2008, the U.S. is responsible for approximately 27.2% of all emissions, making it “...by far the largest single national emitter on Earth (Hansen et al, 2009, p. 18). In holding this title, the United States must consider how to resolve the damage they have caused. As stated by Cuomo, “Basic justice and fairness imply that those who amassed wealth and other benefits... bear ethical responsibility for addressing the harms produced by the industrial greenhouse effect” (2011, p. 697-698). The unrestricted use of nonrenewable energy sources and chemicals in first world countries, which cause significant environmental damage, should therefore act as the justification for more climate change mitigation efforts on their parts. Because the United States has greatly prospered from uninhibited economic growth at the expense of furthering environmental degradation, a good majority of the responsibility lies in the hands of the U.S. government. Prominent government officials, such as the Secretary of Homeland Security and Trump, may be suffering from a lack of connection between the two types of responsibility, which will ultimately leave them feeling disinterested in the fate of those living under TPS.

The delay between where and when pollution is emitted and where and when the effect is seen creates a window of time in which responsibility can become ambiguous. This time lapse creates a disconnect between those in the first world and those in the third world who see the effects, leading to inactivity in the political and social sphere. Jamieson writes,

...we would be asking people who are now living very well.. to buy insurance that will mainly benefit poor people who will live in the future in some other country... Moreover, rich people do not for the most part love or feel responsible for their poor contemporaries, especially those who live across national boundaries, much less those who will live in the future. (2010, p. 434)

A large contributing factor to the lack of social support given to impoverished individuals is the disconnect between the rich and the poor. People in the first world do not feel responsible for insuring the future as they will most likely be able to afford necessary provisions - whether structural, food, or medical - to ensure their own security. Neglecting provisional efforts that could possibly mitigate climate change mainly hurts the poor because mitigation efforts are often too costly for them to

afford. TPS members living in poverty will ultimately be the most adversely affected. Wealthier individuals do not see the struggles they face in their home countries and therefore do not feel an emotional connection to these individuals. By 2050, the regions that have temporary legal status in the U.S. now will most likely be the most adversely affected by climate change (Cuomo, 2011, p. 696). In order to help individuals under TPS, legal criteria must be extended to allow individuals a safe haven as the climate worsens. As the climate reaches the 2°C threshold, issues will only worsen until the rich can no longer neglect what is becoming of the climate.

CONCLUSION

Countries whose citizens have been granted Temporary Protected Status, such as Haiti and El-Salvador, face intensifying climate issues due to overconsumption of fossil fuels in first world countries. TPS should not be rescinded for both countries. Their history of social and climate disasters has left them vulnerably situated and unable to take in tens of thousands of people. The U.S. has an obligation both legally and morally to protect such individuals because it has caused much of the current climate crisis. Although TPS is somewhat controversial amongst the scholarly community for not having strict guidelines, this grey area is beneficial in that it points to a more inclusive program. The data used in reference to the current climate stressors in both Haiti and El-Salvador portray unstable environments in which people cannot thrive. More so, the forced re-integration of individuals under TPS back to these vulnerable regions would only lead to further stress; densely populated areas bring about a higher death toll in severe weather disasters. Because of this, the temporary nature of TPS must be reimagined. It is impossible to set temporary guidelines in vulnerable regions because time does not necessarily entail progress in a region that lacks security for growth. The U.S. has emitted more CO₂ than any other country throughout history, making it responsible for ensuring the safety of TPS members. In the realm of ethics, the responsibility lies not only on the government, but the people who enjoy luxuries in the first world. The current predicament for individuals living in the United States under TPS stems from the first world's lack of responsibility. The "Sustainable Livelihoods Approach" by Serrat refers to the conditions in which individuals must live under in order to thrive in their environment. The guidelines indicate that one must have a stable environment with consistent reinforcement of their safety in

order to live a happy and productive life. One major detriment to personal growth is vulnerability. Vulnerability is affected by poverty and unstable climates. In both Haiti and El-Salvador, vulnerability is pervasive, making it difficult for individuals to thrive. This fact makes it unethical to send over 100,000 people back into these regions where security is a major concern. Sending such a large group of people back to these countries may lead to an increase of casualties when severe weather systems hit and become deadly.

Ethical responsibility governs the role that the U.S. government and the citizens have in helping TPS members. The role that both groups have played in contributing to climate change makes them morally responsible for helping poorer individuals who cannot help themselves. The Secretary of Homeland Security does not see the problems that consistently plague the third world, which may be one cause for the disconnect between both realms of responsibility. The Secretary of Homeland Security may also not feel it necessary for the U.S. to aid in mitigation efforts because President Trump has openly denied the existence of climate change, leaning on the phrase 'global warming' to discredit science when there is cold weather (De La Garza, 2019). President Trump has the power to influence other government members towards acknowledging both realms of responsibility, putting an end to the environmental dissociation between first world countries and third world countries.

Temporary Protected Status marked a major milestone in the protection of immigrants. Hundreds of thousands of individuals have been spared severe hardship due to the generosity of the legislation. The citizens losing TPS are not able to move back to their original country because these regions are vulnerable and incapable of handling such a large influx of people. Sending over 100,000 individuals back to these areas will lead to further suffering. Furthermore, the United States is their home. Many TPS members have been in the U.S. for over 10 years and have given so much back to their communities. The decision to rescind TPS for regions that are clearly one severe natural disaster away from record breaking casualties is rooted in politics and not science. Because the government in these regions cannot provide protection from relatively common natural disasters, sending individuals living under TPS back to their countries of origin is ultimately a death sentence. The mindset that such people do not matter is dangerous as it emphasizes the idea that future immigrants will not be given appropriate refuge from the environmental disasters caused by climate change.

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LAWRENCE FROLOV

Unhappiness in Japan: Failures of Eudaimonism in My Hero Academia

ABSTRACT

My research pursues an understanding of the sources of unhappiness in Japan through cultural figures such as Endeavor from the manga My Hero Academia by Kohei Horikoshi. To do this, I study the two major approaches to happiness, hedonism and eudaimonism, discovering that Japan tends to lean towards the latter. Using journal articles to define my framing concepts, scientific studies to support my claims, and an essay on the history of self-actualization in Japan, I make the necessary connections between Endeavor's failure to find happiness and Japan's failures in practicing eudaimonism. Although eudaimonism does act as a potent source of happiness when followed correctly, its self-sacrificial nature along with its incompatibilities with human nature may cause more harm than good, as evident in the case of Endeavor.

INTRODUCTION

The common English saying, “You have to spend money to make money,” is debated by businessmen and economists alike. However, this ideology of sacrifice slowly found widespread popularity in fields other than economics, such as in the studies on happiness. Many practice sacrificing short-term happiness in the pursuit of long-term happiness, but nowhere in the world is this more prevalent than in modern Japan. The people of Japan still find themselves unhappy despite years of building up their society's wealth and prosperity and being at the forefront of medical and technological advancements. According to studies by the World Health Organization, Japan has the 14th highest suicide rate in the world (“Suicide Data”), and these high suicide rates indicate a societal failure to find happiness, most likely due to fundamental issues that exist in their general approach.

In the manga serialization, *My Hero Academia* by Kohei Horikoshi, Endeavor's insistence of only practicing eudaimonism, regardless of its evident flaws, is what ultimately leads to his unhappiness. Endeavor's unhappiness mirrors that which is generally found in Japan,

as both are the outcome of a flawed approach and understanding of eudaimonism. Sasaki Hidekazu in his paper, “Self-Actualization and/or Self-Realization in Japan: A Historical Approach to its Various Aspects” shows that although the methods by which Japanese people have sought to obtain well-being has evolved over the years, eudaimonism remains a fundamental aspect of their society. As defined by Richard Ryan in his paper, “Living Well: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on Eudaimonia” eudaimonism (also known as eudaimonia) is the belief that one may find happiness through the process of self-improvement and self-actualization, be it through maximizing one’s contribution to society or by fulfilling one’s true potential in the practice of their choice (Ryan et al.). It is inherently connected to self-determination theory, also known as SDT, which is one of the leading theories of well-being. Scholars such as Edward Deci and his team study the underlying mechanisms of eudaimonism in their paper “Hedonia, Eudaimonia, and Well-Being: an Introduction” and discover that autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci et al. 6-7) are the three pillars upon which it rests. Further studies by Timothy Church and his team in their paper “Need Satisfaction and Well-Being: Testing Self-Determination Theory in Eight Cultures” show that eudaimonic well-being cannot be found without at least two of these pillars (Church et al. 507-508), leading one to a life of unhappiness. The issues with practicing eudaimonism come from its pillars’ incompatibility with humans, and specifically their flawed nature. The fallibility of humans plays a large role in blocking one from achieving competence, leaving no room for error in relatedness and autonomy. In this way, eudaimonic well-being is guaranteed only if one is flawless, which is impossible.

Although scholars have shown many times over that eudaimonic well-being directly leads to happiness, the difficulty to achieve eudaimonic well-being can cause unhappiness for the vast majority in any eudaimonist society. One such failure of eudaimonism is seen in the Japanese graphic novel *My Hero Academia* through the character of Endeavor, also known as Enji Todoroki. Similar to many people in Japan, Endeavor has spent his entire life in the pursuit of self-actualization and fulfilling his potential by becoming the number-one hero; however, after achieving his lifelong ambition, he still finds himself unhappy. Endeavor’s flawed nature, combined with his sole focus on practicing eudaimonism, is what leads him to the path of unhappiness, a road which is still being followed by many Japanese citizens today.

APPROACHES TO HAPPINESS

Although many Eastern societies such as the one found in *My Hero Academia* tend to focus solely on eudaimonic well-being, approaches to happiness have generally been split up into two major schools: hedonism and eudaimonism. Those who practice hedonism “define well-being as happiness, interpreted as the occurrence of positive affect and the absence of negative effect” (Ryan et al. 139). Hedonism is closely related to the maximization of positive affect, also referred to as pleasure, and minimizing negative affect, generally known as pain. The authors distinguish pleasure from positive affect because unlike positive effect, pleasure is not the outcome but the continuous increase in happiness. Most hedonistic practices are associated with the accumulation of wealth and power, the use of drugs and alcohol, and other earthly desires. Contrary to the hedonistic approach to well-being, eudaimonic well-being comes from “living a complete human life, or the realization of valued human potentials” (Ryan et al. 140). While hedonism focuses on the outcomes of one’s actions, eudaimonism is said to be dependent on one’s personal growth and character. Therefore, one can achieve both eudaimonic and hedonistic well-being by finding pleasure in the process of self-actualization while also minimizing pain.

Although hedonism and eudaimonism are Western concepts, studies have shown that both act as sources of happiness and well-being in Eastern cultures as well. In their study of well-being in both western and eastern cultures, Church and his team found that “needs for self-actualization and pleasure-stimulation—was moderately related to most aspects of well-being in all cultures” (Church et al. 527). This does not imply that individuals in Eastern societies seek both. Endeavor is one such individual who sought only eudaimonic well-being and denied himself hedonistic pleasure. But, his flawed understanding of eudaimonic well-being also led him to deny the pleasure one is supposed to gain from self-actualization, leaving him with only the pain one sacrifices to achieve their goals.

Like most other careers, heroes in *My Hero Academia* can obtain happiness through both hedonism and eudaimonism. There are many conflicting definitions of what it means to be a hero, which can vary from comic book to comic book; however, when one strives to fulfill their potential as a hero, they are doing so in accordance with their own definition of hero, regardless of whether it is correct. Thus, it makes the most

sense when talking about eudaimonism to only examine the definitions given by individuals inside the *My Hero Academia* universe. The definition of hero in the *My Hero Academia* universe is dual-sided, and as such the path to becoming the greatest hero is dual-sided as well. Throughout the story multiple perspectives are given on the nature of heroism though the all-encompassing definition is given to the reader by the former number-one hero, All Might. He explains to two of his students that “You can become the ultimate heroes. Ones who save by winning, and win by saving” (Horikoshi 37; vol.14). In figure 1, he shows that a hero is split into two parts, two people, and two perspectives, representing its dual nature. By saving people, a hero is always able to win, but to save people, they must also win the battle.



Figure 1. All Might’s Definition of Hero page 37, vol. 14

The dichotomy of heroism exists not only in its definition but also in its sources of happiness. Heroes can find hedonistic well-being by taking pleasure in their victories, whether it be by saving others or by defeating villains. Studies by psychologists such as Daniel Kahneman have shown that such hedonic pleasure follows a logarithmic scale, meaning that the hedonic well-being gained from such activities grow at slower and slower rates (Kahneman and Deaton 1). Similarly, heroes can find eudaimonic well-being by taking pleasure in their growth as heroes. However, as some psychologists may argue, this pleasure is not eu-

daimonic since growth as a hero requires the acquisition of power, which is a pleasure that is hedonistic in nature (Ryan et al. 139). This stems from the common misconception that self-actualization cannot exist in the pursuit of hedonistic goods such as power and wealth. Hidekazu Sasaki explains the source of such well-being “was, however, apt to be misunderstood without careful deliberation as a theory stipulating that economic growth is a prerequisite for human happiness. In fact, the ideal of self-actualization could be an effective incentive for people motivating them to work industriously and earn money enthusiastically” (Sasaki 166). Sasaki argues that after the large economic growth in Japan, pleasure was commonly misinterpreted as stemming from this growth (hedonistic in nature), when it was eudaimonic well-being that acted as a motivator for economic growth. The same can be said of eudaimonic well-being and its relation to power. Instead of taking pleasure in the acquisition of power, which is associated with greed and hedonism, a hero is also able to find eudaimonic pleasure by improving their ability to save others and by training to defeat greater villains to fulfill their potential.

Eudaimonism is not directly associated with the pursuit of happiness, yet it is still viewed as an approach to well-being, as self-actualization and meaningful endeavors are theorized to bring pleasure that is indistinctive from hedonistic well-being (Ryan et al. 141). A study by Church and his team shows that such theories are well-posed and that happiness comes from a combination of pleasure that is derived from hedonistic and eudaimonic pursuits. Church and his team “did not [find] that satisfaction of hedonic needs (i.e., pleasure-stimulation) was a better predictor of hedonic well-being (i.e., positive and negative affect) than eudaimonic well-being” (Church et al. 523). Church implies that pleasure, also known as positive affect, is indiscriminately derived from both hedonistic and eudaimonic pursuits. However, the true contradiction one runs into when attempting to find hedonistic pleasure through eudaimonism is within its insistence of self-sacrifice. Sasaki explains that self-sacrifice plays a large role in the process of self-actualization, especially in collectivist societies such as Japan. In his paper on the history of eudaimonism in Japan, Sasaki explains the influential Japanese philosopher “Inoue [Tetsujiro] argued that the specific contents of self-realization led to individuals’ devotion to society through self-discipline and that self-realization could not be accomplished without self-sacrifice” (Sasaki 162). Here, Sasaki argues that self-discipline and sacrifice are necessary for one to fulfill their potential in their devotion to society; yet this can be

generalized as a devotion to any practice. Fulfilling one's potential in any field, be it academic, athletic, or corporate, requires a tremendous amount of self-sacrifice. This allows for the possibility of one's self-sacrifice to outweigh the pleasure they receive from fulfilling their potential, leading to an overall unhappiness.

By focusing solely on eudaimonism, Endeavor limits himself to only one source of happiness, thus lowering the probability of successfully finding happiness. He is willing to sacrifice everything in the pursuit of becoming the number-one hero, and in the process sacrifices his own hedonistic well-being. Shoto Todoroki, the abused son of Endeavor, explains that "He's a powerful bastard who only thinks of becoming stronger" (Horikoshi 96; vol.4). In Figure 2, we see Endeavor with tensely strained eyes and his back turned to All-Might, who is not only the number-one hero, but is also someone well-known for finding happiness in his work. By turning his back on All-Might, Endeavor is also abandoning his hedonistic pleasure, something we see multiple times throughout the serialization. Inasa Yoarashi, another student and ex-fan of Endeavor, recounts one such experience, saying that unlike other heroes who find enjoyment and passion in their work, Endeavor does not allow himself to feel happiness from his victories. Instead he stares coldly forward, focusing solely on fulfilling his potential. After sacrificing his hedonistic well-being, Endeavor is left with eudaimonism as his only source of happiness.



Figure 2. Endeavor being a bastard page 96, vol.4

SACRIFICING RELATEDNESS

Eudaimonic well-being is directly dependent on one's growth as a person; however, simply fulfilling one's potential does not guarantee happiness.

Although Endeavor is a massively successful and powerful hero with the highest number of resolved incidents in Japan, he is still unhappy upon achieving his goal of becoming the number-one hero. This may seem to act as a counter-example for the efficiency of eudaimonism, since it is a case in which someone fulfills their potential yet still feels unhappy; the underlying issue is not that Endeavor finds himself unhappy after completing his goal. The true signal of failure for eudaimonism is that Endeavor never feels happiness during his road to greatness. Endeavor fails to meet the requirements needed for one to obtain eudaimonic well-being, leading to an ultimately unhappy life, since “... living well involves those motives, goals, and behaviors that are satisfying of the basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy” (Deci and Ryan 9). To approach happiness solely from the eudaimonic perspective, Endeavor must achieve appropriate levels of competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Endeavor's failure to achieve a sense of relatedness stems from his sacrifices in his pursuit of self-realization, and acts as an example of the contradictory nature that exists in eudaimonism and its allowance of self-sacrifice. Ryan et al. provide a concise definition for relatedness, stating that the “*need for relatedness* refers to feeling connected to and cared about by others” (143). Although the constant criticism and dissatisfaction from the people that he attempts to save acts as an example of his failure to find relatedness on a societal level, Endeavor's true failure exists in his relationship with his family. After coming to the realization that he will never be able to surpass All Might, Endeavor does what any logical person would and decides to genetically engineer children for the purpose of fulfilling his ambitions of becoming the number-one hero. In order to accomplish this, Endeavor arranges a marriage to a woman with ice powers and psychologically tortures her and their children for years in the name of his dream. After over a decade of seeing her children neglected and abused by her husband, Endeavor's wife is driven insane and is hospitalized after pouring boiling water down her son's face (Horikoshi 98; vol.4). As stated earlier, Endeavor is a flawed character. By all accounts, it is clear that any sense of relatedness he may have once had is thrown away in the pursuit of becoming the number-one hero, and acts as a large contributor for his consistent unhappiness throughout the serialization.

Endeavor's situation is reminiscent of those found in many of the married Japanese men working in industry. As described by Michael

Hoffman in his article “Japan is as happy as it feels - miserable,” many of these men are forced to throw away their familial relationships in pursuit of a higher salary. “His two daughters despise him, his wife won’t look at him. “The harder I work for them, the less they know I exist” (Hoffman). This exemplifies one of the fundamental issues that exist within the relationship of eudaimonism and self-sacrifice. Since eudaimonic well-being requires self-sacrifices along with a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, then how can one achieve eudaimonic happiness if they must sacrifice one of these three to fulfill their potential? Church and his team offer a conditional solution, explaining that “Generally one or two, but not all three, SDT needs contributed independent prediction of well-being” (Church et al. 527). They claim that not all three SDT needs, used interchangeably to mean autonomy, competence, and relatedness, are needed to provide a stable source of eudaimonic well-being. While it may be true that it is possible to find eudaimonic happiness with only two of the three needs, what happens to those who have goals which require more sacrifice than others? In this way, eudaimonism cannot act as a source of happiness for those whose goals require certain sacrifice in the areas of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

INCOMPATIBILITY WITH HUMAN NATURE

In Endeavor’s abusive treatment of his family, he not only sacrifices his sense of relatedness, but his competence as well. Competence is defined by Ryan and Church to mean the need to feel capable and effective in one’s actions (Ryan et al. 153; Church et al. 508). In the context of eudaimonism, this can be taken to mean the one’s effectiveness in their ability to make decisions in pursuit of their goal. Endeavor, wishing to become the greatest hero, acts as a failure of competence, since his role as an abusive father works to negate his accomplishments as a hero. Endeavor later realizes this, saying “I have to safe-guard the future for them. That’s the job for whoever’s on top! And yet... What about the futures I cut short” (Horikoshi 63; vol. 21). By abusing his family, he goes against his own meaning of heroism. His actions are grossly incompetent, as they push him further away from his goal of becoming the greatest hero; and although he eventually receives the official title, he knows that he had accomplished nothing.

Endeavor’s failure to achieve competence is partially due to its incompatibility with human fallibility. Ryan et al. define “The *need for*

competence [as] concern[ing] the sense of efficacy one has with respect to both internal and external environments” (143). Competence in the context of eudaimonism is closely related to one’s ability to act effectively and correctly in the pursuit of their goals. However, human fallibility tends to prevent one from achieving competence while maintaining that illusion that it is being achieved. The conflict between competence and fallibilism arises in the possibility for one to achieve their goals through incorrect means. Baron Reed explains that the fallibility of human nature implies the possibility for one to know something is true despite not having proper justification. In logical terms, “S knows that p in a fallibilist way just in case S knows that p on the basis of some justification j and yet j does not entail (or guarantee) that p” (Reed 586). We can extend fallibilism to actions as well, claiming that it is possible for one to achieve their goals even by incorrect means. Reed likens such scenarios to a child solving a math problem with the incorrect formulas yet still receiving the correct answer. Endeavor is one such example of someone falling into the trap created by fallibilism: the scenario in which one consistently gets the right answer through the wrong means, convincing themselves that their approach is correct. Endeavor, who works all the way up to number one hero through non-heroic means convinces himself that his path was correct, when it clearly contradicts the values of what it means to be a hero.

Endeavor and Japan’s failure to find happiness through eudaimonism stems from the difficulties of maintaining its three pillars. Competence’s incompatibility with human nature makes it extremely difficult for Endeavor to achieve it, and the self-sacrificial nature of eudaimonism forces Endeavor to sacrifice his familial relationships to fulfill his potential. While it is true that many Japanese citizens have found themselves in a similar position to Endeavor, this is not the exact reason why Japan as a whole fails to find happiness through eudaimonism. Since it is difficult for one to maintain each one of the three pillars of eudaimonism, it follows that the probability of achieving and maintaining at least two of these pillars is significantly low. On a societal scale, this equates to a significant portion of the population not being able to maintain at least two of these pillars, and thus not being able to achieve eudaimonic well-being. Endeavor acts as a showcase for the numerous difficulties of achieving eudaimonism in Japan; any more difficulties found in maintaining each of these pillars only further lowers the probability of finding happiness through eudaimonism. It would be ignorant to assume that all difficulties in achieving eudaimonic well-being come from

situations like Endeavor's, since Japan's unhappiness is not only found in its married businessmen. According to studies by the Japanese government "Among those between 15 and 39, meanwhile, suicide has been the dominant cause of death since 2012" (Kyodo 5). The widespread unhappiness in Japan is indicative of other factors which lower the probability of achieving eudaimonic well-being, such as Japan's recent adoption of individualism, as shown in a study by Yuji Ogihara and Yukiko Uchida which finds that "individualistic values in Japan were associated with a deterioration in close relationships" (Ogihara and Uchida 4). The introduction of individualism in Japan acts to deteriorate close relationships, making it more difficult for one to achieve a sense of relatedness. As predicted, Ogihara and Uchida also find a negative correlation between individualism and happiness (Ogihara and Uchida 6), most likely due to eudaimonic well-being's requirement of relatedness. Japan's widespread failure to find happiness through eudaimonism can be attributed to the many factors which make it difficult to maintain its three pillars, such as those faced by Endeavor.

CONCLUSION

Endeavor's failures in finding happiness through eudaimonism parallel much of the unhappiness in Japanese society. Endeavor and many of Japan's citizens focus solely on practicing eudaimonism, limiting their sources of happiness and lowering their chance of successfully finding happiness. In addition, eudaimonism's incompatibility with human nature lowers the probability of successfully finding happiness, because of its requirement that one must make the correct decisions. Many people may be forced to sacrifice relatedness or autonomy in the pursuit of their goal, thus lowering the probability of achieving eudaimonic well-being even further, as was the case for Endeavor. There are many factors that lower the chance of one successfully achieving eudaimonic well-being, causing wide-spread unhappiness in cultures such as Japan where eudaimonism is exclusively followed. Endeavor acts as just one of the many cases of the failures of eudaimonism in Japan.

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The Effect of the Commodification of Healthcare on Societal Divisions

ABSTRACT

Healthcare, specifically access to care, is a major point of contention for all Americans, now more than ever. With the current pandemic, our healthcare system is being pushed to its limit, and inherent biases that have manifested for many years rear their ugly heads. This paper discusses these inherent biases for what they are the results of the commodification of healthcare, enabled by the elite class in America. The legacy of American healthcare shows the systematic integration of the elite class's racist, sexist, and classist points of view, effectively utilizing the healthcare industry as a tool by which they can increase the societal power they wield. Analyzing these moments through the lenses of reification, biopower, and intersectionality, we begin to see the underlying theme: that the commodification of healthcare is driving the widening of economic, gender, and racial disparities in America. Through this examination, we realize that the United States is gradually losing the potential to be the bastion of opportunity and equality that it claims to be.

INTRODUCTION

In the radically politicized climate of the United States of America today, two prominent issues are the economic and racial divisions that are evident in day-to-day life as well as the various policies that govern healthcare. With regards to the former, these divisions are found between various races and genders, and any subgroups therein. They are typically the manifestations of implicit or explicit racism and sexism, and they can be observed as disparities across a wide array of categories. The overarching problem with these multiple disparities is that a disparity in one facet of life, say, a wealth disparity, can lead to increased inequality in another facet of life, such as health. This correlation is shown when comparing different governing styles and economic policies with the associated health outcomes in those countries. It has been observed that countries that minimize income inequalities, such as those with social democratic parties in power, are also more successful at minimizing infant mortality rates (Navarro 485-6). Clearly, there is a relationship between wealth and

health disparities. This is an important issue to address; if left unattended, it can and will propagate a vicious cycle of suppression of those in disadvantaged positions. Therefore, it is essential to examine one of the categories in which inequality is readily apparent—healthcare. Specifically, it is imperative that we analyze the commodification of healthcare that lies at the intersection of the wealth gap and the health disparities visible today. The commodification, or reification, of healthcare is immediately problematic, since commodities are typically nonessential goods and services that are being subjected to capitalistic and free-market forces. However, healthcare is a very essential part of modern life, ranging from vaccinations and primary care to major life-saving surgeries. The difference between liberal countries, such as the United States, and social-democratic countries is that healthcare is viewed as a right in the latter. Meanwhile, in liberal countries—especially the United States—the market is the most powerful force; if there is a service or good that is profitable, regardless of whether or not it is crucial, the market will allow that to be commodified (489). This systematic disregard for the importance of healthcare in an individual's life results in its commodification, which inherently results in inequalities in access to healthcare.

To further analyze the idea of the commodification of healthcare, we must ask a question to guide our thinking. One such question is to what extent has the commodification of healthcare exacerbated divisions in American society on the basis of class, race, and gender? To examine this problem accordingly, we must define a number of key concepts, which will be used to form a framework through which we can better understand the issue at hand. First, we must discuss the concept of reification as interpreted by György Lukács, a Hungarian Marxist philosopher, and one of the founding fathers of Western Marxism. Specifically, discussing how his concept of reification applies to healthcare in modern America will provide us with the groundwork for understanding how something as abstract and complicated as healthcare is being turned into a product for sale. The second concept that we must define is biopower, as developed by Michel Foucault, and how the commodification of healthcare can be seen as an actualization of it. Foucault was a French philosopher and social theorist, most notably serving as a member of the faculty of the prestigious Collège de France, where he gave regular lectures. Understanding biopower will give us insight into the motivations of the elite behind the restriction of access to healthcare. Lastly, we must also venture into a discussion of Kimberlé Crenshaw's idea of compound

discrimination, which she developed alongside her theory of intersectionality as a scholarly leader and philosopher of critical race theory. Specifically, how her ideas correspond to observations of the American healthcare system. After defining these concepts, we will be able to apply them to selected case studies that concern healthcare. The first such case study will be the controversial history of medicine as discussed by Washington, where African-Americans were subjects for various unethical medical studies. Secondly, we will be looking at Williams and Blinder's report on Alabama's recent ban on abortion, a clear intent of suppressing the female population through limiting their access to available healthcare. Additionally, we will see how it demonstrates the continuing medicinal legacy of mistreating disadvantaged groups. The last case study that we will be looking at is that of medical outcomes in white and BIPOC communities, with particular emphasis on the improvements, or lack thereof, that have occurred in recent years. Through the examination of these cases, we will be able to conclude that there is a historical legacy of medicine being used to suppress minority groups, and the commodification of healthcare is a method through which the elite exert their biopower with the goal of maintaining their elite status, thereby widening economic, racial, and gender disparities in America.

REIFICATION, BIOPOWER, AND COMPOUND DISCRIMINATION

To completely comprehend each case study as they apply to the idea of the commodification of healthcare being used by the elite to maintain and enhance their status, we must properly define the frameworks through which these cases will be analyzed. Reification can be defined as the consideration, or transformation, of a previously intangible object into a tangible object with "physical" properties. Lukács emphasizes that "of central importance here is that because of this situation a man's own activity, his own labour becomes something objective and independent of him, something that controls him by an autonomy alien to man." (Lukács 4). Essentially, a man's labor or relations have taken on the commodity form that has been fetishized by capitalism, and now that labor or relation is being controlled by market forces. These market forces are not a concept that is intrinsic to mankind; rather it is foreign, and thus it does not make logical sense for the layman when this reification occurs for something as abstract as healthcare. Perhaps more important to consider in

this discussion is Lukács's discussion of the commodity form that "stamps its imprint upon the whole consciousness of man. His qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality; they are things which he can 'own' or 'dispose of' like the various objects of the external world. And there is no natural form in which human relations can be cast, no way in which man can bring his physical and psychic 'qualities' into play without their being subjected increasingly to this reifying process." (15). This artificial division between man and his abilities has a very real application to the topic of healthcare. The ability of a doctor to provide healthcare for his fellow man is no longer thought of as part of the relationship between doctor and patient, but rather it is now a product that the doctor can sell to his patient, or rather, his consumer. The use of this language, of healthcare consumerism as a direct result of the reification of healthcare, shows how America, as a society, has already conceded healthcare as a commodity—a "thing" —to sell for the sole purpose of making a profit.

This mentality of reification is manifested by the government as a method through which it can control the population such that it benefits large businesses. Analyzing this mentality requires a good understanding of the concept of biopower as developed by Foucault. Foucault describes biopower as a regulatory power, which is used in order to standardize the behavior of entire populations "to the extent that they form... a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on." (Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* 242-3). Biopower is a system that is based upon the betterment of human life, but Foucault sees inherent hypocrisy in this intent, discussing how harmful methods are used by the elite, those who wield the biopower, in order to maintain their power. Foucault describes this hypocrisy by asking, "how can a power such as this kill, if it is true that its basic function is to improve life, prolong its duration, to improve its chances, avoid accidents, and to compensate for failings?" (259). Of particular importance, is Foucault's description of biopower's intent to prolong life's duration and to improve its chances. It logically follows that if this was biopower's true intent, then a priority of those in power would be to allow for equal and widespread access to healthcare in all its forms. However, as we will soon see through our case studies, healthcare access is constantly limited, usually as a direct result of its reification, but also sometimes explicitly restricted by the elite in the form of healthcare policies. The realization of Foucault's proclaimed paradox will make it quite clear that the commodification of healthcare is not in the best interest of the general public, but

rather, healthcare is a tool used by the elite to suppress other groups. In addition, the elite depicts their commodification of healthcare as a way to benefit the health of their population, but it ends up only benefiting the elite, themselves.

Lastly, we must discuss the concept of compound discrimination as the encompassment of discriminatory biopower and reification if we are to fully understand the effect that the commodification of healthcare has on multiply-disadvantaged groups. Crenshaw first formalized the concept, defining it as the “focus on the most privileged group members [that] marginalized those who are multiply-burdened and obscures claims [which] cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination.” (Crenshaw 140). This concept will be crucial in analyzing the varying effects that the combination of racism and sexism has on different race-gender groupings, such as the comparison between white men and black women. Furthermore, Crenshaw emphasizes that “race and sex... become significant only when they operate to explicitly disadvantage the victims; because the privileging of whiteness or maleness is implicit, it is generally not perceived at all.” (Crenshaw 151). This idea is essential in understanding why disadvantaged groups were always the first to be subject to medical experimentation and the first to have their access to healthcare limited. The white male is the implicit “standard” for humankind, as Crenshaw says, to the point where it is not even perceived. As such, almost all of healthcare, such as symptoms, anatomy, dosages, and procedures are all based upon the model of a white male. For example, the infamous symptoms of a heart attack including chest pain radiating to the left arm, shortness of breath, and a cold sweat are only common in men. Women typically have a different experience, involving chest pain that radiates to the jaw or back, as well as nausea. However, these symptoms are less commonly known. As a result of the white male standard, the care delivered to other permutations of race and gender is worse, simply because they are not the model which was studied in order to develop medicine as a field. Since the care provided is worse, the results are also worse, resulting in extended disability for those groups, in turn creating economic disparities and contributing to the race and gender divide. This lack of access to healthcare, combined with the price barrier of insurance, are examples of how reification and biopower are two components of compound discrimination that affects multiply-burdened groups.

CASE 1: A BRIEF HISTORY OF RACISM IN MEDICINE AND THE TUSKEGEE SYPHILIS EXPERIMENT

Despite the ideal of healing in an unbiased fashion, medicine came to its existence in a racist world and time. Thus, medicine has undertones of racism embedded in its very existence. These undertones are very clearly visible when looking at medicine during the era of slavery, and up until the late 1900s. One of the simplest, yet most severe, cases of discrimination can be understood by discussing the patient-physician dyad that Western medicine is based on, and comparing it to the reality of the owner-physician pact that was the norm in slavery-era America. The patient-physician dyad is the idea that the patient presents their doctor with their problems, and then expresses consent (or lack thereof) for the various procedures suggested by the medical professional. However, when it came to slaves, the owners were the only ones communicating with the doctors. Essentially, this was a “slaveholder-physician dyad, with the slave left outside, unconsulted, uninformed, and with no recourse if she or he was unsatisfied, injured, or killed—a medical nonentity.” (Washington 40). For all intents and purposes, the slave owner was the *de facto* patient, as they made all the decisions regarding patient care. This was mutually beneficial, as the slave owner was able to have his workforce treated and the doctor was able to charge a hefty sum for his services. Essentially, the healthcare of slaves was being commodified for the benefit of both white parties, but not for the slave. The slave did not truly exist in this transaction between doctors and slaveowners, except as the physical target of medical procedures. Foucault describes this appearance of race as “a way of fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls.” (Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* 255). Essentially, the discrimination of slaves in a medical sense is a way to separate them from the white elite, and to render them vulnerable to the suppressive tactics being used. By taking charge of all of their slaves’ medical decisions, white slave owners were placed in an artificial position of power, where they could control and manipulate the health of others for personal gain. From an early point in its development, medicine was predominantly white, both in terms of medical professionals and patients, which allowed the white elite to continue their suppression of other races.

Although this form of suppression changed over time, it did not disappear completely. There are other, more recent examples of the

manifestation of this racism in American medicine. Perhaps the most infamous of these is the Tuskegee syphilis experiment. The study, which took place from 1932 to 1972, was conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) and involved 600 black males. The purpose of this study, as documented by the PHS, was to study the progression of syphilis in black males, which was believed to manifest differently than in whites. It was believed that the disease did its worst damage to the neurological systems of whites, but did its worst damage to the cardiovascular systems of blacks, given the inferiority of their brains (Washington 122). Syphilis is just one of many examples of diseases in which it was believed that pathologies for whites and blacks would be different due to certain inferiorities of blacks. These beliefs would make the diagnosis of these diseases much harder in blacks because doctors would not expect the same symptoms as presented in the white population. The true tragedy of the Tuskegee syphilis experiment was that “doctors dispensed inadequate medications such as aspirin, which was craved as a miracle drug by the overworked, sickly men, who marveled at how it assuage their omnipresent aches and pains.” (126). Penicillin had already been proven to work in the treatment of syphilis as early as the 1940s, yet the PHS-sanctioned doctors lied to their black patients, about both their diseased status and the treatments they were receiving. Once again, we see race become a factor in the treatment of black Americans, and it is for similar reasons as previously outlined by Foucault; namely, the involvement of race provides a biological justification for the apparent power disparity. What is perhaps more significant in the case of Tuskegee is that the involved physicians are employed by the U.S. government. Thus, what was previously individual racism became institutionalized by none other than the government of the United States, which in and of itself was a predominantly white body of power. Furthermore, one of the physicians expressed an ambivalence for the eradication of syphilis among black males, stating “those that are treated are only half cured... perhaps here, in conjunction with tuberculosis, will be the end of the negro problem. Disease will accomplish what man cannot do.” (124). This rhetoric, that the assumed inferior race should be eradicated for the purification of the species is hauntingly familiar to Foucault’s observations. Foucault states that the logic of racist biopower involves thinking that “the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer.” (Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* 255). The Tuskegee case captures

Foucault's biopower paradox perfectly. Physicians, who take an oath to do no harm, are acting ambivalently to the eradication of an entire race because they seem to believe it will make the human race cleaner and healthier. The biopower that is supposed to improve life is instead being used to condone the murder of a portion of the population, solely to preserve the power of white Americans.

The Tuskegee case also presents some compelling insights when viewed through the economic lens of commodification. First, it is important that we consider how the subjects of the study were incentivized to participate. They were enticed to be a part of the study with the promise of free healthcare and doctor's appointments for the duration of the experiment (Washington 126). Clearly, healthcare, at this point, had already been commodified such that receiving any health-related service for free was of great value and an incentive. However, we must also consider the role that the black men involved were playing. They were being used to study the progression of syphilis in blacks, but this knowledge was going to white doctors, sanctioned by a predominantly white government, whose interests seemed to include maintaining their power. Thus, it only makes logical sense that the knowledge would go towards helping white Americans who were suffering from syphilis. Essentially, the government was declaring that the intended customer for their commodity of healthcare, particularly related to syphilis, is the white population. The black population was simply a means to an end, a way to get information that could then be used to benefit a different group. This is explained by Lukacs, insofar as "man's own activity, his own labour becomes something objective and independent of him...something that controls him by virtue of an autonomy alien to man." (Lukács 3). Essentially, healthcare becomes subject to market forces now that it has been commodified, and this results in the goal of the healthcare field changing. Instead of looking to better the lives of the most people possible, their goal is now to make a profit. Unfortunately for black Americans, the white population is the best to profit from, and thus healthcare as a commodity is directed towards white Americans. A similar system is seen in modern America, where the "test" population is always different from the "intended" population. In the past, the test population would be blacks, and the intended population would be whites. Today, the test population are typically animals, and the intended population is all humans. This implies that blacks in the past were viewed with the same amount of respect, or rather lack of respect, that animals are in the modern-day. This change in populations

occurred once the unethical proceedings of the Tuskegee syphilis experiment were exposed in 1972. However, marginalized groups are still being used as test populations, albeit in an indirect way. It has been documented that, while somewhat uncommon, financial incentives of \$10-195 are made for certain emergency department clinical trials (Bernstein and Feldman 1). This sum of money is not insignificant for those of a lower socioeconomic status, and thus can function as an effective incentive. For those that can be considered elite, though, this is not enough money to motivate them to participate in these typically unproven trials. From this, marginalized populations are more likely to be participants in a trial that could have negative medical results, and thus we see a continuation of racism through the commodification of and financial incentives in medicine. Clearly, the problem of racism and discrimination as a whole in medicine has not been solved, and we will see more proof of this in subsequent sections.

CASE 2: ALABAMA'S DE FACTO BAN ON ABORTION

The prevalence of discrimination in medicine gives rise to another facet observed in marginalization: sexism. Perhaps of more significance is that this sexist discrimination shows the same underlying legacy and logic discussed in the context of racist medicine. To further examine sexism in medicine or the medico-legal space, we will turn to the case of Alabama's 2019 de facto ban on abortion. This law effectively "bans abortions at every stage of pregnancy and criminalizes the procedure for doctors, who could be charged with felonies and face up to 99 years in prison. It includes an exception for cases when the mother's life is at serious risk, but not for cases of rape or incest." (Williams and Blinder 1). While this law may not make abortions illegal to receive, it does make them illegal to perform as a medical professional, which has the same final result. The lawmakers responsible for passing this legislation have not been covert about their true intentions behind banning abortion. Eric Johnston, the drafter of the bill, commented on other attempts at limiting access to abortions via the detection of a fetal heartbeat, saying that those would lead to the next major Supreme Court abortion case being a wasted opportunity, and that his proposed bill would succeed in directly challenging the *Roe v. Wade* decision—the landmark Supreme Court decision that ruled it was the constitutional right of a pregnant woman to choose to

have an abortion without government interference. This falls in line with previous attempts at banning abortion in Alabama, such as in 2014, when a “portion of an Alabama law requiring abortion-clinic doctors to have admitting privileges at a local hospital [was deemed] unconstitutional.” (McWhirter 1). This previous law was deemed unconstitutional because it was in disagreement with *Roe v. Wade*, since its implementation would result in the closure of three of the state’s five abortion clinics, and thus limit a woman’s right to terminate a pregnancy. This follows a historical legacy of abnormalizing women in healthcare, especially on the basis of their sexual activity. Foucault discusses “the direct link between the themes of the sacred religious and economic function of women on the one hand, and the mercantilist, strictly economic theme of national strength linked to the size of the population on the other. Women are precious because they reproduce; children are precious because they replenish a population, and no “shameful silence” must stand in the way of knowing what will enable these lives to be saved.” (Foucault, *Abnormal* 70). Foucault explains the school of thought that considers the value of women to solely be contained in their ability to reproduce, since their children can add to the population and the future workforce. Women who are incapable of reproducing, or choose not to reproduce, are therefore not contributing to their country and the economy, thus losing all their value, abnormalizing them. In contrast, men are perceived to be able to contribute to society beyond reproduction. This is evidenced by the rejection of an amendment to the Alabama bill to ban vasectomies (Wax-Thibodeaux and Brownlee 5). Men are thought to be contributors to society in ways that women are not. In the modern case, women who opt to abort a fetus are correspondingly abnormalized, since they are giving up their ability to contribute to society. It then follows, using this logic, that abortion should be outlawed because it provides women with a method of abnormalizing themselves. The existence of the procedure can only cause a decrease in economic production, since it allows women to effectively erase a child that could have been a contributing member of society. However, this logic is flawed, since it assumes that women cannot contribute to society if it is not indirectly through their children. Women are, in fact, capable of contributing to society, as evidenced by modern women in positions of political and financial authority. The continued use of this flawed logic, though, can have very negative results.

The ban of abortion in Alabama has many real economic consequences for women living in the state. This follows the logic of the

commodification of medicine and medical procedures. If we are to look at the situation from the perspective of supply and demand, abortion as a procedure will have a much higher demand than supply in Alabama due to its criminalization. This can lead to the procedure being driven “underground, endangering the lives of women and girls and disproportionately affecting poor and minority Alabamians.” (Williams and Blinder 1). The creation of a black-market is much more likely if a certain good or service is made illegal. This has been seen, albeit in reverse, with cannabis in the United States. Illegal sales of cannabis-derived drugs are much higher in states which have not yet legalized cannabis, while those states that have legalized the drug have lower rates. Similarly, the banning of abortion will likely cause a spike in illegal abortions in the state. It is true that this will disproportionately affect Alabamians of a lower socioeconomic status because those with “the wherewithal will fly out of state.” (2). We can see that abortion has become akin to a service for consumers. Those who are better off and can afford the procedure through the proper channels will not have an issue with transporting themselves to a location where abortions are legal and can be performed by a medical professional in a controlled environment. However, those from lower socioeconomic status, are not capable of going through the appropriate channels or leaving the state, and thus they will either have to proceed with the pregnancy or they will opt for an illegal, underground version of the procedure. Both of these options present a risk, either of potential health hazards due to improper medical protocol or of lost opportunities due to a continued pregnancy. This is an example of compound discrimination at work, since these women lie at the intersection of womanhood and low socioeconomic status, which results in the amplification of their disadvantages. These potential health hazards and lost opportunities then translate into an inability to advance in society, and thus perpetuates class and gender divides. From this viewpoint, we can see that there are many similarities between the case of abortion in Alabama and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment of the mid-1900s. Both cases involve the government, or some government-associated entity, determining the access to healthcare of an already disadvantaged group. In the Tuskegee case, the U.S. Public Health Service was controlling access to syphilis treatment for black Americans. In the abortion case, Alabama state legislature is controlling access to abortions for women, and particularly women of lower socioeconomic status. The parallels between the two situations are even more clear when pregnancy is conceptualized as a disease, or at least as an unwanted

medical condition, for the woman desiring an abortion. If conceptualized in this way, an abortion is essentially the treatment for this undesirable condition, and Alabama state legislature is controlling access to that treatment. The practice of medicine is heavily reliant on the idea of patient autonomy, where the patient has the final say on whether a procedure is performed on them. By controlling access to a potential treatment, be it abortions or the cure to syphilis, the government is interfering with patient autonomy, which is a fundamental right in medicine. In both these cases, we are presented with a violation of patient rights and a widening of class, race, and gender divides due to the exertion of elite biopower.

CASE 3: MEDICAL OUTCOMES IN WHITE AND NONWHITE POPULATIONS

The basis of biopower that the elite exert is, as previously defined, to reduce populations down to certain measurable statistics that represent that population's birth, death, illness, production, etc. It is often cited that life expectancy has increased over time for non-white populations, which is accurate. Black males have seen a rise in life expectancy from approximately 60 years in 1970 to 71.9 years in 2017 and black females from 67.5 years in 1970 to 78.5 years in 2017 (Murphy 5). This fact is often used to support the idea that there are no longer racial health disparities, or at least that those disparities are being lessened over time. However, when we control for gender, it is clear that the white population has consistently had higher life expectancy in the last half-century. According to the same data, white men had a life expectancy of 67 years in 1970 and 76.4 years in 2017, whereas white women had a life expectancy of 75.5 years in 1970 and 81.2 years in 2017 (Murphy 5). From these data, three conclusions are obvious. Firstly, the white counterparts to black Americans had consistently higher life expectancy over time. Secondly, every group experienced a nominal increase in life expectancy between 1970 and 2017. Lastly, and supportive of the argument that racial health disparities are being reduced, the gap in life expectancy has decreased over time. This argument, however, fails to appreciate the reasons why these phenomena are being observed. For one, the increase in life expectancy has been seen across the board, across every racial and gender group. This can be attributed to the many technological and procedural advances made in the field of medicine since the 1970s. These kinds of advancements are the most reasonable way that life expectancy can increase in this manner.

The technological advances can also explain the reduction in the racial life expectancy gap. Technology is unprejudiced, which lends it a more objective lens when it comes to medical situations. This objective lens is essentially the standardization of healthcare, and as standardization occurs, health disparities will decrease. Yet, we still see disparities in medical outcomes and life expectancy. For example, the infant mortality rate per 1,000 births for a white mother is 5.07, whereas it is 10.81 for a black mother. This is a ratio of 2.13, meaning that the infants of black mothers are more than twice as likely to die when compared to a white mother. These disparities are still present because medicine is an innately human field, and it is nearly impossible to completely remove the human component from a medical case. Thus, it will not be possible to simply rely on technology to close the gap that is present in the modern day.

There exists another barrier to healthcare access and to the new technology that is responsible for lessening the racial and gender disparities in medicine. Namely, this is insurance. Insurance is a direct result of the commodification of medicine, and it creates an artificial price barrier for those seeking medical care. New medicines and procedures, particularly those that utilize new technologies, are expensive. Historically, medicine has been shown to be commodified to the point that receiving any discount is seen as a very strong incentive to participate in various studies. Additionally, medicine has historically been racialized and gendered. These facets, of commodification and discrimination, has culminated in the institution of insurance. In modern times, healthcare is almost unaffordable if uninsured, especially for those of a lower socioeconomic background. There are various insurance plans, but typically the most comprehensive ones are founded through private companies, which are less accessible to the general population, and even less so in government-based insurance, which most insured marginalized populations use. These private companies are in the business of making a profit, not providing the majority of people with quality healthcare. Due to this commodification of healthcare, insurance is discriminatory towards those of lower socioeconomic status who cannot afford coverage. In addition, it seems that insurance also contributes to racial divides, since only 56.5% of black Americans have private insurance, as opposed to 69.4% of white Americans (Berchick 16). There is an obvious difference between the amount of black and white Americans that are insured. This discrepancy results in the lower rates of favorable medical outcomes for disadvantaged populations for various reasons. Disadvantaged populations may have to

turn to subpar healthcare providers or may simply be unable to get appropriate medical attention, resulting in unfavorable outcomes to their medical plights. Thus, we can say that the commodification of healthcare—of which insurance is a direct consequence—results in the widening of class, race, and gender divides.

CONCLUSION

Upon examination of the history of racism in medicine, Alabama's abortion ban, and health outcomes of various populations, we can conclude that there is a historical legacy of discrimination in medicine, and that the commodification of medicine is a method through which the elite exert their biopower and widen economic, racial, and gender disparities in America. We have seen how medicine formed in a racist time, and that discrimination carried forward, particularly to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment. We have seen how this same logic was applied when Alabama state legislature passed a law that effectively banned abortion in the state, and how the commodification of healthcare is further being used to oppress disadvantaged groups. Lastly, we have seen how there is an overall increase in favorable health outcomes over time, but this can be attributed to an increase of technology in medicine. However, we have also seen how these new technologies have resulted in higher healthcare costs, and insurance has become the new barrier to entry for receiving quality healthcare. Clearly, technology is not capable of fully bridging the gap that separates various classes, races, and genders.

In fact, we see that the introduction of new and relevant technologies or medical procedures further divides the population along those same lines. The most recent example of this phenomenon is seen in the case of COVID-19 testing, and how those tests are being distributed. In the United States, there is a marked shortage of COVID-19 testing kits, resulting in the inability for the sick and for healthcare workers to be tested for a potentially deadly disease. Despite this, officials in the Trump administration are being tested daily. Perhaps this can be justified by concluding that federal government officials are a key part in coordinating the nation's pandemic response, and this conclusion would not be incorrect. However, following that same logic, would our healthcare workers not also fall under the same umbrella? Without them, our pandemic response would be nonexistent, regardless of any directives issued by top government officials. The discrepancies do not end here as it has been re-

ported that many celebrities, most controversially including several NBA athletes, have been granted access to testing. Yet, it cannot be argued that celebrities are an essential part of a pandemic response. The only justification that can be offered for their ability to access testing, and for the general population's inability to do the same, is their wealth and elite status. Their wealth allows them to participate in the world of concierge medicine, where an individual pays a relatively large sum of money to have constant access to an on-call physician, who is typically well-connected and can provide access to the newest medical advancements. Obviously, this will provide the wealthy with an undue advantage in receiving high quality healthcare. Once again, in the most recent of examples, we see evidence of the tools of commodification, such as insurance and concierge medical services, being used to artificially raise the barrier of entry for quality healthcare. In doing so, our society further becomes fractured along the lines of wealth and social status, whose association with race and gender we have already discussed.

Naturally, this brings up the question: What are the consequences of these inequalities? The most significant consequence is the occurrence of what seems to be a domino-type effect. Disadvantaged groups cannot access healthcare as well as other groups, which then leads to increased debt, missed work, and even death. Each of these factors harms the next generation of those disadvantaged groups, since parents are no longer able to provide for their children's education, childcare, and even healthcare. This creates a cyclic and generational effect, where a discrepancy in healthcare can result in further economic struggle, which only exacerbates the healthcare disparity that began the domino effect. This can continue to the point where marginalized groups, after facing a sufficient number of generations of discrimination, will start to struggle to provide their children with basic needs such as food, water, and shelter. From the elitist point of view, however, they are simply acting in accordance with the biopower that they are privileged with, if the scope of their power is limited to their own population. They are implementing various systems, such as insurance, which allow for the white male elite of high socioeconomic status to receive care for themselves at the expense of the other populations in society. Foucault showed that this was a typical use of racist biopower, explaining the logic from the elite's point of view that "the more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I—as species rather than individual—can live, the stronger I

will be, the more vigorous I will be. I will be able to proliferate.” (Foucault, *Society Must be Defended* 255). The racist and discriminatory institutions of insurance, antiabortion laws, and American medicine as a whole are all working to further this goal of the elite, by throwing marginalized groups into a vicious cycle of further marginalization. This cycle will only continue if we are unable to fix the disparities that we see in our healthcare today. Certain proposals, such as Bernie Sanders’ Medicare for All plan attempt to address the problem of the commodification of healthcare, by removing the cost to the patient at the time of service. Instead, the program would be funded through taxes, and insurance would no longer be needed. While this idea will definitely improve the current state of our healthcare system, it fails to address the historical legacy of discrimination that we have explored throughout this paper. It tackles the economic portion of the problem, which is likely the largest aspect of the issue. However, in conjunction with this program, we would need to find a way to help disadvantaged groups recover from generations of discrimination in our healthcare system, and the domino effect that ensued. If we fail to make these sweeping amends, the United States will lose the potential for equality for people of all races, genders, and creeds—the potential to be the country that it was meant to be.

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Social Media and the Changing State of Modern Music

ABSTRACT

Social media's effect on society has created changes in the way people communicate, express themselves, and define their identities. While musical tastes and preferences are naturally adapted to fit the emotional demands of every new generation, never before has music witnessed such exhaustive changes as through the latter half of the 20th century and into the early 21st century. This research investigates the effect of social media and technology on music culture including an analysis of fan communities, profit motives, and identity association that have spurred changes in social interaction and corporate structure between artists and fans. In taking a holistic view of the music industry, I develop a deeper conclusion of the small and gradual changes that have led to a new understanding of being a musical artist and fan in the modern era. In pointing out the different aspects of the current music scene in comparison to its past, I intend not to impart bias or personal opinion, but instead shed light on the new opportunities offered by social media and technology that have expanded our understanding of music's capabilities. Analyzing scholarly journals, open-source forums, and audio and video samples gives this research an extensive outlook and allows it to present some very real-world conclusions. These findings assert a few key trends: music access has been greatly expanded, especially with fan-documented material and increased opportunities for small acts to release official work. Concerts have become much more profitable and now represent crucial income channels for recording artists while crowd demographics and overall accessibility to live music has been somewhat limited by increasingly costly events. Fans may develop musical communities, but they sacrifice physical interaction in opting to utilize technology over face-to-face interaction. Artists possess more direct control over their public image and can take advantage of new scalable media opportunities to increase their online presence and overall popularity. While fairly comprehensive, these trends represent only a fraction of the impact that social media and technology has had on music and fandom. Changes will continue to occur as music represents an endlessly dynamic and shapeable art form that ultimately reflects the state and sentiment of its time.

INTRODUCTION

The inception of social media fundamentally changes the way people communicate, establish identities, and interact with their social environment. Whereas talking face to face and handwritten notes make up previous generations primary avenues for communication, social media results in radical changes to communication. These effects translate into all fields of human life from leisure to work and everywhere in-between. The music industry has witnessed extensive changes that result from people's enhanced ability to receive updates and connect with other fans. Some scholars hesitate to fully embrace the impact of social media use in music, while others accept and believe that it offers new opportunities that ultimately allow easier access to content, expanding music's potential influence for all people, regardless of income. While a definitive agreement on whether social media has a positive or negative effect on society has yet to be established, all scholars agree that social media alters the expectations and experiences of music fans across the globe. This paper will explore these changes and offer insight into whether they arose naturally and represent a progression of fandom or lead to a destruction of the live experience and subsequently, studio material. Previous works investigated specific facets of social media and music such as its effect on the live concert experience or access to content, but my research will focus deeply on the effects of social media on the culture of music. The broad acceptance of social media in music has resulted in changes to trends in performance, songwriting, and what it means to be a dedicated music fan in the modern century. Furthermore, these effects have begun to reshape the entire art form and the social communities that support it. People embrace a new meaning of fandom as they become increasingly more connected, but they may be losing some of the special and exclusive sense of participation that results from experiencing something truly firsthand.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS IN REMOTE PARTICIPATION.

Real time documentation of live shows enables fans to remain connected and provides fans the necessary raw material that allows online music communities to exist and thrive. From the setlist to the artist's wardrobe, concert documenters attempt to capture every piece of the live experience, so that remote fans can witness a glimpse of the in-person experi-

ence, while in the comfort of their homes; however, there are inherent limitations in producing second-hand content. Fans listening to concerts online or watching performances uploaded to streaming services are “seemingly experiencing and re-enacting the same responses as the audience members present at the show,” but they are forfeiting some of the details that make the live experience a unique and highly personal memory (Bennett 551). Interactions with audience members, the passing comments and stories provided by artists in between songs and sets, and the general unpredictability and excitement of active participation represent just some of the features online resources sacrifice (Holt 253). Whereas physical participants invest in truly unique experiences in retaining the full autonomy to choose how to engage with the crowd and performance, remote listeners are at the mercy of documenters who are often so busy collecting and posting information online that it “alters their own experience of the show by focusing on communications with fans who are remotely located” (Bennet 549). Worried about providing continuous updates, they may interpret a version of the live show that differs from that of the average fan. Therefore, engaging in a performance from the remote perspective and through popular sources, such as forums, can lead to unreliable interpretations of the live experience. Furthermore, bias and exaggeration stunt the reliability of online engagement. Many documenters put the most emphasis into predicting setlists and expressing personal opinions. Their reports affect the valuations of a concert as one disgruntled user laments “maybe when I come back, she will have perked up. In fact, I know she will. She can’t keep the energy that low for that long,” in a way that almost seems akin to a review or critique of the show than an accurate recounting (Bennett 552). As it is virtually impossible to gauge the accuracy of a user’s comments with no fact-checking involved in an upload, posts are prone to wild fluctuations in accuracy. Users may overly critique the performance for obscure reasons, such as a predictable setlist, “not a fan of teen spirit, she seems to play it a lot. Hopefully she’ll get it out of her system by London” (Bennett 551). Other users seem to wildly overstate the quality of performances almost as if they never watched the artist play live before “you should see me – I think I’m going to faint soon... Honestly, I’ve got tears almost coming from my eyes right this moment!” (Bennett 550). Relying solely on forum posts for a review of a performance leads to not only sporadic results, but online documentation remains a highly utilized platform for remote fan engagement. Regardless of the quality of forum posts, these online communities pro-

vide an important framework for understanding how substantial social media impacts fan communities and music culture at large. In response to an accurate portrayal of live performance, remote engagement certainly seems to fall short and may create lasting and potentially deteriorating interpretations of an artist's live experience. For hardcore fans, however, remote engagement may offer a new and exciting opportunity, but it almost certainly should be treated as a separate experience altogether.

Live performances prove difficult to faithfully reproduce, so the difference between capturing a performance with professional equipment and amateur equipment has important ramifications on a remote listener's interpretation of a show. Modern recording technology enables more accurate and direct sound sourcing, but social media users rarely have access to this equipment; meanwhile, large and well-funded corporations utilize it as a means of enhancing the perceived quality of a show, "performance is also fetishized... media can intensify the drama via mass audience awareness, as illustrated by phrases such as, 'the nation is watching'" (Holt 253). Large corporations are able to capture a performance in a much higher quality than independent users who require the use of small, portable equipment unsuited to deliver the intricate sounds of live music. Furthermore, by producing a wide range of perspectives through multiple camera angles and detailed sound treatments, corporations attain greater visual and sonic content in comparison to individual users who may only own limited processing equipment, if any at all. Without access to the mixing board, perfect sound quality in live music is almost impossible to capture even on a professional scale, so forum users tend to rely on other people's interpretations of a show rather than their own ears. Many fans attest that home systems cannot recreate the quality of actual live performances because "a major part of the live experience in popular music shows is the sensuous totality of the loud sound and the large crowd" (Holt 252). These attributes can only be attained through physical participation, so experiencing live music without actually attending the show inherently limits both the sonic and visual aspects. While live performances represent the ultimate challenge in passing on an accurate sense of experience, forums still act as a valuable resource, especially for dedicated fans who want unlimited access to music. Comparing user uploads of the recent Coachella 2019 festival with the official documentation from Coachella's AV team demonstrates the wide gap between professional recordings and independent attempts. Whereas user videos feature shaky camera angles mixed with audio that severely limits the

music's dynamic range, leading to distortion during loud segments and a complete lack of clarity in quieter segments, the professionally mixed set from Coachella is more balanced and clearer (Coachella 2019). Recording from a spot in a crowd means that background and crowd noises are constantly picked up but taking a high-quality sample straight from the mixer negates these issues entirely. Furthermore, allegedly high-quality uploads by independent users are quite untrustworthy and are often falsely advertised. Listening to a supposed 24-bit sample, which is widely considered to be the highest quality digital format of 'lossless' quality, from electronic music artist Four Tet's performance at Coachella as uploaded by a user on the website MixCloud, reveals that Coachella's sound team uses either significant post-processing or that the user lied about the quality of their upload (2019-04-13 – Four Tet). The user upload featured a crushed dynamic range and sounded brittle in comparison to Coachella's much more full and balanced sonic landscape. For a genre such as electronic, where the DJ is responsible for changing the timbre of various instruments and other sonic treatments that constitute the performance, the limited quality of the audio in this sample leads to poor representations of the subtleties of the performance. Capturing live sound remains a challenging aspect of music production, even in the modern age where nearly all professional concerts run through mixing boards and sound processing software before their reproductions on loudspeakers. When judged with an understanding of their limitations, user uploads of concerts allow people to experience performances that would otherwise be held exclusive in the memories of active participants. Therefore, they offer a benefit for hardcore fans under the assumption that a larger discography enables more opportunity to enjoy an artist's music and live presence.

Although online documentation of concerts allows fans to connect over great geographical distances, online participation sacrifices the creation of local music communities. Despite its unanimous reputation for connecting people, the internet causes "a decline of a sense of local identity and of being part of a particular local history with a music scene" (Kruse 630). While the internet decentralizes channels for distributing content and allows for greater access to live performances, the effects of centrality, which is the proximity to important music strongholds, usually in major cities, strongly influence artist popularity. Studies on the impacts of centrality and social media on artist attention clearly demonstrate how "artists coming from cities that have a central place in music production receive more attention by both institutional media critics and user

critics” (Verboord and van Noord 69). Rapper Meek Mill demonstrates the power of centrality through his association with his hometown city, Philadelphia, and takes advantage of scalable marketing schemes. His song “Dreams and Nightmares” exemplifies this as it became the anthem for the recent NFL Championship team, the Philadelphia Eagles. Not only did Meek gain considerable attention from fans outside the Eagle’s general region, but he established his musical following specifically in Philadelphia, such that he became a local icon.

Cities like Philadelphia and Los Angeles offer great opportunities for emerging artists, but smaller cities without prominent music associations can also reap benefits through establishing strong local music scenes. In establishing a local sound and aesthetic, artists create social networks that become essential to the accessibility of their music, creating dedicated fan bases with more ease. Interestingly, small independently-run music scenes often find success in placing their musical attributes in opposition to stereotypes of corporate music and mainstream trends (Kruse 627). A band that intentionally creates a divide against mainstream music may find difficulty in gaining a national following, but in identifying with a local aesthetic, artists can more effectively use local opportunities, such as college radio stations and underground music venues (Kruse 628). Thus, local music scenes serve as an important foundation in the early stages of a band’s development. By focusing away from the overpopulated internet, artists firmly establish a group identity and following. The internet disallows artists to distribute their content all around the world, but it could be argued that by first establishing a strong local identity, artists could pave way for a more successful career in the future. Websites such as Facebook and MySpace are essential avenues for connecting artists with fans, but the internet may offer too much content, causing a surplus of un-established bands that complicate the discovery of fans of independent music partake in.

ECONOMICS’ ALTERATION TO THE CULTURE OF MUSIC IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

Changes in the structure and accessibility of recording options have shifted revenue channels, impacting the kind of music artists compose and the way fans listen and consume music. After peer to peer file sharing altered the accessibility of music in the early 2000’s, allowing people to illegally download music instead of buying it in physical form,

record companies lost control of a significant channel of revenue and were forced to find alternative ways of subsidizing these lost profits. Corporate behemoths turned to ticket sales and music festivals as a means of regenerating these lost profits, but their decision directly interferes with the structure and workflow of artists who write and record their own music. With limited studio time and the loss of funding for album recording, artists must shift their songwriting philosophies to create a few hit songs instead of an entire hit album. Artists from the period before file sharing could make enough in one album to fund the rest of their careers, such as 1960's folk star Paul Simon, who attests, "I made more money on a few albums than many people make in a lifetime" (Holt 247-248). The diminished importance of successful full-length albums changed the artists' recording philosophy and has also caused major shifts in the corporate structure of music. Two international concert promoters, AEG Live and Live Nation, have grown tremendously in their influence in the music industry through purchasing venues, seizing control of ticketing, and creating contracts with prominent artists (Holt 249). More control from large companies means less autonomy for artists. The combination of increased emphasis on creating radio-friendly singles with more pressure on touring strategies has led to decreasing album quality across nearly all genres.

Consider a comparison between two songs that both spent time at the number one spot on the Billboard chart and ended up as the 6th top song for their respective years of 1967 and 2017. The Doors' hit song "Light My Fire", retains the album's major theme and presents an exciting, explorative new approach to songwriting by synthesizing jazz and Latin roots with rock music. Conversely, the 2017 hit "Bad and Boujee" by Migos was envisioned as a single from its inception and presented no real innovation or purpose in lyrical or musical content (Billboard.com). While these examples demonstrate a stark contrast in form and emotional meaning, they were both equally received in their respective periods, demonstrating how the requirements of a hit song have diminished. Creativity no longer serves as a top priority among casual music fans. Migos's decision to initially release their song as a single was part of a strategy to lock in touring dates and gain interest from concert promoters and festivals, while The Doors only released "Light My Fire" after their album had gained considerable attention. The focus on releasing successful tracks rather than entire albums strikes a major change in songwriting philosophy that results from the changes in consumer purchasing trends. Pres-

sure from upper management along with the new market structure are to blame for music's seeming loss of creativity, but the effects of increased ticket prices transfer to the fan market in a large way.

Increased ticket prices have changed the culture of live performance. Live shows are an essential element to the culture and identity of an artist as they allow the raw energy and emotion of the music to make its full impact with the audience. However, shifting age demographics "from students and die-hard rock fans in rock clubs to a larger 30+ demographic with more spending power" has caused the atmosphere of artists' live shows to change considerably (Holt 250). The average price of a superstar concert has increased more than double from the mid-1990s, resulting in fans strategically budgeting their money and making value decisions for live concerts (Holt 250). These implications mean that live performances are typically less exciting and have a more sterile aesthetic, and because "social interaction, the influence of other fans, and correspondence with musicians may affect the decision-making of potential audience members to purchase concert tickets," a lackluster audience may have compounding effects that could decrease the quality of shows over an artist's entire tour (Cho et al. 111). Not only are individual concerts affected by increased ticket prices, but changes to festivals signal the diminished importance on the musical experience. "Rock festivals have broadened their appeal to a wider age spectrum by adopting a more holistic approach to the festival experience and focus less exclusively on the music" (Holt 251). In losing focus on the musical experience, the entire culture of festivals shifts as people begin to judge the non-music elements, such as merchandise and food, as equal to the musical experience. Festivals have also begun experimenting with multiple performances occurring at the same time on different stages, so it becomes easier than ever to miss a performance of an unknown but deserving new artist. Discovering music through live performance is an important way for lesser-known groups to expand their fan bases, but festivals limit this opportunity by having so many ongoing distractions. Social media posts from concert attendees tend to disproportionately highlight the visual elements of festivals which cultivates an online culture centered around taking pictures, rather than simply enjoying the community and diverse range of music offered. Furthermore, festivals and larger concerts tend to have price differentiated seating which is shown to "have psychological effects on the entire culture" by creating divisions between fans based on financial differences (Holt 250). Fans become filtered based on class and age. Large

shows for prominent artists, which are already objectively overpriced, feature sharp and caustic distinctions that may further disincentivize certain demographics from buying tickets. Whereas general admission frequently allows people to meet other fans and engage as a social community, strict seating requirements and an aging concert demographic limits the crowd's engagement with the show and destroys the atmosphere of live performance.

ARTISTS AND FANS INTERACTION MIRRORS THE PROGRESSION OF FAN COMMUNITY

Although concert documentation existed before computers, the subcultures that emerge from online documentation show vast differences in the way fans connect and uphold a group image. Artists such as the Grateful Dead, who presented themselves as an oppositional force to the corruption and vices of corporate and government meritocracies that held power in the 1960s, made tremendous impacts on the society and culture of music for multiple decades (Meriwether 49). Grateful Dead's ability to create movements in society made lasting impressions on social and music culture, which outlived the music they produced. Few artists have managed to create such a large and easily identifiable subculture, but what makes the Grateful Dead particularly interesting is that they pioneered some of the concepts of free-access that became the main benefits of social media use in music (Meriwether 53). The Grateful Dead were the first band to encourage audience members to document and record their concerts. Cassette trading and costless tours of colleges helped pave the way for universal access to their music. Similarly, concert documenters seek to accomplish the same access in the modern day. Where online music communities have begun "allowing fans to collectively create and maintain concert set-list databases, where performances can be cataloged and archived," Grateful Dead fans continue to detail documentation almost identical to this since the late 1960s (Bennett 551). However, Grateful Dead's strong subculture differentiated them from others of their time. Their aesthetic image and philosophical belief, which was not only radiated through the band's music, was also upheld in the spirit of what it meant to be a hardcore fan. Such strong assertions of identity certainly do not exist in society today, as dedicated fans were known to leave their lives for a time to follow the band for a tour of a major region or even a country before returning. Despite modern music fans believing that

concert documentation can lead to a stronger community, “an added element was delivered to their experience, as a result of their connection to the non-present audience,” even the most prolific internet communities fall short of reaching even half the impact of artists like the Grateful Dead (Bennett 554). Although the internet provides open access to content, fans dedicate less time to form physical communities and meeting other members in real life. Participating in social media groups “fulfills important needs and memberships are seen to bring clear benefits as it reinforces not only the identity of an individual but also that of the group (Salo et al. 25). However, in comparison to fans of modern artists with substantial online community support, Grateful Dead fans retain a stronger sense of identity association. Physical communication serves as the missing link in this difference; online communities effectively reach remotely located fans, but they may never reach the same strength and influence as music communities from the past.

Social media’s role and function differs based on an artist’s size and popularity. Artists with limited fan bases use the often-free costs of internet services to distribute content and connect with their fans. This operates as an invaluable service for groups that obtain less revenue from touring and playing live. Social media has a historical connection with concerts: apps like Myspace and Facebook support underground music scenes, offering new groups a chance to test their live set before approaching more established promoters (Kruse 636-637). Rather than having to go to battles of the bands or other social events where there is a more discerning audience, privately hosted events through social media allow music artists to establish a close connection with their audience and try new material in a judgment-free zone (Kruse 637). Small shows for new acts are especially important, given that “the number of people attending events through Facebook seems to be in line with people actually coming to the concert” (Salo et al. 31). Thus, local fans tend to be dedicated and take an active role in supporting their favorite groups. While small acts do reap considerable benefits, larger music groups with their powerful marketing and financial backing, can gain even more from social media. The power and influence of social media for popular artists is significant and often hidden from casual fans, “the richest and most famous artists have professionalized their social media presence such that the distinction with traditional top-down marketing practices is difficult to see” (Verboord and Noord 70). Along with strong financial support, social media use is proven to create a greater effect for artists in or near large

cities. “Operating from cities that have more central positions in the music industry is indeed beneficial for getting mainstream media attention” (Verbood and Noord 67). Statistics show that location plays an important role with the decentralizing effects of technology, “pop artists who originate from more central cities of production are likely to receive more media attention, regardless of their reputation” (Verbood and Noord 67). Smaller groups with prominent positions in local music scenes may still be far away from large cities with prominent status as music capitals, so the former falls behind in social media exposure on two crucial fronts. While small acts do find some extremely useful opportunities through social media use, record companies, with their vast resources and central position in the industry, continue to have an edge.

Online music communities and social media apps are fundamental in the creation of fan and artist identities in the modern age. Popular artists before widespread access to technology were documented almost exclusively by magazines and other commercial channels, such as television appearances, and they generally lived in obscurity from the average fan. Today, social media users may post multiple updates on websites on the same day, allowing followers to stay up to date in real time with the activities of their favorite artists. This intimacy with fans can lead to stronger personal attachments and aid in the development of a sense of identity and connection with a music idol (Salo et al. 25). Fans’ social media use differs based on the popularity of the artist, demonstrating how image and identity are important concerns for social media followers. “By joining fan pages of smaller music artists, participants usually signal support, whereas fan pages of artists already known for the public are considered an information channel, and participants genuinely like these artists” (Salo et al. 34). Social media users also understand that following certain artists can create labels for their identity and tastes, so they place special attention into which accounts to follow and what content they post on these accounts.

Furthermore, artists construct a social image in their social media to assert an identity to their audience. Identity concerns are prominent for fans and artists alike. While rock icons of the past were associated with drug culture and lavishness, today’s rock icons such as Mac Demarco position themselves with a “slacker” image, often wearing worn out clothes and humble material items to convey momentary embracement rather than materialism. Thanks to his frequent videos on YouTube and public gregariousness in interviews, Demarco establishes a sizeable

fanbase and continue to grow due to sharing content through social media. Mac possesses full control of his media image, whereas artists in the past were often framed by reporters and paparazzi as shockingly different than their actual personalities. Whether participating directly with fans or upon personal intuition, social media and the close connection it allows serves as a valuable resource for today's artists.

CONCLUSION

Technology continues to influence the human experience in a permanent way, and as it finds its way into more aspects of people's daily lives, its impact exponentially grows over time. Social media presents new opportunities, especially for emerging artists who are looking to gain a following in an efficient and cost-effective manner, but technology disallows the universal and equitable impact that it promises. While music communities and new avenues for distributing content offer tremendous benefits for today's aspiring artists, large corporations have been keen on implementing social media to increase their influence in the industry, as well. Hopefully, technology's accessibility to limitless creative options will increase, allowing all individuals access to music content and deserving artists access to audiences across the globe. These aspirations are still afar in music's current state. The industry has adjusted to technology in both positive and negative ways, signaling how the battle of independent versus corporate still strongly resonates in every power cord and 808-beat that finds its way onto 2-inch tape. Despite this, with the increasing pace of technological development, music's future looks promising. Social media will undoubtedly serve as an essential skill to understanding the changes in genre, artist popularity, and musical aesthetic that is featured throughout the 21st century. Music fans should remain confident and optimistic in the future direction of this cherished art form as it progresses through time, always finding a way to surprise.

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KATHERYN RAATZ

Integrative Medicine: Putting the Care Back in Healthcare

ABSTRACT

Medicine is a valued necessity in everyone's lives and has likely been used by every individual at some point in their existence. It keeps the entire population healthy and is utilized to treat millions of distinct ailments. For chronic sufferers medication has become an integral part of their daily routine, an aid with which they cannot be without. However, the form of medication or therapy selected is dependent on the patient. While conventional medicine has been a staple in society, more and more individuals are turning to alternative therapies. Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), or Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Health (CAIH) as it has been renamed by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), has been gaining popularity in recent years. CAIH is an approach that involves unifying alternative medicine with mainstream medicine, rather than choosing one or the other. Both modern medicine and alternative medicine have their benefits, but also have the potential to cause harm if one is not careful. While conventional and unconventional therapies can be used together, it is important that medical providers are aware of all a patient's medication to avoid adverse interactions. Thus, it is crucial that all medical practitioners, orthodox, alternative, or otherwise, work to strengthen the bond between practitioner and patient. Establishing a good doctor-patient relationship can significantly minimize the risk of detrimental side effects because if a patient feels comfortable confiding in their physician it is likely that both parties can work together to find the best and safest treatment for the individual.

INTRODUCTION

Many people assume that modern, high-tech solutions are the most reliable and effective when it comes to curing ailments. However, this may not be the case for all illnesses, especially chronic conditions. Chronic illnesses often require patients to take medication or receive therapy for the rest of their lives to manage their symptoms and prevent the progression of their condition. However, conventional treatments such as prescription pills can result in additional complications over time

due to their side effects. This is why many patients have begun to search for more natural options and have found success in the use of alternative medicines. These forms of therapies were known as Complementary and Alternative Medicine or CAM; however, the term has since been updated to be called Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Health (CAIH) (Pinzon-Perez, Guerra & Hickey, 2016). Integrative medicine combines conventional and unconventional practices in order to treat illnesses. The addition of integrative medicine allows CAIH to be more inclusive, incorporating alternative medicine into mainstream healthcare to work together with conventional medicine, rather than replace it. CAIH medicines are beginning to gain popularity among consumers, with several patients turning to alternative treatments.

However, there still is some backlash from medical professionals. The majority of physicians have a negative opinion of alternative therapies and refuse to offer them to their patients. Doctors' insistence on conventional medication has resulted in some conflict between physician and patient and has ultimately harmed the doctor-patient relationship. Due to the strong opposition of conventional practitioners, patients do not feel as if they can be open about taking alternative medications and thus take their health into their own hands. Healthcare has become very impersonal, with physicians treating patients like a transaction. Rather than having an open dialogue between patient and doctor, medical practitioners use prescription medication for most ailments without necessarily finding the true cause. This has led to an over-prescription of medication and increasing antibiotic resistances while the original problem still remains. Alternative therapies are more beneficial to patients due to their natural derivation as well as due to their holistic nature which capitalizes on the power of the mind in healing the body rather than relying on pharmaceuticals.

In this paper, I first look at the benefits of alternative medications, as touched on by the articles from Hughes and Crawford. I explain why implementing alternative treatments, specifically chiropractic therapy and the herb chamomile, are preferable to biomedical options. I will then define key theoretical concepts that will provide a clearer understanding of the controversy that exists over alternative forms of therapy. Finally, I examine the other side of the controversy, focusing on the risks and uncertainty that result from alternative therapies due to the lack of empirical evidence supporting the treatments as covered in the article by Angell and Kassirer. This argument will be supported by the idea of positivism, which

will question if empirical evidence is necessary for all forms of medical treatment and if this can ever ensure complete efficacy and safety of a treatment. Positivism claims that everything can and should be scientifically verified. This is relevant to my paper because, in the case of alternative medicine, many doctors claim that conventional medicine is superior since it has an abundance of research to support its findings while alternative medications do not. In this paper, I will question the value and importance of evidence as it applies to alternative therapies. The notion of capitalism will also be integrated into the argument by observing if the monetary facet of prescription pills influences physicians' inclination to promote this form of treatment over alternatives. Medical professionals should take a more individualistic, personalized approach when it comes to medicine and offer their patients the best form of treatment regardless of whether it is alternative, and further should not give in to pressure to promote prescription drugs more than any other form of medicine.

SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Alternative therapies were traditional for most of human history, long predating the Enlightenment and the introduction of Western medicine. While traditional medicine took a backseat to positivistic therapies, it has never entirely disappeared. Over recent decades, CAIH treatments have been gaining popularity, especially among U.S. consumers. Compared to other countries, the United States has one of the highest rates of CAIH medicine usage, with approximately 75% of the general population on average utilizing alternative forms of treatment (Hughes, 2008). Many consumers prefer alternative medicine to mainstream treatments. In fact, it was found that the number of visits to CAM providers exceeded those of traditional medical services, with 629 million visits to CAM providers and 386 million to primary physicians (Pinzon-Perez, Guerra & Hickey, 2016). Alternative therapies do not have to be something so extreme; it can be as simple as diet change. Food can be used as a form of medicine to prevent and even cure diseases.

While not all alternative therapies are effective, there are some that hold promise. Herbal medication is one of the top alternative medications used by the public. Chamomile has become a popular herb with a strong record of safety. The herb chamomile has medicinal components and is "commonly used for many human ailments such as hay fever, inflammation, muscle spasms, menstrual disorders, insomnia, ulcers,

wounds, gastrointestinal disorders, rheumatic pain, and hemorrhoids” (Gupta, Shankar & Srivastava, 2010). Although the healing power of chamomile is still somewhat of a mystery, it is thought to be derived from chamomile’s flower which “contain many terpenoids and flavonoids [that may contribute] to its medicinal properties” (Gupta, Shankar & Srivastava, 2010). Chamomile is extracted for many uses, but it is most commonly sold as tea. Chamomile is one of the more popular teas worldwide, with about a million cups consumed every day, which is partly due to its renowned healing attributes (Gupta, Shankar, & Srivastava 2010). In 2009, Amsterdam et al. conducted a randomized, double-blind trial in which they studied the efficacy of chamomile extract therapy in patients suffering from Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), compared to that of a placebo. The study concluded that there was a significantly greater decrease in the mean total anxiety, utilizing the Hamilton Anxiety Rating (HAM-A) scores, among the participants undergoing chamomile therapy (Amsterdam et al., 2009). Similar results have been reported by several other studies conducted, such as Ross, 2013 and Mao et al., 2012, confirming the effectiveness of chamomile in managing GAD. In 2013, Professor Ross and her fellow researchers observed a significant reduction in the mean HAM-A and also noted that chamomile was well tolerated by their patients (Ross, 2013). In the study conducted by Mao et al., Mao and his colleagues concurred Ross’s and Amsterdam’s findings, discovering that “over 50% of subjects with moderate or severe GAD symptoms respond to chamomile” (Mao et al., 2012). Chamomile is often used as a mild sedative, making it a good anxiolytic and antispasmodic alternative to prescription anxiety medication. Anxiety pills can be very addictive and once an individual goes off them, he or she can experience withdrawal symptoms, which is why chamomile may be preferable to patients.

HOLISTIC MEDICINE

Much like how chamomile may be preferable for those dealing with anxiety, other alternative therapies can yield better results when treating patients due to their holistic approach. On the contrary, conventional physicians tend to look at the body as pieces and only treat the “affected” area. They take an atomistic approach when diagnosing an illness or when treating an injury; doctors are more concerned with the individual parts of a subject, rather than looking at it in its entirety. However, in some cases the problem may be more dispersed, thus it is necessary to treat the

entire being to avoid an oversight that could cost a patient greatly. Illness has become very standardized and doctors are failing to acknowledge the personal aspect of it. As Alderson (1998) notes, "Pain relief has been refined through rigorous experiment and cautious insistence on firm evidence. Yet pain is a paradox: an intense personal sensation, it provides no direct, reliable evidence for the observer." This positivist reliance on scientific proof tends to simplify ailments, when in reality they are much more complex and go beyond physical sensations.

Modern medicine treats the mind and body as two separate entities, despite the strong link between health and emotions. According to Oakley Ray, a Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Psychiatry and Pharmacology at Vanderbilt University, "the mind-body or biopsychosocial paradigm, which supersedes the older biomedical model, [suggests that] there is no real division between mind and body because of networks of communication that exist between the brain and neurological, endocrine and immune systems" (Brower, 2006). Through the use of brain imaging, researchers have been able to see physical reactions in the body due to the individuals' emotions. Doctors have "found that positive emotions can trigger 'reward' pathways located deep within the brain, including in an area known as the ventral striatum," while negative emotions "activate a brain region known as the amygdala, which plays a role in fear and anxiety" (2015). The mind is a powerful force; a person's attitude and state of mind have the potential to aid in their recovery as well as impede it. A collection of UK studies, known as the Whitehall studies, found that workers with low-level, high-stress jobs were at twice the risk of developing metabolic syndrome (a precursor of heart disease) when compared to those in high-level, less stressful positions (Brower, 2006). Moreover, "Research by Pennebaker and his colleagues (1997) has demonstrated that those who repress their emotions simultaneously suppress their immune response, rendering them vulnerable to illnesses of all kinds, from colds to cancer" (2007). Thus, physicians should create a welcoming environment where patients can unburden their problems because treating the patient's emotional needs may in turn aid in their physical needs as well. On the contrary, conventional and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practitioners implement a more caring and gentle form of medicine. One CAM doctor stated that he or she "equate[d] healing and integration in a lot of ways because [he or she knew] that the root word of the word 'heal' is connected etymologically to the word 'whole'" (Barrett et al., 2004). CAM practitioners are very patient-centered and take the time to get to know

the individual, allowing them to become more aware of any personal dilemmas that may be presenting themselves as physical symptoms. On the other hand, conventional physicians do not practice holistic healing to the extent that they should. They should not only focus on treating the patient's physical condition, but also on looking at its root cause, which may be due to some mental or emotional turmoil that the individual is going through. Prescribing medication or surgery may not solve the problem, it might only be masking it. "Studies have found that over 80% of all doctors' visits involved a social-emotional problem, while only 16% could be considered solely organic in nature" (2007). Getting to the root of the problem is the best way and the only way to really put a stop to the ailment if it is being caused by a non-physical source. Health providers must communicate with their patients and build trust within their doctor-patient relationship so that patients will feel more comfortable telling their doctors what is going on; this will allow physicians to improve diagnoses and advise better forms of treatment, which may include diet changes, meditations, acupuncture, etc. Modern medicine insists on treating the mind and body as separate from one another, and ignoring the connection between the two as it applies to one's physical health. Until this changes, numerous ailments will continue to be misdiagnosed or mistreated, prolonging patient suffering and further delaying their recovery.

DANGER OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription medications have pervaded society. Medical doctors have come to rely on prescribing pills for almost every affliction that a patient may suffer from. According to the CDC, about 30% of antibiotics prescribed in the United States are unnecessary (CDC). In reality, this form of treatment may not be doing the patient any good and may put them at risk. Several prescription medications can have severe, long-term side effects as well as having the potential to be highly addictive. In 2010, according to the CDC, "16,500 people died...from overdoses tied to common narcotic pain relievers such as Vicodin, OxyContin, Opana, and methadone - up from 14,800 in 2008" (Crawford, 2013). On average about 45 Americans die each day from prescription drug overdose (Crawford, 2013). For those suffering from pain as a result of cancer, doctors are quick to prescribe prescription drugs, such as opioids to treat the pain because "if someone is dying addiction isn't [viewed] as a problem" (Kluger, 2010). However, if a patient then survives they are now left with

another life-threatening problem. Addiction to painkillers can lead to further addiction towards harder, more accessible drugs, such as heroin. Therefore, is the momentary relief in pain worth the consequences that are likely to ensue? Instead of putting patients at risk for an overdose by prescribing painkillers, there are other options out there.

Chiropractic therapy, for example, has been shown to reduce pain and improve the function of the body. Stephen M. Perle, DC, a professor of clinical sciences at the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut said, “Patients with pain syndromes who find effective treatment under the direction of a doctor of chiropractic are less likely to become chronic users of pain medications, and thus less likely to become addicted” (Crawford, 2013). While traditional medications have done a lot of good and have lowered the number of deaths worldwide tremendously, they still have their faults. Conventional practitioners’ biggest argument for prescription medicine is that it’s safer than the alternatives. However, FDA approval is not a guarantee that a product is 100% effective and safe. For example, Vioxx, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), was put on the market in 1999 to treat acute pain. However, later in 2004 it was removed from the market and faced a lawsuit due to increased incidences of sudden cardiac death among some of its users (Larson, 2007). The experiments and testing conducted by the FDA are why prescription medication is thought to be superior to that of alternative treatments. However, as is shown by Vioxx, FDA approval does not ensure the complete safety of a drug.

RISKS OF ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Much like traditional medication, there are still areas of concern when it comes to CAIH forms of therapy, such as the fact that the FDA does not regulate most forms of alternative therapies. “According to the Dietary Supplements Health and Education Act of 1994, dietary supplements can be marketed without proven safety or efficacy in the United States” (Phatak, Alper & Pashankar, 2019). This means that alternative products have the potential of being harmful to patients. Some may even contain ingredients that are not listed on the product or different amounts than what is claimed on the product. Not knowing exactly what and how much is being put into one’s body can result in negative consequences, such as side effects and/or drug-herb interactions.

The most common form of alternative treatment is herbal medi-

chine. However, some herbs have the potential to be highly toxic:

“LoVecchio et al. reported on a patient who suffered central nervous system depression after ingesting a substance sold in health-food stores as a hormone stimulator and Beigel and colleagues describe the puzzling clinical course of a patient in whom lead poisoning developed after he took an Indian herbal remedy for his diabetes” (Angell & Kassirer, 1998).

The FDA can only intervene after the product has been shown to be harmful, but by then it is too late because already the product has done damage to numerous patients. Before the 20th century, botanical remedies were found through trial and error, but this did not come without risk due to the unknown aspects of the herb (Angell & Kassirer, 1998). Many herbs can be virulent when consumed, however now as a result of medical advances the beneficial properties of herbs can be safely extracted and isolated, leaving behind the toxic components. Now using laboratory equipment, it is possible to identify active ingredients in herbs, remove their contaminants, and define a safe dosage. For example, “digitalis was extracted from the purple glove, morphine from the opium poppy, and quinine from the cinchona bark” (Angell & Kassirer, 1998). Thus, if it is possible to receive the benefits of herbs without the potential for danger, it can certainly be used as a credible form of treatment.

For those that reject alternative medicine, their main argument is that the lack of empirical evidence supporting alternative treatments makes them ineffective and, more importantly, unsafe. Conventional medicine, which is practiced by licensed physicians, focuses on treatments heavily based on scientific findings. “Treatments fall under the purview of ‘evidence based medicine (EBM)’, which tests different treatments to confirm they are effective and safe” (HIE Help Center, 2019). On the other hand, alternative therapies do not have much research to support their treatments, in fact much of the findings indicate the inefficacy of CAIH medicine. However, this lack of research and evidence does not seem to be of too much concern to consumers with sales of alternative medicine still rising. This increase in the use of CAIH therapies seems to be the result of “disengagement from scientific thinking (Dawes, 2001), a natural disinclination to think empirically (Wolpert, 1992), or a rejection of trust in scientific progress (Petrie et al.)” (Hughes, 2008). Many patients with chronic illnesses are becoming dissatisfied with traditional treat-

ments due to their high costs with little success in remedying their afflictions, further exacerbating the growing skepticism of Western medicine among the public.

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE DOCTOR-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

One of the most prominent reasons for patients' distrust of conventional medicine is due to the damage that has been done to doctor-patient relationships. The trust between these two parties has been broken, which has led individuals to take their health into their own hands or to search for help elsewhere. Rather than receiving personalized care, many patients feel as though they are nothing more than a transaction:

“Studies show that [doctor] visits average about 20 minutes and that doctors change the subject back to technical talk when patients mention their emotions, that they interrupt patients' initial statements after 23 seconds on average, that they spend a single minute providing information, and that they bring up weight issues with fewer than half of their overweight patients” (Sullivan, 2018).

Patients are in and out of the doctor's office so quickly that they are not able to form a connection with their physician, which is crucial to fostering a good doctor-patient relationship. Compared to alternative practitioners, who on average spend over an hour with each patient (Youn, 2019). Furthermore, the interaction between healthcare providers and their patients is also important in the healing process. It was found that “patients with irritable bowel syndrome have greater relief from their symptoms when their practitioner is empathic rather than cold; patients with acid reflux disease do dramatically better after a 42-minute consultation compared to an 18-minute one” (Tucker, 2016). Hence, the social aspect of a doctor's visit plays an important part in relieving the patient's stress and allowing the practitioner to get to the bottom of what is going on with the patient.

When going to a physician, an individual is essentially placing their life in the doctor's hands. However, if a patient does not feel comfortable with their primary care physician it is likely that the patient will not tell the doctor all the details of their problem, which can delay recovery and result in signs of a graver problem being missed. Patients often do not feel heard by their doctors, which results in growing distrust and an-

imosity. “There is a need to further the patient-provider dialogue and enhance the partnership and trust that comes with shared care” (Pinzon-Perez, Guerra & Hickey, 2016). This being said, the shared decision making (SDM) model should have greater employment in the healthcare field. This is “an approach where clinicians and patients share the best available evidence when faced with the task of making decisions, and where patients are supported to consider options, to achieve informed preferences” (Elwyn et al., 2012). Many individuals fail to tell their healthcare providers that they are undergoing alternative forms of treatment since they fear their doctor’s judgment, because rather than encouraging their patients to consider their options, physicians typically present only one option—prescription medication.

The reason for this overreliance on prescription drugs might be that healthcare professionals do truly believe in them and have a distrust of alternatives. However, it is more than likely that it is the result of constant pressure put on physicians by pharmaceutical companies, which often includes monetary compensation. A study found that “1 in 12 doctors has received money from drug companies marketing opioid pharmaceuticals. Between August 2013 and December 2015, researchers at Boston Medical Center found that 68,177 doctors were paid a combined amount of \$46 million from drug companies marketing these drugs” (Brown, 2017). These drugs many times have dangerous side effects or are ineffective, despite what pharmaceutical companies may say. It was shown that “85 percent of new prescription drugs hitting the market are of little or no benefit to patients” (Sullivan, 2018). They are created and marketed for the sole purpose of generating a profit at the expense of consumers. Those in the medical field have become too focused on the bottom line and have lost track of what healthcare is really about, the patients. Doctors must not be swayed by outside forces, instead they must maintain their integrity and recommend the best option for their individual patients when suggesting a treatment, whether it be a prescription drug or alternative medicine.

CONCLUSION

Alternative therapies have great merit and the potential to help those with chronic conditions. While they do have risks, it is not any more than those of conventional medications. However, to minimize these risks physicians must be aware if their patient is undergoing alternative treatments to avoid possible interactions. In order for this to happen,

physicians must be more open to unconventional forms of treatment and willing to listen to their patients' opinions on their healthcare regimen. In certain cases, some alternatives are more suitable in treating an individual's ailment, which is why physicians need to recognize and implement them into their practice as a way to improve healthcare as a whole. Undoubtedly, medical professionals do not give alternative medicines the recognition they deserve, mainly due to their rigid, positivist thinking. This is the most notable barrier between conventional and complementary medicine, which results in unfounded prejudice. Those investigating integrative medicine noted that "attitudes and belief systems [are] more important than economic or scientific considerations. Prejudice, they said, results from lack of communication and lack of understanding, and is the major barrier to integration" (Barrett, 2004). Although doctors often look down at alternative treatments, in reality the majority of them have very limited knowledge on the subject. An American survey found that 61% of doctors felt they had inadequate knowledge about the safety and efficacy of CAM therapies and 81% believed that more education was required in this field (Maha & Shaw, 2007). Therefore, in order to get more conventional practitioners on board with alternative medications and propel integrative medicine into the healthcare system it is necessary to improve education on alternative therapies for students entering the medical field as well as physicians already practicing medicine.

Hospitals affiliated with prominent universities, such as Yale, Duke, and John Hopkins, have already begun promoting alternative therapies and holistic medicine (Ross, Blau & Sheridan, 2017). Doctors must identify what treatment is best for each individual illness, looking at the benefits and risks of both Western medicine and alternative treatments in order to choose the best option for the patient. Healthcare has become such a standardized field that even though it is a people-centric profession, it has lost the personal aspect that it was once known for. For mainstream physicians, it is not only important to utilize alternative therapies, but also to implement the attributes that have become synonymous with alternative practitioners. This includes listening to patients and their needs, having open communication between patient and doctor, and involving the patient in their treatment. There are positives and negatives to both unconventional and conventional medicine; the best way to improve on both is for its supporters on each side to work together to better serve the healthcare needs of the public.

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KANA ADACHI

Deep Brain Stimulation: A Double-Edged Sword for Treatment-Resistant Major Depression

ABSTRACT

Deep brain stimulation (DBS) is a high-risk surgical procedure that involves the implantation of electrodes into the brain to regulate target areas. DBS is already approved as a treatment for several neurological disorders but has not yet been approved as a treatment for psychiatric disorders. This paper examines the controversy surrounding DBS as a possible treatment for major depressive disorder (MDD). More specifically, this paper considers patients with treatment-resistant depression (TRD) as prime targets of this suggested procedure. By framing the controversy as a double-edged sword, this paper comparatively analyzes the ethical concerns seen in the history of psychosurgery (brain surgery for the treatment of mental disorders), as well as the psychological, social, and emotional benefits and the limitations of DBS based on a compilation of recent case studies. This paper further delves into alternative antidepressant treatments as models for regulation. The purpose of this paper is not only to investigate the value of the DBS procedure but also to suggest guidelines that should be established if and when the procedure is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for MDD.

Keywords: deep brain stimulation, double-edged sword, major depressive disorder, treatment-resistant depression

INTRODUCTION

Consider a person who is suffering from a life-threatening disease. If this patient is presented with a new treatment that has many severe risks and could even make his/her condition worse, and yet this treatment is the only chance he/she has to recover, should this person choose to undergo the treatment? In this case, the patient must learn to manage something that can have both highly favorable and unfavorable consequences. This predicament, which represents the status quo for the

deep brain stimulation procedure in terms of depression, currently sparks complex debates among clinicians and healthcare administrators. Although major depressive disorder (commonly referred to as depression) is a serious, highly prevalent condition, it is a topic that is often avoided and not taken as seriously as it should be by society. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-V defines major depressive disorder (MDD) as a mental health disorder characterized by pervasive, sustained low mood, loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and low motor functions. People who do not suffer from the condition may dismiss depression as a temporary problem, or ignorantly think that depression can be easily fixed using medications, therapy, and positive thinking. In reality; however, the issue is not that simple. In fact, there is a significant portion of depressed patients that have been treated by standard therapy and medications for years and still experience little to no improvement. These unaffected patients are classified as having treatment-resistant depression (TRD). Recently, a surgical procedure called deep brain stimulation (DBS) was proposed for patients with TRD. This procedure involves implanting a neurostimulator under the skin of a patient's chest that is connected by wires to electrodes that are implanted into a patient's brain. The electrodes target specific areas of the brain that are thought to impact certain mental disorders. Specifically, a region of the brain known as Brodmann area 25 is targeted to treat depression. As target areas are stimulated, symptoms of various disorders can be alleviated by controlling the changes in brain activity. The implanted neurostimulator can be tuned and recharged regularly by a clinician. Patients themselves usually do not have major control over the specific voltage or area of electrical stimulation, but they do have the power to turn the whole system on or off using a handheld device. With this development, even patients with TRD are able to feel strong positive emotions such as empathy, interest, and happiness. DBS is already approved as a treatment for several neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease (in order to improve tremors). Even though studies are being conducted now to test if DBS should be approved for psychiatric conditions like depression, it is controversial whether or not the benefits of the surgery outweigh the risks.

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

The controversy surrounding deep brain stimulation can be understood when DBS is seen as a double-edged sword. In the article, "A Real Dou-

ble-Edged Sword:’ Undergraduate Perceptions of Social Media in Their Learning,” researcher and educational developer Erika Smith conducts a study that showed how social media can be considered a double-edged sword that both informs and distracts students in their education. Smith asserts that when using technological developments, “particular aspects of our experience are amplified, while others are reduced” (Smith 51). As Smith explains, technology is not an easy bargain. The human-technology relationship revolves around improving some aspects of human lives (amplification) while taking away from some aspects (reduction). This amplification-reduction relationship between technology and humans can be applied to deep brain stimulation surgery. DBS can help patients with TRD improve their psychological conditions and amplify their social functioning; however, ethical and surgical complications can impair their lives as well, or even put the patients in worse conditions. Just as other treatments in the history of psychosurgery have posed the risks of potential abuse, ethical concerns, biological side-effects, and suicide, the potential consequences of DBS must be discussed before the treatment is approved. Thus; due to its dual nature, deep brain stimulation can be perceived as a double-edged sword, as the procedure can simultaneously improve and worsen the conditions of TRD patients. Considering the procedure’s efficacy for patients with treatment-resistant major depression, along with the various complications and concerns as witnessed throughout the history of psychosurgery, deep brain stimulation should be approved as a treatment for major depressive disorder. Because the procedure is a double-edged sword, however, DBS should be regarded as a last resort, and healthcare administrators must establish strict regulations to enforce upon the approval of the procedure.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

Deep brain stimulation has life-altering psychological and social benefits for patients with treatment-resistant major depression. For instance, Prof. Dr. Thomas Schlaepfer (MD), a psychiatrist and researcher at the University Hospital Freiburg, tests the effectiveness of DBS in patients with TRD in his article, “Rapid Effects of Deep Brain Stimulation for Treatment-Resistant Major Depression.” In his study, Schlaepfer found that “six of seven patients were responders; four were classified as remitters (MADRS10). Baseline elevated levels of anxiety (HAMA) were reduced to a subclinical level. Social functioning (GAF) improved in the

sample as a whole from serious to mild impairment” (Schlaepfer 1209). When the author refers to “responders,” he suggests that six of seven patients improved on the Montgomery-Asberg Depression Scale after the onset of the deep brain stimulation treatment. The four “remitters” refer to those who went into remission and were classified as treated for depression. The social functioning and anxiety levels also improved for the patients, as shown by the improvement in the Global Assessment of Functioning scale results. Considering that these seven patients were initially classified as treatment-resistant, this improvement reveals how this brain stimulation procedure can be considered effective to a certain extent and give hope to those with severe depression. The treatment can possibly help those with treatment-resistant depression to feel less despair and function regularly in society without depression interfering in their jobs and personal lives. The major improvements of these six patients classified with TRD show that DBS surgery can significantly help depressed patients reduce anxiety and depression while improving social functioning levels. Similarly, Simon Raymaekers, psychiatrist and researcher affiliated with KU Leuven Research Group of Psychiatry, studies the effects of DBS on two target areas in the brain in his article, “Deep Brain Stimulation for Treatment-Resistant Major Depressive Disorder: A Comparison of Two Targets and Long-Term Follow-Up.” In his article, Raymaekers asserts that “This decrease was statistically significant ($t(6) = 6.96, P < 0.001$). Five out of seven patients were responders and two were in remission” (Raymaekers 4). The Hamilton Depression Rating (HAM-D) scale is a rating scale designed to rate the severity of depression in patients. In Raymaekers’ study, the overall decrease in the HAM-D scores was “statistically significant,” meaning that the scores statistically proved the effectiveness of deep brain stimulation on the TRD patients. A majority of the patients improved to the stimulation and two were even in remission.

EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

These results highlight the potential benefits of the deep brain stimulation procedure and show why TRD patients should consider the procedure in the first place. If TRD patients have a real chance to improve their conditions, they may choose deep brain stimulation over helpless suffering. For instance, in a video uploaded by *CNN*, “Deep Brain Stimulation Treats Depression,” a woman with treatment-resistant major

depression named Edi Guyton tried the DBS surgery and regarded the procedure as a great success. Guyton relays her first-hand experience, claiming that she almost smiled during the trial because “I felt feelings that I thought were gone.” When the interviewer asked her how she felt about an electrical machine being turned “on” in her brain to control her emotions, she assured, “It felt fantastic. I didn’t care what was doing it.” Guyton’s reactions and experience emotionally appeal to other TRD patients that the procedure can finally let the patients experience the normal, positive emotions they have been lacking in their lives. Of course, Guyton’s experience may not apply to all TRD patients because effectiveness and side-effects can vary from patient to patient. Regardless, DBS is still a valuable option for those who have tried all other treatments and feel as if they are beyond help. As Erika Smith mentions, “they understood this two-sidedness of social media as having the potential to both inform and distract” (Smith 47). The “two-sidedness” of social media refers to the idea that social media is a double-edged sword that has the potential to both help and hinder education. In terms of deep brain stimulation, the effectiveness of the procedure for treatment-resistant patients like Guyton portrays the optimistic side of this double-edged sword; however, patients must keep in mind that DBS can not only improve the conditions of patients but can also simultaneously harm the patients.

DISADVANTAGES OF DBS

Although deep brain stimulation may sound like an appealing method to alleviate symptoms of patients with treatment-resistant major depression, there are many disadvantages to consider, as it is a double-edged sword. Patients with depression must determine if the rewards of deep brain stimulation actually outweigh the risks before they consent to the procedure. To put the benefits and disadvantages on a scale, patients must first be exposed to the potential drawbacks of DBS. For example, Daniel Cleary (MD, Ph.D.), a doctor at the Department of Neurology at Yale Medical School, analyzes the effects of DBS on patients with various mental disorders based on available DBS studies and their outcomes in his article, “Deep Brain Stimulation for Psychiatric Disorders: Where we are Now.” This article not only provides direct evidence of the effectiveness of the DBS surgery, but also of the various complications such as the possibility for abuse, nausea, surgical side-effects/injuries, and even suicide, as “more than 10% of patients” attempted suicide in a study

(Cleary 5). Thus, Cleary's article helps readers understand the benefits, side-effects, and potential risks of DBS proven by studies already existing for DBS by 2015. The most important risk to note here is the risk of suicide. Not only was this pattern of suicide observed in Cleary's study, but it also appeared as a risk in Raymaekers' study. Raymaekers mentions in his article that during his study, "One patient (C5) showed, after a period of remission, a deterioration of depressive symptoms and was hospitalized. During this hospitalization, he committed suicide" (Raymaekers 5). The patient committing suicide even after a "period of remission" shows that relapse is possible in the long term and that depressive symptoms can actually increase for TRD patients who undergo the deep brain stimulation procedure. This specific example emphasizes the risks and ethical concerns of deep brain stimulation that need to be further investigated. If deep brain stimulation has a high suicide risk, the direct cause of the risk should be addressed, and the use of the procedure should be strictly limited to patients without a history of attempted suicides.

THE HISTORY OF DBS

These direct deep brain stimulation studies are helpful in understanding the currently known risks and benefits of DBS; however, the historical sources are useful for applying the known history of psychosurgery to DBS and to predict the potential social effects and ethical concerns of DBS that have not been proven yet. Throughout the history of psychosurgery, doctors have been experimenting to understand the brain by trying to change brain chemistry and alter moods. For instance, James Caruso, an expert in the Department of Neurological Surgery at the University of Virginia, reviews the history of lobotomy in his article, "Psychosurgery, Ethics, and Media: a History of Walter Freeman and the Lobotomy." Lobotomy is a surgical procedure that used to be done in the past to alleviate symptoms of mental disorders by removing a large region in the front of the brain. When discussing lobotomy's potential for abuse throughout history, Caruso mentions, "Recent evidence revealed that Eva Peron underwent a prefrontal lobotomy in 1952 to alleviate metastatic cancer pain, but further analysis revealed that her lobotomy may have been politically motivated" (Caruso 2). Caruso suggests that Eva Peron's lobotomy may have been ordered by her husband, Juan Peron, who was the president of Argentina at the time. The lobotomy, in this case, may have been used to pacify Eva Peron's aggressive personality, which

came off as a political threat. Such historical precedents suggest that new psychosurgeries can be abused for personal or political motivations and therefore be used outside of its original purpose. If psychosurgeries (including deep brain stimulation) have the potential for abuse, then strict regulations must be set so that the procedures are only used for medical purposes. As Simon Raymaekers claims in his deep brain stimulation study, “DBS is often regarded as a last resort” (Raymaekers 5). Since deep brain stimulation is a dangerous procedure that is usually considered as the “last resort” for patients with treatment-resistant major depression, the procedure is strictly intended for severe medical purposes. As DBS is seen as a “last resort,” patients must try other treatments such as therapy and antidepressant medications before considering DBS as a treatment option. To limit the potential for abuse, the surgery must only be used for TRD patients who have gone through careful diagnosis and fully consent to the surgery to alleviate their own depression. The surgery cannot be available for people who do not have treatment-resistant major depression or be ordered by others for a qualifying patient. By understanding the ethical concerns found in the history of lobotomy and comparing lobotomy to DBS, the potential social concerns for DBS can be predicted and analyzed.

The ethical concept of possibly worsening a condition, even with the initial intention to help, can be applied when using psychologist Dr. Shawn McClintock’s article, “Multifactorial Determinants of the Neurocognitive Effects of Electroconvulsive Therapy.” McClintock explains the effects of electroconvulsive shock therapy (ECT), a treatment for depression in which electric currents were run through the brain, on patients with depression. ECT and DBS both use electricity to stimulate the brain and alter the brain’s functions. The biological and behavioral side-effects of ECT can be used to help predict and consider similar side-effects for DBS. Although research shows that ECT is an effective treatment for major depressive disorder, the adverse side-effects that were discovered as well were too significant to disregard. For instance, ECT can cause “anterograde amnesia for recent information, and retrograde amnesia for long-term autobiographical and impersonal information” (McClintock 1). Patients who undergo ECT can end up with amnesia for the rest of their lives when all they want to do is alleviate their depression. They would no longer be able to retain new information, remember their own identities, or establish strong connections with others. These patients would have to risk who they are for a chance to obtain happiness. Deep brain stimu-

lation can have that same ultimatum for patients, considering how DBS also alters the brain and there is no guarantee that current mental abilities or psychological and behavioral conditions will not change for the worse. In Daniel Cleary's DBS study, various psychological side-effects were recorded, including "mania, hypomania, anxiety, panic, fear, worsening depression," and there was even a statistically significant "decline in some areas of cognitive performance" seen in a neuropsychological test (Cleary 5). Cleary's study demonstrates the potential deterioration in psychological, behavioral, and cognitive states of patients who undergo the DBS procedure. Having the symptoms of mania and worsening depression clearly do not exhibit an improvement in the patients' conditions. Ironically, patients face a gamble of risking a decline in themselves for the possibility of improvement. Erika Smith also highlights irony as a characteristic of the double-edged sword as she emphasizes that "this metaphor illustrates not only what is gained but also what is lost" (Smith 51). As Smith suggests, it is crucial to identify the aspects of the patients' lives that could be "lost" as a result of the DBS surgery. Currently, unknown biological and behavioral changes that have not yet been identified must also be considered along with the already discovered side-effects, since most clinical DBS trials for depression have been conducted in small sample sizes, and further risks may only become apparent after the surgeries become more widely used on a larger population. Thus, there is no guarantee that DBS will improve or even maintain conditions for TRD patients, which contradicts the purpose of alleviating their depressive symptoms. It is important to perceive the surgery as a double-edged sword that could both alleviate and worsen the symptoms of depression.

GUIDELINES/REGULATIONS

Once the double-edged sword perspective of deep brain stimulation is accepted, it is crucial to understand the need to establish strict guidelines, specifically for the use of DBS on patients with treatment-resistant major depression. As Erika Smith proposes, "To manage the helping-and-hindering double-edged sword, students often described intentionally separating academic and social spheres of their social media lives" (Smith 48). Students who choose to incorporate social media into their education must learn how to balance the pros and the cons. By deliberately establishing boundaries between the academic and social uses of social media, the students in Smith's study manage to avoid letting the

distractions affect the benefits of social media. This concept of managing pros and cons can be applied to deep brain stimulation, as patients and scientists can find ways to lessen the impact of the risks. To begin with, suicide is a major risk of deep brain stimulation that must be addressed in the regulation of DBS. Since TRD patients with a history of suicide attempts tend to have a higher risk of relapsing and committing suicide after the DBS procedure (see Raymaekers' study), TRD patients should be screened for a history of attempted suicides, and only be approved for the DBS procedure if their history is clear.

Furthermore, to clarify which patients should be considered for the DBS procedure in the first place, DBS regulations should declare that patients must be diagnosed with treatment-resistant major depression by multiple psychiatrists. For example, Prof. Miguel Faria, an expert in neurosurgery and in medical history, analyzes the history of psychosurgery and the DBS surgery in his article, "Violence, Mental Illness, and the Brain—A Brief History of Psychosurgery: Part 2—From the Limbic System and Cingulotomy to Deep Brain Stimulation." Faria mentions that criteria for psychosurgery, such as patients must be "referred by two psychiatrists" to be evaluated for psychosurgery, "have available postoperative care, 'be disabled by mental or physical anguish but have a premorbid history of effective functioning,' and have no previous relief from 'appropriate treatments'" were already established in the 1970s by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Faria 4). This established guideline helped manage psychosurgeries throughout history and should be applied to deep brain stimulation when deciding to what extent the surgery should be approved. Patients that have "mental or physical anguish" like major depression and "no previous relief" from common treatments are in critical, treatment-resistant conditions and are running out of options. Therefore, these types of patients qualify for dangerous psychosurgeries like deep brain stimulation due to absolute necessity. Likewise, James Caruso, a researcher and an expert in the field of neurosurgery, claims, "Physicians must pay special attention to patients' ability to provide full consent; clinical research studies should confirm the intervention's safety and efficacy; the risk of adverse change in personality should not exceed the degree of benefit that the treatment could confer" (Caruso 6). Caruso uses the words, "full consent," to address ethical concerns as he asserts that specific guidelines must be set for psychosurgery. Only patients who are capable of giving full consent should be consid-

ered for the DBS procedure, and patients should be allowed to take back consent at any time before the surgery in order to avoid the potential for abuse by the doctor or the patient's family members. If a patient is incapable of giving a clear, declarative form of consent on his/her own behalf and needs a representative to make the decision for him/her, the patient should not be approved for the procedure. This idea of personal consent should apply even when considering underage patients. Furthermore, safety, efficacy, risks, and benefits must be evaluated through official clinical studies and confirmed before the procedure is approved. For instance, potential adverse effects of DBS surgery, such as nausea, vision problems, intracranial bleeding, seizures, infections, strokes, and headaches must be studied and revealed. It is better for the public to know the full extent of the surgeries so that rules can be established. Less ambiguity can validate surgical procedures and help DBS gain trust in society. Deep brain stimulation should also follow these guidelines and make sure to address ethical concerns of the public involving consent, the potential for abuse and manipulation, and the potential of severe adverse side-effects like suicide, psychological/behavioral changes, and surgical injuries.

To establish further limitations on the application and approval of deep brain stimulation as a treatment for patients with treatment-resistant major depression, especially in terms of the United States, current regulations in the U.S. for similar treatments should be evaluated. Parkinson's disease, for example, is a neurological condition that DBS is already approved as a treatment for. According to the video, "Woman Regains her Life with Deep Brain Stimulation Therapy," patients with Parkinson's experience "a sustained improvement of tremor" due to the DBS procedure (*UR Medicine*). Parkinson's patients who undergo the DBS procedure are usually older patients with more severe conditions who have continuously paid for medications that have become gradually ineffective. The DBS procedure is explained to each patient carefully before the patients give consent, and the patients continue to visit their surgeons for routine tuning in the DBS device to increase or decrease voltage. As long as DBS is clinically shown to be effective for treatment-resistant major depression like it is for symptoms of Parkinson's, and TRD patients agree to go to their doctor for routine check-ups for the tuning of their devices, the procedure should be approved for major depression as well. Similarly, there have been recent developments in ketamine-based antidepressants, in which the FDA approved a new medication for treatment-resistant depression called Spravato in the form of a nasal spray (March, 2019).

Ketamine, a dissociative anesthetic, is a controversial drug that is comparable to the DBS procedure, as they are both risky treatments for major depression. Because of the possible adverse effects and the potential for abuse, Spravato is only approved under a very restricted system, called the Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS). According to the FDA:

Patients must be monitored by a health care provider for at least two hours after receiving their Spravato dose. The REMS requires the prescriber and the patient to both sign a Patient Enrollment Form that clearly states that the patient understands they should make arrangements to safely leave the health care setting to get home and that the patient should not drive or use heavy machinery for the rest of the day on which they received the drug. Additionally, Spravato must be dispensed with a patient Medication Guide that outlines the drug's uses and risks. The patient self-administers Spravato nasal spray under the supervision of a health care provider in a certified doctor's office or clinic, and the spray cannot be taken home. (*FDA.gov*)

The FDA's REMS approach to the approval of Spravato is a great model for the guidelines of deep brain stimulation. Strict limitations, such as requiring the supervision of a healthcare provider after the treatment and the avoidance of driving, can minimize the risk of injury (towards self/others) and suicide for DBS. Furthermore, patients should be given procedure guides that specifically outline how the DBS procedure works, why post-surgery maintenance and checkups are necessary, and how to correctly use the DBS procedure's benefits while expecting its risks. Thus, by examining the currently in-practice use of DBS for Parkinson's and the distribution of Spravato as a guide to establishing the regulations for deep brain stimulation for major depression, the possible risks of DBS can be managed—and the benefits can finally outweigh the risks.

CONCLUSION

Although it is still controversial whether or not the efficacy of deep brain stimulation on psychiatric disorders outweighs the potential biological, psychological, and behavioral risks of the procedure, studies do seem to suggest a better quality of life for patients suffering from treatment-resistant major depression. As historical precedents reveal the ethical concerns that must be addressed, recent controversial treatments for depression such as DBS for Parkinson's and the ketamine-based Spravato highlight the direction deep brain stimulation should follow in terms of

FDA approval. Clinical studies must substantiate the effectiveness of DBS in improving the conditions for TRD patients, and possible short-term and long-term adverse effects must be presented. The DBS procedure should only be approved as a proper treatment for major depression under the conditions that the patients are screened for a history of attempted suicides and be able to give full consent for themselves. To do their part in ensuring the safety of the patients and balancing the possible risks, doctors should only use the procedure for patients with treatment-resistant major depression who have no other options, fully explain the risks, benefits, and the process of the DBS surgery to their patients, enforce a device maintenance policy for regular tuning and require healthcare providers to supervise patients after the surgery. Therefore, the future of deep brain stimulation depends on how much effort patients and doctors are willing to put in towards managing the procedure as a double-edged sword—thus, achieving the optimal balance between the potential risks and benefits through preventive measures.

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CHANDANA SINGATHI

Dark Secrets Behind Light Shades: Hollywood & Modeling Media

ABSTRACT

Colorism, a specific form of racism, stems from stereotypes regarding darker-skinned individuals and is normalized through racialized media images. It is the concept that lighter-skinned people of color who possess eurocentric features experience greater privilege than those with darker skin and afrocentric features. Colorism plays a significant role in the under-representation of individuals possessing darker complexion of skin in such popular industries as Hollywood film and fashion modeling, and may limit their opportunities in these agencies due to industry-wide tendencies to hire lighter-skinned individuals of color possessing characteristically eurocentric features (e.g. lighter skin, tall and thin body structure, pointier facial features). Media agencies are aware of this lack of representation as well as the inherent coloristic prejudice at work but continue to perpetuate stereotypes to increase profits and acceptance from a majority white audience. This paper's purpose is to investigate how coloristic preferences for individuals of lighter complexion in Hollywood and modeling affect African-Americans, Latinx, and other models of color in the media industry as well as American millennials' perceptions of beauty. Millennials are constantly exposed to media provided by Hollywood and modeling due to their considerable presence on modern social media platforms, and thereafter subconsciously form mental perceptions and images of these industries' narrow definitions of beauty. Through an analysis of various case studies, qualitative data from interviews and statistics, surveys and small group discussions, examples of Hollywood characters' and models' depictions on screen, and the relatively minimal media presence of darker-toned celebrities, this paper will explore how experiences of colorism vary based on gender stereotypes. Female celebrities already experience greater societal pressure and heavy scrutiny. Negative societal perceptions of darker skin tones ultimately limit the professional development of an actor or model in these industries.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. is known worldwide as a nation that provides its citizens with countless opportunities and equality; however, large portions

of American society are discriminated against daily due to the societal implications of their physical characteristics. Although individual success correlates with hard work and/or talent, obstacles such as cultural and racial stereotypes, colorism, and a narrow definition of beauty hinder the professional growth of African-American, Latinx, and other individuals of dark complexion. Factors such as the current presidency, deep-rooted racial divides in the U.S., and socioeconomic disparities between different subgroups enable the mass media to exploit and reinforce stereotypes regarding individuals with darker skin tones. These factors support Teen-Vogue's argument that "colorism created the belief that lighter-skinned black people are better, smarter, and more attractive than their darker-skinned counterparts because they have a closer proximity to whiteness" (Onyejiaka). Furthermore, limited demand for celebrities with darker skin tones in media consequently decreases the quantity and quality of the opportunities provided to those with darker skin. In "Being Seen and Unseen: Racial Representation and Whiteness Bias in Hollywood Cinema," Rosa R. Lembcke argues that inequalities in racial representation are highly relevant issues due to their impact on the opportunities for celebrities of color in the Hollywood film industry. Lembcke cites numerous examples of characters with darker complexions in films who are depicted as less sophisticated and less worthy than their lighter-skinned counterparts. Further, the nature of discrimination based on skin complexion differs for male and female celebrities of color, and the constant reinforcement of these inequalities in the media causes highly-generalized and inaccurate ideas to become widely accepted throughout American society. In "Media Stereotypes and 'Coconut' Colorism: Latino Denigration Vis-à-Vis Dark Skin," Ronald E. Hall demonstrates how media depictions of Latinx individuals as hypersexual and powerless females or dangerous, immoral males lead to limited opportunities for Latinx celebrities. With regards to the modeling industry, "Black Models Matter: Challenging the Racism of Aesthetics and the Facade of Inclusion in the Fashion Industry" provides Scarlett L. Newman's discussion of the fashion industry's underrepresentation of models of color; it was found that only six percent of models in the U.S. possess darker skin tones. Including external case studies, Newman's qualitative evidence provided by American models' personal accounts, as well as the history behind stereotypes regarding dark skin complexion, explains the struggles faced by these models, who are constantly pressured to conform their opinions, appearances, and behaviors to more closely fit the white American standard. In "White-

washed Runways: Employment Discrimination in the Fashion Modeling Industry,” Vanessa Padula discusses coloristic discrimination in American modeling and describes potential solutions to increase the representation of non-white models. Hollywood filmmakers’ tendencies to perpetuate stereotypes surrounding dark skin complexion as a means to entertain the majority, as well as modeling agencies’ underrepresentation of black and Latinx models and depiction of said models as exotic, normalize racialized and sexualized stereotypes as well as the mistreatment of celebrities of color both on and off-screen. Hollywood and modeling agencies exploit these stereotypes for profit, causing these celebrities to face the brunt of colorism and sexism through the consequently limited nature of professional opportunities available to them.

Several key theoretical frameworks support the relevance of colorism; this paper will address three of these. The first is tokenism, which hypothesizes that the underrepresentation of non-white celebrities incites agencies to hire token celebrities of color for the sole purpose of appearing more diverse than in actuality. The second framework is aesthetic labor - the idea that those African-American and Latinx celebrities actually hired are only accepted due to their possession of physical features and characteristics similar to their lighter-skinned or white counterparts. The last framework is the concept of dimensions of difference, in which one group uses certain factors such as appearance, dialect, and socioeconomic status to discriminate against other groups for a perceived deviation from the norm. Colorism continues to exist through the media’s spread of racialized imagery: colorism molds narrow perceptions of beauty among American millennials through an increasing connection to social media content. Evidence from this paper’s sources will demonstrate the connection between stereotypes regarding individuals with dark skin tones and the reduced opportunities available for these celebrities in Hollywood film and fashion modeling.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF COLORISM IN SOCIETY AND MEDIA INDUSTRIES

Colorism - a term coined by Alice Walker, a popular African-American novelist in the 1950s - represents an implicit, internalized form of racism in which a society or ethnicity grants increased privileges to those with lighter skin, inherently mistreating those with darker skin. Eurocentric features often increase the privileges of a non-white person.

Thus, agencies often base judgment upon one's level of darkness, discouraging darker-skinned individuals from roles and opportunities. According to Margaret Hunter, world-wide light-skinned privilege originates from histories of colonization and slavery, wherein darker-skinned slaves were forced to perform grueling work in fields while lighter-skinned slaves were permitted less physically taxing work indoors. Such harmful prejudices were the norm and occurred due to the white majority's association of lighter skin with a greater degree of purity, worth, and sophistication. Today, racial tensions due to American president Donald Trump's open discrimination and negative statements regarding people of color worsen coloristic prejudice towards immigrants and citizens alike. This situation also impacts celebrities of color, as success in the film and fashion industries depend heavily on societal perceptions of their physical characteristics, role versatility, and social connections. Rosa R. Lembcke discusses how film creates associations between certain physical features and subcultures in the U.S., limiting non-white celebrities' opportunities due to stereotypes that "maintain existing power structures and preconceived notions about race" (18). Stereotypes perpetuated by such media images allow producers to portray characters of color as highly-generalized, inaccurate depictions of their respective subcultures rather than real, multidimensional individuals. As per Stuart Hall, stereotypical characteristics of non-white people are seen as "natural as opposed to cultural, and thus inherent, non-negotiable and unchangeable" (qtd. In Lembcke 16) by the majority, implying that there are inherent characteristics pertaining to those with dark skin. In the U.S., there are clear differences between the socioeconomic conditions of the average black and white individual: "Dark-skinned blacks have lower levels of education, income, and job status. They are less likely to own homes or to marry; and dark-skinned blacks' prison sentences are longer" (qtd. in Allison 382). Thus, it is apparent that the deep-rooted issue of colorism allows negative stereotypes about non-white people to be perpetuated and exploited by the media.

EFFECT OF COLORISM AND SEXISM ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-WHITE HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES

Racialized imagery in Hollywood films distorts reality by perpetuating misconceptions about various US subcultures, resulting in lighter-skinned actors and actresses generally being provided more opportu-

nities than their darker-skinned counterparts. According to Catherine Knight Steele, Hollywood's use of dimensions of difference - factors that a majority group uses to discriminate against groups who deviate from the norm - enables inaccurate stereotypes to be sustained in society (6). Classics such as *Pocahontas*, *Great Wall*, and *Indiana Jones* portray white people conquering or colonizing the "exotic Other," sharply contrasting the sophisticated, civilized white person from the primitive other and reinforcing the inferiority of darker-skinned individuals. According to Lembcke, Hollywood's use of "racialized stereotypes in cinema and television can potentially maintain existing power structures and preconceived notions about race," worsening the prejudice faced by celebrities of color in the fame industry (18).

In addition to stereotypes surrounding dark skin tones in US subcultures, sexism also plays a role in further limiting the opportunities of non-white female celebrities. Sexism is a struggle for all women but is especially so for women of color due to the amplified combination of stereotypes surrounding women and dark skin. Due to the high frequency of such images in films, racist and sexist themes become normalized, circulating back to society and hurting individuals of color. This dual form of prejudice towards those of certain skin color and gender further decreases opportunities for those falling within these physical descriptions and creates an even greater struggle to reach the same level of fame. According to Ronald E. Hall, "coconut colorism" is a specific form of colorism directed towards Latinx individuals in the U.S., demonstrated by how the "Euro-American community continues to view [the Latino male] as the embodiment of negativity and inferiority" (2008). These societal constraints are incorporated into films, and filmmakers have historically depicted male Latinx individuals as bandits, rapists, killers, or thieves; movies like *Island of Love*, *Death of a Gunfighter*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Full Fathom Five*, and *12 Angry Men* depict Latinx characters as nefarious and immoral. Further, differences between Latinx males and females are quite apparent. Males are portrayed as "sadistic enforcers who were no match for the feminist vanguard despite their dark skin, mustaches, and slicked back Latino greasy hair" (Hall 2011). Stereotypes about Latinx males are synthesized with those of African-Americans and other people of color, creating highly generalized, inaccurate depictions. For example, the movie *Guns* includes a "stout, dark-skinned Erik Estrada who portrayed an international arms dealer," and a "Jack of Diamonds, who smuggles state of the art weaponry from China to South America"

(Hall 2011). Meanwhile, Latina women are depicted as promiscuous and hypersexual, as Hollywood movies often contain nudity, misogyny, and two-dimensional “sidekick”-like Latina female characters. In *Crack House*, a group of characters of color start a national epidemic by creating a drug intended to harm Euro-Americans; numerous scenes illustrate how “Black and Latino (drug dealers) raped Euro-American and Latino American women, took part in drive-by shootings, murder, and [inflicted] pain... There were numerous Latino American and African American putas on display to make the point” (Hall 2011-2012). Through this description, Hall implies the Euro-American belief that the drug problem depicted in the scene was initiated by these groups of individuals with dark skin tones. Thus, the quotation illustrates how Hollywood perpetuates different stereotypes about African-American, Latinx, and other men and women of dark complexion, associating dark skin with danger and violence and contrasting it with the so-called purity of white individuals.

Beyond coconut colorism, gender-related differences in colorism exist among black African-Americans in Hollywood as well. For example, it is more common in media for a black man with a darker complexion to find a light-skinned black woman attractive than the opposite situation, normalizing the idea that lighter skin makes women more attractive. This normalizes colorism in relation to gender and reduces the perceived beauty of a woman with darker skin tones. Additionally, in the case of black or Latinx female characters, expressing sexual desires and behaving promiscuously is portrayed as immoral and dirty, while women possessing lighter skin tones are depicted as positive characters for expressing the same desires. Hence, although lighter-skinned female characters are portrayed as inferior to men by “being female objects for the gaze of an implicit male subject” (Lembcke 21), women of color are judged harshly for hypersexuality. Sexual desires have little to do with one’s race and are instead indicative of one’s individual behavior and feelings towards others (Steele 12). When the media portrays specific subcultures as possessing undesirable traits, it aids the preservation of racism and societal conflicts based on injustice. In Hollywood cinema, “[dark-skinned] women of color have... not [been] regarded as serious love interests or marriage-potential” (Lembcke 18) which demonstrates the consequences of gender-related bias in colorism.

Furthermore, while plenty of black male celebrities in Hollywood, such as Idris Elba, John Boyega, and Shameik Moore, are able to thrive, most female celebrities of color are light-skinned and play the roles

that darker-skinned women could play. For example, in 2016, Afro-Latinx actress Zoe Saldana played the role of Nina Simone, a well-known singer and activist who possessed darker skin; Saldana altered her look using skin-color-altering makeup and a prosthetic nose to recreate Nina's appearance. According to Tiffany Onyejiaka, *X-Men* features Storm, a character of Kenyan descent possessing a darker complexion who is instead portrayed by biracial actresses of lighter complexion such as Halle Berry and Alexandra Shipp. Evidently, colorism and sexism play significant roles in reducing opportunities for black and Latinx actors and actresses, as they are denied roles due to physical appearance rather than talent.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN MODELING & CULPRITS OF COLORISTIC CASTING PREJUDICE

While colorism results in fewer professional opportunities for darker-skinned actors and actresses of color in Hollywood, models of color face greater coloristic prejudice because the modeling industry relies heavily on social networks and physical characteristics. Currently, the low number of non-white modeling directors and influencers creates a difficult environment for models of color to thrive. Agencies hire token amounts of these models to falsely appear diverse to the public and increase profit and socioeconomic status, exemplifying tokenism; however, according to Scarlett L. Newman, these models are presented with a smaller range of opportunities and are often depicted as “exotic” on screen (12). For example, in 2008 Vogue Italia's Editor-in-Chief Franca Sozzani responded to accusations of racism by using solely darker-skinned black models in the July issue of Vogue Italia; this “Black Issue” had lower sales than other issues and did not improve the outlook for darker-skinned models due to its sarcastic nature (Newman 11). Sozzani intended to show the world that an issue solely consisting of black models would not be financially profitable for his company, attempting to justify his discriminatory actions on the terms of less than optimal financial gain from portraying diversity. Another example is provided through Malaika Handa's analysis of 228 Vogue covers over 19 years, finding that from 2000 to 2005 there were only slight variances in models' complexion. Only 3 out of 81 cover models were black; after 2005, Vogue's increased skin color variance was only attributed to four specific covers; however, all four featured the same model: Lupita Nyong'o. These statistics indicate that tokenism determines the racial makeup of modeling

shows and represents the effect of a truly low demand for models of color. The industry audience's tendency to be more likely to purchase magazine issues containing images of white or light-skinned models of color also plays a significant role in narrowing the range and demand for models who possess darker skin tones; however, to maintain a facade of diversity, these companies are almost forced to feature models of color on rare occasions despite the lack of guarantee that they will stay with a company in the long-term.

In those rare instances that dark-skinned models are depicted in fashion shows, their appearance often correlates with the most traditional versions of their ethnic backgrounds and they are often depicted as dramatically cultured versions of themselves. Further, in regular society "black girls are punished and mocked for their originality [gelled-down baby hairs and braids]... others profit from and co-opt their traditions," creating a disconnect between the "normal" behaviors of dark-skinned and light-skinned women (qtd. in Newman 2). This idea exemplifies cultural appropriation, which is the exploitation of one's race and/or ethnicity for selfish reasons, mocking one's race, and accepting negative portrayals such as blackface and yellowface. Agencies often exploit race and reduce the value of dark skin to trends and aesthetics, ignoring the culture, traditions, and identity behind one's racial appearance. Another example of this unfair treatment is shown by the prevalence of blackface, or the use of darker makeup on light-skinned celebrities, in media to "satisfy the fantasy of 'brown skin with white features,'" further indicating that these industries are not willing to hire people who are actually darker-skinned (Newman 18). Blackface, as well as yellowface, are common inclusions in modern Hollywood movies, although their prevalence has somewhat decreased. The effects and implications of blackface are far greater than previously imagined; unnecessarily including ethnic characteristics on screen normalizes "historic act[s] of racism used to dehumanize and humiliate [dark-skinned] black people" (Newman 18). When pressured to fit Eurocentric standards of beauty, models with Afrocentric features mold their appearances by "straightening the hair, [adopt an] extensive diet and exercise [regime], [and] keeping out of the sun" (Newman 5). This behavior, otherwise known as aesthetic labor, implies that dark skin is only attractive when attached to characteristically eurocentric features. Aesthetic labor highlights the deep-rooted racial and coloristic inequality in the modeling industry, acting as a microcosm for society's definitions of beauty. According to Vanessa Padula, when Alber Elbaz, a

designer for Lanvin, presented five black women on the runway during a show, the scene was described as “‘purely aesthetic.’ [Thus, the industry] treats models as nothing short of mannequins... painted in the designer’s shade of choice” (123). On the rare occasion that dark-skinned models of color are hired, agencies utilize them in one of two stereotypical roles: “The first is the African tribal look, where women are often featured with tribal painting and bald heads. The second, the ‘Anglo’ look, consists of longhaired weaves & European features” (Padula 123). Provided these roles are filled, other models of color are turned away, leading to minimal variability in their on-screen appearances.

Models of color become easily replaceable when they are constantly deprived of opportunities, privileges, and power. This constant fear causes such models to hesitate when speaking out about prejudice in the modeling industry; even if legal action is taken, models’ identities are kept hidden from the public to save their reputation. For example, in 2004, a group of models of color sued modeling agencies for an estimated \$22 million for price-fixing, an illegal act in which competing modeling agencies lower take-home salaries for models; however, due to poor communication between the courts and the plaintiffs, the money was instead given to charity. Unfortunately, many models fear demanding salaries from agencies due to the immense power the industry holds over models’ careers (Padula 126). Worsening the situation, the U.S.’s legal system does not offer models much protection as models are generally considered independent contractors (136). The misrepresentation of dark-skinned models of color in the fashion modeling industry exists due to a cycle of events, in which the casting and modeling directors become the primary catalyst.

STUDIES & SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS OF DARK-SKINNED CELEBRITIES’ PHYSICAL FEATURES

There are numerous studies demonstrating light-skin privilege in American society as well as the existence of certain stereotypes associated with dark skin. This causes problems for black and Latinx individuals, as they are often relegated to roles related to said stereotypes. Given the whiteness studies discussed in Lembcke’s work, Margaret Hunter concludes that light-skinned Americans of color indeed receive greater privileges due to their physical features and socioeconomic status, arguing that

they do not struggle in the same ways that Americans possessing darker skin tones do. Through the media's constant reinforcement of stereotypes, white subcultures in the US are perceived as sophisticated, whereas non-white subcultures are typically associated with poverty, crime, and aggressive and/or promiscuous behavior. In addition, stark differences between the portrayals of lighter and darker people of color on screen have become prevalent due to the underlying societal notions that "dark skin represents savagery, irrationality, ugliness, and inferiority" while lighter skin implies "civility, rationality, beauty, and superiority" (Hunter 238). According to Ronald E. Hall, "in a social milieu that is threatened by the masculine and dominant implications of [one's] dark skin... dark skin is feared. That fear is widespread and extends from the most professional personnel and institutions to the least educated" (Hall 2014). Pervasive media images in the fame industry reinforce associations between darker skin and danger and criminality, as opposed to associations between lighter skin and purity and civility.

These media-spread images stimulate the formation of definitions and mental conclusions of beauty standards in the minds of millennials, the most prevalent group participating in social media platforms. Sydney Janelle Dillard's study, in which four groups of educated African-American millennials were interviewed and qualitatively analyzed, demonstrated that subjects were aware of American beauty standards that favored eurocentric features and lighter skin over Afrocentric features of dark skin. Subjects were also found to believe that the media oversexualizes African American women, "portraying them as erotic and exotic [and depicting them as] forbidden fruit... that is looked upon as prohibited and not allowed, which could be perceived as mainstream media attempting to trivialize Black women as undatable" (Dillard 57). The perceptions of women with dark skin tones found in the study illustrate how a dark complexion becomes associated with hypersexuality, and that dark-skinned women are short-term sexual interests, rather than reliable long-term partners. With regards to male models of color, Dillard's results indicate that "dark skin [equals] hyper-sexuality and lower social class or light skin [equals] power and prestige" (Dillard 80). Pervasive media images reinforce negative perceptions regarding dark skin; agencies in various sectors of the fame industry take advantage of these seemingly acceptable ideas for personal gain in popularity.

REASONS THE FAME INDUSTRIES KNOWINGLY SUPPORT COLORISTIC DISCRIMINATION

Despite the supposed open-mindedness of filmmakers and modeling agencies, coloristic discrimination has not, in fact, lessened over the years, potentially due to industries' need to impress the white majority in the country over any other subgroup. Ashley Mears claims that "modeling is the professionalization of a certain type of gender performance, one that interlocks with other social positions like race, sexuality, and class" (Mears 23). In addition, "Bookers and clients face intense uncertainty as they look for the right models in the high-end segment of the fashion market, where the stakes of impressing elite consumer tastes are high" (Mears 22); however, Vanessa Padula discusses how the Supreme Court often concludes that directors and recruiters are protected under the First Amendment (right to free speech), allowing them to "engage in artistic expression" during the recruiting process; thus, "a model may not be hired because she is not what the designer 'aesthetically and artistically' envisioned," because filmmaking is considered a form of artistic expression (Padula 131). Yet, despite some validity in these arguments, agencies should instead focus on the long-term effects of their actions and aim to improve diversity as well as the representation of celebrities of color without primarily focusing on financial profit. Increasing the diversity of representation in the film industry will not only increase reach and popularity across borders but will enable dark-skinned people of color to experience greater inclusion at the societal level. In another argument, Kelly J. Baker discusses the belief that increased success of women in an industry historically dominated by men is, in itself, a huge step forward. Baker states that "while the Women's March garnered press attention because of its progressive focus and unrepentant call for women's rights, there's an assumption, still, that women's activism is somehow inherently progressive." Although this accomplishment is noteworthy, feminism is intersectional and involves women of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Therefore, agencies should not continue to sideline issues related to and involving colorism, as such acts directly and/or indirectly hurt the prospects of darker-skinned celebrities. Fame industries must stress that talent is of the utmost importance in order to uphold social and cultural responsibility.

CONCLUSION AND OVERALL IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, it has become apparent that American millennials' perceptions of beauty are indeed impacted by colorism in a negative manner through the distribution and perpetuation of sexist and racist imagery in mass media; it is also through the phenomenon that the professional opportunities available to celebrities possessing darker tones of skins are decreased and minimized in the Hollywood film and fashion modeling industries. Dillard's descriptions of African-American millennials' opinions on American standards of beauty, as well as the prevalence of negative media imagery, relate to Handa's statistical analysis of Vogue's lack of coloristic representation over the past 19 years. Similarly, Lembcke describes numerous examples of differences in the portrayal of characters with dark and light skin tones in Hollywood that, alongside Dillard, Onyejiaka, and Hall's discussions regarding similar topics, indicate that gender determines how a celebrity or film character is presented on screen. Onyejiaka specifically cites examples of gender-related differences in colorism in Hollywood, such as the greater prominence of light-skinned black actresses compared to those possessing darker complexion. These examples demonstrate that Hollywood bears a tendency to hire slimmer, straight-haired black women of lighter complexion and, as opposed to curvy and curly-haired women of darker complexion. Padula and Newman indicate possible reasons for the underrepresentation of darker complexion in the fashion modeling industry, and claim that practices such as aesthetic labor and tokenism limit the nature and amount of opportunities offered to dark-skinned models. Societal perceptions of individuals of color are negative when compared to their lighter-skinned counterparts, and often harm said individuals' prospects of success. The agencies of these industries should, therefore, focus instead on the long-term effects of their actions regarding representation, as the incorporation of greater representation of individuals of color on screen may improve society in a positive manner. The prevalence of stereotypes surrounding individuals possessing darker skin tones from non-white subcultures is perpetuated and intensified by the media, and thus differences in the nature of portrayal and the quantity of light-skinned and dark-skinned celebrities' opportunities become evident due to the varied socioeconomic status and lack of media presence of these groups. Analysis indicates that defining an entire group of people by commonality in physical traits and characteristics or creating preemptive assumptions of their backgrounds and talent

produces highly inaccurate results. Agencies must hire greater numbers of dark-skinned filmmakers and modeling photographers to allow greater diversity in the array of talent available to these industries; such actions could potentially expand the international popularity and societal reach of films and modeling companies. The prominent use of stereotypes should be minimized on media platforms due to the detrimental effects it has on individuals of color who aim to move ahead in their careers. Too often, people believe that an individual's appearance is directly and definitively related to who they are or what they are capable of, but such mindsets are detrimental in the long term. The continued success of dark-skinned models and celebrities of color continues to prove contrary to this idea, but as long as the industry remains colorist, these individuals in the Hollywood and modeling media industries, as well as within society, will be unable to reach their full potential.

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ZACH TARMAN

Meet Me in Montauk: Finding Sunshine in Remembrance and Eternal Return

ABSTRACT

*What makes *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* so compelling? In one way, the film challenges its genre, the romance film, and in doing so, it has created a cult classic that fans of the film adore. Creating a twisted cinematic experience, it alters narrative elements like the*



*extraneous circumstances separating lovers, a linear plot structure, and a happily ever after. While the film deals with technology beyond our society, the sci-fi aspect only seeks to provide an introspective look into humanity with the depiction of a break-up feeling much more grounded and heartbreaking than one in a typical romance film. However, beyond all of the more evident features of the film, the story presents philosophical musings on human nature. In particular, the pleasure principle and the doctrine of eternal recurrence, presented by Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche respectively, provide critical frames for uncovering a new understanding of how the film deliberates why these lovers are entangled. Delivering a poignant, post-modern look into heartbreak and questioning happiness as a result of ignorance, *Eternal Sunshine* subverts the staples of the typical romance film by journeying through the broken mind to reconsider the value of memories and the allure of returning to the familiar.*

INTRODUCTION

Though there are many subversions and distinctions of the rom-com genre, the defining characteristic at its core is that *Eternal Sunshine* is a romance film against romance. This assertion seems impossible or, at the very least, contradictory. To clarify, the film opposes romance in the traditional sense of the word. Stereotypical films thrive off painting love as something that is found with ease and maintained without issue.

Indeed, it could be said that “A romcom certainly has a very distinctive narrative structure: boy meets girl... complications ensue, ultimately leading to the couple’s realization that they were meant to be together” (Mortimer 4). It is as if destiny brought two people together, and they will live happily ever after despite the external environment pulling them apart. This magical atmosphere defies the reality of many relationships, and Charlie Kaufman, the screenwriter of the film, has the bravery to explore the intricacies of deep connections with others. The love story presented to us virtually begins with the break-up, and the two characters choose to erase each other from their respective lives. One does not find such a premise in a feel-good, thoughtless, low-budget romantic comedy, and “with our multiplexes stuffed with toxic Hollywood formula, it’s a gift to find a ballsy movie that thinks it can do anything, and damn near does” (Travers). Eclipsing fantasy, love is not perfect nor a perpetual state of enthusiasm. Any relationship is complicated, flawed and most of all, difficult. And after all, the course of true love never runs smooth.

On the other hand, realigning with the rom-com formula, the characters of Joel and Clementine find themselves drawn back together despite their pasts and forced amnesia pulling them apart. Granted, the film still differs from the stereotypes. Instead of external circumstances being the initial reason that they cannot be together, “the obstacle lies rather in some aspect of the human condition of separateness, coupled with what might be called the dynamics of human relationships” (Day 137). Their incompatibilities constitute the reasons that they should not continue a relationship, and the external circumstances only result from decisions leading from their unhappiness. Their inadequacies as a couple and as partners are clearly shown to the audience; but nevertheless, there is still an underlying feeling in the viewer that they should end up together, and one might root for their togetherness at the end of the film. What makes it so that Joel and Clementine, as well as the audience, hope for a romance so seemingly doomed, and why is this important to the understanding of the film as well as human nature? Propelled by Freud and Nietzsche, the doomed romance of *Eternal Sunshine* demonstrates humanity’s magnetic and unconscious pull towards the familiar and indicates that the power of memories transcends mere recollection.

PART 1: REMEMBER

THE LIFE (AND DEATH) OF RELATIONSHIPS

Life consists of a great deal of moments. There is happiness beyond which one could imagine, and there is sadness deeper than one could envision crawling out from. No existence can escape these highs and lows. In that regard, relationships themselves take on a certain life of their own between two people, and “whether its span is that of a mayfly or a Galapagos tortoise, it has a life cycle of birth, growth, maturity, decay, [and] death” (Corliss). Each deep relationship has its highly euphoric and excruciatingly despairing moments. In an effort to capture these moments, memories are a sort of treasure that humans accumulate over their lives. Memories are a way for the mind to encapsulate and retain moments from human experience. They may not always be unequivocally accurate retrospectively, but at their core, they represent the emotional past of a person since we “not only... remember the content of an emotional event, we also remember our assessment of, and reactions to, the event” (Reisberg and Hertel 30). In the mind, these memories take on dramatic lives of their own, and they encase moments extracted from a time now gone for as long as the mind chooses to remember them. Even if reality is subject to death like Corliss points out, moments inhabit a more eternal life in memory and remembrance.

Tangentially, humans do not prefer those experiences mentioned above that associate with misery, sorrow, grief, etc. While those experiences probably cannot be avoided altogether, people behave in certain ways as described by the pleasure-principle put forth by Sigmund Freud. With it understood that “any given process originates in an unpleasant state of tension,” people tend towards “relaxation of this tension, i.e. with avoidance of pain or...production of pleasure” (Freud 4). By pain, Freud is not simply referring to physical wound or injury, but he seeks to encompass human emotions as well. In other words, people do not want to deal with unease, but since change and tension are inevitable in the chaotic nature of life, people will act in resulting ways to relieve this pain. In *Eternal Sunshine*, Joel and Clementine have as many difficult moments as they do beautiful ones, but the painful ones are freshest when they both decide to forget everything instead of facing the despair of their love’s demise. Joel says, with little hesitation, “I’m erasing you and I’m happy!” (Kaufman 44). The film brings about the age-old question: Is it better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all? Memories hinder our

thoughts from escaping the pain once felt (now always felt), and so, it may be impossible to determine a universal law for the better option of a specific individual's lost love.

THE TEMPTATION OF IGNORANCE

With subjectivity surrounding the previous question, the concern should now transcend preference: is it right to “forget” such love and loss? At first glance, erasing memories seems to alleviate tangible despair on both sides of the relationship. The film expresses to the audience that the clients of Lacuna, the memory-erasure company



in the film, were “not happy and [they] decided to move on” (Kaufman 33). There is little argument that Lacuna’s clientele are people dealing with great amounts of grief over loss, and they are all coping with some type of emotional ailment. In the story, it just so happens that a breakup is the centerpiece, coinciding with the fact that Clementine and Joel decided to get the procedure completed around Valentine’s Day. It is worth noting that there are other cases that appear to warrant a visit to Lacuna though (a pet’s death, for example). In any case, according to Epicurus and hedonism, it is the best course of action to eradicate all forms of pain or inconvenience from the body and the mind. After all, “why should [Joel] suffer remorse when Clem’s slate is clean?” (Corliss). The weight has been lifted off her shoulders, and Joel is left to carry the now meaningless burden of heartbreak. As Nietzsche said, “blessed are the forgetful, for they get the better even of their blunders” (Kaufman 51). It seems that Joel should follow suit and release himself from the past like she did. Moreover, Freud and his pleasure principle lend insight as to why Clementine and Joel choose to forget rather than remember. Where these heartbroken characters at highly unstable points in their lives are just looking for equilibrium and anything to make them feel normal again, “pleasure or ‘pain’ may be thought of in psycho-physical relationship to conditions of stability and instability” (Freud 5). Lacuna provides the memory-erasure procedure as an option to revert to a time when things were more stable in one’s life. Much like the theory of entropy in which nature gradually declines to disorder as a function of time, returning to an earlier time leads to greater

order, and therefore, greater stability.

Analyzing the nature of memory, the non-linear structure of the film is not only a symptom of Lacuna's methods but also an indicator of how we remember events in life and an explanation for the characters' choices. The non-linearity creates a unique experience for the cinematic viewer so that it represents the way people navigate memories and the intensity of emotions due to the fact that "in every such juxtaposition the *result is qualitatively* distinguishable from each component element viewed separately," (Eisenstein et al. 8). People do not tend to remember from the beginning to the end. Stories are traditionally told that way so that an audience can understand the cause and effect of the numerous events that comprise someone else's tale. On the other hand, if one were to approach remembering their own story, say a relationship, they would find that their most intense and potent emotions come from the memories of recently occurring experiences. In the case of the film, Joel and Clementine remember the explosive end of their relationship, and they choose to act upon those prevalent emotions. That is not to say that the beginning of the relationship is completely arbitrary or that the emotional core of earlier memories are weaker since "our most vivid and powerful memories involve emotional events" and "memory accuracy for emotional information does not decrease with age" (Reisberg and Hertel 281). It just so happens that those distant feelings are buried under the freshest moments. Like an impossibly large stack of plates in the cupboard, it is still possible to reach the bottom, but one must sift through all the plates above it first. Also, the importance of the fact that the present state of things changes how one views the past is immeasurable. For example, "You have a memory of your first date with this person, and you have a memory of your first date with this person after the relationship is over. The end is coloring the beginning, but you still assume it's the same memory if you don't think about it" (Day 142). This explains Joel's commentary and awareness during the erasure of his mind as he views what has been. The knowledge of the future can strongly affect the reflection backwards. Obviously, it is easier to embrace overwhelming emotion of the present than to find the foundation of the relationship. Based on the painful feelings and the opportunity via Lacuna, the protagonists are driven to expunge the other from their lives and their minds.

HUMANITY IN MEMORY

On the contrary, the easiest choice is not always the righteous one, and a look into the morality of memory-erasure provides a critical look into the foundation of Lacuna's business model. After the execution of the memory-erasure is completed and "the emo-



tional core to each of [their] memories" have been eradicated, their mind is degraded and their targeted memories "will have withered and disappeared" (Kaufman 38). Everything in the relationship is erased, from the dismal conclusion to the euphoric beginning. However, ridding memories that brought the highest pleasure in pursuit of not experiencing any pain seems to contradict the very idea of pleasure-seeking, and "the tendency towards the goal does not imply the attainment of it" (Freud 6). Expunging all of the bad means erasing all of the good, and a hedonist would not want pleasure to be wiped away. The only way to completely eliminate all possibility of pain is to destroy everything; and in that event, there is no possibility for pleasure or even humanity itself since "these emotional events are likely to have been consequential for us in one way or another, and are...likely to shape our sense of who we are" (Reisberg and Hertel 3). Once the experiences that have led up to this point in one's life flee, one loses their sense of self and personality, reverting to an experience-less drone. Even if it is not the entirety of their memories, "the opposition of ego- (or death-) instincts and sexual (life-) instincts would then disappear," and thus, it is evident that Lacuna is taking away their humanity (Freud 35). The patients are killing parts of themselves, destroying the mind palace that defines them, and in doing so, Joel and Clementine overlook that "maintaining the ability to look back is just one part of our larger responsibility to look at the world with the clarity that morality requires" (Grau 127). The procedure is a wrongful action, coming down to the importance of truth. One could nitpick that premise by arguing that no memory is one-hundred percent truthful to the moment that occurred in the past. For example, memories shared between two people can be interpreted in multiple ways with different, minute details remembered in one compared to the other. However, it is of little concern to the topic

at hand whether the human mind is entirely accurate. What is important here is that these moments provide truth to who these people are and why they are the way that they are. Further, “the responsibility over a shared memory is on each and every one in a community of memory to see to it that the memory will be kept” (Margalit and Margalit 58). In this case, the relationship’s participants, Clementine and Joel, are the film’s community. Shared memory holds a certain weight over our traditional notions of personalized memory. Akin to historical documentation, memories with importance that expand beyond one mind require an enhanced responsibility and protection. That’s not to say that memories concerning only one person are rendered arbitrary, but when information and feelings have meaning to multiple people, remembering is a societal responsibility beyond the duties to oneself. Regardless, memories are personality’s truth, and they require the same protection that society grants other forms of truth.

Furthermore, just because this bereavement came at their own hand does not make the cheating of one’s memories any less devastating or disreputable. One could argue that “we cannot be morally or ethically praised for remembering, or blamed for failing to remember, if memory is not under our control” (Margalit and Margalit 56). Post-procedure individuals are people who are not in control of the memory loss they have experienced. Mary, upon discovering that she had had her memory wiped before the events of the film, feels as bewildered and foolish as the audience does, “unable to digest this, struggling in vain to remember” (Kaufman 87). Even though Mary chose the procedure, the post-procedure Mary, who has had a blindfold on this entire time, does not quite agree with that action in the same way she once did. They are two different people at two different points of experience in their lives. This may be a confusing concept, but bottom line, it would be unreasonable to hold the current individual responsible for something a different version of themselves did. On the issue of the morality of memory in *Eternal Sunshine*, Christopher Grau writes, “[patients of Lacuna] have sacrificed a part of their minds and in the process blinded themselves to a part of the world” (Grau 123). The idea that one intentionally handicaps himself by being unable to remember the past is uncomfortable for the general population because they are becoming intentionally ignorant. In that way, they are no better than someone who does not understand the responsibilities or requirements of a certain job (in this case, being a cognizant member of society) but attempts to do it anyway, resulting in unfortunate

side effects for the periphery and themselves. With this in mind, “we thus arrive at the result which at bottom is not a simple one, that the search for pleasure manifests itself with far greater intensity at the beginning of psychic life than later on, but less unrestrictedly: it has to put up with repeated breaches” (Freud 51). It is necessary that Joel and Clem respect the life they had together by letting it live forever in the mind, but the procedure completely euthanizes it without any consideration that seeking pleasure is often accompanied with pain. Even on the grounds of utilitarianism, which seeks pleasure for the largest number of people, the events that unfold in the film indicate that all the procedure does is bring more pain and darkness to the lives of those seeking to escape it, and regardless, it is impossible to escape all pain in life without killing the experience altogether. Heartbreak is painful, but sunshine cannot be found in the darkness of ignorance. Considering the importance of truth to oneself, the film advocates that it is essential to be a responsible agent of memory for one’s own sake and the sake of morality itself.

PART 2: RETURN SOLACE IN RETROSPECTION

Through all the intricacies of the world and the larger universe, humans find themselves coming back to the same features of their lives. This pattern of cyclical and repetitive behavior is seen everywhere in life, whether out of necessity or preference. Friedrich Nietzsche had an idea of this phenomenon with his notion of eternal recurrence that speaks of energy and life in general: “in the sameness and repetition of the motion and beat of the waves, there is a rhythm which... repeats itself again and again” (Pfeffer 290). Like the ocean, life itself follows a recurrent energy flow. Although this is a largely philosophical proposition, a scientific perspective of the near infinite amounts of time coupled with the fact that “space is limited and finite; the number of atoms... is determined and finite” allows Nietzsche to believe things are destined to happen again and again (Pfeffer 278). Back to the scope of humanity, having a routine and finding a rhythm in life provides safety and security. For instance, there is something comfortable in a heroin addict relapsing after years



of sobriety or, like Joel, someone returning to the innocent moments of childhood. People tend to return to familiar life. Hinted at earlier, Freud asserts that:

The pleasure-principle is deduced from the principle of constancy; in reality the principle of constancy was inferred from the facts that necessitated our assumption of the pleasure-principle. On more detailed discussion we shall find further that this tendency on the part of the psychic apparatus postulated by us may be classified as a special case of Fechner's principle of the tendency towards stability to which he has related the pleasure-pain feelings. (Freud 5)

Familiarity plays a large role in pleasure. His view of pain is that it arises from tension, and tension does not just have to be something that makes us feel sorrowful. Change makes us uncomfortable, and that is "painful" to us as human beings. People crave a certain threshold of homeostasis with their surroundings and interactions. Obviously, one cannot ignore change forever, but this idea of returning to things that give us comfort is essential to human nature.

Seen in this critical context, *Eternal Sunshine* portrays the erasure of two lovebirds' minds that have poisoned their relationship, but after the memories are gone, the audience (as well as Joel and Clem) seem to be right back where they started, with "the consciousness of the future that already was and the past that will eternally return, with eternal inevitability" (Pfeffer 297). The Lacuna tape recordings stolen and released by Mary provide this knowledge of the past to the couple and, by extrapolation, a look into their potential future. Without this information, their condition is akin to "amnesia (i.e., an inability to recall when provided adequate retrieval cues)" since each of them is given more than enough familiar material to remember each other (Reisberg and Hertel 132). It is clear that the procedure has wiped away any ability of conscious recollection of their previous relationship, but before they get the tapes, they end up bumping into each other again, falling for each other again, and so on and so forth. With this return to each other, they are confronted with a decision about their future in which they see the relationship possibly repeating itself again, including its demise. What seems to be destiny that these two should end up together is actually a dream-like ending masking a deeper, shrouded truth about the human condition: the inevitable tendency towards repressing and subsequently repeating our pasts.

Repress, Repeat

While *Eternal Sunshine* ends with the two protagonists back together again despite their numerous obstacles, a happy-ever-after does not encompass the further-reaching implications of the return to the troubled relationship. The film seems to suggest that “love could be the emotional equivalent of muscle memory” and that “love isn’t what we remember; it’s what we are” (Corliss). Even the best advancements in modern science (fiction) cannot seem to separate Joel and Clementine, two star-crossed lovers defying all the odds of their amnesiac-like conditions. Initially, it seems like a stretch to believe that the line, “Meet me in Montauk,” could possibly come to fruition at all without some unknown force beyond memory driving them back together again (Gondry “*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*”). Audience members may accept it as a side effect of the cinematic experience, a suspension of disbelief for the benefit of the emotional impact of the narrative. However, “this meeting out in Montauk couldn’t be the result of a promise of a rendezvous, since (as Kaufman says) ‘Clementine’s not there’” (Day 132). The Clementine that Joel talks with is Joel’s projection of Clementine. He is talking to himself, and even still, that self is gone the moment the erasing stops, eliminating the possibility of a conscious reunion in Montauk. Their return to one another, outside the magic of cinema, seems to be a mystery. With a film so in tune with its handling of human nature, the iconic line must be symbolic or indicative of something larger than a lover’s plea to not say goodbye forever.

Upon further examination, Nietzsche and Freud present frames in which the post-erasure stretch of the film is symptomatic of the true conditions of repression, repeatability and return. As a preface to the following, “forgotten trauma is neither inert nor benign; it is the silent source of diverse psychological problems” (Reisberg and Hertel 130). While not all repressed memories are traumatic for an individual, they serve as integral parts of their behavior even if they cannot remember what it is that is making them behave this way. In the film, although neither party can consciously remember the other after the procedure, the emotional memories must leave residual traces on their minds. Destroying the cores of the memories, as described before, eliminates retrieval cues and therefore the essence of the individual memory, but the overall relationship leaves lingering echoes (i.e. Clementine’s reaction to Patrick’s seduction and the whispers of Clementine in Joel’s head at the beginning of the film). For those people who have repressed memories, “there is no doubt that the resistance of the conscious and preconscious ego...

is trying to avoid the pain that would be aroused by the release” (Freud 14). Without an external force, the repression of a memory is a direct result of the subconscious willing the memory to cease causing pain to the individual upon resurfacing. It just so happens that in the case of Lacuna, an outside force is doing the bypassing for someone. However, it seems that such efforts are futile in any case. Even if one represses or wipes something from their mind, that lack of knowledge coupled with their past tendencies and the principles discussed prior steer the individual to whatever they have repressed. Perhaps the events undergone and returned to are not exactly identical in the same way that “the interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory as a return of exactly the same fixed states must be abandoned,” in the spirit of avoiding absolute definitions (Pfeffer 281). A flowing river may never have the same molecules recreate a state at separate times, but the rhythm and the energy of that flow will be maintained eternally. In the same way, human nature may never strictly replicate itself, but instead, it simulates and imitates the past. Regardless, forgetting a memory can revert a person to a mental state that caused them to act towards that moment in the first place. Rather than strict recreation, they re-experience the pain in a new memory because they will not know to evade it. The mind has a way of replicating “the total field of energy” as the individual lives “through a certain fragment of his forgotten life... in the light of which the apparent reality is always recognised as a reflection of a forgotten past” (Pfeffer 281; Freud 13). If one tries to forget their past, the past has a way of recreating itself in their present. In the end, repression is only a delaying mechanism of the pleasure principle, and per Nietzsche, the way people respond to the reality around them will inevitably bring them back to the source of their pain.

EMBRACING ETERNITY

Given the situation Joel and Clementine have been dealt, the memory-erasure procedure and the subsequent memory loss forces a confrontation with their past pain. It has already been determined that forcibly forgetting is not the morally righteous action, but given that the action has been taken, the two post-procedure individuals now need to reconcile and proceed. Their knowledge of the prior relationship presents them with a unique opportunity to anticipate the outcome of their proposed future as a ‘new’ couple. The Lacuna tape recordings opened wounds that they did not even know they had. There are “harms that may

not wound but do deprive the person of some good,” and in this case, that deprivation comes at the hands of the procedure eliminating the knowledge of their faults in the past relationship (Grau 6). Now, presented with the tapes, the two have suddenly

returned to their past trauma, and the two have a choice: parting ways, with an understanding that a relationship would end badly but without the comprehension of exactly why, or trying again and seeing



where things go from there. Despite this supposed “choice,” it is quite clear to the Freudian mind that Joel and Clementine are “obliged rather to repeat as a current experience what is repressed, instead of... *recollecting* it as a fragment of the past” (Freud 13). In this case, there is no fragment of the past to recollect. The other partner has been eradicated from their conscious mind, and they are left only with detached recordings of their pre-procedure versions of themselves disclosing what occurred. It seems like a rather bleak warning to not proceed together, but nevertheless, the two lovebirds and the audience feel an instinct to return to the familiar and have them attempt to love each other again. Considering all of the negative bashing on their respective tapes about each other, they decide that even if “[he] will think of things [wrong with her] and [she’ll] get bored with [him] and feel trapped because that’s what happens with [her],” they simply say “Okay” (Kaufman 129). Not even their own vitriol can pull them apart from each other, but not because of love. The power familiarity has upon them is too immense to cast aside, and in this case, just the knowledge of their past together is enough to influence both of them. Even as they anticipate pain, they fall back on each other, fulfilling the doctrine of eternal recurrence and going beyond the pleasure principle.

Seemingly opposing a bittersweet and hopeful ending, Nietzsche’s premonitions haunt the situation. It is not magic that brought these two back together; this moment was destined to happen again by our nature, and it will continue to happen again and again, much like the relationship’s demise, in an infinite loop. With this understanding, “the Nietzschean man experiences the moment in a more tragic manner. It leads him into the abyss” (Pfeffer 297). Nietzsche asserts that this idea of predestination could be crippling to the weak-minded. Life goes on, but its tragedies

and sadness can only repeat eternally. On the other hand, Clementine and Joel demonstrate their embracing of Nietzschean fatalism instead of defiance via “their resolve to confront without despair the ‘disappointment, resentment, and even hostility’ that, as their past reveals, inevitably lies ahead of them” (Day 146). Rather than fight, one can find happiness in welcoming the eternally repeating moments of life. Staring destiny in the eyes and seeing their futures reflect back, Joel and Clementine continue on the paths set forth for them. And so, the real eternity found is not one of pure sunshine, as the film’s title suggests. Perhaps, it is one of returning to the same comfortable yet inevitably doomed love forever, but embracing that fact allows one to be fully alive. *Eternal Sunshine* shows us that even when heartbreak strikes, at least one can love at all.

CONCLUSION

Alongside Joel and Clementine, the audience plays an important role in the film. Without the audience, the overwhelming emotional impact of the film is not felt by the protagonists, given that the two main characters have no idea what takes place in their prior relationship and most of the film. In the end, the traversal of his memories was not for Joel as much it was for the audience. In remembering the film, “*there still arose this whole host of its separate elements, but now not as a chain, but as something single-- as a whole characterization of the [relationship], as its whole image*” (Eisenstein et al. 16). The last moments of regret and genuine care demonstrated in the beach house tint how one views Joel’s relationship with Clementine. That same recurrence and sentimentality featured in the film creeps its way into our own minds as Joel is driven away from the last fleeting moment with the girl he deeply loved. Later, after the memories are gone and they weigh their futures in the final moments of the film, “the viewer’s experience ... is one of projecting the principal pair’s forgotten fantasy-past onto them, or (better) of remembering that past for them, returning it *to them*” (Day 150). This phenomenon of returning to the familiar, valuing remembrance, and giving the characters the love they desperately want is why the audience feels so strongly for the relationship at the end of the film. The catharsis of the “okays” at the end of the film are as much for the two of them as they are for us. As Travers puts it, “Kaufman, Gondry and the pitch-perfect actors have crafted a remarkable film that can coax a smile about making the same mistakes in love and then sneak up and quietly break your heart,”

(Travers). This is why the film transcends the average rom-com. The audience finds themselves in Joel and Clementine, and they find their own humanity channeled through the film's conclusion. Their relationship now lives in us as much as it did for them.

Through Freud's pleasure principle and Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, a clearer understanding emerges of why Joel and Clementine are drawn together. When the two first meet (the second time), the two of them go to the frozen Charles River. Joel is very tentative about the fragility of the ice, and he asks, "What if it breaks?" as Clementine runs onto the river. As a symbol of the relationship, the ice eventually breaks for the two of them and the frigid water that lies underneath is painful, but it was surely "so beautiful" and a fulfilling experience before the cracks befall them (Kaufman 115-116). Happiness often comes at the price of sadness, but much like the same connection between sunshine and darkness, that's why happiness matters. One should embrace the bad that will inevitably return so that one can find a familiar happiness in their Montauk. Again, and again, for all eternity.



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J. MATTHEW TICE

Morality and Travelling Through Time with Captain America

ABSTRACT

In Mark Waid's Captain America: Man Out of Time, we see the use of time travel, as well as the causes and effects of its use on the moralities of various characters. Through his depiction of time travel, Waid provides context for the beginning of a discussion on how time travel should be used, and how to make those decisions. There is a very real possibility of this technology being used for selfish purposes with potentially cataclysmic repercussions, as countries have in the past with different existing technologies (Stein). However, it would be impossible to prevent its eventual creation, as evidence for time travel being possible already exists (Dorminey). Therefore, it is paramount to begin the discussion surrounding the moral decisions related to the use of time travel earlier rather than later. Waid's comic is a first-class example of how time travel could be handled in the future, as it provides a mix of largely utilitarian and some ethical egoist ideals with one of the potential theories of time travel.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the inception of the genre, science fiction has been pushing the limits of our imaginations. The genre has brought about the futuristic ideas such as warp drives, teleportation, and other wondrous technologies. Among the most popular of these technologies is time travel. In the present day, the idea of time travel is not only a debate on if it is possible to time travel, but also if we should. On the surface, it seems like a simple enough concept of being able to travel between the present and another point in time, as discussed in Anguel Stefanov's "The Conundrum of Time Travel." However, Mark Waid's *Captain America: Man Out of Time* brings to light the moral intricacies of time travel, along with the work of Qun Gong on different systems of ethics. In this comic, Captain America finds himself suddenly in the present day after a decade's long coma where he meets the Avengers. After joining the team and being refused to travel back to his time in the 1940s, a time-travelling villain sends Captain America back where he devises a plan to return to the

present and save his new team. Captain America's dilemma of not being allowed to travel back to his time brings to light some of the ethical issues that comes with time travel. As with all technologies, the consequences of its use and disuse are just as important as its physical practicality. This is even more so with time travel, as changing past events can have any number of effects on the present and may only be available on a limited basis. *Captain America: Man Out of Time* argues how, in a universe demonstrating Type I time travel, utilitarian ethics should be more important than egoist ethics. Depending on the circumstances, time travel could be an important tool to change the past, and subsequently future events. However, it must not be overused or taken advantage of, which is where the exploration of ethics is most valuable.

In this essay, I will be analyzing various ethical systems, as well as the fundamentals of time travel and the various interpretations of how it could be feasible. These analyses will help further the dialogue on how time travel is affected by our morals, as well as how time travel works affecting the ethics surrounding its use. Through these analyses, I will be demonstrating how *Captain America: Man Out of Time* demonstrates a prime example of Type I time travel and the importance of utilitarianism. In my first section "Fundamentals of Morality," I will discuss the basics of various ethical systems and how they shape one's morals. My second section "Time Travel and How It Works," will introduce the concept of time travel by providing evidence for its possibility and how it could potentially work. These first sections will lay the groundwork for my argument in "Further Discussion of Utilitarianism" and "Egoism vs. Utilitarianism," which are my final two sections of this paper.

FUNDAMENTALS OF MORALITY

Morals are the starting point for making any decision, and the different ethical systems have been the center of discussion through many generations. Waid's comic *Captain America: Man Out of Time* uses Captain America and his characteristic moral center to open the discussion on ethics in a more modern setting. Generally, morality is the distinction between what is right and wrong, whereas ethics are the rules or framework one uses for making that distinction. While prevailing schools of ethical thought have changed over time, there are some aspects that have remained constant. Qun Gong discusses how ethics can change over time in "Virtue Ethics and Modern Society—A Response to the Thesis of the

Modern Predicament of Virtue Ethics.” He explains “the established status of a person determines his duty, responsibility, and mission, which then shapes his character and virtue ... The appearance of modern society dissolved these conditions, as a result of which the certainty of self-disappeared” (256). This disappearance of the certainty of self changes how one defines themselves and where they are in society. Whether it is their job, hobby, or personal relationships, people define themselves with respect to what they do and what they know about themselves. Without being sure of who we are, it becomes complicated to define ourselves and with this rigid classification weakened, so too are the constraints of past ethical systems. Virtue ethics have become less prevalent now than in the past due to how we as a society function. There are more rules and regulations on how different aspects of society are run, thus more consequences for not following those rules. With virtue ethics, those rules would often be broken in favor of helping an individual, however a minority of people are willing and able to break those rules, and thus have a more deontological system of ethics, meaning that decisions are made under a set of rules rather than based on the potential outcome. This transformation of ethics and morality shows how human society has changed its priorities when it comes to ethical decision making. Having to make decisions with an effect on others is a complicated moral problem, with numerous, interconnected layers and facets. The complexity of this decision making is discussed in depth by Rafael Sánchez’s “The Role of Four Universal Moral Competencies in Ethical Decision-Making,” where he explains that “[e]thical decision-making is a process constituted by all the stages an individual has to go through from the moment a moral problem arises until he or she engages in a given behaviour...four different stages (Rest 1986): *moral sensitivity, moral judgement, moral motivation and moral character*” (718). Each step is an important facet of ethical decision making, and is widely dependent on the individual making the decision. All of these stages are reliant on the individual’s knowledge of ethics and morals, and how they put them into practice. Missing one of these stages can lead to poor decision making, or the lack of any decision at all. In *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, an incomplete understanding leads to poor decisions being made. When Captain America first learns the whereabouts of the individual responsible for the attack on the Avengers, he immediately rushes out to apprehend them. He does not realize how his lack of preparation can affect his choice and makes a poor judgement, as his immediate reaction of fighting the individual was unnecessary. Even though

his motivation and moral character are steadfast, Captain America did not understand the threat of said individual, and acted out in an erratic manner, and being largely disoriented by the new time he found himself in, his decision was potentially dangerous, and malformed. The knee-jerk decision by Captain America could have easily led to the Avengers being lost forever, apprehending the wrong individual, or innocent people being put into harm's way.

Throughout the comic, Captain America comes to conclusions and makes decisions in different ways: for the good of the whole, for the good of his friends, and for his own self-interests. His decisions can be trusted because of who he is as a character in the Marvel Universe, with the major characteristics that define who Captain America is being his strength of will and compassion for others. The ethical standards of a society and the environment an individual was raised or lives in, has a great level of influence on their decision making. Whether there are new experiences, unfamiliar territory, or a new group of people to interact with, there is a large chance no two decisions will be made in the same way. As Gong stated, "Public spheres ... developed, wherein everyone must follow relevant social norms or moral standards. Such a separation of spheres has highlighted differences in social circumstances between modern virtue and its ancient counterpart and make the professional morals in the professional sphere and the public morals in the public sphere [contrast] with the private morals in the private sphere" (260). This idea of spheres helps to visualize how different situations can affect the moral decision making of an individual. These spheres of moral code can be analogous to how people act differently when with their friends than with their parents. When in a professional setting, one may be less likely to worry about individuals and more so about the well-being of the whole organization. Meanwhile, when in a more personal sphere, decisions are more likely to be made based on the consequences they can have on other people and their lives. Both of these approaches are utilitarian in nature, with a priority on the well-being of different people or entities. Oftentimes it can be difficult to make decisions that are the best for both a whole group as well as an individual, however these decisions become clearer in positions that directly interact with the public, such as the police, EMTs and other public service careers. Captain America can fall into this category rather neatly, with his actions routinely working to save not only an individual or a select group of people, but often the nation or the world as a whole. While Captain America is stuck in the past, he figures

out a way to help the Avengers who are nearly defeated in the present by using their experimental time machine and a letter to get him back to help save the day (Waid 5. 12-14). By sending a letter forward to be found by Rick, Captain America was able to not only save his newfound friends, the Avengers, but also the entire world from Kang the Conqueror. This act is encompassed by both the personal and professional sphere as not only is Captain America working to save his friends, but also the world at large.

TIME TRAVEL AND HOW IT WORKS

The new frontier that is time travel and all of its intricacies play a major part in Waid's comic. Not only is it a point of contention with Captain America wanting to return home, it is also how the main villain arrives. As with all futuristic technologies seen in comics, there is currently no concrete information on how time travel could work, and therefore our understanding is under the influence of the theoretical studies done about it. In this case, there are two general theories on how travelling through time could possibly work, as explained by Bruce Dorminey in his article "Should Time Travel Be A Moral Imperative." The first type of time travel is the type popularized by movies, as well as what is present in *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, where actions taken in the past can change the future. The second type is explained as any changes made to the past having no bearing on the future (Dorminey). With these two theories in mind, known as Type I and Type II henceforth, we can see that Type II would have no need for any kind of moral discussion in relation to this comic. Any action taken in the past would affect no changes to the future, and thus is not necessary for the further analysis of Waid's comic in this context. Therefore, the majority of the rest of this discussion on ethics and time travel will be focused on Type I. In the comic, Captain America sends a note to the future through a picture frame he knew he would be gifted in the future where it can be implied that Captain America changed the present by placing his ID card in the picture, thus affecting change in a way that benefited his cause (Waid 5. 12-15). Additionally, Captain America was brought from the past back to the present after writing his note, which also proves Type I as him leaving the past puts him into the present, thus changing the timeline again.

While Type I time travel is the type used in *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, there is overlap between Type I and II time travel and

how they are achieved. This overlap can be due to the Many Worlds conception, also known as the Multiverse theory. According to Stefanov, “the Many Worlds conception postulates the real existence of *parallel universes*, ... [t]hus each universe is characterized by its unique state of affairs, comprised of a physical world together with the human beings whose conscious behaviour (free will) has engendered the concrete universe” (83). This can cause a blurring of the line dividing Type I and Type II time travel because of the frame of reference of the individual compared to a larger frame, such as that of the universe as a whole. The Multiverse theory can be categorized as Type I when seen on an individual scale. When one travels to the past and changes an event, the universe that is realized from that point on is a completely different universe than the one the individual left. From the time traveler’s point of view, such as Captain America, their actions in the past have altered those of the future in some way. On the other hand, from the point of view of the universe as a whole, there would be no change once the time traveler embarks on their journey, described by Type II. From an outsider’s perspective, the time traveler would seem to just disappear from existence, likely never to be seen again, and the future would continue to unfold as they would expect with seemingly no interference from the time traveler. In the wider scope of Marvel Comics and its readers, the idea of a Multiverse is old news, with new earths and universes being routinely created to host new storylines and characters. This preconceived connection the readers have between Marvel Comics and Multiverse theory has no significant impact on how one reads this specific story. Any multiverses created by time travelers in Waid’s comic would not be dissimilar to those created by other writers to house new stories. In this case the multiverses created would just act more closely with the universe of the first issue of *Captain America: Man Out of Time* than those of other, unrelated comics. A case can be made for either Type I or II being the form that exists within Waid’s comic, however, Type I is the most likely as the vast majority of the story is told from the perspective of Captain America. Being seen from an individual’s perspective, it can be assumed the comic as a whole is under the influence of Type I time travel, alongside the mechanisms of multiverse theory.

While time travel is clearly possible in the comic, as it is the main driver of the plot, there are some scholars who believe time travel is not a possibility at all, such as William Grey and his article aptly titled “Troubles with Time Travel.” Grey explains that time travel of any type is likely not possible, saying,

... the future is genuinely open: there is no realm of determinate future fact, no denizens of the future to identify or talk about, though of course — in the fullness of time — there will be. Travel to the future on this view would be ruled out because there is simply nowhere to go. The past, on the other hand, is ordinarily taken to be fixed and determinate and not subject to change. Travel into the past would appear to make it accessible in a way that would enable the traveller to affect changes—that is, to change things that are fixed and determinate and so not subject to change. (57)

Grey seems to make a fair point: the future has not happened yet, therefore it does not exist as a place to go, and the past has already happened and thus is unchangeable. The evidence for travelling to different times outweighs that which excludes it from possibility if time is viewed as the past and future being separate entities rather than as a continuum. As stated previously, Stefanov spoke of the Multiverse theory which has new universes created for each decision made at each time. Thus, time travel can be thought of less as travelling to new times, but rather to new universes which are very similar to ours, just at a different point in our timeline. From here, it can be seen that both of Grey's misgivings are circumvented as a time traveler would always be travelling to the present, effectively making time travel more of a two-dimensional endeavor not dissimilar to driving to a store. Additionally, time travel has been confirmed by experiments at the University of Toronto, as explained by Dorminey, where "the team confirmed this fact when they sent an elementary particle a few billionths of a second backwards in time. 'When we aimed the photon gun at itself in the past,' said Lloyd, 'at the last minute, a little quantum fluctuation [always] whisked the photon bullet out of the way.'" (12-13). This experiment shows, at the most basic level, that time travel is possible, further disproving Grey's claim and, more importantly, proving Type I travel. This is instrumental as Type I travel is what exists in *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, as Captain America's actions change the future. Not only is Captain America, among other characters, able to travel through time either through technology or some type of superpower, he is also able to change the events of the past in order to save the present day Avengers, and world, from destruction.

UTILITARIANISM IN DECISION-MAKING

When discussing travelling to and possibly changing the past, Waid shows how crucial it is to consider the consequences of one's ac-

tions. In order to ensure the security of the future and not cause a cataclysmic change in the past, there must be a consideration of all possible outcomes to any past-changing endeavors. This line of thinking is best described as being utilitarian in nature. Utilitarianism, which deals with making decisions that benefit the largest number of people possible, is seen consistently when a governmental body discusses some kind of large-scale action. Mark Stein explains how utilitarianism arises when countries discuss when and how to perform “humanitarian intervention.” In his work “Unauthorized Humanitarian Intervention,” Stein defines intervention as “[t]he use of force by a state, beyond its own borders, that has as a purpose or an effect the protection of the human rights of noncitizens or the reduction of the suffering of noncitizens” (14). Here it is straightforward to see that actions like these can have a huge impact on the area of interest, and possibly the world. The goal of these interventions is to improve the quality of life of a group of people. After being banished to the past Captain America must find a way to save the Avengers in the future, and he uses his advantage of being in the past with knowledge of the future in order to achieve that goal (Waid 5. 12). He changes the events of the past in a largely inconsequential way as a sort of humanitarian intervention by saving them from the tyranny that is Kang the Conqueror. These interventions as described by Stein can be seen as aggressive due to the use of force, or taken out of context by other countries, which then creates unintended consequences. Stein provides historical examples where the intervention of one country has a negative effect around the world when other countries or the UN disagree with the methods or reasoning of the intervening country. The same, albeit on a much larger scale, can occur when changing the past. With how ignorant we are about the intricacies of time travel, unintended consequences are almost impossible to avoid. An in-depth assessment of any decision can help prevent the undertaking of actions that can be seen as detrimental, even if the intention was pure, which is a very real possibility with utilitarianism. An example of this unintended consequence can be seen clearly in *Captain America: Man Out Of Time*. When Captain America first arrives in New York, he sees a young woman, being mugged by a handful of men. He immediately steps in to try and save the young woman, however, after the men fled, the terrified woman told him to back off before shooting him in the side (Waid 1. 21-24). While Captain America’s actions were clearly an attempt to save the woman from whatever the men were about to do to her, as she cried out for help, she misconstrued

his actions as being hostile. Between his ease in dispatching the men, his musculature, and her terrified state, she took his actions the wrong way and thus Captain America experienced the unintended consequence of getting shot after trying to help the young woman in need.

As can be seen throughout *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, an individual's morals and ethics are largely dependent on their personal situation, thus any decisions they make can be biased and not seen in the same light by other parties. A. L. Hodder talks about this gray area in "Utilitarianism," and how there is rarely a definitively right decision, saying "a utilitarian thinks no act wrong which is not such as to cause people more unhappiness than happiness, and that he thinks no act right which is not such as to cause people more happiness than unhappiness ... not every class of acts which produce more happiness than unhappiness is right, and not every class of acts which produce more unhappiness than happiness is wrong" (92). While Hodder goes on to discuss how utilitarianism is often misused and is not as good of a system as is normally thought, Stein explains how utilitarianism, with its flaws, is still an advantageous way to come to a conclusion with the most positive impact. When used in tandem with other systems of ethics to cover its short-comings, utilitarianism is a solid basis for moral decision-making, especially when those decisions affect others. In *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, when Captain America is trying to return home to the 1940s, he is denied this luxury by the president out of fear of the unknown consequences (Waid 3. 21). Nobody could be sure what his effect on the timeline would be. While this decision by the president could have been misconstrued by Captain America as a selfish act to keep America's hero in the present, it was in fact a choice made in the best interest of the world at large, so while Captain America personally had to suffer, the best decision on the grand scheme of things was to keep him in the present.

EGOISM VERSUS UTILITARIANISM

Captain America is often seen as the archetype for a selfless character, with *Captain America: Man Out of Time*, being of little exception. He is shown to be constantly putting himself in harm's way to save the world, risking his life in order to save the lives of others. As a whole, Captain America is a utilitarian, meaning he is working in the best interests of the majority of those around him. However, Captain America is still a mortal man, and as such is not immune to flaws and his own selfish de-

sires. Most often, those self-interests of his just happen to be those of the public, keeping society safe and preventing the uprising of evil. Occasionally, as with anybody, he acts or has impulses that are strictly for his own happiness regardless of the broader consequences. This line of thinking is defined by ethical egoism, which can be seen as being in opposition of utilitarianism. Ethical egoism, as defined by Alexander Moseley in their article "Egoism," is "the theory that one's self is, or should be, the motivation and the goal of one's own action" (1). Being an ethical egoist is not necessarily a bad thing, especially in moderation. Doing something for one's own benefit is largely how the human species has survived, which can be related to the notion of "survival of the fittest". Many harmless actions people do daily could be considered an ethical egoist, such as cutting somebody off on the highway because you are running late or unplugging another person's phone just to charge your own. However, ethical egoism does have the capacity to create major problems. While the self-interested actions of an ethical egoist do, obviously, provide great comfort to themselves, they can consequently create great discomfort for others. Due to the desire to help one's self first, the actions of an ethical egoist will likely neglect the needs of another, only until it becomes directly beneficial to themselves, as described by Crystal Lombardo in her article "Pros And Cons of Ethical Egoism." In the case of Captain America, there are examples of egoism potentially being harmful. When Captain America learns that time travel exists, he becomes set on returning to the past in order to save Bucky, his best friend, from an exploding plane, regardless of the consequences (Waid 3. 5). Even if it was impossible to save Bucky, and even if saving his best friend meant living the rest of his life as a nameless hermit, Captain America is willing to risk the fate of the future in order to prevent his death. Though he is not directly saving his own life, saving his best friend's life would still be considered selfish as it was in the best interest of his own happiness to change that event in the past.

Just as all the actions and motivations of people such as Captain America are not black and white, neither is the divide between ethical egoism and utilitarianism. While ethical egoism has one's motivations being primarily for their personal benefit, this can cause them to be interested in the well-being of others, as they can in some way benefit from that relationship (Lombardo). This interest could be one-dimensional and solely for the potential self-benefit, meanwhile that interest in the other party still exists at all. The actions of an ethical egoist, especially in

the interconnected society of today, can often be found to overlap with those one would more likely to consider to be of utilitarian disposition. This gray area is cause for special consideration, as these two systems seem to be in contradiction, or at least connected in some way. David Phillips' "Sidgwick, Dualism and Indeterminacy in Practical Reason" discusses this connection between ethical egoism and utilitarianism in depth, while also defining a system in which both work almost in tandem. Phillips suggests this system is less of a full contradiction, and more an "indeterminate system", where there is no way to concretely define which of the two, egoism or utilitarianism, is more important. He also suggests that using both in tandem could prove to be beneficial, stating "... the indeterminacy view suggests that both those who urge the rationality of egoism and those who urge the rationality of morality have seen part of the truth about rationality. Rationality is not fully constituted by exclusive subscription to either norm; instead it is constituted by subscription to both" (Phillips 73). It is often taught that the best course of action for one to take is found when viewing a problem from many angles. Changes in one's perspective on a problem, not only physically but also philosophically, can bring to light solutions one would normally be unable to conceive. In this case, combining the interests of others and one's self-interests can lead to a mutually beneficial conclusion that may be otherwise hidden when viewed strictly by an ethical egoist or utilitarian. With such a combination of rationales being possible, ethical egoism and utilitarianism, while not being completely aligned in their methods and ideals, can often have common goals. Captain America demonstrates this commonality when he lashes out on his own against Kang the Conqueror before being banished by him to the 1940s (Waid 4. 22-23). While Captain America could be seen as lashing out on his own accord of not wanting to be a slave to Kang, he was also lashing out in an attempt to defeat him in order to save the Avengers, and the world, thus acting in the gray area of self-interest, and in the best interest of those around him.

CONCLUSION

Waid's comic *Captain America: Man Out of Time* while on the surface a fun superhero adventure, is also a potentially deep reminder of our own future. With the recent boom in technological advancement, there is no way to tell when we can achieve various technologies, including time travel. Regardless of this uncertainty, it is important to discuss these potential technologies, and how their creation and use can impact

humanity. Waid's work shows just one possibility of time travel, and how we as a society could possibly capitalize on its use, as well as how we handle and prevent its misuse. Time travel's position as a common science fiction plot point has somewhat desensitized the reader to its true implications and the detailed considerations one should take when considering its use. This comic can be a sort of reminder as to what time travel is capable of, and how it can be used for good or for evil. Not only do our ethics determine how time travel would be used, but the type of time travel that can be used determines the ethics most likely to provide the best outcome. From here, not only could other comics be analyzed in a similar manner as this to find other deep considerations of different topics, but one could look outside of the comic to learn more of how one could achieve the feat of time travel in the real world. Analysis of the leading physics theories on how time travel could eventually be achieved, or what we still have yet to fully understand about those necessary mechanisms. Additionally, one could look deeper into the intricacies of various ethical theories and learn more about how humans act in the ways that they do. This paper not only explains some of the intricacies and delicate balance of morals and technology, but also how we as humans react to different environments and changes within.

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DANIELLA RAMIRO
THE HIPPO-CRITICAL OATH: HOW TIME CON-
STRAINED PHYSICIANS
CONTRIBUTE TO THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

ABSTRACT

The opioid epidemic is an increasing issue in today's society. Millions of people in the United States are in a position in which their opioid addiction has taken over their lives, endangering themselves and the people around them; however, it comes into question how the opioid epidemic has reached the point where it is today. More importantly, we must also ask who is primarily responsible for the increasing number of deaths and the increasing number of people dealing with opioid addiction. Physicians are the middlemen between patients and pharmaceutical companies, which gives them the control to prescribe dangerous opioids to their patients. To fully examine a physician's role in greatly contributing to the opioid epidemic, it must be understood that time is one of the biggest factors that influence physicians in this problem. By reviewing the thought process of time-constrained physicians of the Intermountain Health Group and the Hospital of Special Surgery in New York, this paper suggests that physicians who are time-constrained exhibit prescribing practices that negatively impact patients in need of opioids. This subsequently forces patients into a position where they ultimately succumb to addiction, which can lead to other dangerous practices such as drug diversion.

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse has become such a familiar concept today that some people choose to overlook this addictive habit and do not acknowledge its dangers. The United States alone sees a significant amount of deaths caused by drug abuse every year, with approximately 70,000 deaths related to this problem in 2017 ("Overdose Death Rates"). Nonetheless, opioids are the number one category of drugs that mainly contributes to the increasing number of deaths within the past three decades. The medical community, including pharmaceutical companies and physicians, routinely use opioids as their go-to prescription for patients with moderate to severe pain. While opioids are proven to be an effective treatment for pain relief, their addictive properties are dangerous to the lives of patients and those surrounding them. In fact, of the 70,000 drug overdose-related

deaths in 2017, nearly 70% involved the use of opioids at 47,600 deaths, demonstrating how intense the opioid crisis has become (“Overdose Death Rates”). Not only is it important to note how many people have died from an opioid overdose, but it is also important to understand that of those deaths, half of them were non-patients (Shipton et al., 2018), indicating that opioids are finding themselves in the wrong hands and their overuse is risking more lives than it should. This trend correlates with data from 2012, which shows 1.8 million nonmedical users abusing opioids, further demonstrating that the United States has not taken effective strides towards combating and defeating this epidemic. (“Pain Management”).

As opioid abuse becomes increasingly prevalent in society, one must question how the opioid crisis reached the point where it is today. How are people illicitly obtaining opioids if only a certain number of pills are meant for each patient? More specifically, who has allowed the opioid crisis to reach this severity? There are plenty of groups who could take responsibility for the widespread use of opioids, with certain groups contributing more heavily than others. For example, Purdue Pharma was recently under scrutiny for not disclosing information regarding their opioids, as well as baiting physicians with monetary incentives to prescribe certain medications (Nguyen et al., 2019). Despite their actions and those of other pharmaceutical industries, it is doctors who are greatly responsible for fueling the opioid epidemic. Yet, how is it possible that the very people who are under oath to aid patients are actually the ones fueling a deadly epidemic? Ultimately, physicians’ contribution to the opioid epidemic lies in their prescribing habits, giving both patients and non-patients easy access to these addictive drugs and is the reason opioids are also known as “prescription painkillers.” Although a physician’s prescription pad may lead to a path of addiction, physicians do not recklessly prescribe opioids to purposefully harm patients. Instead, it is more likely that a physician’s prescribing habits are negatively affected by external factors, such as lack of time.

As physicians are tasked with completing various responsibilities on a daily basis, they face the pressure to complete such tasks in a timely manner and with top quality; however, as more tasks pile onto one another, the time available to complete them is restricted, forcing physicians to cut spending time on certain activities, including time spent in the patient room. Time’s influence on the prescribing practices of physicians is explained through ALQahtani et al.’s (2016), “Does time pressure

have a negative effect on diagnostic accuracy?”, in which they mention the various types of psychological thinking processes used when diagnosing patients and how the processes used change depending on the amount of time available. Using the correct psychological processing is also dependent on whether certain conversations and observations are held during a doctor’s appointment (Dugdale et al., 1999). This further demonstrates how the lack of conversation between doctors and patients influences physicians to rely on their intuition when assessing patient conditions and in performing accurate analyses of patient histories. The argument that physicians do not perform traditional tasks during appointments is further supported by McDonald and Carlson (2013) in “Estimating the prevalence of opioid diversion by ‘doctor shoppers’ in the United States,” in which they explain physicians’ lack of effort in checking patient prescription databases that contain important opioid prescription histories, including the number of times patients have seen physicians in recent years and what medications (such as opioids) were prescribed to them. Such use of intuition combined with incorrect psychological processing and the misuse of patient databases are exemplified by Pruitt et al. (2019) in “Prescription vs. consumption: Opioid overprescription to children after common surgical procedures,” in which physicians of the Intermountain Health Group, a chain of hospitals located in the Midwest, demonstrate how the over-prescription of opioids is a prevalent issue. Using each of these theories regarding the relationship between time constraints and a physician, as well as Nguyen et al.’s (2019) theory that incentives from pharmaceutical industries influence prescribing practices, how does the inadequate amount of time physicians spend with their patients negatively influence their prescribing practices, and in turn, contribute to the current opioid epidemic? Although physicians are not purposefully trying to harm patients, their time-pressured schedules easily influence prescribing practices, making them susceptible to prescribing more opioids than necessary. Ultimately, such actions endanger the lives of patients by increasing the possibility of medication abuse, as well as creating an opportunity for drug diversion to occur.

DOCTORS’ ROLE IN THE OPIOID CRISIS

As previously mentioned, physicians experience busy schedules on a daily basis; one of the consequences of having a busy schedule is that physicians shorten the time they spend with their patients. According to

ALQahtani et al.'s study, physicians who faced time constraints and knew they were behind schedule made more mistakes in the diagnostic process than physicians who were not time-constrained (712-713). The mistakes made during the diagnostic process are due to the fact that physicians are unable to spend an adequate amount of time analyzing the patients, foregoing potentially valuable information. With physicians being forced to spend less time with their patients, they are hindering the psychological processes that are vital for making correct diagnoses and are using System 1 reasoning, a "quick, intuitive, implicit, contextualized, and typically efficient [system] in diagnosing routine cases. Despite its efficiency, however, System 1 reasoning is thought to be vulnerable to errors" (ALQahtani et al., 2016). The term "intuitive" ALQahtani et al. (2016) demonstrate supports the idea that physicians who are short on time use their experience with previous patients who have exhibited similar symptoms and conditions to diagnose their current patient. The flaw in this method, however, is that no patient is exactly the same; there is a possibility that one different characteristic of a patient's condition could alter the entire diagnosis, therefore changing the prescription.

A patient's history can provide vital information during the diagnostic process; however, when physicians see more than three patients per hour, this information is ignored. As Dugdale et al. explains: "the taking of medical history related to cigarettes, alcohol, and social or family history, and preventative care aimed [...] were significantly less frequent [...] with visit rates of over 3.8 per hour" (36). Tasks such as immunizations and noting down medical history are routine activities that occur in the doctor's office; however, time management for doctors is becoming increasingly difficult to the point where doctors are foregoing simple yet important tasks. Specifically, looking at patient history is critical when considering patients with a personal or family history of drug abuse, especially if the patient is being prescribed opioids (McDonald and Carlson). With prescription painkillers' highly addictive properties, it is vital for doctors to consider a patient's history in order to distinguish any patterns that might increase the possibility for a patient to develop an opioid addiction.

THE INTERMOUNTAIN HEALTH GROUP & THE HOSPITAL FOR SPECIAL SURGERY

The research conducted by both ALQahtani et al. (2016) and Dugdale et al. (1999) display hypothetical situations of what can occur if physicians do not spend enough time with their patients; however, Pruitt et al.'s (2019) research depicts real-life situations where there is an over-prescription of opioids, specifically in pediatric care. Dugdale et al.'s (1999) article focuses on the lack of doctor-patient relationships when doctors do not have enough time to thoroughly meet with a patient. Due to this time constraint, "physicians who expressed a lack of time in their medical practices had higher rates of writing prescriptions than physicians who did not feel a lack of time. [...] They concluded that shorter visits, especially those less than 15 minutes, were a risk factor for inappropriate prescribing" (Dugdale et al.35). Moreover, examples of the inappropriate prescribing methods mentioned by Dugdale et al. (1999) are reinforced by Pruitt et al., as they state that opioids prescribed to pediatric patients in their study were almost double the amount than what was actually consumed and necessary for pain relief. This indicates that physicians of the Intermountain Health hospitals feel pressured by time and are rushing patient visits (2196).

Furthermore, physicians of the Intermountain Health Group are not alone in their dangerous prescribing practices, as surgeons of the Hospital for Special Surgeries in New York demonstrated similar prescribing patterns (Kumar et al., 2017). Pruitt et al.'s (2019) research focuses on pediatric care, which raises the argument that adults are likely to be more cautious when it is their children who are taking dangerous medications; however, Kumar et al. (2017) conducted their study on the physicians of adult patients, who showed greater control over their actions and decisions regarding continued opioid use. In comparison to the data from the Intermountain Health Group physicians, the prescribing practices of special surgery physicians are much worse. With 4480 opioids prescribed but only 2852 used, a surplus of 1628 was left, indicating a high risk of opioid abuse (Kumar et al. 638). The surplus highly indicates that physicians, regardless of their chosen specialty, are susceptible to prescribing an unnecessary amount of opioids to achieve pain relief, which according to Dugdale et al. (1999) is due to the fact that physicians are spending less time with their patients.

Physicians at Intermountain Health and Special Surgery feel

time-constrained, they are more likely they are to utilize System 1 processing and the concept of belief bias (ALQahtani et al., 2016). In addition, the number of physicians depicted in these studies who use such analytic methods is more than expected, as the patients who received opioids underwent basic procedures. The more physicians consistently perform similar procedures on patients, the more likely they are to prescribe the same pain management opioids without thoroughly analyzing a patient's history or considering whether opioids are truly necessary. According to Pruitt et al. (2019), this practice is precisely what requires a modification; if physicians spend more time with their patients, there will be a smaller number of opioid prescriptions, and for those who do require opioids, proper "patient and family counseling prior to surgery and optimizing nonopioid pain medication use are critical to reducing future opioid overprescribing" (2198). Such counseling is vital to patients using opioids because they must be aware of potential risks associated with these drugs, as well as how to properly dispose of any unused medication in order to prevent drug diversion. Nonetheless, proper patient and family counseling may be impossible if physicians are constantly rushing through their patients' appointments.

DRUG DIVERSION AND DOCTOR SHOPPING

With physicians lacking the necessary time to educate their patients on the proper disposal of prescription painkillers, opioids are even more susceptible to ending up in the hands of those who do not need them. The idea of educating patients has become an increasing urgency, especially after the results of Kumar et al.'s research which demonstrates the "lack of patient education regarding opioid disposal as well as dissatisfaction regarding appropriate guidance on pain management and opioid-related side effects" (639-640). By stating a dissatisfaction with the lack of education received, patients are then implying that they are also dissatisfied with the quality of work of their prescribers, as it is the prescriber's role to properly educate patients. Physicians cannot assume that every patient understands what an opioid is or is familiar with its negative reputation. Not every patient attended medical school or holds an occupation in the medical field, and not every patient has a family member with experience in taking opioids. Hence, it is the prescriber's obligation to help those patients understand the risks.

Even though a large number of patients are unaware of an opi-

oid's addictive nature, there are some patients who are aware of the dangers but request prescriptions regardless of the risks. Known as "doctor shoppers," these patients purposefully use prescribed opioids in order to feed their prescription painkiller addiction. These patients are able to get away with such actions by "exploiting gaps and weaknesses in healthcare information systems [...] [and] physicians often have to rely on what new patients tell (or do not tell) them about the care they are receiving from others" (McDonald and Carlson 2). Ultimately, physicians function as the main source to legally obtain opioids through one of two methods: incorrect prescriptions or over prescribing. There are several instances, however, in which patients deceive their doctors to believe they require pain medication, but in reality, the patient is a doctor shopper. Regardless of the patient's intentions in the doctor's office, there is still a major fault with physicians. With McDonald and Carlson (2013) indicating that there are "gaps and weaknesses in the healthcare information system," they demonstrate that patients abuse prescribing practices because physicians allow them to do so. Such gaps and weaknesses are not due to the lack of prescription information systems, but rather the lack of physicians who actively use these systems.

Patients further abuse a physician's lack of attention knowing that physicians have a consistently busy schedule and rush to get things finished. The idea of consulting a database in order to check if patients are doctor shopping is not a popular practice and has not been "incorporated into their work routines such [as] data collection in advance of prescribing opioids [...] Accessing the data is a cumbersome process in many states, which hinders integrating it into physicians' workflow" (McDonald and Carlson 9). According to McDonald and Carlson, the additional task of checking data systems that provide prescriber information would be a burden to physicians and their already busy schedules. Their incorporation of the terms "cumbersome" and "hinders" demonstrates how utilizing the data system is a slow process that would decrease physicians' productivity because they would not be able to complete their assigned tasks. Checking a data system for every patient is not practical, as many physicians try to spend less than 15 minutes with their patients. Physicians' lack of action relates back to an issue raised by Dugdale et al., which is that physicians forego preventative care with their patients to save time for other responsibilities (36). The preventative care inferred in this statement includes the practice of educating patients on the proper disposal of dangerous opioids (Pruitt et al.2198) and checking the prescriber data

system for a patient's medical history to ensure that a patient is not doctor shopping. The more time-pressured a physician may feel, the less likely they are to perform any preventative care. In addition, physicians are less likely to notice the warning signs of patients addicted to opioids. Many experienced physicians are able to discern whether patients have developed an addiction without the use of prescription data systems, but this skill is hindered when less time is spent in the patient room (ALQahtani et al., 2016). In turn, this increases the possibility that a patient will take advantage of the physician, and the physician more likely to overprescribe opioids to an addict.

PROFIT DRIVEN PHYSICIANS

In contrast to McDonald and Carlson's (2013) conclusion that patients are to blame for the opioid epidemic through doctor shopping, Nguyen et al. (2019) portray pharmacists and the pharmaceutical industry as the main contributors to the opioid epidemic. The public has placed the blame for this epidemic on large pharmaceutical industries, accusing them of creating highly addictive medications; however, a large part of the blame cannot be attributed solely to the creation of highly addictive opioids, but rather the methods used to advertise these opioids to physicians. Purdue Pharma, for example, is a major pharmaceutical company under constant scrutiny for their methods in promoting opioids. It recently stated its decision to "cease opioid promotional activities aimed at physicians," and now because of this announcement, "there is renewed interest in understanding the role of promotional activities in the opioid crisis" (Nguyen et al.1052). Hence, this announcement subsequently reveals a serious problem that places the lives of many patients at risk. Such promotional activities included in this statement are the payment that doctors receive. Although many would place the blame on pharmaceutical industries for offering payments to physicians, it should also be noted that physicians are not required to take such payments. It is no secret that most physicians have a high income, but their acceptance of promotional opportunities from pharmaceutical companies gives the impression that they want more: more benefits, more opportunities, more money. With physicians accepting monetary incentives regardless of the amount, it becomes clear that the true intention of pharmaceutical companies' promotional activities is to fuel one of the main culprits of the opioid epidemic: greed.

Considering studies that demonstrate how some physicians continuously accept monetary incentives from pharmaceutical companies, one must question why there is a need for greed. Undoubtedly, the physician occupation is a high-paying job with salaries ranging from 239,000 to 648,000 dollars per year (“Physician Starting”). These salaries, in conjunction with the acceptance of monetary incentives, raise questions as to what else physicians are doing to increase profit. It is necessary to reanalyze the idea that physicians spend an inadequate amount of time with patients, which can be attributed to a physician’s method of payment. Physicians are known to receive their pay through a “fee-for-service” method, which demonstrates that physicians are paid a certain amount of money per patient. Thus, physicians who see more patients per hour earn more money (“The way we pay doctors in the US makes them find problems that aren’t there”). . This explanation also coincides with the idea presented by Dugdale et al. and McDonald and Carson: physicians do not complete routine tasks in the patient room in order to increase productivity by seeing more patients per day. Evidently, these findings indicate that physicians spend less time with their patients not only to complete routine tasks but also to earn more money. Physicians may increase productivity and monetary gain by seeing more patients, but only at the cost of their patients’ well-being and quality of life.

CONCLUSION

The opioid epidemic is damaging the lives of millions, and ultimately, our “trusted” doctors are to blame. Physicians’ consistently busy schedules and their need to complete responsibilities under time constraints force them to spend less time with their patients. This influences physicians to base their diagnoses and prescriptions on intuition, which leads to using shorter, more convenient psychological processes and belief bias, thus preventing them from making proper analyses of their patients. Moreover, not only do physicians refrain from psychologically analyzing patients correctly, but they also forgo important physical analyses such as viewing patient histories, which provide information on a patient’s susceptibility to opioid addiction. Furthermore, time constraints also cause physicians to skip preventative interventions, such as opioid education. The lack of education leads to improper opioid disposal, which then causes opioids to fall into the wrong hands. In turn, this allows for the continuation of doctor shopping and illegal opioid use, further explain-

ing the increase in non-patient opioid abuse and overdoses within the last decade. The inadequate amount of time that physicians spend with their patients is attributed to the fact that physicians increase their work productivity as a means to increase profit, which is influenced by unnecessary monetary incentives from pharmaceutical industries.

Although strategies have been implemented to combat the opioid epidemic by United States President Donald Trump and his administration, further action is required by physicians and pharmaceutical companies to combat this issue. Other pharmaceutical industries should follow the example of Purdue Pharma and refrain from influencing physicians to prescribe opioids with monetary incentives. Chain hospital groups should stop jeopardizing the well-being of patients by restricting medical advancements to patients who are not in need of major prescriptions, or require patients to be seen in person if a stronger dosage of medication is required. Physicians who are consistently time pressured should implement counter methods to balance their schedules as a means to spend more time with their patients. This will then permit the doctor-patient relationships to strengthen, and subsequently increase the well-being of both parties. Opioid abuse is a prevalent, dangerous, and recklessly overlooked problem; any precaution taken by those responsible for this epidemic would allow society to slowly work towards lessening the number of people addicted to opioids.

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ANNA THOMASHEVSKY

Hollywood and the Whitewashing of Latinx Identity

INTRODUCTION

How many famous non-white actors can you name from a recent blockbuster? Why are Latinx actors only recognizable in telenovelas or dramas? Latinx people account for 18% of the United States population yet they are the most underrepresented minority in media and film (US Census Bureau, 2017). As the fastest growing minority group, the lack of Latinx roles in the media has become a hotly contested issue in the entertainment industry. This practice, also known as whitewashing, is the casting of white actors in previously non-white roles and is a major issue in Hollywood. Entertainment industry executives believe that audiences prefer to see white actors over minorities and blame the consumer (audience) rather than the film or TV producers for casting mostly white performers. This contributes to their argument that non-white actors cannot create as much box office success as white actors (Hope 30).

On the other hand, minorities argue that producers involved in the entertainment industry are at fault for favoring Caucasian actors and supporting a Eurocentric ideal, which views European culture as superior to other cultures and prefers European features to be represented in the media. Many also believe that entertainment directors choose white actors because they want to appeal to an audience that is accustomed to seeing monoracial people on screen (Guzmán 451). Furthermore, Hollywood producers are accused of not wanting to target minority audiences with their film/ TV productions because of perceived financial risk. Yet, whites account for less than 50% of moviegoers which indicates the other half consists of minority groups filling the theatre seats (Guzmán 442).

*This research paper will focus on the prominent role of whitewashing in Western cinema and how it specifically affects Latinx identities. It will analyze different case studies including *Coco* and *West Side Story*, in order to debate if the movie audience or Hollywood producers are promoting Eurocentric casting over minorities. The research will further analyze these issues by examining the history of whitewashing in Hollywood and inspect its relationship to hegemony and Eurocentrism. Hegemony is the political/ economic dominance usually by one social group, while Eurocentrism is a worldview that perceives European culture as superior. Using critical media*

studies, this paper will analyze the relationship between the film and marketing industries and the consumers and producers, while examining the advantages of casting ethnic minorities in film roles. Lastly, social identity theory and the mere exposure effect will be used to investigate the negative implications of stereotypes on self-esteem in the Latinx community by using Schmader et al.'s social experiment. This experiment compares both social theories and whether the amount of exposure to stereotypes is a factor in determining a threat to Latinx identity. The findings will argue that whitewashing in the entertainment industry is damaging to Latinx identity. Furthermore, minority actors are equally capable of generating box office success as white actors.

WHITE HEGEMONY

Whitewashing is the practice of casting white actors to portray non-white actors. The ongoing debate around Hollywood's lack of diversity has erupted at events such as the Oscars, where Hollywood's celebrities gather to celebrate the film industry's best achievements of the year. In 2015, the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite went viral when all the nominees for "best leading" and "supporting role" were given to white actors and actresses. Even though the discussion has revolved around films in the current decade, it is important to look back and assess the Oscars' diversity problem from its inception to now. In the 1940s, the top grossing films had 0.6% of whites portraying minorities compared to 0.5% in the 2000s (Hope 19). This one tenth of a decrease in percentage is an indicator of the slow progress that has been made by Hollywood over the last sixty years. In addition, there is a noticeable difference between the percentage of white nominees versus minority nominees in the primary awards show that celebrates the film industry. During the 2000s, white actors still dominated 84% of the Oscar Best Picture nominees while minorities had a mere 15%. Hollywood filmmakers are evidently making roles specifically for white characters rather than creating opportunities for minority lead roles. These statistics are concerning because the United States has progressed significantly from the era of segregation 60 years ago. Yet, the ideology of whitewashing in our culture has undermined minority representation on the big screen: "The stereotypes of minorities have remained unchallenged in their minds as well as their filmmaking practices. Denzin (2002) believed that it is difficult to break the system after it becomes the norm" (Zhang 322). This opens a discussion on how minorities are displayed in film through preconceived stereotypes in Hollywood culture.

Zhang is supporting the idea that hegemonic values are a part of the “system” and ingrained deep into society to the point where stereotypes are impossible to overcome. Hope agrees with Zhang and says whitewashing “persists in the media and demonstrates that our culture is conditioning young people and future filmmakers who perpetuate whiteness atop hegemony, because being white has value” (Hope 36). Both authors believe that whitewashing is a result of the media reflecting back America’s culture and representing minorities as inferior to whites. Which displays the dominance of Eurocentrism above the issue of minority representation in Hollywood and the entertainment industry. Unfortunately, there is still a percentage of whites portraying minorities in the present, which is an example of how cultural hegemony benefits the majority in relation to box office success. White culture is hegemonic thus leading to white people being cast as the leading roles in movies and TV shows. Hope suggests that whitewashing is based on Eurocentric values that coerce minorities and their cultures to fit into European ideals. She emphasizes how Eurocentrism becomes evident in the characters’ appearance, materialistic ideas, and lack of minority representation. She argues that filmmakers alter the representation of a character to make sure it resonates with an audience that is predominantly supportive of whitewashing.

ECONOMICS

At a quick glance, the relationship between whitewashing and the film industry does not seem to be influenced by economic factors. However, with a closer look, it is clear that the film industry, just like any other industry, needs a marketing strategy in order to succeed. A film or television show cannot be produced without money. Gina Rodriguez is an actress best known for her breakout role in “Jane the Virgin” as a Latina. She is an activist for diversity in Hollywood and voices her concern over Latinx underrepresentation: “Right now there isn’t one Latino that can greenlight a movie. That means no studio will put their money behind a Latino face as a lead of a movie because they don’t believe we can make their money back.” (Rodriguez qtd. in McCluskey 1). Gina Rodriguez’s concern for the Latinx community is based on her experiences as a Latina actress in Hollywood. She has been exposed to the reality of whitewashing, as well as studios that use questionable financial reasoning when claiming that a Latinx actor cannot create the same success as a white actor. Therefore, film studios will not provide a big budget for a non-

white cast out of fear that the movie will make less profit than the investment needed to produce it. Rodriguez is blaming society for normalizing the appearance of whites on screen and also convincing non-whites to recognize whitewashing as a problem. Furthermore, a study about Latinx representation in Hollywood revealed that “across the 100 top grossing movies from 2007-2018, only 3% of films featured leads or co-leads with Latino actors” (Smith et al. 1). This statistic shows how Hollywood producers will not cast Latinx actors in leading roles and why Gina Rodriguez is an activist for her community. As a Latina actress, she faces the reality behind these percentages and continues to advocate for minority representation in a whitewashed industry. Overall, these statements are a segue into a discussion of how culture and media influence society to overlook the diversity problem in Hollywood.

CRITICAL MEDIA STUDIES

A subtopic on the relation of economics to whitewashing is how culture, politics and media spread Eurocentric values throughout society. Critical media studies “examine the business culture of the media industries and how they influence textual and industrial practices” (Havens et al. 237). This field does not focus on one specific form of media but rather a multitude including television, film, newspapers, etc. Owen & Wildman are economists who believe that commercial media supplies the audience with entertainment based on their desires and is successful because of the free market. This results in competition between companies that strive to please their customers by developing and producing films/TV shows that their audience wants to see. This perspective on the economics of the entertainment industry is directly affected by the prevalence of whitewashing in American culture. Eurocentric ideals have influenced movie casting decisions because of assumptions that non-white actors cannot have the same box-office success as white actors. Havens et al. states that “Hollywood studios are “both economic and cultural institutions . . . both a site of artistic and social expression as well as a business concerned with the maximization of markets and profits” (249). This means that the film industry is a reflection of modern economic/ cultural beliefs. Whitewashing is a part of American culture and is used to “maximize profits” for film studios who cater to audiences that desire to see white performers rather than minorities. Cultivation theory proposes that increased exposure to television will lead an audience to believe that the images

being shown on screen are a reflection of reality (Gerbner). This results in an audience that stereotypes Latinxs as only suitable for the roles that politics and media dictates dictate for them. This ultimately leads to typecasting, which creates a barrier for minorities, limiting them to stereotypical roles that are associated with certain ethnicities. For example, some negative stereotypes of Hispanics include: “gang members, drunks, dumb, and poor” (Dong & Murrillo 39). Selenis Leyva, a Latina actress, has been directly affected by these negative stereotypes about her identity; “I don’t have a problem with playing the maid. I don’t have a problem with playing a prostitute. I have a problem with—that’s all you think I can play” (Martinez 3). Unlike a white actor, minorities are limited to acting opportunities based on preconceived notions that their talent is best suited for minor roles which match society’s stereotypes of their ethnicity. If Leyva was not Latina she would have a greater chance of auditioning for non-stereotypical roles, but typecasting restricts her ability to be cast in major roles. Latinx are not only underrepresented but also misrepresented in Hollywood, as they are forced to fit a singular narrative formed by society. Americans favor Eurocentric characters instead of minorities which is why there is a large number of leading roles with white actors in the entertainment industry.

Coco, the animated hit Pixar film, is a counter argument to the notion that minorities cannot create the same box office success as a white cast. The film features Miguel, a young Mexican boy, who crosses worlds on the Day of the Dead and learns about his family along the way. As of 2018, *Coco* had garnered \$800.5 million at the worldwide box office and became Mexico’s highest-grossing film in history. In addition, *Coco* is the fifth Pixar film to cross the \$800 million mark among titles such as *Finding Dory* and *Toy Story 3* (Tartaglione 3). The success of this Pixar film, which targets families, was in part due to the historically correct representation of Mexican culture. Overnight, Miguel became a positive role model for Latinx children. “He is someone kids can really identify with because they have so much in common: from the way they look to their traditions to their skin color and Latino names and last names” (Bendfeldt-Diaz 8). *Coco* set an example in the film industry by demonstrating that audiences want to see Latinx characters on the big screen. The film is an example of how socially advantageous it is to cast ethnic minorities in major roles, as it boosts young minorities’ self-esteem when they witness their culture being shown fairly and accurately. Filmmakers cannot ignore the worldwide success of *Coco* and the market for creating

Latinx roles in Hollywood. More importantly, the impact of minority children seeing their ingroup positively represented on the big screen can influence the decision of filmmakers to create more ethnic characters that are relatable to the audience. However, there is still opposition to the idea of creating a diverse market based on financial reasons: “Marion Edwards, Fox’s International TV President stated that diverse shows do not sell well overseas, because they do not reflect the society that those people live in: ‘These shows are a reflection of our society, but not a reflection of all societies’ (Aumer et al. 1316). The executives in the entertainment industry fear that a diverse cast will not translate into international success and use it as a reason to hire white performers. The global success of *Coco* provides evidence that there is a profitable market for diverse films starring minorities because they highlight the values of love and family which can translate into any overseas market because they defy the bounds of language and ethnicity.

On the other hand, there are ramifications for casting white actors in certain roles. As seen with *West Side Story*, a 1960s film inspired by Romeo and Juliet, which portrays the rivalry between two gangs known as the Jets and Sharks. The ethnicity of the “Sharks” in *West Side Story* was written for Puerto Ricans while the Jets were of Polish descent. However, the main actress, as well as many other cast members, identified as white. The only actress matching the ethnic description of Puerto Rican was the supporting actress, Rita Moreno. Fifty years later, she opened up about the brownface that occurred on set and how she became a victim. Brownface is the act of impersonating someone with darker skin by using makeup to match their brown skin tone. Moreno admitted that her skin was made darker to appease the stereotype of Puerto Ricans as “dark,” although she is Puerto Rican herself (Moreno 2). Being the only Puerto Rican actress on set may have also contributed to why Moreno waited fifty years to reveal the truth of what happened behind the scenes. In the 1960s, there was rarely social backlash for using brownface or other makeup to impersonate certain ethnic identities. While racism still permeates the American cultural landscape, this kind of appropriation is taken more seriously and disputed. Moreno would not have had the support she does now if she had decided to report the makeup artist for stereotyping the appearance of Puerto Ricans. At the time, her social identity was being threatened because she was a light skin Latina among a cast of whites portraying her culture and identity.

SELF-ESTEEM

Social identity theory, a social theory by social psychologist Henri Tajfel, argues that people base their self-esteem and identity on their connection with a group they relate to; most commonly race is used as a category of identity. In “Assessing Racial Preferences in Movies”, the results of the study concluded that members of the audience did not prefer their own race when picking a cast.

Ultimately, this disproves social identity theory since people did not choose those who resembled themselves. The social identity theory would be supported if the minority participants casted actors with the same racial group as their own. However, white actors were still cast more frequently by the participants in the study than Blacks and Asians. Mere exposure effect states that if someone is frequently exposed to the same stimulus, over time their inclination towards it will increase (Zajonc). Thus, if the audience constantly sees white actors in films, they will choose a white cast regardless of their personal ethnic-racial identity. The participants in the study above were able to pick their own cast out of a list of white, Black, and Asian actors. Despite being given a wide variety of options to choose from, the majority of ethnically diverse participants still chose white actors to play each role in three out of four movies. Aumer et al. provides evidence for the mere exposure effect when monoracial people of color were exposed to actors of the same race. Their preference in casting white actors over their own group identity supported this effect because historically they have been exposed to predominantly white actors. The research concluded “that audience members are not preferring their own race when watching shows or movies” because of exposure to whitewashing (Aumer et al. 1321). In addition, the practice of whitewashing is affecting the way Latinx individuals identify. “According to a study by the Pew Research Center, 2.5 million Americans who had identified as Hispanic and ‘some other race’ during the 2000 U.S census changed their answers in the 2010 census and checked Hispanic and “white” instead. Perhaps it really was more of us wanting to identify as “white” (Alvarado 5). This discovery is an example of how constant exposure to a majority race in media, culture, and economics takes a toll on a minority’s self-identity. The mere exposure effect is an example of how whitewashing can directly impact a minority group, such as Latinx, who are misled by mass media to prefer society’s Eurocentric ideals regarding race.

Social identity threat is when an individual or members of a

group feel attacked after witnessing a negative representation of the group they associate with. Effects of stereotypes on self-conscious emotion and implicit group attitudes were studied to determine whether they pose a threat to Mexican Americans' social identity. Implicit group attitudes are negative or positive points of view that are created unconsciously towards another social group, while self-conscious emotions are being aware of oneself and how one's actions affect others. The first study revealed that Mexican Americans "experience negative emotions such as shame and anger after viewing a stereotypical portrayal of their ethnic group" (Schmader et al. 62). However, it was determined that pride in one's ethnicity lessens the negative impact that can occur from watching stereotypes in films. The second study analyzed how both Europeans and Mexican Americans responded to the same film clips. The goal of this study was to see whether Mexican Americans experience a greater social identity threat based on the endorsement of stereotypes by the majority or minority group. Results indicated that when the outgroup (European Americans) and ingroup (Mexican Americans) were seen enjoying the prejudiced clips of Latinx, this had a detrimental effect on the minority group's self-esteem. At the same time, some members of the outgroup felt guilty and self-conscious when witnessing white members act racist by laughing at the unrealistic clips. White members possessing racial pride were reported as having a greater positive effect after watching Latinos being stereotyped on film. Thus, this study supports the social identity theory because the white participants had greater self-esteem after seeing another group being criticized rather than their own. This stems from individuals basing their self-esteem on racial identity to where negative portrayals of another group will create more confidence in the unaffected group. Furthermore, a study performed by USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative revealed that when Latinx performers appear on screen, they often are associated with negative and stereotypical depictions. The research shows, "roughly a quarter of both top-billed and all Latino speaking characters across 200 movies were depicted as criminals, and 17 percent of all Latino speaking characters were portrayed as poor or with a lower income" (Smith et al. 2). These percentages indicate how often Latinx people are cast into stereotypical roles instead of being offered roles that correctly represent their identity. However, Latinx actors being offered roles for minorities are still being discriminated against. The role of whitewashing in the entertainment industry limits the quality of correct Latinx representation on screen. By Latinx actors accepting these stereo-

typical roles, the self-esteem of their ingroup will suffer from watching these negative portrayals.

CONCLUSION

The practice of whitewashing has a strong foothold in the American film industry dating back to the beginning of Hollywood. Through a critical media studies lens, the \$800 million sales from *Coco* support the thesis that minority actors can produce the same box office success as white actors. The mere exposure effect proves that Latinx identity is negatively impacted by witnessing stereotypes of their ingroup. Nevertheless, based on the whitewashing in *West Side Story* and the influence of *Coco*, we can infer that minorities experience higher self-esteem when their identity is shown in a positive way. The evidence concludes that there needs to be changes within the entertainment industry. Steven Spielberg, a world-renowned Hollywood filmmaker, is addressing whitewashing by finding a solution to combat it. He is remaking *West Side Story* to correct the previous director's mistake of casting whites in minority roles which led to the darkening of their skin with makeup to "appear" Puerto Rican. Spielberg is also hiring Rita Moreno, a previous cast member, as an executive producer to make sure the new version provides justice for those affected by whitewashing in the first film (Hosking 3). His mission is to correctly represent ethnic minorities in roles written specifically for their identity and culture. Spielberg sets an example for Hollywood that it is necessary to amend the mistakes of whitewashing and create diverse casting opportunities for minority actors. Furthermore, major streaming platforms must increase their diversity on and off screen by treating white and non-white actors equally. The campaign #FirstTimeISawMe, created by Netflix, promotes the stories of individuals and their experience seeing characters that remind them of themselves. One of the participants revealed her feelings after watching a Latinx show for the first time, "I never quite felt my life had been captured until that moment. Having shows like this are fantastic because kids think 'if she can do it I can do it'" (Evans 4). Ultimately, the media has a great impact on individuals' self-esteem. Giving Latinx actors and actresses major roles in entertainment allows them to serve as positive models for their communities to look up to. Hollywood's lack of diversity and whitewashing is limiting the success of another *Coco* while also creating an identity threat to minorities including Latinx.

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AUSTIN MANALESE

Presentation and Representation of Drag Identity in RuPaul's Drag Race

ABSTRACT

RuPaul's Drag Race for the past decade has put the LGBTQ+ subculture of drag performance front and center on mainstream television networks. By applying theoretical frameworks of gender performance and media cultivation theory, then situating it in the context of drag and the Drag Race, I first define the drag identity that is trailblazed and influenced by RuPaul and then subsequently the "Drag Race identity" to understand drag performance in the context of the television series. By examining the fashion challenges and an impersonation challenge called "The Snatch Game," the show reinforces and policies traditional notions of drag performance in this new drag identity created by the show, subjecting the Drag Race queens to mainstream prejudices for the sake of entertainment. Increasing acceptance to a more eclectic representation of drag and becoming more critical of racially charged performances would promote a more inclusive and diverse drag community and would change the discourse of what it means to be a drag queen for the performers and the viewers who watch the show.

INTRODUCTION

An alarm goes off in the workroom and the men gather around RuPaul Charles, who stands in a vibrantly patterned pant suit. RuPaul excites the contestants with the challenge for the week: it is the infamous "Snatch Game" challenge where the contestants must choose a female celebrity to impersonate. These impersonations range from modern-day pop stars to previous drag race contestants, but the rules of Snatch Game are simple: stay in character and be funny. If they do not entertain to RuPaul's standards, the drag queen with the worst performance risks getting sent home. "Gentlemen, start your engines and may the best woman win!"

RuPaul's Drag Race (Drag Race) for the past decade has put the LGBTQ+ subculture of drag performance front and center on mainstream television networks. Drag Race is a reality television show created and produced by RuPaul Charles where drag queen contestants compete

in various challenges from fashion runways to lip syncs to comedy challenges to win \$100,000 and be named “America’s Next Drag Superstar.” Eleven seasons and four “All-Star” seasons later, *Drag Race* has become a relevant part of pop culture that viewers, both in and out of the gay and drag communities, find entertainment and amusement from the show’s drag performers, challenges, and drama. However, despite cracking the code to get gay culture into the mainstream, RuPaul’s show still exists within a society of male, straight, cis, and white privilege. This paper seeks to interrogate the following research questions: How has *Drag Race* produced the drag identity and redefined drag performance? What are the discourses created by illuminating new queer perspectives? And, to what extent does *Drag Race* reinforce or destroy prevalent gender and racial stereotypes and how does that complicate a contestant’s drag identity? By applying the theoretical frameworks of gender performance and media cultivation theory and situating them in the context of drag performance and the television show, I will articulate the discourses created by the reality competition series and how RuPaul first shaped the presentation of drag in popular culture. To understand the complexity of the identity of drag performers, it is important to clearly define both drag and, to understand drag performance in the context of the television series, subsequently define the “*Drag Race* identity.” Then, I will analyze the degree to which the contestants Milk, Manila Luzon, and Yara Sofia follow the definitions of drag and drag race identity through their experiences and portrayals on the show to understand how their identity challenges or reinforces ideas regarding gender expression and race.

In this paper, I argue that the art of drag allows for a sense of comfort for drag queens to express themselves freely in their drag identity. However, due to existing gender and racial norms, *Drag Race* queens are subject to mainstream prejudices that are then perpetuated through their drag performance for the sake of entertainment. Through these televised presentations, the contestants on the show display a produced gender identity or racial identity that is accepted and policed by the mainstream, limiting their drag identities to the adjusted drag race identities in order to follow these dominating and oppressive stereotypes.

RUPAUL ESTABLISHES THE DRAG RACE IDENTITY

Drag performance, both in and out of the context of *Drag Race*, is open-ended and up to the discretion of the performer on how they want

to present themselves and be perceived by an audience. This includes the concept of gender performance, defined by Judith Butler as: “the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives” (526). Gender has specific norms. This may lead to a binary understanding of gender as masculine and feminine. Gender performance is an intrinsic part of drag performance as it dismantles preconceived notions of gender based in heteronormativity that the audience may have previously had. Other common ways to describe a drag artist is a female illusionist or a female impersonator, demonstrating how the artist uses feminine qualities to perform gender. RuPaul Charles’s song “Born Naked,” proclaims, “We’re all born naked, and the rest is drag” (Charles). RuPaul supports the idea that everyone performs gender just like drag queens and that any tangible and conceptual layers a person adds on are considered drag. The tangible layers are the dramatized make-up, the gowns, and the big wigs. The conceptual layers are the vocal changes to sound less manly, the change in the way they walk, and the way they change their outward personality to make the audience believe in their femininity. Together, these add to the complexity of drag performance. Expanding RuPaul’s definition of drag, Dean Eastmond argues, “Drag has reached a level where it’s beyond simply impersonating a woman and has transpired into a beautiful contortion of gender norms and expectations” (Eastmond). Drag performance, as opposed to gender performance, is not a binary expression of gender but rather a spectrum of expression. Today, there is an abundance of drag expressions that fall within the spectrum of gender expression or even outside of the gender spectrum entirely. However, as the show is placed into a temporality where heteronormativity and prejudices exist, the show is policed into following norms in order to stay relevant in pop culture, even if it means going against what the art itself is meant to support.

To remain popular in mainstream media, RuPaul establishes a drag race identity both passively and actively in this modern media landscape that is influenced by mainstream ideologies of gender and race. On *Drag Race*, the essence of RuPaul’s drag aesthetic becomes the most prominent expression of drag that I will define as the “*Drag Race* identity,” where a contestant molds her drag persona and identity to be more appealing to RuPaul, the judges, and the viewers. Goltz explains media cultivation theory in a queer context, stating “gay enculturation and the construction of gay values and identities are more reliant on the media than

any other minority culture” (Goltz 12). RuPaul establishes a drag identity for herself that tends itself towards a female presentation of gender, coining the term, “glamazon,” a play on the words glamour and Amazonian that is used to describe a woman who is highly self-confident and glamorous (Charles). RuPaul presents her drag as feminine and high fashion but also eccentric and creative; she wears hip pads to create an hourglass feature, wears long blonde wigs, wears a breastplate to give the illusion of cleavage, and has a long, lean supermodel figure. As one of the most popular drag queens of today, RuPaul follows a traditional, binary understanding of gender performance in her drag persona. She, as a man, transforms into a woman; her feminine aesthetic leads the discourse and creates a notion of how drag queens should aesthetically be presenting themselves when placed in the limelight. Egner and Maloney argue that “Drag is not a performance unless there is an audience, formal or informal, to participate” (882). Based on the symbiotic nature of the performer and audience, for RuPaul to receive the popularity and success she has today, she ensures that her drag persona she creates is pleasing the audiences that view and judge it. This drag race identity RuPaul popularizes is actively promoted on the show. Drag performance or similar gender-bending performances date back to Kabuki and Shakespearean theater from the seventeenth century, influenced by the culture it was situated in. Similarly, RuPaul’s influence on drag aesthetic and drag performance creates the dominating discourse on drag performance in today’s drag temporality, where queens look to the trailblazer RuPaul and her hyperfeminine aesthetic to either follow and stay confined in, or present and challenge new takes on drag expression.



PERFORMING GENDER ON DRAG RACE

RuPaul’s establishment of drag norms are then perpetuated on her show, where contestants follow RuPaul’s prescribed drag aesthetics to be successful and ultimately be crowned the next drag superstar. By portraying these newly established standards, they “create a new base of knowledge that helps to legitimize gender queerness and drag in a

dominantly heteronormative society” (González 661). One of the measures of drag performance that the judges and audiences evaluate is “realness.” Realness is the level of authenticity to which the gender a drag queen is attempting to portray is believable. Two of the realness measures the drag contestants follow are “fishiness” and “butchness.” The dichotomy between the two is that butchness refers to the “hyper-masculine” portrayal while fishiness is “the presentation of hyper-femininity and a consistent portrayal of physiological femaleness” (González 663). In Figure 1, RuPaul follows the fishiness, or fish realness aesthetic of drag, and through her prominence of being the most popular drag performer, it becomes the standard to follow for fellow or new drag queens. However, the juxtaposition of both fish and butch reinforces negative stereotypes regarding gender “because of the way it upholds a heteronormative gender binary” (M. Moore). In Figure 2, season eleven winner Aquaria fit into this highly feminized drag aesthetic and fit under the “fishiness” category of drag expression, often being applauded for her ability to create the illusion of being a biological woman with some exaggerations of various features. Aquaria and many other drag queens have seen success on the show through their fishiness on *Drag Race*, something which judges and fans have found the most appealing to them and become accustomed to, creating a hierarchy of successful drag aesthetic of fishiness at the top and butchness at the bottom.



From the previous paragraph, we establish that to be successful on the show, a contestant must follow the traditional norms of beauty of women through fish realness; contestants who do not follow these norms are not accepted, limiting the bounds to which drag identities can be presented on *Drag Race*. González argues that, “Genderqueer drag queens and those who wish to portray anything more than a binary expression of heteronormative gender are not valued nor are they successful on the show” (663). The drag queen Milk creates a multi-layered persona to break traditional and dominating trends in drag to establish a new drag identity. Milk attempts to disrupt the established cultural norms in order to further expand the definition of what it means to be a drag queen. There are two situations where Milk challenges the traditional drag race identity. First, in a challenge called “Night of a Thousand Ru’s,” where

the drag queens must replicate iconic RuPaul looks, Milk decides to go as RuPaul out of drag. Milk's interpretation of the challenge follows the previously explained definition of drag as being something additive and not necessarily something strict to the binary of gender. However, fellow contestants of the show who all decided to portray RuPaul in her iconic gowns ridicule Milk: "instead of being accepted as a creative expression of her drag, Milk was derisively ridiculed as a 'Fuckin' big man' by Gia Gunn" (Gonzalez 663). Furthermore, in the promotions for the All Stars 3 season where the drag queens competing put on their best dresses and most feminine outfits to appear as fish as possible, Milk donned a fe-



male bodybuilder look with exaggerated muscles throughout the body juxtaposed with beautiful and feminine make-up and shining gold platform heels. Her drag is nuanced and counterculture, not switching genders but rather blending and bending genders, creating this conceptually complex look where she is in drag as a woman from her face and heels, but her body is like a male bodybuilder still wearing a bikini, thus playing with the idea of blending traditional masculine aesthetics with womanhood. Although met with criticism for the lack of beauty and elegance from traditional pageant drag, Milk disrupts current norms of what it means to be a drag queen; no longer does a drag queen need to appear purely as feminine. Milk's bodybuilder look intersects with both masculine and feminine traits. However, the look was met



with criticism as well as her other non-binary looks that met neither male nor female standards, and Milk ends up being eliminated early in the competition. In a criticism of the show, Scott McKinnon argues, "*Drag Race* hasn't yet worked out what to do if the man in the dress reveals she has always been a woman; or is both male and female; or doesn't have a gender at all" (McKinnon). Milk's challenge to the currently dominating representations of drag is a microcosm for the overall issue of inclusivity of *Drag Race* as a whole. The lack of acceptance by the show's contestants and audiences mimics the *Drag Race* community's lack of acceptance for exploration out of mainstream presentations of drag identity established by the show, policing gender expression and shutting out ones that do not follow the drag race identity.

PERFORMING RACE: YARA SOFIA AND MANILA LUZON

Like gender, there are certain pressures that drag queens of color face when competing on the show, and their race becomes a dimension to them that they are expected to perform and represent, commodifying their race for entertainment purposes and limiting their ability of expression. Understanding the intersectional nature of the gay experience is important in determining the extent to which non-white and non-gender conforming gays fit into the community and how they are represented. Indeed, "...racial rigidity remakes race into the biologically fixed category from which gender has just escaped. In other words, race is naturalized even as the gender is destabilized" (Strings and Bui 832). The stark comparison of the naturalization of race and the destabilization of gender creates a more critical environment for drag queens of color. This racial commodification is demonstrated by Manila Luzon and Yara Sofia, whose Asian and Latina races respectively become part of their drag race identity. Drag performer Manila Luzon utilizes her Filipino heritage to draw inspiration in her performance and talents. However, it becomes the forefront of the identity she creates when competing on the television show. From the concoction of the drag race identity, "[drag queens] were marking what it meant to be gay and marking what it meant to be Asian as not being peripheral to their identities, but essential to them" (Kornhaber). From Kornhaber's argument, we see how racial rigidity impacts Manila as a performer, emphasized more so by her name that is in direct reference to one of the Philippines' major islands, further pushing her into the category of "Asian drag queen." The process of race naturalization for Manila is clear when, in an acting challenge, the drag persona she performs as is a highly stereotyped Asian news broadcaster with broken English and a thick Asian accent, making said affectation almost incomprehensible in an effort to be comedic. Her over-the-top parody of a non-native English speaker ends up winning the challenge but at the expense of presenting and repeating unforgiving Asian stereotypes.

Despite encouragement from the judges to be creative in their drag expression, there are several challenges where the contestants get compartmentalized to the salient biological trait of race to perform to the judges' interests and amusement, suppressing the drag race identity to a racial and gender point of specificity. "Successful drag' is predicated on the curious mixture of gender play and racial authenticity," explains

Strings and Bui (828). Although there is no explicit “Asian realness” or “Latina realness” that is defined in the show or drag vernacular, the judges still look to the level of believability the drag queens can portray for a realistic performance. In the Snatch Game challenge, the drag queens must portray and impersonate a female celebrity and answer various questions in their likeness to impress the RuPaul and judges and win the challenge. Manila Luzon performs as Imelda Marcos, the former first lady of the Philippines. She fits under the successful drag the judges look for as it follows racial authenticity. For the contestants of Asian descent, they were “heavily racialized in ways that the other contestants weren’t, and more importantly, the show rewarded the Asian contestants the more they Orientalized themselves” (Kornhaber). Manila’s portrayal of the Filipina first lady is met with praise from the judges, saying it is “on-brand.” Orientalism in itself is a way to “emphasize, exaggerate, and distort,” to see Eastern cultures as “exotic, backward, uncivilized, and at times dangerous” (“What is Orientalism?”). By using the word “orientalizing,” it converts the concept and race of “oriental” and “Asianness” into an action that can be performed. Manila’s level of believability and racial authenticity provides a source of safety and praise in the competition by hiding in her racial identity. Yet, the prejudices that the judges and Manila herself base these presentations and interpretations of the performances are inherently and explicitly racist.



In the same Snatch Game challenge, Yara Sofia, a Latina Queen of Puerto Rican descent decides to step outside of her racial identity but is met with backlash from the judges, setting the expectation that she must follow her racial identity within her drag identity in order to be successful on the show. Ramey Moore argues that “As the drag queens perform and the viewing audience watches, the drama stems from the narrative of the show and not the existential dread of postmodernism’s unraveling identities” (Moore). Moore juxtaposes the drag race identity created by the show with postmodern concepts of gender performance. Instead of allowing the drag performers to continue to expand and challenge their identity through their performance, the show impedes their creativity to something that is more entertaining for television screens at the expense of the performer. This is evident in Yara Sofia’s performance on the Snatch Game where she attempts to step outside of her racial identity in her

Snatch Game performance to attempt to be creative in a postmodern drag identity.

The focus of the drag performance is not in the act of representing an authentic self but playing to the drama and the narrative pushed by the reality competition agenda. As a result, the authentic drag self that these contestants are portraying is forced to align with stereotypes that are more salient to them for the viewing pleasure of the judges and the audiences. Yara attempts to break out of the racial rigidity that is constructed by the show by choosing to portray Amy Winehouse, a white British R&B singer, something that she believes will be entertaining and challenging for herself.



At the time of judges' critiques, she is told that her performance did not make sense and is "off-brand," making a comparison to Manila's on-brand performance. Strings and Bui argue, "For them, Yara was at her drag best when she sounded sexy, exotic and most importantly authentic. This revealed the importance for Yara, of being both convincingly feminine and Latin" (827). By using the words "exotic" and "authentic," Yara is put into this "other" category, compartmentalized to then "Latina queen" whereas her white drag counterparts can be performed as the "campy queen" or the "fashion queen." In understanding the minority representation in the media, "*Drag Race* began marketing elements of a minority subculture for mass consumption and mainstream titillation" (Strings and Bui 823). The specific critiques of her race during the judges' deliberation show how a drag contestant's racial identity plays into drag performance. If a drag queen comes from a racially marginalized group, it becomes the most visible and prominent part of her identity. Race becomes an intrinsic part of a person of color's drag persona, demonstrating that for people of color, race and gender performance are intertwined. Despite her ability to freely express her femininity in the form of drag, she is still encouraged and, to an extent, pressured to portray specifically a Latina woman to create a successful drag performance and illusion. The intersectionality of her gender expression and race complicates Yara's experience and identity in the competition, forcing a drag persona that realizes her race and racial stereotypes associated with it. The performances on the show are not a means to increase representation through diversity and inclusion but rather capitalize on the obvious stereotypes for entertainment purposes. Drag in the context of

the show no longer becomes an outlet for creativity but an exploitation of the artists.

CONCLUSION

In essence, *RuPaul's Drag Race* is a progressive television program that has enabled new queer narratives that have not formerly been well-represented in mainstream media. In my paper, I seek to interrogate how the drag identity and established drag race identity interact with gender and race performance to create new discourses about varying queer narratives. Drag queens and their language, culture, and identity are becoming more familiar in day to day life because of this TV series that continues to produce more seasons and put more drag queens on mainstream screens. However, it is still subject to current stereotypes regarding race and gender expression and, as a result, perpetuates them for the sake of entertainment. Through the three experiences of these drag queens, we see the policing of drag identities to follow the drag race identity constructed by RuPaul, the judges, and the audience. However, there are definite limitations in understanding the nuances of drag and the drag race identity; there are now hundreds of queens that have participated in the show. Further research can continue to deep dive various issues specific to certain genres of drag, such as Milk's club kid, or track a specific race's performance and success on the show over the course of the twelve seasons of competition. Moreover, emerging discourses about transgender women participating in both drag and *Drag Race* would be relevant in the current political and cultural climate of trans-activism. In various ways, the experiences of the drag queens I analyze are microcosms for the overall issues of gender and race not just in the drag community but for the larger gay community. Becoming more critical of racially charged performances and accepting more eclectic representations of drag would push for a more inclusive and diverse drag community and would change the make-up and performance of *Drag Race*. *RuPaul's Drag Race* opens doors for queer identities to emerge and it is important that we must continue to be critical to push for a more accepting society.

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Synesthesia: How Varying Forms Contribute to Creative Tendencies and Abilities

ABSTRACT

This paper will explore the different forms of synesthesia and its influences on convergent and divergent thinking in an individual, along with the relationship between synesthesia and tendencies towards creative occupations and hobbies. Those who have synesthesia, known as synesthetes, have been found to have more creative tendencies than those who do not have synesthesia. The creative abilities that synesthetes gravitate towards are dependent on the type of synesthesia that they have. This paper uses the cross-activation theory as a theoretical framework for different forms of synesthesia, resulting in varying levels of convergent and divergent thinking. These levels of convergent and divergent thinking range from how open minded a person may be (divergent thinking) to how sharp a person's memory is (cognitive thinking). The research presented throughout the paper shows that creative inclinations and thinking levels of synesthetes must be assessed based on what form of synesthesia they have. Research also supports the idea that many people who have synesthesia find that their world has been enriched by the condition, allowing them to view it in a way that enhances their own lives. The many forms of synesthesia result in not only specific creative inclinations, but in different divergent and convergent thinking levels, thus promoting creativity. The unique experiences that synesthetes have are important to investigate because they have the ability to share their rare perceptions of the world with the rest of the public who cannot comprehend their synesthetic experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Human senses enable people to experience the world in a number of different ways. The smells, tastes, sights, and so forth that people encounter each day often inspire them, and some are even exposed to a simultaneous cluster of stimulated senses. When multiple senses are perceived at the same time, people experience different stimuli together. For example, a person may have specific colors associated with certain letters

or words, feel a sensation when they hear a particular sound, or hear sounds and see certain colors. This mixture of unrelated senses is known as synesthesia (Sitton and Pierce 1). Synesthesia is a “condition in which sensory or cognitive modalities interact, creating unusual quasi-perceptual experiences” (Hossain et al. 1). There has been controversy amongst researchers regarding how rare synesthesia is, but recent studies have supported the idea that as many as one in every thirty people have some form of the condition (Mulvenna and Walsh 2). Certain stimuli trigger sensory responses in which a person will see, taste, hear, or experience a connection between the stimuli presented and a sense or senses. There are many parameters of synesthesia, in which people experience qualities involving color, texture, space, sound, taste, and so forth (Van Leeuwen 109). Experiences that someone with synesthesia may have range from seeing colors when certain sounds are heard to reading words that trigger specific tastes (Hossain et al. 74). A stimulus will be detected, and mixed senses will receive and process the stimulus. A theory, known as the cross-activation theory, explains how neurons interconnect in ways that result in synesthetic experiences. This theory is a model for the claim that different forms of synesthesia correlate with varying levels of creativity and often leads to a higher-than-average level of creativity depending on the form. The theory also offers an explanation of how neurons in adjacent regions may connect to one another, thus resulting in responses where people experience multiple unrelated stimuli. A consideration to take into account is that people can have multiple forms of synesthesia rather than just one (Hubbard et al. 165). As a result of having different forms of synesthesia, synesthetes may have varied levels of divergent and convergent thinking, creativity, and hobbies that are unique to them. It is for this reason that the creativity and thinking levels of people with synesthesia cannot be generalized when being studied and researched.

Divergent and convergent thinking are two different approaches that the mind will take when presented with a problem or idea. They contribute to synesthetic experiences that a person may have, and play a part in what kind of lifestyle that person may live. Research on the creative aspects of synesthesia cannot be oversimplified; understanding the condition and the experiences it produces can offer a world of unique perspectives that may lead to new innovations and ways of thinking. The connections produced by the condition are certainly unusual, but to what extent do the different forms of synesthesia impact creative abilities, such as divergent and convergent thinking, and tendencies, such as one’s

occupation and hobbies? Divergent thinking focuses on unconventional thinking and problem solving, while convergent thinking has more to do with concrete answers and direct associations like memory. Divergent and convergent thinking are critical to the exploration of synesthesia as they are important aspects of creativity, contributing to a number of separate patterns that impact one's lifestyle. For example, someone who is more of an unconventional thinker may be involved in hobbies or occupations that involve solving problems, while someone who is stronger in convergent thinking may stick to fields involving memory and concrete answers. Research presented throughout the years on the thinking abilities of synesthetes have both supported and criticized the relationship between synesthesia and convergent and divergent thinking.

Critics of the idea that synesthesia impacts creativity debate the levels of creativity that synesthetes have, both in relation to people without the condition and to other people with different forms of synesthesia, such as grapheme-color synesthesia (words/numbers to colors), or chromesthesia (sound to color). In his article, "Synesthesia," Jamie Ward reviewed a case study where the levels of convergent and divergent thinking were tested amongst people with synesthesia and people without. Researchers used an Alternative Uses Test (ALT) to measure divergent thinking, and a Remote Associations Test (RAT) to measure convergent thinking (67). It is important to note that the researchers did not take into account the different forms of synesthesia when conducting the tests. After analyzing the results of the two tests, findings supported the argument that people with synesthesia do not have greater levels of divergent thinking than people without the condition (Ward et al. 2008, as cited by Ward 67). Researchers used these findings as a foundation to argue that divergent thinking is not enhanced by synesthesia. Therefore, someone who has synesthesia is less likely to be more creative in nature than someone who does not have the condition. In a separate case study, critics focused on the relationship between divergent thinking and involvement in creative occupations and hobbies by analyzing the results from different creativity tests, such as the RAT and the ALT. The results indicated that there was no significant link between synesthesia and higher levels of convergent or divergent thinking. Researchers concluded that divergent thinking levels are not correlated with synesthetes' involvement in the arts (Ward et al. 139). Critics believe that greater involvement in creative fields does not relate to the levels of divergent thinking a synesthete might have. Researchers who fail to account for the different types of synesthesia

often find that there is no significant difference regarding creative abilities between people with the condition and people without it. The flaw in these studies is that synesthesia cannot be generalized, as it varies in each individual based on the kind of synesthesia with which they live. In order to accurately examine the relationship between synesthesia and creativity, researchers must recognize that different forms of synesthesia result in different artistic passions, thus influencing synesthetes to involve themselves in a variety of occupations and hobbies. When evaluated, varying types of synesthesia led to a range in differences regarding convergent and divergent thinking levels (Hossain et al. 80). This finding is important, as it shows how synesthesia cannot be generalized because of the many different forms it can take. Regarding critics' findings on the link between divergent thinking and synesthesia, researchers have found that synesthetes, specifically those that have forms associated with color, have high levels of open-mindedness and risk taking—traits that fall under the category of divergent thinking (Safran and Sanda 39). Higher levels of open-minded thinking among synesthetes correlates with interest in pursuing artistic fields and hobbies. The creative abilities and tendencies of synesthetes are dependent on the type of synesthesia they have, ultimately impacting their levels of divergent and convergent thinking in ways that contribute to the vibrancy of synesthetic experiences, and the creative inspiration that stems from those experiences.

DIVERGENT THINKING AND LIFESTYLE

Before the impacts of synesthesia on lifestyle and creativity are explored, it is important to understand the differences between the varying forms of synesthesia and their effects on synesthetes. The concept of cross-activation supports research that varying types of synesthesia correspond to different levels of creativity because the many forms of synesthesia are suggested to be connected and stimulated in different regions of the brain. The cross-activation theory, as defined by Hubbard, Brang, and Ramachandran's article, "The Cross-activation Theory at 10", explains how hyperconnectivity of different regions of the brain can impact the type of synesthesia that forms (165). The connections between neurons of different regions of the brain play a part in what type of synesthesia is formed. Different forms of synesthesia result in people gravitating towards specific artistic occupations and hobbies depending on the type they have. After evaluating varying groups of synesthetes based on what forms they had, Katrin Lunke and Beat Meier, authors of "Creativity and

Involvement in Art in Different Types of Synesthesia”, came to the conclusion that “different types of synaesthesia relate to different creative abilities” (Lunke and Meier 4). In other words, creativity tests vary in results because one type of synesthesia may induce more creativity than another type. For example, somebody with grapheme-color synesthesia may have different levels of creativity and stimuli than somebody with sound-to-color synesthesia, or chromesthesia (Lunke and Meier 4). This information is important as it shows how independent forms of synesthesia can result in specific levels of creative involvement based on that particular form. The cross-activation theory supports the researchers’ findings that different forms of synesthesia summon different levels of convergent and divergent thinking based on what neurons are hyperconnected and where in the brain they are found. A more in depth explanation of this process is that when neurons, specialized cells that transmit information to other cells, are adjacent to each other and connect, their location of connection is responsible for what type of synesthesia forms. The type of synesthesia that forms corresponds with varying levels of convergent and divergent thinking, as the synesthetic experiences have an impact on one’s lifestyle and creative tendencies.

Synesthetes are often involved in art and other creative fields which contributes to greater levels of divergent thinking that directly impacts their lifestyles. To further explore the impacts that somebody with synesthesia will have as a result of exposure to art, Charlotte Chun and Jean-Michel Hupé, authors of “Are Synesthetes Exceptional Beyond Their Synesthetic Associations? A systematic comparison of creativity, personality, cognition, and mental imagery in synesthetes and controls”, found that greater involvement in art may contribute to an open-minded personality, a tendency to fantasize, and the ability to engage in more creative thinking styles. In order to get these results, researchers had the participants retake a test in order to more accurately assess what types of synesthesia each person might have. The researchers acknowledged the different forms of synesthesia when conducting the tests in order to avoid generalizing the condition, thus getting more accurate results (Charlotte Chun and Jean-Michel Hupé 400). These traits were commonly found amongst people with synesthesia and fall under the category of divergent thinking, which involves open-mindedness and risk-taking. The findings between Chun and Hupé and Lunke and Meier connect because people with different forms of synesthesia will be exposed to different creative fields, thus stimulating varying levels of open-mindedness. Synesthesia

also plays a part in molding the personality of the person it affects which directly impacts how creatively involved one might be. Varying types of synesthesia and differing levels of creativity result in a mixture of creative traits, experiences, and levels of inspiration. This involvement exposes synesthetes to new ways of thinking, new ideas, and a broader imagination which only stimulates greater levels of open-mindedness and involvement in creative fields.

The form of synesthesia that a person has often dictates the creative field that they may be involved in. The cross-activation theory emphasizes the fact that neural connections happen in different regions of the brain depending on the type of synesthesia a person has. In Lunke and Meier's article, "Creativity and Involvement in Art in Different Types of Synaesthesia", they investigated the relationship between the varying forms of synesthesia and creative involvement (1). In their case study, Lunke and Meier assessed a number of synesthetes who had grapheme-colour synesthesia, sound-colour synesthesia, grapheme-colour and sound-colour synesthesia, and sequence-space synesthesia, and compared them to people without the condition in the same age and education range (Lunke and Meier 730). The results of their study showed how people with synesthesia had a higher prevalence of being involved in the arts than the control group. Each group was tested alongside a control group and consisted of a specific type of synesthesia so the data collected could not be generalized. The tests also showed high associations between varying creative interests and each type of synesthesia. For example, people with sound-colour synesthesia "showed a higher involvement in artistic activities overall while sequence-space synaesthetes showed higher involvement in visual art" (Lunke and Meier 1). Lunke and Meier's research also showed that people with grapheme-colour and sound-colour synesthesia showed the highest levels of divergent creativity (Lunke and Meier 740). The cross-activation theory supports this finding as it emphasizes the difference in creative tendencies, including convergent and divergent thinking, in the different types of synesthesia. Due to the hyperconnectivity of neurons in different regions of the brain, the forms of synesthesia that develop may be different. One may find themselves as a musician due to their sound-to-color synesthesia, while another might find that they are drawn to painting as a result of his grapheme-color synesthesia. Researchers also found a trend between the type of synesthesia someone has and what artistic field they involve themselves in (Safran and Sanda 38). When examining the artistic fields, researchers found that "...the prev-

alence of synesthesia was found higher than in the general population,” and that “their percepts are frequently represented in their artworks” (Safran and Sanda 38). This finding is important as it shows how synesthetes who involve themselves in creative fields use their experiences to their advantage. Safran and Sanda’s research and Lunke and Meier’s findings both concluded that synesthetes not only involve themselves in creative fields, but they also excel in specific fields based on the form of synesthesia they have.

CREATIVITY AND THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF SYNESTHETIC EXPERIENCES

It is clear to see how unusual experiences, such as those provided by having synesthesia, lead to an increased involvement in creative occupations and hobbies throughout one’s life. Researchers have found that people with synesthesia often find themselves involved in creative fields as a result of the synesthetic experiences they have (Safran and Sanda 39). In a study conducted where sixty-three people with synesthesia were evaluated, nine percent were professional artists and over half of those tested were active in art. Out of this sample, seventy-eight percent of people stated that synesthesia assisted them in their creative works (Niccolai et al., 2018, as cited by Lunke and Meier 728). Lunke and Meier expand upon the impacts of synesthesia on one’s life by examining the effects of different types of synesthesia on the individual. Lunke and Meier are suggesting that the type of art in which one is involved is based on what kind of synesthesia they have (728). The cross-activation theory supports Lunke and Meier’s findings because it posits that neuronal hyperconnectivity of two stimuli will have a better chance of impacting one’s lifestyle than stimuli that are not connected in the brain. Someone who has grapheme-color synesthesia (synesthesia where colors and written symbols are connected) has a much greater chance of being drawn to creative fields that involve colors, letters, and symbols, than someone who has synesthesia that has to do with hearing.

The attraction that synesthetes commonly feel towards the arts is often seen as a benefit of the condition because they are able to perceive the world around them in a unique way—a way that people without the condition are unable to experience. Carol Steen, a painter with synesthesia, “...felt that the ‘overwhelming beauty of what she has seen’ powerfully compelled her to capture and reproduce her visions, and that ‘urgency to

paint needed to be expressed’...” (Safran and Sanda 39). Steen’s synesthetic experiences moved her so much that she began to paint in the hopes that others would understand the experiences that synesthesia allows her to see. The cross-activation theory offers the explanation that neural representations of inducers and concurrents are most likely placed in nearby areas in the brain (Hubbard et al. 154). Steen’s synesthesia creates colorful experiences that are unique and allow her to express her synesthetic experiences through her paintings. The visualizations that Steen experiences would not be possible if specific neurons in adjacent areas were not interconnected. The activation of neurons results from an outside stimulus. The neurons that code for the inducer activate the neurons that code for the concurrent. The key to this theory is that the neurons are adjacent to each other, and that is how they interconnect. Another example of someone empowered by their synesthetic experiences is Daniel Tammet—a man with synesthesia who is able to recall 20,000 decimals of π by remembering each number based on the texture, color, or shape that he sees it as (Ward 66). The difference between Steen and Tammet’s forms of synesthesia have allowed them to use it to their advantage. While Carol Steen is inspired by her synesthesia and channels what she experiences into her paintings, Daniel Tammet uses his form of the condition to help him memorize numbers. People who have synesthesia find that it brings more benefits, such as having a surplus of inspiration, than disadvantages, like distractions or feelings of being an outlier, and has a significant impact on their lifestyle.

PERSONALITY, CREATIVE THINKING, AND SYNESTHETIC EXPERIENCES

Synesthesia is more complex than simply experiencing multiple stimuli at once; a person’s personality directly corresponds to their form of synesthesia. It is crucial to begin with how convergent and divergent thinking play a role in creative thinking and personality. As mentioned earlier, convergent thinking relates to correct answers and memory, while divergent thinking involves open-mindedness, out-of-the-box thinking, and risk-taking. It is important that the critics’ standpoints are highlighted in order to understand the role that divergent thinking plays in personality and synesthetic experiences. The main stance that critics take when analyzing the relationship between synesthesia and creativity is that those who have synesthesia do not have higher levels of divergent thinking than

people without the condition (Ward 67). When evaluated against a group of people who did not have the condition through The Remote Associates Test (RAT) and the Alternate Uses Test (ALT), synesthetes outperformed the control group in convergent thinking, but not divergent thinking. The ALT was conducted by asking the participants to think of alternative uses for objects, while the RAT was conducted by providing three words to the participants and asking them to think of a connection between the words (Ward et al., 2008, qtd. in Ward 67). However, it is important to note that the varying types of synesthesia were not accounted for and people with all forms of the condition were tested together. These findings are not accurate because, as supported by the cross-activation theory, different forms of synesthesia will produce different levels of convergent and divergent thinking (Hubbard et al. 271-272). Critics also argue that levels of divergent thinking and involvement in creative fields are unrelated (Ward et al. 13). In other words, critics found that people who have synesthesia are often drawn to creative occupations because of the senses that are stimulated. This does not necessarily make them more creative in terms of thinking, such as divergent thinking, and does not support the connection between divergent thinking levels and creative tendencies.

A person's personality plays a significant part in their synesthetic experiences. The cross-activation theory supports the fact that different forms of synesthesia produce varying levels of convergent and divergent thinking. However, an interesting aspect to consider is how strongly personality, in relation to divergent thinking, affects synesthetic experiences (Hossain et al. 75). Divergent thinking, as mentioned earlier, is defined as out-of-the-box thinking, problem-solving, and requires an open-mind. Researchers found that when synesthetes were assessed on their personality traits according to a personality assessment known as "The Big Five," they had consistently high levels of "Openness to Experience," or open-mindedness. The researchers did not perform the personality assessments to synesthetes of all types in order to avoid generalizing the condition. Instead, the assessment focused on grapheme-color synesthesia (Safran and Sanda 38). "Openness to Experience" relates to the inclination to be involved in the arts and is associated with the imagination, higher levels of fantasizing, and openness to different ideas (Safran and Sanda 39). Researchers studying grapheme-color synesthesia along with additional types, such as forms involving visualized music or personification, also investigated the relation of personality to synesthetic experiences through the use of 'The Big Five' assessment. When com-

pared to the control group, researchers found that those with synesthesia scored significantly higher on the “Openness” and “Fantasizing” traits. The researchers concluded that synesthesia is linked to certain personality profiles that have the ability to impact how they interact with the world (Lucy Annett et al. 829-831). This finding challenges the argument that synesthetes do not have high levels of divergent thinking.

According to the cross-activation theory, the hyperconnectivity of neurons in different regions of the brain suggest that the type of synesthesia forms according to the location in the brain that these neurons connect (Hubbard et al. 165). These regions impact the form of synesthesia that is produced, thus impacting creativity levels and synesthetic experiences. Researchers also found that, “synaesthetes who are particularly high on ‘Openness’ may see more saturated colors because they are better able to bind, or direct attention towards their unusual sensory experience...” (Hossain et al. 80). Synesthetes who score high on openness have enhanced synesthetic experiences because the adjacent neurons that were hyperconnected were strengthened simultaneously; this is in accordance with the cross-activation theory. As synesthetes experience more enriched synesthetic incidents, they will continue to involve themselves in creative fields, thus strengthening the connection between the already-stimulated neurons. Being drawn to the arts helps promote aspects of creative thinking as it stimulates the mind and provokes the imagination. Synesthesia, divergent thinking, and involvement in creative fields all supplement one another to strengthen synesthetic experiences and encourage synesthetes to continue to involve themselves in creative fields.

CONCLUSION

Synesthesia is a unique condition, and it is difficult to comprehend the impact of experiencing multiple senses at once. Nonetheless, research supports that synesthesia cannot be generalized, and must be assessed with respect to the various forms that the condition can take. Thus, the creativity levels and inclinations that synesthetes have vary based on what form of synesthesia they have. Research also supports that divergent and convergent levels of thinking contribute to synesthetic experiences, along with the level of creative involvement that someone with synesthesia has throughout their life. Increased exposure to creative fields and hobbies will continue to enrich synesthetic experiences, inspiring further development of innovative thinking and abilities for synesthetes.

The cross-activation theory provides a neurological explanation as to why synesthesia occurs, assists in creating a foundation to explain how synesthetic experiences can be enhanced, and why people who have synesthesia may be more inclined to involve themselves in creative hobbies and occupations. Research also explains how synesthetic experiences and creative inspiration can be intensified with greater exposure to creative activities. The cross-activation theory highlights the connection between the different forms of synesthesia and convergent and divergent thinking by showing that the neuronal connections that occur in different regions of the brain form many different types of synesthesia. These different forms impact the individual who has the condition by influencing them to have more creative tendencies, hobbies, and occupations. By connecting synesthesia and convergent and divergent thinking, the cross-activation theory explains why different types of synesthesia results in interests in different creative fields, and why synesthetic experiences have varied levels of intensity.

Research on synesthesia is important due to the nature of the condition. Synesthetic experiences can provide people with enriched perspectives and inspire them to create incredible works to share with the world. Those who have the condition find that their synesthetic experiences are more of a help than a hindrance. Regardless of whether or not people with synesthesia share their experiences with the world, having the condition gives synesthetes the ability to express and involve themselves in ways that the rest of the world cannot comprehend. The unique perceptions that synesthetes have can inspire new ideas and innovations in society, further advancing the world around us.

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MELANIE KRAVCHENKO

The Carceral State: How Neoliberalism Ensures its Prosperity

ABSTRACT

*Under the guise of neoliberalism, the “War on Drugs” has created a carceral state that is harmful to the underprivileged and functions to secure the economic prosperity of the wealthy. In doing so, the “War on Drugs” highlights systemic injustices founded on racism that have left select communities vulnerable to policies that lead to incarceration for drug-related offenses. This paper will carefully examine Michelle Alexander’s argument about colorblindness and Thomas Scanlon’s notion of “equal concern” in *Why Does Inequality Matter*. Both are seen as driving forces for tough-on-crime policies that appeal to the privileged majority at the expense of the silent minority. John Stuart Mill’s utilitarian notion of happiness will also explore the role of these minorities in the social contract. A case study of Alabama’s prison system highlights conditions that are detrimental to the wellbeing of the prison population. Lastly, several solutions to the aforementioned issues are proposed based on an analysis of the driving forces behind social inequality, economic inequality, and “trickle down” economics.*

INTRODUCTION

The War on Drugs, declared first by President Richard Nixon in 1972, has served as a justification for mass incarceration. Those using drugs, regardless of individual circumstances and the severity of their offense, have been harshly punished. This new law enforcement initiative was initially meant to combat illegal drug smuggling and “drug kingpins” but it later turned into a war on America’s underprivileged. his paper will argue that this war has led to systemic injustices that disproportionately affect minority populations. The conditions in America’s poor urban neighborhoods, the role of law enforcement in perpetuating systemic racism, and those who control most of America’s wealth to fund “tough-on-crime” policies have fueled a culture of oppression, creating 21st century slaves who perform modern slave labor. Wealthy Americans benefit from a form of liberalism called neoliberalism. Neoliberalism represents the “ideas that unfettered markets on their own were efficient and stable”, and allows those with excessive material wealth to benefit from the

free-market as discussed in Joseph Stiglitz's book *People, Power, and Profits* (Stiglitz 194). This paper contends that neoliberal elites promote and perpetuate what Noah De Lissoyoy calls "the carceral state" to ensure that the market serves its interests. The carceral state, which includes but is not limited to prisons, is the tendency toward authoritarianism and punishment in the state and civil society," (De Lissoyoy 2). This paper explores to what extent criminal behavior, particularly when fostered by systemic inequality and desperation, justifies incarceration on the scale we have witnessed in the United States over the last few decades, and questions whether or not the monetization of criminals is in line with any reasonable definition of justice.

The notions of colorblindness and equal concern both feed into the inequality the carceral state forces upon underprivileged minorities in. Michelle Alexander in her book *The New Jim Crow* argues that colorblindness masks a system that disproportionately incarcerates minorities, especially those of low-income minorities, in a lucrative but morally repellent failure to manifest at the institutional level what the philosopher Thomas Scanlon would call equal concern. Colorblindness is rooted in color blind policies which purport to be applicable across all races but disproportionately affect people of color. Similarly, equal concern, prioritizes the interests of a certain class of individuals over another, in this case whites over blacks. As Scanlon puts it, "These objections apply when an institution or agent owes some benefits to every member of a certain group but provides this benefit only to some, or more fully to some than to others" (7). However, it is evident that when a policy unfairly targets underprivileged individuals, it is unjust. Colorblindness does not allow people of color to achieve the same levels of success and stability as their white counterparts. Instead, issues such as poverty are made worse by color blindness, affecting an entire class of working individuals. If both people of color and white can prosper, then society as a whole can thrive. The issue of ensuring prosperity must not become a political game with players serving as "currency" or "pieces." It should not work to promote or achieve the interests of specific individuals. While politicians insist on the integrity of free-markets, color blind neoliberalism is at work because advocates of an ideology already sees racism as "an individual rather than a structural problem." One example is societal status is measured by individual choices rather than outside factors beyond the individual's control. Lissoyoy uses would be how schools cater to students of color, stating that the students "struggle with lower levels of resources and face a more

hostile school climate and more regimented forms of curriculum” (742). Arguably, less resources and a hostile climate would contribute more to a student’s performance than a character flaw such as laziness. Because of color blind neoliberalism, students are left to struggle because of deficits they possess within themselves, while higher authorities neglect to ensure that they receive an education on par with that of their white counterparts. Therefore, the advocates of an unregulated free-market see the social problems produced through racism as an individual issue as well.

The ostensible purpose of the criminal justice system is to restore justice, punish crime, and rehabilitate offenders from criminality once they have paid their debt to society. However, the imposition of heavy sentences for drug offenses on a does not restore justice or address the problems that lead to increased recidivism. For low-income minority communities that already suffer from the effects of racial inequality, over-policing only compounds the institutionalized challenges these groups face. The various liberties granted to an individual are not necessarily dependent on the law or constitution, rather privilege and power perpetuate inequality even as owners claim to oppose it. Fueled by neoliberal economics, the carceral state endangers the lives of America’s most vulnerable members to benefit a tiny elite who presides over the criminal justice system. By design, the carceral state and neoliberal economics serve the personal interests of the wealthy and powerful and promote a distorted perception of the common good.

HOW POOR EDUCATION PROMOTES THE CARCERAL STATE

An individual brought up in poverty will often lack a proper education that leaves them more susceptible to choosing a life of crime. Not having what is considered a socially acceptable “mindset” could contribute to one’s decision to engage in deviant behaviors and create conflict. Although their actions may not be justifiable, the lack of education suggests that education plays a significant role in shaping one’s values, morals, and beliefs. As Rutger Bregman in *Utopia For Realists* states, “A twenty first-century education should prepare people not only for joining the workforce but also (and most importantly) for life” (150). Individuals who do not have access to this education are, therefore, lacking the preparation that transforms them into law-abiding citizens. Thomas Scanlon explains the conditions under which equal concern is violated such that

“If some students in a state receive a higher level of education this will place others at a disadvantage as “competitors in the labor market” (15). When the labor market is the sole force driving a society, a high level of education almost seems to be a necessity. With urban youth, they receive unequal education because the government has provided them with inferior schooling, while prospective wealthy students can afford to attend better institutions. For example, as Loic Wacquant argues in his book *Punishing the Poor*, “today young Washingtonians from the lower class, who are nearly all black and who depend entirely on crumbling public institution, have a higher chance of finding themselves behind bars than behind the desks of a university lecture hall” (162). Such individuals may never have an opportunity of joining the workforce and contributing to society and may instead turn to drug-related activities to provide for themselves or their family.

How can individuals participate in the free-market when they don't have what they need to lead happy, fulfilling, and prosperous lives? In his book *Libertarianism Defended*, Tibor Machan argues that such individuals should be able to detach from any such antipathetic “community” for staying would “violate their basic nature, their creative role in directing their own lives for better or worse” (77). If this were a just society, they would be able to do so but those confined to rundown sections of cities seem to have no way out of them. However, once they begin to commit crimes and end up in prison, they become dehumanized members of a new, and usually terrifying, community: the community, although they may not have access to opportunities that arguably could have prevented them from resorting to crime or deviant behaviors. Prisons do not function as a means in. This community does not create an environment where individuals are forced to reflect on their actions nor does it encourage individuals to reintegrate into society once they are released. Instead, it acts as a means of social control where inmates are thereby labeled “animals” by the state and, as a consequence, undeserving of a chance to redeem themselves.

HOW SUBPAR EMPLOYMENT AFFECTS THE POOR

Some might argue that a system of social control is necessary to punish those who have violated the law. To that end, one might say criminals have breached the social contract codified in our laws and upheld by our justice system. Why shouldn't they be imprisoned? What else should

we expect of law enforcement? The difficulty with this argument is that the prison system reinforces systemic injustices, ignoring the challenges these individuals and their communities have faced for generations. According to a 1940 study done by Ford Motor Company, “Many of the Negroes are employed in the foundry and do work that nobody else would do,” exposed to “molten metal, flying sparks, and touching heated machinery and metal parts” (Puryear 83). These individuals filled significant roles at these workplaces, even with the risk of injury and potential casualties. Yet, such positions were not, and are not, associated with power or privilege, particularly as individuals are risking their lives and wellbeing at work having no choice. Did these workers have what Thomas Scanlon would call “substantive opportunity” to train for and pursue work in other, less dangerous job sectors so that they could become “good [candidates] for selection” of “positions of advantage” (53)? The answer, historically, has been no as the types of employment available to blacks has been vastly different from the opportunities offered to whites. When “work nobody else would do” is their only alternative, it is not surprising that blacks gravitated towards dealing drugs (Puryear 83). They are trying to earn a wage comparable to their white counterparts, despite social arrangements systematically failing to foster conditions that allow them to achieve that goal by legal means. Tommie Shelby in his book *Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform* adds that some of the “ghetto poor” might refuse work because the jobs available are physically arduous, highly unpleasant, or “dirty,” or extremely dangerous (192). Despite the argument that the poor are not taking advantage of the jobs available, this frame of mind does not take into consideration the exploitative nature of the work involved, nor does it consider barriers, such as the inability to properly develop “marketable skills” (Shelby 193). Therefore, to improve the variety of jobs available in the private sector is not enough if underprivileged individuals lack the necessary skills to take advantage of them.

Ironically, while minorities are subject to the worst types of employment and working conditions, it is the fruits of their labor that the wealthy ultimately reap and enjoy. The wealthy gain the most from the work of racial minorities which runs contrary to the idea that elites are contributing the most economically. Economist Joseph Stiglitz argues that a raise in CEO salaries is “not intended to reward effort” but instead reflects factors such as “market interest rates and the price of oil” (4). Market interest rates are the rates of interest on a loan that varies depending on the type of loan and its term, factors that CEOs do not usually

control. Factors heavily influencing the price of oil, such as supply and demand for the product, are irrelevant to an individual CEO's performance. Instead, these factors reflect the state of the general economy. Unfortunately, the underprivileged, earning enough to make ends meet, are chastised when speaking out against such inequality. How can the disadvantaged be expected to equally contribute in the marketplace when they are subjected to extreme unfairness in the way of the measures they must take to make money?

In poor neighborhoods, individuals often have to resort to different forms of illegal activity such as selling drugs to survive. Jiwei Ci calls this "subsistence poverty," a form of poverty arising when "a lack of money threatens a person's ability to meet needs necessary for physical survival for themselves and their families" (Scanlon 30). For low-income populations drug dealing grants them a degree of autonomy in the work that they do. It is a market over which they have control and the skills, deeply embedding itself in their culture that Wacquant in his book *Prisons of Poverty* calls "booty capitalism" (81). For drug dealers, whether they harm others through their work is subordinated to securing basic necessities that allow them to survive. . According to John Stuart Mill, "the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually, or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection" (9). However, the poor and economically vulnerable cannot survive without violating laws of social contract, engaging in unorthodox booty capitalism on the street which is injurious to others. Mill's harm principle does not account for these variables that exist within the structure of a ghetto. However, human beings who are competent in Mill's sense will tend to choose those particular kinds of lives or 'modes of existence' that utilize their so-called 'higher' human faculties, such as their "aesthetic, intellectual, and moral powers" (Fuchs 235). In the absence of economic opportunity, however, these faculties must be utilized in a manner Mill's formulation does not include. Tommie Shelby describes the practice of gaining "street capital," in which individuals establish their authority when selling drugs as a redirection of their "higher capabilities" or "powers" in the absence of a social framework that enables them to be used in the manner a law-abiding citizen would consider rational or acceptable (226). With a proper social structure in place ensuring equality between all groups and classes of individuals, historically marginalized groups would be able to recognize their full potential and capabilities. Therefore, power and privilege would derive from the cultivation of their various talents

and abilities as citizens of equal worth and value. Those working to gain street capital want recognition as individuals having some power in a society that devalues them.

HOW THE UTILITARIAN NOTION OF HAPPINESS IS INAPPLICABLE TO OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The concept of utilitarianism encourages inequality in the carceral state by neglecting the existence of systemic injustice. Mill, who believes that adults should live as they see fit, argues that the happiness of the many should outweigh that of the few. This implies that the few who are engaging in illegal drug activity, even if this allows them to live in a way which benefits them, are not contributing to the welfare of society as a whole (“the happiness of the many”), and should be prohibited from continuing in their mode of existence (Smith 234). However, as Michael Rosino and Matthew Hughey point out, capital is the determining factor in perceiving an individual in society. Racial, social, economic, and cultural forms of capital collectively decide if one is a “fit” or “unfit” member of society (857). An unfit member of society may well be a drug addict on the street selling drugs to fuel his habit, desperate for help because their situation has turned hopeless. To criminalize unfitness of this kind is inhumane, and it becomes especially concerning when most individuals in the criminal justice system are people of color. “In some states, black men have been admitted to prison on drug charges at rates twenty to fifty times greater than those of white men” although they have both been shown to use drugs at similar rates (Alexander 50). Here, the carceral state is at work as it is deliberately incarcerating as many underprivileged individuals as possible. It also just happens to be African Americans being predominantly targeted to make the case that society has no place for such “dangerous” individuals. Meanwhile, this occurs all while neglecting the actual dangerous individuals within the society. Should not all those in prison indeed be violent and dangerous?

Discriminatory policies motivated by the War on Drugs have been amplified by law enforcement’s habitually excessive use of force against minority suspects. Michelle Alexander notes appalling accounts of SWAT teams raiding homes after receiving anonymous tips that frequently resulted in the murder of innocent people. As criminologist Peter Kraska explains, “between 1989 and 2001 at least 780 cases of flawed

paramilitary raids reached the appellate level, a dramatic increase over the 1980s, when such cases were rare, or earlier, when they were nonexistent. Many of these cases involve people killed in botched raids” (Alexander 75). Alexander further argues that such tactics are a means of exercising power, arbitrarily and with impunity over individuals who have much less social credibility than law enforcement officers. It is an effective tactic. When individuals speak out against such horrific acts, law enforcement disregards their claims, effectively silencing their voices. By allowing the oppression of these underprivileged individuals to continue, it fosters tolerance for that oppression in white communities. What is occurring in this scenario is a form of social control by the white privileged class, which connects to the notion of colorblindness. Law enforcement may not have racist intentions, but when police target certain racial minority groups, fundamental problems with existing policy emerge. This silence ensures that the carceral state will continue to exist as an instrument of institutionalized racism.

When the carceral state is able to continue as such an instrument, this system fosters and relies on the ignorance and tolerance of privileged populations, resulting in serious consequences. John Rawls, author of the book *A Theory of Justice*, asserts that the underprivileged should not be angry about their situation because they will form “non-comparing groups,” that will allow them to share a common ground with their social peers (Scanlon 36). Rawls points out that this would work if the economic gains of the few trickled down to everyone in society so that the underprivileged would be better off than anyone else. That is not the case in today’s carceral state. Thomas Scanlon points out that this is quite dangerous, particularly when whites become indifferent or apathetic toward different individuals and groups less privileged than they are. Therefore, Rawls’ argument for the benefits of non-comparing groups cannot apply today. Radical inequality breeds envy that exacerbates the indifference of other non-comparing groups leading to social unrest and violence because the wealth is not trickling down to the poor. Instead, it is sitting at the top of the social ladder, daunting them. Even as the current state of America’s prisons places law enforcement and the carceral state in what Rawls calls the “position of advantage”. So-called “ghetto communities” form groups with the goal of instigating acts of rebellion against the government whose promises of civil liberties ring hollow. Rawls calls this phenomenon “spontaneous rebellion” (Shelby 223) in which communities seek to bring attention to the structural injustices they are facing.

Moreover, it is not only the federal government which does not deliver on its promises of protecting civil liberties. It is the corrections officers working inside prisons whose job is to contain the “threat” to society but instead promote mistreatment and hinder rehabilitation. The type of illegal drug trafficking and smuggling, which the war on drugs is meant to prevent, takes place inside the prisons of the United States at the hands of these corrections officers. A report on conditions in Alabama’s prisons released this year by the Department of Justice detailed how prison staff fuel the illegal smuggling and distribution of drugs, which contribute to overdoses and perpetuate drug dependency. Reports involving incidents such as these are a violation of the 8th amendment of the constitution, protection from cruel and unusual punishment. As the report explains, “These security problems have persisted despite [Alabama Department of Corrections’] awareness of our investigation and our numerous onsite inspections of several facilities. In fact, the majority of the examples of unconstitutional conditions described throughout this letter occurred after we began our investigation” (49). The penitentiaries knowingly continue to subject its prisoners to unsafe and deadly conditions: “Many prisoners thought that part of the danger from drugs is that drug usage leads to drug debts, which leads to violence and sexual abuse when prisoners are unable to pay” (33). Alexander herself states that “The CIA admitted in 1998 that guerilla armies it actively supported in Nicaragua were smuggling illegal drugs into the United States -- drugs that were making their way onto the streets of inner-city black neighborhoods in the form of crack cocaine”, and now illegal drugs are (unironically) making their way into Alabama’s prisons. Prisons and correctional officers are therefore ineffective at rehabilitating and treating individuals with actual drug-related problems as the conditions prisons keep inmates in exacerbate those issues.

The utilitarian claim that the “maximum well-being of all involved” should also apply equally to prisons. If it did, measures would need to be implemented that prevent the authority figures in the correctional system from creating an environment that fosters crime, drug use, and other deviant behaviors. This utilitarian principle gives those who engage in abuse of their power the ability to exert pressure on individuals who, as Scanlon would argue, have entered into a contract with society. This contract should require that individuals give up some liberties to receive protection from the government, but ultimately that individuals collectively self-govern in a way that should benefit all participants of so-

ciety. However, this notion fails to understand that the privileged majority are governing while the underprivileged minority has no influence. In the article “The First White President,” Ta-Nehisi Coates recalls when President Nixon spoke on behalf of the “silent majority”. “It is a voice of people who have not taken to the streets before, who have not indulged in violence, who have not broken the law” . This speech explicitly condemned the criminal minority for violation of the social contract. However, this social contract grants no legal protection from the government, providing no reason to abide by the law. Nixon’s view also ignores a central truth articulated by Rosino and Hughey that the only reason such individuals have a “clean reputation” in society is because the areas they live in — predominantly white neighborhoods such as the Hollywood hills where the “bulk of illegal substances is actually consumed” — are not searched as aggressively for drugs by law enforcement or receive the same media attention when crime occurs is because it would undermine the residents’ appearance of entitlement and privilege (Rosino and Hughey 873). Once again, the negligence of authority figures in the name of utilitarian principles persists by allowing the people in those neighborhoods to remain ignorant.

THE NEED TO KEEP SOCIETY “SAFE” VERSUS THE “PATHOLOGY OF THE DRUG ADDICT”

In liberal societies, there is a predominant view that adults should have the right to “live as seems good to themselves,” as a fundamental liberty (Smith 233). Therefore, the decision to use drugs will not necessarily lead someone to become a violent, ruthless criminal. Imprisoning them is a way to “protect” society, supporting the notion that “intervention” is necessary to prevent harm from being inflicted upon others. It is only because society condemns an individual who has not actually harmed others. In a case study from Andrea Mayr and David Machin’s book *The Language of Crime and Deviance: An Introduction to Critical Linguistic Analysis*, an image is taken from a journal article depicting a woman sitting on a street curb surrounded by various paraphernalia. She is presented in a negative light as the writer expresses disgust over how this woman’s behavior may be harmful to others. He calls her a “junkie” who “smokes deadly drugs in broad daylight” (42). This type of attitude diverts the focus away from her predicament and reinforces a common media portrayal. They are perceived as “criminals” rather than people in need of

help. As Bregman argues in citing Duke University professor Jane Costello, “the stress of poverty puts people genetically predisposed to develop an illness or disorder at an elevated risk” (54). While genes cannot be altered, it is possible to undo poverty; however this requires a well-planned strategy.

ADDRESSING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, A DRIVER OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Economic inequality drives social inequality and perpetuates the existence and operation of unjust institutions and laws. Without adequately addressing economic inequality, unjust institutions and regulations cannot change. However, to create new laws requires a change in the attitudes of those who enforce colorblind practices and institutional racism. Joseph Stiglitz claims that “societies with greater inequality are less likely to make public investments which enhance productivity, such as in public transportation, infrastructure, technology and education” (11). Since a wealthy elite possesses most of the wealth in America —the “richest 8% earn half of all the world’s income, and the richest 1% own more than half of all wealth” (Bregman 217)—it is no surprise that neoliberals rely on the private sector to fulfill their needs.

When poor people are incarcerated it prevents them from exercising power and it reinforces the economic gains of the wealthy who prey on their misfortune. Paradoxically America’s poor are the people who need jobs the most because, as Stiglitz argues in his discussion of “rent-seeking” behavior, the wealthiest individuals do not actually produce any goods (11). The poor are producing products for the wealthy while the rich hold most of the wealth. This is an issue that extends beyond racial lines because it affects anybody that is not part of the wealthy minority. The impact of creating jobs has been seen in Europe, which has “many more police per capita than the U.S. does, but they also have more expansive welfare states that seek to reduce crime by providing high-quality daycare, good schools, universal health care, and other critical social and economic programs” (Gottschalk). A policy such as universal health care would benefit all of its recipients, most importantly aid the poor and their susceptibility to incarceration. One example being mentally ill individuals entering prisons. Rehabilitation for the mentally sick prisoners through current medical care and therapy policies fail to address the underlying pathologies. With a system like universal healthcare, these

abnormalities can become treatable. Nevertheless, treating these pathologies cannot happen without identifying the underlying causes, such as systemic poverty. Under the current system, the mentally ill prisoners are actually placed in an environment which exacerbates their pathologies. Meanwhile, neoliberal elites benefit from the “free-market” which only ensures their financial security.

Trickle-down-economics preserves the carceral state by not only failing to create jobs and ensure social welfare but through expanding the infrastructure of the carceral state by building new penitentiaries. , Loic Wacquant notes in his book *Prisons of Poverty* how, “Wall Street brokerage firms, such as Goldman Sachs, Smith Barney Shearson, Prudential-Bache, and Merrill Lynch sank \$2 to \$3 billion dollars per year into”the construction of 26 federal prisons and 96 state penitentiaries in 1996 (143). These bankers making billions fund the dehumanization and monetization of mainly low-level, non-violent offenders. By doing so, they can continue reaping the benefits of having a surplus of wealth at the expense of others. Therefore, America’s poor are unable to escape poverty and climb up the social ladder.

Since we cannot depend on the private sector to produce public benefits, it has to be at the discretion of the government to backstop the free-market by providing all families with a universal basic income (UBI) which would “free the poor from a welfare trap and spur them to seek a paid job with true opportunities for growth and advancement” (Bregman 44). Ta Nehisi Coates claims that the white working class wants to achieve financial security just as the black working class does and but “most Americans—regardless of race—are exploited by an unfettered capitalist economy”. Thus, if all families, white and black, were to receive a UBI, this could potentially bridge the gap between the two classes of individuals. Stiglitz, in response to Bregman, would argue that while UBI is a feasible solution, it alone is not the solution to integrating one into the marketplace as jobs are the “backbone of a healthy economy” (Stiglitz 191). Nevertheless, addressing the imbalance between classes is still a step in the right direction.

However, achieving long term economic stability is not possible without addressing the problems at the center of economic inequality, namely, discrimination. Stiglitz even acknowledges that racism “like any cancer it undermines our vitality” (201). African Americans are jailed at rates disproportionate to their white counterparts which keeps them economically isolated. It can be the driving force in one’s decision to resort to

drug use given the pressures faced by racial minorities. They are competing in a market that does not adequately address their material pursuits or forget their criminal record.. Having that label of an inmate or former inmate comes with severe repercussions. Without employment, an individual would likely struggle to find a place to live and afford the necessary expenses.

To prevent individuals from suffering such repercussions, reform of criminal justice, and the system of incarcerating individuals is necessary. As suggested by John Pfaff suggests in his book, *Locked In: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration*, the focus of reforming the criminal justice system should not be reducing the length of one's sentence because "there could be fewer people in prison each day, but more people passing through each year" but rather decreasing prison admissions. -- this strategy would be difficult to execute (65). Given that "prosecutors have ended up with almost unfettered, unreviewable power to determine who gets sent to prison and for how long" (Pfaff 68). Consequently, what is required is a system of checks and balances on the power of prosecutors so as to make the criminal justice process racially neutral. In "America Needs a Third Reconstruction", a potential reform strategy similar to Pfaff's idea is proposed: "Prison should be reserved primarily for people who pose grave threats to public safety", which is not the case when many individuals are imprisoned because they have either committed a non-violent offense or have been forced to plead guilty (regardless of their true guilt) as they could not afford adequate legal representation (Gottschalk). Even if an individual is guilty of a crime, it is not justifiable to strip them of the right to a fair and speedy trial. The constitution guarantees and applies this to all citizens. Furthermore, although the Supreme Court is supposed to uphold the rule of law, it implicates itself in the abuse of power alongside law enforcement stripping individuals of their rights. The mere fact that an individual comes from an economically and socially run-down neighborhood does not justify the discriminatory treatment rendered to them by our society.

FINAL SENTIMENTS

The emphasis on tackling the issue of drug smuggling into the United States has resulted in a war on urban communities, particularly poor and underprivileged minorities. While not explicitly recognizing the targeting of minorities through its over-policing policies, the state continues to deny its use of "colorblind" tactics. The different findings

and analyses have led to the proverbial “making the rich richer and the poor poorer,” reflecting the objective on the part of wealthy individuals. Wealthy individuals are represented by influential politicians to preserve their power and privilege within American society. The basic structure of society allows for certain individuals to enjoy their inheritance while others cannot even enjoy the fruits of their labor. The reason the elite are so powerful is that these fruits are primarily “consumed” by them, the sole benefactors of neoliberal policies. These individuals are not influencing the free-market in a way that would benefit everyone. On the other hand, many underprivileged individuals are forced to employ unorthodox means such as drug dealing to ensure their economic survival. It is evident that not providing individuals from minority communities with substantive opportunities cannot fully prosper in our society.

A poorly-structured social welfare program implemented by the government would be useless and would not serve well any of its recipients. All it does is reinforce the privilege of the elite. The money of the wealthy minority being used to fund new penitentiaries does nothing to combat America’s drug problem. Instead, it feeds the illegal smuggling of drugs into prisons, unjustly tramples on the rights of minorities, and in some cases has led to deaths stemming from gross negligence. Proponents of the drug war ignore the fact that locking away an innocent individual barely guilty of a crime would take away the contribution they could make to society.

Furthermore, expecting an individual who has spent a significant amount of time in prison to wish to contribute to the common good is foolish. This expectation is justified when a potentially productive member of a community becomes a victim of systemic injustices. However, where does that leave these individuals if they are viewed as inferior and subhuman? The dehumanization of human beings and monetization of prisons engendered by and through the enforcement of the carceral state is immoral in every regard. An efficient solution to the economic and social injustices in our society must be well thought-out and implemented through a bipartisan effort in Congress. The belief for such a solution relies on hope, hope for a better future and better interracial relations.

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AUSTEN DAMERAU

Social Media and the Death of Logic

ABSTRACT

Echo chambers covering a variety of topics exist all over the internet, however, the most dangerous echo chambers facilitate the spread of misinformation. A prime example is the Flat Earth theory which maintains that the true shape of the earth is flat and that there is a conspiracy to conceal this fact from the public. Echo chambers allow individuals to insulate themselves from contrary points of view while mechanisms such as selective exposure lead people to believe information that could be harmful to themselves or others. Flat earth theorists who inhabit echo chambers further perpetuate the chambers through personality traits, such as antisocialness, that restrict the introduction of new information to the group. The individuals in a chamber and the mechanisms of the chamber itself form a positive feedback loop that creates hard-to-change opinions based on information from dubious sources. Ultimately, echo chambers are detrimental to traditional belief-forming strategies and require further examination in order to prevent their use.

INTRODUCTION

The power of the internet has connected people across societies and enabled the spread of ideas on a global scale. However, with the power of increased connectivity comes with the unintended consequence of facilitating the spread of conspiratorial beliefs. Specifically, conspiracy theorists are able to cluster together on various web pages and social media sites in order to form echo chambers which are defined as “homogeneous and polarized communities” (Michela Del Vicario et al. 554) People use these echo chambers as launching points to proliferate belief in various conspiracy theories. One example of proliferation would be the Flat Earth theory, which thrives in these despite the existence of contrary information. Flat Earth theory is the belief that the earth is flat, which opposes the scientifically verified fact that the earth is round. The Flat Earth belief system originates from the experiments of Samuel Birley Rowbotham, an English inventor from the early nineteenth century (“Flat”). An important belief for Flat Earth theorists is a commitment to free thinking, best demonstrated by a quote from their website: “The Flat Earth Society

mans the guns against oppression of thought and the Globularist lies of a new age. Standing with reason we offer a home to those wayward thinkers that march bravely on with REASON and TRUTH in recognizing the TRUE shape of the Earth - Flat” (“Flat”). These factors, along with Flat Earth theorists’ use of the internet, make them a good case study for echo chambers. How do online echo chambers reinforce belief in conspiracy theories like Flat Earth? The fundamental mechanisms of the creation and maintenance of echo chambers are the same mechanisms that allow echo chambers to contribute so much to conspiracy belief. The case study of Flat Earth theory is an effective example of how conspiracy theorists use echo chambers since many online echo chambers are supportive of it.. If online communities act as echo chambers for ideas that support Flat Earth theory, then they contribute to the theory through the same mechanisms that sustain the echo chambers. Through these mechanisms, individuals can gain maladaptive belief-forming strategies that only focus on supporting information making their beliefs difficult to correct. In this paper I will analyze echo chambers as they relate to the proliferation of Flat Earth theory. I will discuss what echo chambers are and how they form, how echo chambers maintain themselves, and why they are an issue.

THE BASICS OF ECHO CHAMBERS AND HOW THEY FORM

One of the internet’s greatest strengths is its ability to transmit information quickly and efficiently between users. Flat Earth echo chambers use the transitivity and connectivity of the internet to diffuse both information and misinformation. Through selective exposure, “users mostly tend to select and share content related to a specific narrative and to ignore the rest” (Del Vicario et al. 558). Del Vicario et al.’s research shows that selective exposure is an important factor in the diffusion of conspiracy information. Individuals tend to rely on information that confirms their beliefs and only share this information with other users if it coincides with both of their beliefs. The information spreads, shuttling among individual users and among various echo chambers. The internet’s ability to easily chain together ideas bolsters this spread of information, as reported in “Mimesis and Conspiracy: Bureaucracy, New Media and the Infrastructural Forms of Doubt” by Micheal Vine and Matthew Carey. Vine and Matthew Carey explain in their text “Mimesis and Conspiracy: Bureaucracy, New Media and the Infrastructural Forms of Doubt”,

“There is always one more link to click, one more connection to make – a fact captured in the anxious image of the bottomless ‘rabbit hole’ that proliferates wildly within conspiracist discourse” (60). The nature of the internet —and social media in particular— facilitates this “rabbit hole” effect, in which sources that support conspiracy theories connect more effectively and allow individuals to consume misinformation in large quantities.. These two ideas work in concert through echo chambers to proliferate belief in Flat Earth. The Flat Earth Society’s official web page demonstrates this effect. On the home page, there are links to other Flat Earth echo chambers, such as the official Flat Earth wikipedia page (See Fig.1 below). Easy transitivity between these various homogenous clusters allows information to spread quickly through them and their members, thereby reinforcing this information. However, in order for proliferation and reinforcement to take place, people must establish the echo chambers first.

Many factors can contribute to the creation of echo chambers, however, the personalities of the individuals involved are the most salient. In “Personality Traits and Echo Chambers on Facebook,” Alessandro Bessi finds that, “Rather, our analysis suggests that the presence of specific personality traits in individuals lead to their considerable involvement in supporting narratives inside virtual echo chambers” (323). The fact that a significant number of theorists involved in these echo chambers share personality traits agrees with findings by Del Vicario et al.: “In particular, we show that social homogeneity is the primary driver of content diffusion, and one frequent result is the formation of homogeneous, polarized clusters” (558). The specifics of these personality traits matter less than that they are similar. Bessi and Del Vicario et al.’s findings confirm that social homogeneity and homogenous polarized clusters are critical for the formation of echo chambers. Therefore, it is the integration of similar personality traits and similar beliefs that creates echo chambers. This contributes to the most important mechanism that allows echo chambers to exist: the cyclical nature of reinforcement.

HOW ECHO CHAMBERS FACILITATE BELIEF

Thoughtful claims are usually supported by well-reasoned facts; conspiracy theorists’ claims usually do not rely on strong facts. Instead, they employ repetition as their principal tactic for spreading misinformation.. The term “echo chamber” points to this tactic and the self-confirming nature of conspiracy theories. In “Echoes of a Conspiracy: Birthers,

Truthers, and the Cultivation of Extremism” authors Benjamin R. Warner and Ryan Neville-Shepard point to echo chambers as examples of places that allow theorists to internalize reinforcing messages and ignore ideas that may be contrary to their claims (4). Through the reinforcement mechanism, echo chambers facilitate the proliferation of misinformation outlined previously. Del Vicario et al. found that through the spread of conspiratorial information, people can create echo chambers that reinforce that information. After they create these echo chambers, those who interact within them use selective exposure to ignore opposing points of view and focus on reinforcing beliefs. Any new information that individuals find or create in one echo chamber can then flow into other echo chambers. This new information reinforces these chambers and creates other, new chambers as well. This cycle creates a positive feedback loop that insulates theorists by reasserting any previous claims and facilitating the proliferation of a particular conspiracy theory. The closed-off nature of echo chambers that insulates theorists from conflicting points of view preserves this loop nature.

While different echo chambers can be connected, there is often a disconnect between their narratives and the conflicting information between them. Del Vicario et al.’s research found that “Users tend to aggregate in communities of interest, which causes reinforcement and fosters confirmation bias, segregation, and polarization” (558). As the word “segregation” suggests, theorists use echo chambers to separate themselves from conflicting ideas. Consequently, the danger of an echo chamber is in its ability to shelter users from contrary points of view. Warner and Neville-Shepard define selective exposure as the action of a theorist to avoid exposure to certain evidence that disproves their beliefs (4). This concept is also in Alessandro Bessi’s text “Science Vs Conspiracy: Collective Narratives in the Age of (mis)information.” He writes, “In particular, we measure commenting activity of polarized users on the opposite category, finding that polarized users of conspiracy news are more focused on posts of their community and their attention is more oriented to diffuse conspiracy contents” (9). Although Bessi does not use the term “selective exposure,” his finding that conspiracy users tend to focus inwards supports it.

Echo chambers grant users the ability to hide within these communities and insulate themselves opposing points of view. In the event selective exposure fails and conflicting information does enter an echo chamber, a secondary mechanism, partisan filtering, maintains the

chamber's integrity. Partisan filtering is the process of dismissing contrary beliefs and only focusing on evidence that confirms one's beliefs (Warner and Neville-Shepard 4). Both mechanisms— selective exposure and partisan filtering— allow theories like Flat Earth to perpetuate themselves despite the existence and availability of contrary evidence. The forum section of the Flat Earth Society webpage shows these mechanisms, particularly selective exposure, in action as there is only one forum post dedicated to debating Flat Earth and multiple forum posts dedicated to discussing supporting ideas (See Fig. 2 below). Additionally, the website heavily moderates the debate forum ("Flat"). Although this debate forum portrays itself as an argument against the existence of an echo chamber, it is a clever way to contain contrary viewpoints in one area of the chamber. This makes it easy for the majority of theorists to use selective exposure to uphold the integrity of their beliefs. Moderators, who are usually steadfast believers, later engage in partisan filtering to dismiss the contrary information as they mediate the forums. One of the ways in which echo chambers are established, through personality traits, supports the idea of selective exposure.

The mechanisms that lead to the creation of echo chambers are also important in maintaining them. Del Vicario et al. explain that selective exposure is also a potential mechanism in the formation of echo chambers, "Selective exposure to content is the primary driver of content diffusion and generates the formation of homogeneous clusters, i.e., 'echo chambers'" (554). Yet, even as selective exposure forms these clusters there are more similarities between the participants than just a shared ideology. In "Personality Traits and Echo Chambers on Facebook," Bessi analyzes the personality traits of echo chamber participants:

Our results show that, in both echo chambers, the dominant personality model is "nynny", pointing out the strong prevalence of individuals that enjoy interactions with close friends (low extraversion), are emotionally stable (high emotional stability), suspicious and antagonistic towards others (low agreeableness), engage in antisocial behavior (low conscientiousness), and have unconventional interests (high openness) (321).

Specifically, they point to a mechanism for maintaining selective exposure. These traits, low extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, suggest individuals who have engaged in minimal amounts of

social interactions with other people are unlikely to encounter differing viewpoints. This reinforces the selective exposure mechanism.

Why is maintenance of selective exposure so important? Del Vicario et al. elaborates that selective exposure is important in establishing and maintaining echo chambers (554). However, selective exposure alone does not fully explain how echo chambers function. In “Conspiracy Theories: Causes and Cures*,” Cass R. Sunstein and Adrian Vermeule discuss a more specific way in which selective exposure can act:

For most of what they believe that they know, human beings lack personal or direct information; they must rely on what other people think. In some domains, people suffer from a “crippled epistemology,” in the sense that they know very few things, and what they know is wrong. Many extremists fall in this category; their extremism stems not from irrationality, but from the fact that they have little (relevant) information, and their extremist views are supported by what little they know (211-212).

Sunstein and Vermeule’s concept of “crippled epistemology” gives a much more complete view of how selective exposure is important to conspiratorial belief systems. The element of “crippled epistemology” serves as an additional mechanism for the establishment of selective exposure since it explores how individuals form beliefs based on limited information. Due to the hyper connective nature of the internet, it would seem nearly impossible to live in the kind of bubble that prevents a person from confronting a variety of viewpoints. Sunstein and Vermeule’s argument that most people rely on others for information helps remedy this misconception. The fact that people rarely use direct information to form opinions makes selective exposure even more important because conspiracy theorists’ social groups and echo chambers can insulate them from contrary information. The Flat Earth Society’s website shows the prevalence of insulation tactics by recommending The Flat Earth Wiki as another source to find supporting information. This website, a massive database of articles pertaining to the Flat Earth debate that is produced and curated by Flat Earth theorists, makes known its policy of self-regulation: “Welcome to the Flat Earth Wiki, otherwise known as The FEW - a collaborative resource maintained by the Flat Earth Society” (“The Flat Earth Wiki”). Due to this self-regulation, the site is a perfect breeding ground for the “crippled epistemology” outlined above. The information is second-hand so the users are never exposed to primary sources. In ad-

dition to its ability to contribute to theorist's "crippled epistemology," the site serves as another source of misinformation that helps to reinforce Flat Earth belief. Through these mechanisms echo chambers create a breeding ground for not just false but also potentially harmful information.

WHAT MAKES ONLINE CONSPIRACY ECHO CHAMBERS DANGEROUS?

While many online echo chambers exist, what makes them dangerous is the quality of information that circulates through and from them. After all, echo chambers are places where one set of beliefs reigns supreme and other beliefs are not tolerated. However, it is important to note that echo chambers are not limited to conspiracy theories. Alessandro Bessi investigates the prevalence of echo chambers on scientific news forums:

In particular, we focus on users commenting on posts published by US Facebook pages supporting the scientific narrative (Science) and the conspiracy-like one (Conspiracy). We choose to consider these specific narratives for two main reasons: a) Science and Conspiracy are two very distinct and conflicting narratives; b) scientific pages share the main mission to diffuse scientific knowledge on the most recent research findings e.g. the discovery of gravitational waves and the Higgs boson, whereas conspiracy-like pages diffuse myth narratives, hoaxes, false news, and controversial information designed to replace scientific evidence e.g. the absence of a link between HIV and AIDS and the causal relationship between vaccines and autism (Bessi 320)

These were identified as echo chambers due to their polarized nature, overlapping content, and ability to spread information among users. What divides these two echo chambers is the quality of information they spread.

Del Vicario et al. discuss the nature of the information and how its spread differs between the two types of echo chambers: "...conspiracy theories simplify causation, reduce the complexity of reality, and are formulated in a way that is able to tolerate a certain level of uncertainty. On the other hand, scientific information disseminates scientific advances and exhibits the process of scientific thinking (554). Information spread through conspiracy echo chambers has few facts, relative to science echo chambers, to support their claims. This means that the information that

circulates through conspiracy chambers has a higher chance of being false. Additionally, Del Vicario et al. finds that the way in which people spread conspiracy-related information is also significantly different. “Science news is usually assimilated, i.e., it reaches a higher level of diffusion, quickly, and a longer lifetime does not correspond to a higher level of interest. Conversely, conspiracy rumors are assimilated more slowly and show a positive relation between lifetime and size” (558). While the spread of conspiracy information is hard to see in Flat Earth due to the comparatively limited number of sources, one can still see the nature of this information within the conspiracy. Del Vicario et al.’s analysis of conspiracy theory echo chambers finds that they tend to simplify the argument. One example would be the Flat Earth Societies website which states: “What Is Gravity? Gravity as a theory is false. Objects simply fall” (“Flat”). People may think that, compared to science echo chambers, conspiracy echo chambers are more damaging. However, the echo chamber’s topic is not the only important difference between the two. The location, either online or in-person, of the echo chambers is also important.

In a recent study on echo chambers, “The Geographic Embedding of Online Echo Chambers: Evidence from the Brexit Campaign,” Marco Bastos et al. explains how physical proximity plays a role in influencing online echo chambers. “This is nonetheless in line with the hypothesis that physical social networks are likely to have spilled-over to online debate. The fundamental differences in echo-chambers in the Leave and Remain campaigns correspond to the demographic makeup of their social networks” (13). This study offers another way to examine echo chambers by looking at them online and seeing if they have a basis in the material world. Although physical echo chambers do exist, this thesis focuses on those that exist online due to how effective they are at generating and maintaining an individual’s conspiratorial belief. One can see a good example of this on the first page of the Flat Earth Society’s website which contains a register of all of the society’s members and where they live. Members are from all over the world rather than from a limited geographic region like they would be in the case of a physical echo chamber. The power of the internet allows for connections like these and facilitates the reinforcement of these members’ beliefs by giving them access to other like-minded individuals. Additionally, it allows them to retreat to positive feed-back loops whenever they are presented with contrary information, regardless of their physical location. While online conspiracy echo chambers are more damaging than physical echo chambers, these

concepts alone do not fully account for the dangers of echo chambers. The true danger of echo chambers is their ability to convince theorists that they are freethinkers standing against an oppressive elite, a perfect recipe for a harmful form of populist politics.

The rise of populism in recent years has also seen an increased acceptance of conspiracy theories. Populism is defined as “...having at least two identifiable core characteristics—it emphasizes the central role of ‘the people’ in politics and is heavily critical of ‘the elite’” (Silva et al. 424). Flat Earth belief blends together these core characteristics in relation to science instead of politics. The Flat Earth Wiki (FEW) shows this science populism best:

We, editors of the FEW, hope that you find the truth and erudition of these works, as so many before you have. Within these digital pages you can expect to find the skepticism and understanding needed to break free from the constraints of conventional dogmatic thinking and brave the pioneering waters of true science and learning (“Flat Earth Wiki”).

The people’s quest for the truth and taking a stand against the dogmatic thinking of the elite fills Flat Earth rhetoric. Therefore, populist beliefs tend to correlate with a belief in conspiracies. “It shows how individuals who are more susceptible to populism tend to believe in the existence of malevolent global conspiracies and control of information.” (Silvia et al. 431). Through this correlation between populism and conspiratorial beliefs, along with the prevalence of populist rhetoric found on Flat Earth websites, one can theorize that populism contributes heavily to Flat Earth belief.

How is the Flat Earth theorists’ populist messaging connected to echo chambers? Flat Earthers view themselves as champions of freethinking who stand against the lies of the elite scientists. For Flat Earthers, Flat Earth belief is about the right to find their own truth. However, this noble pursuit of knowledge is an ignorant belief. Instead of acting as a mechanism that encourages free thought, populism only facilitates echo chambers. In “Right Wing Populism in the West: Social Media Discourse and Echo Chambers” Majid Khosravinik explains how, “given the nature of populist nationalist discourse and strategies, the new digital participatory technology is an apt space for construction, promotion and dissemination of exclusionary nationalist discourses across geopolitical contexts” (63).

Del Vicario et al.'s findings that "homogeneity appears to be the primary driver for the diffusion of contents" found in echo chambers reinforces "exclusionary nationalist discourse" (554). This implies that, in order for information to be propagated through an echo chamber, it must be similar to or in support of preexisting beliefs. Instead of encouraging free thinking, the populist ideas that Flat Earthers champion and the echo chambers they frequent only serve to reinforce their beliefs.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF ECHO CHAMBERS

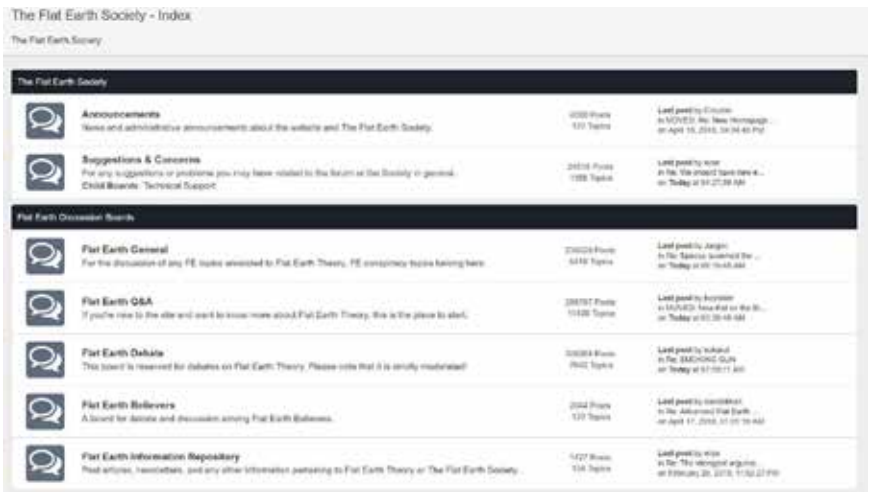
The dangers posed by echo chambers and how they eschew the conventional method of forming beliefs through closed-mindedness is an issue that people should not dismiss and which requires further moderation. Although Flat Earth belief is unlikely to harm theorists there are many other conspiracy theories that pose a greater threat to their believers. One example is the anti-vaccination movement where parents forgo vaccinating their children for fear the vaccine will give them autism. This has led to a major increase in preventable diseases in children. Online echo chambers filled with like-minded individuals support these theorists' misguided beliefs in the same ways that online echo chambers support Flat Earth theorists. Once people form the echo chambers, selective exposure allows them to isolate their community from any contrary information. This community isolation creates a place where anything can seem plausible since there is nothing to contradict it. These echo chambers are not limited to conspiracy theories; any subject of interest can lead individuals to exhibit self-confirming behavior. The increase in echo chambers throughout the internet can facilitate the spread of misinformation to almost every topic where people ignore logical belief-forming methods and readily accept misinformation as the truth. Awareness of echo chambers can help individuals recognize the threat they pose and choose to avoid them, preventing more people from falling for their misinformation.

Figure 1:



(theflatearthsociety.org/home/)

Figure 2:



(theflatearthsociety.org/forums/)

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RAHUL PAI

Media Bias: The Framing of African American Male Athletes in Sports Media

ABSTRACT

Media has the power to collectively shape and distort human perception by using framing as its catalyst. According to research on the portrayal of Black male athletes in sports media, the frames used on athletes of color are overwhelmingly biased. Particularly, the practice of stereotyping by race and physicality can be dated back to issues in the slavery narrative. In our current cultural climate, the vast social and cultural capitals that the media possess have the ability to reconstruct how individuals define athletes of color but also how to define minority populations at large. Data obtained in critical analyses illustrates that when reporters selectively determine what pieces of information are relevant or salient to a story, distorted fields of knowledge among consumers can be created. Focusing on Colin Kaepernick's 2016 NFL protest, the aim of this paper is to determine if Black male athletes are disproportionately covered compared to their White counterparts and how this can be seen through the specific frames that are used. Understanding both the complexities and nuances ingrained in the framing of the conventional Black and White athletes allows large ramifications of bias in sports media to be uncovered and remediated.

INTRODUCTION

"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."

- Malcolm X

Inherent in storytelling are distinct nuances that define each story and alter how people consume information both consciously and unconsciously. Storytelling is used in the media as a tool to advance the diversity found in sports entertainment. Particular to Black male athletes, sports media highlights minority athletic contributions under very specific meanings of frames and places within them, where the nuances

(which can only be understood upon analyzing the collective frames used to depict Black male athletes in sports media) exist.

News media frames can transform human perception through the restructuring of cognitive schemas, which aid in organizing current knowledge and forming relationships for future understanding. Framing theory is used to deconstruct the exact frames used to portray Black male athletes and any overt biases within these frames. To further this point, specific content analytic studies are employed to reveal what frames are commonly applied and to examine the ramifications of media framing on human cognitive development and public perception. The public's reactions to Colin Kaepernick's 2016 National Football League protest is used to elucidate the parallel relationship between selective media coverage and framing. Such investigation relies primarily on the two following questions: Within the context of sport, does racialized media framing alter the human perception of Black male athletes in the United States? If so, how does media framing play a role in the production of stereotypes, public perception, and racial biases among the public? Ultimately, the biased media framing and coverage of Black male athletes in the United States are underscored by the hidden nuances in racial frames that can be indoctrinated into ordinary society in the forms of racial bias, stereotypes, and the perpetuation of false narratives. Specifically, the false narratives that are preserved in sports media serve to dehumanize Black male athletes as corporeal entities rather than emphasize their intellectual abilities or knowledge relative to their White counterparts.

THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA FRAMING ON THE ACQUISITION OF COGNITIVE SCHEMAS

News media portrays Black male athletes by using specific frames that simultaneously construct and transform the currently held schemas in viewers. Schemas help viewers constructively form patterns between categories of information and use such understanding to develop future relationships between ideas. Thus, viewers simply base constructed meanings and different frameworks of thinking on the implicit framing used to portray Black male athletes in media. Frisby expounds that, "news frames... work with cues... that come from people, situations that we do not personally experience, from the media, from the news, from entertainment media, from family, our group association and... help journalists provide meaning in stories, telling readers what is and what is not important. (Entman, 1994)." (94) Although viewers naturally expect

the news to be objective, the frames used in news reporting oftentimes contain misrepresentations of people that can impose certain framing effects on the audience. A “framing effect... occurs when a phrase, image or statement suggests a particular meaning or interpretation of an issue. Frames link issues to particular beliefs that carry with them concepts for interpreting implications of the issue” (Frisby 93). Although the framing of a story helps viewers comprehend the story with their own innate understanding, these frames also transform how viewers interpret the nuances of the topics entailed in such stories. The specificity with which a story is framed permits the viewer to either garner broader beliefs about issues or reconstruct their current understanding within the applied frames.

The nuances (an inherent component of media framing) can impact how journalists cover certain stories and how they choose the scope within which these stories are told. For instance, “communications researcher Entman (1993) argues that journalists may follow the rules for objective reporting, yet inadvertently use frames in their stories that prevent most audience members from making a balanced and “objective” assessment of the story, individual, and situation” (Frisby 92-93). Since journalists are often building a story upon a progressive order, they largely rely on established frames that may be factually incorrect or biased. Viewers often further incorporate these biases into their current cognitive understanding of the world and leave out any substantial objective understanding. In other words, viewers integrate the specific meaning behind frames used in media into their own existing schemas and frameworks of thinking without being aware of such an occurrence. Consequently, the integration of biased frames can prompt the emergence of mental frameworks that are innately flawed and inaccurate, beginning the formation of stereotypes.

THE PERPETUATION OF CULTURAL STEREOTYPES THROUGH MEDIA REPRESENTATION

The attribution of specific labels and their associations with Black male athletes in sports media can exacerbate the stereotypes and the misguided assumptions rooted in racialized stereotypes. Importantly, stereotypical media portrayals lead to a reductive analysis of complex racial issues. Martin suggests that “Stereotypes simplify the way we process information about people (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). While we are very adept at processing social information, our capacity to do so

is constrained by our ability to attend to, perceive, and recall information (Fiske & Taylor, 1991)” (3). Such a recall process conveniently organizes large amounts of information about labels, associations, and social groups but is proved to be faulty and inadequate in its oversimplification of stories. Martin further advocates that:

Stereotypes help to ease this cognitive burden by providing a system of easily learnable, simplified, highly structured relationships, whereby group membership indicates possession of a relatively small number of associated attributes. Notwithstanding the potential cost in accuracy, the functional value of stereotypes lies in their capacity to act as mental shortcuts, providing us with rapid and efficient access to knowledge stored in memory whenever a social category is detected (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000).

Although stereotypes provide humans a shortcut to easily categorize and instinctively base information from previously learned associations, they largely contribute to the inequality and the destructive racial bias in society. Stereotypes may simplify mental frameworks, act as shortcuts preventing complex ways of thinking about an issue and lose functional value in that their accuracy is compromised in the process of creating these mental shortcuts.

There exists a dichotomy in which Black athletes are both stereotypically portrayed as lacking intellect relative to their White counterparts and portrayed as corporeal entities. This dichotomy can be dated back to the 18th century. The discourse in media today aligns with the discourse of identity issues rooted in the slavery narrative. Deeb and Love explain that:

Although race is a social construct (Omi & Winant, 2015), in sport, race is sometimes used to classify athletes into distinct categories, which are then assigned meaning according to the belief in “natural” or “biological” traits (Coakley, 2014). When race was first used as a means of social classification by English settlers in 18th century North America, it changed the way human differences were viewed (Smedley, 1998) and led to the rise of racial ideologies (Coakley, 2014). These racial ideologies often link particular attributes, such as intelligence and physical ability, with skin color and constrain human identity by stripping the humanity from nonwhites (Mills, 1997; Smedley, 1998). The combination of race and racial ideologies has led to the existence of numerous racialized stereotypes in sport (98).

The prominence of racialized stereotypes of Black male athletes in sports is largely due to the historical precedent perpetuated since the Colonial period. The historical depiction of Black men as corporeal entities and White men as embodying intellectual beings has laid the foundation for the racialized stereotypes seen in sports media today. Under these historical classifications, Black male athletes in sports are repetitively categorized in accord with their physicality, yet their White counterparts are portrayed in accord with their intellect. The historical depiction of Black men as corporeal entities and White men as embodying intellectual beings has parlayed into the racialized stereotypes seen in sports media today.

Deeply rooted in sports media, the association between specific physical or intellectual labels and race is not an uncommon practice. In 2015, researchers Hughery and Goss (quoted in Haslerig et al.) analyzed sports media coverage of the “292 articles covering Olympic, professional, and collegiate sport from ten major United States newspapers [that] found a tendency for news media to attribute Black athletic success to a superior genetic predisposition rather than training or hard work” (2). Black athletes were portrayed as “naturally gifted” with “God-given talent.” Haslerig and others note that:

In contrast, descriptions of white players often highlighted their intellect and work ethic (e.g., “mind for the game” and “disciplined” Hughey and Goss, 2015: 184; Leonard, 2017). Even though these stereotypes and perceived genetic differences in athletic ability are false (Hunter, 1996), the narrative persists, creating a dichotomy in sports media discourse where white athletes are praised for their diligence and intellect while Black players are assumed to have simply inherited the physicality necessary to compete (Azzarito and Harrison, 2008).

Such a false dichotomy holds a large cultural impact, as it transforms not only how individual viewers participate in sports discourses but also how media outlets further their false narratives in the forefront of sports media.

THE DIRE IMPACTS OF SELECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE SPORTS MEDIA COVERAGE

The media’s selectivity in coverage and the lack thereof on key topical issues can prompt viewers to create a fallacious analysis of the giv-

en information. Oftentimes, the frames used in selective media portrayals construct subjective renderings of a topic or an issue. Frisby suggests that “the media have the power to form or mold thoughts and beliefs (Tuchman 1978)” and can also control and guide thoughts simply by choosing what to cover and how to portray an event. Precisely, “Journalists use news frames that may prevent most audience members from making a balanced and “objective” assessment of the situation and the black male athlete (Iyengar, 1991)” (Frisby 99). The media’s selective coverage grants journalists the ability to place specific weights or meanings on issues that they deem appropriate. Thus, when media outlets use one-sided news reporting, the audiences inherit a distorted field of meaning within the small scope of both information translated in media and the frames used in the aforementioned subjective portrayals. The “field of meaning” in the current literature denotes a specific group of people within a large context such as sports or mass media. Importantly, “this value-laden process of selection and salience (what is deemed to be significant in the first place is a somewhat arbitrary decision, shaped by personal and wider societal values) creates media frames that implicitly make some ideas appear more reasonable than others. As such, media frames are analytical assemblages that structure discourse and that can be saturated with normative assumptions” (Boykoff and Carrington 4). Since journalists can selectively choose and render the saliency of a story based on their own personal values and morals, they can propel their subjective understanding to the forefront. The random manner in which journalists place meanings on specific stories over others heightens the ongoing bias in media portrayals and the lack of objectivity.

The subjective frames used in media further cause the media portrayals to be oversaturated with subjective understandings which then cause issues to become increasingly decontextualized. A prime example of this notion is the reality that “the (sport) media have the potential to render certain racial and ethnic categorizations more salient than others, thereby shaping or reifying the racial and ethnic categories that people use to structure and order the world around them (Hall, 1995)” (Sterkenburg et al. 820). The media’s portrayal of race as more or less salient and the frames applied to these portrayals transform how viewers understand the world through these subjective frames. In doing so, viewers who don’t actively engage with information often internalize these racial frames into their own existing frameworks of thinking. The internalization can also inadvertently transform their future understanding of ethnic categories

and society at large.

THE UNCONSCIOUS RAMIFICATIONS OF MEDIA BIAS

The induction of stereotypes and the perpetuation of racial ideologies engenders the unconscious racial bias and selective coverage of minorities in sports media. The stereotypes largely propelled by sports media have significant ramifications on Black male athletes and societal inequalities. For instance, scholar Sterkenburg asserts:

Critical scholars such as Davis and Harris (1998) have suggested that the sports media also portray racial and ethnic minorities in stereotypical ways, thereby reinforcing and confirming racial and ethnic inequalities in society at large. Bruce (2004) suggested that sport commentators who work under high pressure and on a live stage may often unconsciously draw on widely circulating racial ideologies as they have little time to think about their reactions to what occurs on the playing field. The societal consequences of this stereotyping are often ignored in public discourse about the sport media, since televised sport programs and discussions are generally not recognized as having broader societal implications. (820)

Although sports commentators attempt to objectively portray a story, their portrayal can impose unintentional categorizations of athletes based on their race. Indeed, some media outlets are more than deliberate in creating bias. “Entman contended that the media ‘call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements’ (1993:55). The media create dominant interpretations of reality that appeal to a desired or anticipated audience” (Sterkenburg et al. 819). When media outlets selectively choose what stories they cover and what information they ignore, they intentionally create a bias in their discourse and make assumptions about broad groups of people. Thus, media outlets often construct false narratives without even fact-checking said groups and then bring these false narratives of reality to the forefront. Consequently, viewers consume this biased information and simply take on what is portrayed as fact rather than immerse themselves in actual discourses.

When viewers thoroughly engage with news stories and understand multiple competing arguments in spite of media bias, they have prevented themselves from being corrupted by unconscious stereotypes and framing effects. Chong and Druckman suggest that:

theoretically, we expect that framing effects diminish with active engagement with issues. In particular, biased representations of issues should be less influential as citizens become exposed to the full array of alternative arguments. Competition makes accessible a more representative sampling of underlying considerations than one-sided communications and therefore provides a broader frame of reference for locating one's preference on an issue. (118-119)

The presence of multiple arguments in sports media enables viewers themselves to create their own field of meaning in the absence of bias towards a selectively chosen position. An earnest engagement with key issues and an unbiased analysis of competing arguments exposes viewers to a more nuanced exploration of issues and schemes of thinking.

THE THEMATIC FRAMING OF BLACK ATHLETES IN SPORTS MEDIA AND COLIN KAEPERNICK

The partial coverage and framing used to characterize Black athletes in sports media are highly specific and incomparable to the thematic framing of White athletes. In a content analysis of 155 media sources, a comparative analysis was conducted between the framing of White, Black, and other races in regards to specific coverage types. Researcher Cynthia Frisby concluded that: of the 155 total media sources studied, “more news stories were written about white male athletes (43.9%) than Black athletes (38.7%). In terms of news stories on domestic and sexual violence stories, data revealed that coverage of this topic centered more on black male athletes 70.6% than White athletes 17.6%. There were more

Table 1. Thematic frames and type of story by race of athlete.

Type of Media Coverage	White	Black	Other	Totals
Crime	6 (22.2%)	18 (66.7%)	3 (11.1%)	27 (100%)
Domestic/sexual violence	3 (17.6%)	12 (70.6%)	2 (11.8%)	17 (100%)
Training/work ethic/dedication	6 (42.9%)	5 (35.7%)	3 (21.4%)	14 (100%)
Merely successful	10 (83.3%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)
Violating the rules/laws of the league	8 (47.1%)	6 (35.3%)	3 (17.6%)	17 (100%)
Accomplishments	20 (58.8%)	8 (23.6%)	6 (17.6%)	34 (100%)
Personal Lifestyle	9 (42.9%)	7 (33.3%)	5 (23.8%)	21 (100%)
Abilities/athletic skills	6 (46.2%)	3 (23.1%)	4 (30.8%)	13 (100%)
Totals	48 (43.9%)	60 (38.7%)	27 (17.4%)	155 (100%)

$\chi^2 = 63.1, df = 14, p < .0001.$

Table 1 Thematic Frames and Type of Story by Race of Athletes (cited from Frisby, page 98)

positive stories involving moral successes, accomplishments, and training that were written about white male athletes than black athletes, and the difference in this type of coverage by race was significant ($p < .0001$)” (98)

The results from table 1 demonstrate the statistically significant difference in the application of media thematic frames between Black athletes and their white counterparts. Particularly, the coverage of Black athletes relative to their white counterparts is disproportionately skewed in terms of coverage or the lack thereof on key themes such as crime, success, work ethic, and athletic contributions. A prime example of the skewed coverage of black athletes can be seen in the 2016 NFL coverage of Colin Kaepernick.

Notably, the media’s depiction of Colin Kaepernick during his 2016 National Football League protest was underscored by selective and partial coverage across numerous sports and traditional media sources (Reid). Since Colin Kaepernick’s method of protest was peacefully executed, the coverage of his protest mainly focused on the implications of the protest and lacked any violent undertones. In a study on the coverage of Colin Kaepernick across 233 mentions between 2016 to 2018, only 46.4 percent of the total mentions focused on the actual origins of Colin Kaepernick’s protest, while 53.6 percent of the mentions were largely

Kaepernick Mention Type	Total	Percentage
That he was not signed as a free agent by any other NFL teams	45	19.3%
His philanthropic efforts outside of football	15	6.4%
His career statistics in comparison to other starting NFL QBs	5	2.1%
His political opinions	60	25.8%
His meeting with Green Beret Nate Boyer and/or the origins of his protest	108	46.4%

irrelevant to the issue at hand such as his political affiliation, his career statistics, and his philanthropic efforts. Hunter suggests (quoted in Pena) that “the debate focused on his methods and his perceived patriotism, among a slew of other aspects such as his credibility, his right to protest, and the implications on his NFL future. Much of the coverage from the

sports outlets in particular focused on the opinions of sports figures and those in the military, largely focusing on whether they agree with Kaepernick's actions" (45). Hunter (quoted in Pena) further claims that, "the final frame found was one of deflection and distraction by which coverage of the protest focused mostly on the act itself, and not the larger issue of excessive use of force by police against minorities (Coombs et al 2017)" (16). Thus, the way in which media sources selectively choose what they render as salient and meaningful in the coverage of Colin Kaepernick's protest was highly open to interpretation and was highly biased on a source to source basis. The coverage of Colin Kaepernick was permeated by selectivity across a wide range of news platforms. Pena indicates that:

Much of the coverage from the sports outlets in particular focused on the opinions of sports figures and those in the military, largely focusing on whether they agree with Kaepernick's actions... *The New York Times'* coverage of Kaepernick focused mainly on the issues Kaepernick wanted to address, whereas ESPN spent much of its time questioning the validity of his argument. For example, the Times had stories looking at the bigger picture with stories titled "Colin Kaepernick's anthem protest underlines union of sports and patriotism," and "Colin Kaepernick and the question of who gets to be called a patriot" (Borden, 2016; Morris 2016). Most of ESPN's coverage featured what so-and-so said about the protest each week, seldom diving deeper. (45-46)

The disparity between the coverage of Colin Kaepernick in the New York Times and ESPN pinpoints the broader issue of selective and biased coverage across platforms. The objective coverage of Colin Kaepernick in the New York Times versus ESPN's surface-level challenging frames highlights the media's selectivity in relaying information. The selective coverage of Colin Kaepernick's protest can further perpetuate the random process by which certain stories are deemed more relevant and brought to the forefront of the media.

CONCLUSION

In this project, the biased media framing and partial coverage of Black male athletes in the United States was explored using Colin Kaepernick's protest as one of several possible foci, along with four critical content analyses. The ultimate goal was to reveal, layer by layer, the hidden racial frames and selective coverage of Black male athletes driven

largely by biased media framing. The employment of framing theory has dissected the hidden nuances in racial frames and coverage of Black male athletes using current and applicable content analytic studies. The content analytic studies used in this project proved to be useful in pinpointing not only the specific thematic frames used to portray Black male athletes but also the evident bias in the coverage of Colin Kaepernick in 2016.

In the current cultural climate, the immense social and cultural capital that the media possesses is relevant in that it has the ability to reconstruct how individuals define athletes of color and ultimately minority populations at large. Understanding both the complexity and nuance ingrained in the collective framing of the conventional Black and White athlete will enable us to signify the larger ramifications of bias in sports and media. Ultimately, the power of media framing lies not only in its ability to simply deliver a story but also in its capacity to transform human perception. Cohesively, the media can be a dominant source of complex and interpretable ideas that pervade the subconscious. Nevertheless, the media fundamentally do have the power to propel constructive discourse in a form that empowers audiences to create radical changes in society through active engagement and truthful storytelling.

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TASNOVA CHOUDHURY

A Literary Take on the American Dream

ABSTRACT

*Coined in 1931 by James Truslow Adams, the American Dream is a phrase meant to declare that every person in the United States is subject to a life filled with opportunity based on ability and achievement. This is an idea that the United States was built upon during the Great Depression. It carries decades of hope and disappointment, ultimately meaning something different to each person, making it difficult to study through facts alone. Oftentimes, history is studied with the help of literature. In turn, a significant purpose of this paper is to conclude whether literature is a reliable source. Many notable pieces of literature give perspectives on how the concept of the American Dream pervaded American life in the mid-twentieth century, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *A Raisin in the Sun*. The focus of this paper is to analyze Arthur Miller's depiction of the American Dream in his play *Death of a Salesman* by following the life of a fictional salesman, Willy Loman, who is inevitably beaten down by a capitalist society.*

Literature is often studied hand in hand with history, because authors provide unique perspectives; they are witnesses of the time they are writing about, and can therefore be of use to historians who want to study the reasoning behind historical facts. Literary critic Charles Glicksberg sees literature as a form of "social protest," which he defines as a call for change (Glicksberg 76). This is seen through Arthur Miller's play, *Death of a Salesman*, where he argues that the concept of the American Dream was tainted due to the consumerist nature of the country in the 1940s. This consumerist nature Miller writes about was a result of the economic growth following the Second World War (Bohanon), which allowed society to indulge in luxuries. The concept of the American Dream has changed in response to the sentiments of the time. Literary critics analyze the shift of this historical time period through books, focusing on the story's conflict: the individual versus society. Professor Lois Tyson writes that "Literature is a repository of both a society's ideologies and its psychological conflicts, it has the capacity to reveal aspects of a culture's collective psyche, an apprehension of how ideological investments reveal

the nature of individuals' psychological relationship to their world" (1). In other words, Literature is a "repository" because the author culminates the sentiments of society and their own feelings within their stories. Literary critics use literature to study the American Dream because the medium opens the door to the "individuals' psychological relationship to the world", as it was created to culminate hope in not just the country, but in the individual citizens as well. Individuals felt the American Dream shifting into a dream for wealth. This is explored throughout the various literature written in the mid-twentieth century. This brings about the questions: "What does an author see that makes them unique from different critics and how do they relay their message through storytelling?" and "Are authors credible sources when it comes to studying history?" Authors saw firsthand the shift that occurred in the country following the war. Placing themselves apart from society in their literature allows historians and literary analysts to gain an understanding of the reasoning behind abstract concepts, such as society and the American Dream. The concept of the American Dream was introduced during the early Progressive Era following the Gilded Age. Professor Sarah Churchwell states it was "a dream of equality, justice and democracy for the nation" (Churchwell). The country was polarized by monopolies and trusts consolidating power, producing distinct inequality between robber barons and the working class. When the country entered the Great Depression, the American Dream became a national catchphrase. Historian James Truslow Adams stated the American Dream is

a dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.
(Adams 404)

Adams argues that the American Dream is a dream for "everyone", regardless of the "fortuitous circumstances of birth or position," which acknowledges that some people are born into wealth by chance. That wealth, however, should not define the American Dream as it is "not

a dream of motor cars and high wages,” a sentiment which puts down the Gilded Age consumerism that would evolve into the Great Depression. Americans, then, become “weary” of the Dream because the imbalance of wealth causes a divide between the upper class and those who were striving for opportunities. This development of the American Dream, from Adams’s perspective, represents how the economic boom in a post-war society creates classicism among the people, and destroys the equality that the American Dream calls for. Referencing Adams’ argument, Professor Churchwell asserts “that America had gone wrong in becoming too concerned with material well-being and forgetting the higher dreams and the higher aspiration that the country had been founded on” (Churchwell 91). Churchwell argues that the concept of the Dream epitomizes the ideological foundation of the country: the hope for equal opportunities, for Americans to be defined as free citizens. Its failure comes down to people forgetting “the higher dreams” of equality and becoming concerned with consumerism. The meaning of the American Dream was twisted once people began to define it as a pursuit for money and social status. The American Dream began as a concept to instill hope for equality; however, materialism caused its meaning to dissipate and shift into a dream for luxury.

Churchwell argues that the American Dream went wrong once consumerism took hold on society, which then persuaded Americans into thinking that a facade of wealth would translate to their reality. Tyson states that “The American dream is itself a consumer product, which Americans ‘buy into’ as the primary myth by means of which they mold their interpersonal relations to resemble relations of capitalist production, which are relations among commodities” (Tyson 7). She argues that the American Dream has become an object of desire, determining that there is a proportional relationship between someone’s commodities and their worth. Tyson utilizes commodity psychology, which she defines as a structural principle that gives value to objects in a social context (Tyson 7). This idea causes people to relate people or things to their relative worth on the market. As people immerse themselves in mass consumption, a sense of uniformity permeates American citizens, because they hope to “resemble relations of capitalist production.” Uniformity emerges when many individuals begin to resemble the same things; in this case, a tendency to buy commodities. Robert Witkin, then, asserts the problems that come out of society’s obsession with commodities when he writes “the commodification, fetishization and standardization of its products,

together with the authoritarian submissiveness, irrationality, conformity, ego-weakness and dependency behavior of its recipients- are developed by [Adorno]" (Witkin 3). Adorno criticizes the modern culture of obsessing over consumer products and would support Tyson's claim that becoming immersed in commodities pushes people to link their worth to what they own. He suggests that the "commodification, fetishization, and standardization" of products leads to "ego-weakness," which is an inflated sense of self, often associated with grandiosity and a superiority complex (Britannica). The more commodities people immersed themselves in, the higher sense of superiority they believed they exhibited. Witkin also proposes that it causes consumers to exhibit a "dependency behavior." This is when people appear to cling to whatever they believe sustains them, and convince themselves they cannot live without it, usually in reference to another person. For instance, in Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Happy Loman cries out "But then, it's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I'm lonely" (Miller). Witkin's words of "commodifying, fetishizing, and standardizing" these products echoes in Happy's beliefs. He grew up with the idea that material goods would be his pathway to happiness. He then "standardized" commodities like nice cars and apartments, to fabricate happiness in his own life. However, Miller rejects this ideology, by emphasizing the current state of distress Happy is experiencing, for his submissiveness and conformity to society did nothing to advance him, as evidenced by his statement, "And still, goddammit, I'm lonely." Happy Loman represents the average 40's American who blindly believed material wealth would help him attain the American Dream yet was left disappointed because that could not sustain his happiness. Society's dependence on material gain conveys the struggle Americans had with creating their own identity. Happy Loman showed no original thought, as his purpose in life was to become his father. Had many Americans not fallen into this trap, their quality of life would have enhanced. They would have sought things that brought them happiness, rather than chase the facade of happiness through consumerist success. The American Dream turned into a dream of material gains, however, that resulted in people connecting their worth to what they owned, causing them to become dependent on those commodities for happiness.

The confusion individuals, such as Happy Loman, exhibited, in defining what the American Dream meant for their lives, was due to the influence of society-promoted consumerism . A common conflict

in literature is the individual against society archetype, “where man stands against a man-made institution” (Lamb 80). Protagonists are often portrayed as separate entities from the world around them, and authors usually write this through their perspective. In Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman is a character that is seen both conforming to society, in hopes of achieving the status he desires, and rejecting society, once he realizes that it has used him up without a payoff. The “man-made institution” that Willy Loman stands against is capitalism. In the conflict of individual versus society, Cheever argues that the individual is influenced by society when she states, “the epithet ‘phony’ was... an easy appellation for individuals who appeared cynically to conform to codes of behavior for social approbation or advancement and appeared as a common label for a certain type of person in writing, literature, and film” (Cheever 2). Cheever states that the word “phony” was frequently used by social critics, such as authors and filmmakers, to portray those who conformed to society for status or approval in a negative light. Cheever analyzes J.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* and the protagonist’s frequent usage of the word “phony” to argue that there was a lack of “authenticity” among the people in his school. There was little separation between the individual and the social world, as the country went through a period of “self-reconstruction” to embody the culture of the times. Tyson, however, argues “such criticism doesn’t consider the ways in which the individual psyche and its cultural milieu inhabit, reflect, and define each other in a dynamically unstable, *mutually constitutive* symbiosis” (Tyson 2). The individual is influenced by society, and society is formed by the characteristics of the individuals that comprise it. The relationship is therefore “mutually constitutive,” as they both take part in shaping one another. She exemplifies her claim through the character Jay Gatsby, stating that the American Dream “allows each individual the opportunity to escape from history into the commodity. Thus, for Gatsby, the commodity—not just his material possessions but also Daisy as well—becomes the site of displacement, the sign he needs to feel insulated from the existential inwardness that accompanies his psychological connection to his own past” (Tyson 55). Tyson demonstrates the entwinement of America’s exploitation of vulnerable people and the people’s exploitation of commodities to attain what they desire. Gatsby was in a vulnerable mindset following his participation in the war, for he hoped to relive his past with his first love, Daisy. He threw elaborate parties hoping to gain her attention. This exploitation of consumer goods to attain one’s goals supports the circulated belief that

money buys happiness. . He attempted to “escape” his loneliness through the use of commodities, thus depicting a “symbiotic” relationship between society and Jay Gatsby. In contrast to Cheever and Tyson, Glicksberg claims that there is a diverging relationship between the individual and society, that an author “struggle[s] to redefine his function and to reappraise the true value of his contribution to the world. His social conscience smarted as he wondered at times if he were not sacrificing the precious stuff of life itself for the sake of producing inutile works of art” (Glicksberg 77). Glicksberg highlights that criticizing aspects of society that the majority of individuals are either indifferent to or in support of can cause a person to feel alienated, similar to the protagonists of asocial literature. Asocial literature is defined as literature that criticizes society and causes the protagonist to feel withdrawn and alienated in their community. They believe their unique voice is “inutile,” or pointless, in relation to the large scale of society. Miller demonstrates rejection of society when Willy states that “the street is lined with cars. There’s not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don’t grow anymore, you can’t raise a carrot in the backyard. They should’ve had a law against apartment houses. Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there?” (Miller 6). Willy condemns what his neighborhood has become by contrasting the factory-like apartments of today with the beauty of nature that existed before. This contrast shows a decline of societal values, as more attention is placed on making money rather than simple pleasures, such as preserving nature. Miller shows this glimpse of Loman realizing that he has rejected society, which causes him to feel miserable and hopeless. This hopelessness in Loman is similar to Glicksberg’s words of “inutile,” as Loman can only remember the past rather than recreate it. Analyzing the protagonist in relation to society gives a greater understanding of an author’s intention when writing their literature, for Salinger, Fitzgerald, and Miller had unique messages about society and the individual.

Authors put an immense amount of thought into the stories they create and the messages they hope to relay, however the reasoning behind why they write can be varied and dependent on the topic they choose to write about. Charles Glicksberg states:

It is accordingly impossible as well as irresponsible, in the judgement of some critics, to stand apart from or above the battle. To remain non-political in a world that is full of conflict is to accept the world as it is; it is to renounce the idea that one is an active member of his

society, who much bear the guilt for failure to do his part in shaping the world. Looking at in this light, all literature... is animated by a profound social concern. (Glicksberg 73)

An author's motivation to write is rooted in their concern for the world around them. Social critics, such as authors, believe that silence enables disagreeable conflicts in the world to worsen, and that even a small form of objection plays a role in shaping the world around them. Glicksberg uses Miller's *The Crucible* as an example of being "politically 'committed' or 'revolutionary literature'" (Glicksberg), as Miller calls attention to the hysteria behind McCarthyism in the 1950s. It takes an army to power a revolution, and motivated people to form an army. If people were to succumb to the conflicts around them, society would become stagnant and less people would be inclined to voice their opinions. A society cannot progress or improve without these voices, even if the voice is inside one's head as one reads a book. Arthur Miller, himself, wrote:

The Crucible was an act of desperation. Much of my desperation branched out, I suppose, from a typical Depression-era trauma... But by 1950, when I began to think of writing about the hunt for Reds in America, I was motivated in some great part by the paralysis that had set in among many liberals who, despite their discomfort with the inquisitors' violations of civil rights, were fearful, and with good reason, of being identified as covert Communists if they should protest too strongly. (Miller)

Miller's intentions behind *The Crucible* echo Glicksberg's words, as they both argue writing's relation to activism. He saw the fear that was casted on society, and how it prevented people from speaking out against the "hunt for Reds." Miller also has a political motivation in his play *Death of a Salesman*, as he seeks to expose the corruption of capitalism (Rose). Miller condemns capitalism in the scene between Willy and his boss, Howard: "HOWARD: No, but it's a business, kid, and everybody's gotta pull his own weight. / WILLY (desperately): Just let me tell you a story. Howard... / HOWARD: 'Cause you gotta admit, business is business" (Miller). Howard is characterized as a cold person, who values the profits of his company more than the wellbeing of his employees when he says "business is business." This is a statement that removes all emotion from the conversation. Howard exemplifies the cold nature of corporations; Willy exemplifies the deteriorating effect those corporations have

on people. This causes readers to empathize with Willy, as Howard gives little attention to Willy's pleas. As a result of this developed empathy, people will begin to compare the fictional world they are reading about to the eerily similar events around them, thus planting the seeds for change. Outside of just the concept of the American Dream, literature can be examined to gain information about society in various time periods. Glicksberg writes "the literature of social criticism does not reject society. It holds up a magnifying mirror to the abuses and abominations of the age; it is a spirited cry of protest against specific miscarriages of justice; it is an attempt to expose by imaginative means and, by exposing, denounce the inhumanity of man to man" (Glicksberg 74). Literature is not only a means of social criticism, but also one of social protest. Authors reveal the injustices that are carried out by society, as well as the problems that occur between people. Through his protagonist in *Death of a Salesman*, Miller denounced the increasing corruption of capitalism, and amplified his protests by dramatically killing off Willy Loman at the end. Miller believes *Death of a Salesman* succeeded because of the intense amount of empathy he brings about for Willy (Rose). Willy's failed cry for help represents Miller's warnings of the "abuses and abominations" of corporations during the 1940s on consumers.

Literature also played an immense role regarding other social movements, such as abolitionism in the mid-1800s, with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. While it is fictional, it gave a deep insight into the destruction of slave families, and the emotional and physical trauma that they experienced. This brought forth a wave of empathy from readers and gave motion to the abolitionist movement. Abraham Lincoln is believed to have called Stowe the "little woman who wrote the book that started this great war," in reference to the American civil war (USHistory.org). Another example of literature being used to call attention to the injustices of society would be Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, which focused on the life of an immigrant family working in poor conditions to make a living during the Progressive Era. The novel exposed unsanitary details about the meatpacking industry, which led to the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, to enhance food safety. Sinclair's focus, however, was raising awareness of the unsafe working conditions. Both of the novels mentioned continue to be studied in classes today, to raise awareness of the past and examine how words on a page led to change. They also prevent history from repeating itself, as more recent generations are able to make connections between the past and the present-day world. Literature plays

a key role in bringing about change, because stories can be vivid in the crude details, which leads people to express concern.

While critics like Glicksberg and Tyson emphasize the importance of literature in studying the societal context of a certain historical period, Professor Emami argues that literature can be a form of “pseudo-criticism.” He uses Adorno’s definition of pseudo-criticism, that “works of the culture industry that claim to be critical of society,” to argue that *Death of a Salesman* feeds into that culture industry. While Witkin references Adorno to criticize society’s obsession with consumer products and its relation to conformity, Emami cites Adorno to argue that critical works like literature “heighten[ed] the lie of individuality” (Emami 357). The “individuality” they claim to support in society is a facade. While Emami and Miller both use Adorno’s Theory on Popular Culture, they are supporting contrasting claims. In his analysis of the individual versus society, Emami argues that society cannot be blamed. He quotes and analyzes Arthur Miller to strengthen his argument:

‘Man is more than the sum of his stimuli and is unpredictable beyond a certain point. A drama, like a history, which stops at this point, the point of conditioning, is not reflecting a reality.... If there is one unseen goal toward which every play in this book strives, it is that... we are made and yet more than what made us’ (Miller, 1967, pp.54-55). As it is clear Miller believes that man is able to pull his weight in life. This is much quoted by some critics who try to prove that what happens to Willy in his life and his final death are mostly direct outcome of his own choice and society doesn’t play much role here” (Emami 354).

Literary critics, like Glicksberg, have previously claimed that Miller put blame onto society and capitalism. However, it can be argued that Miller believes part of the blame is also due to the individual, and the decisions they make. Emami writes “Willy doesn’t want to accept that the outcome of all the ideas proposed by society is this and by killing himself he tries to prove that he can still have individuality, be loved and remembered” (Emami 354). Emami references Willy’s suicide to argue that his decision was his own rather than society playing a part. Emami’s argument of the individual as dominant and responsible for their own decisions contrasts Tyson and Cheever, who both lean more towards belief in societal influence on the decisions people make. In the case of Willy’s suicide, Cheever and Tyson would argue that society partly influenced

Willy's mindset, that killing himself was the only way he could escape from the distress he was feeling. There are various ways to interpret written texts, as exemplified by Emami's contrasting conclusions to Witkin, Glicksberg, Tyson, and Cheever. How a text is interpreted by a collective audience affects the ultimate outcome. If people are not moved by an author's writing, nothing will come out of the author's efforts. If people receive the message the wrong way, it can hurt the movement the author is trying to support.

However, Emami acknowledges his own shortcomings, as he concludes that Miller's true intentions cannot be configured using one play, as it is not "satisfactory enough". Multiple plays would have to be considered to get a more accurate reading. While there may be different interpretations, what an author wrote must be interpreted with support from the text. Different interpretations are a natural result of deciphering a complex text. For instance, Miller depicts the American Dream and capitalism as gray areas. No conclusion can come of whether capitalism is good or bad, and there are still arguments about whether U.S. society should be socialist or capitalist. However, Miller's intent was to portray capitalism's effect on the individual, and how it influenced what the American Dream became. With this reasoning, Tyson and Cheever's arguments prove to be more persuasive, because they explore a relationship between the individual and society that shows both sides. This is important because a complex concept such as the American Dream needs to be evaluated from both the society, and the individual's point of view. This is due to the symbiotic nature of the relationship: one is influenced by the other. The American Dream is a concept that came about to help a "nation find its way" (Churchwell). It was an ideal to foster hope for American citizens, and impress upon them that they possess the opportunities to reach their personal potential. However, the economic boom following World War II led to an influx of consumerism, and caused society to treat the commodities they owned as the defining factor for their status and happiness. While the American Dream is a significant part of U.S. history, there is no concrete or physical information that can encompass its meaning. To gain insight, critics must look to past literature. Authors are social critics who write about abstract societal concepts and issues, and therefore are expected to have unique perspectives on the time period they live in. Their perspectives are reflective and critical, as they use their literature to "protest" against the injustices they see, in hopes of creating change through their audience. The art of storytelling also helps their mission, as

they develop conflicts within their work that show varying perspectives on a certain situation. Literary critics and historians can analyze the same play and come to two different perspectives; however, those different perspectives reflect the existent complexities within society. There has been a vast amount of research that reflects the importance of using literature to study the American Dream, as shown by Cheever, Tyson, and Glicksberg. The culmination of this research was used to analyze Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, and its ability to depict the adverse effect American capitalism had on the American Dream in the 1940s. Arthur Miller wrote from the perspective of businessman Willy Loman who works hard to achieve his American Dream, however, he has misinterpreted the dream to stand for status and wealth. He is worn out by a capitalistic system that leads to his untimely death. Miller develops a conflict between Willy Loman and society, similar to the archetypal conflict "society versus individual." This conflict allows him to show the perspective of an average American working 9-5 and the perspective of a business company interested in profit. It is evident that Miller intended for his play to be a "social protest" against a capitalistic system that has overshadowed the true intent behind the American Dream. A subtopic that would be interesting and thoughtful to study would be the meaning of the American Dream to Americans from various ethnicities, genders, and age groups as shown in literature that corresponds with those respective perspectives. For example, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* argued that the American Dream coincided with homeownership and equality for African American citizens. Authors from the mid-twentieth century depict these different meanings of the American Dream through their diverse stories and characters, in hopes of instilling empathy in their audience, to bring about change. This prevents the suppression of underprivileged voices and continuously allows society to strengthen itself.

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POOJA REJITH

Stigma in the Mental Healthcare System

ABSTRACT

“Stigma in the Mental Healthcare System” utilizes Erving Goffman’s Theory of Social Stigma to discuss how societal stigmas affect patients in pursuit of mental health care. This essay’s main focus is to analyze the mental healthcare system and discuss the positive and negative aspects of current treatment plans. The essay analyzes the relationships that doctors and pharmacists have with each other as well as the individual relationships that each have with their patients. The essay also highlights what doctors and pharmacists perceive to be the best form of treatment for mentally ill patients. There is also a discussion about how the media portrays mental illness and how this portrayal reflects the interests of the mental healthcare system. The essay highlights how different celebrities and famous figures can have varying impacts on mental health awareness. The essay overall focuses on the nuances of the mental healthcare system and the pharmaceutical industry and how those nuances affect their patients’ journeys towards rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, mental health has been a concept so foreign to healthcare professionals that they used treatments that would be considered medically unsound today. Even though psychiatric care has come a far way since the days of Metrazol therapy, lobotomies, and bloodletting, there is still a long way to go. Through Erving Goffman’s theory of social stigma, I will explore the mental healthcare system’s treatment of mentally ill patients. I’m focusing on what the ultimate goal of the mental healthcare system is, why in certain times it goes to great lengths to try to cover up its negligence, and why the field has so much negligence in the first place. I will analyze the carelessness in psychiatric facilities in order to emphasize the mental healthcare system’s profit fixation, and why hospital treatments generally worsen the side effects of mental illnesses. Research shows that many mentally ill patients find themselves repeatedly coming back to hospitals for treatment because they are not initially provided with adequate care. By observing these patterns and refusing to fix them,

the mental healthcare system is failing its patients and the community. I will subsequently examine the role that the pharmaceutical industry has on the mistreatment of mental health patients, and how it relies on societal stigmas to advocate for the use of expensive medication. I will conclude my research by discussing how the social stigma around mental health and the poor treatment being provided in psychiatric facilities affect patients. Stigmatizing mental health misinforms the general public and creates a rift between people who are mentally ill and people who are not. This rift enables the mental healthcare system to take advantage of their patients without public censure.

Costly medications and subpar treatment plans provided by pharmacies and behavioral healthcare specialists work to prolong the rehabilitation of patients and encourage the continuous need for both services. This leads to profiting for the mental healthcare complex as a whole. I also suggest that both industries rely on social stigmas to keep their patients seemingly ill in the eyes of the public. Since both systems have not been outed for such intentions, people with mental illnesses still choose to trust healthcare companies that do not have their best interest in mind. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness about the corruption within the mental healthcare complex in order to provide patients with the care they really need.

THE LOSS OF IDENTITY TO MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma states that a stigma is a generalized characteristic that is damaging to an individual's or group's reputation. Goffman believes that stigmas are a gap between virtual and actual social identity, and that society has a tendency to "lean on these anticipations... transforming them into normative expectations, into righteously presented demands" (Goffman 42). In the case of mental health, there is a prominent stigma that stereotypically dictates that people with mental illnesses are potential dangers to society. The stigma implies that those people should be restrained for the safety of themselves and others. Media perpetuates this stigma to the masses, which enables both the public and mentally ill individuals to believe in an inaccurate idea of what mental illnesses are actually like. As a result, patients transform from what Goffman describes as "unexpressive and confused individuals, as they frequently appear in larger society, to expressive and understanding

persons within their own group...[expressing] themselves in institutional terms” (Goffman 37). Scholar Lawrence Rubin further explores the mental healthcare system’s dependency on social stigma, and the stigma’s effect on institutionalized patients. He discusses the admissions process of patients into psychiatric hospitals and how “in order for inhabitants of the asylum to make the transition from member of society to member of asylum, they [have] to undergo a rite of passage, or transformation.” He continues, explaining that this usually begins “with the patient’s failure to manage their lives,” finished by an “adaptation of an identity consistent with the sick, or outsider role” (Rubin 3). The acceptance of a ‘sick’ identity directly correlates to Goffman’s argument about the effects of societal stigmas on patients. When patients are admitted into an institution, they are encouraged to align their identities with mental health stereotypes based on stigmas created by media. In a sense, the loss of a patient’s identity equates to a financial gain for the mental healthcare system, which prompts that system to allow society to perpetuate mental health stigmas. The 1996 General Social Survey (GSS) recorded the opinions of 1444 adults on mental health, and found that “more than 40% of the 1996 GSS sample agreed that people with schizophrenia should be forced into treatment. Additionally, the public endorses segregation in institutions as the best service for people with serious psychiatric disorders” (Corrigan and Watson 10). The mental healthcare system has no obligation to push mandatory healthcare onto people with mental illnesses, since society and media take on that responsibility instead. As patients accept stigmatized representations of mental illnesses, this directly leads to advocacy for their isolation. Because they assume that doctors and pharmacists are acting in their best interest, patients stay under the care of the mental healthcare system, sometimes longer than they need to, and accept the financial consequences of a prolonged rehabilitation period.

APATHY WITHIN THE MENTAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The mistreatment of patients in the mental healthcare system is a result of systematic corruption, rather than the fault of mental healthcare providers. The general practice of the mental healthcare complex is to value materialism over humanity. This leads to a lack of compassion which enables patient exploitation. Scholars Issy Pilowsky and David Maddison explain that a successful psychiatric clinic and mental healthcare system

“[develops] a comprehensive community mental health service with a full range of domiciliary and community services” (Pilowsky and Maddison 74). The mental healthcare system has failed to fulfill Pilowsky and Maddison’s definition of a successful support system for patients. Doctor Linda Girgis touches on this when she discusses the system’s lack of empathy for patients. Girgis highlights the difficulties that patients have when they first receive care and how “[those] with mental illnesses are stigmatized... [and] the system only makes it harder by throwing other obstacles in the way” (Girgis 3). The obstacles that Girgis is referring to are the financial strains that the mental healthcare complex puts on patients. It is important to note that some treatment options will always be more expensive than others, and that all treatments cost both hospitals and providers a substantial amount of money. However, in order to receive treatment, patients are required to pay out of pocket or pay for more health insurance. By definition, this system has a general disregard for patients’ financial situations, which emphasizes the greed-driven nature of the mental healthcare system.

The stigma that patients face also makes the mental healthcare system less sympathetic towards their medical struggles, and this allows providers to raise treatment prices without remorse. The theory of social stigma divides societal relations into three parts: the Stigmatized, the Normals, and the Wise. The Stigmatized are those who are targeted and degraded by the public, the Normals are the members of society who do not realize that a stigma is present and publicly detest the Stigmatized in the name of societal normality, and the Wise are those who recognize that there is a stigma and have the choice to either educate the Normals or use their understanding for a personal advantage (Goffman 32). In regards to the field of psychiatry, the mental healthcare system is the Wise that recognizes the existence of a stigma. Rather than sympathizing with the stigmatized, mentally ill patients and educating the Normals of society, the system uses its knowledge to its own benefit. The 1996 GSS concluded that “research respondents are less likely to pity persons with mental illness, instead reacting to psychiatric disability with anger and believing that help is not deserved” (Corrigan and Watson 8). Since mental illnesses are not physical ailments, society inherently has less sympathy for mentally ill patients. This thereby reduces the pressure of the notion that the mental healthcare system has to treat their patients with care, which increases the ease for the system to exploit their patients for financial gain. There are tendencies in psychiatric practices where specialists reject cer-

tain insurances and demand a convenience fee or an alternate insurance specifically for mental health highlights the profit-oriented values of the mental healthcare system. While the misfeasance against patients stems from an atmosphere of apathy and ill-will among healthcare providers, the pharmaceutical industry and its reliance on medications also contribute to patient mistreatment.

THE IMPACT OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

The pharmaceutical industry profits off of its patients by advertising medications like Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors with marketing tactics such as Direct to Consumer Advertising (DCTA). DCTA is one of the fastest growing forms of advertising, especially within the world of antidepressants. Part of the DCTA's strategy is to manipulate consumers through marketing tactics in order to expand the antidepressant market. A 2004 study performed by Donohue and Berndt showed that "DCTA for antidepressants [increases] the number of depression diagnoses and requests for antidepressant treatment" among patients (qtd. in Park 591). On the surface, DCTA educates the public on mental health and encourages people with mental illnesses to come out with their struggles and seek help. However, through the use of DCTA, the pharmaceutical industry has been able to convince patients to take prescription drugs that the patients were originally against. The DCTA promotes the most expensive kinds of medication and rejects the use of cost-efficient alternatives. Additionally, pharmaceutical companies analyze how audiences respond to DCTA in order to tailor advertisements for antidepressants to their target demographic. Scholars Bo Wang and Aaron S. Kesselheim have analyzed the effects of DCTA marketing on mentally ill individuals, and how "the promotion of high-cost, patent-protected drugs...[undermines] patient confidence in competing generic drugs or other effective alternative treatments" (Wang and Kesselheim 6). Since DCTA is a form of biased advertising that prioritizes patient manipulation over promoting informed decision-making, the pharmaceutical industry's usage of this medium emphasizes its underlying, greedy intentions.

The power of persuasion that DCTA has on consumers is dangerous, but in order to reach consumers, pharmaceutical companies must use other methods as well. This comes in the form of societal stigmas. Erving Goffman discusses the idea that "the stigmatized individual is

asked to act so as to imply neither that his burden is heavy nor that bearing it has made him different from us” (Goffman 38). Aligned with this principle is the idea that mentally ill individuals feel pressured to behave like other members of society in order to avoid scrutiny. Furthermore, when health officials and pharmaceutical companies refuse to accept mental illness as a valid medical issue, or when they downplay it in the media, such as advertisements, they further the stigma of mental illness. Scholar Christine Babineau discusses the portrayal of medications within the marketing industry and how it affects consumers. She explains that advertisements for antidepressants “downplay the presentations of depression [by] claiming that they reflect something like the flu or a cold” (Babineau 733). The common reaction to becoming sick with a cold or the flu is to take medications as a cure. By presenting mental illness to be synonymous with these types of sicknesses, the pharmaceutical industry promotes the use of medications to make its patients “feel better”. These kinds of advertisements uphold the stereotype that antidepressants are a quick fix that can instantly cure depression. They also push the misconception that mental illnesses should not be taken too seriously and can be “fixed” easily. As the pharmaceutical industry and the mental healthcare system attempt to manipulate their consumers, treatment options become more limited and less daunting for patients.

PATIENTS AND THE MEDIA

Many individuals who struggle with mental health have found other mediums of comfort instead of hospitals and other forms of in-person treatment, such as online support groups and social media. While doctors are still searching for “empirical manifestations of [the advantages of online support groups that] should be identifiable in the help-seeking behavior of the population at large,” in-person treatment plans seemingly fail patients more than virtual treatment (DeAndrea 4). The failures of the mental healthcare system are rooted in the fear of in-person treatment, which stems from the social stigma regarding getting help from healthcare professionals. Succumbing to in-person treatment is an admission of having a mental illness, and many mentally ill individuals are afraid of what other people will think of them, as Erving Goffman points out when he asserts that, “given what the stigmatized individual may well face upon entering a mixed social situation, he may anticipatorily respond by defensive cowering” (Goffman 37). Interacting with a healthcare professional

creates a “mixed social situation,” and patients feel more comfortable obtaining the help they need from behind a computer screen. In-person treatment is so daunting to many patients because doctors rely on the stigma created by mass media in order to shame patients into receiving in-patient care. The same social stigma also deters patients from seeking help in-person, which is why so many adults and children with mental illnesses “defensively cower” behind online walls that can hide their identity. Since the mental healthcare system cannot replicate the success of media support by itself, it uses that media support to its own advantage instead.

Parasocial relationships are the bonds that an audience can form with media characters with whom they do not have a personal relationship. Media psychologists, such as Dr. Phil, use the societal stigma around mental health to strengthen the parasocial relationships they have with their audiences. Goffman emphasizes the importance of stigma representation and how certain standards are “required about those who come to serve as representatives of a stigmatized category” (Goffman 36). Media psychologists such as Dr. Phil misrepresent mental health patients and perpetuate stigma even when they have the ability to change people’s opinions on the mental healthcare system. The Dr. Phil show, as a whole, exploits peoples’ mental illnesses for the sake of viewership rather than taking active steps to give the guests on the show the help that they need. The show emphasizes the so called “crazy” behaviors of the guests to generate a green social blade and keep the show on the air. Scholars Eric E. Rasmussen and David R. Ewoldsen explore the development of parasocial relationships as they explain how people “should expect viewers to respond to a media mental health professional, such as Dr. Phil, the same way they would to a real-life mental health professional, especially because the attributes of parasocial relationships are similar to the essential attributes of typical doctor–patient relationships” (Rasmussen and Ewoldsen 8). Because of the strength of parasocial relationships, media psychologists have the power to take away some of the fear that mentally ill individuals associate with in-person treatment, and mediating this fear encourages patients to take more active steps to obtain the help that they need and begin their rehabilitation process. However, media healthcare specialists often only reinforce the mental health stigma for their audiences, thereby making audiences more vulnerable and susceptible to trusting the media representation of what a doctor-patient relationship should look like. In contrast, scholar Parul Jain discusses the effects that

celebrities have on the mental healthcare system, specifically their lack of efficacy, or a person's ability to influence the opinions of others on a certain topic. Jain explains that "both response efficacy and self-efficacy are considered to be one of the key determinants in influencing attitude to behavior link," but that an increase in parasocial interactions between fans and celebrities does not necessarily increase efficacy in terms of mental health care (Jain 12). Celebrities have very little influence regarding the mental healthcare complex, so there is often no way for them to use their efficacy to influence fans' views of either system. With all of this being said, media psychiatrists are still more able to change people's opinions of the mental healthcare complex than celebrities are. This is because media psychiatrists are often viewed as more credible healthcare professionals and therefore experts on the issue. Since media psychiatrists are members of the mental healthcare system, they use their bias and mental health stigmas created by society to make the actions of the system seem justifiable. This makes audiences blindly support the mental healthcare system without doing their own research and allowing the system to get away with providing subpar care, making money, and continuing to drive the stigmatization of mental health.

CONCLUSION

In summation, my argument encapsulates the negligent nature of the mental health care system and the pharmaceutical industry. The mental healthcare complex operates in a way that ensures that mentally ill patients will continue to need care and pay for mediocre treatments and medications. I also assert that the mental healthcare system and the pharmaceutical industry manipulate vulnerable mental health patients in order to make the highest profit. Mentally ill patients are deeply affected by this systematic corruption without even realizing it because of the way that the mental healthcare system and the pharmaceutical industry convince them that the care that they receive is acceptable. These points are supported by Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma. Doctors and pharmacists use the stigmatized idea of mental health in order to support a distorted idea of what mental illness actually is and obtain societal support for their careless medical practices. The stigma surrounding mental health both demonizes those who live with mental illnesses and downplays mental illnesses and the rehabilitation process of a patient. As people ignore the injustices of the mental healthcare system and the

pharmaceutical industry, both are able to continue their acts of negligence and profiteering. Although mental health care has come a long way, especially within the last fifty years, ignoring systematic corruption and negligence leads to a halt in mental health care progress and advocacy. While it is the mental health care system's responsibility to take care of its patients, the fate of mentally ill individuals depends on society itself. Society has the power to recognize corruption and force a systematic change among the mental health care complex. If people continue to ignore the corruption that directly affects members of their own society, then they are also contributing to that same systematic corruption.

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MAX ANTHONY

The Intersection of Psychology and Terrorism: How Extremist Use Radicalized Ideology to Exploit Psychological Vulnerabilities

ABSTRACT

Terrorism consists of a broad spectrum of ideologically motivated groups that vary widely in their belief systems. From Neo-Nazis to Islamic extremists, these groups center around a distinct belief system that motivates them to carry out violent acts. The violent plots these organizations carry out are generally looking to achieve a political goal. These organizations consist of individuals who have become radicalized through a political or religious ideology, or a combination of the two. The radicalization process that these group members undergo is part of a complex interaction of psychological and sociological deprivations. Terrorists use radicalized ideology to exploit these vulnerabilities, in order to appeal to the individuals who are suffering from deprivations of fundamental psychological needs.

Radicalized ideology, whether political or religious, preys upon an individual's psychological vulnerabilities, in an attempt to recruit members to a terrorist organization. This radicalized ideology lays the framework to which these organizations construct the goals they seek to accomplish. The use and belief in violence to achieve specific goals is grounded deeply in the ideologies that these groups define themselves by. Robert Taylor, the director of the Executive Master of Science Program within Criminology at the University of Texas at Dallas, defines terrorism as, "The deliberate and unlawful use of threats or actual violence to inculcate fear, intended to intimidate or coerce individuals, groups, or governments to change their political, social, religious or ideological basis" (Taylor 8). Extreme and radical interpretations of political and religious ideologies justify the use of violence to accomplish varying goals designated by the terrorist organization. For example, Muslim extremists, such as members of ISIS, believe they are fighting a holy war against Western culture or what is known as jihad: "The association with terrorism

represents a distortion of the true Koranic meaning of the term...jihad is supposed to encompass both a struggle against one's sinful proclivities.. and a struggle against injustice..." (Rabil 1). Muslim extremists radicalize the concept of jihad, in order to provide justification and motivation to use violence against countries that they believe are creating injustices and sin. But why do these ideologies have such a powerful influence on individuals? What motivates a person to come to identify with them in the first place? How are individuals shaped by them so strongly that they use such extreme violence? The power of political and religious ideology has underlying psychological roots that motivate individuals to conform to them. This essay seeks to illustrate how the radicalization process transforms the deprivation of basic psychological needs into strong identification with extreme ideological beliefs. This evaluation will demonstrate that a motivation to commit acts of extreme terror and violence is rooted in political and religious ideologies that provide fulfillment of specific fundamental human needs within a person, due to intertwining relationships between psychological and sociological factors.

The radicalization process reconstructs specific psychological needs in order for an individual to identify with an ideology that seems to fulfill these fundamental human needs. Bertjan Doosje, a professor at the University of Amsterdam, and his colleagues, developed a model that describes the process of radicalization that any individual in society can go through. Their model is broken down into three phases consisting of a sensitivity phase, a group membership phase, and an action phase. In each of these stages, the micro, meso and macro level influences are evaluated to provide an in-depth analysis of how individuals become radicalized. Doosje states that:

In the sensitivity phase, an important driving factor at the micro level concerns the quest for significance. Feelings of insignificance can be caused by a loss of status, a strong sense of humiliation, or poor career prospects...Radical groups such as ISIS are well-equipped to foster or restore feelings of significance by providing recruits with a sense of belonging, respect, heroism, status and the notion to fight for a holy cause (81).

These intense feelings foster motivation through deprivation. The lack of significance or career prospects creates a negative reaction of powerlessness, which propels an individual to overcome this inadequacy.

Radical groups are able to take advantage of this desperate state, because personal significance is directly tied into their ideological beliefs. However, the radicalization process has severe consequences for individuals that go seemingly unnoticed. The result of conversion is a "...complete loss of control over one's choices. Conscience and compassion might have to be set aside, and indeed one's own survival can become a secondary consideration" (Dember 161). Radicalization represents a paradox of an individual regaining control in their lives, through psychological fulfillment, but unconsciously relinquishing their control due to the guiding principles established by the radicalized ideology. The deprivation of human needs initially drives the individual to become radicalized. However, the ideology eventually drives the individual to commit acts of violence through their identity conversion.

To further understand the complexity of radicalization, this section will explore the idea that political and religious ideologies represent the primary belief systems that contribute to an individual's identification with a terrorist organization. The majority of terrorist organizations fall on the extreme right side of politics. Much of what conservatism represents is a reflection of fear due to societal changes and threats to tradition. In Lazar Stankov's paper, *Psychological Processes Common to Social Conservatism and Terrorism*, he establishes a relationship between specific characteristics of conservatism that overlap with certain psychological aspects of terrorism. Grudges, nastiness, social awareness, and religiosity were all evaluated in terms of how they shaped individuals beliefs and political orientation. He found that "Without Grudge, MEM [Military Extremist Mindset] is incomplete, and Nastiness/Social Dominance...on their own, are unlikely to lead to terrorist activity. Thus, the absence of a strong Grudge within a conservative society is likely to prevent the emergence of complete MEM" (Stankov 78). The concept of a severe grudge, which is a feeling of resentment towards an individual or organization due to a past harm committed, pushes conservatism to the extreme end. Furthermore, a grudge can be thought of in terms of the occurrence of injustices to members of a society. When an injustice occurs, it creates a drive to seek vengeance against whoever committed the injustice which, overtime, develops into a grudge. Conservative ideology creates susceptibility within the individual to protect traditional values through seeking vengeance. Another way of viewing this is through John Jost and David Amodio's model of political ideology, motivated by social cognitions. They suggest that, "...individuals gravitate toward those ideas

and opinions that ‘match’ or ‘resonate’ with their own needs, interests, and desires...conservative ideology should be more appealing to individuals who are either temporarily or chronically high in needs to manage uncertainty and threat...because ‘preserving the status quo allows one to maintain what is familiar and known while rejecting the risky, uncertain prospect of social change’” (Jost and Amodio 57). Uprooting an established culture in a society creates enormous anxiety and stress within individuals. Conservatism appeals to those individuals that need to hold together traditional culture, as a means to protect their way of life and diminish the injustices created by the individuals who are perceived as destroying the society. Injustices create serious threats to the status quo and displace the traditions established by society. Continued injustices, which foster a grudge, lead certain groups like terrorists to respond with violent actions, because extreme right-wing ideology promotes this intense aggression.

Building on the idea of the impact of ideology, religiosity provides powerful motivations for individuals to conform to terrorist organizations. Religion is a defining feature of a majority of societies, and it is interwoven within almost all aspects of that society. For example, conservative politics is heavily influenced by religious scriptures and beliefs that define family values and cultural norms. Religion acts as a guiding principle to help define life and give meaning to existence:

First, religion is about the substantive notion of ‘the sacred’ and, second, religion serves a unique function in explicating the “ultimate issues in life”. Thus, the shared belief in the existence of God (or gods) and an afterlife as well as less explicitly religious concepts, such as control and life purpose, ought to culminate in a powerful worldview. That worldview not only directs individual and group processes but also might reduce existential anxiety by fostering the prospect of an eternal group membership (Ysseldyk 62).

The belief in religious scriptures provides a powerful impression of security and certainty in a complex world, by reducing the anxiety of death and a meaningful life. This is accomplished through clear answers on how to live with and interact with other people, along with the promise of an afterlife. The anxiety that stems from a lack of satisfaction of these needs is immense and almost unbearable. Radical groups take advantage of the powerful, comforting ideology of religion, in order to weave religious scriptures into their belief systems as a means to obscure

their malicious intentions, and provide justification for the violent behaviors they call for. Another way to understand this concept is illustrated by M. B. Rogers et al., who examines social-psychological factors underlying terrorist violence. She states, "...the 'religious framework' offers the excuse, and the terrorist framework offers the means to carry out the job. Religion might appear to play an elevated role because of the rhetoric used by terrorist groups, but the key factors driving the choice of suicide bombers to be low self-esteem combined with countered grievances" (Rogers et al. 254). Terrorist organizations prey on psychological vulnerabilities, such as insecurity or insignificance, by using religion to give them meaning and purpose. This justification of violence is crucial, because the distortion of religion is exactly what is used in retaliation for injustices towards political ideologies, notably far-right conservatism. Political and religious ideologies are interwoven with one another, as each provides not only fulfillment of deficient needs, but also justifies the use violence as a means to protect their worldview concepts.

Further examination of the underlying psychological and sociological motivations will provide a deeper understanding of how the exploitations of fundamental needs push individuals to identify with radical ideologies. Psychological, or micro-level, influences stem from vulnerabilities within the individual, such as a need for meaning or identity, and perceptions of injustices. Finding significance in life promotes the belief that actions contribute to a greater purpose. This concept has been studied countless times, to which the findings suggest

...nearly every human, across cultures, has a deep and profound psychological need to create a sense of personal meaning and significance...this identity can be a complicated, uncertain and anxiety provoking experience. Instead of wrestling with it, some people just gravitate toward an existing, structured set of beliefs and adopt them with little critical thought or personal reflection. The absolutist, black-and-white nature of most extremist ideologies is often attractive to those who feel overwhelmed by the complexity and stress of finding meaning in a complicated world. (Borum 292)

Identity formation is crucial for every person, because it provides a sense of self and understanding of who one is in relation to others. The byproduct of identity formation elicits motivation to give the self purpose. This can be fulfilled through actions that are believed to make a difference in the world, or affect society for the greater good. In addition,

perceived injustices help foster inclinations for purpose and meaning, because they violate the individual's moral standings. Injustices are seen as intentional acts, since the idea of a just world is generally accepted by the majority of people. It has been established that there is "...a positive relationship between intensity of anger and perceptions of injustice. This result is consistent with a social interactionist perspective of aggression and violence, which suggests that attributions of blame and injustice lead to expressions of anger that extend beyond the self to the social realm" (Brown 1020). By enacting revenge on people or groups who caused injustice, it gives individuals a sense of meaning and significance, that they are doing something bigger than themselves. Terrorist organizations take the combination of these powerful drives within people, along with their already strongly held political and religious beliefs, and twist them together to form an extremist view of changing the world by protecting others against corrupt, evil people.

One of the most appealing aspects of terrorist organizations is the idea of group membership that creates a sense of belonging. Humans are social beings who, evolutionarily speaking, survive off the interdependence of groups. Group membership is an essential feature of a person's life because it provides security, increases self-esteem, and contributes to identity construction. However, "...deprivation of belongingness should lead to a variety of affiliative behaviors and cause various undesirable effects, including decrements in health, happiness, and adjustment...loss of social bonds causes emotional distress...people who do not have adequate supportive relationships experience greater stress than those who do" (Baumeister 508). Social exclusion and rejection can lead an individual to develop a mentality that life is meaningless, through which self-esteem is greatly decreased. This reduction of self-esteem causes a person to feel worthless, and generates a severe hole in a person's self concept to which their identity is built on. Radical groups exploit this by promising group membership and establishing security with other members, both combined working to restore meaning and rebuild identity. Professor Tyler Stillman from Florida State University states that, "...humans get most of what they need to survive from their social group rather than directly from the natural environment...the human strategy for survival depends on belonging...social exclusion...could threaten people at such a basic level that it would impair their sense of meaningful existence" (Stillman 250). Social bonds between individuals act as reinforcers to self-esteem, because they build a person's confidence and provide the support need-

ed in hard times. Where loneliness works to break down identity, social groups complete individual identity through the security needed in order to discover meaning and significance. Therefore, it is not the radical ideology itself, that drives individuals to become involved in terrorism but rather, the concept of group membership and the bolstering of one's self-esteem through involvement with the group. The ideology only takes precedent when the bonds with other group members are formed. It is only through the formation of these bonds and the identification of the characteristics within a group, that the meaning involved in the ideology begins to shape and define the person, to the extent they take the violent actions called for.

While psychological vulnerabilities mainly contribute to identification with radical ideology, an alternative perspective illustrates that cultural factors are just as significant. Societies have cultures that transcend through time, in which norms and values have been constructed. These cultures have created what sociologists call a collective memory; "a memory or memories shared or recollected by a group, as a community or culture" (dictionary.com). Stephen Vertigans, a Professor of Sociology at the Robert Gordon University in Scotland, posts a theory about the importance of understanding habits as a means of influencing behavior, and how these habits are part of a broader collective memory that has roots from generations passed. He argues that by analyzing historical processes, one will gain a deeper understanding of social life and the influence it has on individuals: "Violent pasts are, of course, hardly unusual. Aggressive struggles over discourse, resources and power feature throughout history and across societies..." (Vertigans 49). Cultural norms and values provide a framework of standards for individuals to live by and come to formulate their identity. These habits create the foundations to which society is built upon, and both directly and indirectly influence individuals' everyday lives. Disruption to social life threatens the security of people in a society. The degree of these threats can precipitate violent reactions, as a means to protect the society. However, terrorism is not seen in all societies, under these circumstances. The use of terrorism to defend social life is brought about by the attributions these groups make to determine who is responsible. Attributions determine how groups and individuals create explanations about the causes of events, and who or what is responsible for them: "The way people make attributions is pertinent to how they develop grievances, ascribe blame, and evaluate those regarded as responsible for negative events. It is not unusual for people to 'default' to attrib-

uting positive outcomes to themselves and negative outcomes to others” (Borum 295). In instances where serious threats to societal life occur, the way in which group members attribute blame has a direct effect on the responses enacted. Identification of another group or person causing the negative events will forge motivations to retaliate against them, in order to stop further disruption. Sociological perspectives evaluate societal level factors that contribute to the creation of vulnerabilities within the psychological make-up of people.

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated a small portion of the underlying psychological factors that contribute to individuals identifying with radical ideology. There are many more influences such as social identity theory, self-concepts, and personal biases, that all play a role. These influences work together to produce a vulnerable person who falls victim to extremism. The term victim should be viewed lightly; not every terrorist member can be considered victimized. Human cognition is incredibly complex; there is no one specific way in which a person becomes radicalized. With this in mind, it is important to understand that any person in any environment can fall prey to radicalization. The belief that there is a stereotypical “terrorist” is completely false. Understanding the perspectives of the individuals who believe they are fighting for a justified cause, will lead to further knowledge of how and why these extremist groups come to be. Acts of terrorism have devastating emotional and physical tolls on not only the people directly involved in them, but also national policy decisions, stereotype activations, and economic functioning. It is for these reasons that simply labeling terrorists as individuals with mental defects is destructive in successfully intervening with them. Effective intervention techniques still need more development and research, but understanding the complexity of these individuals must be kept in mind in order to produce practical actions. Further research needs to be conducted on the history of terrorist organizations, and the influence of other countries’ policy decisions, that contribute to the rise of terrorist organizations. Sufficient empirical research must be conducted, in order to put an end to the use of violence in the name of radical ideology.

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SARAH PFREUNDSCHUH

Parental Feeding Strategies: Promising Means of Overcoming Innate Food Preferences

ABSTRACT

It is widely agreed that healthy eating, or more specifically, unprocessed eating, plays an important role in proper growth and development and helps to reduce future risk of obesity and chronic disease. Given the potential for both immediate and long-term health consequences, ensuring that children develop preferences for healthy food is particularly valuable. Yet the development of such preferences is often not simple, especially given the existence of certain innate taste preferences that were likely once evolutionarily advantageous in the modern food environment of developed nations. Fortunately, even innate preferences tend to be quite plastic in nature, allowing for manipulation via outside intervention. This paper explores the potential implications of our evolutionarily derived taste preferences in the context of a food environment very different from the one our species evolved in. It then follows with a multifaceted discussion of a sample of parental feeding strategies that can be selectively employed to take advantage of the plasticity of these evolutionarily derived preferences in an attempt to help parents in the modern world better ensure that their children acquire preferences for foods that will best protect their health.

INTRODUCTION

Given the rise of childhood and adulthood obesity, as well as many other chronic health conditions, ensuring proper nutrition has become increasingly important. As Irish psychology and health science researchers Amanda Fitzgerald, Caroline Heary, Elizabeth Nixon, and Colette Kelly note in “Factors Influencing the Food Choices of Irish Children and Adolescents: A Qualitative Investigation,” “Nutritional intake during childhood and adolescence is important for growth (Story et al., 2002), the development of lifelong eating behaviours (Coulson et al., 1998) and may have long-term health implications” (289). With childhood being a time where the development of healthy eating behaviors, or lack thereof, can affect one’s future health, studying the factors that

affect such behaviors can aid intervention efforts that lead to better eating habits. Yet while many factors are environmental, and thus alterable, many are at least partially hereditary. University College London Health Behaviour Research Centre researchers Alison Fildes et al. shed light on this debate in their study, “Nature and nurture in children’s food preferences.” Nutritional Science professors at Drexel University and Rutgers University respectively, Alison K. Ventura and John Worobey, further highlight the differences between innate and learned eating preferences in their review, “Early Influences on the Development of Food Preferences,” drawing special attention to the evolutionary explanations for the genetic eating preferences observed broadly amongst young children.

Drawing upon the evolutionary significance behind our innate food preferences, I will attempt to determine the degree to which heredity and environmental factors play a role in fostering food preferences within the modern world among developing children. While many food preferences are genetic due to once being evolutionarily advantageous, improved accessibility to food and the highly processed nature of that food dictates that these preferences are no longer beneficial. Given the presence of now maladaptive innate food preferences, taking advantage of the plasticity of otherwise heritable food preferences is of key importance in developing children. By repeatedly exposing children to a variety of whole foods, demonstrating model behavior via social facilitation, and employing a selective degree of food restriction, parents can help to reduce preferences for processed energy-dense foods in children, as well as promote potentially long-term preferences for more nutrient-dense foods such as vegetables and fruits, thus encouraging the development of healthy eating habits necessary to reduce the risk of obesity and disease.

To lay the foundation for understanding the potential significance of evolutionarily-derived food preferences in an environment far removed from its evolutionary origins, I will begin by laying out the universal innate food preferences at hand. Using nutrient transition theory as a baseline for highlighting the changes characteristic of the modernizing food environment, I will then discuss the disparities between the environment that designed these universal preferences within the current environment. Given the multitude of possible environmental influences, or any food-related experiences, and more unique genetic traits capable of influencing unique food preferences in children, I will not draw definite conclusions regarding the supposed cause of preferences for the processed foods generally agreed to be damaging to general health. I will, howev-

er, note the power of altering food environments of children through a sample of well-established parental feeding strategies, to promote healthy preferences and discourage unhealthy ones in both the short-term and long-term, regardless of the ultimate source of existing preferences.

EVOLUTION AS THE DRIVING FORCE OF UNIVERSAL INBORN TASTE PREFERENCES

While genetic differences in taste sensitivity can lead to varying degrees of individual preference for foods, some preferences are more universal, and experts have theorized that they have arisen via evolution. For example, Adam Drewnowski and Eva Almiron-Roig note in *Fat Detection: Taste, Texture, and Post Ingestive Effects* that “human liking for fats may be a consequence of evolutionary pressures to select energy-dense foods to assure nutrition and survival (267). Living in the absence of grocery stores and large-scale farming, human ancestors spent more time and energy obtaining food. Knowing which foods would produce the greatest return on investment was crucial for survival, helping individuals prioritize the pursuit of the available energy sources most likely to meet their caloric and nutritional needs. Ventura and Worobey note this same biological preference for energy-dense foods:

When children have repeated opportunities to consume two different versions of the same food that differ in energy density (for example, a high-fat or low-fat pudding) and have distinct flavor cues, children show preference for the flavor paired with the higher energy-density version. Research using animal models report similar findings which suggests the predisposition to prefer foods that confer positive post-ingestive effects, as do energy-dense foods, is unlearned. (404)

Though the fact that children must eat multiple foods prior to experiencing relative differences in post-ingestive satiety might seem to suggest that preferences for high-fat foods are learned; such preferences are in fact deemed “unlearned,” as the associations formed are ultimately programmed by genes. Unlearned preferences are therefore innate. Moreover, the widespread presence of an unlearned preference for high-fat foods among humans and other animals, which appear at an early age (Drewnowski and Almiron-Roig 266), highlights that differences in individual environmental influence has little to no impact on the development of said preferences, further speaking to their genetic nature.

Unlearned food preferences emerge during the fetal and newborn stages, and experts view them as a product of evolution that helps to facilitate the consumption of adequate calories and nutrients.

As with all innate traits, universal unlearned food preferences arose to serve an evolutionary advantage. In this case, such preferences help children to discriminate those foods rich in essential nutrients from those potentially toxic, as well as instill a desire for consumption of the former. Expanding upon the range of almost universal unlearned food preferences and their evolutionary significance, Ventura and Worobey explain:

Before food processing and labeling, human survival depended on correctly discriminating foods that were energy-dense and nutrient-rich from those that were toxic or rancid. In nature, sweetness is often associated with calorie-rich carbohydrate sources such as breast milk or fruit [87]; umami is associated with amino-acid or protein-rich foods, such as meats [88]; and salt signals the presence of an essential mineral [89]. (403)

In addition to preferences for energy-dense foods, humans evolved to exhibit unlearned preferences for sweet, umami, and salty tastes from an early age. Such tastes correlate with calorie-dense and protein-rich foods with essential minerals, with sweet tastes accordingly overlapping with the energy-dense preferences driven by post-ingestive satiety (Ventura and Worobey 404). These inborn preferences helped to distinguish foods rich in calories and nutrients from foods that might be toxic or rancid in an age lacking modern food processing, safety, and labeling. Such preferences may still carry some value, as the “sensory preference for sweet taste is present at birth, and the ‘sweet tooth’ of early childhood helps to introduce new foods into the children’s diet” (Drewnowski and Almiron-Roig n.p.). These unlearned preferences might also help to promote consumption of foods that common dietary guidelines prioritize. Without any unlearned preferences, it would likely be more difficult to get children, especially those with high degrees of food neophobia, to expand their palates.

NUTRIENT TRANSITION THEORY: A NEW FOOD ENVIRONMENT

While evolutionarily-driven universal food preferences may still carry some benefits during the early stages of food introduction into a child’s

diet, widespread access to nutritional information and the newfound normalcy of obtaining food from grocery stores rather than through self-sustenance dictate that these inborn preferences are less necessary in the modern food environment. Wiss et al. highlight the unique characteristics of such a food environment in “Sugar Addiction: From Evolution to Revolution” using nutrient transition theory, which centers around the “correlation with increased BMI [body mass index] and changing economic and agricultural factors”. Examples of such factors include “urbanization, economic growth, technical change, and culture... [as well as] technology...economic welfare relative to the cost of food, and expansion of global trade” (Wiss et al. 2). The theory further notes an epidemiological transition from “high prevalence of disease associated with famine, malnutrition, and poor sanitation, to a pattern of high prevalence of chronic and degenerative disease associated with urban-industrial lifestyles,” pointing to increasingly sedentary lifestyles and the uptake of the western diet, rich in processed foods high in fat and sugar, as the likely causes (2). Speaking to the drastic differences between the past and present food environments of our species, Jennifer S. Savage, Jennifer Ortlet Fischer, and Leann L. Birch point out in “Parental Influence on Eating Behavior: Conception to Adolescence” that while:

During historical conditions of scarcity, family life and resources were devoted to the procurement and preparation of foods, which are often low in energy, nutrients, and palatability...today in non-Third World countries children’s eating habits develop under unprecedented conditions of dietary abundance, where palatable, inexpensive, ready-to-eat foods are readily available. (22)

Our inborn taste preferences, though intended to be beneficial, may be doing more harm than good within the context of the modern food environment in developed countries, characterized by such “unprecedented conditions of dietary abundance” and other characteristics denoted by nutrient transition theory.

Yet although nutrient transition theory clearly illuminates the shift in developed countries towards a food environment characterized by abundance, availability and consumption of processed foods, the origin of preferences for these foods remains somewhat unclear. Supporting the perspective that such preferences are influenced primarily by the environment, Fildes et al. found “a lower genetic influence on the preference

for snacks (29%). Preferences for dairy and starch were also less heritable (27–32%). Mirroring this result, shared environment effects were substantial for dairy, starch, and snacks (54–60%)” (915). Given that the dairy, starch, and snack food groups associated with lower heritability include a number of highly processed foods, such findings point to the absence of processed foods amongst early human ancestors and suggest that perhaps humans are not biologically predisposed to prefer processed food. The idea that individuals who share an environment are more likely to exhibit similar behaviors further supports this lack of an evolutionary preference for processed foods by indicating that environmental influences, rather than genetics, lead to preferences for dairy, starches, and snacks. Despite this, Ventura and Worobey shed light on an opposing viewpoint by highlighting the unlearned nature of preferences for high-fat foods and sweet, umami, and salty tastes (403), all of which are characteristic of highly processed foods, though to varying degrees. Preferences for processed foods, such as sugar and fat-rich prepackaged cookies, might therefore be innate, despite the low heritability of preferences for such foods reported by Fildes et al. Accordingly, it is somewhat unclear as to whether preferences for highly processed foods take advantage of the once more advantageous unlearned preferences stressed by Ventura and Worobey, or whether the environment plays a more critical role as findings from Fildes et al.’s twin study suggest.

PARENTAL FEEDING STRATEGIES AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING PREFERENCES

Present evidence and research ultimately bar the ability to rule out that environmental influences impact eating preferences, and forbid definite conclusions as to whether preferences for highly processed foods are the product of now maladaptive unlearned food preferences, or whether they result from the current environment. Yet, because even “high heritability does not mean that environmental interventions are without value... [and rather] many studies have shown that food preferences are modifiable, especially in early childhood” (Fildes et al. 917), taking advantage of strategies shown to promote stronger preferences for healthier foods can help to instill in young children the healthy eating behaviors necessary to reduce the future risk of developing obesity and other chronic illnesses (“Dietary Guidelines” n.p.).

SOCIAL FACILITATION

One of the strategies for influencing food preferences in children via environmental manipulation is social facilitation, defined as “an increase in a behavior in the presence of others displaying the same behavior,” which is broadly viewed as effective (Ventura and Worobey 405). Utilizing the evidence for the effectiveness of social facilitation, Ventura and Worobey explain that “Studies have shown that the foods that parents consume and make available to their children predict the types of foods their children consume. Experimental studies have provided evidence that both adult and peer models are effective in promoting children’s acceptance of and preferences for novel foods” (404-405). When parents and other influential figures eat specific foods in the presence of young children, they increase the likelihood that the children will consume the food themselves and develop preferences accordingly. In a study that explored the relationship between food-related parenting practices and food preferences, Rachel L. Vollmer and Jamey Baietto uncovered a negative correlation between parental modelling and preferences for foods high in sugar and fat in children aged 3 to 7 (136). Such findings suggest that effective modeling can not only encourage consumption of healthy foods, but also discourage consumption of less healthy foods.

Yet while effective modeling of ideal food preferences can help to instill the same healthy preferences in children, modeling of less desirable food preferences can potentially foster unhealthy preferences. If parents or authority figures frequently eat highly processed foods and little to no fruits and vegetables, then their children are most likely to develop similar preferences. In their study, “Strategies Used by Parents to Influence Their Children’s Food Preferences,” Catherine G. Russel, Anthony Worsley, and Karen J. Campbell describe accounts of feeding strategies used by parents of children with healthy, unhealthy, and neophobic preferences and patterns of intake (124). One parent of a child in the healthy group speaks to the importance of censoring the potential influence of older siblings’ food preferences: “I’m very conscious of it, you know, my eldest daughter says ‘oh I don’t like that’, well...I ask her not to announce it loudly because the younger one will probably follow at some stage” (Russell et al. 126). Taking note of the strong influence a family member had on a child’s food preferences and willingness to try a new food, this parent notes taking special care to ensure that the older daughter’s preferences do not influence the younger child. If the parent were to allow the

contrary and permit his or her eldest daughter to clearly express dislike of a food in front of her younger sibling, the younger sibling might be deterred from trying the food or decide that he or she no longer wants to eat the food despite possibly having liked it initially. Young children are particularly vulnerable to poor eating influences, like those of picky siblings or parents, especially those who make their dislikes very explicitly clear. Ventura and Worobey further extend the realm of potential influencers, noting that “Experimental studies have provided evidence that both adult and peer models are effective in promoting children’s acceptance of and preferences for novel foods” (404-405). Not only do parents and siblings have the power to foster long-term liking for healthy foods, but peers may play a similar role. In attempting to promote healthy eating preferences for a wide-variety nutrient-dense foods such as vegetables and fruits, it is imperative that all present figures of influence first model these preferences. Parents ought to eat primarily healthy foods around their children and exhibit signs of enjoyment when consuming these foods, and also watch the influences of others who interact with their children, including siblings and peers.

Although modeling is an effective feeding strategy when used correctly, its isolated potential to shape food preferences does appear to differ from child to child, and its impact may also be intertwined with other factors. As noted in the seminal public health paper, “Behavioral Science at the Crossroads in Public Health: Extending Horizons, Envisioning the Future,” “Eating behavior is an example of a phenomenon that results from synergistic interactions among biological [hunger] and social [eating cues] levels” (1662). Following a similar framework, eating preferences also result from synergistic interactions and are the product of both genetically driven traits and aspects of individual experiences with food. When these factors come together, the overall effects are greater than the sum of the theoretical effects if they were to occur separately. Ventura and Worobey and Russell et al. alike highlight the aforementioned power of models to act as either positive or negative influences. If parents demonstrate preference for highly processed foods in the presence of their children, it is unlikely that their children will choose healthier foods. Yet Russell et al. do add a complication, as not all parents of children with unhealthy eating preferences and behaviors neglect the value of modelling. One parent of a child with unhealthy preferences and behaviors notes:

'I think if she sees us eating something healthy then she's more likely to follow it. There's no way that if I sat down and had a snack of a biscuit, that she'd go and have an apple, you know what I mean, she immediately wants what we want, and I think she sort of models her eating on us a bit, so I try to be conscious of that a bit, you know. Try and lead by example a little bit. (Russell et al. 126)

Appearing to be quite mindful of the ability of their eating behaviors to directly influence those of their child, this parent's account hints at the multifactorial nature of eating preferences. While modeling of healthy eating behaviors can promote the development of such desired behaviors, it represents only one of many strategies capable of varying degrees of influence depending upon both the child's individual genetic traits and other aspects of the child's food environment and related experiences.

REPEATED EXPOSURE

Like social facilitation, repeated exposure within a positive social environment can promote similar development of healthy food preferences. This strategy entails offering children a variety of foods, involving children in the process of preparing food, and repeatedly offering foods that have previously been refused. Yet use of the tactic does not go so far as to use any means of force or coercion to get a child to try a new food or eat a previously rejected food. Ventura and Worobey speak to the power of repeated exposure:

Neophobic tendencies can be reduced and preferences can be increased by exposing infants and young children repeatedly to novel foods [100, 101, 114, 115]... Studies suggest that young children need to be exposed to a novel food between 6 and 15 times before increases in intake and preferences are seen. (404)

While infants and young children may be evolutionarily programmed to avoid unfamiliar foods during early childhood in order to primarily reduce the risk of obtaining a food-borne illness, repeated exposure to foods that these individuals initially refuse can promote a liking for them. In order for preferences to develop, "Exposure needs to include tasting the food, as merely seeing or learning about a novel food on repeated occasions did not promote children's preferences for that food" (404). If parents persevere in attempting to promote preference for healthy foods that a child initially refuses to eat by continuing to provide

access to them, perhaps in combination with foods already liked by the child, he or she may then grow to like the new food. By following such guidelines, parents can reduce the risk of their children developing health problems associated with the consumption of excess calories or a lack of vital nutrients. Further speaking to the power of endurance among parents, a parent of a child in the healthy group of Russell et al.'s study of feeding strategies responded to the question of whether one would continue to expose a child to a previously rejected food: “. . . I would certainly try again, and whether it be months, or weeks down the track, I'd certainly try it. . . ? (Healthy Group)... [whereas a parent of a child in the unhealthy group simply stated:] 'I know if she doesn't like something I won't serve it up to her.' (Unhealthy Group)” (Russell 126). The parent of a child in the healthy group's response was marked by a sense of assurance, with the use of the word “certainly” highlighting his or her readiness to continue trying despite undesirable outcomes, as well as his or her confidence in the value of a sustained effort to encourage liking. On the other hand, the parent of a child in the unhealthy group arrived at the conclusion that his or her child's previous refusal of certain foods rendered any future attempts to encourage liking illogical and impractical. Given that repeated exposure was especially common amongst parents of children with healthy eating habits, parents taking a sustained, active role in developing their children's palates are particularly important in promoting lifelong healthy eating behaviors. Parents are most likely to have success when they are patient, as children can overcome their dislikes so long as the environment supports such change.

RESTRICTION

Unlike social facilitation and repeated exposure, the immediate impact of restricting access to particular foods makes the strategy appear less desirable. Regarding restriction, Ventura and Worbey warn against the short-term impact of restricting access to foods high in fat, sugar, and salt, indicating that:

When children were presented with two snack foods in a laboratory-based setting, one restricted and the other freely accessible, children showed a clear preference for the restricted food despite reporting no difference in preferences for the two foods prior to the restricted versus free-access presentations. In addition, when later given free access to both snack foods, children exhibited a greater

behavioral response and higher intake of the previously restricted snack food compared to the freely accessed snack food. (404)

When foods are restricted, children appear to desire them more, and this effect persists even when access is later uninhibited. In “Perceived Recollection of Frequent Exposure to Foods in Childhood Is Associated with Adulthood Liking,” Wadhwa et al. also note that parental restriction can cause children to desire restricted foods more than unrestricted foods, though they note the presence of this effect only in the short term (Wadhwa 30).

While restriction can increase short-term preference for foods amongst children who fail to understand the motives behind such restriction, the feeding strategy shows a more promising potential to promote healthy eating preferences in the long-term. Demonstrating this potential, Wadhwa et al. found that college-aged individuals disliked unhealthy foods high in fat, carbohydrates, or both, that parents forbid during childhood (30). While individuals may exhibit greater preference for specific foods during childhood as a result of seeing such foods as “special’ due to their restricted status,” they are more likely to recognize the true health implications of such foods that gave their parents reason for restriction later in life (30). As restriction tends to carry short-term consequences but long-term benefits, it may therefore be necessary that parents restrict most processed foods high in fat, sugar, and salt, while still allowing their children to consume some “lesser evil” foods that are not quite ideal dietary choices, but not detrimental in moderation.

CONCLUSION

The multitude of possible influences capable of contributing to individual food preferences ultimately bars the drawing of definite conclusions regarding the origin of preferences for highly processed foods. Oftentimes, preferences are most likely the result of multiple influences. One such influence stems from our unlearned preferences for high-fat foods and foods characterized by umami, sweet, or salty tastes. Such food and taste preferences are thought to have once been more advantageous in an environment devoid of the modernization denoted by nutrient transition theory, in which energy expenditures were higher and food scarcity was more common. Highly processed foods were not present among human ancestors, yet the composition of these foods capitalizes on preferences passed on from them. As such, once advantageous preferences may

now be encouraging the consumption of human-designed foods detrimental to our health. Yet, regardless of the ultimate origins of our preferences for highly processed foods, these preferences are not set in stone. Given that food preferences formed during childhood predict preferences during adulthood, parents have a key responsibility to help facilitate the development of preferences for healthy foods. By employing strategies such as repeated exposure, social facilitation, and selective restriction, parents can help to guard against the development of strong preferences for highly processed foods and instead promote the development of the healthy eating preferences necessary to reduce a future risk of developing obesity, illness, and disease. Such a list is not exhaustive, and children may respond to various strategies to differing degrees. Providing parents with education on widely-effective feeding strategies and encouraging the practice of a variety of these strategies is therefore of critical importance.

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SOPHIE WEI

Queering Traditional Marriage in China

ABSTRACT

This essay explores the ways in which queer individuals interact with marriage in China. It analyzes two predominant performances of traditional marriage used by gay men and women in China: Xinghun and tongqi marriages. Xinghun marriages are defined as contract marriages between a queer man and woman whereas tongqi marriages are between a homosexual man and a straight woman in which the woman is unaware of her husband's sexuality. Due to the tension between Chinese culture and homosexual marriage, queer individuals need to navigate social customs to avoid the cultural consequences of being out and queer in China. This piece examines the backgrounds behind these tensions and exposes the remaining influence of colonization in China's attitude towards queer behavior and relationships. It also examines the complex benefits and consequences of these types of marriages and ultimately reveals that, due to the unwavering homophobic values that Chinese culture continues to uphold, these marriages are necessary to keep queer individuals safe in China. As such, mixed orientation marriages can prove to be a useful tool for queer Chinese individuals and can begin the process of normalizing unconventional marriage as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a fundamental and necessary milestone in Chinese culture. It is a sacred tie between families, as well as a means of reproducing the paternal family name. As such, marriage has become the basis for the growth and development of Chinese values. This norm is so pervasive that if one does not get married, society often perceives them as failures. Unmarried women are “derogated as ‘leftover women’ (shengnu)” and are “ridiculed by the media and viewed by state agencies and government officials as a social problem” (Choi and Luo 264). Heterosexuality is considered not only an advantage but a necessity because the legal and social bond of marriage is viewed by society as an essential tool for the reproduction of family and the continuation of lineage. Professors Shuzhen Huang and Daniel C. Brouwer contextualize marriage in China in their

article, “Negotiating Performances of ‘Real’ Marriage in Chinese Queer *Xinghun*.” They assert that “there is a strong value for kin and lineage in Chinese history” and that “it is the heterosexual marriage system that guarantees the reproduction of kin across generations” (142). When marriage is centered around reproduction, homosexual relations are marginalized and ignored, thus perpetuating the belief that heterosexuality is the norm. This worldview is known as heteronormativity which will be the main theoretical frame for the rest of this paper. If heterosexual marriage is the only version of marriage permitted by law and by social code, how do queer people in China navigate cultural expectations for heteronormative marriage?

In addition to the push for familial reproduction, Chinese marriage and the social norms that are tied to it bring the issue of *mianzi* (reputation), defined more concisely by Ren et al. as “what an individual shows to the public and involves the impression that one gives to others” (219). *Mianzi* is fundamental to Chinese people; if a family name is tainted, the lineage and reproduction of the family will be forever tarnished. Family and marriage become performative through *mianzi* because “its essence is to formally meet society’s expectations about family and marriage rather than to substantively live a family (and married) life” (Choi and Luo 276). These combined factors contribute to the phenomenon of *Xinghun* or *tongqi* marriages, which continue to increase in prevalence. *Xinghun* is defined as a contract marriage between a gay man and a gay woman in which both members are aware of their own and their partner’s sexual orientation. On the other hand, *tongqi* marriages are defined as a closeted gay man marrying a straight woman who is not aware of her husband’s sexual orientation. Although distinguishing between these types of marriages is crucial, they both “offer a way to maintain one’s personal and family reputation (*mianzi*)” (Ren et al. 213). More importantly, they are enforced by Chinese marriage norms and share many of the same consequences. This paper will examine the extent to which these sham marriages either perpetuate heteronormativity, or alternatively, provide a safe haven for queer people in China. To understand the extent to which these concepts uplift or detract from the Chinese queer experience, this paper will use postcolonial theory to determine how modern Chinese values were created, and the theoretical frames of heteronormativity and intersectionality to determine the positive and negative consequences of sham marriages.

WHAT CONSTITUTES CHINESE VALUES?

Historically, homosexuality was well-represented and even romanticized in ancient Chinese art forms; same-sex eroticism was present and well-represented in poetry, opera, painting, and so forth. Bret Hinsch claims in a study he conducted that in ancient Chinese society, the “general sexual ethos seems to be fairly fluid...homosexuality and extramarital heterosexuality both had an accepted place in...society” (18). Hinsch cites multiple poems and stories to back up this claim, including *The Bitten Peach and the Cut Sleeve*. The story centers around Duke Ling and Mizi Xia who are fictional figures from the Zhou dynasty. Mizi Xia finds a peach that he then shares with Duke who exclaims, “[h]ow sincere is your love for me! You forgot your appetite and thought only of giving me good things to eat!” The bitten peach is “a symbol still used to signify love between men in China” and is modernly used as a synonym for homosexuality (Mills).

The romanticization of same-sex relationships has changed in the centuries since this story was written. Today, queer social justice issues in China are no longer romanticized and are treated as taboo instead. What Chinese values are antagonistic towards homosexuality? China’s system of social norms is structured around upholding strict categories that separate “normal” from “abnormal.” For instance, there is a rigid gender binary in which gender is classified into two categories: male and female. With this binary comes gender-specific roles causing women to be held to standards of meekness and submission while men are expected to be strong and dominant. In the article, “Two Gay Men Seeking Two Lesbians: An Analysis of *Xinghun* (Formality Marriage) Ads on China’s,” researcher Min Liu asserts that in China especially, there is profound “expectation that husbands play a dominant role in traditional marriages” which comes with an “expectation that the husband is taller, older, and in a financially better position” (496). As a result of this strict categorization, many social, cultural, and political institutions are gendered, creating significant societal expectations for both men and women. Thus there is a profound expectation put on Chinese citizens to conform to both heterosexuality and to male/female roles (as determined by biological sex) in domestic and public life. Anything that deviates from these expectations such as homosexuality, transgenderism, gender non-conformity, and so forth, is deemed unnatural. This paper will henceforth refer to these socio-normative “deviations” under the umbrella terminology of “LGBT”

or “queer” interchangeably.

These seemingly arbitrary categories of gender and sex have changed radically from those of ancient China. According to Asian postcolonial theorists such as Po-han Lee, modern ideas and norms surrounding sexuality and gender were introduced during the Western colonization of China in the late 19th and early 20th century. Postcolonial theorists have researched how imperialistic endeavors exploited native land, resources, and people, and have determined that for China, “the concepts of homo/heterosexual binarism as well as sexual orientation were actually introduced from the ‘West’” (Lee). In other words, colonialism introduced the gender-based categories and binaries upon which modern Chinese culture is structured on. Lee elaborates that a lack of decolonization has led to a homophobic and intolerant combination of traditional Confucianism and Western Judeo-Christian values. He states that “the so-called ‘Chinese culture’ based on Confucianism, today is an exercise in selective memory with arbitrariness” meaning that Chinese society often arbitrarily chooses certain Confucian values to uphold, while disregarding others. This type of selective enforcement of values can often undermine queerness. For example, the Confucian value of filial piety contributes significantly to the ubiquity of conformity. Filial piety is the belief that one must have profound respect for their parents and elders, which Ren argues is crucial to understanding how Chinese queer people navigate marriage. He states that to “honor filial duty” Chinese youth have to “protect and maintain face at the individual and family levels, with an emphasis on the family’s reputation as a whole” (227). Due to these values, Chinese youth heavily value their parent’s beliefs and as such, uphold old traditions of heteronormativity.

XINGHUN - CONTRACT MARRIAGES

When queer people are refused the right to marry in China, they have to discover unique ways to navigate traditional marriage and fulfill queer union-ship. In many scenarios, due to both family and societal pressures, LGBT couples often pursue contract or *Xinghun* marriages. In these marriages of formality, queer men and women primarily perform heterosexually to fit into the norms and expectations of their society. Many believe “that following ‘normal marital procedures’... was necessary to make... *Xinghun* look real, which would protect... [one] from heteronormative surveillance of parents and friends” (Huang and Brouwer

146). As such, the “husband” and the “wife” in such pairings often live separate, secret lives outside of the marriage with their preferred partners, and only display or perform their heterosexual relationship around and for their family and peers. To a large extent, these performances of heterosexuality are necessary to avoid scrutiny in Chinese society.

CONSEQUENCES OF XINGHUN MARRIAGES

Many people criticize *Xinghun* marriages in China because they believe that the socially-enforced performance of heterosexuality has the potential to reinforce heteronormativity in China. If gay individuals participate in heterosexual marriages instead of fighting for their right to have legitimate marriages, do these *Xinghun* marriages actually perpetuate heteronormativity? Is it counterproductive to the rights of queer Chinese people? Queer people in China want to be as convincing as possible in their performance of heterosexuality to appear socially acceptable, yet this type of behavior has the potential to erase or diminish queer culture in Chinese society.

In particular, *Xinghun* ads, in which queer people seek out others to enter into a “heterosexual” relationship with, are a fascinating point of examination when analyzing the cultural effects of these relationships. Due to being convincing in their acts of heterosexuality, “the ‘realness’ of *Xinghun* is a regulatory force on queer subjects” (Huang and Brouwer 146). Min Liu found through her study that many queer people distance themselves from typical queer stereotypes as a consequence of regularly performing heterosexual realness. Many of the characteristics that such ads request from potential partners fit into traditional Chinese gender roles. For instance, gay women typically want to find gay men that are “not effeminate, not... (sissy)” and gay men “emphasized that they were looking for partners who ‘are not too fat and have feminine looks and mannerism’” (503). To an extent, this desire to find a convincingly heterosexual partner is understandable. These marriages have to appear as legitimate as possible to obtain approval from family. However, the demand for heterosexual characteristics goes much further than just looks. According to Liu, “more than half of the ads contain the language that ‘I/we do not mingle much with the gay/lesbian circle in town’” exemplifying that many of the queer people putting out *Xinghun* ads want to avoid any connection to queer culture as a whole, and believe that detaching themselves from queer groups will make it easier to obtain a *Xinghun* partner

(503). The attitudes that queer people themselves have towards queer culture exemplify their tendencies towards self-internalizing homophobia. Furthermore, *Xinghun* relationships have the potential to add a whole other dimension of class, and often have strict requirements class-wise. Due to the lack of genuine romantic love, *Xinghun* marriages become transactions, and “queer subjects who cannot meet the class expectations in *Xinghun*... are marginalized or even rejected access to such a queer practice” (Huang and Brouwer 151). Not only do gay men and women have to perform heterosexuality, but partners also have to match each other socioeconomically. A man writes in one such *Xinghun* ad:

Gay in Beijing sincerely seeking a lesbian to marry; me—born in 1982, 172 cm, 64 kg, definitely not effeminate; in a 3-year committed relationship with BF; Master’s degree and government job; I am financially independent. You—hopefully are also independent, born in 1980 or later, at least a Bachelor’s degree, above average looks, not manly; easy to be with and filial to both parties’ parents. (Liu 494-495)

Xinghun marriages have the capacity to promote traditional Chinese values even more than genuine heterosexual unions, as they tend to put a strong emphasis on family backgrounds. Unlike the commonly understood definition of “queer” in which “to queer” or “queer-ing” is perceived as a disruptive tactic, *Xinghun* marriages neither subvert nor expand the categories of normality in Chinese culture. Instead, these unions have the capability to further marginalize and enforce categories of gender expression and class. Thus, the perpetuation of *Xinghun* marriages does not create serious progress for LGBT rights. It encourages queer people in China to conform to these categories and perpetuates a culture that is intolerant of queer identities.

BENEFITS OF XINGHUN MARRIAGES

Researcher ZhenJia Ren conducted multiple interviews with queer Chinese men and women in an attempt to determine the reasoning behind why they enter *Xinghun* marriages. With the data collected he created a model to visually exemplify the reasonings and motivations behind formality marriages. This model categorizes these motivations into *mianzi*, *lizi*, and *tizhi*, which translate into “reputation,” “true identity,” and “social systems,” respectfully (213). He argues that formality

marriages provide an ideal compromise between maintaining “societal and familial harmony” and that “formality marriage resolves conflicts at the individual, family, social, and interpersonal levels. It serves as a mask that covers the shame of lesbians and gay men and their families” (228). Queer people in China feel a need to protect the reputations of both their families and their personal reputations due to the emphasis on values such as filial piety. Researchers Huang and Brouwer analyze the consequences and origins of *Xinghun* relationships in their study and found that many of their “interviewees mentioned the difficulties of coming out to family in mainland China given the force of “family pressure” (*jiating yali*) (147). *Jiating yali* is incredibly pervasive in the lives of queer people in China because many aspects of their lives are deeply rooted in their family’s lives. In order for queer people to be treated normally, they are required to perform heterosexuality for both their family and for Chinese society. In the workplace, queer people risk losing employment as a result of coming out. Ren asserts that *Xinghun* marriages allow queer people to maintain *mianzi* while also living out their queerness and maintaining *lizi*. One interviewee from Ren’s study stated:

You’d better stay in the closet. You might feel relieved coming out, but you will be placing a burden on your family. It would be better to tell them a good lie. You’ll lie to lots of people in life. One of my friends told me that once you come out of the closet, you are in fact pushing your family into that same freezing closet. Your lie is good for everyone. (224)

This quote summarizes the general attitude towards coming out that is held by the majority of queer people in China. They would rather sacrifice living candidly as openly queer people than burden their families. By remaining in these marriages they can maintain their interpersonal and family relationships rather than pursue the complicated and isolating process of coming out.

Through an intersectional lens, *Xinghun* relationships are especially beneficial for lesbians living in China. Huang and Brouwer argue that *Xinghun* relationships “provide some agency... in personal and familial lives” and that many “actively seek *Xinghun* as an alternative to a traditional heterosexual marriage—a queer union that shields their same-sex desires from gendered family pressure” (148). By participating in sham marriages lesbians can both superficially display heteronorma-

tivity to please their families and escape much of the sexism involved in a traditional heterosexual marriage, because through an intersectional lens, lesbian issues are not simply queer issues. They are also entangled with sexism issues in Chinese society. According to Min Liu, “for a woman, to get married automatically means to be a housewife, a wife and mother, and that means an exploited laborer, a lifelong sacrifice for children, and a domesticated caretaker respectively. For a gay man to get married, he is neither a housewife or sexually exploited by his wife” (499). Although gay men suffer from prejudice in Chinese culture, gay women have to face both ramifications of a heteronormative society and the ramifications of sexism. Thus, *Xinghun* marriages relieve these burdens from lesbian women. Huang and Brouwer argue that romantic love in a relationship often places “heterosexual women at a disadvantaged position” (152) but when marriage becomes a negotiation and a formality, the concept of love is no longer relevant. They argue that “*Xinghun* permits more space for lesbian women to negotiate existing gender roles” (450) and thus alleviates many of the societal expectations held in traditional heterosexual relationships. In detaching the prerequisite of romantic love in marriage, *Xinghun* relationships have the capability to alter the way marriage is conceptualized not only for lesbians, but for all members of Chinese society. *Xinghun* marriages are not the only type of alternative marriage in China. In fact, *tongqi* sham marriages are a much more prevalent method in which queer people navigate traditional marital norms. *Tongqi* is a term used to describe a situation in which straight women unknowingly marry gay men. In some instances, the man himself is not aware of his sexuality until after he is married. It is estimated by Zhang Beichuan, a famous LGBT Chinese researcher, that 80 percent of gay men in China have entered *tongqi* marriages with straight women, implying that an estimated ten to nineteen million straight women have married gay men (Bram). The majority of Chinese people have come to view this phenomenon as an epidemic issue that needs to be resolved. On the other hand, some see it as a method of subverting the orthodox definition of marriage that Chinese society upholds.

CONSEQUENCES OF TONGQI MARRIAGES

As media becomes increasingly more pervasive in Chinese society, more attention has been given to *tongqi* marriages. LGBT issues and sex have always been taboo subjects to speak about in society, but

recently more people - especially *tongqi* women - have found their voices through media. According to Bram, *tongqi* support groups have begun to dominate certain social media outlets. For instance, in an app called QQ, “*Tongqi’s* Family is one of the liveliest of such groups” (Bram). In multiple cases, these women have been cheated on by their gay husbands and have contracted HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. Zhang Beichuan estimates that over 30 percent of *tongqi* women will contract an STD, and that 10 percent of *tongqi* women will attempt suicide. One woman posted on a *tongqi* forum:

I am a tongqi expecting a baby. My husband and I are both orphans. I thought the child would give us the family we never had. But I was found to be HIV positive during a prenatal check-up. Yesterday, my husband told me that he is gay and he has been HIV positive for seven years. I am six-months pregnant, but I don't know if I should carry this baby to term. (Tang 3)

Due to many examples similar to this, Beichuan asserts that “this isn’t just an LGBT problem,” and that “it’s a whole society problem” (Bram). To curb the amount of *tongqi* marriages, Chinese society as a whole needs to be more accepting of queer people. As a result, gay men will not feel pressured to enter *tongqi* relationships. However, it is unjust to put the blame of *tongqi* marriages on gay men. Due to Chinese society’s homophobic views, emphasis on traditional marriage and reproduction, and lack of LGBT progress, gay men who do not pursue *Xinghun* marriages are left with limited options. Many gay men enter traditional heterosexual marriages with women out of pure necessity and some enter traditional marriages out of ignorance or lack of awareness of their own sexual identities. If they spend their entire lives performing heterosexuality due to cultural norms, it is logical to assume that they will also perform heterosexuality in marriage. To combat these consequences, Beichuan argues that Chinese society has to make these marriages less of a social necessity, and the only way to do this is to change negative attitudes towards homosexual behavior.

THE EFFECT OF NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS TONGQI MARRIAGES

As harsh as these consequences sound, researcher Jingshu Zhu argues that the negative discourse around *tongqi* marriages is actually fur-

thering the heteronormative definition of marriage. She asserts that *tongqi* marriages have the potential to be inherently subversive and should be perceived as another method in which queer people can and should navigate marriage in China. Zhu claims that marriage can and should be used as an economic tool and that romantic love is not a requisite for marriage. Thus, when *tongqi* marriages are criticized and perceived as illegitimate, marriages that generally lack non-platonic love and romance are then perceived as illegitimate. Additionally, according to Tang, “[s]ome *tongqi* groups publicly denounce gay men for deception... [and] sometimes even co-opt gay pride parades” to “educate young women about homosexuality” (6). Criticisms of *tongqi* relationships contribute to the condemnation of non-normative marriages as a consequence.

Zhu also contends that the negative connotation associated with *tongqi* marriages reduces the identity of a gay man to just his sexual orientation. Through this perspective, his gayness becomes a remnant of biology and he supposedly becomes entirely incapable of loving women. This perspective also ignores other aspects of his identity. In many cases it can erase the idea that sexuality lies on a spectrum. Moreover, it paints the gay man in the relationship as dishonest and fraudulent. According to Zhu, “essentializing discourses employed by both gay groups and *tongqis* make being a ‘gay fraud’ especially shameful, much more so than being a closeted, unmarried gay man” (1081). Thus, this discourse often promotes traditional cultural expectations of marriage and shames gay men. In reality, *tongqi* marriages can alter China’s traditional perception of marriage because they prove that marriage can be used as a tool for queer people and should be recognized as a sustainable queer union.

CONCLUSION

Although there are some substantial repercussions to alternative marriage, research concludes that these marriages are necessary in order for queer people to live normal, happy lives, and are the only methods in which queer people can escape institutional and cultural prejudice. Homophobia in China is systemic and rooted in the history of Western colonization. These homophobic attitudes have culminated in a profound emphasis on family and reputation and have therefore made it remarkably difficult for young queer people to come out. Until China decolonizes and/or passes pro-LGBT legislation, these marriages are the only reasonable option for queer people. If society refuses to change its values and

LGBT marriage is not legalized in the near future, queer people can only begin to change expectations around marriage within the allowances of current laws and norms. Queer people can begin to change the definition of marriage to include queer unions within state-defined restraints by making marriage less of a reproductive ritual and changing the discourse around *tongqi* marriages.

The negative consequences for *tongqi* marriages can be contained and controlled without condemning alternative marriage. By perceiving mixed-orientation marriages as a reasonable option for queer people rather than framing it as a consequence of dishonest gay men, the negative attitudes associated with these marriages can be alleviated. However, for *Xinghun* marriages, promoting heteronormativity is inevitable. This research has established that performing heteronormativity is necessary to avoid the repercussions of being out and queer in Chinese society. *Xinghun* marriages, regardless of their heteronormative influences, have the capacity to alter traditional Chinese matrimony as well as alleviate sexist norms enforced on married women.

In order for these marriages to become legitimate forms of queer union-ship, long-held preconceived assumptions about marriage must be relinquished. Their prevalence can initiate changes in attitudes towards homosexuality. Queer people can and do use these forms of marriage as tools to navigate the legal and cultural constraints that China holds on marriage. Ultimately, as these relationships subvert traditional marriage structures, they can help Chinese society reimagine marriage as a whole.

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GRACE LEE

The Big Sick, and Crazy Rich Asians: Nuances of Representation

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to analyze how film interacts with society to manifest messages and ideals of racism and misogyny within Asian Americans. It utilizes two films, “Crazy Rich Asians” and “The Big Sick,” as vehicles to explore the connection between the history of racism within Asian-American communities and film. Utilizing Kimberle Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality as a framework, this paper attempts to put relationship experts, film theorists, racial historians, and Twitter users in conversation with each other, and ultimately concludes that films reflect society as society reflects film. Films that claim to be progressive must be truly progressive else they will welcome criticism from marginalized viewers. The repercussions of false representation should be a priority for filmmakers attempting to create a film representative of Asian-Americans.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, Asian Americans have celebrated some large accomplishments in terms of media representation. There has been a rise in visibility in television with *Fresh Off the Boat*, *Master of None*, and *The Mindy Show*, a growing number of Asian American comedians with huge fanbases like Ali Wong and Hasan Minhaj, and more Asians in popular music like Far East Movement, Zayn Malik, and BTS. In particular, I focus on feature films: *The Big Sick* (Michael Showalter 2017), which marks the first feature film starring a Pakistani American, and *Crazy Rich Asians* (Jon M. Chu 2018), the first Hollywood film in twenty-five years to star an all-Asian cast. These two films have been hailed as revolutionizing the way Asians are seen on the big screen. However, they do not represent as much as they claim – each utilizes and reveals racism and sexism within its story.

In this paper, and with these two films as vehicles, I build the argument that films starring Asian American men construct their narratives in a way that aims to reestablish Asian American masculinity within the modern world while erasing the stories and experiences of Asian American women. Moreover, colorism and white bias arises even within

Asian communities. This belies not only an inherent gender inequality between Asian American men and women, but also exploits the distinct internalized racism within the Asian American community for media representation. To begin, I utilize the concept of colorism, or prejudice or discrimination based on skin color. I then frame my argument with the theory of intersectionality, which analyzes marginalization in terms of the interweaving of social stratifications (in this case, race and gender). In particular, I focus on how members of the same panethnic group experience colorism differently (East-Asian versus South-Asian). And lastly, I examine how both concepts manifest as internalized racism, or the belief in one's own negative racial stereotypes, assimilation to white standards, and the denial of racism.

THE HISTORY AND ORIGINS OF ASIAN COLORISM

Asian Americans have a peculiar place in society; the model minority myth has not only proven to be harmful and even anxiety-causing to second-generation Asian Americans, it has also driven a wedge between Asians and other minorities. It has stereotyped Asians into the perfect workers, romanticizing their rags-to-riches stories of immigration to socioeconomic success and yet effectively barring them from taking on executive positions or embarking on creative careers. One way to combat this was through film and media, which Asian Americans rarely saw themselves in. Within the past few decades, Asian Americans have made huge progress in the search for Asian representation; in particular, they have thrived in the indie-film industry with films such as *Better Luck Tomorrow* (Justin Lin 2002), *Saving Face* (Alice Wu 2004), *The Namesake* (Mira Nair 2007), or *Gook* (Justin Chon 2017). With these films, Asian American filmmakers have explored sexuality, transnational identity and culture, generational divide and family dynamics, crime, race, and more, all liberties that independent films can take. However, these films lacked the worldwide audience that Hollywood possesses, subjecting them to being casted as “race films,” films by and for Asians. Thus, they have been excluded in usual dialogue surrounding film theory and impact.

Despite the seemingly effusive representation and strides for empowerment, Asian Americans still possess the “model minority” stereotype. In fact, the influx of Asian American media presence has made visible just how nuanced representation is. In particular, it has revealed that current race dynamics within the Asian American community only occur

in the context of white patriarchy, and that the standards for Asian men and women are held in contrast to the perceived “norm” that is whiteness. I use Igor Ryabov’s research to help define “whiteness”: Ryabov’s research attributes differences in educational attainment for Asian American students of different skin tones to both generations of colorism as a result of European colonialism, and classicism due to landowner aristocracy (2). European colonialism in Asia, as Ryabov explains, privileged individuals possessing white-like features, such as light skin and large eyes, while demonizing dark skin. Such effects were particularly evident during the British rule of the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, though relatively untouched by colonialism, East-Asia also developed a color-hierarchy because the upper-class were marked by their light skin, which contrasted with the dark skin-tone of working-class individuals who labored in the sun. Essentially, European colonialism both directly and indirectly influenced the history of colorism within the East-Asian continent, which has been passed down generationally to Asians today, particularly in Asian Americans.

CRAZY RICH ASIANS AND COLORISM IN ASIAN AMERICA

Groups of people are often represented by the most dominant members, which effectively sidelines and oppresses the other people who identify with the group. Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality argues that race is often defined by white men and gender is discussed only in the context of white women. In particular:

Not only are women of color in fact overlooked, but their exclusion is reinforced when white women speak for and as women. The authoritative universal voice — usually white male subjectivity masquerading as non-racial, non-gendered objectivity — is merely transferred to those who, but for gender, share many of the same cultural, economic and social characteristics (155).

In Crenshaw’s analysis of the reasoning behind the concerns of black women facing erasure within the American judicial system, she writes that issues of erasure go unnoticed because the public do not realize social strata do not exist independently — rather, they “intersect,” and each unique intersection results in differing racial experiences. Therefore, “all women” are represented by white women, just as “all black people”

are represented by black males, and “all Asian people” are represented by Asian males. Rather than advocate for their own agency, generations of Asian American immigrants have attempted to symbolically whitewash themselves to gain social empowerment. Yet, instead of gaining agency, attempts at further representation have only erased dark-skinned Asians.

Despite being hailed as a win for representation, *Crazy Rich Asians* exemplifies erasure due to colorism. As the first Hollywood film to feature a full-Asian cast since *The Joy Luck Club*, *Crazy Rich Asians* bears a high social responsibility. However, the film’s lack of South and South-East Asians reveals a discomfiting colorism woven subtly throughout, sparking heated discussion on social media platforms such as Twitter. For example, a Twitter thread by EJ Ramos, a Filipino-American professor at University of Alaska, Anchorage, says:

Also, ‘Crazy Rich Asians’ dangerously propagates the model minority myth & celebrates material wealth that is based on the exploitation of brown Asian labor. In Singapore, where the movie happens, 56% of domestic workers are Filipinos 32% are Indonesians. The movie erases them (@ejravid, 24 Apr 2018).

Ramos’ quote is one of many scathing reviews and tweets have picked at its lack of true Singaporean representation, which consists of majority Chinese, then Malay, then Indian demographics. The film betrays the integrity of its setting, creating a fabricated version of Singapore. This results in symbolic whitewashing, commonly known as the practice of using white actors to play canonically non-white roles, in which light-skinned East Asians are used to erase the existence of darker-skinned Asians. As Crenshaw claims,

... a discriminator treats all people within a race or sex category similarly. Any significant experiential or statistical variation within this group suggests either that the group is not being discriminated against or that conflicting interests exist which defeat any attempts to bring a common claim (151).

Since the movie features an all East-Asian cast, “discriminators” do not perceive the colorism at play; however, its racism still exists, manifesting itself in classism, in which East-Asians are “crazy rich,” and South or South-East Asians are “the help,” contradicting the film’s own claim of representation. As Shimizu explains, film “must take heed to decenter

its whiteness... it should consider the films of not only Asian Americans but also other minoritized groups and cinematic traditions as central to its canon” (122). Only by decentering its white values through thoughtful and nuanced portrayals of dark-skinned Asians can *Crazy Rich Asians* truly be an impetus for social change. By claiming itself to be revolutionary in representation, it places the responsibility of socially conscious and fair representation on its own shoulders, yet fails to do so. Activist Kirsten Han tweeted:

[*Crazy Rich Asians*] markets itself as a representation win; the language of its marketing is based on diversity and wanting to see authentic, nuanced portrayals that people can recognise themselves in. It roots itself in that politics of representation (@kixes, 9 Aug 2018).

Han finishes her thread with:

6/ Of course it would be unreasonable to demand [*Crazy Rich Asians*] be everything to everyone, but that’s not what I’m saying. A film marketing itself on progressive politics could be more thoughtful and cognizant of where it’s fallen short, and I hope AsAm audiences are open to this too (@kixes 9 Aug 2018).

Film is an art form that portrays an ideology. A film that is truly representative needs to portray ideologies that are progressive on multiple levels and not just with appearance. Ultimately, the ideology that *Crazy Rich Asians* portrays is not the one it claims, and as a result, Asian Americans still see themselves erased from films.

THE BIG SICK AND INTERNALIZED RACISM IN CINEMA

Historically and contemporarily, Asian countries have coveted Western features and ideals, and the colorism that resulted has led to internalized racism, a phenomenon reflected in *Crazy Rich Asians* and *The Big Sick*. A parallel idea to symbolic whitewashing, internalized racism, is a climactic scene in “The Big Sick” which involves Nanjiani’s on-screen girlfriend, Emily, discovering a cigar box full of pictures of Pakistani women, who are potential marriage candidates chosen by Nanjiani’s mother. Upon the discovery, Emily becomes upset, notably asking: “Can you imagine a world in which we end up together?” This scene encom-

passes the film's main plotline – a play on forbidden love that attempts to unite seemingly incompatible cultures together. However, the scene, and thus the film, is both inspiring and problematic because its use of the women's pictures as props to propel the scene forward explicitly reveals Nanjiani's internalized racism. The photos, and thus the women, become cultural objects to “exaggerate racialized characteristics” and imply that Nanjiani rejects his Pakistani heritage in favor of assimilating into his white society (Davé 3). Moreover, the women represent “the embodiment of male fantasy in these male-authored works,” and their rotation around the male lead perpetuates an inherent sexism and female objectification that presides within the Western male-dominated society (Shimizu 121). Thus, the film reveals its controversy on two levels – race and gender, just as Crenshaw theorized.

In society, since Asian males actively seek white women as status symbols, Asian women must “masquerade” as white women in order to have their voices heard, whether through physically changing their skin tone, or marrying a white male. In particular, South and South-East Asian women infamously utilize skin-lightening mediums to achieve whiter skin. In his book *Fighting Poverty Together: Rethinking Strategies for Business, Governments, and Civil Society to Reduce Poverty*, Aneel Karnani comments on the skin-whitening product Fair&Lovely: “90 percent of Indian women want to use whiteners because it is aspirational, like losing weight. A fair skin is like education, regarded as a social and economic step up” (101). Research by Alma M. García extends Karnani's point: “India and Indian diasporic communities around the world constitute the largest market for skin lighteners. ... Women between the ages of 16 and 35... recognize the reality that light skin constitutes valuable symbolic capital in the marriage market” (García 171). The intersectionality of this colorism becomes sharply evident: Asians, in general, covet whiteness and shun dark skin, but Asian women in particular seem to depend on white-features to gain social mobility. Thus, the exploitation of dark-skinned women in films like “The Big Sick” completely undoes any progress it attempts – the repercussions of the film on the sensitivities of South-Asian women in particular harm rather than help.

One reason why the phenomenon of internalized racism within Asian-American women is so widespread, as Alma M. García cites, is websites and forums:

For example, IndiaParenting.com and sukh-dukh.com, designed for South Asians in India and other parts of the world, have chat rooms on skin care and lightening, and Rexinteractive.com, a Filipino site, and Candymag.com, a site sponsored by a magazine for Filipina teens, have extensive forums on skin lightening. The discussions on these forums provide a window through which to view the meaning of skin color to consumers, their desires and anxieties, doubts and aspirations. The internet is thus an important site from which one can gain a multilevel perspective on skin lightening (166).

The internet (among other media outlets) has become the vehicle with which South and South-East Asians discuss among themselves methods and ways to lighten their skin and possess Western features. Their influence on and accessibility to young women in particular have allowed for a generational decrease on their self-worth and image. Thus, to view whiteness as an “aspiration” not only harms Asian women psychologically, but also supports “beliefs in negative stereotypes of deficit or weakness inherent to being [a minority] ... and endorse[s] Eurocentric standards of attractiveness and downward comparisons of Asian Americans” (Keum et al. 575). Nearly the same can be argued for Asian men — whiteness, for them, is also valued for social gain. However, because there exist beauty standards for women that do not exist for men, Asian men’s focus is less on changing their own appearance and more on “marrying white,” or utilizing women for social mobility. Where “The Big Sick” should not be attacked for its accurate portrayal of Nanjiani’s real life, it should be criticized on its effect as a piece of film that relays messages to its audience. As evidenced in the film, and explored above, the “model minority” stereotype actually motivates Asian Americans, especially men, to experience internalized racism via exercising sexist ideas on Asian American women in order to assimilate to the white norm – in essence, a form of oppression, one that films in fact perpetrate.

As a film, *The Big Sick* transplants Nanjiani into the role of a titular white male by portraying his fulfillment of white values, thus expressing an ideology of white idealization. Using the subplot of arranged marriage, the film sets up a racialized contrast between Nanjiani’s inherited cultural identity and the white identity that he desires. An interview of Nanjiani’s wife, Emily Gordon, with *The New Yorker*, further explores the film’s subconscious ideals. Gordon comments: “Finding a literal box of photos—that’s cinematic license.” Films constantly use cinematic license as a reason, or excuse, for stylistic or narrative choices. However, films

do not exist independently, without reaction or repercussion. As Brown discusses in his *Cahiers du Cinéma*, “every film is political, inasmuch as it is determined by the ideology which produces it. [...] cinema ‘reproduces reality’ [...] ‘reality’ is nothing but an expression of the prevailing ideology” (60). *The Big Sick* at its core highlights a very real preference for light-skinned women over dark-skinned women. Under the guise of a progressive, romantic comedy, the film actually endorses “Hollywood installed images of Asians in America [as] forever foreign, perverse, and caricatured stereotypes,” (Shimizu 120). Thus, it prescribes to the very racist origins of Asian American cinema that motivated it – the notion that films portraying real Asians exist by and for Asians only, and are illegitimate forms of expression outside the established sphere of film.

In both male and female cases, “white female beauty” symbolizes higher social status, a phenomenon that can be found in parts of *The Big Sick* and *Crazy Rich Asians*. However, they manifest themselves differently based on sex. An Asian American male who marries a white woman becomes elevated in the eyes of his peers; an Asian American woman who physically attains the features of a white woman becomes elevated in the eyes of men. And, while some may argue that Asian American women who marry white men gain the same social benefits as Asian American men, evidence collected by Nemoto shows that is not the case. Neither the man nor woman truly gains social mobility — in both relationships, Asians are seeking to find mobility within the context of a *white patriarchy*; the Asian male with his presumably white peers, and the Asian female with a white husband. Ultimately, the difference of methods by Asian males and females reveals the underlying gender bias which favors men over women. In nearly every case, a woman’s appearance is her main asset (i.e. the cigar box full of photos) where a man may use other forms of human capital like wealth, education, and others, to raise his attractiveness (Nick Young’s fortune). A large part of this attractiveness is perceived through skin tone, as García restates: “Although skin tone is usually seen as a form of fixed or unchangeable capital, in fact, men and women may attempt to acquire light-skinned privilege” (165). However, as Nemoto’s research discovers, skin-tone privilege seems less applicable to Asian American female/White-male relationships. Usual stereotypes cast Asian American women as possessing model-minority traits such as intelligence, thriftiness, and a desire to work hard. Along with these, however, are often ideals of domesticity – according to Keum et al. “these stereotyped images also reinforce people’s expectations that AAW should

be subservient, self-sacrificial, domesticated wives or partners who should prioritize their families or relationships over their career aspirations” (573). The woman’s value becomes based on their ability to fulfil household duties. To white men, having such a wife *validates* their masculinity, placing them firmly in Western societies as the head of a contemporary nuclear family. Nemoto further elaborates, stating: “As long as white men expect such racialized femininity from Asian American women and Asian American women pursue white men as ideal possessors of masculinity, their interracial relationships will continue to operate within the logic of white patriarchy” (103). In Nemoto’s interviews, there are multiple Asian American female/white-male couples in which the woman expressed:

...she sensed that she served as a pleasurable and exotic sign or object, similar to the characters in Asian stories and films, for [her boyfriend] and other men who, she sensed, exoticized Asian media and culture. In her interactions with [her boyfriend], she was annoyed to be expected to live up to his exotic ideal (96).

Controversially, Nemoto implies that Asian American women actively seek out these relationships with white men despite feeling objectified, because white men have become the standard for masculinity. One reason could be to attain the safety of white privilege for their children, as García mentions: “Sometimes this search takes the form of seeking light-skinned marital partners to raise one’s status and to achieve intergenerational mobility by increasing the likelihood of having light-skinned children” (165). Yet despite any reasoning, the reality is that Asian men and women seem to operate with the goal of attaining white privilege in mind.

Yet instead of focusing on attaining white features, Asian men focus on behaving white — their internalized racism manifests in seeking out white romantic partners, as Kumail Nanjiani does with Emily in “The Big Sick.” Though *The Big Sick* pays homage to Nanjiani’s real life, as a film, it advocates for internalized racism and intraethnic othering (defined as the ridicule or rejection of more-ethnic members by more-assimilated members of the same ethnicity). As Nanjiani does in “The Big Sick,” Asian American men in particular reject typically-ethnic markers of their race. Karen Pyke asserts in her study on internalized racism:

Respondents strategically use FOB [Fresh Off the Boat: refers to immigrants who have not assimilated to the nation's culture, and still continue to practice their own cultures.] to ridicule co-ethnic "others" for displaying the same characteristics associated with anti-Asian stereotypes and, in so doing, distance themselves from those stereotypes. Although an adaptive response to oppression, this strategy of distancing oneself from negative stereotypes by suggesting they are true, just not true for oneself, is a form of internalized racial oppression (558).

The "FOB" term arises largely from an effort for Asian immigrants to find community within America's diverse ethnic makeup. However, Asian-Americans use the term to distance themselves from the perceived negative stereotypes; they focus on claiming only their "white" traits, i.e. spending time with white friends, dating white people, or dressing in typical Western fashion. Kumiko Nemoto focuses on the romantic aspect of co-ethnic othering, collecting and analyzing interviews of white/Asian interracial couples in her book *Racing Romance: Love, Power, and Desire Among Asian American/ White Couples*. On Asian American male/White-female couples, Nemoto asserts that "the media have bombarded society with images in which white female beauty has been associated with symbolic capital as a source of power and status" (107). Here, the media is blamed once again for suffusing Asian youth with subconscious pro-white messages; these messages work in tandem with the influence of online forums and magazines, which García mentions. Enforcing the white norm as the optimal lifestyle feeds into the internalized racism within Asian Americans, and as a result, Asian Americans often conform to white ideals. Moreover, in films, internalized racism is not always evident, as it is often presented with positive connotations as assimilation. One could say it is obscure within films like "The Big Sick" and "Crazy Rich Asians" because viewers themselves are influenced by white ideals.

Before Asian American film became widespread, online video sharing platforms such as YouTube allowed Asian Americans to fight against erasure by freely creating content by and for Asians. As Shimizu elaborates in her writings, "Their everyday scenes about the mundane particularity of their lives diversify Asian representations globally with an up-to-the-minute relevance," giving contemporary Asian American youth easy access to other Asian Americans and their experiences (121). While smaller video-sharing platforms allow for Asians to freely control and distribute their content, these efforts stem from a bigger goal — for Asian

Americans to enter and cement a position in the world of film. And, as evidenced, much of popular media is suffused with white ideals of beauty and success. Thus, the best way to counter the media's negative effects is to suffuse modern representation of Asian Americans with ideals of progressiveness, inclusivity, and positivity. Unfortunately, recent films have failed to do so. Supporters of *The Big Sick* and *Crazy Rich Asians* claim that they are the answer to generations of marginalization that I have delineated in this paper. However, close examinations of these films have revealed that they in fact do not subvert racist and xenophobic notions of Asian Americans; rather, they subscribe to them.

CONCLUSION: THE NEXT STEPS IN ASIAN AMERICAN CINEMA

My research, which formulates its argument around two films, is amorphous and evolving with every new show or film starring an Asian lead that debuts. Ultimately, it concludes that the effectiveness of film representation lies in the nuance and care of the filmmaker. It lies with tasteful artistic and narrative choices that may indulge in some tropes, such as *The Big Sick's* arranged marriage, or *Crazy Rich Asian's* Cinderella story, without exploiting underrepresented groups. Some may argue that a film with a single fictionalized story should not have to be mindful of every single minority. My research, which disseminates generations of colorism within the Asian community and attributes its exacerbation to the media, suggests that the social repercussions of not being careful outweigh the gravity of that responsibility.

Of course, not every single Asian nationality should be represented in a single film; those that should only be portrayed with integrity to their natural setting, as Singapore should have been portrayed in *Crazy Rich Asians*. Otherwise, films such as *The Big Sick* and *Crazy Rich Asians* will only extend the ideals of internalized racism and sexism within Asian Americans, rather than subvert them. Since the film industry, as with nearly all industries, operates within a white patriarchal society, Asian American filmmakers need to be conscious of the ideologies their films represent, and the images that they hold. Ultimately, Asian American films must continue to elevate their social consciousness if they are to impact real change on the Asian American race dynamic.

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SARAH PASCOAL
“I DO” NOT CONSENT: GAINING LEGAL
PROTECTION FOR MARITAL RAPE

ABSTRACT

Marital rape is a specific form of sexual abuse between spouses that occurs when one spouse forces the other to perform and/or receive sexual acts without their consent. This paper analyzes the ongoing issue with spousal exemption laws and the lack of protection for spouses who become victims of marital rape. Spousal exemption is the theory that if two people are joined through the sacrament of marriage, it is not necessary to obtain consent from each other before engaging in sexual activities. This paper aims to answer the following question: How can victims of marital rape best be afforded legal protection? In order to answer this question it is necessary to compare the outdated laws in certain states and evaluate where change has been made and what spousal exemption laws still need to change.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the legal structures defining a relationship between a husband and wife, marital rape is an act of sexual abuse that is often ignored. Some states still have spousal exemption laws in place to protect men from prosecution in cases where a man's sexual advances are not solicited by and are unwelcome to their wives. Through spousal exemption laws, a concept of implied consent formed when referring to rape between a married couple. This is due to legislation being known to protect offenders. As researcher Aubrey Jackson writes in her article for Social Science Research, spousal exemption laws “limit women's rights to bodily self-control and personhood and heighten men's state-sanctioned power over women by allowing them unrestricted sexual access to their wives” (291). States that allow any form of the exemption law claim that its purpose is to protect the unity between spouses, and that it is in the states' best interest to do so. By having this exemption, men are empowered to rape and abuse their wives since they are untouchable through law. It is critical that advocates work to distinguish these laws to gain legal understanding and social acknowledgement of the issue of marital rape.

Given the complexity of this issue, this research paper proposes to answer the following questions: How can the victims of marital rape best be afforded legal protection? Whose responsibility is it to protect

women who are victims of sexual abuse within marriage? Does the state government have the legal right to have any form of a spousal exemption law put into place? Marital rape is recognized on a federal level and exemptions are repealed by the federal government, not by each individual state. There are a number of steps that can be taken to legally protect victims of marital rape, but the most important measure is overturning the “spousal exemption” law in states that continue to uphold it. In an article published in *Florida Law Review*, author Robin West writes that supporters of the exemption “typically assert that the state’s important interest in promoting marital harmony and intimacy, or, its interest in encouraging reconciliation of warring spouses, justifies the statute” (64). This argument suggests that states claim they need to protect marital harmony, but while doing so, they are promoting an abusive relationship.

Feminist legal theory, or feminist jurisprudence, pioneered in the 1960’s by Ann Scales, is the theory that laws have been the foundation of perceived inferiority and social subordination of women throughout history (83). The theory structures the controversial debate of marital rape and exemption laws in order to put into perspective how the government injudiciously protects men over women. This research paper will consider the roles of advocates and government courts when intervening on cases of marital rape and suggest that protection for abusers is unconstitutional and spousal exemption laws should be reassessed. To a great extent, the argument follows that of Ann Scales’ feminist legal theory, as articulated in “Legal Feminism: Activism, Lawyering, and Legal Theory,” with a slight deviation specifically focusing on the role of feminist jurisprudence when pertaining to the spousal exemption law.

A SHORT HISTORY OF MARITAL RAPE

Gender stratification, which refers to the social construct that men have a higher status than women, enables the continued existence of spousal exemption laws (Jackson 290). This further develops the idea that men are not to be held responsible for giving into their sexual tendencies and also creates rape myths, which refer to theories people have about rape while challenging the idea that all rapists should be held responsible (Ferro et al. 764). These beliefs do not come as a surprise when considering the history of marital rape. As early as 1857, the state of Massachusetts acknowledged that a man has the right to have sex with his wife without her consent. This law soon became recognized by every state

throughout the country. A woman was considered her husband's property, and the 'unities theory' "confirmed that marital rape could not exist because a husband could not steal his own property or commit a crime against himself" (Martin et al. 331). Progressing almost 120 years, the Equal Rights Amendment passed, offering a protection of legal equality between sexes and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex. In 1976, Nebraska became the first state to repeal the spousal exemption law. By 1983, seventeen states got rid of the exemption, while others still held on to some form of it (England 1). In 1985, psychologists Finkelhor and Yllo distinguished three existing categories of marital rape laws throughout the country; absolute exemption, partial exemption, and no exemption. Absolute exemption and no exemption are self explanatory, but in "A Review of Marital Rape," the authors describe partial exemption as "states that allow marital rape in certain cases or only sanction it when the couple is living apart, legally separated, or divorced" (Martin et al. 331). The variance between different laws would cause inconsistency around the country that would eventually need to be leveled out.

On June 23, 1993, the issue of marital rape hit a turning point when Lorena Bobbitt admitted to cutting off her husband's penis, being that he had been raping her for the entirety of their four year marriage. At the time, John Bobbit was only charged with marital sexual assault due to the fact that the state of Virginia did not recognize rape in cases where couples were living together, unless there was evidence of physical violence against the victim. Lorena was charged with malicious assault but was found not guilty due to temporary insanity. John was acquitted of the charge of rape due to Virginia law, found not guilty on all remaining charges of sexual assault (Peele). In November of 1993, as people watched "on late-night television, the Bobbitt case [became] a punchline. But to some women's groups it [symbolized] the legal system's treatment of domestic violence" (Labaton 1). This case sparked debate throughout the country; it was understood that political changes had to be made. By 1994, President Bill Clinton passed the Violence Against Women Act, which provided protection to women who were victims of domestic abuse (Lynch 1).

As soon as 1996, all states in the U.S. revoked the original spousal exemption law, but some states revised their laws to preserve a difference between marital rape and non-marital rape cases (Lynch 1). By 2002, only twenty four states completely abolished spousal exemption laws. In "Current Perceptions of Marital Rape," it is clear that a trend exists

between government decisions and public opinion, seeing as “recently as 2002, Basile reported that rape myth acceptance is relatively high among U.S. citizens. Rape still tends to be viewed as less serious, and less physically and emotionally damaging, than are other violent crimes” (Ferro et al. 765). In order to gain a better understanding of the public opinion, the authors conducted a study in 2008 and found that people tend to be more forgiving towards marital rape abusers as opposed to rapists that are strangers (Ferro et al. 764). This concept is illogical, as “the use of relationship status to determine whether a crime has occurred reflects the ways in which our attitudes about rape vary depending on the victim–offender relationship” (Ferro et al. 765). To resolve the issue of marital rape, there needed to be public understanding about the topic, which did not exist up until this point.

USING FEMINIST LEGAL THEORY TO OVERTURN SPOUSAL EXEMPTION LAWS

Ann Scales’ theory of legal feminism explains how since the 1960’s, laws have been put into place to suppress the rights of women. These laws have allowed for validation of gender stratification. Furthermore, the concept of spousal exemption laws directly place women in social statuses that are inferior and subordinate to men. In cases of marital rape, it is important to abolish these laws and gain awareness and legal protection for women in abusive relationships. The article “Criminalizing Spousal Rape: The Diffusion of Legal Reforms” published in *Sociological Perspectives* introduces a 2009 campaign run by marital rape victim advocates referred to as the ‘Rape Law Reform Movement,’ which exists for the sole purpose of refining spousal exemption laws within the government. In their campaign the statistic arose that “the percentage of the labor force comprised of women is positively related to the elimination of the marital rape exemption” (McMahon et al. 518). There is a direct relationship between the statuses women hold in society and the marital rape exemption law being eliminated in those states. According to the feminist legal theory, changing laws that solely empower men would lead to better social statuses for women, and subsequently allow for such laws to be reviewed. Considering the fact that more women are becoming financially independent and society is allowing for women to thrive in their work environments, there is legal pressure to eliminate the marital rape exemption law. When women prove to the community that they

have control of their daily lives, they are more likely to have a say when it comes to creating new legislation and adapting to new societal needs. Feminist legal theory advocates for “challenging the exclusion of women from equal opportunities of all sorts. The thrust of the approach was to argue for neutrality in legal standards, that is, for a legal rule regarding women that ‘did not take sex into account’” (Scales 84). The approach is meant to challenge laws that allow for the oppression of women to continue both legally and socially. Specifically, changing laws to apply to both men and women with no regard to their sexes leads to the solution of gender stratification.

Advocates for the spousal exemption law believe in the concept of implied consent through marriage along with various other rape myths, leading to the continuous subjection of women. In the case of Jennifer Teeson there should have been more than sufficient evidence to prosecute her husband, including video evidence. In February 2019, Jennifer Teeson was going through her documents on her home computer and came across a video that shocked her. The video was evidence of her husband drugging and raping her in their home, in front of their one year old child, over a year ago. She had no knowledge of the events portrayed in the video and decided to press charges. On February 22, 2019 Jenny Teeson’s soon to be ex-husband was found not guilty when charged with drugging and raping her, even with video evidence. His actions were validated due to Minnesota being one of twelve states in the United States to still have some form of the spousal exemption law (Montemayor 1). Jenny Teeson was disappointed that the law was put into place to protect her husband from prosecution but not to protect her from domestic sexual abuse. The societal view on marital rape tends to be clouded by theories that not all rapists should be held legally responsible for their actions. According to feminist legal theory, laws are put into place to keep women in inferior positions to men legally, but also with an agenda to keep women inferior socially. Jenny Teeson tried to prosecute her husband for drugging and raping her but rape myths allowed for the continuance of spousal exemption laws to protect abusers. Unfortunately for victims, when it comes to a trial by jury, rape is seen as a less serious violent crime, even though research shows that “victims of marital rape suffer from debilitating psychological problems and disorders” (Martin et al. 343). Victim blaming refers to the theory that the victim of a crime is somewhat responsible for the harm committed towards them (Martin et al. 330). When comparing rape to other violent crimes, for instance armed

robbery, US citizens tend to believe that being robbed at knife point takes more of a toll on someone than being raped would (Ferro et al. 765). Victim blaming is not discussed when an armed robbery takes place because no one can argue a victim consented to being robbed. Supporters of spousal exemption believe that victims of marital rape had implied consent, or may have given consent in the past, and their abusers simply got the wrong message. This belief makes it more difficult for victims to report their abuse, since they have already suffered great trauma and will still be blamed for what they have gone through. In order to resolve the issue of victim blaming it is critical to gain public awareness for marital rape victims. In the article, "The Right to No," written by Melanie Randall and Vasanthi Venkatesh, the authors write that "some assaulted women report acquiescing to unwanted and coerced sex with their abusive male intimate partners, precisely to avoid episodes of physical violence" (158). This demonstrates that without proper legal protection for women in abusive relationships, victims tend to refrain from reporting their abuse in order to avoid further acts of mistreatment from their husbands. Ann Scales' theory implies that laws are created in ways that allow for gender stratification. The fact that laws of this nature even exist means that victims often suffer through their abuse and do not report it because they do not have confidence in the law to adequately protect them.

By applying Ann Scales' theory of legal feminism to spousal exemption laws, it becomes evident that this law was created to allow men to overpower women. Some believe that there is no possible way a man can take advantage of his wife, being that he has the right to her body through marriage. Supporters of the theory uphold that rape is only present in a situation where a stranger rapes a woman spontaneously. The irony of this view is that "contrary to popular belief, rapists are not strangers lurking in dark alleys or hiding behind bushes looking for their next victims; rather, the majority of rapes involve a victim and an offender who had a prior relationship before the rape occurred" (Ferro et al. 765). This fact about rapists proves that they tend to know their victims and have been planning the rape, due to a preexisting relationship. The fact that most rapes are between victims and offenders who knew each other makes it clear that a preexisting relationship of any kind does not imply consent for the future. Advocates for spousal exemption argue that if consent is given at any point in the past, then it is valid at any time. The fact of the matter is that consent can be withdrawn at any point with any partner, and failure to comply directly results in sexual assault. This

description of consent should simplify the prosecution of marital rapists, since the reality still stands that marriage does not imply consent.

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

It seems as though marital rape laws have come a long way, but there is still work to be done in order to afford the best form of legal protection to victims. Chanelle Gallant published an article for *Truthout* website advocating for the rights of marital rape victims, indicating that there is minimal awareness being spread on the issue. Gallant states that the “majority of Americans said they believed people were not sensitive enough about sexual harassment. One thing hasn’t changed though. We’re still not talking about sexual harassment in our intimate partnerships and marriages” (1). She writes to gain awareness for the cause and asserts that people believe there is not enough sensitivity when it comes to sexual harassment, but the issue of marital rape is not being addressed as much as it should be. She also suggests that the root of the problem with spousal exemption laws is attributed to the patriarchal society that still exists today. Ann Scales’ Feminist Legal Theory supports this claim, stating that laws are put into place to protect men and keep women inferior to them. In support of movements to repeal spousal exemption laws, there have been events in public areas and college campuses to raise awareness. These movements tend to be focused in states where there are still forms of exemption laws in order to push legislators to make changes (Gallant 1). Specifically, the Rape Law Reform Movement was created in 2009 to support victims and advocate for changes in legislation (McMahon et al. 518). As a way to better understand the complexity of the issue, survivors attend these events and share their experiences with the laws restricting their self-sovereignty and promoting gender stratification. Marital rape tends to be seen as a less serious crime than rape committed by strangers, although victim-offender relationships should not determine the severity of punishments for abusers.

In order to gain legal protection for marital rape victims it is crucial that there is public awareness on the topic. Though there are advocates fighting for the rights of victims, “sexual violence in intimate relationships is still among the more privatized and least remedied forms of gender violence and insufficiently recognized human rights problem” (Randall et al. 157). With no public awareness or understanding of marital rape, lawmakers will not see the need to make changes to current legis-

lation. Researchers McMahon-Howard, Clay-Warner, and Renzulli claim that the “political environment affects the success of legislation advancing the rights and protections of women”(509). They further this argument by stating that they “expect liberal government ideology to be positively associated with the passage of strong marital rape laws” (McMahon et. al. 509). In order to make changes to legislation regarding marital rape, the government and the public must agree on the severity of the topic. States should not hold the power to shield spouses from prosecution when they rape their partners. The political climate makes it difficult to afford certain rights to women, but it is the responsibility of the government to enforce equal rights among all citizens. This includes maintaining the self sovereignty of women.

To victims of marital rape it is evident that legislation regarding this topic is in need of immediate change. Robin West supports a form of feminist legal theory that she refers to as the inequality theory. She proposes a concept of legal protection in the form of a law being passed by the federal government. This law would not tolerate any form of differentiation between rape within marriage and would also “guarantee, consistent with the antisubordination mandate of the fourteenth amendment, that states would not perpetuate or insulate the sexualized social, private, or intimate subordination of women by men” (West 76). The important point here is that victims put their faith and trust into the government and rely on authority to protect them. In reality, the government tends to be the source that restricts the rights of victims and makes it more difficult for them to report and charge their abusers of rape. Ann Scales’ theory supports this statement because it reinforces that laws are created by the government in order to facilitate male superiority in society. Current supporters of the marital rape exemption claim that the laws should be kept in order to protect men from false accusations. believing that it would be too difficult to prove rape because consensual sex most likely occurred in the past. They also claim that “other laws, such as assault and battery, provide a raped wife with avenues for recourse that are less fraught than bringing rape charges against her husband” (England 1). The fact that people believe there are other avenues for pressing charges is both offensive and unjust. Victims have the right to press charges against their abusers for the crimes committed against them and they should not be forced to settle for a less serious accusation based on the sole fact that they are married to their abusers.

CONCLUSION

Now that the legal and social aspects of marital rape are explained, along with a feminist legal theory application, Jenny Teeson's case can be reconsidered. Throughout this case, the general public was outraged that she had no legal protection against her husband after he drugged and raped her. The state of Minnesota had a spousal exemption law to protect men from being prosecuted for raping their wives, therefore Jenny Teeson was not able to obtain justice for her abuse. The state of Minnesota then repealed their exemption law due to public awareness and opinion on this case. Minnesota's democratic representative, Zach Stephenson, led the repeal movement, saying, "We like to think of so-called marital rape exceptions as an artifact of history, as a relic of a time when a woman was considered the property of her husband" (Vagianos 1).

Though the state of Minnesota made changes in spousal exemption laws, there are still eleven states in the U.S. that uphold exemption laws in some way, shape, or form. In order to justify the exemption, these states have partial exemptions when it comes to reporting a rape that occurred within a marriage. For example, some exemptions include only prosecuting when there has been evidence of abusive force or of a man drugging his wife. Other states require that spouses not live together if a woman intends to report her husband for raping her. In most rape cases there is a statute of limitations to report the abuse, which ranges from three to thirty years depending on the state. In cases of marital rape, certain states have limitations requiring that the abuse is reported in as little as thirty days. Although it is recommended that sexual abuse is reported immediately to gather as much evidence as possible, some victims need more time to process their abuse and decide whether or not they intend on reporting it. However, thirty days may not be enough time for them. Partial exemptions and limitations can be seen as a way to indirectly protect men from prosecution, which supports Ann Scales' Feminist Legal Theory that states laws are a fundamental aspect in the subordination of women. The main issue with these limitations is that they do not consider the fact that victims can be emotionally coerced into unwanted sexual acts and may comply with their abusers to avoid further harm.

In order to gain adequate legal protection for victims of marital rape, existing forms of spousal exemption laws must be overturned. It is important to recognize that despite the fact spousal exemption laws have been changed in many ways, there is still more work to be done. Rape is

a heinous crime that can be charged on a federal level. Taking this into account, marital rape should not be any different. This would allow for national understanding of the issue and it would promote public awareness. It is also critical to consider that the issue of marital rape is not limited to the United States. Marital rape is a global contemporary issue and worldwide protection for women is not in the condition it should be. Though the issue of marital rape is extensive, it is solvable. The first step to abolishing spousal exemption laws is to gain public awareness and government action. The problems of spousal exemption laws must be addressed and understood. If these laws are not addressed, women throughout the country will continue to suffer in abusive relationships with no legal protection.

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ALLISON NGUYEN

Filing Down Empowerment of Vietnamese Manicurists in the United States

ABSTRACT

Vietnamese immigrant women dominated the nail salon industry in the United States for many years. This ethnically concentrated line of work made Vietnamese women more visible to the American public, resulting in a generalized view of the entire ethnic group. This is evident in the portrayal of Vietnamese women in popular culture and in mainstream media. While the nail salon industry brought Vietnamese immigrant women economic stability, the empowerment outside of finances is in question. This paper evaluates the history of Vietnamese immigration in the United States, and examines its role in the formation of an ethnic niche. This paper also explores the situations that allow for a market to expand and tracks public opinion on Vietnamese immigrant labor through the lens of the media. These factors are used to evaluate the extent of the empowerment of Vietnamese immigrant women in American society.

INTRODUCTION

Nail salons stand as places of community within neighborhoods across the United States. Polished nails are a staple in Western beauty and became a popular way of pampering women of all races, ages, and backgrounds. While nail salons came to be known as retreats for working women of all classes, these services were not always available to the general public. Before the arrival of Vietnamese immigrants in the United States, there were no individual nail shops - rather, nail services were extensions of preexisting hair or beauty salons, and were unaffordable to the average woman. However, first-wave Vietnamese immigrants transformed the nail industry by streamlining this service with the introduction of stand-alone nail shops, along with various other technological innovations (Eckstein and Nguyen 654). Vietnamese nail shops were able to reduce service prices, making them available to middle and lower-class women. As Vietnamese nail shops became more successful, an ethnic niche, which is a business that is disproportionately run by specific ethnic

minorities, began to emerge (Eckstein and Peri 2). For Vietnamese immigrant women who have not learned the language and culture of America, the ethnic niche of nail salons have been a safe haven; however, this lack of assimilation, makes Vietnamese women more susceptible to stereotyping and racism.

This paper will explore the historical underpinnings of ethnic niches, the economic principles that dictate “native” worker displacement, and the popular cultural view of immigration in the United States. Moreover, these factors will be used to evaluate the extent to which females are empowered in the nail salon industry and their opportunity for upward mobility. Specifically, this paper will analyze empowerment and mobility with the economic theory of displacement, the labor market disadvantage theory, and the idea of acculturative stress, which is the cognitive and social demands an immigrant must endure when coming to a new country. While the ethnic niche within the nail salon industry empowers Vietnamese immigrants financially, it also contributes to the social and economic marginalization of Vietnamese people as a whole. Additionally, mainstream media reinforces stereotypes of Vietnamese immigrants that furthers ostracization, making it more difficult for them to be empowered outside of their ethnic circle.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF ‘VIETNAMESE IMMIGRATION

The majority of Vietnamese immigrants came to the United States following the Vietnam War, which is what led to the formation of the ethnic niche. During the Vietnam War, the United States allied with Southern Vietnam to fight the communist Vietnamese Northerners. However, Southern Vietnam and the United States ultimately lost the war, forcing thousands of Southern Vietnamese people to seek refuge in the United States (Spector). Different waves of Vietnamese refugees that represented vastly different experiences and histories came to the United States. The first wave of immigrants arrived shortly after the war ended, and these immigrants “tended to come from the upper and middle classes. Its members tended to be more educated, [wealthy], [...] likely to have political connections to the U.S. government, and often included military officers and professionals who worked for U.S. companies in Vietnam” (Le 37). This first wave of immigrants received priority once they escaped Vietnam due to their class. Planned to evacuate were 4,000 American citi-

zens and 17,600 Vietnamese citizens that worked for the U.S. government; however, due to the political climate, 125,000 refugees came to America (Le 35). Most of the world felt as though the U.S. lost its prestige when losing this war, and many countries made it clear that they were not going to accept a large number of refugees.

While first-wave refugees became integrated into the American workforce, the continued corruption and instability in Vietnam caused a second-wave of immigrants to come, bringing the total Vietnamese population in the United States to 543,000 (Rkasnuam and Batalova). The second-wave Vietnamese immigrants are referred to as “the boat people” because they escaped Vietnam on dangerous, under-equipped boats, where nearly half the escapees perished (Le 41). Their experiences stand in marked contrast with first-wave immigrants, who arrived on American cargo ships, airplanes, and escape routes that were sanctioned by the United States. With every succeeding wave of immigrants, socioeconomic status, education status, and employment rate decreased (Le 41). Because of these barriers, it was far more difficult for these people to assimilate into American society.

Tippi Hendren, a famous American actress, played a large role in Vietnamese immigrants’ move to the Nail Industry. After the fall of Saigon, Tippi Hedren visited Vietnamese refugee camps in California to help refugees gain vocational skills. In an interview with the BBC, Hedren states, “We were trying to find vocations for them. I brought in seamstresses and typists—any way for them to learn something. And they loved my fingernails” (Morris). This was a lightbulb moment for the young Hollywood actress; she flew in her own personal beautician and persuaded beauty schools to provide free licensing to 20 Vietnamese refugee women (Eckstein and Nguyen 651). After becoming licensed, many of these refugee women started their work in California. Some of the original 20 refugee women went “to open a beauty training school, the Advance Beauty College (ABC) ... The school offered training in a range of specialized beauty services ... [m]ost [importantly], ABC offered classes in Vietnamese, so that English proficiency was not a barrier to entry” (Eckstein and Nguyen 651). After the first-wave immigrants established their careers in the nail industry, many of them went on to expand the opportunity for work to other immigrants. First-wave immigrants opened their own training schools, where classes were taught in both English and Vietnamese, allowing later waves of immigrants to easily attain licenses. First-wave immigrants worked to establish themselves within a foreign

country, which allowed later waves of immigrants to reap the benefits of their work. First-wave immigrants did not have the option of taking licensing classes in Vietnamese, which required them to have a more entrepreneurial mindset in order to establish themselves in a foreign country. With these beauty schools already established, second-wave immigrants did not have to be as innovative in order to be financially stable. Established Vietnamese beauty schools allowed succeeding waves of immigrants to bypass the initial stress of learning the language of the host country. As a result of the differences in class and opportunity, the number of Vietnamese immigrant nail technicians grew, causing the formation of an ethnic niche.

DISPLACEMENT OF AMERICAN WORKERS IN RELATION TO VIETNAMESE IMMIGRATION

Shortly before first-wave immigrants arrived, the United States began deindustrializing, which is the process of reducing industrial activity in a country (Rowthorn and Ramaswamy 1997). Many American companies began relocating their operations to other countries that could produce products for less. Consequently, jobs that once allowed Americans to comfortably provide for their families were taken away. As Americans witnessed thousands of Vietnamese immigrants coming in and opening up their own businesses, the conversation surrounding the loss of American jobs shifted. Many Americans started to feel that Vietnamese immigrants were stealing jobs from them as Vietnamese nail salons infiltrated neighborhoods across the country.

While this was the rhetoric that surrounded immigrant work, studies show that immigrants do not replace native workers at a significant rate. One study, conducted by professors and researchers from Pitzer College, analyzed the Vietnamese nail technician population in California in order to determine the true rate of displacement in the presence of an ethnic niche. The study states that the “economic theory [of displacement] implies that Vietnamese manicurists should have unambiguously displaced non-Vietnamese manicurists over the past twenty years unless demand was perfectly inelastic” (Federman et al. 304). According to this study, the more elastic the demand is for a service, the more sensitive consumers are to changes in price. The more a good or service costs, the less demand there is going to be for that good or service. According to the Economic Theory of Displacement, the Vietnamese manicurists were

offering a lower price for their service, which should have displaced the native workers in a near 1:1 ratio. However, research shows that the rate of displacement is much lower; specifically, “we find that for every five Vietnamese manicurists entering the market, two non-Vietnamese manicurists were displaced” (Federman et al. 315). As the demand for this service is elastic and the rate of displacement is not near 1:1, an explanation that operates outside of the Economic Theory of Displacement is necessary.

One of the main reasons Vietnamese women were able to expand the market for polished nails was by broadening consumer demand for nails. Originally, professional manicures were exclusive services that beauty salons provided to wealthy women who were able to afford the prices. Vietnamese immigrants helped form a new business model similar to McDonald’s fast food services. This model is often referred to as “McNailing of America,’ which established stand-alone nail salons in the neighborhoods where people lived and worked that offered quick, assembly-line service on a walk-in ‘no appointment necessary’ basis, at half the price upscale beauty salons charged” (Eckstein and Nguyen 653). These stand-alone shops were appealing because they were convenient for working women who wanted a quick and reliable walk-in service, which was how the service drew a comparison to McDonald’s. Vietnamese immigrant manicurists also quickly adopted new nail technologies, such as acrylic tips, powders, and electric nail filers, which greatly reduced costs and time for both the technician and customer. These quick business ideas and innovative strategies allowed the industry to further develop and work in favor of Vietnamese nail salons. The price reduction also opened up the market to a more diverse group of consumers, allowing for a slim consumer base to expand to a mass service. With this business model and the introduction of new technology, the nail polishing process was streamlined. People were able to get their nails done more quickly, and the owners were able to reduce their prices enough to remain competitive with preexisting nail services. Price reductions expanded the market to people who could not afford it before. As a result, this increased consumer demand and created more jobs for people in this industry, which is why American workers were not completely replaced by Vietnamese nail technicians.

THE FORMATION AND SUCCESS OF AN ETHNIC NICHE

The labor market disadvantage theory suggests that Asian immigrants must become self-employed because they do not have enough English language skills, and/or American employers do not honor their occupational and education credentials earned in their home countries. Therefore, immigrants must become self-employed to become financially stable and to shield themselves from employment discrimination in America. Immigrant-owned businesses and ethnic niches essentially form as a result of acculturative stress, which is defined as the psychological and social demands of moving to a new country (Kim and Kim 2). One of the main reasons ethnic niches form is because ethnic minorities fill or create a demand for a service that was not available in a particular area before. Other niches form because immigrants are willing to offer the same service at a lower price compared to native-owned businesses.

Both of the above situations apply to the formation of an ethnic niche for the Vietnamese refugees. In addition to the economic factors that helped form this niche, there were also policies that aided the first Vietnamese refugees. In 1965, towards the middle of the Vietnam war, the United States, “opened legal immigration opportunities for people from developing countries (in eliminating national quotas)” (Eckstein and Nguyen 641). With the increase of Vietnamese immigrants during and following the Vietnam War, immigrants relied on networks in the United States to get jobs. This is especially true in the case of women, who were found to be particularly reliant on personal and familial relationships in order to attain a job, especially in industries where women tend to congregate (Sassen 103). As many Vietnamese immigrant women established their own stand-alone nail shops, more Vietnamese women were recruited as an inclusionary employment opportunity effort.

The anti-immigrant rhetoric in the United States is amplified through the current presidential administration, especially as the President Donald Trump continues, “blaming immigration—legal and undocumented—for depressing Americans’ earnings and economic prosperity” (Ferriss). Although immigrants are accused of taking away from the American economy, respected economists prove that immigrants contribute to the American economy. A study on transnational immigrant-owned businesses finds, “immigrant-owned firms generate over \$775 billion in revenue, \$125 billion in payroll, and \$100 billion in in-

come, and employ one out of every ten workers. These firms include not only small businesses, but also 18% of all Fortune 500 companies” (Wang and Liu 345). These numbers are significant because immigrants make up such a small minority in the United States, yet they contribute greatly to this country’s wealth. Immigrant entrepreneurs also employ co-ethnic labor, giving other immigrants an opportunity to reach financial stability. While immigrants are often viewed as deadweight, they prove to play a beneficial role in the American economy.

THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA ON VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANT MANICURISTS AND REGULATORY PRACTICES

While Vietnamese immigrant business women seemed to be on the rise of success, American nail salon owners began to feel threatened. Consequently, “some non-Vietnamese owners of upscale beauty salons that offered manicures as a secondary service fought the transformation of nail care into a less expensive, mass venture. They insinuated that the discount salons were unsanitary and unhealthy” with little evidence (Eckstein and Nguyen 655). Because Vietnamese immigrants formed an ethnic niche by offering lower prices to consumers, preexisting salons began to see a decline in customers soon after. Knowing that Vietnamese immigrants have a harder time getting additional licensing, non-Vietnamese nail salon owners “pushed for increased licensing requirements and more-intrusive government oversight” (Postrel). Non-Vietnamese nail salon owners also suggested that Vietnamese nail salons were unsanitary for consumers, in hopes that it would drive business away.

The preexisting Asian stereotypes in American media also played a role in fueling this negative perception. One New York Times investigation, titled “The Price of Nice Nails,” stood at the center of this controversy, as it states, “the New York State Labor Department, in conjunction with several other agencies, conducted its first nail salon sweep ever... Investigators inspected 29 salons and found 116 wage violations” (Nir). The main regulatory issue this article highlights is the wage violation, stating, “[w]ith fees so low, someone must inevitably pay the price,” suggesting that nail salon workers have their wages taken away from them in order for the customers to have lower manicure prices (Nir). Moreover, the article displays interviews with nail salon workers to show the extent of immigrant exploitation. While one of the main goals of journalism is

to provide the public with accurate information, Asian immigrant nail salon workers agreed that the investigation was not completely truthful. A few sources concur that the author of this New York Times article, “broadly mischaracterized the nail salon industry, several of the men and women she spoke with say she misquoted or misrepresented them. In some cases, she interviewed sources without translators despite their poor English skills. When her sources’ testimonies ran counter to her narrative, she omitted them altogether” (Epstein). As a result, groups of Asian immigrant women working in the nail salon industry organized several protests outside of New York Times Headquarters, asking them to “[p]lease listen to ‘our side’ of the story and help keep us in business” (Sterne). While these investigations may reveal important truths, the way it was reported further justifies the preexisting fear of immigrants in the United States. The problem with the New York Times article is not the true reality of unsafe health codes in immigrant nail salons, but rather, how the authors framed immigrants’ situations based on information that was not completely true. The response from this article resulted in a decrease in customers for Vietnamese immigrant women, and ultimately contributed to the negative stigma surrounding immigrant work.

While there are unmistakable health and wage issues in nail salons, the regulatory guidelines of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are not even clear to many Americans, let alone immigrants. One study demonstrates that “[m]any workers are not fluent in English, yet existing health and safety information (e.g., Material Safety Data Sheets) often utilizes highly technical language and is available primarily in English” (Quach 807). Since many Vietnamese immigrants get jobs in the Vietnamese nail salon industry when arriving in the United States, the language barrier does not pose as an initial concern. However, lack of English proficiency could be detrimental to their health and success in the long-run, as health information and regulations are hard to understand as an immigrant. Language barriers also proved to be an issue in the New York Times article, as some information was lost in translation, resulting in misinformation and misquoting, whether or not it was intentional (Epstein).

As news outlets and other media further sensationalized complaints in the media, “the Asian nail tech made her debut as comic relief. But unlike the not-so-bright American-born manicurist who could not make it in beauty school, the new nail techs seemed a bit too smart for their customer’s own good” (Willett 70). As Vietnamese manicurists’ line

of work is so ethnically concentrated, it further ostracized them from Americans, making their “otherness” extremely evident. The self-other distinction makes Vietnamese immigrant women more vulnerable and more susceptible to discrimination and generalizations. Moreover, Vietnamese immigrants were often perceived as impersonal and uneducated due to their inability to speak English. This perception of Vietnamese manicurists shifted in popular culture when the stereotypical Asian nail technician was introduced as a recognizable character in many movies and TV shows. However, instead of being viewed as uneducated, Vietnamese manicurists were seen as devious businesswomen. In a popular YouTube video, with nearly 19 million views, a Vietnamese manicurist pushes her customer to buy more expensive services and lies to her client about the true condition of her nails. The video also shows that when the customer complains about a misshapen nail, the nail technician proceeds to speak in Vietnamese in a negative tone (Keu). This type of sketch portrays Vietnamese immigrant work in a negative light, showing Americans that immigrant workers do not look for the best interest of their customers. Stereotype-based comedy is considered funny because the audience believes that there is truth to it, and the popularity of this sketch shows how many people view immigrant nail technicians in this light. As a result, clients often assume that real nail technicians are deceiving them or that if a nail technician spoke Vietnamese, the conversation was about a customer. These stereotypes further emphasize the distinction between Vietnamese immigrants and their American clientele.

CONCLUSION

A combination of the social status of first-wave Vietnamese immigrants and looser immigration laws allowed Vietnamese immigrants to establish their own salons and beauty schools in a foreign country. This permitted succeeding waves of immigrants, specifically Vietnamese immigrant women, to get manicure licensing more easily, allowing them to bypass initial acculturative stress. As manicures became ethnically concentrated, an ethnic niche formed, empowering Vietnamese women to get their own jobs and start their own businesses. Vietnamese immigrants revolutionized the nail industry with the creation of the first stand-alone nail shops, along with other technological innovations.

While ethnic niches initially empower immigrant women, the view of immigrants in America ultimately marginalizes them, especially

during the time of deindustrialization in the United States. The preexisting fear of immigrants displacing native workers started to fuel the negative perception of immigrants as a whole. Additionally, succeeding waves of Vietnamese immigrants had no need to learn English because they worked within their ethnic niche, making them even more distinct from Americans. Because Vietnamese immigrants were viewed negatively and were still successful, non-Vietnamese owned nail salons viewed them as a threat. Consequently, non-Vietnamese nail salon owners began to retaliate, claiming that immigrant nail salons were unsanitary and essentially “Un-American.” When some media investigations soon proved that there were wage and health violations in nail salons, sensationalist journalism sparked uproar on both sides of the situation. Racism is essentially embedded in mainstream media, and stories like these are used to “justify” the fear of immigrants in the United States. This, along with prior stereotypes of Asian women in the media, contributes to the disempowerment of Vietnamese women.

While the issues of immigrant nail salons are a harsh reality, American journalists must think about how Vietnamese immigrant women feel about their representation in the media. The language barrier inhibits immigrant women from understanding the technical language of regulations and contributes to major misunderstandings when being interviewed. Journalists must also consider how nail salon owners are often workers themselves, and that they share the same concerns that workers and customers do about a healthy nail salon environment. One more important issue to consider is if there is a way for mainstream media to address real issues without demonizing an already marginalized group. Overall, ethnic niches initially empower Vietnamese women financially and as businesswomen; however, the external disempowerment of immigrants outweighs the benefits. Earlier waves of Vietnamese immigrants were successful in their creation of beauty schools and nail salons, while succeeding waves of immigrants became hard laborers in this industry. This cycle continues as acculturative stress increases for each succeeding wave of immigrants as their level of education and social status continue to decrease. The social, cultural, and language demands of moving to a new country is too much to bear, leaving women with no choice but to work in ethnically concentrated, low-skilled labor jobs with no opportunity for upward mobility. Although this disempowers Vietnamese immigrant women, their hard work encourages and enables their children to become successful in the United States. Vietnamese immigrant women

have tried to uplift their community by establishing their own beauty schools and by working low-skilled jobs to support their families. They have also empowered American women of different backgrounds by making manicures affordable to women of all races and classes. The least American journalists can do is listen to working immigrant women, who have changed American beauty for the better.

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MATTHEW MAI

Germany and Rwanda: Chained to History

ABSTRACT

In a century of totalitarian ideologies and global conflict, the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide stand out as two uniquely horrible events. In the existential struggle to preserve the nation as defined by ethnicity, the Nazis and the Hutu government used dehumanization and brutalization to validate the behavior of committed genocidalists while making bystanders powerless and sometimes complicit in the killing. They exploited people with existing prejudices who perceived certain minority groups to be benefactors of the majority's degradation brought on external forces. This paper explores the common underlying elements of both genocides while remarking on the historical stain on Germany and Rwanda's national images. Ultimately, these two genocides show that when individuals are persuaded to give up their moral agency to rectify the past, they become capable of perpetrating horrific acts of violence on their neighbors.

From 1939 to 1945, the Nazis managed to systematically orchestrate the deaths of six million Jews, Slavs, and other minorities through mass deportations to death camps around Europe. The 1994 Rwandan genocide saw one million Tutsis killed, mainly with machetes and clubs, in only a hundred days. While genocide was not a unique phenomenon of the 20th century, these two cases stood out for their efficiency and brutality. How did the Nazis and the Rwandan government convince their people to commit atrocities against their neighbors with the goal of "extermination"?

Authors John Milfull and Jean-Paul Kimonyo examine the historical and ideological forces that led to support for genocide in Germany and Rwanda respectively. Psychologist Albert Bandura and academic Kristen Monroe provide psychological frameworks that examine the various ways in which individuals consider morality when confronted with systems that enable inhumane behavior. Finally, academic Mark Winton considers how violentization theory materialized through dehumanization to perpetuate violence that, as seen in Germany and Rwanda, was distinct in brutality and reflective of historical anxieties.

INTRODUCTION

Accordingly, this paper will first examine the unique histories of Germany and Rwanda to establish how restive national prejudices and colonial intrusion created toxic ethnocentric climates, or the belief in the superiority of one's ethnic heritage, which permitted the subjugation of minority groups through violent means. Next, this paper will define moral agency and show how historical grievances were weaponized as a way to convince people to abandon their morality in favor of ideologically motivated inhumane behavior. Finally, this paper will look at the specific dehumanization and brutalization tactics used in both genocides and connect them to the resentment the perpetrators held towards their victims. The exposition will demonstrate that the conditions for the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide were unique and depended heavily on historical and ideological forces that impacted the attitudes of average Germans and Rwandans. Due to their distinct histories and national self-images, Germany and Rwanda were uniquely susceptible to exclusionary ethnocentrism that resulted in the use of dehumanization and brutalization to legitimize state-sanctioned violence against minority groups.

THE GERMAN NATION AND THE RISE OF THE NAZIS

How could a vicious tyrant like Adolf Hitler rise to power on a campaign of virulent antisemitism and racial chauvinism? To explore this question, this section will discuss Germany's unique national identity and how, at various periods, political leaders have made appeals to this identity to promote the idea of a racially homogenous state.

German consciousness valued race as the central element of national identity. This collective self-image, forged in antiquity, took pride in the notion of a "pure" people that had avoided the tribal intermixing most continental European societies experienced during the age of empires. In a book titled *Germania*, the Roman scholar Cornelius Tacitus observed the nature of the Germanic people and determined that "The people of Germany appear to me indigenous, and free from intermixture with foreigners, either as settlers or casual visitants... I concur in opinion with those who deem the Germans never to have intermarried with other nations; but to be a race, pure, unmixed, and stamped with a distinct character." (3-4). As a result, the notion of tribal purity was deeply ingrained

within the psyche of the Germanic people and their conception of the nation. In the aftermath of German unification, the first signs of “othering” can be found in the late 1870s with the creation of the Pan-German League which emphasized racial homogeneity as the basis for national cohesion (Jaworska 442). Since Poles were the largest ethnic minority in Germany, the Pan-German League pursued aggressive policies designed to remove them from the Volk (ethnic German population) as their presence was considered cancerous to the welfare of the nation.

In the aftermath of World War I, the Nazi Party continued the legacy of the Pan-German League by appealing to this underlying racial consciousness. The Nazi position on German identity expanded on Tacitus’s description with the belief that the Nordic race was made superior through evolution and thus, was in an existential competition with other races. As historian Richard Weikart explains, the Nazis:

believed that the Nordic race had become superior because harsh climate conditions in north-central Europe during the Ice Ages had sharpened the struggle for existence... they believed that the differential evolutionary development of the races provided scientific evidence for racial inequality... they held that the different and unequal human races were locked in an ineluctable struggle for existence (538).

Humiliated by the Allies with reparations and territorial forfeiture, the rise of Adolf Hitler reflected Germany’s susceptibility to embrace Nordic-centric identity politics for the purpose of restoring the nation. Thus, the Nazis appealed to the masses in racial and historical terms to use the anger of the German people and radically recalibrate the Volk’s self-image through the persecution of the “other.”

However, who was the “other” in the aftermath of World War I? As is written in *Why Germany?*, Europe was known for its conspiratorial suspicion of the Jewish community. Jews were known for their financial involvement with various monarchies so naturally, common prejudice suspected them of abusing the levers of power for their own benefit (12). The Nazis exacerbated this sentiment by claiming that the Jews were an inferior race and their success stemmed from financial connections to industrialists, bankers, and other social elites which meant they had earned a place in society that they were not capable of attaining for themselves. They exploited Germany’s susceptibility to racial chauvinism by intensi-

fyng a baseline prejudice held by many Germans that was a part of their collective consciousness and national self-image. Accordingly, this form of ethnocentric politics sought to preserve and uplift the “master race” while overcoming the scheming of a select few who conspired against them.

THE EUROPEAN REMAKING OF RWANDA

European colonialism was responsible for a significant portion of the chaos that manifested in the various African independence movements of the post-war era and in this, Rwanda was no different. Before European arrival, the Tutsi and Hutu tribes had peacefully coexisted and assimilated into a culturally coherent society. As Jean-Paul Kimonyo describes in his book *Rwanda’s Popular Genocide*, “another form of breaking the social barriers was manifest in blood pacts, many times sworn between a Hutu and a Tutsi. A blood pact tied the two individuals closer than brothers... Another source of social cohesion was the powerful ideology and culture upholding national unity embodied in the monarchy” (13). This effort on the part of the Rwandans to embrace and accommodate each other through political rituals and traditions, including by establishing a monarchy, extended into the social economy whose invisible hand had a large role in governing Tutsi-Hutu relations. Through a system of labor known as “ubuhake,” Tutsis and Hutus were able to exchange goods and services, mainly cows, for personal protection which allowed Hutus to be more economically mobile. This social arrangement meant that ethnic affiliation was not the final determinant of one’s place in Rwandan society as Hutus began to attain many of the same privileges as Tutsis (Gasabo 51).

However, after Germany’s acquisition of Rwanda in 1890, colonial administrators used the Rwandan elites, who were overwhelmingly Tutsi, to help rule the country. This meant that “ubuhake” went from being a proto-meritocracy into a system designed to serve the interests of European authorities to the severe detriment of Tutsi-Hutu relations. Worse, the Europeans forced the Tutsis to exact colonial punishments on the Hutus, further straining tribal relationships (Kimonyo 22).

In the coming decades, the Hutus would be subject to humiliation and oppression at the hands of people whom they once made “blood pacts” with. The implications of European colonialism can be seen in the transformation of Rwandan society which saw a minority group, the

Tutsis, receive preferential treatment at the expense of the Hutu majority. Additionally, European attitudes towards race would foster an artificial sense of superiority among Tutsis as colonial schools encouraged the idea that they were genetically superior to Hutus. This was a turning point in Rwanda's history as it removed any semblance of tribal coexistence in exchange for a policy of ethnic subjugation.

Defined by humiliation at the hands of an artificially created elite, post-colonial Rwandans only knew "Tutsi" and "Hutu" to be a binding label to one's place in society. Given that the Tutsis had acquired generational wealth and privilege as a result of European favoritism, post-colonial Hutus did not have a tradition of social mobility and equitable coexistence to look back to. Instead, their focus would be on avenging these historical injustices using the same means they had been perpetrating: the mechanisms of state power.

After decolonization, the majority-Hutu government set forth an agenda that sought to establish decisive control of the nation's resources. As academic Philip Verwimp explains:

Rwanda is an agricultural nation and faced difficult equilibria, both internal and external. Every Rwandan had to be as productive as possible to keep the country in balance... When resources are scarce, and regime leaders believe that only the Hutu are the legitimate inhabitants of Rwanda, the connection is simple, in this sense that the resources of the country are such they can only support one ethnic group (356).

Given the lack of national progress in the decades after decolonization, the Rwandan government believed it was their obligation to ensure that Hutus were given priority treatment over Tutsis. In doing so, they could finally achieve parity with the Tutsi elite who had benefited from colonialism in the subjugation of the Hutus. To do this, the Rwandan government's post-colonial policies sought to reclaim, through similar means, what had been taken from them. As the next section will show, the exclusion of Tutsis from Rwandan society was an idea that more than enough Hutus were willing to go along with.

MORAL AGENCY AND THE STRUGGLE TO OVERCOME HISTORY

With this understanding of German and Rwandan history, we now move to examine how these forces impacted individual Germans

and Rwandans. To that end, this section will examine how self-images focused on the external nature of human conflict are connected to the perpetration of genocide.

In his text, "Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities," Albert Bandura defines moral agency as "the power to refrain from behaving inhumanely and the proactive power to behave humanely" and claims that it is "embedded in a broader sociocognitive self-theory encompassing self-organizing, proactive, self-reflective, and self-regulatory mechanisms rooted in personal standards linked to self-sanctions" (193). Contained in this quote is the idea that individuals have the capacity to determine their behavior and, while it may be influenced by social forces beyond their control, they retain the power to make moral decisions. An individual's struggle for morality can be seen as a conflict between their capacity to use reason for moral ends and their internal psychological responses that are designed to accommodate the pressures of a social climate influenced by ideological forces.

In her article, "Cracking the Code of Genocide: The Moral Psychology of Rescuers, Bystanders, and Nazis during the Holocaust," academic Kristen Monroe uses three different profiles to explore the ways in which people respond to social pressure and how they view themselves within a larger social context. The first are "rescuers," or people who believe in the intrinsic value of human life and that it must be protected at all costs. Next, "bystanders" are people who act as passive observers and feel that they have no ability to make an impact on their surrounding environment. Last are "genocidalists," or those motivated in their role as preemptive action-takers to cleanse society of specific people who in their view are working to subvert the social order. Regarding these different types of actors Monroe writes that there is, "a critical difference between rescuers versus bystanders and supporters of genocide: an internal locus of control over their fate (rescuers) versus an external locus (bystanders and genocidalists)" (716). Rescuers do not regard systematic practices as a barrier to doing the right thing and they believe that they have the absolute agency to do whatever is necessary in order to protect human life. Historical themes, as powerful as they might be for grounding a national identity, are not a moral justification for committing atrocities. In contrast, genocidalists are idealists who accept inhumane behavior as a necessary means for achieving an ideological mission. They believe historical linearity validates their atrocities. While bystanders do not hold ideological convictions, they view themselves as powerless to stop systematic

abuses and accordingly, accept the idea that external forces have control over their lives. They are marked by apathy and indifference towards the suffering of others and a willingness to disengage from morality altogether.

By 1939, it was the genocidalists and bystanders who made up the dominant psychological profiles in Germany. The evidence is found in the Holocaust's methodology in which Jews were forcefully extracted from German society with material support from genocidalists and the non-disruptive endorsement of bystanders. Academic Herman Kelbert writes how this mass complicity enabled the Nazis to facilitate a brutally efficient policy of genocide:

the Nazis' 'final solution' for European Jewry, in which a policy aimed at exterminating millions of people was consciously articulated and executed, in which such extermination was an end in itself, and in which the extermination was accomplished on a mass-production basis through the literal establishment of a well-organized, efficient death industry. (30)

The connection between German national identity and these two profiles is that the ethnic chauvinism stirred up by the Nazis was something perceived by many Germans to be beyond the scope of individual agency given the centrality of race to the Volk's self-image. For genocidalists and bystanders, the forces behind the Holocaust were either seen as the natural fulfillment of Germany's destiny or too powerful to be resisted.

In Rwanda, the decentralized nature of the genocide allowed for more people to have a direct hand in the violence. The killings were more intimate than those of the Holocaust and consequently, assuming a bystander role was less likely to be tolerated. As Kimonyo explains, "one important aspect of this genocide was its decentralized nature... neighboring communities played a bigger role in the killings... Human hedges, roadblocks, physical checkpoints, and tracking down of escapees and hiders were also entrusted to the surrounding communities with women and children participating" (354). The widespread use of machetes and clubs as weapons increased the psychological intensity of the slaughter in a way that firearms could not, thus forcing the genocidalists to see each of their victims' faces before killing them. Only by repetition could such intensity be numbing enough to yield an unthinking killer comfortable with butchering people whom they held responsible for decades of subjugation.

While different in organization, the localization of violence was also effective because it forced people to participate; many feared they would be killed if they declined to pick up a machete. This is where the idea of a “phantom community” arises. Writing about the Rwandan genocide, Mark Winton notes, “Much work was devoted to increasing the strength of the genocidal phantom communities. In addition to encouraging violent acts, the perpetrator groups were able to gather large support systems who provided aid” (371). Phantom communities converted bystanders into genocidalists and then enabled them to commit atrocities through emotional reinforcement. In Rwanda, the mass conversion of bystanders into genocidalists was indicative of an entire society that had ceded its agency to destructive forces driven to rectify historical grievances.

The mass abandonment of self-sanction and moral responsibility nullified the efforts of those making proactive, humane decisions to protect their Jewish and Tutsi neighbors while simultaneously resisting external ideological pressure. As the next two sections will show, the exacerbation of the German self-image and the purposeful inflammation of ethnic tensions within Rwanda gave the state an opportunity to disseminate desensitizing tropes that primed their people to accept policies of “extermination.”

DISCONNECTING THROUGH DEHUMANIZATION

The Nazis and the Rwandan government engaged in calculated campaigns to dehumanize their victims through language that reflected anxieties stemming from historical grievances and crises of national identity. This section expresses how dehumanization in the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide effectively played on prejudices held by average Germans and Hutus towards their respective victims.

Dehumanization is the concerted effort to strip a person of their inherent dignity and remove any semblance of humanity both physically and psychologically. As a Nazi guard at a concentration camp recalled: You first call your victim names and take away his dignity. You restrict his nourishment and he loses his physical beauty and sometimes some of his moral values. You take away soap and water, then say the Jew stinks. Then you take their human dignity further away by putting them in situations where they even will do such things which are criminal. (Monroe 729) The effects of dehumanization are clear as the guard points out how Jews

became unrecognizable as human beings and thus easier to kill. As Kristen Monroe notes, “Frequently adopting the metaphor of disease, Nazis make genocide a kind of immunology, designed as preemptive action to rid the body politic of unclean elements” (712). Given the widely-held notion that Jews were profiting at the expense of the Volk, Nazi rhetoric characterized their existence within German society as a threat. Genocide was seen as a way to “cleanse” German society of its Jewish “illness.” By characterizing Jews in dehumanizing terms, the Nazis were able to enact a program of state-sanctioned violence with the complicity of the German public.

Similarly, the Hutu-dominated Rwandan government saw fit to characterize the Tutsis in terms that played on ethnic tensions. As Mark Winton writes, “The Hutu 10 Commandments... emphasized that the Tutsi were the enemy,... stating that the Hutu should prevent the Tutsi from attacking them, and that Tutsi women were dangerous spies” (371). The description of Tutsi women as spies was an allusion to the long-held Hutu conviction that the Tutsis were collaborators (and benefactors) in the European colonial project. With the Rwandan government’s emphasis on controlling the nation’s resources, Hutus felt compelled to view the Tutsis as tribal rivals who needed to be destroyed. To do this, the government began to proclaim that not only were Hutus locked in an existential competition with Tutsis but that they were a sub-human competitor unworthy of being recognized as fully human. As psychologist Philip Zimbardo observed, “It also became easier to encourage the mass murders and rapes of Tutsis by being able to view them as abstractions and also by calling them by the dehumanizing term ‘cockroaches,’ which needed to be ‘exterminated’ ” (14). Just as the Nazis pitched the “extermination” of Jews with the language of “immunology,” the Hutu-dominated Rwandan government endorsed this idea as a way to rectify colonial injustice. By dehumanizing specific minority groups, Germany and Rwanda were exposing their susceptibilities to perpetuate virulent ethnocentrism. As the next section makes clear, the physical manifestation of their dehumanizing campaigns would leave the world reeling in horror.

THE LASTING STAIN OF GENOCIDE

Extreme violence is not a natural inclination of the human psyche. People must be taught how to commit atrocities. The effects of this were particularly devastating in the Rwandan genocide where individuals

were free from self-censure due to state-sanctioned violence. As Winton writes, “Comparative analysis demonstrated that leaders gave permission to the perpetrators to kill. In Rwanda, children and adults were taught how to kill by soldiers and encouraged to loot from their victims (Jones, 2002; Winton, 2008)” (372). Being that the state has a monopoly on force, its means of bringing a particular narrative into material reality are superior to that of other social actors. The state’s weaponization of the past to inspire action centered on a struggle promoted as existential in nature made the restoration of the German and Rwandan nations, both founded in ethnic identity, the moral justification for genocide. State-sanctioned violence gives genocidalists the validation necessary to pursue measures that rectify historical grievances while allowing a class of bystanders to conclude that they are powerless to stop the slaughter. The extreme nature of these conflicts required imbued tactics of brutalization that traded an individual’s moral agency for the psychological indifference to suffering required for the violent extermination of an entire group from the polity.

The atrocities committed in both genocides reflected the nature of the anger directed at minorities whose collaboration with foreign powers or social elites had supposedly undermined the nation and benefited their communities exclusively. Sexual violence against Tutsi women, specifically gang rape and the mutilation of sexual organs, was encouraged by Hutu authorities who routinely accused them of being “spies.” It was a way in which Tutsi women were degraded and violated, which made reproduction impossible. This type of violence also reflected the view that there was not enough space in Rwanda for the two tribes to coexist; accordingly, one had to be removed through the targeting of sexual organs (Zimbardo 14). The Nazi’s extermination campaign shared a similar outlook as they specifically sought to destroy Jewish babies. Political theorist Hannah Arendt states that “No one had issued orders that infants should be thrown into the air as shooting targets, or hurled into the fire alive, or have their heads smashed against walls... Innumerable individual crimes, one more horrible than the next, surrounded and created the atmosphere of the gigantic crime of extermination” (qtd. in Miller 90). By 1939, the conventional view was that Jewish infiltration into powerful institutions was holding the Volk back from national glory. Brutality towards infants was simply in accordance with the Nazi’s “extermination” agenda which believed that the Jews, by inheritance, were “cockroaches.” The individuals who participated in these genocidal campaigns were completely

unmoored from the self-sanctioning power of moral agency and accepted an external fate as the force behind their actions. They accepted historical grievances as a justification for the use of extreme violence towards those whom they deemed responsible for the humiliations of the past.

These existential struggles bargained common humanity for the restoration of a nation rooted in ethnic identity. As a consequence, both genocides have perpetually marred the internal and external perceptions of Germany and Rwanda. By inheritance, post-genocide Germans and Rwandans must carry this burden. The social contract of each society must make explicit its acceptance of the “other” through policies promoting coexistence. In the eyes of the world, Germany and Rwanda have shown themselves to be capable of perpetrating extreme inhumanities. Outsiders cannot think of either country or culture without remembering these tragedies. This is not to say that other societies do not bear similar stains or that they are not susceptible to acting on their own prejudices. But what makes Germany and Rwanda different is that their populations efficiently engaged in the uncompromising and systematic state-sponsored extermination of an entire minority group. No nation or tribe is irredeemable, but as the stains of genocide are not easily removed, nor are its images easily forgotten.

CONCLUSION

Germany and Rwanda were uniquely susceptible to ethnocentric sentiments due to their distinct histories and national self-images. The German self-image emphasized racial homogeneity while the Hutus sought to resurrect a nation ravaged by European colonialism and Tutsi collaboration. The Nazis and the Rwandan government played on historical grievances in addition to using dehumanization and brutalization tactics to motivate average Germans and Hutus to commit horrific atrocities. As the Nazis and Hutus slaughtered their victims with the full participation of genocidalists and the aiding indifference of bystanders, there were not nearly enough rescuers to stop the killings. Tragically, the majority of Germans and Hutus were content to sit back and watch the world burn. The irony is that in the struggle to restore their national identities, the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide forever stained the history of Germany and Rwanda. Is it possible to rectify such history? Looking back at Monroe's three psychological profiles makes it clear that genocide is a choice undertaken by societies that feel they have lost themselves and choose

external existential struggles as a means of national restoration. Germany and Rwanda are not irredeemable but only by choosing coexistence as a national mandate can they one day say with confidence “never again.”

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TARA SHRIER

Media Monsters: An Exploration of Fear and Enjoyment in Film

ABSTRACT

For a genre full of gore, violence, and terror, Horror is puzzlingly popular in the entertainment industry. Even films with meager budgets and campy effects hold a special place in the public consciousness, with classic movie monsters taking their place in music, cereal boxes, and theme parks as some of the most famous characters in cinema. Their popularity, despite their gruesome subject matter, begs the question of what makes horror so enjoyable. Perspectives drawing on psychology, biology, and film theory conclude that the thrill comes from experiencing fear in a safe space. To this end, horror films seek to straddle the line between more and more convincing scares and an ever-present acknowledgment that everything is fake. This paper attempts to identify this duality in horror film between realism and predictability and discovers that many of the features that set horror apart as a “low brow” or “predictable” genre are major pros in favor of it. Repetition of the same typical monsters and tropes allows the genre to address some of the most deep-seated human fears from multiple fresh perspectives. At the same time, the repetition of similar plotlines and symbols is crucial to maintaining their fiction. Ultimately, the best-remembered horror films are those that speak to many deep human fears at once, in new and creative ways.

INTRODUCTION

From the 18th-19th century wave of Gothic literature to the popular “slasher” films of the 80s, horror has been a lucrative niche in the entertainment industry. Even low-budget horror films with small sets and cheap effects still reap enormous returns in the box office, some making hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue (Bui). Why is it so easy for horror films to succeed with audiences? What makes an abandoned house or a shot of the moon so enthralling? Furthermore, the horror genre seems to depend consistently on the same tropes: ghosts, creepy little girls, haunted houses, and serial killers. Even after countless iterations, something about these “classic” horror tropes continues to provoke screams. While the enjoyment of horror films varies significantly between individ-

uals, the industry does well for a subject matter that is so unappetizing and repetitive. This paper aims to explore audience' relationship with fear in the entertainment industry. It will draw on biological frameworks, psychology, and film analysis to explain what makes the most famous horror films terrifying and entertaining.

FEAR VS. ENJOYMENT

The first puzzle when discussing horror stories is to consider how fear—a biological aversion to harmful stimuli—turns into something people seek on their nights off. Stephen King, one of the most prolific horror writers today, suggests that people watch horror “to show that we can, that we are not afraid...” (“Why We Crave Horror Movies”). This statement may be true, but it does not tell the whole story. Anyone who has gone to the theater and seen people jump with delight knows that the fear makes the experience thrilling. Perhaps audiences enjoy such films as a way “to reestablish...feelings of essential normality...” (“Why We Crave Horror Movies”). After all, seeing the nightmare-puzzles inflicted on characters by Jigsaw in *Saw* (2004) can make everyday problems seem inconsequential. However, if the goal is to escape from mundanity, why watch films that evoke fear instead of joy? Ultimately, King decides that audiences seek horror “to have fun” (“Why We Crave Horror Movies”). Teens swarmed theaters for *Scream* (1996) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) simply because they are fun to watch, even if the characters on-screen are living their worst nightmares. Why is this fun? King credits the preoccupation with horror to the need to “keep the gators fed” (“Why We Crave Horror Movies”). In other words, our fascination with the macabre is a way to safely exercise our curiosity about that which is too unappetizing to talk about in the course of normal life.

To understand this penchant for carnage, it helps to look at the extremes of horror. The *Saw* franchise serves as an excellent example of stories so brutally violent that it becomes difficult to understand the appeal. This subgenre, dubbed “torture-horror,” is almost needlessly gruesome. Other than an innate fascination with gore, it is difficult to think of any reason why one would enjoy it. In *The Philosophy of Horror*, Jeremy Morris calls torture-horror “a manifestation of a recurring form of recreation whose milestones include gladiator battles, inquisitions, and public executions...” (43). According to Morris, the violence and gore in these films appeal to animalistic impulses that have made a home in en-

tainment for centuries. Some films like *Saw* appeal to a perverted sense of justice, one where people receive over-the-top retribution for their faults. Other movies like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003) lack even that. Morris suggests “one answer is that enjoyment, even that which is sadistic, is infectious” (50). This statement is controversial because it implies that even the horrible deeds of *Jigsaw* and *Leatherface* are somehow enjoyable. Furthermore, he argues that the “genius” of torture-horror is that “it transforms the source of fear from a distant other to something familiar within ourselves...the delight of the torturer...is being consciously shared by the audience” (Morris 51). This interpretation is popular: that people who watch horror movies or play horror games are violent individuals acting on impulse. There are, however, several problems with this sentiment. In his book *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie*, Andrew Tudor mocks this view, recounting the awkwardness that often comes with telling people he studies horror movies. “Doesn’t it desensitize you?” one genteel lady asked, as if viewing horror movies functioned as a kind of condom of the conscience” (7). By “condom of the conscience,” Tudor means the general assumption that horror is a way to practice deviant behavior safely. On the contrary, he notes that despite people’s concerns, he is mentally sound “with no desire to kick kittens, drink blood, or disembowel members of the moral majority” (Tudor 7). He has loved horror movies since his teens, and his enjoyment is entirely unrelated to any attraction to the macabre. Likewise, many audiences do not experience this supposed enjoyment from violence, only revulsion. A 2007 study by Hourani and King found that:

...the more havoc the evil/antagonist wreaks, the more aroused and negatively disposed toward the antagonist the audience becomes. In films with traditional endings, theory suggests that audience feelings and arousal are then transferred, intensifying audience enjoyment when the evil/antagonist is conquered. (476)

Contrary to the common perception of horror lovers, people do not identify with the killer but actively celebrate their destruction. This reaction is evident in audience responses, such as “He got what he deserved, I really liked that,” and, “Finally a film where the guy actually dies and gets what he deserved” (Hourani and King 488). For the most part, even audiences that enjoy gore do not readily identify with the villain. Indeed, there must be some other process underlying this morbid curiosity.

Perhaps a better explanation for the popularity of horror movies is the biological point of view, which is that the very act of feeling scared is exciting. Physiologically, fear is not very different from excitement. In a dangerous situation, the body switches to “fight or flight” response, headed by the autonomic nervous system (Stemmler 64-65). Fear then manifests in physiological changes in the form of increased heart rate, breathing, sweat, and goosebumps (Stemmler 6). A similar response arises in situations of excitement, such as rollercoaster rides or jump-scaries. These shared physiological responses are implicated in the twin reactions of fright and excitement when watching horror films (Javanbakht and Saab, *Smithsonian.com*). Excitation Transfer Theory, proposed by Dolf Zillman, thus suggests that the physiological arousal from watching a horror film remains intact and that it can be redirected to positive feelings when the movie ends and audiences realize they are safe (Cummins). However, this does not take into account the yelps of *delight* during the movie. Instead, it is more appropriate to say that the enjoyment comes from the autonomic nervous system response minus the real danger. Alfred Hitchcock, another horror celebrity, corroborates this in his essay “The Enjoyment of Fear”:

...millions seek [fear] vicariously, in the theater and in the cinema. In darkened auditoriums they identify themselves with fictitious characters who are experiencing fear, and experience, themselves, the same fear sensations (the quickened pulse, the alternately dry and damp palm, etc.), but without paying the price. (117)

The raised heart rate and breathing with the knowledge that no real threat exists, leaves the audience thrilled and on-edge in a controlled atmosphere. Almost all horror movies are specifically designed to achieve this physical response, to “stimulate intense emotional responses in spite of an awareness of fictionality” (Baird 13). The music, sounds, and staging of each frame are meant to increase the suspense and ultimate startle payoff. For example, scenes meant to build tension are often shot in long takes, punctuated by quick cuts to startle viewers (Hayward and VanDerWerff).

PREDICTABILITY RELIEVES REALISM

Many horror films seek to create more and more realistic scares by setting the story in believable circumstances. Found footage films presented as

amateur documentaries use shaky camera work and basic-looking editing to convince the viewer they were filmed during real events. The epitome of these is *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), which features a group of film students--Mike, Josh, and Heather--in the woods with a video camera, hoping to investigate the local legend of the Blair Witch. What sets this film apart is the advent of a never-before-seen advertising campaign that aspired to bring the horror to life. First, the trailer identifies this as actual footage found a year after the students disappeared, including news broadcasts, interviews with parents, and police analyses of crime scene evidence. The editor layered this footage over the footage of Heather apologizing for getting her friends involved in *The Blair Witch Project*. The trailer ends with a black screen and a link to the website. In this way, the filmmakers also utilized the growing internet to spread the word. This strategy proved particularly effective at a time when it was unclear whether the amateur site was a corporate hoax or the work of actual college students. The site features character bios of all the “filmmakers,” as well as interviews and research conducted by the characters about mysterious local disappearances. The actors were specifically selected for their improvisation abilities to further the illusion. They used their real names and their IMDB pages listed them as “missing, presumed dead” (Hawkes, *Telegraph.co.uk*). After the movie’s release, they were instructed to lay low to convince audiences that perhaps they were, in fact, dead. According to an article on the subject, “the hoax went so viral, Donahue’s mother received condolence cards” from concerned viewers (Marthe, Broadly). A study analyzing internet news group discussions after the release explains: The film plays upon the expectations of the recipients, tempting some into wondering for a brief moment “What if it were true?” and potentially confusing others into taking the fiction to be fact and acting upon this mistaken conviction. (Schreier)

Altogether, this mockumentary-style creates an uncomfortable viewing experience, giving audiences the sensation that they are watching real events unfold.

Though effectively done in *The Blair Witch Project*, some degree of realism is necessary for any horror film. After all, “movies must have enough of a ring of truth about them to be frightening in the first place if they are to be entertaining” (Hoekstra et al. 135). However, it must always be clear that the story is fictional, or the fear becomes too realistic. This distinction between “art-horror” and “natural horror (the terrible things that happen in the everyday world)” (Fahy 3) is at the root

of horror movie enjoyment. Ax murderers and rampaging monsters are only fun with the promise that the credits will eventually roll. A study on the horror-movie response by Hoekstra et al supports this. In this study, participants were asked to recall a movie they saw as a child and rate their fear. They note that “the more realistic the movie was perceived as being, the more fright was expressed,” which could be desirable or not, depending on the viewer (Hoekstra et al. 130). Naturally, the more realistic the threat appeared, the more fear the participants reported. Furthermore, they found that “viewers reported more sleep problems when these movies were perceived as being more realistic, a perception far more likely to occur at younger ages when the fantasy-reality distinction is blurred” (Hoekstra et al 133). Perhaps this is the reason why children react with genuine fear rather than excitement, continuing to fear monsters hidden under their beds even after the movie has ended. Conversely, the same study reported that children who grew up with horror films reported enjoying them more, perhaps because they were accustomed to the format. In order to enjoy horror, it seems these films must fit into a predictable medium, a form that audiences saw before. *The Philosophy of Horror* explains:

Just as audiences crave the fear it elicits, they also take pleasure in its predictability. It is this safety net of predictability- of closing a book, of leaving the theater when the lights go back on, or of knowing that a professional skydiver will pull the cord on your parachute- that enables us to enjoy the thrilling, horrifying journey. It is this safety net that makes horror so much fun. (Fahy12)

According to this view, predictability is crucial. Only in knowing that the experience is harmless can one enjoy the adrenaline rush. In a way, predictability exactly counteracts the realism of a story: while one makes it scarier, the other makes it more bearable. What emerges from this assertion is that horror stories must maintain a level of implausibility in order to preserve enjoyment.

REPETITION: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

The horror genre often relies on predictable mechanics and tropes to maintain the understanding that this is fiction. By repeating typical plotlines and reviving old monsters, the genre creates a common vocabulary to talk about fear. Indeed, for a genre that relies so heavily on suspense,

it is outlandishly predictable. Time and again, production companies consistently return to vampires, werewolves, haunted houses, ghosts, possessed dolls, or the latest zombie apocalypse. In *The Philosophy of Horror*, Fahy notes the repetition of “recurring structures, narratives, images, and figures.” He writes:

Horror audiences...tend to ‘desire that the same stories be told again and again,’ but they also find pleasure in the subtle variations of the expected formula. This kind of repetition, both in varying the conventions of the genre and in the form of sequels, disrupts a fixed interpretation of the text. (2)

Horror films repeatedly feature teens camping, engaging in sexual activity, and then they are swiftly killed off one by one. It has reached a point in which the mere image of an upside-down cross, a coffin, or a full moon immediately indicates the presence of demons, vampires, or werewolves. Nevertheless, audiences continue to enjoy the same stories. Fahy argues that this is not a failure of the genre or a lack of creativity, but rather a medium through which to cover new and exciting approaches to horror. A representative example of this is the zombie story, which includes widely different approaches to the same premise. By re-addressing zombies in different ways, the genre broadens the conversation on their symbolic meaning. For example, zombies symbolize death; they return from the grave to steal what makes one conscious and individual (the “brains”). However, they can be fast or slow, much like the approach of death. In *World War Z* (2013), for example, the zombie hoard is overwhelming in speed and number. They are unrelenting, evading helicopter fire and leaping over walls to slam into their prey. The overall impression is of a sudden, violent, and gory death. Conversely, zombies of *The Walking Dead* (2010) appear tame by comparison. Protagonists need only wait for them to stumble over before moving them out of the way (“Them” 12:00-12:30). Hence, the threat is not so much the attack, but rather the slow, inevitable death that characters must experience. On the other end of the spectrum, zombie stories can be comedic, like *Shaun of the Dead* (2004). In this interpretation, Shaun’s blasé attitude toward the apocalypse takes an amusing tone. The audience’s surprise when Shaun does not react as expected creates humor. The humorous angle then provides an entirely new way to approach the fear of death: this fear is rational and a nonchalant attitude towards the apocalypse is ridiculous. Thus, the symbol of the

zombie allows one to approach the fear of death from multiple angles. In this way, the reliable format of scary stories ensures that deep-seated fears are approached in new and gruesome ways without becoming too realistically disturbing. However, it is essential to acknowledge that repetition is a double-edged sword: if too much is recycled, the films become tired and dull, ruining the enjoyment altogether.

The repetition in the horror genre occurs not just in individual monsters but in its overall themes. *Monsters and Mad Scientists* by Andrew Tudor delineates three distinct narrative categories, namely the knowledge narrative, invasion narrative, and metamorphosis narrative. The “knowledge” narrative is characterized by a discovery that unleashes a threat to the world. In *Frankenstein’s* case, this was due to “meddling’ in things that one should not,” but the discovery could also be accidental (Tudor 84). This classic tale about how much humanity can know vs. how much should humanity know is present in many of the most famous horror stories. In some, like *Frankenstein*, or Hawthorne’s *The Birthmark*, the story serves as a cautionary tale against pursuing the unknown. In Lovecraft’s *The Call of Cthulhu*, the characters’ rational world slowly unravels as they attempt to research the supernatural. All of these stories suggest that there are some things one is simply not meant to understand. Though it has become less common in recent decades, the fame of these knowledge narratives still speaks to the common fear of the unknown. The “invasion” narrative, which Tudor considers the “simplest of horror-movie forms” refers to any story in which a monster simply arrives and wreaks havoc (Tudor 90). It can be a monster of any form, though unlike the knowledge narrative in which characters actively pursue the unknown, here it arrives uninvited. *Dracula* is a good example of the invasion narrative: The book emphasizes that *Dracula* is a foreigner, and his power stems directly from the soil of his foreign land. Tudor also points out the “sexual overtones of vampirism,” the “sustained animal references,” and “the life/death opposition” common in specifically vampire stories (92). Once again, the archetype of “the invader” or “the monster movie” provides a basis to discuss more specific threats and fears. Within that discussion, individual monsters, such as “the vampire,” allow for further specificity:

Many vampire movies, for example- including Universal’s first *Dracula* in 1931- have recourse to the image of long fingers emerging from the vampire’s coffin, its lid slowly rising- the creature symbol-

ically and actually penetrating the secular world. Later, such images became more aggressive, with whole corpses thrusting their way out of their graves; but even as early as the 1946 *Return of the Vampire* there is a quite startling shot of a vampire's hand erupting from behind the soil. (Tudor 92)

The monster--symbolic of death--can either arrive slowly or bursting out of a grave, offering either an aggressive or insidious form of invasion. The specific choice of monster, such as vampire (death or censured sexual desire) or werewolf (animal instinct), in addition to the chosen method of invasion (aggressive vs. insidious), determines the specific types of fear a work can address.

Lastly, the metamorphosis narrative is more subtle but still quite common. In it, people themselves become the monsters, and the villain becomes their distorted humanity. Famous cases, like *Dr. Jekyll and Mister Hyde* or Two-Face from Batman's *The Dark Knight* (2008), show humanity and the monster side-by-side, inextricably linked. Zombie apocalypse and disaster movies notably use this narrative to compare large-scale threats with simple people becoming corrupt. The second wave of danger often comes from the chaos of broken social order and undoing of law, as in *The Walking Dead* and *Birdbox* (2018). With no civilized structure, these films suggest people reverting to animalistic and monstrous tendencies can be just as terrifying as the end of the world.

Ultimately, the repetition of themes is an asset to the genre because it creates a springboard for new twists and approaches to the same human fears. However, the added flavor is crucial: without fresh elements and sparks of realism, a film loses its impact. This dullness could be why so many sequels of otherwise well-received movies fail to do well. Films such as *Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2* (2000), the *Saw* franchise, and *Jason Takes Manhattan* (1989) reiterate the same threat, one which is no longer unknown. At this point, predictability completely overwhelms any aspect of realism, and the films become tedious rather than scary.

A "LOWBROW" ARTFORM

In the same way that low budget and repetitive tropes can enhance horror movies, the horror genre seems to excel at turning "bad" writing techniques into strengths. *Bad Seeds and Holy Terrors* author Dominic Lennard offers a striking interpretation of the genre:

Horror is an archetypal “lowbrow” form, after all, and thus a particularly interesting subject for the simple reason that common sense tells us it should not be scrutinized. As a genre, horror can use its perceived immunity to serious critique to get away with murder. This is one reason why its representations have been the subject of considerable academic interest. William Paul writes that “the negative definition of the lower works would have it that they are less subtle than higher genres. More positively, it could be said that they are more direct. (5)

Because of its preoccupation with the worst parts of humanity and its appeals to base instincts and worries, horror is considered “low-brow.” Though a uniquely-adult genre, it is critically seen as juvenile and sometimes considered unworthy of serious academic consideration. Lennard notes that such a base reputation allows the horror genre to accomplish what “higher-brow” genres cannot. It can be direct with its point or meaning showing a dead person to symbolize death or a person transforming to symbolize the worst sides of themselves. Ironically, the appeal of the genre is precisely its ability to address deep-seated fears directly and unabashedly.

COMMONLY REPEATED ARCHETYPES

The tropes most frequently repeated are presumably those that speak to the most common fears, and thus generate the most effective thrill payoff. In many cases, these are obvious: innate, evolutionary fears about bodily harm, predators, or disease. More difficult to explain are supernatural fears, which have no physical basis. Once again, the answer lies in some combination of biological and psychological explanations. According to the evolutionary approach, many human fears merely stem from ancestral survival instincts, like avoiding predators and disease. Even today, encountering a bear in the forest engages our fight-or-flight response. It therefore makes sense that horror movies feature super-predators (*King Kong* (2005), *Godzilla* (1998), *Jaws* (1975)), killers with knives (*Psycho* (1960), *Friday the 13th* (1980), *Scream* (1996)), and devastating disease pandemics (*The Walking Dead*, *World War Z*, *28 Days Later* (2003)). Nevertheless, this neglects the entire swath of supernatural horror, which has no biological or rational basis. In these cases, it seems that many classic horror monsters act as physical manifestations of deeper fears. While ghosts and zombies do not appear to attack in real life, they do speak to fears of death and disease. Monster attacks, apocalypses, and

alien invasions all address large-scale fears of society crumbling. Tales of the dead seeking vengeance, as seen in *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart* (Poe 1843), provoke social fears of confrontation by past mistakes. Masked individuals as in *The Purge* (2013), *Friday the 13th*, and *Halloween* (2018)) may invoke another biological and social fear of strangers. People cannot trust each other because one cannot gauge their intentions from their facial expressions. The “invasion” narrative as a whole also evokes common human fears of loss of control, as something unknown and unwelcome suddenly throws the normal world into chaos.

THE UNKNOWN

Additionally, many classic tropes are manifestations of the collective human fear of the unknown, which are evolutionarily explained as an innately human fear of the dark. Arguably the most obvious is again the fear of death, inevitable yet unpredictable. Other forms of the unknown, however, are deemed frightening because they are unfamiliar. Lovecraft, the author of terrifying works like the aforementioned *Call of Cthulhu*, is famous for this type of “cosmic horror”; the dread that arrives when something triggers “instinctual awareness...of the paltry state of human understanding” (Asma 154-155).

At the most basic level, almost all horror movies capitalize on the human fear of the unknown. Everything from a powerful unknown entity to a dark speaks to the distrust of what humans cannot see or touch. This distrust is one reason that horror lends itself so well to the cinema because it thrives on not showing just as much as it shows. Not only are poor lighting, mediocre camera work, and limited sets all still usable for horror films, they can improve the overall impression of terror by leaving everything else up to the viewer’s imagination. Susan Bier’s *Birdbox* (2018) shows the epitome of this concept, centering on the apocalyptic effects of a monster that drives people to insanity by taking the form of their deepest fears. The film never once shows the monster, choosing instead to blindfold both the characters and the camera itself. The monster is “an entity that takes on a form of your worst fears, or your deepest sadness, or your greatest loss” (*Birdbox*, Bier). For this reason, the film never had to come up with a monster. By placing the viewer in the same position as the protagonist—blind—the monster becomes as terrible as any person can imagine. This effect is far scarier than any model a set designer could create. *Birdbox* Director Susanne Bier explains in an inter-

view with Bloody Disgusting: “Whatever those beings are, they tap into your deepest fear. Everybody’s deepest fear is going to be different from the other person. I think to suddenly take upon a concrete shape in order to illustrate that becomes weak” (Topel, Bloody-Disgusting.com). In this way, not showing the monster is a more effective way to tap into viewers’ fear of the unknown.

A similar phenomenon appears in the ending of *The Blair Witch Project*. The movie ends with Josh separating from the group in an abandoned house, his screams audible from off screen. In a frantic wild-goose chase, Mike and Heather scour the rickety shack for their friend. In the final scene, Heather spots Mike standing in the corner partially off screen. Suddenly, she screams and drops the camera. The movie cuts to black with no explanation of what she saw, nor what happened after. In their interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, the creators admit:

We didn’t have any money, so we couldn’t do any special effects so we had to figure out how to end it without ruining the rest of the film. We came up with the idea three days before we shot it. We thought it was great — kind of unexplained, but it gave you the idea that something supernatural was happening. (Kinane, *EW.com*)

By leaving the ending open to interpretation and not just showing “a person in a bad witch costume,” the directors achieved an ending that was both cheap and eerily effective (Kinane, *EW.com*). The directors recall, “When we screened it, people were overwhelmingly confused... However, when asked if they were scared, 19 out of 20 hands went up” (Kinane, *EW.com*). Though the audience does not see anything, the simple image of Michael standing in the corner makes one’s hair stand on end. The directors admit that the producers originally wanted something more concrete (Kinane, *EW.com*). They shot several possible endings, but the focus group reaction singled out this scene as the scariest. Ironically, the “easiest” ending to shoot—the one that explained the least—was the most effective at unsettling audiences because it drew on the collective fear of the unknown.

CORRUPTING THE FAMILIAR

While fear of the unknown can explain the vast majority of horror movie components, it does not explain everything. For example, another common device is the perversion of innocence – i.e., when a

monster or malignant force invades what is considered pure. Paranormal films commonly rely on the trope of an upside-down cross, signifying the twisting or inversion of religion. *The Exorcist* (1973) attacks innocence in multiple ways. The demonically possessed 12-year old girl Regan makes vulgar and sexualized comments to the priest attending to her. She prods at his moral failures, such as his absence during his mother's lonely death. Perversion of the innocence of children and religion culminates in the scene where the demon masturbates with a cross. Even though most scenes are not as explicit, perverted innocence frequently appears in horror movies in the form of innocent or otherwise ordinary things behaving unnaturally. Haunted houses are a classic example of this, but other innocent objects are recruited to create a sense of unease. In *Poltergeist* (1982), the sight of kitchen chairs arranged atop the table in an impossible configuration creates an unsettling effect. Children's dolls in *Annabelle* (2014), *The Boy* (2016), *Child's Play* (1988), and *Dolly Dearest* (1991) evoke dread when they speak or move outside of human control. The genre uses children as an ancillary device to provoke unease. *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), for instance, uses sounds of children's laughter in the middle of the forest to terrify investigators. *The Babadook* (2014), for example, made the villain a children's book. In *The Exorcist* (1973), the demon creeps into Regan disguised as her imaginary friend. The simple image of a young girl in a nightgown has been used in countless horror films, either innocent, but grossly out of place (*The Shining* (1980), *The Ring* (2002)), or corrupted herself. For example, the first episode of *The Walking Dead* (2010) famously shows a zombie-fied little girl in a nightgown to communicate the sheer scale the disease has reached:

...the set of bunny slippers we see shuffling along the pavement is inhabited not, as one might expect, by an abandoned darling in need of rescue by the sheriff's deputy protagonist, but by its monstrous inverse: a groaning, blood-besmeared and smashed-faced atrocity requiring the swiftest euthanasia law enforcement's six-shooters can deliver. (Lennard 6)

In all of these films, innocence— specifically perverted innocence— signals to viewers that the foe is too ubiquitous to beat; even the most innocent are corrupted. It can touch even things thought to be safe (like one's home, religion, kitchen chairs, children, or toys). Suddenly, the film suggests, one's safe zones can no longer be trusted.

Horror movies deliver some of the biggest blows by violating the boundary between safe and dangerous, known and unknown. Many movies center on the fact that the evil is contained just as a tarantula might seem tame behind glass. This illusion snaps in movies like *The Ring*, where Samara begins to climb out of the TV and into the protagonist's room. Until this point, the rules of Samara's videotape had been contained: her *image* made viewers die of fright. The shock when she steps out of the screen in physical form is, therefore, terrifying. Likewise, the famous "spider-walk scene" from *The Exorcist*, deleted from the original 1973 version (but added back in 2000), is the only instance where Regan leaves the room. A review of the film by *Film Comment Magazine* describes it as "even more unsettling than its reputation indicates" (Jones).

WHAT IS SCARIEST?

Almost all horror movies touch on at least one archetypal threat. It seems, however, that the most memorable films juggle a number of them at once while offering a new interpretation of the same tropes. First, many archetypes are built to address multiple fear dimensions. For example, general categories like ghosts and zombies address different sides of the same coin. Though both discuss death, ghosts address the personal, emotional components: loss of loved ones, regrets, guilt, vendettas/vengeance, and passing of the spirit. Zombies, in contrast, revolve around the death of the flesh, as well as humanity's relationship with the inevitability and harsh anonymity of death. Furthermore, zombie stories combine physical and psychological horror, making them the perfect storm of many fears at once. The apocalypse provides the perfect opportunity to explore how people operate at their worst. In this way, zombie stories explore metamorphosis in more ways than one, such as the psychological changes brought on by desperation that prove just as dangerous as the physical change when becoming undead. Rival bands or deranged maniacs often present just as real a threat as the zombies themselves. Altogether, zombie stories are at once invasion narratives and metamorphosis narratives, complimenting anxieties about death with the fear of living people. Thus, fear of death becomes both physical gore and its form of cosmic horror: an inevitable force that is uncontrollable. Likewise, specific movies can rise above their genre by elevating their tropes to a new discussion altogether. For example, slasher films by nature address fears of death, disfigurement, and gore. However, *The Shining*

adds a new dimension of fear by including not only a psychotic madman and copious amounts of blood (biological fear) but also insanity and unexplainable psychic forces (fear of unknown). Similarly, *The Blair Witch Project* stood out from most cabin-in-the-woods films by grappling with more than just fear of the dark, the unknown, and “cosmic horror.” It includes perverted innocence in misplaced child laughter, as well as the guilt that Heather and her friends feel for becoming involved in matters beyond their control. Lastly, the film’s real effect comes from addressing the audience’s role as viewers. The realistic edge forces audiences to consider: ‘Is this real? Is this not actually fun?’ *The Exorcist*, too, addresses the unnaturalness and perversion of the innocence of a little girl’s imaginary friend, changing her speech and behavior to be too vulgar for some adults. The looming threat of an entity we cannot understand or control, threatening our very humanity, also relates to the “cosmic horror” described by Lovecraft. Hoekstra et al.’s study corroborates that multiple fear types at once tend to elicit the most robust fear response:

The list of movies generated by participants as being particularly scary are primarily R-rated films involving substantial amounts of gore and violence, often with a supernatural element. Interestingly, although such movies are not generally considered to be very realistic, viewers reported more sleep problems when these movies were perceived as being more realistic. (Cantor 1994 qtd. in Hoekstra et al. 133)

This quote suggests that a mixture of violence and the supernatural is a frightening combination. When these unbelievable situations unfold in realistic settings, the audience’s level of fear increases. *The Exorcist* addresses almost every single category of fear mentioned thus far. Evolutionary fears of death, disfigurement, and disease interplay in Reagan’s lacerations, vomit, head-spinning, and backwards crawling. The aforementioned perverted innocence plays a major role when a small girl begins to speak and act in ways antithetical to both childhood and religion. The same entity preys on social fears by addressing Father Karras in his mother’s voice and taking advantage of the guilt he feels for letting her die alone in a nursing home. In this way, the demon addresses the audience’s fears of their faults brought to light. Furthermore, the film embodies all three of Tudor’s narrative categories simultaneously. Indeed, *The Exorcist* is an invasion narrative because the demon violates spiritual/

physical boundaries to invade Regan's very person. It violates personal boundaries by knowing things about Father Karras that it should not, and it crosses physical boundaries by leaving Regan's room in an inhuman way. The film also functions as a knowledge narrative, in which medicine and science attempt to understand Regan's condition. Both priests ultimately meet their end by trying to understand and control the demon within her. Regan's story is also a metamorphosis narrative. In it she becomes something altogether inhuman. In this way, the single demon featured in *The Exorcist* speaks to a great number of human fears at once and is seared into audiences' imagination as one of the most famous horror films ever made.

CREATIVE INTERPLAY/JUXTAPOSITION

Perhaps the best-remembered horror films are those that incorporate a great number of archetypal fear narratives, interweave these fears most effectively, or both. All good films seem to have both of these characteristics. First, they address a wide variety of types of fears, not just death/disease/disfigurement, but also guilt and insecurity, societal and social fears (estrangement, mass hysteria), and loss of control. Second, they combine them into a single, malignant force in new and creative ways. As described in *Bad Seeds* and *Holy Terrors*, "monsters are not only physically threatening; they are cognitively threatening" (Lennard 12). The "horrific cognitive dissonance" that Lennard describes is what remains in the audience's mind long after seeing the movie, and it sets apart the effective horror movies from cheap jump scares (12). The way that fears are integrated into a story, the form they take, and their pairing/juxtaposition with each other is what gives each horror film its own unique take on what terrifies audiences most.

Ultimately, a lasting horror film is one that forces audiences to consider the reality of their deepest fears by giving a face to otherwise formless anxieties. This face can be markedly direct— a decomposed body to represent death or a wolf-man to represent animalistic human tendencies. As a "lowbrow" form of art, horror embraces amateur storytelling techniques to speak openly about what other genres will not show outright. It fills seats by giving people the chance to meet their fears in person in a thrillingly cathartic but controlled way. It is the films that can most accurately name and grapple with the deepest human fears that remain in the audience's collective consciousness. Horror interweaves many

fears at once in a fresh and unseen way, creating a film that will continue to unsettle audiences long after its release.

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