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SILENCE AND SCREAM: WOMEN'S OPTIONS AND OPPRESSIONS IN MAGHREBI CINEMA

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MENTOR: SARAH BUCHANAN

Introduction

Francophone Maghrebian cinema concerns films from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. All three are very distinct countries, yet all share a strong history and cinematic tradition. All were originally French colonies that gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s. Although in the beginning, it had to rely on foreign, especially French, support, Maghrebian cinema is emerging as an independent and self-sustaining art through government support. Maghrebian cinema's strongest style is its use of realism, especially in representing social issues that continue to affect the countries today. Nationalistic films were popular in the beginning of Maghrebian cinema, especially ones portraying independence, such as Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina's *Chronique des années de braise* (Algeria, 1975). Realism has more recently been specifically centered around women and women's issues in the Maghreb and "has been strengthened by the emergence of a new generation born after independence, with a quarter of the younger filmmakers now being women" (Armes 1). Films such as *Les Silences du palais* (1994), *Rachida* (2002), and *L'Enfant endormi* (2004) are all part of this genre that exploded in the 1990s with the emergence of famous female directors such as Moufida Tlatli, Yamina Bachir-Chouikh, and Yasmine Kassari, who directed the films mentioned above.

Although women in Maghrebian cinema are commonly represented in positions in which they are oppressed and silenced, they are not passive but rather break the silence in moments of duress using screams. The women use screams to address their oppression, and the other women in the scenes use silence to create space for the screams. The silence and screams subversively stand out to counteract the oppression through verbal and nonverbal means. These three films—*Les Silences du palais*, *Rachida*, and *L'Enfant endormi*—all include compelling scenes that show this active opposition.

Summary of Films

Les Silences du palais (Moufida Tlatli, Tunisia, 1994) is set in 1950s Tunisia. The film is about 25-year-old Alia, who returns to the place where she was born, the house of the bey where her mother worked as a servant and as a mistress. Alia returns to the house for a funeral, and while she is there, she is reminded of her childhood in the home. The film includes nine flashbacks in which Alia's traumatic childhood is shown in detail. Throughout the flashbacks, we see Alia confronted with the sexual exploitation of her mother. At the same time, she begins to come into her own sexuality and question the identity of her father. While Alia comes to terms with her past, she questions her future. Her lover, Lotfi, has asked her to have another abortion, and Alia is unsure. In the flashbacks, as well as the present, Alia questions her independence and her sexuality.

L'Enfant endormi (Yasmine Kassari, Morocco, 2004) is a Moroccan film set in the Atlas Mountains. In this film, the day after Zeinab is married, her husband and most of the other men in the village leave for Spain to find work. Shortly after learning she is pregnant, Zeinab makes her fetus "sleep," which in this Berber culture means that the baby will stop developing and Zeinab will remain pregnant until the return of her husband, when she will wake the child and give birth. While the men are away, the women are left alone in the village. The only way for the men and women to communicate is through written or video correspondence. The film focuses on the lives of these women as they wait, day after day, hoping their men will return.

Rachida (Yamina Bachir-Chouikh, Algeria, 2002) begins in the city of Algiers, where a young woman named Rachida lives and teaches. One day on the way to school, Rachida is confronted by a former student, now a terrorist, who tries to force her to take a bomb and plant it in the school where she teaches. She refuses and is shot as a result. She survives, but she and her mother leave for a small village to take refuge. While there, Rachida must come to terms with her traumatic experience as well as cope with her posttraumatic stress disorder. Although she is far from Algiers, her trauma still haunts her, and the dangers of terrorism are still very present.

Choice of Films

I chose these three films because they are all from prominent female directors and are all female-centered. Each of them highlights the subjugation that the women in these regions face, as well as the larger context of women in the

Maghreb. Furthermore, these films all have powerful scenes in which women use silence and screaming to counteract their oppression. Each of these films can be seen as an allegory for the state, with women representing the people of the country or being a symbol of the country itself. All three of these films clearly show the linguistic acts of silence and scream as active opposition to the abuse and brutality that these women face.

What is the Maghreb?

The Francophone Maghreb is the region of northern Africa that consists of three countries: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. All three were once colonies of France. The region is diverse geographically, ranging from the Sahara Desert in the south to the beaches of the Mediterranean in the north, with many valleys and mountains in between. The region has had a complex history of conquering and colonization. The dominant population in all three countries is Muslim, and the state religion Islam. The Islam practiced in these countries is mixed with traditional local customs. For example, in the Berber tribes in the mountains of Algeria, it is not uncommon to see Muslim women with face tattoos, a pre-Islamic cultural practice.

History of the Region

The Maghreb cannot be analyzed without discussion of the region's history, and that cannot escape the topic of colonialism. Most of France's former colonies did not gain independence until the 1960s (1962 for Algeria, 1956 for Morocco and Tunisia). Remnants of the region's colonial past are very much prevalent today. French colonialism was pervasive and debilitating, not only socially and politically but also economically, psychologically, and culturally. The upheaval of societies and the placement of power into French hands, mixed with French efforts to "civilize" the Maghrebian people, created a storm whose debilitating effects were felt long after the countries gained independence. The postcolonial world created a power vacuum that led to many militant groups gaining power. After French colonialism ended, the region struggled economically. Poverty and especially pain and anger after the Algerian War of Independence were strong forces behind people joining militant groups, which is shown in the films from the 1990s.

Key issues that appear in cinema are directly related to the aftereffects of colonialism. These militant groups are seen in films such as *Rachida*. The young men who ask Rachida to plant a bomb, and the men who kidnap and rape Zhora,

another character in *Rachida*, are part of these militant groups. Another symbol of postcolonial issues in the Maghreb is seen in the beginning of *L'Enfant endormi*: The beginning of the scene focuses on the men from the village who are “willing to leave their homes to join the ranks of ‘the modern form of slavery that has followed colonial slavery’” (Martin, “Silence and Scream” 175). The men, unable to find work at home, leave and travel great distances. They hope that the people who once controlled and drained their countries will provide them with jobs to support their families. In areas of Morocco where the men must leave from, the women and children typically stay behind. This lack of male presence can create a sort of *haram*, in which women start to have more power in the spaces that were once male-dominated, which become female-centered.

Politics of Language

Perhaps the strongest holdover from the Maghreb’s colonial past is the French language. Although the official language of Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria is Arabic, French is still widely used in government, media, education, and cinema. Many films are either in French or Arabic, with few films in local Berber languages. French involvement in film production has for a long time been a difficult subject for Maghrebian film directors.

Funding, language, and technical knowledge are intertwined issues in Maghrebian cinema. As Viola Shafik says, “It was not only financial and technical insufficiencies that created problems in founding national film industries, but also the lack of technically qualified professionals” (22). This lack of funding and training leads directors to go to film schools in Russia, Belgium, and, most importantly, France. This issue then transforms into a postcolonial debate: To make nationalistic films, the artists must go to their previous colonizer. They must be trained by and rely on these foreigners. The problem, as Guy Austin states, is that, “Not only do film-makers working in Algeria often need international co-production support, they also need foreign audiences” (31). This reliance on and use of foreign aid becomes a necessary evil to offer cinema and discourse to the audience. Directors understand the importance of films as a nonprint medium because “the high illiteracy rates at independence (80–90 per cent in 1962) and the diverse languages spoken meant that cinema was central to the formation of a homogenous national identity” (Austin 20). Print mediums would be useless to the largely illiterate population, and the choice of language would be important. Arabic became a central language for the films because it is a common language of the Maghreb, given that the governments chose it as their national language. Arabic

was chosen as a direct rejection of French, but Arabic is also a colonizer's tongue. Those involved in nationalist movements realized that films can express national pride and liberation while criticizing those who stand against the movement and that, because film is nonprint, they can reach a large audience. Nationalist films typically show "social issues such as unemployment, industrialization and the role of women" (Austin 25). Films such as *Les Silences du palais* (Arabic), *Rachida* (Arabic), and *L'Enfant endormi* (Arabic and Berber) all address these various topics while utilizing Arabic, or Arabic with other local languages.

Religion and Veiling

Maghrebian cinema is deeply rooted in religion. In Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, Islam is the state religion. Islam is shown in all the films from this region. Religion, however, is heavily censored. As Viola Shafik writes, "In general, criticism of Islam is not allowed, this being the official state religion in most Arab countries" (34). The only time when religion is criticized is when it is used by fundamentalists and terrorists in a negative and dangerous way. Otherwise, Islam is portrayed as positive.

In *L'Enfant endormi*, both Islamic and traditional beliefs are shown. When Zeinab "makes her infant sleep" in a traditional Berber practice, she pauses her pregnancy. Another important practice in the religion is veiling. Within these films, religion and its use of veiling are very important. Women in *Les Silences du palais*, *Rachida*, and *L'Enfant endormi* all portray some women veiling and some not. Although in the films, a few women do not choose to veil, a majority of the women do adhere to the practice. It is important to note that veiling is a cultural practice, although it has become synonymous with Islam. The veil is often seen as a form of protection, as best described by Hakim Abderrezak in his article "The Modern Harem in Moknèche's *Le Harem de Mme Osmane* and *Viva Laldjérie*":

When a woman leaves her walls a woman veils herself in order to reconstitute a protective screen around her body which constructs a barrier between her world and the outside in such a way that she will not be seen by men. Thus, she always evolves within her harem, which she carries with her. (76)

The veil becomes a form of protection and identity that the woman takes with her when she leaves the safety of her home. Filming the veil becomes important because, as Florence Martin writes, "filming a veil is filming a separation, the point of both contact and difference between inside and outside, the point of concealment and of revelation" (*Screens and Veils* 107). The scene in

which filming the veil is the most important to this article is the one in *Rachida* in which the village women remove their veils in silence and cover Zhora, discussed below.

Women Represented in a Position in which they are Silenced

In Maghrebian cinema, specifically in these three films, women are portrayed in oppressive situations, through their cultural practices and male dominance. In *Les Silences du palais*, the women who serve the family of the bey are slaves. In the flashbacks in the film, there is never a moment when the women leave the palace, showing that they are prisoners. Along with their slavery, the movie makes clear that sexual exploitation of the women occurs. Alia is clearly an object of desire of Si Bechir, one of the sons of the bey. At one point in a conversation with Alia's mother, Khédidja, Si Bechir tells Khédidja that he would like Alia to be brought up to his room to "serve him tea," a euphemism meaning to serve him sexually. Khédidja, who is in no position to say no outright, must instead explain that her child does not know how to properly "serve tea." In another scene, Khédidja is ordered to dance in front of the bey and his guests for their entertainment. One of the most painful scenes that shows the position of women in the house is the rape of Khédidja. In this scene, Si Bechir rapes Khédidja and she becomes pregnant. In a later scene, Khédidja tells Khalti Hadda, another servant, to "call Cherifa." Khalti Hadda says that Cherifa is "already coming to wax the women." In the flashbacks, Cherifa is seen providing medicine to the women when needed. This conversation is important because it shows that unwanted pregnancy is something that has happened before in the house and that Cherifa's knowledge in ending pregnancies has been used before. Later in the film, Khédidja is seen lying in bed, repeatedly hitting her stomach. In this scene, Alia says nothing but silently watches her mother hit her stomach. Throughout the flashbacks, it is clear that the women in the house are slaves who must serve the bey's family in any way, including sexually; the women have no say over their bodies, and male dominance and sexual exploitation are prominent in their lives.

In *Rachida*, the violence toward women is seen as both physical and sexual. In the beginning, when Rachida refuses to plant a bomb in the school where she teaches, the young men shoot her. Her very defiance of their orders almost costs her life. Fearing for Rachida's safety, Rachida and her mother go to stay in the country for a while. The violence and oppression are just as present there, however. Throughout the film, multiple scenes refer to the violence of the terrorists. In one scene, when Rachida is outside with her mother, Rachida screams hysterically

about the violence surrounding her: “How can I be quiet when there is so much suffering! Raped women! Babies with slit throats! I want to shout out in anger!” Through her anger, we learn of violence that women and children face daily from their oppressors, the terrorists. In another scene that juxtaposes silence and screaming, we meet Zhora, one of the women who is raped by and escapes from the terrorists. By watching Rachida travel from Algiers to a small village, we come to understand that the violence and oppression that women face exist everywhere.

In *L'Enfant endormi*, there is no rape, but the dominance and oppression are shown in the forms of commands and beatings. In the beginning of the film, Zeinab, one of the female protagonists, is married, but her husband refuses to consummate the marriage until she is given a fertility charm in a certain local ceremony. Once she has followed her husband's orders, he consummates the marriage. Halima, the other female protagonist, is believed by the villagers to have cheated on her husband and is subsequently beaten by her male relatives for her actions, although she never actually committed infidelity. Another act of male dominance happens after Zeinab, an elderly woman, and another woman's daughter travel to the city to have their picture taken. The picture is sent in the form of a postcard to Zeinab's husband, whom she misses. His reply, however, is a short command: Do not travel to the city again without my permission, and wake the sleeping child. The message expresses no concern about the well-being of the family; a simple order is the only communication. Although the women have more authority in their small hamlet after the men have left for Spain, they are still under the oppression of cultural traditions and of their husbands hundreds of miles away.

In all three films, strong oppressive factors dominate the women: rape, slavery, terroristic violence, and abuse. When these issues become too great to bear, women break their silence with screams.

Active Broken Silence

All three films include scenes in which women resist their oppression. In these scenes, silence is very powerful because it is juxtaposed with screams. This silence does not equal passivity, however. Silence in these scenes becomes a linguistic performance in which multiple women remain silent to show solidarity for the woman in pain. In the scenes analyzed below, a woman who is screaming against her domination is respected by other women, who show solidarity through their own silence. In the scenes, there are either no men to begin with or the men are gone by the end of the scene. This absence amplifies the women's linguistic act.

Absent Men in Maghrebian Films

In all three films, the silence and screams take place in settings from which men are absent. In fact, a theme of absent men is prevalent throughout these three films—specifically the theme of the absent father. In all three films, the father is gone or unknown. This absence is important to the films. The lack of positive central male figures creates a space where the women's agency becomes clearer. This is not to say the women do not have agency when the men are present, merely that the absence of men removes a barrier for women's agency to be more visible.

Historically, the lack of fathers can stem from as far back as World War II. In the case of Algeria, many men left to fight in France against the Axis powers. Throughout the war, Algerian soldiers began to realize that the colonialism that France was exerting over Algeria was akin to the dominance that Germany attempted to impose in Europe. Only a short few years later, after the end of World War II, the Algerian War for Independence began in 1954. Algerian soldiers had fought to gain independence for France, and they now felt that it was time for their own independence. Algeria gained independence in 1962, but the bloodshed only continued from there. Algeria was faced with the task of becoming a strong new country. Throughout Algeria's history, the death of so many young men is shown in their cinema. In just the war for independence alone,

Military experts consider that in conventional warfare operations, an approximate estimate would be seven men wounded or missing for each soldier killed. . . . Algerian casualties are estimated at well over 800,000 men. . . . The figures given above are quoted from French communiqués and are probably underestimated. (Kellou 276)

Grandfathers and fathers from the Maghreb fought in WWII and in the war for independence (1954–1972) and today, their sons and grandsons are fighting in their own countries. Generations of men have fought and died, and continue to fight and die. This history feeds directly into the absent-father dynamic in cinema. This history is also shared by Morocco and Tunisia, although the bloody war for independence amplified the theme in Algerian cinema.

In *Rachida*, Zhora, the woman who is kidnapped and raped by fundamentalists, is at the center of this theme. She becomes pregnant from the rape, and the father of her child is thus clearly absent. Her own father becomes absent as well, because he disowns her, saying when she returns to the village that he has no daughter because his daughter was killed by the terrorists. Rachida also has no father. In a conversation with her mother, we learn that her mother and father are

no longer together, having divorced when Rachida was small because he was abusive. Even Rashida's fiancé is barely seen in the film. In *Rachida*, good men either are killed or are rarely seen, whereas abusive men and terrorists are shown.

Alia's father in *Les Silences du palais* is present, although his identity is not clearly known from the beginning. Throughout the film, Alia is seen questioning the identity of her father, yet her mother refuses to tell her who he is. Without a father, Alia lives in a world surrounded by women. Although the bey's family has sons and there are men in her life, for much of her life, she is with the other servant women in the kitchen and servants' quarters. Furthermore, there are no strong male figures in the film. All the men in the bey's family are portrayed negatively, except for Si'Ali, who functions as a father figure to Alia in a few flashbacks. Si'Ali is mostly absent in the film, however. The sons of the bey sexually exploit the servants, knowing that the women are in no position to refuse. In Alia's adult life, in the film's present, her partner is portrayed negatively, pushing her to have another abortion after she again becomes pregnant with his child. In the end of the film, she decides to keep the child, although it is unknown whether the father will be present. The narrative of absent fathers may continue into the life of Alia's child.

The absent-father theme is portrayed very differently in *L'Enfant endormi*. Although there are fathers in the film's small village, they all leave in the first scene. Unable to provide for their families working in Morocco, the men leave to go to Spain for months to find work and send money home. The only communication between the men and women is through videos and written notes or letters. In this small village, with the men almost completely absent, the women become central and more active, and their agency becomes clearer.

In these three films, the absence of male figures provides opportunities for some women to take on stronger, more central, roles. It is in these roles and spaces that the women use their screams and silence.

Scream as Agency, Silence as Agency

At certain points in these films, the women use screaming or silence as agency to express their emotions against their subjugation. It is in these spaces, where men are removed or absent, that silence and scream are expressed. The protagonists in the scenes use scream to express the pent-up emotions that have been stifled until that point, and the women around them offer unanimity via silence; they create a safe space for the screaming women to express rage, sadness, and fear in opposition to their domination.

The first scene in which silence and scream are used as agency in a space that is void of men appears in *Rachida*. Zhora, who was kidnapped and raped by terrorists, escapes and returns to her village. When she arrives, she runs through the village, screaming for someone to help her. Everyone is too shocked to do anything, however. When Zhora runs past people, they jump back in fear and in sudden surprise at the woman they assumed to be dead sprinting through the streets in terror. Men, women, and children follow her into the village square, where the pivotal scene takes place. In a medium-long shot, Zhora, out of exhaustion, sits in the center of the square. Men rush around her to calm her, but she mutters fearfully, “Don’t touch me.” The men try to reassure her, saying, “Don’t be afraid. You have nothing to be afraid of” (see fig. 1).



Figure 1. Bachir-Chouikh, Yamina, director. *Rachida*. Esse Ci Cinematografica, 2002.



Figure 2. Bachir-Chouikh, Yamina, director. *Rachida*. Esse Ci Cinematografica, 2002.

For Zhora, however, the very presence of men means danger. The camera quickly cuts to a near shot of three women standing in veils, looking at Zhora with pity and sadness. The camera cuts back to a medium-long shot of Zhora shaking, watching the hands of the men, uttering nothing. An elderly woman steps forward and takes control of the male-dominated space by ordering the men to “leave her be. Go” (see fig. 2). Sound is then replaced by silence and gesture. In complete silence, the women of the village move around Zhora, removing their veils and covering her with them (see figs. 3 and 4).



Figure 3. Bachir-Chouikh, Yamina, director. *Rachida*. Esse Ci Cinematografica, 2002.



Figure 4. Bachir-Chouikh, Yamina, director. *Rachida*. Esse Ci Cinematografica, 2002.

In this scene, an important act happens: The women remove their veils in public. This is important, as in a traditional Muslim culture, only men in a woman’s family are allowed to see her without her veil. Especially when out in public, a

woman wears a veil covering her hair and, in some cultures, more of her body. In this scene, the women's act is therefore directly against oppression. When the women remove their veils in solidarity and compassion, Zhora is not the only woman exposed. In complete silence, the women gently drape their veils over Zhora, covering her: "All the women approach Zhora to cover her with their colorful, translucent veils: Zhora now has her legs, arms, her torn dress, her hair covered in yellow, red, and indigo. Finally, a fifth woman drops a pale blue scarf on her feet" (Martin, *Screens and Veils* 109). When the women cover Zhora, they clearly offer protection and a place in the community.

Because she was captured by the terrorists, Zhora is now no longer a virgin and is considered impure. After Zhora has been violated and then has been disowned by her father, "the former cocoon provided by the family home and by the village has now become a place of estrangement and rejection" (Martin, *Screens and Veils* 96). Zhora has lost her home and her place in the community. As Martin states, "The communal bestowing of veils could be seen as a female attempt to restore Zhora's traditional defense against the evil eye, against the egregious brutality to which she was subjugated in the off-screen sequence of her kidnapping" (*Screens and Veils* 109). In an extreme act of disobedience against the terrorists, the women remove their veils and give them to Zhora. As the director, Bachir-Chouikh, says, "In this scene where women take off their veils to cover the raped young woman, there is a kind of challenge to the fundamentalists, the very people who forbid them to show their hair" (109–110). It is here that the women use the act of veiling as the central component of their agency. By the end of the scene, "women's solidarity has evicted all male protagonists from the space of the village . . . there is no adult male face in this sequence" (Martin, *Screens and Veils* 110). The last shot is of Zhora sitting in the center, covered in various veils of bright colors, with women forming a second veil with their bodies, creating a sort of wall, a sphere of protection and community, around Zhora (see fig. 5).



Figure 5. Bachir-Chouikh, Yamina, director. *Rachida*. Esse Ci Cinematografica, 2002.

The scream in *L'Enfant endormi*, unlike that in *Rachida*, is not the scream of a woman but of a child. The scene begins with an establishing shot that pans across the village. The camera zooms in to a long shot, showing the young men of the village gathered on the hill. The men are awaiting the truck that will take them to the town they will leave from to travel to Spain for work. Then the camera changes to a traveling shot that shows Zeinab's husband hugging his mother while Zeinab stands quietly behind (figs. 6 and 7).



Figure 6.



Figure 7. Kassari, Yasmine, director. *L'Enfant Endormi*. Floris Films, 2004.

He turns and waves to Zeinab, and she gives him a small, sad smile. The mother and Zeinab stand watching their son and husband join the men. A parallel montage shows Halima's husband hugging a woman who appears to be his mother. Halima walks toward him to say good-bye, but he coldly walks past her, brushing her off. She stands still, watching him walk away in silence (see fig. 8).



Figure 8. Kassari, Yasmine, director. *L'Enfant Endormi*. Floris Films, 2004.



Figure 9. Kassari, Yasmine, director. *L'Enfant Endormi*. Floris Films, 2004.

It is in the next action that the tense, sad silence is broken. Siham, Halima's daughter, is shown running out of the house towards her father, screaming for him (see fig. 9).



Figure 10. Kassari, Yasmine, director. *L'Enfant Endormi*. Floris Films, 2004.

He stops and turns around as Halima runs after their daughter. He coldly picks up the child and gives her, still screaming, to her mother. The camera lingers on Halima watching silently as she clutches her screaming daughter, her mother-in-law standing silently on the hill behind (see fig. 10). The camera changes to a traveling long shot and tracks the incoming truck moving toward the men. The camera then cuts back into a medium-long shot as the men get into the back of the truck. Somber non-diegetic music is heard but is drowned out by the sounds of Siham's screams. As the truck starts to leave, Halima releases her daughter and stands like the other women in her village, watching her husband leave in silence. The scene ends with the camera changing out to a long shot of Siham running after the truck, calling out to Ahmed, her father (see fig. 11). In the entire scene, only three words are spoken: Halima saying, "Come here, Siham." These words are drowned out by Siham's screams, however.



Figure 11. Kassari, Yasmine, director. *L'Enfant Endormi*. Floris Films, 2004.

The women stand in silence as their men leave, but it is not out of acceptance. All the adult women understand the situation. There is no money and there are no jobs, so the men must leave. The women have no option to express their emotions. If a woman were to scream and cry, she would probably be met with disapproval from the men and the other women. The women are frustrated that their men must leave, and the men are perhaps disappointed that they are unable to support their families using their own land. Siham must express her emotions not only for herself but also for the women in the village, who must be brave because even if they were to scream and cry, the situation would not change. Because Siham is a young child and does not understand the situation, however, her screaming is taken as childhood ignorance and is accepted. The women do not stop Siham from screaming; no one attempts to tell the girl to be quiet. The women understand that at a certain age, Siham will have to be silent and accept the situation and that when Siham grows, her emotions and feeling toward the men leaving will be repressed. The women stand silently, letting Siham scream and express her emotions. They will allow her to scream in sadness and anger before her screams will be subdued by adulthood and, eventually, by her father or husband.

The last film, *Les Silences du palais*, has two screaming scenes. The first, and most famous, screaming scene in *Les Silences du palais* occurs when Alia witnesses her mother's rape and imagines herself running to the palace gates, which

bang shut on her. In that scene, Alia's face is captured in a close-up as she releases a powerful silent scream. Here, I will analyze the other powerful screaming scene in *Les Silences du palais*. This scene begins with a medium shot of Khédidja leaning over a sink, moaning in pain. Khalti Hadda, one of the other servant women, comes to check on Khédidja. As their conversation starts, the camera cuts in to a close-up shot of their faces and their voices become quiet to indicate that what they are speaking about is a secret. Discussing Khédidja's sickness, Khalti Hadda realizes what is happening and says, "You're pregnant" (see fig. 12).



Figure 12. Tlatli, Moufida, director. *Les Silences Du Palais*. Amorce Diffusion, 1994.

The camera cuts back to a medium-long shot and tracks the movements of Khédidja as she lowers her head in sadness and leaves the room to go into the kitchen. The camera tracks her movements, shaking slightly, mimicking her shoulders as she holds back her sobs. The camera cuts out to a wider medium-long shot and pans right to show the other women in the kitchen performing their daily tasks. Khédidja sits down, looking tired and weak, in a medium shot, and the camera cuts again to another near shot on Khédidja and Khalti Hadda, in which Khédidja asks that Hadda call the local medicine woman, Cherifa, to end the pregnancy. As Hadda tries to comfort Khédidja, we see Khédidja break under the weight of her oppression. She screams, "No! Leave me alone! Leave me alone! Let me go!" Khédidja screams loudly, and the camera jumps as if startled by her sudden screams. The camera cuts to a close-up of Khédidja holding her stomach tightly as if trying to keep herself from falling apart. She hisses angrily, "I hate myself.

Everything disgusts me. I hate my body” (see fig. 13). After this painful scream, the silence becomes defining, as the only sound heard is that of Khédidja’s painful sobs. The camera then cuts to a medium-long cut view of the other servant women silent as they continue their tasks. The women do not say anything to Khédidja about her pregnancy; they accept and cover her shame.

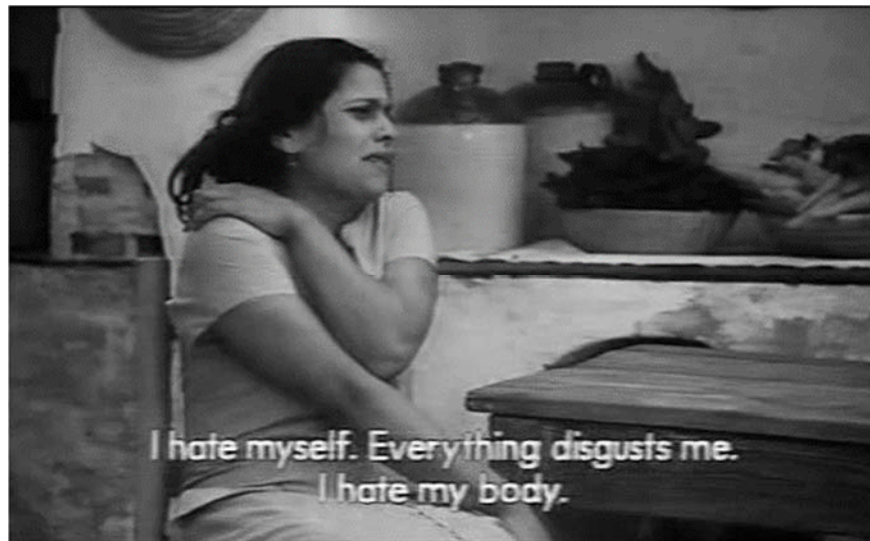


Figure 13. Tlatli, Moufida, director. *Les Silences Du Palais*. Amorce Diffusion, 1994.

The other servant women understand Khédidja’s position: Her child is a product of sexual violence and will never be accepted by the father. If the child is a girl, she will face the same sexual exploitation that these women currently face. Just like Khédidja’s daughter Alia, this child will grow up between the world of the slaves and the world of the bey’s family. No matter what the women say or do for Khédidja, the situation will not change. The women choose to respect Khédidja in a very powerful way, with their silence.



Figure 14. Tlatli, Moufida, director. *Les Silences Du Palais*. Amorce Diffusion, 1994.

As the scene continues, showing the women working, the camera cuts to a near shot while still panning to emphasize their tasks. The tasks that the camera shows the women doing are very powerful and symbolic. Two women, Falfoula and another servant, are washing clothes, as if trying symbolically to wash away Khédidja's shame (see fig. 14). Another woman, Mroubia, looks straight ahead as if trying to see the future of Khédidja and the child (see fig. 15). Throughout the film's flashbacks, Mroubia is constantly shown working on her trousseau, enforcing the idea that she is constantly looking toward the future. Habiba is shown kneading dough (see Fig. 16), trying to create a different fate for Khédidja (Assa 29).



Figure 15. Tlatli, Moufida, director. *Les Silences Du Palais*. Amorce Diffusion, 1994.

Though all the women are silent, their silence is not an avoidance. They are not ignoring Khédidja but act in solidarity. Their response to her cry of pain and sadness is silent understanding. Although the women wish to change their fates and that of Khédidja, they understand that their oppressive situation will not change; they will still be slaves to the bey's family, and their bodies will still be at the mercy of the bey's sons. Through their silence, the women create a space for Khédidja to break the one rule of the palace—silence—to fully express her emotions and strain against her oppression. By not interrupting her or attempting to silence her, they offer her the only thing that she truly does not have: the option to express herself.



Figure 16. Tlatli, Moufida, director. *Les Silences Du Palais*. Amorce Diffusion, 1994.

The Effects of the Setting on Agency

The beginning of the screaming scene in *Rachida* shows Zhora running frantically. “The only time disjointed editing and hand-held camera are used, for example, is to film Zhora’s escape from her kidnapers” (Austin 151). In the forest, the camera cuts to all different angles to show Zhora running. The camera’s movements are choppy and frantic, just like Zhora. The camera continues its erratic movements until Zhora reaches the center of the town. It is here, in the center of the village, where people are confronted with the acts that the terrorists have committed, where the camera moves gently “in order to convey the fact that such events are part of an everyday reality” (Austin 151). The fact that the removal of veils takes place in the center of town is important, as the center of town is a public space that is very male-dominated. When Zhora reaches the center square, she is surrounded by men, but “since the patriarchal order has failed them and proven unable to protect them . . . women have started to (re)occupy the public space” (Martin, *Screens and Veils* 111). Zhora, kidnapped and raped by men, is sitting in a male-centered space. The women silently counteract her abuse by taking control and making the space female-centered. Thus, at the end of the scene, Zhora and the women are in the center, with no men in the shot. Through their silence and compassion, the women have reclaimed a dangerous space for Zhora and made it safe.

The scream in *Les Silences du palais* is the only scream that is indoors. Khédidja's scream occurs inside a kitchen, downstairs in a house. The walls surrounding her are a physical representation of the fact that she is not only trapped in the house as a slave but also that she is trapped as a servant in the kitchen below the bey's family. When Khédidja screams, there is no music or other sound, as the other women stop singing. Although the women in the room continue to perform tasks, they perform them silently. This silence amplifies Khédidja's scream. Her scream, which was trapped in her throat, is released in a guttural sob. Because the scream occurs inside, however, it hits the walls and ceases almost immediately, as if there is pressure in the air forcing the scream to end. Khédidja's scream ends abruptly, a metaphor for how she is not in a position to express herself freely. Her place in the setting also shows her place in the kitchen. She sits at a table in the background while the other women work in the foreground with their backs to her. She is behind the other women, removed from them, yet still in their community. Now pregnant by one of the bey's sons, she again is in a different position than that of the other women. She is faced with the fear of another unwanted pregnancy. The other women do not abandon her, however. Perhaps, as with Alia, if Khédidja keeps the child, it will be raised in the community of servants. Khédidja's scream, which is trapped in the large kitchen and yet is stifled, is thus a strong reminder of her place: a slave in a large house.

In *L'Enfant endormi*, the scream takes place outside on a hill. The setting shows a barren village with large sloping hills and wide-open spaces. It is on one of these slopes where, as she watches her father leave, Siham screams. Her screams dissipate, however, carried off by the wind, trailing off into the distance and disappearing like her father. Siham is too young to understand the necessity of the men leaving the village, and consequently, she cries out to her father in hopes that he will stay; in the end, however, neither the wind nor her father stops moving toward the horizon. Siham is left feeling empty and abandoned, an allegory for the village that loses all its men.

Conclusion

Les Silences du palais, *Rachida*, and *L'Enfant endormi* all concern women who are faced with rape, abuse, kidnapping, abandonment, and other oppressive factors. These films, however, do not show the women as simply accepting their fate. Zhora, Siham, and Khédidja all scream out in objection to their subjugation. The other women in the scream scenes respond with silence. In the response, "nothing is said, but everything is understood" (Martin, *Screens and Veils* 111).

The women, although portrayed as silenced, are anything but. Rather, they break the silence in a moment of duress using screams. Silence and screams stand out subversively to counteract the oppression through verbal and nonverbal means. In all three films, women use silence and screams to address the injustice and violence they experience every day.

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EXPLORING A POSSIBLE MECHANISM UNDERLYING STEREOTYPE THREAT IN ADHD

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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common behavioral diagnosis among young adults. Those who have ADHD are distracted easily, talk excessively, and even have deficits in working memory (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Dawson et al., 2004; Swanson & Sachs-Lee, 2001). These ADHD symptoms contribute to the stereotypes that are often applied to those who have the diagnosis. Chew, Jensen, and Rosén (2009) found that college students used negative adjectives more so than positive adjectives when describing their peers with ADHD. Students with ADHD are not immune to having these negative stereotypes of the disorder. In the same study, students diagnosed with ADHD described their ADHD peers more negatively than students without ADHD did. Not all research has documented negative perceptions of ADHD by those with the disorder, however. Gajaria, Yeung, Goodale, and Charach (2011) found three times as many positive as negative comments about ADHD posted on Facebook ADHD support-group pages. The students with ADHD who frequented these pages were aware of the negative stereotypes about their diagnosis, but they did not talk about ADHD in a negative light.

Although findings have been mixed with regard to ADHD stereotypes, there is evidence that the negative stereotypes held about those who have ADHD could negatively affect the self-perceptions and cognitive performance of those people. Foy (2015) examined the potential role of stereotype threat in influencing the cognitive performance of students with ADHD. Of the 114 participants in his study, 53 reported having a history of ADHD. Half of the participants from the ADHD group, as well as half of the participants from the control group, were exposed to stereotype threat, while the remaining participants were not. Before asking the participants to answer GRE questions, Foy asked students in the threat condition to complete the Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS) symptoms checklist and warned them that those with ADHD usually score much lower on GRE questions compared to those without ADHD. Demonstrating the negative impact that stereotypes can have on cognitive performance, Foy found that students with ADHD who were exposed to stereotype threat performed significantly worse on

quantitative GRE questions compared to those with ADHD who were not exposed to the threat.

Interestingly, the negative effect of ADHD-related stereotype threat on cognitive performance is *not* limited to those who have an ADHD diagnosis. Wei and Suhr (2015) had 72 undergraduate college students who had *not* been diagnosed with ADHD complete the ASRS; only those who scored above the 50th percentile and who had a high concern about having ADHD were chosen to participate in the study. The researchers told half of these students that they would be playing a computer game (control condition) and the other half that they would complete a computerized task assessing working memory and attention that is commonly used to evaluate ADHD (diagnostic threat condition). Those students who were exposed to the diagnosis threat performed worse on the computerized assessment compared to their peers who were playing the same computer game for fun. Their findings suggest that when college students believe they are being evaluated on skills that they are concerned about, their performance is negatively affected even when they are not officially diagnosed with ADHD.

In another study, Suhr and Wei (2013) not only investigated the influence of perceived threat on college students without ADHD but also examined attributions that these students made about their performance. This study included 85 participants, none of whom had ADHD. Half of the participants were told that they were going to play a computer game for fun (control condition), and the other half were told that they were going to play a computer game that measured intelligence (evaluative threat condition). The students in the evaluative-threat condition performed worse on the complex working-memory measure compared to those who were given nonthreatening instructions. Even more revealing, the students who were high in trait self-handicapping and who had experienced the threat reported more ADHD symptoms after completing the test compared to their peers in the nonthreatening control condition. These findings suggest that even students without ADHD may attribute their poor performance to ADHD symptoms.

Although no studies have examined the self-perceptions of students *with* ADHD, Privitera, Agnello, Walters, and Bender (2015) conducted a study on the self-perceptions of college students who were *misled* to believe that they had ADHD. Undergraduate students completed a pretest, the ASRS. Fifty-four participants, all of whom scored below clinical significance, were chosen to participate in the study. When they returned one week later, participants received random feedback from the pretest. “Negative” indicated that they did not have symptoms consistent with ADHD, “positive” indicated that they did have

symptoms consistent with ADHD, and “no feedback” meant that the results were not ready yet. Participants then completed a posttest, which included the same items from the ASRS, presented in backward order to reduce testing effects. Although all participants had been selected for inclusion based on scoring below clinical significance on the pretest, those in the “positive” condition reported significantly more ADHD symptoms after receiving false-positive feedback. More specifically, both total scores and scores in the “inattentive domain” significantly increased at posttest for the students who received the false-positive feedback. Presumably, these students changed their self-perceptions because they believed that they might have ADHD. This suggests that telling individuals that they have ADHD symptoms affects their self-perceptions even if they do not have a formal diagnosis of the disorder.

In summary, previous studies have shown that college students without ADHD may believe that they have ADHD and may report more ADHD symptoms in response to either performing poorly on working memory tasks or being told that they have ADHD (Privitera et al., 2015; Suhr & Wei, 2013; Wei & Suhr, 2015). In addition, Foy (2015) found that students with ADHD who were exposed to stereotype threat performed significantly worse on cognitive tests compared to those with ADHD who were not exposed to stereotype threat. Together, these findings raise the possibility that the effects of stereotype threat on the working memory of students with ADHD may emerge from changes in perceptions and expectations that those students experience because of the threat; however, no past studies have examined how stereotype threat affects self-perceptions of students diagnosed with ADHD, or the potential influence of these self-perceptions and related expectations about performance on actual tests.

The current study examines whether exposing college students with ADHD to positive or negative stereotypes about the disorder will change their self-perceptions and their performance expectations, thereby changing their performance. We chose to include a positive-stereotype threat condition in this study because we knew that participants would be aware that they were recruited because of their ADHD diagnosis, possibly contributing to negative stereotype threat even without exposure to negative stereotypes. We hoped that a positive stereotype condition would counteract these effects. Additionally, previous studies have documented evidence supporting stereotype boost theory, which proposes that exposure to positive stereotypes improves performance. For example, Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady (1999) investigated how Asian American women performed on quantitative tests after either their race or their gender was made salient to them.

The results of the study supported their hypothesis that those who were in the Asian-identity-salient condition performed better on the quantitative test than those in the female-identity-salient condition. They believed that because Asians stereotypically perform better on quantitative measures, making this characteristic salient boosted their performance. The opposite occurred for those in the female-identity-salient condition.

We expect that exposing those with ADHD to positive or negative stereotypes about the disorder will affect their performance in the same manner. That is, we hypothesize that participants with ADHD who are exposed to negative stereotype threat will report more ADHD symptoms, will expect to perform worse on working-memory tasks, and will perform worse on working-memory tasks than will participants with ADHD who are exposed to positive information about the disorder. We also anticipate that the differences in the participants' expectations regarding their test performance that result from exposure to the stereotype threat will explain the differences we observe in their test scores. If these hypotheses are supported, this could reveal a mechanism that could explain how stereotype threat decreases cognitive achievement in a vulnerable college-student population.

Methods

Participants

Twenty college students with a mean age of 19.80 ($SD = 1.03$) and a mean age of ADHD diagnosis of 14.85 ($SD = 4.10$) participated in this study. Half of the participants were assigned to read and answer questions regarding a paragraph containing negative stereotypes about ADHD ($n = 10$) while the other half read a paragraph containing positive stereotypes about ADHD ($n = 10$). Demographic data for participants in the two conditions are summarized in Table 1. Students in both conditions were statistically equivalent in age, education, diagnosis age, and elapsed time since their last dose of ADHD medication (all $ps > .57$). To assure the validity of their ADHD diagnosis, all participants were registered through Butler University's Student Disabilities Services office. Participants either were paid for their participation in the study at a rate of \$10 per hour or received extra credit in a psychology course in exchange for their time.

Materials

“Memory” Paragraphs

The stereotype threat was presented in the context of a “memory” test. All participants read three paragraphs on various topics and answered five questions about what they had read following each paragraph. For students in the negative-stereotype threat condition, one of those three paragraphs reinforced common stereotypes of ADHD, including how those with ADHD struggle cognitively and academically (see Appendix A). For the students in the positive-stereotype threat condition, one of the paragraphs summarized how individuals with ADHD can overcome their symptoms through easily implemented strategies (see Appendix B).

Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS)

The ASRS (Kessler et al., 2005) is a symptom checklist with 18 items reflecting the DSM-IV criteria for ADHD. Participants rated how often they have experienced each of these symptoms over the past six months.

Internal Restlessness Scale (IRS)

The IRS (Weyandt et al., 2003) assesses the construct of “mental restlessness” frequently reported by adults with ADHD. The IRS includes 24 statements such as “Thoughts race through my mind” and “I feel internally restless.” Participants rated each statement on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (none of the time) to 7 (all of the time).

Dual 2 Back

The Dual 2 Back (Jaeggi et al., 2007) is a test of working memory that requires participants to attend to both auditory and visual information simultaneously. Participants heard an automated voice speaking letters of the alphabet and were told to press the “L” key on the computer keyboard when they heard the same letter that had been spoken two letters before. At the same time, participants also attended to visual information. They saw blocks appear one at a time somewhere within a 3x3 grid on the computer screen. Similar to what was done with the auditory information, they pressed the “A” key on the computer keyboard when they saw the same block light up that had been lit two blocks previously. Participants were given visual feedback on the computer screen

whenever they made an omission or commission error on either the auditory or the visual portion of the task.

Letter-Number Sequencing (LNS)

During the LNS test (Wechsler, 1997), participants heard increasingly longer sequences of intermixed single-digit numbers and letters. They first recited the numbers in ascending order, then the letters in alphabetical order.

Paced Auditory Serial Addition Test (PASAT)

During the PASAT (Gronwall & Sampson, 1974), participants heard a sequence of single-digit numbers first at a rate of 3 seconds per digit and later at a rate of 2 seconds per digit. They added adjacent digits together and verbally reported the sum while also attempting to remember the last digit they had heard so that could add it to the next number.

Prediction and Postdiction of Task Performance

In this measure from Suhr and Wei (2013), before completing each memory task, participants heard a description of the upcoming task and were asked to rate how well thought they would perform on a scale from 1 (much worse than most people my age) to 10 (much better than most people my age). In addition, after completing each task, participants indicated how well they believe they had performed, using the same scale.

Demographic and ADHD questionnaire

This questionnaire asked participants' age, education, race, and gender. It also included questions about their ADHD, such as age at diagnosis and typical medication regimen.

Procedure

After giving informed consent, participants were quasi-randomly assigned to one of two stereotype threat conditions. The number of participants in each condition was kept equal by assigning every second participant who volunteered for the study to a different condition. After completing the "memory" test, participants responded to the ASRS and IRS. Next, they took three working-memory tests: (1) Dual 2 Back, (2) LNS, and (3) PASAT, providing predictions

and postdictions before and after each test. Then, participants provided background information on the demographic and ADHD questionnaire. Finally, before being thanked for their time, participants were debriefed about the true purpose of the study and why the deception had been necessary.

Results

Manipulation Check

To ensure that participants paid adequate attention to the “memory” paragraph containing the ADHD stereotype threat, we ran a 3 (“Memory” Paragraph: 1, 2, 3) x 2 (Condition: negative-stereotype threat, positive-stereotype threat) mixed-model ANOVA with the number of correct responses to the questions from each paragraph as the dependent variable (see Table 2). We wanted to ensure that participants recalled the information from paragraph 2 just as well as they remembered the material from the other paragraphs.

A significant main effect of paragraph emerged, $F(2, 17) = 17.78, p = .00, \eta_p^2 = 0.68$. Follow-up analyses indicated that participants did not remember the details of paragraph 1 as well as those from paragraph 2 [$F(1, 18) = 14.87, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.45$] or paragraph 3 [$F(1, 18) = 33.45, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = 0.65$]. In contrast, there was no significant difference in how well participants remembered information from paragraphs 2 and 3, $F(1, 18) = 1.00, p = .33, \eta_p^2 = 0.053$. There was also no main effect of condition [$F(1, 18) = 2.42, p = .14, \eta_p^2 = 0.12$] and no interaction between paragraph and condition [$F(2, 17) = 1.01, p = .39, \eta_p^2 = 0.11$]. Thus, it was not the case that participants in the negative- versus positive-stereotype threat condition differentially remembered the target paragraph or that they remembered the target paragraph less well than the other paragraphs they read.

Primary Analyses

We ran a MANOVA to test our hypothesis that participants with ADHD who were exposed to negative-stereotype threat would report more ADHD symptoms than those exposed to positive stereotypes (see Figure 1a). Contrary to expectations, participants in the two conditions reported the same levels of symptomatology on the ASRS and the IRS regardless of condition, $F(2, 16) = 0.57, p = .58, \eta_p^2 = 0.07$.

Next, we examined the effect of the stereotype-threat manipulation on participants’ predictions and postdictions regarding their working-memory test

performance (see Figure 1b). Again, there were no significant differences between participants in the two conditions in terms of their predictions and postdictions, $F(6, 13) = 0.54, p = .77, \eta_p^2 = 0.20$.

Using a MANOVA, we also examined whether participants in the two stereotype threat conditions performed differently on the objective working-memory measures (see Figure 2). Because the main effect of condition neared significance with a moderate effect size [$F(3, 16) = 2.50, p = .096, \eta_p^2 = 0.32$], we looked at the differences between the conditions on each of the three working-memory measures to determine what was driving the near-significant effect. There were no significant differences between conditions on the Dual 2 Back [$F(1, 18) = 0.28, p = .60, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$] or on the LNS [$F(1, 18) = 0.62, p = .44, \eta_p^2 = 0.03$]; however, there was a significant difference between conditions on the PASAT, $F(1, 18) = 5.37, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = 0.23$ (see Figure 2). Interestingly, this indicates that participants in the negative-stereotype condition outperformed those in the positive-stereotype condition on this measure of working memory.

Even though we found no differences across the two stereotype threat conditions in participants' self-perceptions or on two of the three objective test scores, we wanted to determine whether self-perceptions and performance expectations related to the scores that participants earned on the working-memory measures; thus, we calculated Pearson correlation coefficients among self-perceptions, performance expectations, and objective working-memory performance (see Table 3). We found significant relationships between self-perceived symptomatology and performance expectations, as well as between self-perceived symptomatology and perceived performance. Specifically, the correlations between self-reported symptoms on the ASRS and how well participants believed they would do on the Dual 2 Back [$r(18) = -0.63, p = .003$] and on the PASAT [$r(18) = -0.50, p = .02$] reached significance. There were also significant correlations between self-reported symptoms on the ASRS and how well participants believed they had performed on the Dual 2 Back [$r(18) = -0.46, p = .04$] and the LNS [$r(18) = -0.53, p = .02$]. Self-reported symptoms on the IRS and participants' Dual 2 Back predictions [$r(17) = -0.57, p = .01$] and LNS postdictions [$r(17) = -0.07, p = .001$] also correlated significantly. The only significant correlation involving an objective test was that between scores on the PASAT and participants' PASAT postdictions, $r(18) = 0.57, p = .009$. As shown in Table 3, no other significant correlations emerged between self-perceived symptomatology and actual performance on any of the working-memory tests, nor between performance expectations and actual test scores.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to examine the effects of exposure to negative or positive stereotypes on self-perceptions, perceived working-memory performance, and actual working memory of college students with ADHD. Previous research has shown that various forms of threat can negatively influence cognitive performance. Foy (2015) demonstrated that exposure to negative stereotypes led to decreased quantitative GRE scores of students with self-reported ADHD. Similarly, Wei and Suhr (2015) found that students who were concerned about having ADHD but who did not actually have the disorder performed significantly worse on a working-memory task when they were told that the task was used to assess ADHD. These studies led us to hypothesize that participants with ADHD who were exposed to negative-stereotype threat would perform worse on working-memory measures compared to those who were exposed to positive stereotypes. In another study, Suhr and Wei (2013) found that students who were not diagnosed with ADHD but who were exposed to negative stereotypes about ADHD and had high self-handicapping traits reported having significantly more ADHD symptoms compared to those who were not exposed to the negative ADHD stereotypes. This led to our hypothesis that students with ADHD who encountered negative stereotypes about the disorder would report more ADHD symptoms, which in turn would explain their decreased performance expectations and poor performance. If our hypotheses were supported, the relationship between performance self-perceptions and performance itself could help explain why college students with ADHD struggle academically (Norwalk, Norvilitis, & MacLean, 2009).

Our hypotheses, however, were not supported by the data collected in this study. We found no significant differences between participants in the two stereotype threat conditions in self-perceptions, perceived working-memory performance, or scores on two of the three working-memory measures. Unfortunately, because the stereotype threat did not affect symptom self-perceptions or performance expectations, we were unable to investigate whether self-perceptions mediate performance; however, we did find a few significant correlations between self-reported symptoms and self-perceived performance on working-memory tasks. The ASRS was significantly correlated with how well students expected to perform on the Dual 2 Back and the PASAT, and with how well they thought they performed on the Dual 2 Back and the LNS. The IRS was also significantly correlated with the Dual 2 Back prediction and the LNS postdiction. There was an inverse relationship between participants' symptom self-perceptions and performance perceptions; when participants reported having more

ADHD symptoms, they also believed they would perform or had performed worse on these measures. These findings provide insight into a possible mechanism underlying stereotype threat in ADHD. If students who perceive themselves as more symptomatic also expect to do poorly on objective test measures, they may in turn underperform relative to their true underlying capabilities. Past research has shown that self-efficacy, or how someone expects to perform on a task, affects how well they actually complete the task (Bandura, 1989).

Even though positive and negative stereotypes did not affect self-perceived symptoms or performance expectations, a significant difference did emerge between the scores of students in the two conditions on one of the three working-memory measures included in this study. Surprisingly, those in the negative-stereotype threat condition outperformed those in the positive-stereotype threat condition on the PASAT. This finding is not consistent with those documented in past studies (Foy, 2015; Suhr & Wei, 2013; Wei & Suhr, 2015). One explanation for this could be that the “memory” paragraphs may not have elicited the negative and positive stereotypes we had hoped. Those who were in the positive-stereotype threat condition read a paragraph about effective strategies to manage ADHD symptoms, which hinted at potential positive outcomes without directly addressing positive aspects of ADHD itself (see Appendix B). In fact, it is possible that the positive-stereotype paragraph instead acted as a negative-stereotype threat by reminding participants that they have a disorder that requires additional strategies (that they may not currently be using) to overcome their struggle with attention and organization. Perhaps a more effective positive-stereotype threat paragraph could have summarized positive attributes and advantages of having the disorder, such as explaining that individuals with ADHD are more creative and intuitive compared to their non-affected peers.

Similarly, exposure to stereotypes in the negative-stereotype paragraph may not have influenced working-memory performance because it did not directly speak to stereotypes regarding ADHD and working memory. Foy (2015) explicitly warned participants that those with ADHD perform significantly worse on the quantitative GRE measures that they were about to complete. This method of stereotype-threat exposure may have had a stronger effect on the participants, thus leading to the significant differences between those who experienced the threat and those who did not in his study.

Several limitations of our procedures may have led to the lack of statistically significant differences between conditions on most of the included measures. First, our ability to detect significant effects was limited by the small sample size; we had

only 10 participants in each condition in our primary analyses. This small sample size was a result of the strict participation eligibility criteria that we utilized for our study. We invited only students who were registered with Butler University's Student Disabilities Services office to participate, to ensure that all participants had undergone a rigorous diagnostic process. As demonstrated by Privitera et al. (2015), simply giving participants a false ADHD diagnosis can lead them to report more ADHD symptoms, suggesting that ADHD can be easily overdiagnosed if an individual believes that he or she has the disorder. Although Foy (2015) included participants who self-reported having a history of ADHD, we intentionally set strict eligibility criteria for our study in order to disqualify those who may have been told by a teacher, parent, or primary care physician that they have ADHD but may have not been diagnosed according to official ADHD criteria.

Additionally, we found a significant difference on only one of the three working measures included in this study. Given the large number of outcome measures, this may represent a type II error. We tried to control the likelihood of making a type II error by submitting scores to a MANOVA rather than running a series of independent sample *t*-tests. At the same time, the MANOVA that focused on the working-memory measures resulted only in a near-significant effect of condition. Because of the small sample size in each condition and because the effect size associated with this difference was moderate, we proceeded to examine the differences between conditions on each working-memory measure. This led to the discovery of the significant difference in PASAT scores across the two conditions. Larger sample sizes in future replications of this study could uncover significant differences on other working-memory measures and will be necessary to determine whether positive stereotypes can truly undermine the working-memory performance of students with ADHD as these results preliminarily suggest. Meanwhile, the current results should be interpreted with caution, given these limitations.

Even though our hypotheses were not supported, our data do not rule out the possibility that changes in self-perceptions in response to stereotype threat could account for subsequent changes in performance. Future studies examining stereotype threat and how it affects those with ADHD should recruit participants who have an official ADHD diagnosis, as this difference may affect the power of the study to detect true differences. Future research should also include a control condition in which participants are not exposed to any stereotype threat. Although we originally intended to include this condition in our study, we were limited by our already small sample size. Instead, we focused only on the negative- and

positive-stereotype threat conditions. Finally, using more direct and strongly worded negative- and positive-stereotype paragraphs in future studies could enhance the possibility of finding performance differences in response to stereotype threat so the possible role of symptoms and performance perceptions in this relationship can be examined more effectively.

In summary, neither negative nor positive stereotype threat significantly affected self-perceptions or perceived performance. A significant difference was found for one of the three working-memory measures included in the study, with those in the negative-stereotype threat condition surprisingly outperforming those in the positive-stereotype threat condition. Future studies can adapt their approach to further explore a possible mechanism underlying stereotype threat in ADHD and to examine whether positive stereotypes can, indeed, have a paradoxical effect on working memory. Results of these studies could then be used to design interventions to combat potentially negative effects of everyday stereotypes experienced by those who have the disorder.

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Table 1

Mean (Standard Deviation) or Percent for Participant Demographics by Condition

	Negative- Stereotype Threat (<i>n</i> =10)	Positive-Stereotype Threat (<i>n</i> =10)
Age	19.70 (0.95)	19.90 (1.20)
Gender (% Female)	50.00	70.00
Year in College	2.40 (0.84)	2.40 (1.17)
Age of Diagnosis	14.80 (4.32)	14.90 (4.33)
Time Since Last Dose of ADHD Medication (hours)	30.41 (42.77)	21.09 (24.93)

Table 2

Mean (Standard Deviation) Number of Questions Answered Correctly for Each Paragraph on the “Memory” Test by Condition

	Negative-Stereotype Threat (<i>n</i> =10)	Positive-Stereotype Threat (<i>n</i> =10)
Paragraph 1	2.80 (1.40)	3.40 (1.43)
Paragraph 2 (Stereotype Paragraph)	4.30 (0.82)	4.80 (0.42)
Paragraph 3	4.70 (0.48)	4.80 (0.63)

Table 3

Correlations between Symptom Self-Perceptions and Performance Expectations and Working-Memory Performance, as well as between Performance Expectations and Actual Test Scores

	Dual 2 Back Errors			LNS			PASAT		
	Pre	Score	Post	Pre	Score	Post	Pre	Score	Post
ASRS	-.629*	.409	-.458	-.27	-.114	-.528*	-.503	-.311	-.30
	*		*	5			*		3
IRS	-.566*	.152	-.418	-.33	-.147	-.700*	-.362	-.196	-.45
				4		*			2
		Score			Score			Score	
Prediction		-.401			.397			.433	
Postdiction		-.366			.324			.565**	

** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

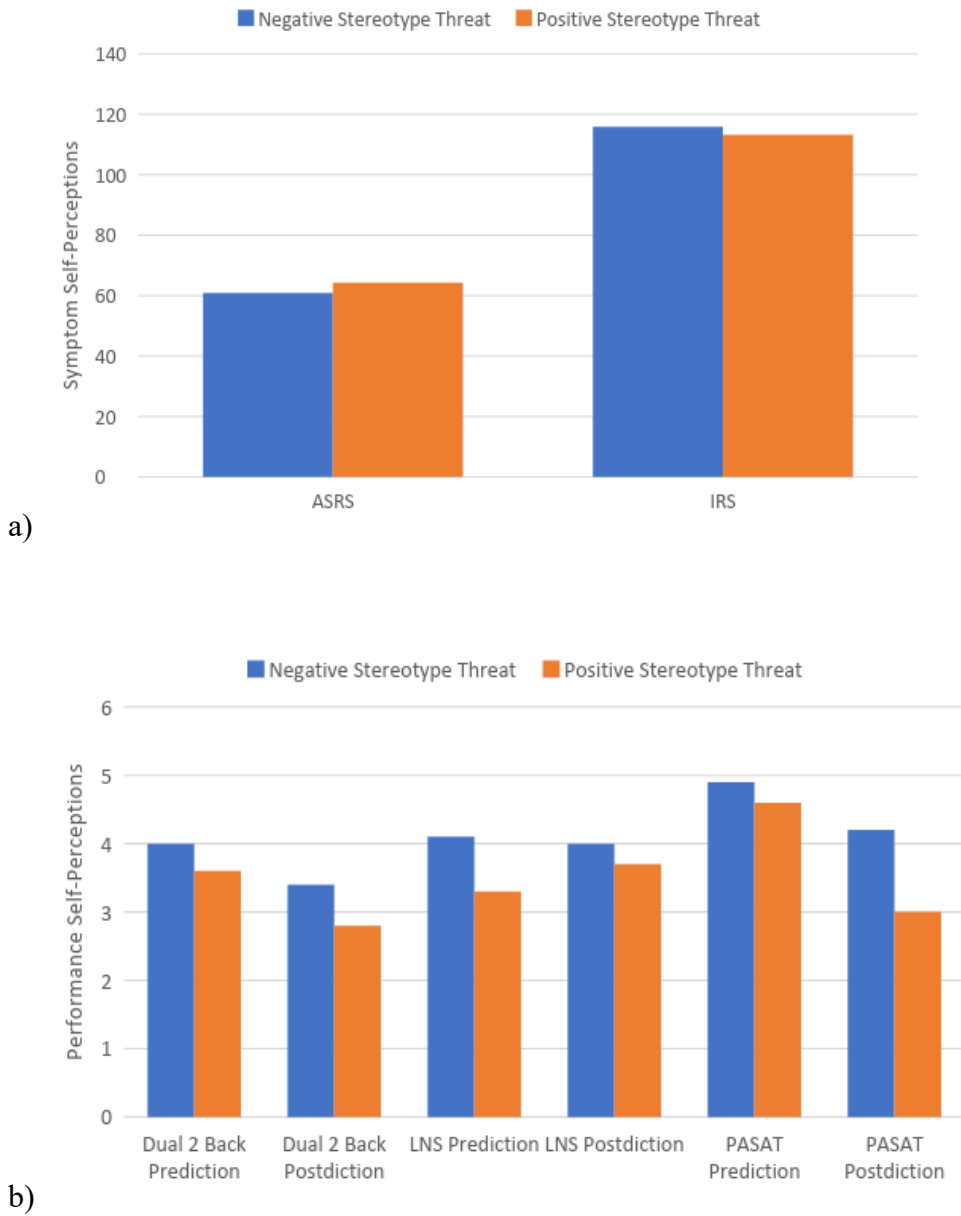


Figure 1. The impact of negative (blue bars) versus positive (orange bars) stereotype threat on symptom self-perceptions (a) and performance self-perceptions (b). There were no significant differences between the two conditions on any of these measures.

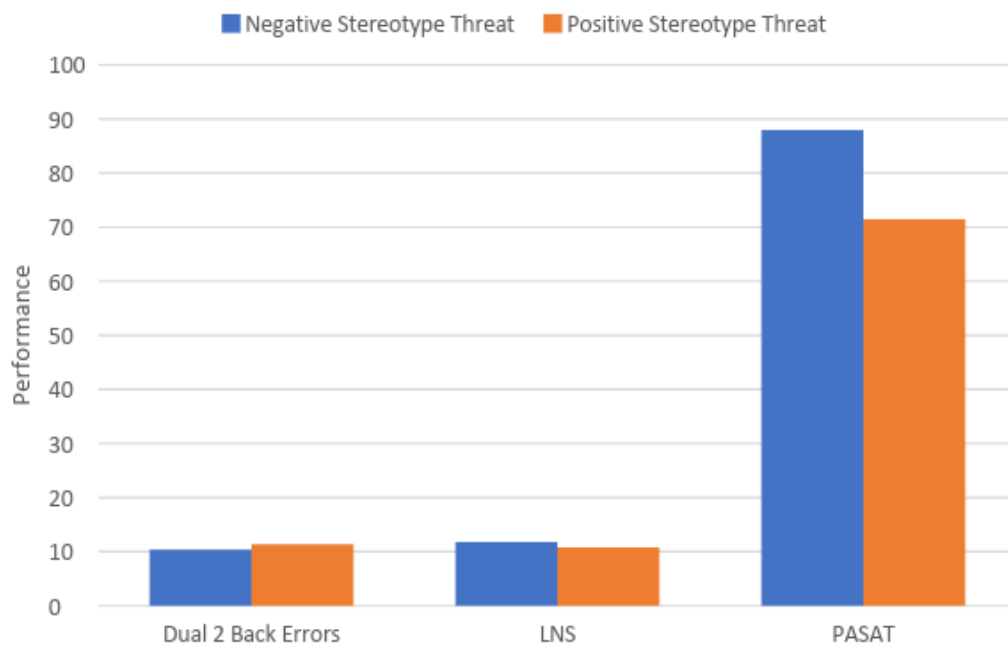


Figure 2. The impact of negative (blue bars) versus positive (orange bars) stereotype threat on working-memory performance. There were no significant differences between the two conditions on the Dual 2 Back and LNS, but participants in the negative-stereotype condition significantly outperformed those in the positive-stereotype threat condition on the PASAT.

* Mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Appendix A

Negative-Stereotype Threat Paragraph

Deficits associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Empirical evidence shows that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) negatively affects those who suffer from this mental illness. The rate of emotional development for children with ADHD is as much as 30% slower than it is for children without the condition. For example, a 10 year old with ADHD operates at the maturity level of about a 7 year old; a 16 year old beginning driver is using the decision making skills of an 11 or 12 year old. 30% of teens with ADHD have failed or have had to repeat a year of school. 35% of teens with ADHD eventually drop out of school. Of the parents with a child or children with ADHD, 44% reported their children to be dissatisfied with their school life, with responses ranging from slightly to extremely dissatisfied. Additionally, 41% described their children as dissatisfied with their social life using the same scale.

Appendix B

Positive-Stereotype Threat Paragraph

Positive outcomes associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Recent research indicates that after receiving appropriate treatment, most children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) experience a dramatic turnaround. These children are able to focus, and even those with hyperactivity or impulsivity are able to pay attention in classroom lessons, according to the ADHD Awareness Coalition. Scientists that have shown positive results advise that it is important to identify successful strategies, resulting in remarkable levels of functioning. Some studies had participants compile a list of 50-60 different techniques that they know work for them. When called on to perform and become engaged, these participants then understood which techniques are most beneficial. These strategies have been shown to work for many individuals with ADHD, because they allow them to step back and figure out the approaches they need to take to succeed. This provides lifelong help because it encourages those with ADHD to build on the many strengths they already possess.

FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S KIDS: A DISCUSSION ON K-12 TEACHER TENURE

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Background

Public education was my life. Fortunately, my twelve years—from first through twelfth grade—were full of compassionate, devoted, and highly effective teachers who focused their energy on what is most important for every student: the quality of education. Just ten miles down the road in a neighboring school district, my peers were not so fortunate. From watching noneducational movies in class three times a week to having multiple study halls per day, they suffered from unmotivated, uninterested, and highly ineffective teachers. The result was a graduation rate 40 percentage points lower than that of my public high school, and a graduating class half as likely to attend college (Illinois State Board of Education, “Geneva Community High School (9-12) – Geneva CUSD 304”, “Aurora East USD 131”).

Seeking answers so as to understand this massive discrepancy in the quality of public education, I turned to a groundbreaking documentary titled *Waiting for Superman*. At the forefront of the fight to repair America’s broken public education system was Michelle Rhee, a former schoolteacher and education activist. As the Chancellor of Washington, DC, public schools from 2007 to 2010, Rhee focused her energy on raising teacher quality for kids. In the worst-performing school system in the country, DC public schools were in desperate need of significant reform. Rhee, referencing her past experience teaching in the classroom, believed that the single greatest flaw in public education was a provision in teacher contracts known as teacher tenure. This statute made it nearly impossible for states and local districts to fire underperforming teachers because of job performance having little to no bearing on a teacher’s evaluation. Rhee, the seventh superintendent for DC public schools in the span of a single decade, believed that if she were able to eradicate this statute, she could eliminate the poorest-performing teachers from her district and save DC kids from receiving a poor education.

Although this may sound simple, Rhee was up against a massive system of extreme regulation imposed by local and federal government, a lack of funding,

and significant resistance from two powerful teacher unions. She and her team of reformers researched, crafted, and introduced a revolutionary proposal that called for a two-tier pay system. Every teacher in the district could choose which tier of compensation fit his or her personal needs the best:

- a. *Red-Tier Compensation*: 28% raise in base pay + \$10,000 cash stipend with tenure privileges.
- b. *Green-Tier Compensation*: 45% raise in base pay + \$10,000 cash stipend + additional bonuses (e.g., cumulatively doubling a teacher’s current pay) with *no* tenure privileges. By the seventh year of teaching in the green tier, teachers would be guaranteed a base salary of \$100,000 per year. (“Transforming the System: An Interview with Michelle Rhee”)

During her time as chancellor, Rhee leveraged this agreement—a compromise between her and teacher unions—to fire more than 200 teachers and to place more than 700 teachers and school administrators on notice because of poor evaluations. After a few short years, Rhee, faced with fierce opposition by teacher unions and parents, lost the crucial public support needed to continue pushing for reform. In 2010, Washington, DC, mayor Adrian Fenty, who appointed Rhee as chancellor, lost his reelection bid in what was deemed a public backlash against Rhee. Having lost mayoral backing and significant public support, Rhee chose to resign (Guggenheim).

After resigning as chancellor, Rhee turned down numerous high-profile job offers and started a grassroots education-advocacy organization called StudentsFirst. She set a bold vision to fundraise \$1 billion in the organization’s first year of operation to overhaul public education in the United States, with the primary goal of abolishing teacher tenure (Resmovits). StudentsFirst fundraised well short of Rhee’s goal, capturing only \$7.6 million in its first year of operation (Resmovits). Over the next several years, StudentsFirst advised many high-level politicians, including Florida governor Rick Scott, on issues relating to teacher tenure and public-education reform. Four years after the organization’s founding in 2010, Rhee stepped down as CEO of StudentsFirst to pursue other opportunities. In 2016, StudentsFirst merged with another Washington, DC, education-advocacy organization, 50Can (Resmovits).

Despite educational reform failing in Washington, DC, Rhee established a lasting legacy in the field of public education. During Rhee’s time as chancellor, Washington, DC, public schools saw test scores rise, with an especially significant

jump after her first year as chancellor (Brown). On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) from 2007 to 2015, Washington, DC, public schools saw fourth-grade test scores jump by 16 points in reading and 18 points in math. During the same eight years, eighth-grade test scores jumped 8 points in reading and 14 points in math. These increases, during and shortly after Rhee's tenure as chancellor, were largely thought to be a result of her aggressive reforms. Rhee's work grabbed headlines across the country and sparked a national debate about education policy and, more specifically, the provision of teacher tenure. In 2011, one year after Rhee's resignation as chancellor, 18 state legislatures amended their education laws to make it harder for public schoolteachers to obtain tenure (Christie and Zinth). Since then, the national debate has continued to rage, with educators, teacher unions, parents, politicians, and students all weighing in. Although the majority of Americans recognize there is a major performance gap in public education, most do not have a clear idea of how to tackle this national problem (Faucheux). Today, as a result of rigorous national debate, states across the country follow different tenure laws, heightening the discrepancies in the American public education system (NCTQ, "NCTQ State Policy Issue: Tenure"). American kids, especially those trapped in failing public schools, are in desperate need of new education policy that ensures that every child has the opportunity to receive a high-quality education.

Research Methods

To explore opinions on K–12 teacher tenure and the American public education system, public schoolteachers were asked a series of questions. These open-ended questions were designed for the researcher to understand each respondent's opinion of current tenure policy, to understand how activists can persuade teacher unions to desire the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure (if applicable), and to discover any additional ideas to improve public education for American kids. Pinpointing specific solutions to incentivize national teacher unions to desire the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure, participants were asked to comment on the effectiveness of three specific variables:

Increased Pay: Significant annual salary increases, up to 100% of current salaries, based on performance in the classroom, which is determined by student standardized test scores.

401(k) Retirement Plans: Transition retirement plans away from traditional pension plans and toward a corporate-style 401(k), with the possibility of receiving a percentage-contribution match.

Job Retraining Programs: Paid job retraining programs for terminated ineffective teachers, with two tracks: one for those wanting to reenter the profession and one for those seeking other desired skills to exit the profession.

Additionally, interviewees were asked to comment on Rhee's proposal of a two-tier pay system (maintain tenure with modest pay increases, or forgo tenure with cumulative pay increases of up to double current salaries). Finally, interviewees were asked what should be done to ensure that students residing in low-income districts do not receive a poorer education than those living in wealthier districts.

After interviews were conducted, the responses were compiled and analyzed. Similarities, trends, and ideas were examined and were used to craft a proposal on how to reform public education in the United States. Please note, the small number of interviewees and similar backgrounds placed significant limitations on the results of this thesis. Given more time and resources, this study would benefit from more interviewees from a variety of geographic areas, school districts, financial resources, student performance rankings, years of experience, educational background, and so on.

Results

A total of nine people were interviewed. This study has a small scope but enough respondents to gather a wide range of opinions and serves as a valuable foundation for more in-depth research. The small sample size was a result of significantly fewer teachers than expected willing to share their opinions on the controversial topic of teacher tenure. Each participant possesses background and experience in public education as a teacher and/or administrator. Of the nine interviewed, seven interviewees were secondary schoolteachers in public school and two were administrators. All interviewees currently work or previously worked in public school districts in Illinois or Wisconsin. The average number of years of experience of those interviewed was 22.5. Those who identify as teachers are all tenured, are active union members, and teach in the areas of physical education, foreign language, history, science, English, and business. All teacher respondents currently identify as members, representatives, or presidents of teacher unions. There were four male interviewees and five female interviewees.

Of the nine interviewed, seven supported the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure, and two were against it. Of those who supported elimination, all seven said

their support was conditional on adding other provisions, primarily statutes that would add extra job protection for older, more-experienced, and higher-salaried teachers. Those against elimination primarily cited the need for due-process statutes that are embedded in current tenure laws to ensure that districts abide by lawful procedures when firing teachers.

In the state of Illinois, tenure is obtained after a four-year probation period, and, contrary to tenure laws a decade ago, evaluations do play a significant role in a teacher's ability to earn tenure. In the first three years of teaching, Illinois teachers can be dismissed by their prospective districts for any reason without explanation. After the fourth year, a district that chooses to dismiss a teacher must give a reason for termination. Teachers who are not dismissed after their fourth year of teaching automatically receive tenure. Tenure is renewed every ten years. During the probation period, the state of Illinois mandates that teachers are evaluated once per academic year. Local districts have the power to increase the number of times a teacher is evaluated during his or her probation period; however, this is highly unusual. These yearly evaluations are often for a few hours during a single school day and are scheduled in advance with the teacher's knowledge of when and where the evaluation will take place. Evaluators are almost always administrators from the local district who possess prior training on how to properly conduct teacher evaluations. Teachers can receive one of four scores on each evaluation:

Level 1: Unsatisfactory

Level 2: Needs Improvement

Level 3: Proficient

Level 4: Excellent

If a teacher receives a Level 1 or Level 2 evaluation, he/she is at risk for dismissal. This "at risk" status is not affected by whether the teacher is tenured or not. During the time immediately after receiving a Level 1 or Level 2 evaluation, the teacher undergoes a remediation process. This process allows the poorly performing teacher to receive additional coaching from peers, take online educational courses, and observe high-performing teachers—all opportunities designed to raise the teacher's performance in the classroom. Teachers who receive Level 1 evaluations have one full academic year to raise their performances or they will be dismissed. Level 2 teachers have two full academic years to raise their evaluation scores or they, too, will be dismissed. It is important to note that local districts play a significant role in shaping the evaluation structures for their teachers. The above arrangement is the benchmark utilized in the state of Illinois.

The state of Wisconsin has similar tenure laws; however, the probation period is only three years instead of four. At the conclusion of the third year, Wisconsin teachers either are terminated or automatically receive tenure. Wisconsin also has an evaluation system that varies by district. Because of the limited time and resources of this thesis, the specificities of tenure laws in each state were not explored in depth.

Support Elimination

All respondents who supported the elimination of teacher tenure said the primary reason for their stance was eliminating ineffective teachers who have a negative impact on kids' education. A few interviewees also cited the importance of eliminating teachers who put forth significantly less effort in their classrooms and who are only working for monetary benefit (i.e., teachers who hold their jobs only because of the protection of tenure).

When asked what effect the elimination of teacher tenure would pose on teachers, respondents' answers varied greatly. "Teacher unions would lose their minds," one respondent said. Another respondent said, "[From the perspective of teachers], any change will be resisted." Other answers included the following:

- Drop in teacher morale
- Teachers feeling attacked and unsupported
- Some teachers working harder
- Drop in overall happiness
- Some teachers quitting
- Increase in collective teamwork between colleagues

When asked the same question regarding the effect on students instead of teachers, respondents' answers also varied greatly. One respondent said, "Every student has a teacher he/she connects to. If teachers are fired because of the elimination of tenure, that could negatively impact students who learn unconventionally." Other responses included the following:

- No effect
- Negative effect due to a drop in teacher morale
- Students encountering teachers who are more motivated
- Students receiving better teachers and a better education

Respondents were then asked who, in their opinion, has the influence to eliminate K–12 teacher tenure in the United States. The answers, which varied significantly, are listed below.

- Local administrations (e.g., local districts)
- Citizens
- Federal or state legislators
- Colleges and universities
- U.S. Department of Education
- Teacher unions
- Local school boards

Respondents were then provided background into the power and influence of teacher unions in the United States and, particularly, the significant financial contributions of teacher unions to state and national political candidates. If applicable, respondents were also educated about the two largest teacher unions—National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT)—and their pro-tenure stance. The NEA is a professional organization that offers membership to the individual who is “a public school teacher, faculty member, education support professional, retired educator or a student preparing to become a teacher” (NEA). The AFT is a traditional union organization that offers membership to individuals who work in “a Pre K–12 school system (public, private or charter), early childhood center, college or university system, healthcare facility or local, state or federal government office” (AFT). Combined, the NEA and AFT have more than four million members.

After receiving information about these two largest teacher unions, respondents were asked in what ways they believed lawmakers could incentivize these unions to desire the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure in the United States. The majority of respondents did not have any specific ideas, but those who did stated lawmakers could increase benefits, improve working conditions, increase pay, and instill a remediation program for underperforming teachers. Almost all respondents expressed that incentivizing teacher unions to desire the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure was near impossible.

In an effort to introduce more structure into the conversation, three distinct variables were provided to each interviewee for comment on the effectiveness that each variable has toward incentivizing teacher unions to desire the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure in the United States:

Increased Pay: Significant annual salary increases, up to 100% of current salaries, based on performance in the classroom, which is determined by students' standardized test scores.

401(k) Retirement Plans: Transition retirement plans away from traditional pension plans and toward a corporate-style 401(k), with the possibility of receiving a percentage-contribution match.

Job Retraining Programs: Paid job retraining programs for terminated ineffective teachers, with two tracks: one for those wanting to reenter the profession and one for those seeking other desired skills to exit the profession.

The first variable, increased pay, received polarizing responses. Roughly half of respondents commented that increasing pay would grab the attention of teachers and unions with an overwhelmingly positive response. Many respondents referenced the national outcry led by many public teachers in the past few decades regarding unfair and relatively low compensation in comparison to other professions. Teacher walkouts occurring in early 2018 in West Virginia, Kentucky, Arizona, and Colorado because of unfair compensation reinforce the importance of this fundamental issue. Understanding this rhetoric, supporters of pay increases believed it had the possibility to convince teacher unions to support the elimination or modification of current tenure laws. The other half of respondents commented that although increased pay could be beneficial for individual teachers, the solution was unrealistic. They argued that many districts are already financially strained and, with teachers not "showing a profit" at the end of each year, unlike many other professions, there is no way to secure more funding.

The second variable, 401(k)-style retirement plans, received a mostly negative response. Interviewees commented that their current retirement plans, both in Illinois and Wisconsin, are very generous. In the state of Illinois, teachers receive a 2.2% pension contribution of their averaged salary during their last four years of teaching for every year they teach. For example, a teacher who retires after 30 years with a salary average of \$120,000 over his or her final four years in the profession will receive 66% of this amount, or \$79,200, annually during retirement. The majority of interviewees commented that 401(k)-style retirement plans would not be an effective incentive because of the high quality of current plans. Additionally, many questioned how districts would obtain additional funding to support a contribution match.

The third variable, job retraining programs, received a mixed response. The majority of respondents said additional support for underperforming teachers, such as job retraining and/or remediation programs, would be well received; however, many of these types of programs already exist. One respondent explained, “[Teachers] are helpers, and they want to be helped. Make me take a class to improve!” Additionally, many respondents expressed that this additional support, while positive, would not be enough incentive to convince teacher unions to desire the elimination of tenure.

After discussing the three specific variables, respondents were given an opportunity to communicate any final ideas they had to incentivize teacher unions to desire the elimination of K–12 tenure. The majority of interviewees said that, given the complexity of the current system, they did not have any ideas. One interviewee expressed the importance of changing the teacher-evaluation process but did not give any specifics on what an ideal process would look like or how it could be implemented. Another interviewee expressed that teacher unions would be in support of eliminating tenure only if a new “tenure-like” system that lessened the number of years with job protection and/or eliminated the probation period were grandfathered in. “All changes must have a local-level focus,” they said. “If you implement something cold turkey, it will never succeed.”

Finally, interviewees were given an opportunity to provide any additional comments or opinions regarding tenure that had not been covered in the prior interview questions. A summary of each response is provided below.

Respondent 1: While I support the elimination of tenure, I do not have an overwhelmingly negative opinion of the current system. Teachers make much less money than people in the private sector; thus, we are entitled to more stability. With that being said, eliminating tenure could be beneficial for students because it could eliminate “deadwood” (e.g., poorly performing teachers). Local government should implement a different policy. The U.S. Department of Education is a complete waste of money. “The farther you are from my classroom, the less you know about it.” Tenure should have three-to-five-year “rollover” cycles instead of a ten-year assignment. If a teacher’s performance drops, tenure should not roll over. The policy should provide some stability but not provide permanent entrenchment. This shorter-length policy would allow you to “light fire under someone” if need be. Everyone “needs a kick in the pants every now and then.” Overall, education should not stay stagnant. “We need change.”

Respondent 2: Keeping your job, in the current system, has no bearing on job performance or evaluation. “[As a teacher on the low end of the income range,] it is difficult for me to swallow finances because pay is based on seniority, not performance.” There must be some safety to prevent districts from firing higher-paid, more-senior teachers; however, tenure should not protect teachers who are doing a poor job. In previous jobs, I’ve seen terrible teachers keep their jobs because of tenure protections. Performance needs to play a bigger role in maintaining a job and in pay increases. With all this being said, “If I had a choice right now to keep tenure or ditch it for more money, I would keep tenure because I have more employment protection and I don’t trust the system. Current teacher evaluations are a joke.”

Respondent 3: “I don’t think tenure has as much of an impact as it used to. It used to be based just on seniority. Now, evaluations are incorporated more into the process. This is the right way to do it.” Overall, I support the elimination of tenure because I still have union protection and tenure does not play a major role in my job.

Respondent 4: First off, comparing the U.S. and other countries like Finland and Sweden on standardized academic metrics is like comparing apples to oranges. In Finland, students are tracked, and in the U.S., teachers get every student regardless of skill. In regards to public education, lack of change including tenure policies stems from colleges and universities evaluating students the same way year after year. “In order to change education, we must have higher standards.” Teachers do not get a lot of respect from others in society, partly due to us keeping our jobs based on tenure, not performance. We must eliminate tenure because it protects disenchanted teachers. Administrators must be taught how to counsel teachers out of teaching. This will allow districts to eliminate “burned-out” teachers. Ultimately, the golden question we must answer is this: “How do you evaluate teachers?” Education is much different than business; you cannot evaluate teachers solely on testing performance, because students are not tracked. I do not know the perfect solution to this problem.

Respondent 5: Job security through tenure is great, but it is not the real world. There has to be a better way to eliminate teachers who are not doing their job; however, “teacher unions would never allow the elimination of tenure because of job security and that is how it has always been.” Overall, “[I think] teachers don’t get the respect that they deserve. They are expected to reach every kid, every day, in every way.” It is an incredibly difficult job.

Respondent 6: I do not like tenure because the argument of academic freedom does not exist at the elementary, middle, and high school level. “[Tenure] protects the weak.” There must be a better way to keep teachers accountable, but performance evaluations cannot be based solely on standardized tests. “Teachers, just as other professions, need to stand on their own two feet from year to year.”

Respondent 7: As a principal, I know firsthand that my relationship with the teachers union made it difficult for me to fire someone. Despite this, “if I really felt that I had a staff member who wasn’t doing their job, I could accomplish a dismissal.” I imagine that, historically, tenure became a reality because people felt that they were being fired for less than reasonable cause. Tenure at the college and university level is much different because of the need for academic freedom. At the K–12 public school level, academic freedom is not a factor. This is my main argument for supporting the elimination of tenure.

Against Elimination

Those who responded that they were against elimination of K–12 teacher tenure in the United States said their main reasoning is that the law is required to protect teachers. In their opinion, tenure is a form of due process and does not protect underperforming teachers; rather, tenure ensures that states and local districts are taking the necessary lawful steps outlined in teacher contracts to eliminate underperforming teachers. As one respondent explained:

Tenure is required, in my eyes. If a teacher has eight-plus years of experience in the profession with a master’s degree and loses his/her job, he/she loses not only a job but rather an entire career. Tenure provides due process so districts cannot fire higher-paid, more experienced teachers unlawfully.

The same respondent continued to explain the reasoning behind this response: “The public needs to understand the totality of the public education system rather than isolate and comment on one specific part. With the current system, tenure makes sense.”

Another argument against the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure is rooted in the existence of the probationary period. “The probationary period for teachers is unlike any industry I know of,” they said. “You can be fired for no cause.” The same respondent went on to explain that tenure is needed later in a teacher’s career

to compensate for enduring this harsh policy during the first few years in the teaching profession.

Critics of abolishing current tenure laws also spent a notable amount of time in the interview combatting the opposing perspective. Statistics are often touted that teachers, among other skilled professions such as lawyers and doctors, have the lowest rate of dismissal or firing. Pro-tenure respondents argue that this statistic does not represent the full picture: “Due process to eliminate bad teachers, established through tenure, does work,” one respondent said. “During the remediation period, many poorer-performing teachers who consistently miss their benchmarks choose to resign before being fired. This is why the national statistic of dismissals is so low.” Another interviewee combatting the argument that teachers are “coddled” with the existence and protection of tenure, said, “We get everyone, not just the best-performing kids. You cannot compare teachers to professionals in the business world. In many cases, kids and parents are the issue, not teachers.”

When asked what effect the elimination of teacher tenure would pose on teachers, both of the above respondents said it would be overwhelmingly negative. One respondent said, “More experienced, senior teachers would be placed on an even playing field as new teachers if tenure were to be eliminated. This would cause a whole host of problems.” Furthermore, without tenure protections, interviewees said, there would be an influx of more-experienced, higher-paid teacher dismissals due to districts’ motivation to reduce budgetary costs.

When asked the same question regarding the effect on students instead of teachers, both respondents also said the overall effect on students would be negative: Because teachers would lack job security and more-experienced teachers would be placed on the same level as less-experienced teachers, the quality of teaching in the classroom would drop.

Opinions on Rhee’s Proposal

Near the conclusion of the interview, respondents were asked to comment on Rhee’s proposal to teacher unions in Washington, DC: maintain tenure and receive moderate pay increases, or forego tenure and have the potential to earn up to double compensation. Interviewees were split between supporting and criticizing Rhee’s proposal.

Supporters expressed satisfaction in Rhee’s proposal tackling teachers’ lack of pay. Many also enjoyed the ability of teachers to make a conscious choice based on personal need.

Critics of Rhee’s proposal, which notably included both respondents who are against the elimination of K–12 teacher tenure, had several arguments. First, a two-tier compensation system would divide teachers within a school between those who choose to maintain tenure versus those who forego it. They argue this would increase competition among teachers, reduce the morale of staff, and cause infighting. One interviewee argued that Rhee’s proposal creates a monitoring issue among those who choose to forego tenure’s privileges. “How do you monitor who is doing well and who isn’t?” they said. “There’s also the problem of how administrations or districts eliminate teachers that are underperforming. What does that process look like? Without tenure, there’s no protection to make sure the appropriate steps are followed.” The last argument stemmed from compensation being tied to Rhee’s model of student performance. “If teacher evaluations are based on student growth, that’s tough,” one respondent said. “A bad mix of kids could lead to poor performance, which could ultimately not be the fault of the teacher. Without tenure, what protections would we [teachers] have for that scenario?”

Dream Scenario

Lastly, each interviewee was asked the following question: “If you had the power to change anything in U.S. education policy, what, if anything, would you change?” All respondents had vastly different answers, which are presented below.

Respondent 1: “I’d blow it all up. Sitting for 50 minutes and walking for five minutes: how is that effective? The current school-day schedule is dehumanizing. I’d have high school classrooms operate like college. Students don’t have to show up if they don’t want to, but, if they don’t, they will pay the price.” This respondent also reinforced the importance of reimagining the current public school curriculum, increasing emphasis on humanities and providing increased control to local districts as opposed to national organizations such as the U.S. Department of Education. In conclusion, this interviewee said, “Sometimes we hold onto old methods because it’s always been that way. We need change.”

Respondent 2: “There is gross inequality in education. Kids don’t have what they need to be educated. I’d funnel money into lower-income districts.”

Respondent 3: “I’d alter all the testing that’s associated with schools. The younger years of education should be about having fun, not about focusing solely on academics. Being a good human being is so important and learned directly

from school. Also, testing, in my opinion, is not a good measure of intelligence.”

Respondent 4: “I would focus on teacher-education programs in college so future educators learn the skills needed before entering the classroom.” (This respondent also reinforced the importance of altering the way colleges and universities evaluate prospective students’ potential, steering entrance benchmarks away from being solely GPA and standardized test scores.)

Respondent 5: Change the public’s perspective on teachers, reinforcing the importance of and increasing respect for the profession.

Respondent 6: Decrease average class size, allowing teachers more opportunities to reach every student and personalize education inside the classroom.

Respondent 7: Create a better teacher-evaluation system. “Administrators don’t have time to supervise and evaluate more than a handful of teachers each year.” The respondent continued to explain that the current evaluation system causes administrators to have too many responsibilities, which decreases the quality and effectiveness of teacher evaluations.

Respondent 8: I would not change anything and would keep the current tenure system. “One thing that’s important with the current [tenure] model is that teachers understand and buy into it. You do not want to create a competitive environment between teachers like you would in [an industry such as] sales. If you turn teaching into a free-market economy, it will decrease the teamwork aspect of education. In education, groups will always outperform individuals.”

Respondent 9: “For kids in lower-income districts, I’d get them into early education programs (e.g., preschool, kindergarten) sooner to level the playing field.” (This interviewee also expressed a desire to fire the current U.S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, because of her policies that “benefit wealthier students.”)

Discussion

Throughout the interview process, themes within public education outside of teacher tenure were revealed and discussed. The three main themes, and the subsequent discussion of each, follow.

School Funding

The discussion of how public schools in the United States are funded stemmed from the existence of low-income, underperforming districts. Many interviewees expressed dissatisfaction about the extreme inequality of student success and overall education quality in public schools. The primary reasoning behind this fact is the result of property taxes playing a major role in the funding of a school. Students who reside in zip codes with lower average income rates and fewer property taxes often receive a poorer education and perform worse in the classroom because of fewer resources, poor-performing teachers, and inadequate facilities. With less money in certain school districts, poorer communities often have difficulty recruiting and retaining (e.g., because of high burnout rates) high-performing, more-experienced, and higher-paid teachers. This, combined with student populations in lower-income districts experiencing a higher degree of poverty, community violence, family issues, outdated educational materials, and inadequate school facilities, causes poorer student performance in the classroom and a decrease in high school graduation rates.

Ultimately, interviewees expressed that the quality of public education received by students is often directly tied with a student's home zip code. One respondent went as far as stating, "Public education in my home state of Illinois really isn't public. Our property taxes, which go to fund 'public' schools, are essentially a student's tuition to attend." A variety of possible solutions were discussed to fix the problem of inequity within U.S. public education by focusing on how schools are funded. One solution discussed was the possibility of using a different type of taxation, as opposed to property taxes alone, to fund public schools. Despite this suggestion, no specific type of tax was discussed. Another suggested solution was increasing the amount of funding per pupil in lower-income districts using federal or state monies. This solution, however, was met with skepticism: "The state [of Wisconsin] has reduced their support for public education funding, but the communities recognize the importance of education. Legislators have to understand that education is more important than other things they can spend their money on." The third solution suggested possessed two components: teacher incentivization and state funding. The first component calls for instilling a model that financially incentivizes higher-quality, more-experienced teachers to teach in lower-income districts. Beyond this suggestion, no specifics were discussed. The second component calls for each state to designate the same amount of funding per pupil across public school districts. Local property taxes would fund each district, and the districts that could not meet the benchmark funds

would receive financial assistance from the state via sales taxes. For the districts that raise more funding per pupil than the benchmark, the excess monies would return to the local taxpayer. The final solution suggested called for placing all property taxes from one state into a large pot of money and equally dividing funds among districts across the state. One interviewee concluded the discussion of school funding by highlighting its importance: “The whole funding issue has to be figured out. It always comes down to this. We must have equitable education for kids regardless of the color of their skin or whether or not their parents went to college.”

Regulation

The question and subsequent discussion of school regulation frequently arose when discussing tenure and the ways to change and/or eliminate this long-standing U.S. policy. Almost all respondents who discussed this topic were in favor of increased local control (e.g., each school would be controlled by its corresponding district or state) and were unsupportive of national control (e.g., federal regulation from the U.S. Department of Education). One respondent supported his rationale: “Washington, D.C., has no idea what I’m doing in my classroom, nor do they care. Federal regulation is an absolute waste of money.” Another respondent pointed out the irony of the U.S. Department of Education overseeing schools nationwide when the majority of decision-makers in the regulatory body have no experience in the classroom. The main argument in favor of local control stems from the notion that teachers and parents who directly interact with kids daily are the most qualified to determine the needs of students. By providing more control to districts, each community would be able to funnel resources and to adapt curricula to the needs of local students.

One interviewee suggested a tiered model for school regulation. Districts would possess the most power, and if schools in a particular district failed to meet educational standards set by the state, local power would shift to a state regulatory body. If the state and its supervision could not empower a district to meet its benchmarks, the U.S. Department of Education would then step in.

Despite overwhelming support for more local control, the majority of respondents said that if tenure were to be eliminated, the decision must come from the U.S. Department of Education. Significant doubt was expressed that local districts would possess enough power and influence to convince and/or combat teacher unions to eliminate tenure.

Teacher Evaluations

The topic of teacher evaluations and, more specifically, how to quantify performance arose in nearly every interview about teacher tenure. All respondents who discussed this topic expressed concern over the ways teachers are evaluated. Teacher evaluations are often based on a variety of criteria—professionalism, school involvement, a common rubric (e.g., curriculum coverage), and student performance—and vary depending on the state and district that the evaluation takes place in.

Since the early 2000s, the increased use of standardized testing because of the No Child Left Behind legislation has, in many cases, increased the importance of student performance in the evaluation of teachers across the country. One interviewee expressed frustration about this national shift: “You can’t compare test scores from kids in Finland and the U.S. and automatically come to the conclusion that kids in the U.S. are ‘falling behind.’ Finland tracks students. Here [in the U.S.], we get everyone. It’s not comparing apples to apples; it’s comparing apples to oranges.” The same interviewee further explained that it is unfair for teachers to be punished because of poor student performance. Although poor student performance could be a result of poor teacher quality, the respondent said, it often is a result of a student’s lack of motivation, bad home life, and other things that are out of the teacher’s control. Another interviewee explained the difficulty in assessing teacher performance: “You know good teachers when you see them. You cannot easily quantify it.”

Teacher evaluations are also difficult to measure over a long period of time, and consistency is even harder to evaluate. One respondent explained the evaluation process in her local district: “A teacher can choose when he/she is evaluated, put on a show, and then go back to poor-quality work on the daily.” The same respondent suggested that districts should have the right to stop in and evaluate a teacher at any time. This, presumably, would hold teachers accountable 24/7 as opposed to solely during their designated evaluation days. Another respondent, who identifies as a retired administrator, spoke about the difficulty that local administrators face when conducting evaluations for numerous teachers throughout the year. This respondent expressed that administrators have time to conduct only six or seven evaluations effectively. Because the number of teachers far outweighs the number of certified administrators, evaluations are often conducted “in a rush,” and subsequently, the quality of each evaluation drops. This increases the chances that poor-performing teachers can pass an evaluation because of administrator time constraints.

Finally, one interviewee expressed the importance of evaluating and rewarding bonus compensation for teachers in groups as opposed to individuals. This interviewee argued that evaluating in groups promotes a team atmosphere that is essential for the benefit of students. Without this, schools become free markets, teachers view their colleagues as competition, and, as a result, best practices are never shared among staff members.

Proposal

After analyzing the opinions, perspectives, and ideas of nine teachers and administrators, I pieced together a comprehensive proposal on how to positively reform public education in the United States. The small sample size places significant constraints on this proposal; however, this serves as a quality starting point. More survey data could flesh out the details and create a more comprehensive strategic plan. With the complexities of U.S. public education, it is impossible to “fix” K–12 teacher tenure without addressing other parts of this massive system. This proposal possesses two main objectives: (1) close the education gap in the United States (i.e., every student, regardless of background or home zip code, can receive a quality education) and (2) raise student performance in the classroom via elimination of poor-performing teachers. Both goals stem from Rhee’s original mission: placing students first.

To accomplish public-education reform in the United States, lawmakers, activists, students, teachers, and community members must band together to support and implement a three-phase solution.

Phase I: College Scholarship Incentives

Before addressing the internal complexities of the K–12 public education system in the United States, reformists must first examine students’ motivations to receive a public education. Education, thought to be society’s great equalizer, is designed to provide any motivated individual, regardless of background, with the necessary knowledge and tools to climb the social ladder and, ultimately, raise his/her standard of living. One of the major issues often overlooked within public education is brain drain within lower-income, underperforming school districts. As a consequence of less funding, low-income districts often have fewer resources, poorer facilities, and underperforming teachers. This results in a poor quality of education, lower graduation rates, and even lower percentages of students continuing their education at four-year higher-educational institutions.

Recognizing a lower chance of success in high school and a lower chance of receiving acceptance into college, many of the “best and brightest” in low-income districts attempt to transfer to high-performing, better-funded public school districts, charter schools, or private schools. This outflow of high-performing students causes significant brain drain in low-income districts. To combat the continuous issue of brain drain, which ultimately hurts the collective of students in low-income communities, public colleges and universities should provide guaranteed admittance and scholarship incentives to a top percentage of students in every public school district across the state. Similar to the current University of California system, every public state-university system (e.g., all colleges within the University of Wisconsin system) will earmark a pool of funds to be allocated to the highest-performing high school graduates in each district across the state. Students who achieve the designation of the top X percent in their perspective districts plus the fulfillment of a core curriculum (e.g., a certain number and level of classes in core subjects such as math, science, language, and so on) will receive guaranteed admittance and a scholarship to any public university within the state system.

This reform, funded by colleges, has major benefits for both parties: (1) Colleges and universities attract a diverse population of high-potential students, and (2) students receive heightened opportunities to attend college, regardless of zip code, financial background, and the like. Additionally, due to college incentives tied to each individual district across the state, the “best and brightest” of low-income districts would have less justification to move to different schools. Ultimately, low-income districts reap the benefit of retaining high-performing students, raising district performance, and bettering the collective of students in the community. The specifics of this scholarship program—GPA/class rank eligibility, core curriculum requirements, and the like—will be established by a board of university professors and K–12 public schoolteachers across multiple universities and districts convened by the state’s board of education.

Phase II: School Funding

The next major issue to tackle within public education pertains to the large gap of funding received by public schools across varying districts. Similar to the model used in Illinois described by numerous interviewees, every state in the United States uses property taxes to varying degrees to fund public schools (National Conference of State Legislatures). This causes a significant discrepancy in the amount of funding that each school district spends per pupil and greatly affects the resources and quality of education that students receive, as it depends on

their five-digit zip code. To close the education quality gap and provide equal opportunity for students, it is essential to equalize funding across districts.

Each state will designate a funding amount per pupil, standardized across every public school district. Funds will be raised using local property taxes. Districts that cannot meet the collective benchmark of funding per pupil will receive financial assistance from the state in the form of sales tax to satisfy the funding target. Districts that raise more than the benchmark per pupil will return excess funds back to local taxpayers. In addition to funding targets per pupil, states will also establish allocation percentage benchmarks designated for those funds. This safeguard is designed to ensure that school funding is utilized to its full potential and allocated to resources that have maximum impact on students. For example, the state would designate that 15% of district funding be utilized to purchase only textbooks and educational materials. It is important to note that these percentages will be a minimum requirement; if specific districts wish to allocate a higher percentage of funds toward purchasing textbooks, education materials, and so on, they would be free to do so under the discretion of school leadership. The state body that will determine both funding amounts per pupil as well as allocation percentage benchmarks will comprise current teachers across districts of varying demographics.

Phase III: K–12 Teacher Tenure

The final phase of this proposal is centered on overhauling K–12 teacher tenure. It is important to note that although the two largest national teacher unions are in support of maintaining current tenure laws, the majority of respondents are in favor of reform. First and foremost, all job-performance protections must be eliminated. This will ensure that poor-performing teachers do not maintain employment because of provisions in their contracts that make it near impossible for states and local districts to dismiss on the grounds of job performance. Loosening these protections will empower local districts to release their worst-performing teachers and to increase the overall quality of instructors in the classroom. In exchange for the elimination of job-performance protections, states will introduce statutes that protect more-experienced, higher-paid teachers across every public district in the state. This will ensure that districts that seek to cut their budgets do not eliminate the highest-paid teachers strictly for financial reasons.

Furthermore, states will maintain due-process statutes existing in the current laws of K–12 teacher tenure to ensure that districts motivated to eliminate certain teachers are taking necessary fair and lawful steps in accordance with the contract.

These modifications to tenure will be “grandfathered in” using a handful of trial districts. Districts that participate in this experimental program will be selected by the state’s board of education. Within these districts, financial incentives similar to those of Rhee’s two-tier pay system will be introduced to motivate teachers to forgo job-performance protections for increased pay. The specifics of these financial incentives will be established by the state’s board of education. Once this phase of the proposal gains momentum (e.g., increased academic performance, happier high-quality teachers, increased public support), the state’s board of education will modify tenure provisions across all districts via executive decree. In the process, the regulatory body, parents, and education activists will communicate the positive impact of these changes to teacher unions, reinforcing that due process and higher-pay protections will protect quality teachers’ job security all while benefiting students. This, if executed effectively, will reduce backlash from teacher unions and will aid in the implementation and sustainability of modifications to tenure.

Alongside the main reforms to tenure, each state’s board of education will convene alongside a group of current teachers across numerous districts to create the following solutions:

- Incentivization for high-quality teachers to teach in historically low-income districts
- Proper and fair evaluation of teachers
- A regulatory system that transfers power to local districts while maintaining accountability measures

Conclusion

Although consensus around American education policy is difficult to find, it is clear that the system is far from perfect. The presence of a large gap in education quality reinforces the flaws in public education. As of today, many poor-quality teachers remain in the classroom and a student’s zip code plays far too dynamic a role in his/her quality of education and opportunity for success. To close the education gap and raise academic performance in the classroom, lawmakers, teachers, reformists, education activists, and parents must band together to stand up to teacher unions, demand change, and, above all, put students first.

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ESSAY 1 ON ALI SMITH'S *AUTUMN*: THE EFFECTS OF ART AND INSIGHT

BROOKE KORITALA, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
MENTOR: LEEANN DERDEYN

“It’s all right to forget. [...] In fact, we have to forget things sometimes. Forgetting it is important” (Smith 210). So Daniel Gluck advises Elisabeth Demand in the early stages of their twenty-five-year relationship in *Autumn* by Ali Smith. The book finds 101-year-old Daniel Gluck in a senior living center, dreaming toward his last breaths, visited daily by 32-year-old Elisabeth Demand. When she cuts him out of her life, it may seem like Daniel’s influence on Elisabeth has been ineffective, yet, restored to Daniel’s company, Elisabeth remembers the Pauline Boty collage that Daniel has seared in her imagination and realizes she can apply her career of art interpretation to other aspects of life. Elisabeth begins again to stand up on behalf of herself and of powerless others, including Daniel. Elisabeth reminisces on his lessons to see other persons’ best sides, and she begins to build the relationship with her mother that she has denied for the majority of her life. Daniel’s influence on Elisabeth is therefore eventually more effective, contributing to her emergent self-actualization.

Daniel uses art to encourage Elisabeth to stand up for herself and express her creativity. When Elisabeth is eight, Daniel describes a collage by Pauline Boty that he has seen, using imagery in an attempt for Elisabeth to visualize the collage. His words and description are effective, as Elisabeth says afterward, “I like that you could maybe touch the pink, if it was made of lace, I mean, and it would feel different than the blue” (Smith 74). When Elisabeth interprets Daniel’s description, she sees the collage in her mind, despite the fact that she has never seen the collage in person. She demonstrates the creativity for which Daniel has mentored her, and she applies this creativity toward interpreting the artwork. Elisabeth activates a part of her identity, and she finds that she is a creative person, then chooses to apply her creativity toward a PhD and a career in history.

It is because of Elisabeth and Daniel’s past experiences together that Daniel is able to have this effect on Elisabeth when she chooses to pursue Boty as her dissertation topic. Daniel inspires her more than anyone else in her life. Daniel teaches her that “[t]he interpretation of art makes appeal because of experience” (Mehigan 175), which is the reason that Elisabeth is able to find part of her identity

by something so simple as a collage by a female pop artist. Daniel uses his experiences to describe this collage that he has seen, but because Elisabeth has not had this privilege of seeing the collage, she must envision the collage. Elisabeth is able to use her past experiences with Daniel to put into practice her passion and creativity. She has “appeal” to interpreting the art in hopes to impress Daniel; however, Daniel has the better motive of helping her discover her true self.

Elisabeth also stands up for herself when she is walking past an immigrant's house, which has been vandalized with paintings of anti-immigrant graffiti but also shows a tree and a row of red flowers that have been painted on it by the owners. When Elisabeth walks into a field, thinking of these flowers and the ones she sees alongside the fence, “the painting by Pauline Boty comes into her head” (Smith 138), and she realizes that “it’s the first time she’s felt like herself for quite some time” (Smith 139). Immigration is a very controversial topic in Elisabeth’s post-Brexit world, and she is able to turn a grim reminder of societal views on immigrants into something beautiful, such as a painting by Pauline Boty. Because Daniel is the one who introduced her to this painting and to Boty’s social message in creating it, he is the reason Elisabeth is able to visualize this. By envisioning the research project that can emerge from connecting the collage to immigration, Elisabeth demonstrates that she is able to apply her creative art-interpretation skills to other aspects of the world, such as immigration. Although the current immigration issue is a national topic widespread with dissension, Elisabeth uses her creativity to turn this into something in which she can “feel like herself.” Art interpretation is an ability that Elisabeth associates with herself, and because she is newly under the influence of Daniel, Elisabeth is able to employ her passion in her career to activism and academic writing.

There are many pessimistic ways to look at immigration, but Elisabeth chooses to look at the topic in a more positive manner. She “implies that there are many ways to look at that thing, none of which are objectively right” (Stecker 1). Elisabeth chooses to use one of her capabilities—art interpretation—to turn this into something she’s passionate about—art. By viewing an immigrant’s house as artwork, Elisabeth demonstrates one of the “many ways to look at” immigration, which shows her open-mindedness and ability to use her creative interpretation skills. Because she is able to use this art interpretation of Pauline Boty that Daniel has introduced her to in order to bring out her creative qualities, she suggests that Daniel is the reason for her being able to see a topic (immigration) from multiple viewpoints.

In addition to standing up for herself, Elisabeth begins to also stand up for others, contributing to her self-actualization. She decides to write her dissertation on Pauline Boty. When Elisabeth has a meeting with her dissertation chair, however, he claims that she should not choose this topic because there is not enough information (Smith 156). In response to this, Elisabeth sassily replies, “[T]hen I’d like to apply to be moved to a new supervisor” (Smith 156). This demonstrates Elisabeth standing up not only for herself but also for Pauline Boty. Elisabeth is passionate about this artist because Boty is a woman doing work in a male-dominated field, and Elisabeth is confident in the fact that she can write a groundbreaking dissertation on Boty. Elisabeth thus shows that she can stand up for not only herself but also other disenfranchised persons, which is an ability that she has not had before meeting Daniel. By standing up for others, she demonstrates selflessness, showing another way that Daniel has contributed to her self-actualization.

In standing up for Pauline Boty, Elisabeth is also arguing on behalf of all women. This scene of Elisabeth contradicting and then firing her dissertation chair on behalf of Pauline Boty illustrates the idea of feminism found in many other texts, such as *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi. This graphic novel also “affirms ideologies such as a woman’s right to freedom of expression and ‘choice’” (Gilmore and Marshall 681). By asking for a new dissertation chair, Elisabeth is arguing for her own and other women’s “right to freedom of expression and choice.” She demonstrates her standpoint on female rights and is able to express her opinion without hesitating, which shows an increase in her confidence. She finally demonstrates that she has the confidence to stand up for others, which she has not done prior to meeting Daniel. This is another example of her self-improvement.

Elisabeth stands up for Pauline Boty, all women, and Daniel while he is on bedrest and is incapable of doing so himself. Recognizing in a commercial a song that Daniel has written, Elisabeth realizes that he has not been given proper credit. She calls the agency in hopes of receiving money to maintain Daniel’s medical care, saying, “I’m calling on behalf of my client Mr Daniel Gluck whose copyright via your use in your current campaign of Mr Gluck’s 1962 hit song Summer Brother Autumn Sister is being infringed” (Smith 237). Because of the fact that Daniel is unconscious and incapable of calling the company about wrongfully using his song, Elisabeth takes matters into her own hands, showing yet another example of her standing up for others. She is able to reveal this part of her new self in which she has the confidence to call Daniel her client, despite the fact that she is neither a lawyer nor a talent agent. Her willingness to act on behalf of others is a product of

the new identity that Daniel has helped her shape, and this is shown by her willingness to stand up for others.

When Elisabeth realizes that Daniel does not love her, she leaves and cuts him out of her life for many years. This is similar to the environment and the use of natural resources. An article written about this topic states, "If humanity understood that the real-world problem is decreasing natural resources, we might attempt to solve that problem deliberately" (Fuller 249). Daniel is natural resources to Elisabeth as natural resources are to humanity and society. When Elisabeth realizes that she has used up Daniel's resources (advice and teaching lessons) and that he has nothing left to give her (as demonstrated when he does not love her romantically), she cuts him off and refuses to talk to him. This is Elisabeth taking advantage of the world's resources, demonstrating a "world protected for us" viewpoint. When Elisabeth has her epiphany about Daniel's lessons being meaningful rather than pointless, she is able to switch to a "world protected from us" viewpoint. Elisabeth returning to take care of Daniel in his bedrest and arguing on behalf of him is her attempt to "solve [this] problem deliberately," as she attempts to re-obtain her resources, while fearing it is too late to do so. Elisabeth realizing that she must adapt a "world protected from us" standpoint demonstrates her reaching her full potential because she finally realizes that she must put Daniel before herself.

Just as she works to restore her relationship with Daniel, Elisabeth begins to spend more time with her mother, Wendy, and her perspective changes so she views Wendy in a more positive light. They have never had a strong relationship, and throughout her childhood, Elisabeth believed that her mother was not as smart as her and did not have power. For this reason, she has encouraged Daniel to lie to her mother about his past of being a dancer. He has replied, "You and I will know I've lied, but your mother won't. [...] A wedge will come between us all. [...] We would all be lessened by the lie" (Smith 114). Elisabeth has pushed Daniel to lie because she wanted the power in her relationship with her mother, though Daniel has known that her mother is not as powerless as Elisabeth has thought. By encouraging Elisabeth not to lie, he has attempted to allow her to see this but at first has been ineffective. Daniel has wanted Elisabeth to build a relationship with her mother and has known that building the relationship would be hindered with even a white lie about him being a dancer. Although Elisabeth is initially naive in this situation, she later realizes that her mother does have power.

Elisabeth comes to this realization when her mother is studying for a game show that she is about to be on, spitting out knowledge. Elisabeth "is faintly

perturbed. She realizes this is because she likes to imagine her mother knows nothing much about anything” (Smith 134), and she discovers that her mom is smarter than Elisabeth has believed throughout her childhood. She realizes that, had she not thought that she was more intelligent than her mother, she might actually have had a real relationship with Wendy. Elisabeth becomes aware that her mother is smart and that she has not allowed herself to see her mother as having known some things all along. This shows that Elisabeth is realizing that Daniel has been right all along—her mother is smart, and this relationship should be stronger. This self-awareness that Elisabeth develops helps her realize her faults, allowing her to become her better self.

By strengthening her relationship with her mother, Elisabeth is able to increase her confidence and to have someone to trust and rely on while Daniel is on bedrest. From multiple psychological experiments, “mother-daughter connectedness was found to be positively correlated to daughter’s self-esteem” (Onayli and Erdur-Baker 329). This is exactly why Daniel has encouraged Elisabeth to rebuild this connection with her mother. Elisabeth’s confidence is shown when she wittily remarks about her mother’s relationship with Zoe, “Unnatural. Unhealthy. I forbid it. You’re not to” (Smith 238). This is ironic because these are words Wendy has said about Elisabeth and Daniel’s relationship. After this, Elisabeth gives her mother a hug and a kiss, demonstrating that their relationship has gotten stronger. By strengthening this relationship, Elisabeth is able to see that she is more like her mother than she originally thought, and she is able to show her newfound self-esteem. Because Daniel has encouraged this relationship, he has also encouraged Elisabeth’s increase in self-confidence when it is formed, therefore contributing to her self-actualization.

When Elisabeth rejects Daniel for ten years, it does not seem as though Daniel has a lasting influence on her. As it turns out, however, she has had to cut him out of her life to realize that he has helped her create her better self. Through visualizing Pauline Boty’s collage in order to create a different perspective on immigration, through asking for a different dissertation chair in order to argue on behalf of not only Pauline Boty but also all women, and through building a relationship with her mother, Elisabeth is able to self-actualize. All of these epiphanies are due to her experiences with Daniel; however, they do not come until she has taken advantage of all he has to offer and has decided to cut him out of her life. Because of these insights into her past with Daniel, Elisabeth is able to discover her creative side and apply it to other areas of life such as immigration, her career, and increasing her self-confidence, demonstrated by her standing up for others and

reconnecting with her mother. Elisabeth has Daniel and all his shared breadth of experience to thank for her self-actualization.

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BEYOND THE LOOKING GLASS: HEAVEN AND EARTH MIRRORED IN EARLY SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE

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The history of religion in South Asia boasts a lengthy and sustained dialogue between religious traditions, often leading to the development of different religious practices and ideologies occurring interdependent or in response to one another. When considering the structural similarities between religions across South Asia, the foundations of religious metaphysics often remain analogous to one another, with their similarities manifesting in observable parallel conditions with a subsequent connection forming between Heaven and Earth. Examining this connection between the two realms—and its subsequent impact on the procession of religion—requires an in-depth look at several religious texts across multiple religious practices to analyze the relationship between abstract religious ideology and the material reality of a religion’s practitioners.

Through an analysis of multiple religious texts, the necessary structuring of religion through a number of mirroring dualities originating in an observable parallel between conceptions of Heaven and Earth marks a distinctive feature of South Asian religious belief; this mirroring provides not merely a metaphysical foundation for religion but also a system that constitutes the manner in which heavenly or divine entities respond and develop against the more human. The complex relationship between society and religion within South Asia suggests a dynamic in which aspects of society intentionally mirror an understood structure of Heaven as it relates to Earth, creating an active dynamic of expected metamorphosis between people and their religious activity, with consequences manifesting materially and throughout people’s daily lives.

As religion in South Asia contains a complex history with several canonized texts with which to examine metaphysical structures of religion, the use of the *R̥gveda* and the *Buddhacarita* as the primary lenses through which to interpret the roles of Heaven and Earth in the procession of South Asian religion extends from the respective significance of the texts as some of the earliest examples of influential poetry for their given religions.¹ Poetry provides a unique avenue with

¹ Although earlier examples of poetry can be found within the Buddhist canon, these are largely personal poems regarding expression of religion and nature of enlightenment, and they do not

which to explore the relationship between Heaven and Earth—and any subsequent intentions or effects as a result of this relationship—as poetry easily lends itself to the abstract or complex with regard to subject matter and the apparatus required to explore inherently intangible concepts. Subsequent texts, such as the *Upaniṣads* and selected works within the Buddhist Pāli Canon, represent a transition from largely conceptual poetry into teachings informed by practical application, allowing for the development of religious praxis derivative of its preceding ideology, another aspect significant to the examination of religious tradition as it occurs and influences the everyday life of people within South Asia.

The Mirrored Structure of Heaven and Earth

An understanding of the unique similarities built between the metaphysical aspects of religion in South Asia and the concrete foundations of society can be observed first through the hymns of the *R̥gveda* (c. 1200 BCE), which expound upon the realm of Heaven and its origins in great detail, with these details often simulating or inspiring later details concerning the structure of material society. Moreover, the paralleled duality between the heavens and Earth appear as early as the creation story itself, which can be viewed as a mold for further comparison. As hymn 10.90, lines 1–3, describes:

*sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt /
sa bhūmim̐ viśvato vṛtvāty atīṣṭhad daśāṅgulam // 10.90.1
puruṣa evedaṃ sarvaṃ yad bhūtaṃ yac ca bhavyam /
utāmṛtatvasyeśāno yad annenātirohati // 10.90.2
etāvān asya mahimāto jyāyāṃś ca pūruṣaḥ /
pādo 'sya viśvā bhūtāni tripād asyāmṛtaṃ divi // 10.90.3²*

The man has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet.
Having covered the Earth on all sides, he extended ten fingers' breadth
beyond.
The Man is alone in this whole (world): what has come into being and
what is to be.
Moreover, he is master of immortality when he climbs beyond (this world) through food.
So much is his greatness, but the Man is more than this:
A quarter of him is all living beings; three quarters are the immortal
in heaven.³

factor into consideration when analyzing constructions of Heaven and Earth within religious text. As such, works such as the *Khuddaka Nikāya* will not be examined over the course of this essay.

² All romanized Sanskrit and Pāli editions are taken from GREITL: Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts and Indian Languages (<http://gretl.sub.uni-goettingen.de/>).

³ All translations of the *R̥gveda* are from Joel Brereton and Stephanie Jamison's recent three-volume set *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*. According to Brereton and Jamison (pp.

This famous origin story, involving Puruṣa—or “the cosmic man”—finds relevance when discussing the mirroring structure of the heavens in relation to the physical, and more specifically society itself, when considering Puruṣa’s dual role in the creation of the universe and the unique circumstance of his connecting the heavens with Earth. It is first significant that the cosmic sacrifice leading to the creation of the universe involves a being described as a “man,” even if many of his features (and their multitudes) transcend that which is typically associated with humanity, as this appellation suggests a connection between the purely human and the divine. The specifics of Puruṣa’s description only further this suggestion, as his existence serves as a sacrifice in the creation of both Heaven and Earth:

*nābhya āsīd antarikṣaṃ śīrṣṇo dyauh sam avartata /
padbhyām bhūmir diśaḥ śrotrāt tathā lokāṃ akalpayan // 10.90.14*

From his navel was the midspace. From his head the heaven developed. From his two feet the earth.

The sacrifice of Puruṣa to create existence itself, specifically Heaven and Earth, signifies that these realms, no matter their superficial difference, exist of the same cosmic substance and derive from the same cosmic man. Given that the two perform similar functions, acting as the temporary home for divine and human figures alike, their shared origin thus further reflects their eventual shared function. In the context of established resemblances between the metaphysical of religion and the layout of the physical, Puruṣa’s existence validates the notion that this is a deliberate parallel meant to have observable effects on the subsequent relations between Heaven and Earth and how the two realms are often linked and structurally similar throughout the hymns of the *Ṛgveda*.

Following creation itself, comparisons between Heaven and Earth continue throughout the *Ṛgveda*, with the connection between the two eventually developing into equal and complementary roles as the two are likened to parents. Within hymn 1.159, Heaven and Earth bear the following descriptions:

*pra dyāvā yajñaiḥ pṛthivī ṛtāvṛdhā mahī stuṣe vidatheṣu pracetasā /
devebhīr ye devaputre sudamsasetthā dhiyā vāryāṇi prabhūṣataḥ // 1.159.1*

I shall start up the praise, along with sacrifices, to Heaven and to Earth, the two great ones growing strong through truth, the discerning ones, at the rites of distribution; those of

57–58), who were commenting on Max Müller and H. T. Colebrooke’s 19th-century observation, the *Puruṣa-sūkta* was very likely added in to the *Ṛgveda* at a later time as the text was reified by brāhmaṇical compilers.

wondrous power, whose sons are gods, who together with the gods tender things of value (to the mortal) who has an insight right to the point.⁴

Although the poet dedicates the hymn in its entirety to the relationship between Heaven and Earth, the hymn's opening lines introduce the similar duality of the two realms that suggests the nature of their mirrored states and its role within the procession of religion. As the dynamic between the two draws comparisons to that of parents, the complementary and paternal relationship that Heaven and Earth have toward both the gods and humanity defines the two beyond their roles as merely realms or planes of existence. Rather, there is a suggested agency or participation, particularity within the phrase "tender things of value," which serves to argue that these two realms exist dynamically, with their shared relationship acting as the basis for this dynamic. With the understanding that their mirrored state acts as a foundation for their role within religion itself, the dual nature of the two realms—particularly within the context of the *Ṛgveda*—becomes especially clear.

When examined closely, Heaven and Earth often appear as a pair within the *Ṛgveda*, even outside hymns dedicated to both Heaven and Earth as the primary subjects, with comparisons present between the two merely through the existence of their conjoined state. As the *Ṛgveda* presents Heaven and Earth as a distinct pair in 147 separate instances throughout the text, the significance of such occurrences is highlighted through virtue of the immense frequency of their joint depiction. In hymn 10.91, a poem devoted to the fire god Agni, the mention of Heaven and Earth together acts as a synecdochical representation for the relationship presented between Heaven and Earth throughout the *Ṛgveda* as a whole:

vasur vasūnām kṣayasi tvam eka id dyāvā ca yāni pṛthivī ca puṣyatah // 10.91.3

As good one [Agni], you alone hold sway over goods, which both Heaven and Earth foster.⁵

This verse echoes sentiments stated within hymns dedicated solely to the dynamic between Heaven and Earth, but it bears its relevance as this relationship exists within hymns removed from those specific to the two realms, suggesting the existence of this relationship throughout the duration of the *Ṛgveda*. A sustained presence of a conjoined nature between Heaven and Earth, specifically one in which the two realms act together with deliberately fostered similarities, indicates toward the continuous nature of this relationship, as it is neither static nor purely rhetorical,

⁴ Stephanie W. Jamison and Joel P. Brereton, trans., *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.159.1.

⁵ Jamison and Brereton, 10.91.3.

but rather a basis for understanding other aspects of the religious text, such as with hymn 10.91 as it concerns the god Agni. This interplay between the established relationship of Heaven and Earth with the gods, in addition to other aspects of religion as presented in the *Ṛgveda*, further highlights the active component of this relationship given the gods' similarly active role throughout the contents of the *Ṛgveda*.

A connection between the heavens and Earth, defined by its role as an active component in religion, can be extended to other religious texts as well, including those outside Hinduism. The *Buddhacarita* (Life of the Buddha), a first-century-CE devotional biography, may be understood as “an apologetic work presenting the Buddhist response to Brahmanical attacks” which “presented the Buddha’s doctrine, the dharma discovered through his Awakening, as the consummation of the Brahmanical text” that shares similarities with the *Ṛgveda* in terms of the dynamic relationship depicted between Heaven and Earth throughout the course of the text.⁶ This interpretation of the *Buddhacarita*—and, by extension, Buddhism itself—presents Buddhism not as a wholly unique religion separate entirely from Hinduism but rather as a continuation or supplementation of Hinduism, meant to adapt certain aspects of Hinduism while rejecting others based on the newfound knowledge of the Buddha’s awakening. The framework for the metaphysical aspects of religion, specifically the conceptualization of Heaven and Hell, remains largely the same—including the temporary nature of each realm with regard to its inhabitants—allowing for a similar analysis of the relationship between Heaven and Earth as it appears within the text of the *Buddhacarita* in comparison to that of the *Ṛgveda*.

Within the *Buddhacarita*, mentions of Heaven and Earth in relation to each other often occur in the form of direct comparisons, rather than through a personified presentation of their relationship as it relates to other aspects of religion as the two appear in the *Ṛgveda*. Often, the *Buddhacarita* explores the similar states of Heaven and Earth through their shared splendor. Aśvaghōṣa—the work’s poet—likens Earth to Heaven, particularly the city of the Siddhartha’s residence, describing “that city as joyous as paradise” (*puram tat svargam iva prahrṣtam*, 3.26a).⁷ Aśvaghōṣa elaborates on this comparison earlier in the text, depicting the city as

⁶ Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Life of the Buddha*. (New York: New York University Press, 2009), xxiii–xxiv.

⁷ Olivelle, *Life of the Buddha*, 3.26.

muktaś ca durbhikṣabhayāmayebhyo hr̥ṣṭo janaḥ svarga ivābhireme // 2.13 a,b

Freed from famine, from danger and disease, people, thrilled, rejoiced as if in heaven.⁸

Through this description of Earth, and its subsequent comparison to Heaven, an understanding of both realms and their relation to each other becomes apparent, as Aśvaghōṣa presents the likeness of the two realms without fanfare or caveat, suggesting an intrinsic understanding of the similarities between the two realms. These descriptions of Earth as a heavenly place are significant primarily because they include specific details not considered within the hymns of the *R̥gveda*, while still furthering the concept of a shared state of identity between the two realms. Whereas the *R̥gveda* concerns itself primarily with the abstract likeness that Heaven and Earth share, the *Buddhacarita* expounds upon more concrete details, specifically the absence of perceived suffering, often associated with Heaven, suggesting the two realms as not only likened in physical structure but also as sharing similar circumstances of prosperity. Given that Buddhism especially leans into the temporary nature of Heaven, given that the finalized state of Nirvana is itself distinct from the temporary habitat of the heavens, a connection between Heaven and Earth in the context of Buddhism proves unsurprising, as the two are intrinsically likened through their shared impermanence.

Looking beyond even religious text and examining this parallel structure as it exists in religious expression, there is evidence of its role as a foundation of religious activity within modern-day South Asia. Cultural anthropologist Diane Mines describes Yanaimangalam, an Indian village that “compares both castes and gods along several dimensions.”⁹ Both humans and gods are stratified through language and, more significantly, through actual location:

Both humans and gods may be further distinguished residentially. Higher and “bigger” (powerful, landowning) castes live in a central residential cluster, while the lower and “little” (landless, service-producing) castes live on the peripheries of the village and in small hamlets out across the fields. It is the same with gods. The higher, more “pure” gods live in the interiors of the central village: in temples on village streets and in alcoves and in framed posters on the walls of residents’ houses. Low-ranking, “impure,”

⁸ Ibid., 2.13.

⁹ Diane Mines, “The Hindu Gods in a South Indian Village,” in *Everyday Life in South Asia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 236.

meat-eating gods live outside: out in the fields or the wastelands beyond, outside the house in the back courtyards facing away from the house.¹⁰

The implications of such a parallel structure, with the physical and locational distributions of the heavens matching that of humanity, validate the significance of such mirrored states within the context of religious text, as the phenomena can be witnessed within the practice of religion beyond textual ideology. This occurrence suggests the fundamental role of a mirrored Heaven and Earth state to the practice of religion within South Asia, implying further consequences resulting from its existence. In the context of the structure itself, this mirroring at its most basic shapes attitudes within the village:

[Lower] gods and goddesses are often subordinated to the village goddess as guardians who live near but outside her temple, much like the humans who live outside the central village residential area are thought by many higher-caste residents to be subordinate and unruly as well.¹¹

Here, the role of gods acts as a determiner for the role of humans, as the two are considered similar in both likeness and standing. Given this further understanding of the mirrored structure as a mold for society itself, it stands to reason there are further observable ideological and material consequences as the role of religion extends beyond simply spiritual to determine or influence class structures as well.

Divine and Human Mutualism

With such direct parallelism established between not only the heavens and Earth but also their inhabitants—the gods in Heaven and humans on Earth—a dynamic relationship between the two realms suggests a similar dynamic between the gods and humanity. In terms of the *R̥gveda*, interactions between humanity and the gods are defined primarily by devotional actions and subsequent prosperity. In hymn 6.28, a poem dedicated to chief of the gods Indra and his relationship with man depicts this dichotomy of action and prosperity:

indro yajvane pṛṇate ca śikṣaty uped dadāti na svam muṣāyati // 6.28.2a,b

Indra does his best for the man who sacrifices and delivers in full. He gives more; he does not steal what belongs to him.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 242.

¹² Jamison and Brereton, 6.28.2.

The significance of this hymn lies in the implied give-and-take between Indra and humanity; if man does not “give in full,” then Indra cannot contribute to man’s prosperity. Ultimately, man needs the gods to be prosperous, but the gods will bestow prosperity only on those who prove themselves worthy. As such a dynamic is formed, the conceptualization of prosperity as described in the *R̥gveda* is as much religious as it is physical, as prosperity is contextualized by action itself through the man who “sacrifices and delivers in full” (*yajvane pṛnate*), with action as the suggested basis for religious practice. This relationship is further characterized within the text as an “alliance” in the first verse of hymn 4.57, with a god described as the “Lord of the Field”:

*kṣetrasya patinā vyaṃ hiteneva jayāmasi /
gām aśvam poṣayitv ā sa no mṛṣātīdṛṣe // 4.57.1*

By means of the Lord of the Field as if by concluded (alliance) may we win what prospers the cow, the horse.¹³

In this verse, the poet not only connects the gods to the concept of prosperity but also describes the role of the gods as occurring in the form of “a concluded (alliance),” highlighting the manner in which prosperity for man can be achieved only through the work of gods in accordance with man. As the *R̥gveda* concerns itself both with the connection between Heaven and Earth and with a similar connection between its inhabitants, an existing influence or interplay can be observed between the two parallel connections.

The symbiotic roles between gods and man extend beyond the *R̥gveda* to find relevance in other important Hindu texts, with the *Bhagavad-Gīta* similarly considering this relationship through the didactic teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa to ambivalent warrior Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa’s advice builds upon the relationship presented within the *R̥gveda*, as the dynamic he describes is more clearly bilateral in its impact on both humanity and the divine. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna:

*sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣtvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ /
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭakāmadhuk // 3.10
devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ /
parasparaṃ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha // 3.11*

When creating living beings and sacrifice,
Prajapati, the primordial creator, said:

“By sacrifice will you procreate!

¹³ Jamison and Brereton, 4.57.1.

Let it be your wish-granting cow!
 Foster the gods with this,
 and may they foster you;
 by enriching one another,
 you will achieve a higher good.”¹⁴

In this conceptualization of the relationship between gods and humanity, sacrifice exists as a means of communication between the two that works to enrich both in equal amounts, as suggested by the parallel grammatical structure presented within Kṛṣṇa’s teachings. In his words, Kṛṣṇa gives the fostering of gods by humanity and vice versa the same weight, suggesting a relationship that equates the substance of such interactions on both its sides. The significance of this is revealed when we examine this dynamic as it relates to the established relationship of Heaven and Earth. In the *Bhagavad-Gīta*, Kṛṣṇa describes men who reach “the holy world of Indra [and] savor the heavenly delights” (*surendralokam aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān*, 9.20c,d), who, after having

*te taṃ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṃ viśālaṃ
 kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṃ viśanti // 9.21a,b*

long enjoyed the world of heaven and their merit is exhausted, they enter the mortal world.¹⁵

Kṛṣṇa then describes this process as obtaining “what is transient” (*gatāgataṃ labhante*). In his teaching, Kṛṣṇa indirectly expounds upon the impermanence that characterizes both Heaven and Earth, and he serves to contextualize the relationship between the gods and man as a facet of this impermanence. As such the temporary nature of Heaven and Earth’s residence mirrors that of the realms themselves, it suggests the derivability of the conditions of the former from the inherent structures of the latter.

As the dynamic between gods and man parallels that of Heaven and Earth, it can also be argued that it is derivative of that original relationship itself as expounded on in the *Ṛgveda*. In hymn 1.159, the concepts of devotion and prosperity are specifically characterized in the context of a relationship between Earth and Heaven:

asmabhyaṃ dyāvāprthivī sucetunā rayiṃ dhattaṃ vasumantaṃ śatagvinam // 1.159.5c,d

¹⁴ Barbara Stoler Miller, trans., *The Bhagavad-Gita* (New York: Bantam Classic, 2004), 3.10–11.

¹⁵ Stoler Miller, 9.21.

For us, o Heaven and Earth, through your kind attention establish wealth consisting of goods and a hundred cows.¹⁶

In creating a correlation between prosperity and Heaven and Earth as a given unit, hymn 1.159 intrinsically implies a similar correlation between a coupled Heaven and Earth and the subsequent dynamic between gods and humanity, as prosperity is at the root of this relationship. This hymn specifically links this dynamic between gods and man to the dynamic between Heaven and Earth, suggesting the former as a consequence of the latter, defining humanity's goal of prosperity as a result of a mirrored state between Heaven and Earth. Hymn 1.22 further supports this implied association:

*mahī dyauhḥ pṛthivī ca na imaṃ yajñam mimikṣatām /
pipṛtām no bharīmabhiḥ // 1.22.13*

Let the great ones, Heaven and Earth, mix this sacrifice for us,
Let them carry us through with their support.¹⁷

Although Heaven and Earth are not presented as center of the act of sacrifice, the two offer “support,” marking their supplemental or influential role in the interactions between gods and man, as sacrifice and ritual are primary aspects of this relationship. Given this interpretation, the dual pillars of prosperity and action that define the interactions between humanity and the divine, combined with their ultimate material effects, can be considered derivative of the primary mirrored states of Heaven and Earth, with their mirrored state acting as a fundamental ideological basis for many South Asian religions.

Within the *Buddhacarita*, the parallels between Heaven and Earth as an influence on human-godly relations appears more directly than in the *Rgveda*, while nevertheless suggesting similar established interactions between the divine and humanity. As previously examined, several comparisons between Heaven and Earth—particularly the city of Siddhartha's upbringing—exist explicitly throughout the *Buddhacarita*. A more significant occurrence, however, is how these similarities are observed by those within the text and the consequences it derives. Aśvaghōṣa describes the manner in which the city so resembles heaven that “the gods residing in the pure realm [Heaven]” (*śuddhādhivāsāḥ devāḥ*)

jīrṇaṃ naraṃ nirmamire prayātuṃ saṃcodanārthaṃ kṣitipātmaḥ // 3.26

¹⁶ Jamison and Brereton, 1.159.5.

¹⁷ Jamison and Brereton, 1.22.13.

created an old man in order to induce the son of the king to go forth.¹⁸

Although this creation exists in part to compel the Buddha-to-be's eventual journey toward awakening, it also suggests the heavenly nature of Earth itself, as the Earth is so likened to paradise that even the gods—within the “pure realm”—notice this resemblance and take offence to the likeness of the two. Given the level of their reaction, the similarity between Heaven and Earth, though not expounded upon, can be taken to be significant, so much so as to compel the gods themselves toward action. Although the expression is significantly different from that of the *Rgveda*, the *Buddhacarita* suggests the same conclusion: The mirrored states of Heaven and Earth inspire consequences beyond that of the similarities of the realms; they act as a catalyst for dynamic change.

An examination of relatively recent religious texts compared to the *Rgveda* also considers the interactions between the gods and humanity, specifically as an extension of an established Heaven-and-Earth parallelism. The *Upaniṣads* (c. 800–500 BCE), which primarily contain the didactic conversations between teacher and student regarding a number of Hindu philosophies, often deal in the philosophical consequences and extrapolations of many Hindu beliefs. In *The Early Upaniṣads*, translator Patrick Olivelle notes:

[T]he Vedic thinkers did not make a strict distinction between the gods and cosmic realities; so the cosmic sphere includes both. The central concern of all Vedic thinkers, including the authors of the Upaniṣads, is to discover the connections that bind elements of these three spheres to each other. The assumption then is that the universe constitutes a web of relations, that things that appear to stand alone and apart are, in fact, connected to other things.¹⁹

The conceptualization of the universe as “a web of relations” where seemingly independent things are actually interrelated acts as the lens through which to interpret the majority of the *Upaniṣads*, particularly concerning aspects in which the inhabitants of given realms interact and are influenced by these realms themselves. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, one such didactic tale explains the relationship between ritual, the gods, and the realms: “[Man] wins the earthly world through the hymn recited before the sacrifice, the intermediate world through the hymn that accompanies the sacrifice, and the heavenly world through the hymn of

¹⁸ Olivelle, *Life of the Buddha*, 3.26.

¹⁹ Patrick Olivelle, trans., *The Early Upaniṣads* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 24.

praise.”²⁰ Building off the parallel relationship established between Heaven and Earth within the *R̥gveda*, the *Upaniṣads* classify the role of this relationship within the context of religion on a broader scale, specifically in how it relates to ritual and sacrifice, a previously mentioned significant component to the relationship between gods and man. As consequence, the dynamic nature of South Asian religions exists in deference to this connected state of the metaphysical and physical realms, such that the practice of religion can be considered an extension of the exploration of this connected state.

Within the context of a modern practically applied religion, this dynamic can be observed in the village Yanaimangalam of Mines’s article, as she examines the capricious nature of gods toward humanity and the earthly realm. The earlier mention of stratification of gods, with a parallel stratification of humanity, can be witnessed and even subject to manipulation within the context of a relationship between the two groups. Mines describes a relationship between humanity and the divine that is characterized by both change and a natural ambivalence:

From one end of the spectrum to the other, soft gods (of which Brahmanical are the softest) are those who are generally calm, stable, and beneficent. Fierce gods on the other hand are wild, unstable, and unpredictable. The fierce gods may prove protective and beneficent at one time, then cruel at another. They may unpredictably attack a person if they feel the slightest insult.²¹

Given this depiction of not only the gods but also their ever-shifting relationship with humanity, an understanding of a practically applied dynamic of change within the context of practiced religion can be understood. When a given relationship between humanity and the divine is subject to change, visible ramifications become apparent, such as a blurring between the line of humanity and divine, mirroring the blurred distinctions between Heaven and Earth as they are often likened to one another within religious text. Mines provides an example of this occurrence in the killing of a man by a lesser god, which, after several generations, led to “the victim . . . becoming a lesser form of the god who had killed him.”²² Such a metamorphosis of identity displays a continuous state of change in religion and religious expression within the context of South Asian religions. When religious expression is subject

²⁰ Ibid., 3.1.10.

²¹ Mines, 237.

²² Mines, 244.

to change, there are undoubtedly material consequences of such change that can then be observed.

Consequential Materiality of Religious Metaphysics

An examination of the material aspects of life as affected by the dynamics within religion first requires an understanding of material value and its significance throughout religious texts. Primarily, this suggests several questions: What does it mean to be materially prosperous? How can material prosperity be measured? And finally, what is the relationship between material prosperity and religion? Considering these questions through the lens of the *Rgveda*, a connection between material prosperity and pastoral success can be ascertained. Given a lack of coinage analogous to modern currency, substitutes to measure a man's wealth as a sign of prosperity occur in the form of a man's agricultural success and his wealth of pastoral animals, specifically cows. In line 4 of hymn 4.57, the poet states:

śunaṃ vāhāḥ śunaṃ naraḥ śunaṃ kṛṣatu lāṅgalam // 4.57.4a,b

Prosperity (be) the draft-animals; prosperity the superior men; for prosperity let the plow til.²³

This hymn clearly connects the concept of prosperity to a man's success in agriculture and pastoral animals; in fact, these are the only measures of prosperity given. The more-prosperous man is the one more visibly thriving in his farming and pasturing. The fifth and sixth lines in hymn 6.28 further this connection by stating that “fortune has appeared to me as cows (*gāvo bhago me acchān*)” and

*yūyaṃ gāvo medayathā kṛśaṃ cid aśrīraṃ cit kṛṇuthā supratīkam /
bhadraṃ grhaṃ kṛṇutha bhadravāco brhad vo vaya ucyate sabhāsu // 6.28.6*

You fatten even the thin man, o cows. You make even one without beauty to have a lovely face. You make the house blessed, o you of blessed speech. Your vigor is declared loftily in the assemblies.²⁴

These excerpts not only liken cows to fortune itself but also establish cows as an investment in further prosperity and elevate the importance of cows above all other as a sign of success. By acting as a sign of a blessed house and improving upon man, cows act as a display of established and lasting wealth and prosperity, as their impact stretches beyond the immediately practical.

²³ Jamison and Brereton, 4.57.4.

²⁴ Ibid., 6.28.6.

Given an understanding of material prosperity, it can then be understood that this measure of wealth closely interacts with similarly considered religious prosperity, both in how it is achieved and in its understood significance. The *R̥gveda* primarily suggests that, given the relationship between the gods and man as an instigator of success—with a man’s prosperity (or lack thereof) on display in the form of his agriculture success and wealth of cows—a man’s physical or worldly prosperity will always be tied to his perceived spiritual purity or devoutness. When considering in context, this redefines how a “rich” or “poor” man will be perceived within the context of Vedic society and religion, as a man found not prosperous is not only physically lacking but also spiritually lacking. Line two of hymn 6.26 highlights this sentiment:

bhūyo-bhūyo rayim id asya vardhayann abhinne khilye ni dadhāti devayum // 6.28.2c,d

Making wealth increase more and more just for him, [Indra] establishes the man devoted to the gods in undivided virgin land.²⁵

As this hymn explains that a man faithful to the gods will be given land and become prosperous, the implication becomes that a man not faithful to the gods will not receive these benefits. If a man does not experience prosperity or wealth, it is a result of his own lack of devotion; thus, the role of poverty as defined by the *R̥gveda* becomes one not of circumstantial burden but of personal and spiritual failing. The fifth line of hymn 6.28 further demonstrates this concept, as it likens cows to the divine itself:

imā yā gāvah sa janāsa indra icchāmīd dhṛdā manasā cid indram // 6.28.5c,d

These cows here—they, o peoples, are Indra. I am just searching, with my heart and mind, for Indra.²⁶

By drawing a direct comparison between cows—the most definitive sign of prosperity—and a god, the *R̥gveda* establishes prosperity as a sign of spiritual wealth; thus, the “rich” of society will be held as more spiritual and perceived as more devout in their faith to the gods. With this correlation between wealth and perceived spirituality, divisions in class would be considered not merely economic in nature, but religious as well.

An understanding of societal materiality as something both derived from and informed by religion suggests a heavy reliance on religious practice to ensure

²⁵ Jamison and Brereton, 6.28.2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.28.5.

prosperity, particularly in interactions with the gods, which leads to the fostering of relatively easy pathways for these interactions to occur. This is evident in the *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* (c. first century BCE), translated by Patrick Olivelle, which largely details various rituals and praise to give the gods as a means of ensuring prosperity, often in relation to how a man should conduct his household and manage his property as an extension of his religion. One *Dharmasūtra* author, Āpastamba, details a “Rite for Prosperity,” which entails a complex ritual to “attain great prosperity.”²⁷ The ceremony tasks the participant to

*udagayana āpūryamāṇapakṣasyaikaikarātramavarārdhyamupoṣya tiṣyeṇa puṣṭikāmaḥ
sthālīpākaṃ śrapayitvā mahārājamiṣṭvā tena sarpiṣmatā brāhmaṇaṃ bhojayitvā
puṣṭhyarthena siddhaṃ vācayīta // Āpastamba 2.20.3*

prepare a milk-rice oblation; make an offering of that in the fire to the Great King;* feed a Brahmin with that milk-rice mixed with ghee; and get him to proclaim success with a formula signifying prosperity while increasing the number of Brahmins fed to increase prosperity.²⁸

The inclusion of this rite, particularly in a text detailing the manner in which to follow dharma, bears significance on two fronts. Primarily, it dictates a specific route—one that both is time-consuming and requires numerous resources—via which one can achieve prosperity; this suggests a level of religious practice that occurs on a sizable scale in everyday life. Furthermore, this ritual highlights a repetitive action that’s subjected to inherent change through the increase of Brahmins as the ritual continues. As such, the rite can be viewed as a microcosm for not only religious activity but also the repetition of dynamic change that is inherent to the practice of religion in South Asia, as repetition through ritual and devotion are encouraged throughout Hinduism, with the expected change occurring in the relationship between gods and man.

The material consequences of a religion that encourages constant interaction with deities exist beyond the occurrence of action or ritual, existing also in the facilitation of these rituals through the upkeep of religious structures. In the village of Yanaimangalam, “there are at least sixteen temples and shrines to fierce gods and goddesses,” in addition to the number of shrines dedicated to “softer” gods and goddesses.²⁹ An account of the temples and shrines dedicated to deities

²⁷ Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Manu’s Code of Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.20.8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.20.3.

²⁹ Mines, 242.

throughout the village reflects the materials and labor that must have been required to build and upkeep these landmarks, especially given the significance they hold as central to village life. For example, Mines describes one temple dedicated to a brāhmaṇical god as “the largest structure in the village.”³⁰ Diverting or allocating the resources required for the maintenance of this structure suggests an impact on material and everyday existence within the community to a great extent, but this level of devotion characterized by physical structure is considered necessary within Yanaimangalam—and within many South Asian expressions of religion—to facilitate the relationship between man and the divine to ensure prosperity. The most pertinent example exists in the form of the “village goddess,” who, though existing under several names, has a universally recognizable influence and power within the context of the village:

But everyone in the village worships the village goddess. To her is attributed the power of fertility—fertility of the soil, of humans, and of animals. There is no one in the village unaffected by her power (cakti) to assure good crops of rice and to help the living bear healthy children.³¹

In the context of the relationship between villagers and the village goddess, the prevalence of numerous temples and shrines for the purpose of worship or ritual for a given god or goddess both acknowledges the power of this deity within the village and also provides a means to facilitate the possible or eventual use of that power as a means to gain prosperity. As such, it will always appear in the interest of villagers to maintain and upkeep such buildings and monuments, permanently affecting their priorities and the consummation of those priorities as a result.

Within the context of Buddhism, the intended material consequences of a dynamic between humanity and the divine stray from those associated with Hinduism, while still suggesting the significance of the relationship as it exists. As Buddhism emphasizes a path that rebukes material prosperity as a goal or desired achievement, the relationship between man and gods considers a more conservative understanding of prosperity. In the *Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, a lesson dating from the late BCE, one monk relays to another monk the following teaching of Buddha:

abhabbo khīṇāsavo bhikkhu [...] abhabbo khīṇāsavo bhikkhu sannidhikāraṃ kāme paribhuñjītuṃ seyyathāpi pubbe agāriyabhūto [...] abhabbo khīṇāsavo bhikkhu chandāgatim gantuṃ // A 4.371

³⁰ Ibid., 238.

³¹ Ibid., 241.

A monk who has destroyed the taints is . . . incapable of amassing material things to enjoy as he did previously when he lived in a house; he is incapable of following a course of action out of desire.³²

As a consequence of his enlightenment, which, in the account given the *Buddhacarita*, occurs as a direct result of the actions of the gods, the Buddha has shunned the idea of life lived in the desire for amassing material wealth or prosperity. The material consequences of this exist in a religion that bases itself in an adherence to a certain level of frugality, a contrast to the importance given to material prosperity within the hymns of the *Rgveda*. This suggests not only the dynamic nature of South Asian religion itself—that even when rooted in similar ideology, different understandings of prosperity will grant different material consequences—but also the given change of the relationship between gods and humanity, as both instances of interaction derive opposing consequences, while still suggesting their shared roots and subsequently fostered dynamics. The result in Buddhism is not a life lived in the pursuit of material prosperity but rather a life founded in spiritual prosperity as the primary goal. Regardless, this devotion to spiritual prosperity above all else can be traced back to the same parallel state of Heaven and Earth that influences and directs Hinduism.

Religion in South Asia constitutes an inherent relationship between Heaven and Earth that informs several other aspects of religion as a product of its existence. In parallel states between Heaven and Earth, subsequent parallels between gods and humanity can be recognized and considered influenced by this primary relationship, with humanity often attempting to foster its relationship with the gods toward a recognized understanding of prosperity. When considering the influential role of the paralleled realms of Heaven and Earth, many aspects of the practice of religion in South Asia occur as either a direct or consequential response to this relationship, as ritual and monuments alike all exist within the framework of a conjoined Heaven and Earth and of the attempts of gods and man to bridge these mirrored states. In this sense, it should be understood that even the most abstract and originating concepts of religion suggest their own material consequences, evident through a concise delineation of how those conceptions develop within the practice of religion itself and significant in the manner and scope of their influence on the daily lives of a given religion's practitioners.

³² Rubert Gethin, trans., *Sayings of the Buddha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2.471.

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ESSAY 2 ON ALI SMITH'S *AUTUMN*: ESTABLISHING ETHICAL DIALOGUES

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The age of information has brought forth rapid communication through text, email, and social media. Subsequently, human interaction has evolved into a less personal form of communication. In *Autumn*, seventy-seven-year-old Daniel Gluck uses interpersonal communication to establish an ethical and formative dialogue with his eight-year-old mentee, Elisabeth Demand. Within their twenty-five-year relationship, ten years have been spent away from each other, leading to disarray in Elisabeth's life. It might seem like ethical communication shared between herself and Daniel helped mold Elisabeth into becoming a complex individual; however, Daniel's sense of truth allows Elisabeth to assert herself with authoritarian figures, discern problems within her community and attempt to adjust them, and stand up for what she believes in. It is therefore evident that despite Elisabeth's outcome, the lessons that Daniel instilled gave Elisabeth an overwhelming sense of understanding her community.

Daniel's sense of truth has been acquired by his perception of the world throughout his many years. When he watches over an eleven-year-old Elisabeth, the first thing he asks her is "What you reading? Elisabeth showed him her empty hands. [...] Always be reading something. [...] Even when we're not physically reading something. [...] Even when we're not physically reading. How else would will we read the world?" (Smith 68). Daniel uses this first interaction to begin a Socratic method of thinking that affects the next series of questions he asks Elisabeth. By establishing an ethical dialogue from the first conversation, Daniel attempts to build a relationship based on logical reasoning, not on personal feelings. Daniel uses a form of cooperative dialogue between himself and Elisabeth to express that a thirst for knowledge does not draw from books but rather from examining other people within their society. Daniel gives Elisabeth a thirst for analyzing her surroundings and using critical thinking to explore the ongoing relationship between herself and her environment.

The interpersonal relationship between Daniel and Elisabeth stems from the complexity of their differences in age and education. Daniel continually educates Elisabeth on complexities within society that stem from historical norms. In an

entry within the Encyclopedia Britannica, these ethical dialogues are shown within the context of philosophers. Despite the growing complexities and consistent shifts of communication between them, Daniel and Elisabeth have a keen sense that “[k]nowing what a person says, for example, is a matter of knowing what truth (or falsehood) his words convey; so communication itself requires cognizance of the connection between language and the world” (“Philosophy of Language”). Daniel’s description of art to Elisabeth is interpreted as a connectivity of absolute truths that his language implies. Daniel uses this knowledge and his methods of a cooperative argument to solidify the idea that Elisabeth has a specific interconnectivity between herself and the world. Daniel also uses this argument to establish that truth is subjective to the speaker and listener and that actions are typically what someone will believe.

Daniel and Elisabeth’s sixty-nine-year age difference drives specific ethical dilemmas due to Elisabeth’s naivety. When Elisabeth is thirteen, Daniel offers to play his interpretation of the game Bagatelle after Elisabeth comments on the distance of their walk. Daniel does this to begin Elisabeth’s cultivation of the Socratic method and to justify a sense of trifle “because the whole point of Bagatelle is that you trifle with the stories that people think are set in stone” (Smith 117). Elisabeth’s attitude toward the walk shows her overthinking everyday occurrences, seemingly building her own self-reliance from society. Elisabeth’s introduction to treating situations as trifles, just as Daniel did throughout his life, allows her to continue forward through adversity by analyzing Daniel’s point of view toward situations; however, it is evident that Daniel wants Elisabeth to go beyond treating situations as trifles and to instead rise above irritations to begin social change. Daniel attempts to disentangle Elisabeth’s trifles so she will be inclined not to let them dominate her life.

Elisabeth’s sophisticated upbringing is partially due to her perception of her mother and Daniel. Elisabeth thinking that she is smarter than her mother is a “[problem that] may not always be easy to discern. You may have to analyze the situation carefully and interpret it in the light of these values—understanding that, for example, a keen sense of loyalty may be a form of responsibility, while a disciplined devotion to accuracy could be a version of honesty” (Kidder 76). Daniel continually uses his lessons to show Elisabeth the importance of values and loyalty, yet because of her naivety, she does not feel inclined to impart these values toward her mother. Elisabeth’s independence from and disdain for her family in itself is a gross imposition of power due to her attitudes with her mother. Daniel sees this

malice building within her and attempts to show her that an abundance of reliance on oneself typically leaves one in tragedy.

Elisabeth does not treat situations as Daniel would want. She continually overanalyzes simplicities and common occurrences instead of treating them as trifles. Such can be seen as Elisabeth is renewing her passport: a “notion that my head’s the wrong size in a photograph would mean I’ve probably done or am going to do something really wrong and illegal. [...] And because I asked you about facial recognition technology, because I happen to know it exists and I asked you if the passport people use it, that makes me a suspect as well” (Smith 24). Elisabeth attempts to use battle with the sense of taking back control from this postal worker by treating the situation as a trifle. By evading the accusations and prejudice, Elisabeth sets forth a precedent within the remainder of the dialogue that she is fighting the worker’s narrative; however, this tactic fails because of Elisabeth’s current disconnect from Daniel and results in a destructive conversation with authority.

As Daniel and Elisabeth’s connectivity with each other shifts throughout the novel, a sense of “retreat and return” can be identified in Elisabeth’s retreat into the world and return to Daniel. Terry Gifford, in his publication about the effects of pastoral environments, alludes that Elisabeth’s retreat has justification to it. Elisabeth unknowingly retreats from Daniel in an ecocritical perception, yet it is seen because “there must in some sense be a return from that location to a context in which the results of the journey are to be understood. When the pastoral is merely escapist, [...] there is an implicit attempt on the part of the writer to resist return” (Gifford). Elisabeth seemingly resists the return to Daniel because of her complicated relationship with him, making the retreat initially feel like a plea for escapism from the one she loves. Elisabeth knows that the environment Daniel has created for them gives her a false sense of authority that she desperately desires. Elisabeth’s retreat from Daniel implies that she has yet to understand the results of the journey she has taken away from him.

As Elisabeth begins to visit a sedated Daniel and to recall his teachings, her attitude toward society shifts to become less aggressive. She begins to realize that her journey to acquire power is faulted if she cannot love those around her. This concerned attitude is portrayed within a dialogue with her mother as “Elisabeth grimace[s]. Every morning she wakes up feeling cheated of something. The next thing she thinks about, when she does, is the number of people waking up feeling cheated of something all over the country, no matter what they voted” (Smith 197). Elisabeth’s point of view becomes less self-centered and more global as she

observes certain injustices. The many lessons Daniel instilled within her have begun to surface despite Daniel not being present. Her self-realization is so impactful because it stems from Daniel's Socratic method and her applications of critical thinking to injustice toward strangers.

Daniel's ethical communication has allowed Elisabeth to establish a sense of trifles for herself and not toward society. Daniel has done this because "[a]cts of communication affect what is good, right, or virtuous for everyone involved in the communication process. [...] It is a way of living that recognizes that our communication co-constructs the world in which we live" (Tompkins 15). Elisabeth, when she was a child, could not fully comprehend what was good, right, or virtuous for society. Daniel, in his years as a Holocaust survivor and an immigrant, was able to acquire the sense through his natural, ethical conversations. Daniel's most important lesson, which can be shown in nearly every lesson he gives Elisabeth, is that the unconcealed attainment of power in any environment will undoubtedly lead to tragedy. That communities of communication construct their morals and that the individuals within the community adjust the morals as society changes is the pinnacle of Daniel's teaching to Elisabeth.

Daniel Gluck's desire to protect Elisabeth from the consequences she imposes on herself and her surroundings leads to Elisabeth's desire for power being fueled. As Elisabeth recalls a stroll with Daniel, she cannot remember what led to the actions of throwing "Daniel's watch, not just any old stone or piece of litter, flying through the air, and knowing too that there was no way those boys could know this, that only she and Daniel know the enormity of what he'd just done. She remembers that Daniel had given her the choice, to throw or not to throw. She remembers she chose to throw" (Smith 76). Daniel gives Elisabeth his watch to symbolize his willingness to surrender a physical entity, his watch. More importantly, he gives Elisabeth an intellectual dominance of a specific secret that only they would share. Daniel allows young Elisabeth to throw his watch because he would rather take the consequences and harm over society. Daniel attempts to deconstruct any emotional relationship he has built with Elisabeth, by giving her the freedom and choice to implement his lessons in a controlled environment. Elisabeth instead is in a state of self-deception and throws the watch simply because she can. Elisabeth's inner dialogue is likely foreseen due to her naivety at the time, yet as she recalls the memory, she still cannot piece together why she threw it.

Elisabeth uses Daniel's Socratic method to instill an analytic sense of observation within her inner dialogue. Literary critic Richard Kelly affirms the use of inner dialogue to justify the creation of complex relationships in "follow[ing]

Elisabeth as she spends weekends with her mother in the village where she grew up. Together they observe various disquieting post-Brexit phenomena that are as plain as the change in the weather; they see Spanish tourists harangued at a taxi stand, hear people in the street crowing about kicking undesirables out of the country” (Kelly). Elisabeth and her mother observe these post-Brexit occurrences, yet it is Daniel who instills the ability to distinguish the change. Daniel’s desire to protect society from Elisabeth, and vice versa, is justified by the future interactions that Elisabeth partakes in.

Elisabeth’s restitution with Daniel comes as she visits him in the hospital. As she talks to one of Daniel’s care assistants about his past, she has an epiphany of what Daniel truly is to her. Elisabeth seemingly realizes that she genuinely does not know who Daniel is because “[h]e’s never talked about any of that, not to us, Elisabeth says. Family for you, the care assistant says. Easier to talk to someone you don’t know” (Smith 171). Elisabeth considers her relationship with Daniel to be one of familiarity, not realizing that he has always considered it a mentor-mentee association. When Elisabeth discovers from a stranger moments of Daniel’s history that she did not know, it becomes evident that Daniel is also protecting himself from Elisabeth’s overanalysis.

Daniel and Elisabeth’s relationship stems from their personal outlooks of each other and shifts as their communication changes over time. Although Elisabeth knows she cannot have what she truly wants—her idea of Daniel’s love—she understands that he has given her an overwhelming sense of understanding society. By using and not using Daniel’s lessons, Elisabeth forged her own path to personal fulfillment despite the adversity of a hostile post-Brexit society. Daniel Gluck undoubtedly wanted this for Elisabeth, and it is pertinent to understand that he deserves the benefit of the doubt because he believes what he is doing is right. Despite Elisabeth’s constant curiosity, she was able to discover when and when not to strive for fulfillment.

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EFFECTS OF GESTURE ON RECOLLECTION AND DESCRIPTION OF AUDITORY AND VISUAL STIMULI

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Gesture. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, it is “a movement usually of the body or limbs that expresses or emphasizes an idea, sentiment, or attitude” (2018). It has commonly been thought of as simply an arbitrary movement of the hands; however, it is much more inherent to communication than an arbitrary movement. More recently, gesture has been analyzed as a communication tool. The field of research on gesture in communication is fairly new but has ignited several exciting questions about and new directions to understanding why humans gesture. Much research has suggested that gesture plays a large role in typical interpersonal communication. Moreover, additional research also suggests it benefits memory (Frick-Horbury & Guttentag, 1998). The purpose of the current study was to examine how individuals use gesture across the domains of interpersonal communication and memory retrieval.

In one of the first studies on gesture and memory, Thompson, Driscoll, and Markson (1998) investigated how gesture develops and influences comprehension and recollection. They found that when gesture was added to spoken language, both adults and children had increased memory retrieval. This suggests that gesture plays a larger role in communication than previously thought. This study gave the first inclination that gesture may be utilized for comprehension and memory purposes.

Similarly, Church, Garber, and Rogalski (2007) studied recall of three categories of video stimuli presentation: “speech only,” “gesture only,” and “speech+gesture.” The video stimuli were short phrases produced by onscreen women, such as “it smelled bad in the room,” that were played in video form for each participant. In the “speech only” condition, the stimuli showed a woman saying “it smelled bad in the room” or one of the other phrases included in the study. In the “gesture only” condition, the woman only waved her hand in front of her nose. In the “speech+gesture” condition, the video showed a woman saying “it smelled bad in the room” while waving her hand in front of her nose. The information shared by the speech+gesture video stimulus was best comprehended and recalled by the participant. The researchers concluded that adding gesture to speech improved comprehension and recollection of the stimuli.

The previous studies examined the effects of perception of gesture on memory for stimuli. It is possible that performing gestures, as opposed to merely seeing gestures, might have a greater effect on memory for events. Wagner-Cook, Kuang Yi Yip, and Goldin-Meadow (2010) analyzed how the ability to gesture while encoding information affected the ability to recall a stimulus after various amounts of time. Recall was tested immediately and then again after three weeks; in both instances, participants showed an increased ability to recall stimuli when they had been able to gesture during the learning process. That is, individuals who had seen communication with gesture within the stimuli had better recall of the stimulus than the participants who had not seen stimuli with communication with gesture. In addition, those who had not gestured while encoding the stimuli of the experiment recalled less than those who had gestured. Further, the number of gestures used by the participants was positively correlated with the number of things participants were able to remember. The researchers therefore concluded that gesturing increased memory retention and recollection, as well as made communication comprehension more effective.

In a similar study, Cutica and Bucciarelli (2013) presented participants with various texts and then asked them to recall various words and phrases from the texts. Part of the time, each participant was encouraged to gesture during his or her recall, and the other part of the time, the participant was discouraged from gesturing. When participants gestured, they were able to remember more phrases than when they were discouraged from gesturing. These results agree with those of Wagner-Cook et al. (2010), which suggest that gesturing enhances mental models and increases memory retrieval.

Finally, Frick-Horbury and Guttentag (1998) asked participants to recall SAT vocabulary words. Half the participants were prohibited from gesturing during recall. When gesturing was restricted, lexical retrieval and free recall were reduced, once again suggesting that gesture is influential in the memory process.

Goldin-Meadow, Nusbaum, Kelly, and Wagner (2001) expanded upon the previous study to investigate the effects of gesture on cognitive load. In this study, children and adults were asked to remember a list of words or letters and then were asked to explain the way they solved a math problem. When subjects were allowed to gesture, they were able to recall more items from the word and letter lists and from the math problems than when they were not allowed to gesture. The researchers concluded that gesturing reduces cognitive load by mentally separating the words and letters from the math problems, thus improving recollection.

Not everyone relies on gesture to the same extent to improve memory. Marstaller and Burianová (2013) looked at working memory and how it is influenced by individual differences in gesture. They identified which participants were more likely to gesture, then separated participants into high-gesturing groups and low-gesturing groups. In addition, they identified who had high working-memory (WM) capacity and low working-memory capacity. They found that individuals with low WM capacity who were high-gesturing had reduced WM accuracy when their gestures were restricted; however, for the other three groups (high WM/high gesturing, low WM/low gesturing, and high WM/low gesturing), there was no effect from gesture inhibition. This study illustrates that an individualistic aspect to gesture and memory capacity could exist that may influence success in a memory task.

The outcome of memory tasks, in general, is often dependent on the type of stimulus presented. In a study conducted by Peters, Suchan, Köster, and Daum (2007), the recollection of auditory and visual stimuli was compared at each step of the memory process: encoding, retrieval, and recognition. The researchers found that individuals process auditory and visual stimuli in different subareas of the brain, which allows the processing method for each modality to be more effective. Auditory memory performance was lower than visual memory performance, most likely due to dual-coding of the visual stimulus. For instance, participants not only recognize the objects but also think of what the names of the objects are when looking at the visual stimuli; in comparison, when listening to a spoken word, participants may or may not imagine the visual object. These results suggest that the encoding process and type of stimulus have a large effect on memory.

These studies offer a variety of perspectives on the complex and emerging knowledge of gesture in regard to language and memory. This information prompts the question of whether gesturing is necessary for a more high-quality recollection of information across any type of stimulus. In addition, most research has examined the receptive qualities and effects of gesture, yet few have looked at the impact of expressing gesture. It has been shown that when a person is listening to a speaker who uses visual information and gesture along with speech, there is increased comprehension and memory of a stimulus. How is a communicator's recollection of the stimuli affected when the speaker is using the gestures, though? Also, how do different types of stimuli play a role in recollection? That is, does gesture have more benefit for memory of visual or auditory stimuli? It was hypothesized that having the ability to gesture would enhance recollection of target words compared to the number of target words recalled by subjects who were unable to gesture with

both auditory and visual stimuli, and that gesture would benefit recall equally for auditory and visual stimuli. This is because during a visual presentation, one is able to map out the spatial details with one's hands. In addition, with an auditory condition, a participant can map out the auditory scene in space and time. Although it is not known whether gesture will have more benefit in one recall situation over the other, recall of information from both modalities could involve similar gestures.

Experiment 1

Method

Participants

In this study, 20 college-age participants (ages 18–25; 13 female, 7 male) from Butler University volunteered to be tested. These participants were motivated to participate in this study through a small incentive, a \$5 Starbucks gift card upon completion of the study. Subjects were recruited via advertising around campus with materials such as flyers and posts on the department Facebook page.

Students who decided to participate in the study were informed of the study procedure and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. Potential participants understood that their participation was completely voluntary. In addition, participants agreed to be recorded via video for the sole use of the data being reviewed after completion of the study. All sessions were video-recorded with a CAT Canon Vixia HF R200 HD camcorder. This research project was conducted on Butler University's campus in the Communication Sciences and Disorders research lab.

Design

This experiment used a 2x2 between-participants design. The independent variables were the type of stimuli the participant was presented (auditory or visual) and the ability to gesture (allowed or not allowed to gesture). The dependent variable was the number of keywords from a predetermined list that a participant was able to recall.

Procedure

The 20 participants were separated into four groups, each consisting of five people, by the process of random assignment. Groups 1 and 2 were shown a visual

stimulus on paper, and Groups 3 and 4 heard an auditory stimulus through headphones.

Participants were told that they were either going to see a picture of or listen to a description of a busy, multifaceted scene. They were instructed to remember the details of the scene because they would be asked to recall them later. During these instructions, the word “gesture” was not used. The participants were then presented with the first stimulus scene either visually (see Appendix A) or audibly (see Appendix B).

After each scene, the participant was given a “distraction task.” This was a five-minute interview conducted by the student researcher. The researcher asked participants various questions about topics including language education, family vacations, the college experience, and so on. This served as a buffer between the two parts of the experiments, allowing the participants to halt their focus on the stimuli after the designated time and direct their attention elsewhere, in order to assess long-term memory as opposed to working memory.

Following the distraction task, the experimenter asked participants to recall as many things as they could from the stimulus scene. Groups 1 and 3 were asked to do this with no gesture limitations. These groups were not prompted to gesture, but previous literature suggested that the probability that the subjects would use gesture was naturally very high. The goal was to have Groups 1 and 3 describe the stimulus as naturally as possible. Because of this, researchers did not prompt these subjects to gesture or ask them to focus on their gestures during their speech, in order to avoid distracting them. If someone in Groups 1 or 3 used no gesture whatsoever, that person’s data were to be eliminated. None of the subjects’ data were removed, however, because all participants included gesture during their speech. The remaining groups, Groups 2 and 4, were asked to place their hands on a table as they recalled the stimuli. This was intended to prohibit them from gesturing.

The participants were instructed to recall the picture or recording and to describe what they had seen or heard. They were given two minutes to recall the scene to the researcher. As participants described the scene, the researcher checked items from a keyword list as the participant mentioned them. This type of data collection was completed across all of the groups, regardless of stimulus type or ability to gesture. After the two minutes of recall were complete, the researcher counted the number of keywords named.

This procedure was repeated 10 times, once for each of the 10 scenes. The order of the 10 scenes was randomly generated for each participant to prevent order effects. After a participant had seen all of the scenes, he or she was given a final recall task, during which the researcher asked the participant to remember everything the participant could about the first scene he or she had seen or heard. This was intended to show the effects of longer-term memory recall.

Stimuli

The visual stimuli were a variety of scenes that included dynamic action. One scene, for example, included a park in which several children played on a variety of playground equipment (see Appendix A). In turn, the auditory stimuli were one- to two-minute auditory recordings of a voice describing the same detailed, multifaceted scenes (see Appendix B). These audio descriptions were recorded with a Snowball iCE USB microphone and GarageBand software. The auditory stimuli were recorded prior to the experiment and were played through a set of high-end headphones during the experiment.

Groups 1 and 2, the visual groups, were presented with visually illustrated scenes for approximately one to two minutes. The specific time the participant was allowed to study the picture was dependent on the corresponding audio scene. The participant viewed 10 visual scenes total. Groups 3 and 4 listened to 10 one- to two-minute recordings describing the same scene as the picture. A list of keywords was created to correspond with what was being shown and heard in the stimuli. The keyword lists each consisted of 20 objects or actions occurring in each scene (see Appendix C).

Results

The researcher compared the between-subject variables of gesture (present or absent) and the stimulus type (auditory or visual) using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post-hoc *t*-tests.

The first analysis examined the average number of keywords recalled across the four groups (see Table 1). For Group 1, visual+gesture, the average number of keywords recalled was 11.56 (SD = 1.13). For Group 2, visual+no gesture, the average number of keywords recalled was 12.12 (SD = 1.33). For Group 3, auditory+gesture, the average number of keywords recalled was 12.30 (SD = 2.69). Finally, for Group 4, auditory+no gesture, the average number of keywords recalled was 12.98 (SD = 1.75). An ANOVA revealed no main effect of type of stimulus

(visual or auditory), $F(1, 16) = .959, p = 0.342$, nor of the ability of gesture (gesture or no gesture), $F(1, 16) = .576, p = .459$. The interaction between stimulus type and gesture also did not reach significance, $F(1, 16) = .005, p = .942$.

Discussion

The results of the study revealed no statistically significant effects on the relationship between ability to gesture and number of keywords recalled. This meant that, unlike the researchers hypothesized, those who were able to gesture did not recall more keywords than those participants who were unable to gesture. In addition, the stimulus modality did not have an effect on the number of keywords recalled, so regardless of whether participants were presented with auditory or visual stimuli, the average number of keywords stayed the same.

This study did have limitations, however. The lack of significance could have been due to the small sample size, given there were only five people per condition. In addition to this, some individuals may have been more inclined to gesture more in general than others. This idea could be manifested in participants not being as affected in the “no gesture” category if they rarely gestured anyway, and vice versa. Similarly, the instructions given to the participants may have not elicited enough gesture because of this variability in participants’ reliance on gesture.

Because of this, it seemed imperative to test more participants to gain a greater sample size and to determine whether individual differences in the frequency of gesture of participants may account for varying likelihood of gesturing. The purpose of Experiment 2 was to determine whether there is a relationship between gesturing during conversation and gesturing during recall.

Experiment 2

In Experiment 1, no significant difference was found between the number of keywords that participants were able to recall if gesture was allowed or gesture was restricted. Due to this, in Experiment 2, gesture was not limited, and all participants were able to gesture naturally, but participants’ gesture rate (i.e., number of gestures per second) was investigated, because it was found in the previous experiment that certain participants used gesture more in communication than did others.

What does gesture rate look like in different communication settings? Goldin-Meadow (1999) looked at the role of gesture in a broad way and found that

gesture is specifically used in communication. In addition, Thompson et al. (1998) found that gesture is utilized within recollection. Gesture in both communication and recollection has not been studied within the same individuals, however. Do certain people utilize gesture in only one condition or the other, or do they consistently utilize gesture across all communicative situations? It is unknown if those who use a significant amount of gesturing are just “gesturers” or if different communicative situations are completely separate entities within the realm of gesture. Thus, the purpose of the second study was to look at the relationship between gesture during conversation and gesture during recollection. The researchers hypothesized that participants would gesture more, on average, during the recollection portion of the study compared to the conversational portion. In addition, because of the results of Experiment 1, there was no expectation that participants who were presented with the auditory stimuli would remember more or fewer keywords than those presented with the visual stimuli.

Method

Participants

In this study, 20 college-age participants (ages 18–25; 16 female, 4 male) from Butler University volunteered to be tested. Data from these 20 participants were included from 10 participants from Experiment 1 (Groups 1 and 3) and 10 new participants (5 assigned to Group 1, and 5 assigned to Group 3). These participants were motivated to participate in this study through a small incentive, a \$5 Starbucks gift card, upon completion of the study. Subjects were recruited via advertising around campus with materials such as flyers and posts on the department Facebook page.

Students who decided to participate in the study were informed of the study procedure and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. Potential participants understood that their participation was completely voluntary. In addition, participants agreed to be recorded via video for the sole use of the data being reviewed after the completion of the study. All sessions were video-recorded with a CAT Canon Vixia HF R200 HD camcorder. This research project was conducted on Butler University’s campus in the Communication Sciences and Disorders research lab.

Design

This experiment included both between- and within-subject independent variables. The first independent variable (between-subject) was the type of stimuli the participant was presented (auditory or visual). The second independent variable (within-subject) was communication type (conversation or recall). The first dependent variable was the number of keywords from a predetermined list that a participant was able to recall. Additional dependent variables included number of gestures and gesture rate (number of gestures per second) during both the distraction task and the recollection task.

Procedure and Stimuli

Participants completed the same procedure as did Groups 1 and 3 in Experiment 1; that is, all participants gestured naturally. Ten participants were assigned to Group 1, and ten participants to Group 3. The procedure and stimuli were the same as in Experiment 1.

Results

We combined the data for Groups 1 and 3 from Experiments 1 and 2 to complete three statistical analyses: an independent-samples *t*-test, a Pearson correlation test, and a paired-samples *t*-test. We did not include the data from the 10 subjects in Experiment 1 who were in Groups 2 and 4 (no gesture) because this experiment focused only on naturally gesturing participants.

To determine whether the type of stimuli had an impact on the number of keywords that participants were able to recall from the scenes, we ran an independent-samples *t*-test with stimuli condition (visual or auditory) as the between-subject variable and with number of keywords recalled as the dependent variable. The visual group recalled a mean of 12 words ($SD = 2.16$), while the auditory group recalled a mean of 11.90 words ($SD = 5.47$; see Table 1). The *t*-test revealed no significant difference between the two groups, $t(18) = 0.54$, $p = 0.958$.

We also analyzed the correlation between the number of gestures used during the conversation distraction task and during the memory-recall portion of the task. A Pearson correlation test did not reveal a significant correlation between the number of meaningful gestures during the distraction task compared to the number of meaningful gestures during the recall task, $r = .152$, $p = .523$. In addition, the number of gestures per second during the distraction task compared to the

number of gestures per second during the recollection task was positively, but not significantly, correlated, $r = .346, p = .136$. This means that the number of gestures used during one task did not increase consistently with the number of gestures used in the other task. Essentially, this assesses the idea that some participants are more likely to gesture in general than others in any type of communication. Although participants' number of gestures per second in the distraction task were positively correlated with the number of gestures per second in the recall task, the correlation was not strong enough to be significant.

Lastly, we ran a paired-samples *t*-test with type of task (communication versus recall) as the within-subject variable, and number of gestures used per second as the dependent variable. This analysis revealed fewer gestures per second in the communication task ($M = .17, SD = .94$) than the recall task ($M = .25, SD = .16$), $t(19) = 2.285, p = .034$, Cohen's $d = 1.022$.

Discussion

The results of the study revealed a positive correlation between the number of gestures a participant used during conversation and the number used during recollection, although this correlation did not reach significance. This finding suggests that there is no relation between number of gestures across communication contexts (conversation and recall). That is, individuals who use more gestures than others in one context (conversation) do not necessarily use more gestures than others in a second context (recall).

We also found that participants typically gestured more during the recollection portion of the task than during the conversational portion. This is consistent with the hypothesis that participants would gesture more when they were trying to recall information than during conversational communication. This finding suggests that gesturing may play a bigger role in recollection than in everyday conversation.

Some limitations to this study existed and should be noted, however. The sample size of Experiment 2 was predominately female (90%). It is unknown whether this would have an effect on gesture, but it is something to consider for future studies, considering that men and women often communicate differently (Hall & Roter, 2002). Some participants used gestures that were difficult to accurately account for because of the retroactive data collection via video recordings. Counting the number of gestures a participant used was completed via the study's recording, so the data could have been susceptible to subjectivity

because no specific a priori criteria, other than research judgment, labeled a participant's motion as a gesture or an arbitrary movement. It may have been helpful to create concrete criteria prior to data collection that detailed what was considered a gesture and what was considered a non-gesture motion (e.g., moving hair out of one's face). Along this same thread, the study was not a blind study, because the researcher knew in which group each participant had been placed. This potentially could have also produced some bias. If the researcher had been blind to which category was being analyzed, or if a different individual had completed the coding of gestures via recorded video after the experiment, there may have been less potential for bias when counting the number of gestures.

Another limitation was that the conversational portion that was analyzed could technically be seen as a recollection as well. The participant was asked to tell the researcher about the favorite trip or vacation the participant had ever taken. Although it is not the same as trying to recall keywords that participants had specifically been asked to remember, it could have had an effect on the conversational communication data. Using a different distraction conversation, such as the participant's favorite things to do in his or her free time, might eliminate the effects of the recollection involved with talking about a previous trip.

Because of this, future directions include a potential third experiment that diversifies the sex of participants and uses a blind study methodology. In addition, it would be insightful to tweak the methodology and stimuli to focus on eliciting more gesture. This could be used to see if prohibiting gesture does have an effect on the ability to recall information.

General Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the role of gesture in communication and recall. The findings suggest that individuals gestured equally across auditory and visual conditions but were more likely to gesture when they were trying to recall stimuli than when they were simply having a conversation. Moreover, individuals were not more likely to be "gesturers" over others. Instead, gesture was seen more as a recollection tool than as an individual trait. This aids the thought that gesture may be utilized differently across different situations.

Future directions for this research could include trying to alter the stimuli by possibly employing the "tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon" to spark retrieval failure or to use stimuli scenes that are more complex. This could elicit increased gesture or a different kind of gesturing response. In future experiments, it may be

beneficial to have participants encode both auditory and visual stimuli during their session, instead of just one, for comparative purposes. Introducing reaction time as a dependent variable in order to assess whether gesture plays a role in how quickly one is able to recall something might also yield interesting data. In addition, requiring participants to indicate a “feeling of knowing” before producing the answer could supply more insight. This might help identify in which specific phase or part of the recollection process gesture is utilized.

These results, if replicated and generalized, could be valuable in the future in a clinical setting. For instance, gesture could be applied to help children in the education system recall important material. Similarly, creating visual and kinesthetic association with material, possibly even in a speech therapy setting, could potentially aid in learning, especially if there is a disorder or deficit. Other advancements could be made with this research in populations with memory problems, such as dementia and mild cognitive impairment.

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Table 1

Mean Number of Target Words Recalled (and Standard Deviation) from Experiments 1 and 2

	Gesture	No Gesture
Experiment 1		
Visual	11.56 (1.13)	12.12 (1.33)
Auditory	12.30 (2.69)	12.98 (1.75)
Experiment 2		
Visual	12.00 (2.16)	
Auditory	11.90 (5.47)	

Appendix A

Example of Visual Stimuli



Appendix B

Example of Transcribed Recording of Auditory Stimuli

Researcher:

You are standing in front of a park scene with many children and families enjoying the beautiful day. Closest to you on the right side, a few children are playing with their sailboats in the fountain. A little farther back from the sailboat kids, seven children are playing and spinning on the merry-go-round. Still on the right-hand side, but even farther back, there is a swing set with three swings, a man/father is pushing a little boy. In the background, there are brightly colored trees lining the edge of the park, where a group of children are playing soccer. Landscaping throughout the park includes brightly colored flowers and green grass for visitors to play on, and families stroll on walking paths/sidewalks together. Farthest from you on the left-hand side, there are many children/kids playing on the large red slide. Closer to you on the left side, a brown-and-black dog sits next to

a bench where two women and a child sit watching a baby in a baby stroller. In the center of your view, there is a boy holding an orange ball, walking with a friend on the pathway.

Appendix C

Example of Keyword List for Visual/Auditory Stimuli

Visual # 6 - Park - (1:07)

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Park | 11. Grass |
| 2. Sailboats | 12. Families |
| 3. Fountain | 13. Walking Paths / Sidewalks |
| 4. Merry-Go-Round | 14. Children / Kids |
| 5. Swingset | 15. Slide |
| 6. Swings | 16. Dog |
| 7. Man / Father | 17. Bench |
| 8. Trees | 18. Baby Stroller |
| 9. Soccer / Kickball | 19. Orange Ball |
| 10. Flowers | 20. Women / Woman |

ELECTRA HEART'S PROVOCATIVE PERFORMANCE: CHALLENGING HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY THROUGH JUXTAPOSITION

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Abstract

Music has long been used as a rhetorical device to send messages and challenge social norms, and as a result of its accessibility and influential nature, it can be extremely persuasive. Marina Diamandis, known by her stage name of Marina and the Diamonds, has used her recent rise to popularity and fame to send such a message through her second album, in which she creates the persona of Electra Heart. Electra Heart is an ultrafeminine character who sings about provocative topics such as breaking hearts and performs stereotypical masculine behaviors.

Literature about music as rhetoric and about women in pop music informs my analysis of the persona of Electra Heart and her song and video "How to Be a Heartbreaker." The analysis is broken down into themes of gender roles, identity, and juxtaposition and incongruity. Using the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, overdetermined femininity, and juxtaposition, I conclude that through the juxtaposition of Electra Heart's overdetermined femininity and her performance of hegemonic masculinity, Diamandis effectively challenges feminine stereotypes and the system of hegemonic masculinity. Her challenge is effective because her femininity is overemphasized but she simultaneously performs hegemonic masculine behaviors, a juxtaposition that is not supposed to be possible and thus subverts hegemonic masculinity as a whole.

Music has been a form of protest and social reform for decades (Hurner, 2006), and "How to Be a Heartbreaker" is no exception to this trend. This song is featured on Marina Diamandis's second album, *Electra Heart*, wherein she creates the character of Electra Heart, a narcissistic beauty who embodies every stereotype of the classic pop star. Electra Heart, as an album and a persona, is, according to Diamandis, "a vehicle to portray part of the American dream" (Robinson, 2011); however, the performance of Electra Heart, within the lyrics, the music videos, and the character herself, is also a rhetorical device that comments on—and

challenges—modern ideals of femininity. Through the juxtaposition of an ultrafeminine character with provocative lyrics, Diamandis effectively challenges hegemonic masculinity because she sends a message to the listeners that the patriarchal system of gender can and should be subverted, and teaches them how to do so.

Despite popular notions that gender is inherent (West & Zimmerman, 1987), both femininity and masculinity are rhetorically constructed concepts that are performed. As *Electra Heart*, Diamandis performs gender, in both a literal and a metaphorical sense, through her hair, makeup, and dress, as well as her behavior in her videos. Judith Butler notes that “gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (1988, p. 519). Diamandis seems to abide by this institution of gender—that is, femininity—in her appearance and movement, but she contests it through her provocative lyrics. Through this juxtaposition, she directly challenges femininity, and in so doing, she also challenges hegemonic masculinity, because stereotypical notions of femininity are the result of hegemonic masculinity. Her simultaneous performance of femininity and masculinity destabilizes the entire system of hegemonic masculinity because the two are not supposed to occur in tandem.

In this paper, I highlight the significance of popular music and show its effectiveness as a rhetorical device. Next, I provide an overview of *Electra Heart* and “How to Be a Heartbreaker” and analyze them using the concepts of emphasized femininity and overdetermined femininity, hegemonic masculinity, and juxtaposition. Finally, I conclude by summarizing my analysis and offering directions for future research.

Context

Music and videos are more accessible than ever for listening and viewing: iTunes has nearly 800 million accounts (Arora, 2014), while YouTube has over 1 billion active users every month (Reuters, 2013). As iTunes and YouTube are two of the most popular resources for accessing music and music videos, these statistics are substantial. Diamandis is no exception to this phenomenon, as *Electra Heart* debuted at number one on the UK Albums Chart (Kreiser, 2012); her YouTube account has more than 1 million subscribers, and the video for “How to Be a Heartbreaker” has more than 36 million views (YouTube). Diamandis’s popularity is not the only reason her work should be studied. Gender is a performance, as

Judith Butler (1988) contends, and thus Electra Heart and “How to Be a Heartbreaker” warrant analysis because they indirectly subvert stereotypical notions of femininity through performance. Additionally, they instruct audiences, male and female alike, how to perform hegemonic masculinity. Essentially, Diamandis performs both masculine and feminine roles, and in doing so, she challenges the binary system of gender because one is not supposed to embody both roles simultaneously.

There is no doubt that music has the ability to influence listeners in “subtle and significant ways” (Root, 1986, p.15). Even before the Internet and radio, music was used as a way to send social and political messages (Hurner, 2006). The ability to influence audiences is also related to the song and/or artist’s popularity (Berns, Capra, Moore, & Noussair, 2010). Thus, in order to analyze topics such as femininity or hegemonic masculinity in music, it is appropriate to choose an artist or a song that has reached a large audience. Popular female artists such as Diamandis can use their platforms to send messages about gender and society that might otherwise be overlooked. Although some pop music actually affirms social constructs by not reflecting on them, not all pop music is so surface-level. Some songs do not effectively send their messages—or they simply have no deeper meaning—and as a result, they provoke only moods, not thought (Sellnow & Sellnow, 2001). As Nicola Dibben writes, however, “Music which is critical of its own material is critical of the social situation within which it arises” (1999, p. 333); essentially, if the artist is self-aware and channels this self-awareness into the music, the music can be an effective device to critique social constructs. When constructed carefully, music can “function effectively as an authentic voice for women as a marginalized group” (Sellnow & Sellnow, 2001, p. 396) and the message can provoke deeper thought in the audience and encourage the audience to take a stance on the issue at hand (Dibben, 1999). As Sellnow writes, music’s function as a rhetorical device that is deeply engrained in society warrants it to be continually examined (1999, p. 66).

The literature relevant to this essay, on music as a communication device and on female representation in music, can be divided into the overarching themes of gender roles and identity, and juxtaposition and incongruence.

Gender Roles and Identity

Much research that has been conducted about femininity or females in music has focused on how they are sexualized in music videos. Some researchers go so far as to call this a culture of sexualizing women because of its prevalence.

Women are frequently portrayed as sex objects and are objectified much more than are men in music videos, although men are still occasionally objectified (Vandenbosch, Vervloessem, & Eggermont, 2013). The popularity of this sexualization can lead to a chain of psychological events, including self-sexualization, which is the phenomenon in which women sexualize themselves as a result of the objectification of women on television, in magazines, and so on. This self-sexualization has been shown to increase aggression in men, especially if a woman who is seen as sexual also seems to have no autonomy (Blake, Bastian, & Denson, 2016). The dangers of sexualizing women in music are clear, but there are other gender roles upheld beyond portraying women as sex objects.

Research by Click and Kramer (2007) discusses how sex-role stereotypes persist in music and in music videos and are even upheld by female artists in their own work. Stereotypes such as women being passive, submissive, and not wanting to age are common themes. Dibben's (1999) work on femininity in popular music shows that some female artists construct music containing explicit patriarchal constructions, such as women submitting to the male gaze, being submissive and innocent but still sexual, and allowing men to have all the power. In contrast, sometimes, the artist readily acknowledges patriarchal constructs and feminine stereotypes but directly challenges them instead of reifying them. Through subtle implications, artists can encourage their listeners to be critical of the constructions they are portraying, like the narrative structure of "Dress" by PJ Harvey, which implies the female protagonist is trying to find a way to cope with her failed relationship and subvert the role expected of her as a woman (Dibben, 1999, p. 338). Whether or not they are explicitly discussed or addressed, gender roles are omnipresent in songs and music videos.

When performing gender, women have to adhere to certain norms and expectations in order to "do" their gender correctly. The act of taking on a certain appearance or identity is central to music that aims to send a message of protest. In Sheryl Hurner's work on suffrage songs, she claims that songs with a "protest message" can help break down social constructs of what it means to be a woman (2006). Although the "Cult of True Womanhood" that sang these suffrage songs adhered to tenets of pioussness, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity, the fact that they sang about suffrage in the first place was a huge challenge to gender norms of their time (2006, p. 235). The tenets of the Cult were what guided the identity of these women, and the songs they sang reinforced their identity. As Hurner writes, "songs may thereby serve to sustain existing discursive identities for women or to

develop new ones” (2006, p. 236). In modern-day music, this relationship between music and identity formation is still prevalent.

As a symptom of sexualization, females in music videos today frequently wear dresses “emphasizing one’s ideal body” in order to “attract men’s sexual interest” (Vandenbosch et al., 2013, p. 182). The desire for this “ideal body” can morph into an unhealthy obsession with the body; for many young girls, the desire leads to a “perception of excessive fatness,” which can lead to anorexia (Spitzack, 1993, p. 1). According to Spitzack, anorexia is a spectacle “characterized by a crisis of the female body and its quest for identity within a cultural climate that demands of its actors a concealment of performative criteria, thereby preserving the illusion of an essential female identity for spectators” (1993, p. 1). This formation of identity through body image is central to music videos and to representations of women in music. While hegemonic masculinity focuses on reifying straight white men as the dominant figures in society, it also justifies the subordination of women. This subordination results in emphasized femininity, the opposite of hegemonic masculinity. The term “emphasized femininity” is interchangeable with “overdetermined femininity” because both are focused on emphasizing the physical feminine features of women; women are trained to correlate their identity and worth with their appearance.

Juxtaposition and Incongruity

There are times when the message an artist is trying to send and the message the artist actually sends do not line up. For example, in Martina McBride’s song “This One’s for the Girls,” surface-level listening depicts the song as an empowering song for women. Deeper listening reveals some contradictions in her message, however: She claims women should not be defined by their appearances, but she simultaneously suggests that their worth is in their appearance (Click & Kramer, 2007). In instances such as this, incongruity, or inconsistency in messages from the same source, weakens the message of the artist. Although irony can be a great tool in conveying meaning in songs (Sellnow, 1999), McBride’s message is not strong enough or deep enough to depict irony; however, other artists, such as PJ Harvey and the Spice Girls, have been able to send effective messages in this manner (Dibben, 1999).

Juxtaposition and incongruity have been shown to have the ability to effectively send messages in music. Like incongruity, juxtaposition contains inconsistencies, but it takes it a step further by ensuring that the inconsistencies are set up in direct contrast to each other. Contradictions can cause the listener to pay

close attention to the music in order to figure out what the artist is trying to say. As Dibben (1999) suggests, contradictions in music can actually strengthen the message of the artist because the artist is escaping ideology. The song “Ooh, Aah ... Just a Little Bit” by Gina G encourages listeners to be complicit to patriarchal ideals because every aspect of the song reinforces popular stereotypes and the patriarchy. In contrast, the song “Dress” by PJ Harvey successfully subverts patriarchal ideologies through musical techniques and the narrative structure of the song (p. 340). Dibben’s analysis of these songs shows how social constructs of femininity and gender roles can be reified or challenged in music, depending on how the artist constructs the song and video. To successfully challenge gender roles, music must diverge from the norm in some form, whether in the musical structure of the song, in the lyrical and narrative structure, or through some other form of juxtaposition.

Overdetermined Femininity and Hegemonic Masculinity

Femininity and masculinity come in many forms, but some forms of each are the most socially accepted, especially overdetermined and emphasized femininity, and hegemonic masculinity. These concepts are central to any discussion of gender roles, making them critical to my analysis of Electra Heart. Hegemonic masculinity, according to R. W. Connell and James Messerschmidt (2005), is the most socially accepted version of manhood and causes subordination of women and the repositioning of all other types of masculinity in relation to it. I will be using Nick Trujillo’s interpretation of hegemonic masculinity (1991), specifically his concepts of patriarchy and heterosexuality.

Abigail Feder (1994) explains overdetermined femininity as the emphasis of feminine characteristics of women when the playing field between women and men is otherwise equal. Overdetermined femininity is a branch of emphasized femininity; it expands on the concept of the latter. Emphasized femininity is the opposite of hegemonic masculinity and is also a result of it. Hegemonic masculinity undermines women, even when they are on the same level as men, by emphasizing feminine characteristics; thus, overdetermined femininity and emphasized femininity are the same thing. In addition to these concepts, I will be using the idea of juxtaposition in my analysis, specifically focusing on the juxtaposition of Electra Heart’s ultrafeminine persona with her provocative lyrics and behavior.

Analysis

Electra Heart always emphasizes femininity via her appearance, often with big blonde curls, lots of makeup, and tight dresses. Electra Heart is the epitome of stereotypical femininity, but her appearance contradicts her song content and her behavior.

In addition to analyzing the persona of Electra Heart, I will analyze the lyrics and video of “How to Be a Heartbreaker.” In this song, Electra Heart lists four rules for how to break men’s hearts without getting hurt. This, along with other specific lyrics, depicts Electra Heart as performing hegemonic masculinity, along with her overdetermined feminine appearance. In the video “How to Be a Heartbreaker,” Electra Heart, opting for dark hair in place of the blonde curls, but still wearing form-fitting outfits, is shown in various locations with many different men dotting upon her while she looks extremely uninterested in their affections, although she does dance around some of them. In one of the reoccurring scenes, she dances around in a shower, fully dressed, with multiple men wearing only Speedos. I chose this video because Electra Heart clearly performs the concept of hegemonic masculinity not only in her lyrics but also in her behavior. In addition, this video explicitly shows role swapping of men and women, as the men are objectified and hypersexualized, which is another way Electra Heart subverts hegemonic masculinity.

Overdetermined Femininity is the Result of Hegemonic Masculinity

Although the overdetermination of Electra Heart’s femininity might seem like it reifies stereotypical femininity and hegemonic masculinity, Diamandis uses this overdetermination as a mechanism to capture her audience’s attention and challenge gender norms as the overly feminine Electra Heart simultaneously performs and teaches hegemonic masculine behaviors. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) write, emphasized femininity has generally been thought of as compliance to patriarchy. This is true; emphasized femininity is the result of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy. Hegemonic masculinity “ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men” (2005, p. 832); this legitimization of subordination manifests itself in women by being expected to accommodate the wants and needs of men in the form of emphasized femininity, among other things. Diamandis is able to use emphasized femininity to subvert the patriarchy instead of comply to it, however. Feder specifies that overdetermined femininity occurs when women and men in the same field are on par with one

another (1994). Diamandis is on par with other male musical artists in terms of talent and popularity. Following this definition, Electra Heart certainly overdetermines her femininity. The form-fitting outfits, the heavy makeup, all the pink and bows and high heels—these are all signifiers of stereotypical or emphasized femininity.

My analysis shows that Diamandis chooses to perform Electra Heart in four archetypes in her music videos and blog: Su-Barbie-A (a play on “suburbia”), who appears to look like a glamorized 1950s housewife; the Homewrecker, who is ultrafeminine in her appearance but not in her actions; the Teen Idle, who is essentially Electra Heart as a teenager with all her feminine appeal intact; and the Prima Donna, who is the most glamorous in appearance of the four archetypes. Although the archetypes all have different personalities, Electra Heart is consistently represented as the “ideal woman” in appearance, no matter the archetype, because each archetype emphasizes characteristics traditionally desirable in women—beauty and passivity being the most obvious. Through this representation of the archetypes, Diamandis can challenge both the archetypes and the stereotypes they are composed of because the audience already has a frame of reference; the archetypes remind the audience of traditional feminine characters. While her appearance is the most overdetermined part about her, as seen in the archetypes, Electra Heart’s femininity is also emphasized in her music videos.

In “How to Be a Heartbreaker,” Electra Heart does many things that are stereotypically feminine, but she does look to be sought after by the assortment of men with whom she appears. This depiction of her as the object of affection is in compliance with patriarchal notions that women are passive and sought after while men are supposed to be active and do the seeking. To read Electra Heart as a simple passive character based on this passive behavior would be a mistake, however. The performance of these stereotypically feminine behaviors in “How to Be a Heartbreaker” is a very intentional choice. The passive feminine behaviors in the music video are contradicted by the lyrics as well as by Electra Heart’s other behaviors in the video, such as her seduction of many men at the same time. Her ultrafeminine appearance and seemingly passive behavior are juxtaposed with her performance of hegemonic masculinity.

Electra Heart Performs Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is embodied in many different manners, but the two most relevant to this analysis are patriarchy and heterosexuality (Trujillo, 1991). The patriarchal manifestation of hegemonic masculinity is male dominance over

women, and heterosexuality is the emphasis on manliness, or “not being a sissy” (1991, p. 291), and having sexual relationships with women. Diamandis flips these concepts upside down in how she has Electra Heart perform them.

Electra Heart’s performance of hegemonic masculinity is most obvious in the lyrics for “How to Be a Heartbreaker.” This song is structured around a list of four rules for how to break a man’s heart without getting hurt. Rule number one is “that you gotta have fun / but baby when you’re done, you gotta be the first to run.” This implies that, to Electra Heart, heartbreaking is essentially a hobby that she does because she finds it entertaining, but she knows the risks so she has learned how to avoid getting hurt. Rule number two is “just don’t get attached to / somebody you could lose.” This rule shows a more vulnerable side of Electra Heart, as it implies that she has loved and lost before, which is perhaps why she chooses to treat heartbreaking as a game. She recognizes that loving someone can result in pain, so she chooses to play around instead of settling into a deeper relationship; she is refusing to go deeper than the surface level, presumably nothing more than physical affection. This rule is a nod to the stereotypes that men do not love deeply and that because of this, women get hurt frequently. Electra Heart promising not to get attached is a demonstration of her taking on a masculine role.

The third rule is “wear your heart on your cheek / but never on your sleeve, unless you wanna taste defeat.” This is an obvious play on the phrase “wear your heart on your sleeve,” which means to let everyone know how you are feeling. Wearing one’s heart on one’s sleeve is often a negative trait tied very closely with women and the stereotype that they are too emotional. By claiming that being emotional results in defeat, Electra Heart alludes to the patriarchal tradition of men controlling women. The persona of Electra Heart usually wears a small black heart on her left cheek, right below the outer corner of her eye. Putting the heart on her cheek is likely a symbol of how Electra Heart pretends to be an open, emotional person, like the true feminine stereotype, when her lyrics indicate she is keeping an eye on her feelings and never showing her true colors.

The fourth and final rule that she spells out is “gotta be looking pure / kiss him goodbye at the door and leave him wanting more, more.” This rule explicitly shows Electra Heart’s nature as a player, a title she proudly wears as she sings in the chorus, “We’ll get him falling for a stranger, a player.” Electra Heart recognizes her overdetermined appearance in this rule, and her motivation for emphasizing her femininity becomes obvious—by looking “pure,” she can more easily break a heart and escape unscathed. While she wears a lot of makeup, her makeup choices are

pink and pure rather than femme-fatale, which highlights the contradictory message of her lyrics.

On the surface, these rules instruct women how to break men's hearts, but they double as instructions for how to perform hegemonic masculinity. Electra Heart is performing patriarchal behaviors usually performed exclusively by men. Although she appears somewhat passive in the music video for "How to Be a Heartbreaker," Electra Heart is dominant over the men because she is desirable and she recognizes this, so she uses it to control them. We see her uninterested in the affections of the men around her; in one scene, she is on her phone while a man kisses her neck, and in another, she dances around while a man eyes her, but she makes no eye contact with him, showing that the dance is not for his pleasure. Although she reinforces the concept of being the object of desire, she holds all the power and control over the men around her and is clearly the dominant figure. Toward the end of the song, she sings, "Girls, we do whatever it will take / 'Cause girls don't want, we don't want our hearts to break / in two, so it's better to be fake / Can't risk losing love again, babe." Here she is implying that she is being a player and breaking hearts because she has been played and has had her heart broken; she has made a decisive choice to do what has been done to her and to perform those masculine behaviors. In performing masculinity as a woman, she subverts the entire culture of masculinity by showing that women can behave in a hegemonic masculine manner, which is a direct contradiction to the very definition of hegemonic masculinity.

The other aspect of hegemonic masculinity that Electra Heart performs is heterosexuality. Electra Heart is very clearly heterosexual in both her lyrics, where she sings of girls and boys being together, and her music video, in which the supporting characters are all men. This aspect of her performance actually upholds ideals of femininity because women are supposed to be with men, hence the stereotypes of "housewife" and "mother" (Trujillo, 1991). Despite being exclusively with men, Electra Heart still manages to subvert parts of this concept by being the dominant figure and not performing the stereotype of housewife or mother. Part of the heterosexual nature of hegemonic masculinity is "not failing at relationships with women" (Trujillo, 1991, p. 291). Electra Heart crushes this expectation by purposefully making men fall for her without any intention of falling for them; any man who falls for her is going to fail in his pursuit for her affection and thus will fail at the heterosexual aspect of hegemonic masculinity.

Although Electra Heart is an ultrafeminine character and upholds some aspects of femininity, such as passivity, she ultimately subverts hegemonic

masculinity by performing it herself. Emphasized and overdetermined femininities are the result of hegemonic masculinity, and by embodying them, Electra Heart is able to subvert hegemonic masculinity. This subversion would not be successful if it were not for the juxtaposition of her ultrafeminine appearance with provocative lyrics and behavior.

Challenging Hegemonic Masculinity via Juxtaposition

The most significant part of Electra Heart as both a character and an album is the juxtaposition between the emphasized feminine characteristics and the provocative lyrics that display her performance of hegemonic masculinity, because it very clearly demonstrates the effect of the power structure of masculinity. When juxtaposition in music is strong, it can display meaning by escaping ideology (Dibben, 1999), meaning it diverges from the norm; Diamandis does just this through Electra Heart. Sellnow and Sellnow (2001) warn about the difference between songs that provoke thought versus those that only provoke moods; for music to have a social impact, it must provoke thought. *Electra Heart* clearly provokes thought, and this is a result of the juxtaposition.

Diamandis consciously presents Electra Heart as a sexualized character, but while this self-sexualization seems to uphold some patriarchal ideals, she still has autonomy, as shown in her lyrics, and thus is not an “easy” object of aggression for men (Blake et al., 2016). Additionally, without her performance of overdetermined femininity, Diamandis’s challenge to hegemonic masculinity would not be successful. If Diamandis had created a normally dressed character who sings the same lyrics as Electra Heart, she would be seen in a completely different light and her music would provoke only a mood, not thought. This is evident by the fact that the song itself has little effect on the listener but when in tandem with the character performance and the music video provides extra elements that make it powerful. Diamandis uses the elements of shock and irony to her advantage; through Electra Heart’s performance of both overdetermined femininity and hegemonic masculinity, she creates a contradiction that does not go unnoticed.

Although some might argue that because Electra Heart performs overdetermined femininity, she cannot challenge any gender norms, whether emphasized femininity or hegemonic masculinity, such an argument looks at only a small piece of the performance of Electra Heart. A performance of overdetermined femininity or hegemonic masculinity individually would not be enough to challenge anything and would most likely result in the reification of the concept; it is the juxtaposition of the performances of the two concepts together

that results in the successful challenge of hegemonic masculinity. Electra Heart's overdetermined femininity together with her provocative lyrics captures the audience's attention and forces the audience to think about what she is doing, instead of just creating a mood through the music. She instructs her audience how to perform hegemonic masculinity through the set of rules she espouses in "How to Be a Heartbreaker," which subverts hegemonic masculinity by implicating that women can perform masculine behaviors just as men can. Finally, by making the men in her video perform the objectified role that women are usually forced to assume while she herself performs both the masculine and feminine roles, Diamandis takes the juxtaposition of her performance of Electra Heart to another level that flips the system of hegemonic masculinity on its head.

Conclusion

Electra Heart, at a glance, is a simple overly feminine character. Her pink form-fitting outfits go well with her heavy makeup and done-up hair, which taps into cultural views of female stereotypes. She is never caught looking anything less than flawless; she is an exaggeration of stereotypical femininity and the ideal woman. This performance of overdetermined femininity is done very carefully, with purpose and conviction, which is made obvious by Electra Heart's simultaneous performance of hegemonic masculinity. She makes sure she looks "pure" so she can perform masculine actions, such as being a player and breaking hearts, more effectively. This duality is critical to the success of Diamandis's challenge to femininity and, on a larger scale, hegemonic masculinity. Diamandis successfully challenges hegemonic masculinity through the juxtaposition of an ultrafeminine character with provocative lyrics, because the lyrics display her performance of hegemonic masculinity—a performance that is provocative in and of itself because she is a woman and, as such, should not be able to perform hegemonic masculine roles.

Marina and the Diamonds continues to grow in popularity, especially with the release of her third album, *Froot*, in 2015. This album is not as explicit a commentary on gender roles and femininity as *Electra Heart*; however, if used in tandem with more recent interviews in which Diamandis comments on feminism, it could be used in future research about how music can challenge hegemonic masculinity. Additionally, future research could look at musicians of different genres who are popular with young men and examine how those musicians challenge or reinforce hegemonic ideals, and whether they do so by provoking

thought or moods (Sellnow, 1999). It would be interesting to see how approaches beyond juxtaposition work to challenge femininity and hegemonic masculinity.

Marina and the Diamandis clearly challenges hegemonic masculinity in “How to Be a Heartbreaker,” but only if one sees the simultaneous performance of the feminine and the masculine in the music video. Her challenge does not work unless you see her character and video, because they demonstrate the masculine and feminine binary together, a performance that is not supposed to occur, because of the standards of hegemonic masculinity (Trujillo, 1991). Diamandis’s performance as Electra Heart provokes thought through her lyrics, character, and video, and she masterfully showcases that a specifically gendered performance can challenge the social and rhetorical structures of gender, but the artist must demonstrate visible juxtaposition of the gender binary in order to successfully do so.

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THE COMEDIA NORMANNORUM: NORMAN IDENTITY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE 11TH-12TH CENTURIES

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Introduction—How Symbols and Ethnography Tie to Historical Myth

Since the 1970s, historians have tried many different methodologies for exploring texts. Because multiple paradigms tempt the historian's gaze, medieval texts can often befuddle readers in their hagiographies and chronologies. At the same time, these texts also give the historian a unique opportunity in the form of cultural insight. In his 1995 work *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy*, Kenneth Baxter Wolf discusses a text's role in medieval historiography. A professor of History at Pomona College, Wolf divides historical commentary on medieval primary sources into two ends of a spectrum. While one end worries itself on the accuracy and classical "truth" of a source, the other end, postmodern historiography, uses historical records "to tell us how the people who wrote them conceived of the events occurring in the world around them."¹ The historian treats a medieval text as a launching pad for cultural analysis. Because any individual writes history in the context of his or her culture, no matter the time period, we can analyze rhetoric and symbol as windows into cultural perception and creation.

If text has cultural context worth analyzing, then textual symbol should serve as the beginning point for cultural analysis. Although a historian may not know the meaning behind a text or the author's intent, the historian can at least notice tropes and images, nuggets of textual expression that, when cracked and prodded, hold flakes of culture. After panning a text for symbol, the historian can identify how a particular text exists as a reflection of its culture. Whereas one self-contained image poses little value to the historian, recurring symbolism over decades of texts hints at something deeper—that these symbols are pieces of a culture's identity.

¹ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1.

The “culture” of medieval historiography is mostly analogous to “ethnicity,” a term that anthropologists as well as social historians have molded and defined through decades of serious critique. As Nick Webber begins in his work on Norman identity, social scientists and postmodern historians of the 1970s saw ethnicity less as an “objective reality” and instead molded ethnicity into a “subjective phenomenon” of deliberate choice; in short, contemporary historiographers “emphasise the importance of ethnicity as *something that was claimed* by those within a group, and attributed *by those outside it*” [emphasis mine].² When textual sources portray a particular people as an “ethnicity,” the reader bestows the title; in the end, exterior observers legitimate the claims of a people.

After changing the meaning behind “ethnicity” in historiography, medieval historians of the 1970s then turned their heads towards *gens*, a Medieval Latin term meaning “people” or “family line.”³ Much like more-modern texts with the term “ethnicity,” medieval authors also categorized societies into *gentes*, the *gens Normannorum* (the “Norman people”) being no exception.⁴ As such, when medieval historians define a *gens*, they attribute ethnicity to a people who previously claimed it through their political, social, and cultural practices. What was once a concept argued between a society and its contemporaries is now a courtship between a historical source and its reader. A historian reads a text, notices its claims in the form of symbols, and then induces an identity around those symbols.

The Norman peoples of northern Francia from the 10th through 13th centuries exemplify a culture that promulgated its cultural identity through textual symbol. In terms of historical context, the Normans were a mix of Norse and Scandinavian peoples who gradually migrated to the coastal region along the English Channel during the 9th and 10th centuries. Eventually, these Vikings carved out their own duchy from the Frankish region of Neustria, becoming a mostly independent state by the 11th century. From their new Frankish home, these peoples gave themselves a cultural name—Normans—and quite quickly expanded their political influence, first to Sicily in 1061, then to England in 1066, and then to the Holy Land during the First Crusade (1096–99) and other regions of Europe. Despite thousands of miles of geographic separation between Norman states,

² Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911–1154* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005), 3.

³ Webber, 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*

however, these Norse–Frankish peoples still exhibited a certain “Norman-ness” or *Normannitas*, a cultural identity that spread throughout their holdings in the medieval world. The Normans crafted this *Normannitas* when they first set foot in Francia, as a means of both defining their own culture and comparing their culture to that of their European peers.

Paradoxically, this *Normannitas* also includes self-acculturation, or the voluntary change of cultural practice to make a certain ethnicity or *gens* seem legitimate in relation to other local cultures. While Norman texts define qualities that the Normans both valued and disliked, Normans were also highly adaptive to the cultures of their neighbors, often changing their histories to accommodate the cultural practices of their immediate peers. Wolf connects this historiographical looseness to many other historiographies that immediately followed the fall of the Roman Empire, in which “barbarian” cultures grasped for ways to connect their societies to both Roman history and their conquered subjects.⁵ The Normans used their histories to reform their cultural identity in much the same way: to connect their conquests to local culture, and to tie Norman social hierarchies into the existing historical narrative of a given region. When they first came to Francia, the Normans morphed their histories, adapting those histories to the societies they conquered, to legitimize Norman expansion into medieval Europe. The Normans used this historical rhetoric to prove that they belonged in medieval Europe as much as any other people. As they adapted to European cultural mores, the Normans shed their atypical behaviors—polygamy and paganism, for example—and portrayed themselves as legitimate Christian state holders in medieval Francia.

In its quest to combine *Normannitas* with local cultures, Norman historiography uses three overarching categories of cultural symbols. The first of these is churches. After the Normans converted to Christianity, Norman hagiographies, church construction, and liturgical reform all enforced a social hierarchy that the Normans created after their conquests. This prevails especially in the ducal origins of most Norman church power, as monasteries and other religious communities derived their land from grants, royal taxes, and laws. The second of the categories is castles, a common trope of Norman state building. Following conquest, Norman leaders constructed motte and baileys, fortresses, towers, and other architecture of a militaristic nature—a practice they learned from their Frankish neighbors—to remind their subjects of Norman occupation and to

⁵ Wolf, 4.

further the perception of their right to rule.⁶ By extension, Norman castles also reflect another key political symbol: law. At the same time, law occupies a third category of cultural symbol: that of texts. Written work is the assessment and observation of other statements of legitimacy; Norman laws and Norman histories are a gradient between political statements of legitimacy and texts that embody cultural values. Through analyzing the roles that these symbols play in Norman identity, we can see how the Normans systematically and conscientiously affirmed their *gens* and forged connections to their subjects. The Normans propagated a rhetoric of cultural legitimacy through these symbols; churches, castles, and texts reflect not only the cultural identity that the Normans built in contrast to their neighbors but also the cultural practices that the Normans adopted through self-acculturation.

The Normans in Normandy—Geography and Conversion

Whereas most historiography distinguishes between the history of a place and the history of a people, proper analysis of medieval Norman identity conflates both ideas. The racial mix of the settlers of northern Francia required the Normans to construct their identity out of geographical determiners instead of genealogical factors. Before crafting a culture eponymous with their region, however, the Normans had to take steps to appear equal to other Frankish societies by asserting Christian motifs; the Normans had to first prove that they belonged among the states of Christian Medieval Europe before they could fully explore their cultural identity within Normandy. Early Norman historians buy into this acculturation by writing on the Normans' "Frankish" characteristics—i.e., their Christianity. After asserting their Christianity as a means of gaining acceptance into Europe, Norman historians then identify key pieces of *Normannitas*, including their martial abilities and egalitarian law.

The Document at Fécamp

The story of Norman occupation in "Normandy," or "the land of the Normans," begins in the ninth century. In terms of historical record, the account of Fécamp is one of the earliest documents we have that mentions the Normans as a society in France. Written by an anonymous source of Norman or Frankish origin,

⁶ Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power 840–1066* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 239. Searle calls castles "Europe's most powerful instruments of social control" in the medieval world. This practice started in Europe, primarily through Frankish states, and then through Normans.

the source of Fécamp illustrates how Charles of France recognized a Viking settlement in northern France around the mid-10th century. The author portrays the early circumstances of this “Norman” settlement: “[The Normans] are given the seven farthest maritime provinces by the gift and concession of Charles, the king of France, which they may improve by a settlement of their labor from abroad, and defend and protect against the invasions of assaulting barbarians.”⁷ Medieval historian Leah Shopkow identifies these beginnings of Norman historiography as the first steps toward an “ideological existence” in terms of early *Normannitas*.⁸ This ideology starts to manifest itself upon the characterization of Rollo, a proto-Norman Viking who receives a land grant from Charles the Simple of Francia. As the Fécamp source and Shopkow explain, “Rollo received a grant of territory consisting of Rouen, its surroundings, and the Pays de Caux,” a strip of land east of the Seine along the coast. A concession to stop Viking aggression so close to Francia, Charles the Simple’s land grant at least partially defined a space for the Viking settlers who cohabitated the area with their Latinate–French-speaking neighbors.⁹ These Scandinavians “came upon the Frankish scene in the 840s as raiders, and, when they could, as settlers.”¹⁰ Before Charles the Simple’s concession, Normandy did not exist as a political entity, nor was there “any unified duchy that could be transmuted into Normandy”—the Normans had to carve out a political space in which to live.¹¹

While Shopkow categorizes the Fécamp source with multiple criteria, I feel that two concepts best define how this source demonstrates the early stages of Norman identity construction: political gains and cultural reform. First of all, the Fécamp document begins the narrative of the Norman community with a political act: Charles the Simple bequeathing a geographic expanse to a particular group of Viking invaders. Military conflict precipitated this political act; the Normans received this concession partly because of their constant raiding. At the same time, a cultural factor must have existed to distinguish these particular Scandinavians from other groups. By differentiating proto-Normans from other Scandinavians, the Fécamp source casts Normans as culturally changed from their ancestors. The historian can take this contrast as a symptom of acculturation; the Normans must

⁷ Anonymous, “The Document at Fécamp,” as cited in Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 8.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Searle, 1.

¹¹ Ibid.

have made some conscious effort to make themselves appear culturally closer to the Franks than did other Germano-Norse communities.

The Normans continue their cultural change by offering to convert to Christianity. The next portion of the Fécamp source illustrates this point: “When the Normans, renewed by the grace of spiritual sacraments, had accepted their provinces, they called them Normandy, ‘North’ meaning ‘wind’ in their language. First Rollo, then second William, the son of Rollo, held the dukedom of this land.”¹² The chronology of this passage is critical; as the author of the Fécamp piece notes, the Normans accepted Christian sacrament before they seized Charles’s land grant. Christian expression may exemplify a symbolic expression of European *gens* as opposed to the previous pan-Scandinavian qualities of the proto-Normans. The historian can read this specific sequence of events in two ways: that the author of the Fécamp document, probably a vernacular Latinate-French speaker with ties to Francia as well as the new Normandy, emphasizes the Normans’ Christianity as a criterion for their claim of the region, or that the Normans felt it prudent to convert to Christianity in order to legitimize their rule, thus bringing them closer to the local culture of their coinhabitants. As Shopkow hints, these “converted pagan(s) comprised a foreign settlement”; in political terms, the Normans had now expressed themselves through the Frankish proclamation, but they had also deliberately highlighted their ability to forge a connection to their future subjects through their Christianization.

The Normans’ decision to name their land from their Scandinavian roots also evokes cultural distinction. The Normans most likely constituted only a landed minority in “Normandy” by AD 911.¹³ Despite this, the Normans copied their linguistic practices when naming Charles the Simple’s former state; this combined with Norman changes to place-names from Latinate-French origins to Scandinavian labels for regions in which the Normans occupied. By the time of the first Norman histories some century later, however, place-names and linguistic practice regressed to the French vernacular of the majority.¹⁴ In fact, the Normans took special care to note the “Roman” language that they express in their later histories; despite their Danish linguistic origins less than a few decades before, these Normans actively adopted the language of their subjects, along with the formal Latin of the medieval elite and church communities. By the time of Dudo of Saint-Quentin, the first known Norman historiographer, Normans were using the

¹² Ibid.

¹³ R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 21–22.

¹⁴ Ibid.

place-names and language of their Latinate-French speaking peasantry for all things except the name of the region itself. The historian can view this as a parallel for other Norman social and cultural practices; although the early Vikings of “the land of the North Men” opted for culturally familiar terms by the time of Charles of France, the century between Norman establishment and Norman historiography transformed the Normans into French Christians who presented their language, as well as their history, as parallel to that of the rest of Neustria.

The linguistic choices that the Normans made have European parallels in their methodology. As medieval historian Nick Webber expresses, the Normans embraced “the close relationship” between “ethnonyms and toponyms”—or the language used to refer to a people and the name that those people use for their political region.¹⁵ In the context of medieval ethnography, many other European *gentes* use the same word for both their people and their state; in fact, Webber takes special care to emphasize the parallels between “Normans” and “Normandy” with “Burgundians” and “Burgundy” or with “Franks” and “Francia”—all medieval states of the same region.¹⁶ In this sense, we can analyze the Normans’ decision to name their duchy after their people as yet another piece in the Normans’ deliberate acts of acculturation. While some historians emphasize the Scandinavian qualities of Norman state-naming, I think that the Normans’ decision to title their region in the same manner as their Frankish or Burgundian peers says more about their desire to parallel European values than their own linguistic origins. This easily ties to our categorization of Norman symbols of identity. With text as an evaluation of other cultural statements, the title of “dux Normannorum” (Duke of the Normans) may be a cultural statement in and of itself; just like “le roi des Français” of medieval Francia, the Normans are rulers of a people, not a region—dukes of Normans, not of Normandy, and legitimized rulers of that culture.¹⁷

The Norman migration to northern France exhibits the early qualities of Norman identity. British historian R. H. C. Davis expands on how the early Normans used geography as the taproot to their identity. Rather than expounding geography and culture as a dialectic, Davis rejects analyzing “ethnicity” and genealogical factors when drawing a picture of the Scandinavian peoples who began living in northern Francia in the 10th century.¹⁸ Instead, Davis believes we should look at Norman historical development and the first sources of Norman

¹⁵ Webber, 7–8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Davis, 59.

history as pieces of a “creation myth.”¹⁹ This Norman historical writing also ties to a kind of rhetoric meant to blur the lines between conquered and conqueror. Having won a piece of land from the Franks through appearing religiously similar to them, the Normans learned to adopt church symbols as part of their identity.

In this vein, we should consider Norman historical writing as a means of expressing political, social, and cultural meaning but not a specific genealogical or racial condition. When the Normans arrived in France, they amalgamated their already multicultural origins with the residents of mainland Francia. Although some of the Normans who would become extensive property holders had closer ties to Scandinavia than others, Franks, Britons, and these new Normans all shared titles in the social and political sphere of Normandy.²⁰ Because of our inability to distinguish these landed classes through a racial lens, the historian must abandon viewing *Normannitas* as a racial term. Instead, Normans comprise only one piece of the social and cultural matrix of early medieval France; rather than enforce their Scandinavian practices, the Normans instead acculturated to Frankish norms and practices.

As both Davis and Wolf express in their secondary texts, the Normans matched other medieval historiographies that narrate cultural assimilation as a means of connecting a conqueror society’s cultural norms with the practices of its subjects.²¹ Like previous histories from Francia following the fall of the Roman Empire, Norman sources take the most likely oral histories from their Scandinavian beginnings and juxtapose those stories with Frankish values such as Christianity. In this sense, the historian should read the earliest texts of Norman history as an attempt at presenting Norman narratives as parallel to previous Frankish experiences, as a means of legitimizing the Normans’ inclusion into the political tapestry of medieval France.

Dudo of Saint-Quentin’s *De Moribus et Actis Primorum Normanniae Ducum*

In the timeline of Norman histories, Dudo of Saint-Quentin’s *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum*, or *Customs and Acts of the First Norman Dukes*, pioneered historical accounts of the Normans as the first known text describing their rule from within Normandy. Unfortunately, we know too little of

¹⁹ Ibid., 19.

²⁰ Ibid., 36.

²¹ Davis, 19; Wolf, 4.

what this monk from Saint-Quentin did for much of his life in the late 10th and early 11th centuries. Medieval historian and Latin scholar Eric Christiansen combines the factors that Dudo provides about himself along with other historical evidence to construct a picture of this Norman-Frankish author. A relatively well-to-do resident born around AD 965, Dudo ascended to head cleric of Saint-Quentin in Picardy in February of 1015.²² From what we can gather, count Richard I of Évreux commissioned Dudo's work around 994–996; by the early 1020s, Dudo lay down his pen, releasing a collection of books on geography, aristocracy, and the history of his religious community from the arrival of the early Normans to their fully fledged state. Ultimately, Dudo's work outlines the beginnings of Norman migration into Francia from Scandinavia, their destined creation of a state, and the first dukes who ruled this state.

Dudo's source fits into a period in which the Normans were taking active steps toward mirroring Frankish cultural and linguistic practice. In this sense, Dudo reflects the Normans' transition into a legitimized *gens* of Europe instead of a pagan outsider people living in Francia. In fact, Webber cites the use of the "ethnonym" of "Normandy" in Dudo's work as a statement that "marked the ethnogenesis of a new people."²³ Dudo affirms the Normans' assimilation into European customs and traditions as the beginning of their European rather than Scandinavian lives after a few generations in Francia. To fully embody such a change, Webber argues, the Normans needed a new word for themselves—hence, Dudo's *Normanni*.

After his beginning invocation and a few prayer verses, Dudo begins his history with a description of the Germano-Norse peoples from which the Normans descended, as well as a potential explanation for their migration to northern France. Dudo begins this description with an apostrophe to the peoples of Scandinavia:

Spread out within the huge space between the Danube and the edge of the Scythian Sea, there dwell savage and barbarous peoples, which are said to have sprung forth in various different ways from the island of Scanza [Scandinavia], hemmed in on both sides by the Ocean, like a swarm of bees from a hive, or like a sword from a scabbard; as barbarians will.²⁴

²² Dudo of Saint-Quentin, *History of the Normans*, trans. Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1998), ix–x.

²³ Webber, 21.

²⁴ Dudo, 129.

Dudo began writing his accounts in a time when “men were still alive whose fathers could have remembered Rollo,” the proto-Norman hero of definite Scandinavian origins.²⁵ In less than a few generations after the Normans carved out their state, Dudo, a Norman-Frank, scorns the non-European, or “savage,” origins of the *gens*—a rapid change in sentiment. In little more than a century, the Normans have gone from a pagan people to a European landholding community that produces texts that mock and criticize their earliest oral mythos.

One of the first symbols that corresponds to our three main categories of Norman identity comes to us in Dudo’s characterful address of Scandinavians: the “sword.” As the opening invocation references, Dudo likens the barbarians of Scandinavia to a sword in a scabbard; this simile contains the Normans in a bond made through military language. Although we cannot fully connect only Dudo’s comparison to a piece of Norman identity, the trope of arms and armaments as a symbol in Norman historiography begins here, in the very earliest of Norman texts.

Law and custom also motivated Norman expansion. At first, these motivations came from Viking social mores in response to overpopulation concerns; Dudo cites the chief cause of Norman exodus to northern France as one of practicality, as Norman polygamy left many Normans landless and covetous of the political power of their relatives: “Now these people burn with too much wanton lasciviousness, and with singular depravity debauch and mate with as many women as they please . . . when [their children] have grown up, they clamour fiercely against their fathers for shares of property.”²⁶ Again, Dudo criticizes the historic cultural practices of the Normans. Although the Normans had once been pagan polygamists, their 10th-century Frankish Christian customs directly conflicted with their former identity, leading to Dudo’s harsh commentary. As he continues, we see that the Normans resorted to a “very old custom” of exiling children via luck of the draw.²⁷ Again, we must consider Dudo’s commentary in tandem with his criticism; if Dudo scorns the polygamy of the early Normans, he must also react to early Norman custom in a way that mocks its antiquated nature. As Webber identifies, after the Normans settled in Francia, “Scandinavian custom met Carolingian law”; as a means of adopting Frankish cultural practice, the Normans rapidly changed their legal and social customs to parallel those of their European neighbors. Dudo

²⁵ J. J. Norwich, *The Other Conquest: The Normans in the South, 1016–1130* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 6.

²⁶ Dudo, 129.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

logically sees Norman polygamy and the customary reaction to it as foreign concepts, as neither is part of Norman identity by the time of his writing.

Still, Dudo continues with his chronology. The Viking warrior Rollo, the proto-Norman of Dudo's narrative, is a victim of Scandinavian exile custom. Although Rollo was most likely Norwegian,²⁸ Dudo begins Rollo's exploits by telling of his exile from Denmark with a band of men: "Francia was considered an almost empty desert, and the terror-stricken people were dreading the arrival of the Northmen like the unpredictable rumblings of a thunder-clap."²⁹ In this vein, Dudo considers the political and cultural climate that the Normans must have faced upon their arrival in Francia; as the Normans did not yet mirror the practices of Europeans, Dudo assumes that the medieval people of Francia would greet Rollo and his men with typical response: armed resistance. Assuming Rollo's motives to be hostile, the Franks take up arms against the exiled Normans in the same way that they had against Hasting, another Viking leader depicted in *de moribus*.

Though the Franks' resistance of the Normans' arrival in Neustria seems like a logical course of action because of potential hostility, we can also examine Dudo's chronology in cultural terms. At this point, the Franks deny the Normans because of the Normans' Scandinavian cultural origins. Because they appear like any other Viking raiders, the Normans seemingly threaten the Franks' European society. As Dudo's text hints, these Normans must change their appearance from barbaric Norsemen to peaceful Franks if they truly wished to cohabitate with their northwestern European neighbors. This includes the very way that the Normans report their history; as Christiansen explains, the Normans rejected copying their Old Norse poetic style for any historiography made in Normandy, instead opting for the written chronology that Dudo mimics from other Frankish and English historical writing.³⁰

Like the account of the Fécamp document, this evidence of Norman change in custom comes to us in the form of Christianization and baptism—important concepts in the Church symbolism of Norman identity. The Normans in Dudo's work cannot or will not persevere in northern France until they take steps toward acculturation to Frankish values, including conversion to Christianity. Rollo and his exiles seek ways of returning to Scanza [Scandinavia] or of finding success in

²⁸ Shopkow, 70.

²⁹ Dudo, 136.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, xvii.

northwestern Europe. As Dudo writes in his opening invocation, the Normans have a destined course of action:

Wealth will be showered on Rollo, affluence on his be conferred;/Once there is peace between Francia's sons and the Dacians,/Then will [Fortune] breed and give birth . . . /Kings and archbishop, dukes also and counts, nobles of high rank:/Under whose rule, Christ-led, all the world will rejoice & prevail,/and by whom churches will everywhere be increased in number.³¹

The symbol of the church dominates this passage; in the form of verse, Dudo predicts the Normans' future gains as a product of their decision to convert to Christianity. Because of this, we can classify Dudo's narrative as part of our three main pieces of Norman identity: that of churches and the actions associated with them as a means of blurring cultural divisions and promoting Norman presence in northwestern Europe.

Rollo's ultimate decision to convert to the religion of his Frankish peers came after the English king Aethelstan advised him to accept God and pursue Christian peace over barbaric raiding. Dudo begins his account of Aethelstan and Rollo by describing the English king as "adorned with a reputation for all kinds of goodness" and "a most worthy protector of the holy church."³² Dudo echoes the religious qualities that the 11th-century Normans will value by placing special emphasis on Aethelstan's role as "protector of the holy church"; if Dudo portrayed a king as a morally good leader because of his ability to strengthen the Christian church, then he must have valued church security as a piece of his medieval identity. As Dudo wrote within the monastery of Saint Quentin, this comes as no surprise.

After sending envoys to Aethelstan, Rollo met with the English king as a guest in his court.³³ With sadness, Rollo's envoys informed Aethelstan of their exiled condition as they cursed their inability to return to Scandinavia, as well as the recent storms that had stopped their marauding of Francia. It is when Rollo and Aethelstan finally meet in person, however, that Dudo's chronology defines the Normans' search for Christianity; Rollo and Aethelstan "embrace," with the English king giving a speech to his new friends: "Let us agree on a treaty of peace, and be joined in one faith./ . . . Stay on, I earnestly beg you, here in the confines of

³¹ Dudo, 144.

³² Ibid., 147.

³³ Ibid.

our land.”³⁴ After welcoming his guests, Aethelstan quickly invites the Normans to partake in the “health-giving waters of baptism,” with the enticing offer to “take from the kingdom” that Aethelstan rules.³⁵ In this passage, the English king promises peace and political treaties with Rollo and his Normans, on the condition that they also accept Christian conversion. In fact, the English king goes so far as to offer part of his own land to Rollo and his men, provided they reciprocate his religious practices. Ultimately, the proto-Normans stay in England as Christians in AD 912.³⁶ In a seeming instant, the Normans go from roaming exiles to Christian gentiles and treaty-holding guests of England; this transformation proves just as important in Dudo’s perception of Rollo’s band, as the Vikings’ baptism leads to their success in Francia.

Through their act of cultural assimilation, the Normans appear more “European” to the English court, despite their Scandinavian marauding origins. This change in perception becomes obvious after Aethelstan regards the “barbaric” qualities of the other peoples of Scandinavia; as terms of the Normans’ treaty with England, Aethelstan petitions Rollo, “[If] a dire and ferocious people should at one time or another assail me, evil-doers who keep no faith and observe no agreements, bear me what aid you can.”³⁷ By the ninth century, England’s greatest threats of “dire and ferocious people” involved Celts and Viking raids; if this is the case, then we must remember that the court of England has just welcomed exiles from the very region that Aethelstan fears. Because of this startling change in perception, we can assume that Dudo’s story defines the Normans’ conversion as the beginning of their identity as western Europeans. Because they consciously decided to assume the ruling religion of medieval Europe, the Normans can now hold political treaties with their future neighbors.

As in the timeline of the Fécamp source, the Normans in Dudo’s work prevail in Europe only after they become Christians. In one passage, Rollo recalls a dream he presumably received from the Lord about attacking the Franks; in a prayer, Rollo emphasizes that God granted him “a vision” of Christian Normans sacking Francia, and that becoming “a believer in Christ” would “rein in the fierce tide, let the disasters die down,” and allow the Normans to finally sail east to the Frankish kingdom.³⁸ Like an archetypal miracle story, the fierce Channel seas immediately calm after Rollo’s prayer, allowing the Normans to disembark in

³⁴ Dudo, 148.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, 149.

Walcheren, just north of modern-day Normandy.³⁹ Again, a cultural expression precedes Norman success; the Normans, Christians bolstered with political legitimacy through their treaties with England, now have divine favor in their travels to Francia.

After a few months, Rollo and his men settle down in northern Francia, where the Christianized Viking sleeps uncomfortably because of a new dream from the Lord. As he sleeps, Rollo “seem[s] to behold himself, far higher than the highest, in a Frankish dwelling.”⁴⁰ From atop a mountain, the proto-Norman sees “a spring of sweet-smelling water flowing”; after bathing in the water, Rollo imagines his unclean body “made whole from the contagion of leprosy.”⁴¹ Following his purification, the warlord “saw about the base of [the mountain] many thousands of birds of different kinds and various colours, but with red left wings” which were so numerous “and so far and so wide that he could not catch sight of where they ended.”⁴² The first part of Rollo’s dream is heavy with Christian symbolism; Rollo clearly baptizes himself in the pure waters of Francia. Additionally, birds played numerous roles in Christian art, from the bird of Mary to swans and other protective birds being parallels to Christ.

As Rollo rested in the spring’s splendor, the various flocks of birds flew “one after the other in harmonious incoming flights and sought the spring on the mountain, and washed themselves, swimming together.”⁴³ The baptismal theme of the dream continues, only this time as a unifying factor for birds of different species; much like the Normans’ multicultural makeup, these varied birds all flock together under one banner: that of Christian practice. Rollo’s dream progresses:

When they had all been anointed by this miraculous dipping, they all ate together in a suitable place, without being separated into genera or species, and without any disagreement or dispute, as if they were friends sharing food. And they carried off twigs and worked rapidly to build nests.⁴⁴

Dudo’s extensive narration on Rollo’s new dream hints at multiple qualities of proto-Norman identity, ranging from religious expression to castle symbolism. Historian Nick Webber transcends the bird motifs of the dream and focuses on the

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 146.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 146.

passage's portrayal of the Norman *gens* and its future expansion; as Webber writes, "the birds signify empire, in this case a unity of many races and cultures in one grouping."⁴⁵ By giving Rollo another dream, Dudo allows the proto-Norman warrior to envision his future of his people as Christian-European stateholders; despite the Normans' "polyethnic" background, the amorphous Scandinavians will merge with the other "birds" of Francia to make a harmonious state akin to "friends sharing food." Additionally, these cultures now have something in common, in the form of shared baptism, a prominent symbol under the church motif of Norman identity. As Webber highlights, Dudo may be using Rollo's first dream as a Christian European as a means of making a new "origo gentis," or "ethnic origin story"; as the Normans lack a recorded history other than various Scandinavian oral myths, Rollo's dream creates a "semi-mythical past" to "rival that of their neighbors," the Franks, Britons, and English.⁴⁶ Instead of a classical foundation myth, Dudo begins the story of the Normans with imperial visions from God—thus reflecting the themes of castle and church.

The Normans morphed their cultural identity to hide their non-Christian-European origins through self-acculturation. This parallels other examples of "immigrant identity," in which newcomers entwine their cultural practices with those of the majority; though some cultures bicker and war when they meet, Norman-Frankish cohabitation followed a path of "change in the nature of one or both of the identities in an area that allow[ed] them to coexist."⁴⁷ When the Vikings arrived in northwestern Europe, the "vulnerable" qualities of their Scandinavian identity, the most atypical pieces of their cultural practices, including polygamy and paganism, withered and fell off of the main structure of *Normannitas*.⁴⁸ The Normans instead embraced Christianity as a gesture of change. We can suppose that, like other "immigrant identity" practices, the Normans rejected their seemingly barbaric practices because of their ambition to resemble their Christian European neighbors.

The chronology of the birds' metaphoric baptism also follows previous sources. As in the Fécamp document, in Dudo's account of Rollo and Aethelstan, the Normans successfully make relations with their neighbors only after they first cope with Christianity. In Rollo's dream, the birds successfully join together only after they have accepted the holy waters, a direct parallel to the Normans'

⁴⁵ Webber, 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 18.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 19.

experiences in England and northern Francia. Church motifs again dominate Dudo's depictions of Norman identity and cultural change; before the Normans or Rollo's birds can dine "as if they were friends" with their new acquaintances, they must first join together in baptism.⁴⁹

Finally, we must point out that the birds integrate in order to construct "nests." Although Dudo does not specify these constructions, I would postulate this passage as another piece of Norman castle symbolism. Later sources of Norman historiography will juxtapose Norman expansion into a new region with the creation of fortresses and castles; therefore, it seems logical that the earliest Norman histories would at least hint at this occurrence. Through this lens, we can form a timeline of events of the Norman "birds," who go from cursed pagans to healed Christians composing a multiethnic state and then legitimize their occupation of that state through "nests," or fortifications that prove and enforce their occupation.

Although Dudo's history presents the beginnings of Norman interactions with the Franks, the Normans managed to seem "Frankish" to most of Europe by the beginning of the 11th century. As both Webber and ethnographer Cassandra Potts conclude, the Normans rapidly blurred the line between newcomers and semi-indigenous inhabitants.⁵⁰ Though this transition may have posed difficulties to the Normans at first, the Christianized Scandinavians morphed into quasi-Frankish state holders in fewer than one hundred years. As Webber writes, the "two distinct *gentes* in the Norman territory"—those of Scandinavians and Franks—quite quickly merged as " 'the product of a difficult but ultimately successful union between these newcomers and natives,' these 'Norman rulers' and 'their Frankish subjects.' "⁵¹ This new identity, which Dudo has made careful pains to highlight in his long passages on Rollo's quest to finally get to France, entrusts itself on a specific piece of territory—Normandy, the land of Normans—and the state surrounding that region. Dudo reiterates this concept in the form of textual history, a medium that legitimizes cultural expression as permanent phenomenon; by the time that this early history publishes, there is no distinct barrier between "Scandinavian" and "Frank"; there is only "Norman."

As the first recorded Norman history, Dudo's text presents a narrative of acculturation and legitimization: The proto-Normans, a warlike people of Norse background, arrive to the Frankish mainland with bitterness and bloodshed. They soon convert to Christianity, adopt the language of their immediate neighbors, and

⁴⁹ Dudo, 146.

⁵⁰ Webber, 21.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

generally buy into the local culture of their peers. In this sense, outsiders bestow cultural practices to the Normans in Dudo's narrative; the French and English educate the Normans in "proper" European mores, which the Normans adopt as legitimate cultural practice. The Normans, wishing to legitimize their presence in Europe, manipulate religion, law, and other characteristics of their subjects and their peers in order to make their occupation seem as fitting as that of any other European people.

William of Poitiers's *Gesta Guilelmi*

The only descriptions of William of Poitiers that survive to this day come from small passages in his work and a mention from Orderic Vitalis, who said William was a Norman monk from Préaux. William of Poitiers was most likely a chaplain to William the Conqueror; along with his religious work, William of Poitiers also wrote the *Gesta Guilelmi*, or a chronology of the deeds of the Norman duke. William of Poitiers takes Dudo's story of the Norman comedy and advances it further, progressing from Vikings who conquer a portion of Francia to a new *gens* that finds itself ruling a respectable chunk of medieval Europe. William of Poitiers bridges the gap between the Normans as freshly settled Vikings and as new conquerors of England, Sicily, and Italy, and he also reacts to previous Norman historiographies and the histories of his peers. His commentary ends not long after Duke William ascends to the throne of England at Christmas of 1066.

At the very beginning of the text, William of Poitiers outlines key pieces of Norman identity when considering the Normans' recent role as Christian state holders in medieval Europe. The object of William's praise, Duke William ("the Conqueror"), exemplifies these criteria through his statecraft. In an apostrophe to the audience, William of Poitiers enumerates the Norman duke's Christianity and legal prowess, two central qualities of Norman acculturation: "[William] began with the utmost zeal to protect the churches of God, to uphold the cause of the weak, to impose laws which would not be burdensome, and to make judgements which never deviated from equity and temperance."⁵²

In his introduction to the ruler, William of Poitiers succinctly defines William the Conqueror's character as one of legalism and Christianity. This extends beyond personal matters; William the Conqueror combines his political policies

⁵² William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, trans. Marjorie Chibnall and R. H. C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), i.6.

with these practices, using both of them as key pieces of his identity.⁵³ We can thus already see the way that Normans such as William exploited law and religion to affirm their political and social power; William of Poitiers subtly emphasizes this point by introducing William the Conqueror as a Christianizing and legislating force.

The same drive for using religion and law as legitimizing forces erupts from William the Conqueror's own mouth later in William of Poitiers's chronology. Quoting the Latin I Corinthians, William meditates on his role in the state and concludes, "praeterit enim figura huius mundi"—"the fashion of this world passeth away"—that political and social reforms affect only temporary situations.⁵⁴ With true permanency deriving from religious philosophy, the state should, "in the midst of the warlike activities and domestic occupations," concentrate "his greatest efforts to things divine," including building churches and granting legal power to the Church.⁵⁵ Because we can confirm his membership in a religious community, we allow William of Poitiers certain leeway in endorsing the powers of the Church; at the same time, the centrality of Church power in William's depictions could demonstrate the role of the Christian church as a key tenet of Norman identity and state formation by the late 11th and early 12th centuries.

Leah Shopkow reasons that William of Poitiers's special attention to Duke William's character as a microcosm of his state explains the author's genre. As she writes, William of Poitiers composed his text as a "series of moral tests" that challenged his ruler to embody the critical concepts of Norman identity—specifically, political stability, legal prowess, and religious health.⁵⁶ Like late-medieval and Renaissance "prince manuals," William of Poitiers's text advises a monarch through didactic literature. If William of Poitiers embraces church power and political hierarchy, then these criteria must reflect the value system of his community. With texts representing the society that produced them, Norman identity must conform to this kind of symbolism; the Normans latch onto law and religion to prove their power and carve out a territory to call home, all while using text to affirm and assess these statements. William of Poitiers values law and religious practice in his appraisal of William the Conqueror; the monk identifies William the Conqueror as a good ruler because he adeptly navigates these two pieces of Norman identity.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 79.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Shopkow, 91.

Because he writes as the Normans recuperate from their mass conquest in England, William of Poitiers perceives the Normans as unique; however, he compares the Normans with the English and the Franks through a moral lens rather than a cultural one. In fact, William of Poitiers completely ignores the genealogical differences between Normans and Frankish or English peoples, instead choosing to compare them as peers that differ in character rather than history. After lauding the fearlessness of Duke William and the Normans, William of Poitiers describes the tyrannous Frankish kings as “fortified in their proud recklessness,” a progeny of men devoted to egotism and waste. While acknowledging the Franks’ abilities in combat, William of Poitiers finds the Franks immoral and unbecoming of proper Christian rulers.⁵⁷ William of Poitiers repeats this negative commentary when later addressing the English, Normandy’s new subjects. After Edward succeeds to the English throne, he accepts Harold as a hostage to “check the resistance of the whole English people” from their natural “fickleness and perfidy,” and their inherent will to revolt.⁵⁸

The historian interprets these passages in a number of ways. At first, we recognize William of Poitiers’s focus on the martial activities of the Normans’ peers; the Franks are capable fighters who are capable of “reducing our whole land to a dreadful desert” if provoked, and the English often reject foreign occupation, as demonstrated through William of Poitiers’s studies of Roman history. The Normans may value arms and military success as critical to their respect of their European neighbors. On the other hand, William of Poitiers’s commentary may delve much more deeply than superficial martial concerns and may instead reveal how William views the Franks and the English; because William does not cite the Normans’ unique origins in comparison to the Franks and English, he is mediating between the culture of other Europeans and that of the Normans, who have now acquired enough political and cultural stability to rank with the other peoples of the region. William does not acknowledge anything dissimilar about the Normans when discussing other *gentes* in his work.

In fact, the Normans had grown such roots in Normandy by this time that they regarded it as their historic home, with Christianity as their original custom. As William of Poitiers denounces any state that “forbids or makes difficult the building of churches in their lands,” he counters this point with a startling passage: “But our *native land* [*patria nostra*] praises the Lord in many churches built by the

⁵⁷ William of Poitiers, i.30.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, i.41.

gracious favour of its prince, William, and enriched by his ready liberality.”⁵⁹ Not only did William fund new churches to propagate Norman Christianity, he also “willingly gave unrestricted authority to anyone wishing to make donations; he never inflicted any injury on the saints by taking away anything whatever that had been bestowed on them.”⁶⁰ By focusing on Christianity, William of Poitiers not only obscures his people’s Norse origins but also audaciously asserts their centuries of settlement in Francia and their unfaltering worship of God. Considering that the Normans were pagan foreigners only a few generations before William’s writings, these histories mask Norman cultural origins and present the Normans as similar to their neighbors. William of Poitiers’s text confirms Norman attempts at presenting themselves as cultural equals to their European neighbors; while the Normans were still newcomers to this region of Europe, Norman historiography already presented the Normans as indigenous people who outperformed their peers in military, political, and religious reform.

This focus on church formation also ties in with Norman rhetoric surrounding religious reform. After William the Conqueror’s campaign in England, the victorious king considered his options for his recovered inheritance. In the midst of his planning, a contingent of bishops and religious officials visited the duke, begging him for a Norman presence in the English church; Stigand, the archbishop of London, “did homage to [William], confirmed his fealty with an oath,” and beseeched the duke to reform the church with Norman practices.⁶¹ Whether or not this passage tells the truth, the Normans propagated and enforced this kind of rhetoric in their histories to enforce their occupations. Through religious rhetoric, William of Poitiers has convinced the reader that the churches of England desired Norman reforms, a quality that could easily legitimize Norman presence in the British Isles. With churches under their control, the Normans projected cultural and social influence.

By the time of William of Poitiers, the castle symbol of Norman identity had reached critical mass, becoming not only a key icon of Norman occupation but also one of the first endeavors that the Normans undertook upon expanding to a new region. After border disputes with the Frankish king, Duke William warred with his southern neighbors. The Franks, “anxious to put an end to discords that were so burdensome for them,” fearfully acquiesced to Norman demands after some of their armies succumbed to Norman arms. Following the peace,

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, i.50.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, ii.28.

“immediately, and in [the peace assembly], the duke issued a command ordering the captains of his knights to be ready to enter the territory . . . to build the castle of Ambrieres.”⁶² This reaction to build castles and fortifications seems almost knee-jerk, an autonomic response that the Normans had adopted for both practical and thematic reasons. In a physical sense, motte and baileys and other fortifications protect a ruling lord and his court. At the same time, castles also function in the political spectrum; they shelter the lord’s estate and segregate at least a portion of it from the countryside in which he rules. Additionally, and most importantly, castles embody political and social dominion. Through castles, a conqueror people can constantly remind its new subjects of their position in a social and political hierarchy. These conquerors can quite literally oversee this chain of rank from atop their structures.

William of Poitiers does not limit himself to Norman conquests in Francia; after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, Duke William contemplates his political position as potential king of England, a rebellious state full of aforementioned “rebels.” William confers with select churchmen and nobles of the English countryside about how to proceed with integrating the kingdom into Normandy.⁶³ After his advisors and acquaintances reiterate William’s skill in political juggling, the new king proceeds to London. Again, the castle plan appears after William seizes the state: “He hoped above all that once he had begun to reign any rebels would be less ready to challenge in and more easily put down. So he sent men ahead to London to build a fortress in the city and make the many preparations necessary for royal dignity.”⁶⁴ Whereas Dudo of Saint-Quentin introduced the Norman “birds’ nests” as nebulous symbols of settlement, William of Poitiers gives castles form and function as the means of securing Norman conquests and also of affirming Norman state control. This piece of Norman identity now exerts its full influence over the Norman conquests; when the Normans arrive in a new land, they build castles and other fortresses to assert their presence.

Along with castles, laws can project political hegemony. Additionally, laws can personify cultural perception because they are texts with political and social qualities. After landing in England, Duke William speaks with a group of monks about his reasons for coming to the island; after Harold usurped his position as king of England, the Norman duke felt that he had the legal right to pursue war regardless of cultural differences between the English and the Normans:

⁶² Ibid, ii.32.

⁶³ Ibid, ii.29.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

[Harold previously] made himself my vassal by giving his hands to me, and gave my surety with his own hand concerning the kingdom of England. I am ready to put my case against him to judgement, by the law of the English or of the Normans as he prefers.⁶⁵

We could easily define William's reasons for coming to England as a case of contract law; by swearing to honor Duke William's claim to the throne and giving the proper oaths, Harold entered into a contract with the Norman ruler. By usurping the throne, Harold broke that contract, a fact that William thought either English or Norman law would uphold. Additionally, William's potential deferral to English law indicates something about the Normans' willingness to adopt foreign legal practices; William the Conqueror's rhetoric parallels previous Norman reactions to local law, like the Vikings' embrace of Carolingian law. Studies in common law practice reiterate this notion; not long after the Normans conquered England, their legal traditions enmeshed with English common law practices.⁶⁶

The Normans in England—Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica*

William of Poitiers's narrative on William the Conqueror's travels in England reminds us that the Normans conquered a lot more than a plot of land in medieval Francia. In fact, the Normans used the same legitimizing tactics for creating Normandy that they did when expanding into other portions of Europe, including the Kingdom of England in 1066. A contemporary of William of Poitiers, Orderic Vitalis, also incorporates Norman identity symbols into his history. Written a few decades after William of Poitiers's work on Duke William, Orderic Vitalis's *Ecclesiastical History* ranges from descriptions of the religious communities of 12th-century Normandy to generalizations on the Norman state and cultural character, as well as the Normans' recent conquest of England.

Historians know only a little of Orderic's life, with the author presenting only scant details on his upbringing in his own chronology.⁶⁷ Probably born in 1075 in Shrewsbury, a town in Shropshire, an English province directly east of Wales, Orderic likely did not experience the Norman conquest of England until around 1071. As Chibnall writes in her translation of the *Historia*, "The Norman conquest was a slow process"; when the still-rebelling Englishmen of Shropshire finally

⁶⁵ Ibid, ii.12.

⁶⁶ Langbein, John, Renee Lerner, and Bruce Smith, *History of the Common Law: The Development of Anglo-American Legal Institutions* (New York: Aspen, 2009), 4.

⁶⁷ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, trans. Marjorie Chibnall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 1.

acquiesced five years after the Normans first made landfall, the province went to Roger of Montgomery, a Norman councilor of Duke William.⁶⁸

Roger of Montgomery's first actions as lord of Shropshire not only effected Orderic's later vocation as a monk but also demonstrated the typical Norman response to gaining new territory: "In the first phase of the Norman settlement" of Shropshire, Roger of Montgomery took special care in using "church prebends [lands and taxes given to religious communities] to provide for the clerks of his household."⁶⁹ Much like those in previous Norman histories, Roger of Montgomery flocked to religious authority to reinforce his new gains; as a means of aiding his new social hierarchy, Roger of Montgomery had the abbeys and churches of Shropshire house his clerks. Additionally, the Shropshire church lands became gifts to many of Roger's new clerks, including a Saxon chapel that went to Odelerius, a Norman who served as a bureaucratic figurehead of the province's religious community.⁷⁰ These Norman conquerors in England practiced the same tactics of their Scandinavian ancestors from the 10th century by using Christianity as a way to reinforce their new gains, only this time in a new land.

A visiting monk to the now-Normanized abbey of Seez recommended a ten-year-old Orderic a clerkship in the abbey of Saint-Evroul, in central Normandy.⁷¹ Orderic became deacon of the abbey when he was 18, and he spent much of his adult life studying in the grounds of his new home.⁷² Sometime around 1110, Orderic's superiors at Saint-Evroul asked him to write a history of the monastic community and Normandy at large, a collection of writings that later became the priest's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, a history that "left its mark on historical traditions" for all Norman historiography after its publication.⁷³

The English-born Orderic saw the Normans as a good people, but their culture required certain controls to "tame" them; the fact that these controls mirror our central tenets of Norman identity is not coincidental. William of Poitiers had already recorded that the Normans incorporated castle and legal symbols into their conquest of England; these symbols were added to by writings about the control that Norman law had over their barbaric character. William contrasts how the Normans act with and without law: "If the Normans are disciplined under a just and

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 5.

⁷² Ibid., 23.

⁷³ Ibid., 31, 1.

firm rule they are men of great valour”; at the same time, “without such rule they tear each other to pieces to destroy themselves.”⁷⁴ Because of their love of “rebellion” and “sedition,” Orderic concludes, “[the Normans] need to be restrained by the severe penalties of law, and forced by the curb of discipline to keep to the path of justice.”⁷⁵ Like his contemporaries, Orderic presents law as a defining feature of Norman identity; law not only encompasses Norman cultural expression but also can ground the Normans into behaving like their European peers. Without law, Orderic supposes, the Normans would regress to their barbaric, pre-Christian nature. As Shopkow writes, Orderic “counterbalanced” most Norman qualities; while Orderic noted the Normans’ inherit “avarice, greed for power, inconstancy, frivolity, and a taste for wrongdoing,” the monk also lauded their ability to become “audacious and courageous” after adapting to the networks of medieval Europe.⁷⁶ Orderic appreciates how the Normans have used law to adapt themselves to European customs. As an Englishman commenting on Norman behaviors, Orderic Vitalis shows how the Normans have gone from barbaric marauders to Frankish state holders to new occupants in England—all thanks to their ability to blur cultural lines through castles, churches, and laws.

The Normans in Sicily—Geoffrey of Malaterra’s *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of His Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*

Half a decade before the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, a group of Normans under Robert Guiscard (*Viscardus* being Latin for “the Wily One”) fell into ruling the island of Sicily after taking the region from its Arab leaders. Originally sent to Normandy as soldiers for hire, Robert Guiscard and his men seized Sicily, creating the first Christian state of Sicily in some centuries.⁷⁷ Much like the Normans in the conquests of Normandy and England, the Normans in Sicily introduced their occupation through religious and political means. After building their castles and churches like proper Normans, Wolf explains, the Normans turned to their third symbol to explain their recent expansion: texts. As Wolf writes, “by the end of the [11th] century, three different chroniclers, operating quite independently of one another, had each produced his own full-length account of the

⁷⁴ Orderic Vitalis, 4:83, as cited in Shopkow, 101.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Shopkow, 101.

⁷⁷ Geoffrey of Malaterra, *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of His Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*, trans. Kenneth Baxter Wolf (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 2.

conquests in Italy and Sicily.”⁷⁸ Of these three, the work of Geoffrey of Malaterra, a Norman priest in Sicily, comprehensively outlines the Norman conquest of Sicily and attaches that narrative to the whole story of Norman development.

Geoffrey of Malaterra probably came to Sicily at the end of the 11th century as an “ecclesiastical recruit enlisted by Count Roger,” Robert Guiscard’s brother, “in his effort to reestablish the Latin church” in Muslim Sicily.⁷⁹ Along with his conversion work, Geoffrey compiled the story of Norman expansion until 1099 in his *Deeds of Count Roger*. Whereas other histories tell only the story of the Normans in Sicily, Geoffrey places the Norman conquest of Sicily into part of an overreaching story of Norman development. This story begins as far back as Rollo, the proto-Norman hero; as Geoffrey writes in his source, the Normans first came to Europe “on account of [the richness of Francia], Rollo and his men set out from both banks of the [Seine] and began to subject the inhabitants of that region to their dominion.”⁸⁰ Despite the geographical and cultural transformation through decades of Norman rule in Sicily, Geoffrey of Malaterra still connects his history to previous Norman conquests. Geoffrey writes to connect Norman history into a contiguous tale, from Normandy to Sicily to England and beyond—all with the same methods of castles, churches, and texts.

Geoffrey parallels Rollo’s desire for riches in Francia with Roger’s reasons for sailing to Sicily centuries later, while also incorporating Norman symbols of churches and law. As Geoffrey writes, Roger first considered warring in Sicily for its economic value but then changed his thinking to consider the religious benefits of seizing a non-Christian state:

[Roger] figured that [taking Sicily] would be of profit to him in two ways—that is, to his soul and to his body—if he could, on the one hand, reclaim the region, which has been given over to idols, to divine worship, and on the other—speaking in more temporal terms—appropriate for himself the fruits and revenues of the land, which had been usurped by a people disagreeable to God, and dispose of them in the service of God.⁸¹

By this time, the Norman story does not even acknowledge the Normans’ previous paganism. Although Rollo certainly came to Francia at first for plunder, Geoffrey

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, I.1.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, II.1.

considers the Normans' conversion to Christianity as swift and permanent, thus making the Normans fully legitimized Christians who are capable of hunting down non-Christians like the Muslims of Sicily. Additionally, Roger expresses the same ties between Norman state and Christian church that the Normans used in Normandy and England: If he can successfully sack the land, Roger will appropriate his conquests to the Christian church, much like Roger of Montgomery in England and other Norman elites.⁸² Yet again, the Normans used church rhetoric to explain their motivation for conquests. When Norman historians recorded these symbols into histories, they used these claims as pieces of Norman identity construction.

The Normans adapted to Sicilian law through acculturation, much like their experiences with Carolingian law in Normandy and common law in England. The best example of this comes in Geoffrey's accounts of the siege of Palermo: As the Normans wait outside the city walls, Palermo's Muslim inhabitants fear that the Normans will make them "relinquish their law" if the Normans win the city.⁸³ As a protection from this, the city sends an envoy to the Normans, asking for "assurances that they [will] not be coerced or injured by unjust of new laws."⁸⁴ Roger graciously accepts this offer, which motivates the city's occupants to surrender Palermo. Again, the Normans respect the symbol of law in the cultures of their subjects, seeing it as a legitimizing institution. The fact that the majority of this legal system comes from Arabic law also shows the Normans' capacity for religious provisions; by promising to not infringe on Muslim legal practices in Palermo, the Normans recognize the hierarchical power that Islam has on the state of Sicily. Were the Normans to fully destroy that hierarchy, they would risk jeopardizing their new expansion.

The events following the surrender of Palermo also correspond to the typical Norman responses to conquest. As soon as the Muslims agree to surrender the city after learning that their laws will not disappear, Roger seeks out the nearest church to change it into a Christian cathedral; Roger's men quickly find "the church of Mary," a building in Palermo "which had been an archbishopric in ancient times" before the Muslim occupants turned it "into a temple dedicated to their superstition."⁸⁵ Through prayer and Christian ornaments, the Normans quickly "[revive] the cult of the Christian religion as much as possible" by reconsecrating the church of Mary.⁸⁶ After addressing their church motifs, the Normans then work

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., II.45.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

toward castles; Roger sends out a band to assess the military qualities of the city's fortifications, and the new count immediately begins "strengthening the fortress and disposing of the city as he [sees] fit."⁸⁷ Much like in previous Norman histories, the Normans in Geoffrey's text jump to churches and castles to enforce their most recent gains and assert their connection to their subjects.

These first sources that depict Norman conquests in Sicily and England follow the same pattern of Norman conquest used when these multiethnic peoples first made landfall in Europe. Much like those in the 10th century, the Normans who arrived in Sicily and England quickly sought out laws, churches, and castles with which to enforce their conquests. These very symbols were present in early Norman historiography in Dudo and other sources, and they continued to reflect Norman identity in the 11th and 12th centuries. More than likely, these patterns continued into Norman historiography as the Normans progressed into the Holy Land and other smaller settlements in medieval Europe. After first carving out their own culture by looking at their peers in Francia, the Normans spread their culture through the same means they used to define it.

Conclusion—The Discourse between Historical Source, Symbol, and Audience

The Normans exploited history as a means to an end. The Normans certainly took advantage of historical text to confirm that they belonged in Europe as much as any other *gentes* of medieval Europe. Geoffrey of Malaterra puts it most succinctly; in his commentary on the roles of the historian, the monk of Sicily records:

In the tradition of the ancient philosophers and for the sake of future generations of men, it became customary to transmit for posterity the deeds of valiant men, recording them with honor, so that the things remembered, along with the names of those by whom they were done, would not be lost to silence, but rather, committed to letters, would be read and made known to future generations, in a way that would make those who accomplished such deeds come to life through such memorials.⁸⁸

If history both affirms cultural expression and preserves those statements for future generations, then the historian creates memory. Malaterra sees the historian, rather

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Geoffrey of Malaterra, 8.

than an analyzer of chronological milieu or a commentator on rhetoric, as the gateway to the past. In this respect, the reader of history judges all history. While the chronicler can assert the truth, the reader must search a historical source and find it worthy. The audience of a historical text plays a central role in all historiography; historical sources that engage and persuade the reader as to the verisimilitude of the past simultaneously change the past.

The Normans were not a specific people. These Norse-Scandinavians claimed only small pieces of family genealogy, spoke whatever language was of the nearest majority, adopted the legal codes of their subjects, and worshipped the god of their peers. The entirety of Norman expression unifies under one idea, however: a common story. Rather than turn to politics or racial makeup as the source for cultural identity, the Normans instead turned to history—a history that they morphed, molded, and re-created as they gathered more and more people under the banner of *Normannitas*. As Davis puts it, “if peoples are formed, not by race or language,” but instead through a common story, “they can remain peoples only so long as that experience is kept alive,” a process done by “handing on the story” through text and tradition.⁸⁹ The life-span of *Normannitas* lasted only as long as people practiced this historiographical looseness. As the 13th century dawned, the French reabsorbed Normandy into Phillip II’s kingdom. The storytelling died soon thereafter, as Normandy lived on as France; without the duchy, the Normans no longer had a place through which they could tie their histories. *Normannitas* shriveled, and the peoples of England, Sicily, and Normandy became “English,” “Sicilian,” and “French” within a generation—the final act of Norman acculturation.

From Dudo of Saint-Quentin in the 10th century to Geoffrey of Malaterra in the 12th, Norman identity conformed to central qualities that survive in these histories despite geographic separation, cultural dissociation, and political difference. Castles, churches, and texts prevail; regardless of degree of separation, the Normans incorporated political, religious, and historical symbols into their identity. Ultimately, all of these central qualities orbit the theme of cultural accommodation. Few other medieval societies acculturated on such a systematic and rapid scale as the Normans did; in a matter of generations, these multiethnic Norse settlers became brave Christian Franks, pious Sicilians, and equitable English lords. Because of their cultural assimilation, the historian cannot ethnically define *Normannitas*. Instead, he or she may only outline the symbols that the Normans used to record themselves in their historiographies. With this in mind,

⁸⁹ Davis, 15.

Norman studies must cope with only defining the Normans in postmodern terms: as state crafters who legitimized their gains through religious rhetoric, political iconography, and historiographical representation.

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COMMUNICATING MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE BLACK AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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I do not recall what, exactly, happened when my father entered the room—if he spoke to me, or what the conversation between him and the guidance counselor entailed. However, there is one thing I remember clearly: what my father said in regard to what had required his presence there. When the guidance counselor expressed her concern about my suicidal thoughts, my father let out a hearty laugh and said, “If I gave her a gun, she wouldn’t even pull the trigger.” I cannot pinpoint why hearing those words upset me so much, but it did, and from that day on, I kept my mental issues hidden. Those words stuck with me throughout the years. My mother, too, did not take mental illness seriously. One day we got into a heated argument, and she mentioned I needed help. I recall requesting it, too, because even I knew that psychologically, something was wrong with me. When I questioned her about it later, however, she simply jokingly, stated, “There’s nothing wrong with you. You’re just crazy, and that cannot be helped. They can’t help you not be crazy.” My family did not deem my mental instability worthy of treatment, and consequently, I did not either. I tried to ignore my mental health issues altogether.

Later, however, I found that I was not alone. Many Black Americans deal with mental illness, though generally not at the same rate as White Americans, nor as long; typically, Black Americans experience mental illness during the young adult years, whereas White Americans experience mental illness during the years thereafter and have a higher rate of mental illness (Jackson et al., 2004; Woodward, Taylor, Abelson & Matsuko, 2013). These reports on prevalence and rate of mental illness in different ethnic groups are hard to decipher, however, because of “differences in the presentation of self-reported symptoms” (Woodward et al., 2013), which is likely to skew the results, especially for Black Americans. Within the Black American community, a “taboo nature of disclosure” influences their communication (Campbell & Mowbray, 2016, p. 261). For this reason, it could be said that mental illness is not taken seriously because of the taboo that surrounds revealing it. Disclosure of personal matters, such as mental illness, tend to be viewed negatively, which in turn can leave information about such matters scarce, or adverse. This paper presents findings from a qualitative interview study, which

builds upon previous studies' work, by exploring responses to mental illness among young Black Americans.

Literature Review: Mental Illness in the Black American Community

Mental illness is a topic that is often neglected and shunned in the Black American community. A review of the literature on mental illness yielded several potential reasons why communication about mental illness appears to be absent within the Black American community. The main contributors are stigma, lack of knowledge, mistrust, and preference for nonmedical coping mechanisms.

Stigma

The lack of discussion about mental illness in this community stems from stigma. In general, mental illness is stigmatized, as it is often associated with negative behaviors, such as unpredictability and danger (Alvidrez, Snowden, & Kaiser, 2008). Mentally ill individuals are often deemed dysfunctional and are seen as a danger to society. It could be said that this perceived view of the mentally ill is supported by fear. A copious amount of fear surrounds being considered mentally ill and being associated with the mentally ill, as it can have negative repercussions. Coincidentally, mentally ill individuals have internalized fear and dread of being labeled "crazy," which is an association repeatedly made throughout the dominant U.S. society and within the Black American community (Campbell & Mowbray, 2016). Although these stigmas hold true for anyone, they may be amplified for Black Americans.

In fact, Black Americans hold a higher degree of negativity toward mental illness than do members of any other ethnic group (Gaston, Earl, Niscani, & Glomb, 2016; Ward, Clark, & Heidrich, 2009) and are potentially already stigmatized because of what could be referred to as "double minority status" (Ward et al. 2009, p. 1589), in which their race and gender are utilized as catalysts for discrimination or maltreatment. Perry, Harp, and Oser (2013) found that the toxic mix of racism and sexism devalue the individuals and reinforce the stereotypes held about each group. Black males are seen as hardened criminals, and Black females as seductive, promiscuous beings. Being considered mentally ill within this community could hinder one's social status (Campbell & Mowbray, 2016), and thus Black Americans strive to avoid being defined as mentally ill, and discussing mental illness altogether.

Furthermore, this fear is intensified by the concern of appearing weak. There is a general belief that mental health is beneath Black Americans because they have overcome more challenging adversities, such as slavery (Alvidrez et al., 2008). This viewpoint follows the idea of “Black Power” or “Strong Black Woman,” which indicates that the strength of Black American individuals allows them to rise above any hardships, whether racism or mental illness. However, some Black Americans view mental illness as a normal part of life, not as an abnormality that needs to be corrected. Conner et al. (2010) found that Black Americans often considered symptoms, such as bouts of sadness, associated with mental illness as an everyday occurrence. When individuals seek treatment, they are therefore sometimes labeled as weak because they could not handle the normality of life (Gaston et al., 2016). In any case, the idea of weakness prevents Black Americans from seeking aid for their mental illness.

Lack of Adequate Knowledge and Resources

Sometimes mental illness is ignored because of the lack of adequate information about mental illness, its symptoms, and its treatment process (Ayalon & Alvidrez, 2007). This is plausible for the Black American community. In fact, many Black Americans go untreated because of their belief that treatment for mental illness is an option solely for Whites (Ayalon & Alvidrez, 2007). This reluctance to receive treatment may derive from Black Americans’ assumption that most medical professionals are insufficiently trained to diagnose them. This is not an unfounded assumption; although Black Americans and White Americans display symptoms differently, the majority of intervention practices are designed based largely on White Americans (Hunn & Craig, 2009). For example, Black American women often display their psychological symptoms physically, indicating that they have chest pain (Hunn & Craig, 2009). Thus, by receiving treatment that was created for White Americans, Black Americans run the risk of being misdiagnosed or of not being diagnosed at all. Additionally, according to Campbell & Mowbray (2016), attempts to educate the Black American community about mental illness did not reduce the stigma that Black Americans held about mental illness and, in some cases, even strengthened the stigma. This is not the sole reason that treatment is not sought, however.

When attempts are made to address mental illness in poor Black American communities, these attempts are often ineffective because of the lack of adequate resources for the whole community (Ward et al., 2009). The contrary is true for the White American community. Within the White American community, resources

for mental illness are plentiful and more readily available, as White Americans are more inclined to view mental illness for what it is—an illness (Campbell & Mowbray, 2016). Because the Black American community tends to stigmatize mental illness, however, resources are often not granted or even desired by the community. In addition to the aforementioned double-minority status and stigma, financial constraints seriously influence whether Black Americans get the help they need for their mental health. According to Gaston et al. (2016), many Black Americans do not seek treatment for their medical conditions, including mental illness, because of economic stressors, such as “lack of health insurance, unemployment, and poverty” (p. 686). If one struggles to pay one’s bills, seeking medical help for mental health may be the least of one’s worries, especially if there is a lack of satisfactory resources.

Mistrust

Another noteworthy reason why Black Americans do not discuss mental illness or seek professional aid is mistrust. This mistrust originates from the history of mistreatment that Black Americans have suffered from the hands of medical professionals (Hunn & Craig, 2009). For example, the Tuskegee experiment, which was conducted on Black American males who were ill-informed about the study, left everlasting effects on the community. The 40-year (1932–1972) study involved withholding treatment from 399 Black sharecroppers who had already been diagnosed with syphilis and observing how their bodies reacted to the illness (Poythress, Epstein, Stiles, & Edens, 2011). This experiment caused many unlawful deaths, as the researchers did not provide treatment to the participants, in order to view the end stages of syphilis. To this day, many Black Americans are still outraged about the experiment and many also state that they are afraid to participate in medical research or even to receive medical treatment, as they are wary of the medical professions’ intentions (Shavers, Lynch, & Burmeister, 2000).

Another reason for mistrust toward healthcare, especially for mental illness, is that many Black Americans believe that available treatments were designed for and by Whites (Alvidrez et al., 2008; Dennis, 2015). This belief is not without basis. As previously discussed, the majority of interventions for mental illness have been developed from research on White Americans and therefore could be inappropriate for Black Americans (Hunn & Craig, 2009). Each group has differing cultural backgrounds, experiences the world differently, and handles psychological issues differently. Because many of these differences are attributed to racial oppression and discrimination, treatments insensitive to racialized experiences cannot

appropriately address mental illness. Hunn and Craig (2009) found that Black Americans are often misdiagnosed with dysthymia instead of depression because “the source and context of their behaviors are misunderstood” (p. 88) due to their symptoms differing from already established symptoms. If not misdiagnosed, symptoms can also go undetected, leading to no diagnosis (Hunn & Craig, 2009).

Coping Mechanisms

It is possible that Black Americans tend to seek out forms of aid via different, nonmedical methods due to the mistrust they have toward health facilities. A common source for this aid is the church. According to Payne (2008), many Black Americans see religion as central to their lives and therefore turn to it as a source to combat their mental illness (Hunn & Craig, 2009); however, at the same time, many Black Americans see mental illness as incompatible with their religion (Ayalon & Alvidrez, 2007). Holpuch (2014) found that the reluctance to admit mental illness derives from the misconception of mental illness being caused by “demons, bad spirits or sin” (para. 6). Succumbing to mental illness could make the individuals appear anti-God, since the roots of mental illness are the enemies of God; therefore, instead of admitting their mental illness, individuals may try to control their “negative” emotions and embrace their love for the Lord through prayers (Payne, 2008). When prayers are not sufficient, individuals may turn to their ministers or to God for further aid. Black Americans rely on their ministers or the Lord to reconcile mental illness and religiosity, rather than seek traditional mental-health treatment (Ayalon & Alvidrez, 2007). Ministers serve as mediators who can aid individuals to feel comfortable with their mental illness or to reinforce that their belief in God is still strong.

Another common method of handling mental illness is to simply ignore it by focusing one’s energy on something else. Typically, this is done via the practice referred to as John Henryism, or Black Americans’ practice of utilizing hard work and determination to combat the mental and physical strain in one’s life (Hunn & Craig, 2009). This syndrome originated from an old tale from the 1800s about an exceptionally strong slave named John Henry who worked himself to death in order to prove himself (James, 1994). Many Black Americans disregard their mental illness by focusing their energy on their work instead of on their mental status, which in turn leads to no diagnosis or to misdiagnosis. Likewise, instead of focusing on work, some Black Americans may deal with their mental illness by engaging in “negative” activities such as isolating themselves from others and partaking in illegal activities, such as involvement with drugs (Gaston et al., 2016). These

activities allow them to shelter their mental illness from the community and to avoid further judgment.

In sum, mental illness within the Black American community is complex. Multiple differing ideas exist about how mental illness is viewed and managed within the Black American community, as well as about the effects this management has had on the community. Although insightful, much of the previous research has been conducted with older generations. Each generation faces different challenges and has different needs in response to changing sociocultural, political, and economic conditions. For example, the younger generation has become less religious because these individuals have been taught to “think for themselves—that they find their own moral compass” (Masci, 2016, para. 3). Young Black Americans also face new pressures that pose threats to their mental health, represented, for example, by police brutality against Black Americans and the conflicts over confederacy. There is a belief that the younger generation today is post-racial, but this is a misconception (Longmire-Avital & Robinson, 2017). Racism continues to affect Black youths’ mental health. Recent studies show that college students of color have a higher rate of unmet mental-health needs (Lipson, Kern, Eisenberg, & Breland-Noble, 2018; McGree & Stovall, 2015). According to Lipson et al. (2018), only 21% of Black American students received diagnosis, as compared to 48% for their White counterparts. In short, there is much to learn about young Black Americans’ experiences with and views of mental illness—the subject explored by this study.

This study also pays close attention to communication. Communication plays a vital role in constructing the social world, yet much of the literature on responses to mental illness within the Black community is psychologically oriented and focuses on individual concerns and characteristics. Pearce (2007) states how the communication that is utilized during commonplace conversations creates a social world that each individual resides in concurrently. Thus, what is uttered at one instance influences what happens next and creates a social world that the individuals will continuously interact in. Then, it is important to examine what kinds of communication are taking place to create and perpetuate this social world of mental illness. The current study therefore explores the following questions through qualitative interviews with young Black Americans.

RQ1: What ideas about mental health exist in the young Black American community, and how are they communicated?

RQ2: What are the potential factors that have influenced the communication practices utilized within the younger Black American generation?

RQ3: How does mental-health communication affect the treatment of mental health problems in the lives of young Black Americans?

Methods

This in-depth qualitative-interview study focused on the perception and communication of mental illness in the Black American community, with a particular focus on the younger generation. Rather than seeking generalization, this study sought detailed stories of six Black American young adults in college in order to understand the complexity and nuances in communicating and negotiating mental illness.

Participants

The participants were recruited at a local college in the Southeast United States through a snowball sampling method. This process involves informing possible participants of the study by spreading awareness of the study through various forms of communication, such as word of mouth and e-mail. To take part in the study, participants needed to be young Black Americans with firsthand experience with mental illness—for example, they themselves or a close friend or relative were mentally ill. All participants in this study fulfilled those requirements, and all mentally ill individuals were professionally diagnosed. The participants (four females and two males) were given pseudonyms to protect their identities (Wakanda, Queen J, Tom, Allison, Farrah, and Kerry). Their ages ranged from 20 to 25.

The interviews were conducted by the author in a private room in the university's library to provide security for participants. Each interviewee was asked a series of questions that arose from the research questions. Reflective questions were used in order to elicit responses about the individuals' firsthand experience with mental illness and to get an idea of participants' perception of and ideas about mental illness. Such questions included "How has the way mental health is communicated in the Black American community affected your perceptions?" and "Do you think young Black Americans view mental health/mental illness differently than the older generations?" Participants were also asked to explain the relationship between mental illness and religion. The length of the interviews ranged from 20 minutes to one hour. All of the interviews were audio-recorded with a tape recorder and later transcribed verbatim by the author. Each transcription was

typed in 12-point Times New Roman, which provided a total of 86 double-spaced pages.

Data Analysis

Each transcription was read by the author and the author's faculty advisor and was analyzed using thematic analysis, a "method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 79). The process of thematic analysis involves six phases: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Each of us read the transcriptions separately to familiarize ourselves with the data. Then, each generated codes within the texts that encompassed a general idea held via each participant. All codes were generated separately, and once we had created them, we came together to discuss them and why we deemed them important. Disagreements were discussed carefully and thoroughly until agreement was reached. Afterward, these codes were grouped together into overarching themes in accordance with the research questions. These preliminary themes were later condensed into more fitting themes and were renamed to accurately portray the findings.

Results

This section displays emergent themes in accordance with the three research questions. Where appropriate, the relevant literature reviewed earlier is incorporated. To a large extent, the interviewees' responses overlapped with the issues brought up in the literature. This is noteworthy because participants were not prompted to address these issues.

Existing Ideas about Mental Illness in the Black American Community

There are three primary themes with respect to the ideas that exist about mental illness in the Black American community: stigma, denial, and racial viewpoints. These themes build upon one another to create an overall negative idea about mental illness.

Mental Illness is Shameful and Fearful

Participants mentioned mental illness being viewed as something "bad to have" or a "handicap." Their perception followed the already established belief of

negativity and was often accompanied by shame or fear. Participants mentioned being “kind of hesitant to say there’s something wrong with me” or “I don’t want to have anything” when faced with the idea of potentially being mentally ill. For instance, when asked why Black Americans do not actively seek aid, Wakanda and Kerry stated that “Black people are just afraid to face it” and “people get a little bit scared.” Farrah said that she avoided treatment because of the “fear [that] trickled down to [her]” from her mother, as her mother was afraid of doctors. As previous research showed, mental illness is often ignored because of fear of being “shunned or avoided” as well as of being “stereotyped or misunderstood” (Waite & Killian, 2008, p. 183; Bains, 2014, p. 89). This fear of being stigmatized or ostracized for being mentally ill is a reality that continues to plague the Black American community and to deter acceptance of the illness.

Mental Illness does not Exist

According to the interviewees, the communication surrounding mental illness in the Black American community is poor or nonexistent. Mental illness “was not brought up enough” or “definitely not talked about a lot” in the Black American community. Participants had difficulty remembering instances when mental illness was discussed. One participant shared that her mental illness was never discussed within her family, although she was seeking therapy: “They put me in therapy or whatever, and even then, me and my momma *never* talked about it.” Her experience illustrates the passive denial of mental illness that occurs in the Black American community. Passive denial often occurs because of the belief that mental illness is a topic that is not to be discussed and should be avoided at all costs (Alvidrez et al., 2008).

When mental illness is not being ignored, it is often dismissed or actively denied. Several respondents recalled being told to “toughen up” or “get it together” when they disclosed their potential mental illness to others. Additional phrases they encountered repeatedly included “you’re crazy,” “you’re being dramatic,” and “you’re just being lazy.” These instances of active denial relied on attributing mental illness to anything else rather than acknowledging what it actually is—an illness. This is a common practice within the Black American community; as Waite and Killian (2008) state, mental illness is commonly believed to arise from a “weak mind, poor health, a troubled spirit, and lack of selflove” (p. 189). The participants’ experiences were consistent with this belief.

Mental Illness is a White Thing

As previously stated, there is a common belief within the Black American community that mental illness is strictly a White problem (Campbell & Mowbray, 2016). The interviewees echoed this belief. They remember being told, “Oh, stop acting White!” or “[Mental illness] is a White person problem.” This idea goes hand in hand with the stereotype of a strong Black man/woman (Ward et al., 2009). Wakanda stated that teachers would see the “disruptive” behavior of Black male students and simply think, *Niggas just acting out*. They associated his odd behavior with Black males acting tough. Another interviewee, Kerry, mentioned his own disbelief about his brother’s mental illness; he simply thought, *Eh, [he’s] Black. There’s probably nothing wrong with [him]*. In short, mental illness is often ignored due to the misconception that it is a White problem and cannot be experienced by Black Americans.

Factors Influencing Communication about Mental Illness

These ideas about mental illness in the Black American community arose from a number of contextual factors. In this study, three factors emerged: history, lack of knowledge, and attitude, which collectively shape a negative viewpoint of mental illness.

Historical Mistreatment of Blacks

Previous research showed the influence of the violent mistreatment that Black Americans have experienced throughout their history on the ways they perceive medical institutions in general (Hunn & Craig, 2009). The current study showed that the communication surrounding mental illness within the Black American community was influenced by this history. Wakanda, for example, mentioned that “we’ve been considered less-than all throughout history” and that this affects the communication surrounding mental illness because being mentally ill can work to confirm this perception. Unprompted, another participant, Allison, brought up the Tuskegee experiment (Ward et al., 2009) as being a main cause of the distasteful outlook and mistrust of medical institutions. The exploitation that Black Americans experienced in the past thus influences the communication that surrounds mental illness.

Lack of Knowledge

In addition to brutal history, the respondents believed that a general lack of knowledge about mental illness contributes to miscommunication and resulting mismanagement of mental illness. They stated that many Black Americans “don’t know about it,” “don’t know how to recognize it,” or “do not have anything” to check the misinformation that surrounds mental illness, thus confirming previous findings that many Black Americans “lack information about mental disorders and treatment” (Campbell & Mowbray, 2016, p. 253). Because of this lack of knowledge explaining mental illness, potentially mentally ill individuals are unaware of their own mental illness, as Farrah’s story illustrates. She was oblivious of its existence at first because of her lack of knowledge: “I’ve never been taught how to deal with it or notice it.” She was unable to properly identify it and consequently thought that she was just lazy or crazy; she fell victim to the idea that mental illness is shameful and should not be acknowledged.

Attitude

Another contributing factor that greatly influences the communication surrounding mental illness is the attitude that Black Americans hold toward mental illness. This attitude comprises a combination of pride, religion, and gender norms. According to the participants, Black Americans cannot “put their pride aside” to admit that they need help, or it is hard for Black Americans to seek treatment because pride gets in the way “when you come from a background where you’re not supposed to get help.” As previously shown, Black Americans place high value on “strength in the face of adversity” and thus take pride in not succumbing to mental illness (Alvidrez et al., p. 888). Pride dissuades individuals from admitting to being mentally ill; instead, they resort to heavy reliance on religion.

As the literature showed, God and religion play a vital role in day-to-day life of the Black American community (Payne, 2008). Multiple interviewees brought up the role of religion interfering with the communication surrounding mental illness. When mentioning their illness, they were told by others, “Pray and it’ll go away,” “God will help you,” or “You just need to go to church.” Mental illness is viewed as an obstacle that religiosity can combat; therefore, some participants were told, “You must not be praying hard enough,” when their mental illness persisted. In the experiences of the interviewees, this faith in religion for curing mental illness greatly affects the communication surrounding mental illness and, as will be discussed later, the treatment for mental illness.

Another common discourse about mental illness is gender norms. If a male were to disclose that he is potentially mentally ill, he would not be met with supportive talk. Instead, he would be patronized. One interviewee, Tom, stated,

From a male perspective, it's like you're supposed to be the strong . . . strong Black male. You're supposed to be . . . you ain't supposed to cry. You ain't supposed to deal with nothing. You ain't supposed to show no emotions. You're supposed to be—BOOM. BOOM. Solid.

Masculinity plays a critical role in how mental illness is treated, and mental illness is often ignored so as to avoid being labeled weak or unmanly (Bains, 2014). This idea of not wanting to be perceived as weak or unmanly circles back to the stigmatized idea about mental illness, on the one hand, and the expectation to follow the stereotypical idea of masculine "Black Power," on the other.

An additional factor that influences the attitude about mental illness is generational differences. Previous literature did not explore how this factor may influence the communication surrounding mental illness. It was, however, brought up repeatedly by the participants in this study; younger generations tend to have differing viewpoints on mental illness, and thus, their communication surrounding it differs from that of older generations. This study's interviewees considered themselves as part of the younger generation and as being "open-minded" to the idea of mental illness's existence. More importantly, they were more inclined or "willing" to try treatment practices created for mental illness. They credited this to the availability of resources, such as the Internet, Google, and Instagram memes. These resources allowed the interviewees to be more accepting of mental illness.

Additionally, interviewees felt that the communication about mental illness must change. As discussed next, they often viewed as problematic or ineffective the conventional strategies used by their community to address mental illness.

Conventional Responses to Mental Illness in the Black American Community

Marginalization by Others and by Self

The participants agreed that mental illness is marginalized in the Black American community. This marginalization is believed to occur because of the "cultural perceptions that Black Americans are 'strong,'" thus indicating that mental-health services are not needed (Gaston et al., 2016, p. 686). Multiple

participants shared this belief, stating that Black Americans “act like it doesn’t exist” or “don’t deal with it.” Instead of admitting that mental illness exists and participating in active, healthy manners of combating it, Black Americans ignore it and/or do not take it seriously because they believe they are strong enough to prevail over the illness. Queen J mentioned how Black Americans tend to be self-centered, as they “don’t check on others” to see how others are doing mentally. This refusal to check on others could stem from the idea that Black Americans have more shameful attitudes toward friends who struggle with mental illness (Ward et al., 2009). Consequently, it is possible that many are dealing with mental illness without disclosing to each other and trying to handle it on their own.

Given the stigma attached to mental illness in the Black American community, it comes as no surprise that the mentally ill are often left to tend to their mental health alone. The mentally ill become reliant on their inner selves to deal with their mental illness (Bains, 2014). All of the interviewees mentioned differing methods to cope with their mental illness, with a majority of the methods being negative. Such coping mechanisms included “bottling things up,” going through “hoop phases,” “cutting,” and “not eating,” to name a few. These practices were utilized to weaken the pain that they felt from their mental illness. Unfortunately, these methods did little to ease the internal pain. As one participant, Allison, stated,

I’m still depressed because . . . acting out sexually was a way to feel something. Because, like, I really didn’t know how to identify my emotions well back then. And so, I took . . . loneliness and connected that to sex, because you get someone to come over so they’re technically with you . . . but then they leave, and so, I was just stuck with all of those feelings.

These self-marginalization methods had little promise of making the mentally ill feel better. In fact, they only enhanced the solitude or pain that the mentally ill were feeling, which could lead to more-drastring measures, as in the case of Wakanda’s aunt, who acted “strangely” before attempting to commit suicide:

She was quiet. She wasn’t talking to anybody. She wasn’t eating; like I said, she dropped a bunch of weight. And, so . . . what finally got us to, like, commit her was when one night, she had woke my cousin up, which is her son. Like, she was rumbling through the drawers and when he woke up and came in there, she had a knife. Like she was about to kill herself, so, that’s when they committed her.

Self-marginalized practices can build up over time to more dire situations, such as suicide. For this reason, when the first few instances of self-marginalization are noticed, traditional methods of aid are sought.

Seeking Professional Help

A few participants mentioned utilizing traditional methods to deal with their mental illness, including using medication, seeking therapy, and being institutionalized. Farrah, for example, sought treatment because “I’m tired of feeling empty. I’m tired of, like, being on a rollercoaster. Or like, breaking down, or just, this isn’t normal. This wasn’t me.” Farrah’s desire to enter treatment derived from an inner place of wanting to become better, which is a common occurrence for mentally ill individuals. As stated by Ayalon & Alvidrez (2007), the main reason why the mentally ill seek treatment originates from their acknowledgment of “high levels of need, symptoms becoming too bothersome, or suicidality” (p. 1330). The mentally ill become exasperated with feeling the way they do and thus seek treatment. Other interviewees shared this idea as well; they mentioned seeking aid because of “being suicidal” or “not feeling normal.”

For the majority of participants, seeking aid meant becoming medicated. They used medication to combat bipolar disorder, anxiety, or depression. Interestingly, however, the participants terminated their medication early because “I don’t feel like I could live being on that forever” or “I did not like the effects.” This is consistent with previous research: Black Americans typically do not complete and/or adhere to their recommended treatment (Ayalon & Alvidrez, 2007). This unwillingness to adhere to their treatment or to become dependent on the medication also possibly relates back to the idea of “strong Black men/women” who are able to overcome any adversity.

Different from the older generations’ tendency to avoid therapy, the young Black interviewees stated that they used therapy to help them manage their mental illness. Farrah, for example, liked therapy because “you have somebody to talk to who doesn’t judge you.” A few interviewees mentioned how they needed someone to talk to about their mental illness and, because mental illness is viewed so badly in the Black American community, they turned toward therapy. Whereas previous research pointed out ethnic mismatching or “lack of culturally competent services” as prevalent reasons why Black Americans do not complete and/or seek therapy (Ayalon & Alvidrez, 2007, p. 1324), participants in this study welcomed therapy. Some even held different views on ethnic matching for therapy. For example, Wakanda felt that connection had little to do with racial similarities:

Although I feel like . . . we had two different walks of life, I still felt like I could relate with her more than I would with somebody else. . . . When you feel like you could relate to someone more, or somebody would have a better understanding of what you're going through, it's easier for you to open up.

Allison, on the other hand, felt that race matters, but sharing race (thus the racial culture) also presented a challenge:

I feel I can connect with [Black therapists] because . . . they won't try to go—step into that traditional path. But, also, I feel kind of weird. So, like with the third one that was an African lady woman, I felt more timid in speaking about how I feel about my mom. Because, you're supposed to be tight-knit in the family. I could care less, unfortunately, about my family.

Different from the previous literature, then, the lack of cultural matching seemed to present little problem or was even desired in this study's participants. Allison was hesitant about having a Black therapist because of the norm in the Black American community as to what should and should not be disclosed about the family. Interestingly enough, another participant, Farrah, mentioned preferring White therapists because they are "more creative." At least for these young participants, cultural matching was not important or desired in terms of therapy.

Religion as the Answer

As the literature showed, there is a strong reliance on religion in the Black American community in handling mental illness. Religion affects both the communication that surrounds mental health and the treatment that is sought. Many respondents mentioned being referred to religion and/or God to treat their mental illness—to pray more, to attend church more frequently. Allison's story is illustrative of this:

But after talking to me, he was like, "Alright. Let's go down to the church and we're gonna talk to a pastor." And I was like, "He's not really mine. I don't want to go to church on Sunday with y'all." Um, but, yeah. We went to the church and then his pastor was like, "Alright. Here's this therapist I know." And I was like, "Is—is she with the God too? Thank you for helping, but like, no! I'm not really feeling that connection with Jesus yet." . . . But it always seems like the first immediate response is "Alright. We're going to church." If

it's not that, it's just—"You're just fucked up! I can't help you if, you know, you don't go to church."

Allison's experience is a typical one. Black Americans often seek nonmedical methods such as speaking to ministers to treat mental illness, and attribute religion to healing mental illness more than traditional methods (Payne, 2008).

Preferred Ways to Address Mental Illness in the Black American Community

As shown above, participants in this study experienced typical responses to mental illness, and they all felt that these responses by the Black American community were not ideal. They felt that more constructive approaches were needed.

Improved Social Environment

Currently, mental illness is overwhelmingly stigmatized in the Black American community, thus creating an overall negative environment. Several interviewees suggested alleviating the stigma that surrounds mental illness by talking about mental illness more or by simply "building support groups." These support groups, which could include family, friends, counselors, and so on, would be able to create a welcoming environment around mental illness. It has been found that an environment that supports mental illness as well as the mentally ill creates a more positive image about mental illness (Ayalon & Alvidrez, 2007). The participants in this study made a number of suggestions, including "not portraying [mental illness] as if something's bad but portrayed as we are all as one" and "not separating people who do have mental illness from those who don't." Specifically, Allison mentioned "bring[ing] people in to talk about mental illness" because having a personal account of mental illness from a mentally ill individual opened her eyes. Kerry similarly stated,

I almost had the same ignorant mindset like, "Eh, you're Black. There's probably nothing wrong with you." But that was a nice little wake-up call. It helped me realize, "Oh, snap! I do need to actually be careful about this. I need to be sensitive." You never know what somebody is going through.

Being around a mentally ill individual thus changed Kerry's perspective.

The participants all pointed out the importance of creating a social environment that allows dialogues with people with mental illness as the first step toward changing the ways mental illness is viewed in the Black American community.

Build Knowledge

As previously stated, a lack of knowledge contributes to negative communication surrounding mental illness. Lack of knowledge about mental illness tends to influence the views that some individuals hold about it and its treatment (Gaston et al., 2016); however, this can change if, as suggested by the interviewees, the community promotes mental-illness awareness and individuals educate themselves. Here, universities play important roles, as they can promote mental-illness awareness to young adults (Longmire-Avital & Robinson, 2017). In fact, some universities began to promote awareness of mental illness by having a mental health month. One interviewee brought up this idea of “mental health awareness month” as something the Black American community should adopt as well. Another interviewee, Wakanda, stated that her knowledge on mental illness began to grow once she entered college and took psychology classes, as well as that she gained insight via TED talks. Queen J said that she promotes mental illness awareness with others: “I try to give them the information that I’ve gotten so they understand that there’s different types of mental illnesses and you just learn how to cope with different things.” Each of these attempts to build knowledge helps to lessen the stigma that surrounds mental illness and hopefully begins to change the attitudes held about it.

Attitude

There is a general unwillingness in the Black American community to disclose mental illness because of the attitudes held about it (Hunn & Craig, 2009). The respondents felt that, in order for mental illness to be seen in a positive light, there needed to be an attitude adjustment: becoming open-minded, taking mental illness seriously, and not being so reliant on religion. The interviewees mentioned making the communication surrounding mental illness more open. Farrah stated, “Don’t talk at them; talk *with* them.” Often, individuals’ attempts at communicating their mental illness are shut down by being told nothing is wrong and they just need to “buck up,” which in turn often leads to self-marginalizing practices, such as not disclosing their mental state. The communication surrounding mental illness must be more inclusive and dialogic.

Multiple interviewees also suggested that heavy reliance on religion to deter mental illness must be reevaluated. The strong dependence on religion (Payne, 2008) often stops mental illness from being addressed properly. The participants supported this idea. Farrah stated, “I believe in God too. I’m a die-hard believer, but if you need help, you need help,” to reinforce the idea of not relying solely on God. This concept was further explored in Tom’s response: “I firmly believe that God will make a way, but I also feel like, sometimes he puts these steps . . . or things in front of you to help you.” Another participant, Kerry, combined the two aforementioned ideas. He mentioned that “God wants us to pray, but God also wants us to take action. So, we combined the two forces, I guess you should say” in regard to utilizing other methods alongside religion for treating mental health. Each interviewee recognized that religion and God can help to lessen the challenges of mental illness to some degree but that other actions need to be taken in order to best address the problem.

Discussion and Implications

Notably, a copious amount of the findings from this study supported the findings from the prior research on mental illness in the Black American community. It appears that stigma is the leading cause of how mental illness and the mentally ill are treated. As previous research showed, mental illness tends to be looked at negatively in general, but that negative view is typically amplified in the Black American community because of the additionally stigmatizing status that mental illness brings to members of the community (Campbell & Mowbray, 2016). This is supported by the aforementioned double-minority status as well by as gender norms, reluctance to disclose, and history, as reinforced by the participants’ responses. The stigmatizing nature surrounding mental illness tends to create an inimical perception that creates shame, fear, and denial and often influences others to take on this negative stance. With these ideas in practice, awareness of mental illness becomes stunted, resulting in a lack of knowledge of and a disavowing attitude toward mental illness. This creates an everlasting cycle that produces negative communication that affects not only the mentally ill but everyone.

Negative communication about mental illness disadvantages the entire community, not just the mentally ill, as maintained by the interviewees’ insights. None of them had anything positive to share about the relationship between mental illness and the Black American community, as the communication within this community tends to disparage mental illness. As found by Campbell & Mowbray (2016), the “racializing and gendering” of mental illness greatly influences how one

interprets and understands the notion (p. 260). Kerry's insistence that his brother could not be mentally ill because of his race and gender ties into this idea as well as the notion of "Black Power" and "strong Black woman/man." These ideas have a tendency to obstruct the relationship between the mentally ill and non-mentally ill, thus creating a hostile environment and further division between the two groups. Furthermore, because the marginalization of mental illness is not about diagnosis but rather about the communication around it, marginalization affects anyone who may display the symptoms—whether diagnosed or not—by silencing their experiences or preventing them from seeking needed help. Thus, changing the communication surrounding mental illness is a key to a better understanding of and response to it.

Communication is a powerful tool that holds great influence and power. This is why it is important to look at mental illness from a communication perspective as this study did. This study built upon prior research by showing how what we think and believe—an integral part of psychology—is shaped by communication. As Pearce (2007) argued, each communication has an "afterlife" (p. 2) in that it has a consequence; it helps to shape a social world. The communication about mental illness in the Black American community has been overwhelmingly negative. Every statement made about mental illness has an effect in the lives of each individual—mentally ill or not and diagnosed or not—and consequently influences communication about mental illness in the future with others, hence creating a cycle of negativity about mental illness—a cycle that is often hard, but not impossible, to break.

Pearce (2007) mentioned how "every turn in a conversation is a bifurcation point," meaning that the communication surrounding any given subject could be changed, leading to a different afterlife and thus to a social world (p. 5). The younger generation is already beginning this process by using bifurcation points to change the perceptions held about mental illness and provide a hospitable outlook. Participants in this study mentioned utilizing the Internet to create an open dialogue about mental illness, as well as becoming more comfortable with being mentally ill. Others stated how the college environment aided in this process, as universities typically have a mental-health-awareness month. College is a privileged space that not everyone has access to, however.

The idea of bifurcation points, the generational changes, and college as a privileged space together lead to an important practical implication. Is it possible for these bifurcation points to happen outside of college—perhaps in the church or other community spaces? As mentioned earlier, religion is seen as a central element

in the lives of many Black Americans (Payne, 2008); additionally, the church is seen as a “primary source of spirituality, social support, and connectedness” (Hunn & Craig, 2009, p. 87). Conceivably, this location could be utilized to create a space for open dialogue about mental illness for all members of the congregation to partake in. Perhaps these dialogues can begin to alleviate the stigma surrounding mental illness and create compassion for it—a bifurcation point that can change the perception of mental illness and create a new afterlife surrounding it.

Finally, this study’s findings point to several implications for future studies. First, conducting similar research with more participants of both sexes and other demographics (class, sexuality, region, etc.) will help to see if the findings from the current study are shared by larger and diverse groups of young Black Americans. My participants mentioned that the reason their perceptions of mental illness differed from the older generations’ is because of education. In previous research, however, increased learning about mental illness did not help to ease negative views of it. Future research needs to explore this inconsistency and what kinds of educational programs about mental illness are helpful in the Black American community. Another area to be explored is the role played by therapists. In my study, the race of the therapist was important for some and not for others. Some questions that could be explored include “Do Black American therapists make treatment easier and more comfortable to partake in for Black Americans?” and “What communication is likely to be helpful if the therapist is non-Black?” An additional area of research may be the influence of historical racial injustices experienced and endured by the Black American community on how Black Americans treat mentally ill individuals within their community. Finally, the role of religion must be explored more. Given the importance of religion in this community, how can religious leaders, families, and medical professionals work together to better approach mental illness? All these areas should be studied through means of research such as qualitative interviews that allow in-depth understanding of communication about mental illness in the Black American community.

Conclusion

This study explored young Black Americans’ experiences with and views of mental illness within the Black American community from a communication perspective. In particular, the study examined the ideas about mental illness communicated to young Black Americans, and how those young Black Americans felt about and responded to the ideas. Although the findings are limited to the six participants and can certainly benefit from further study, the fact that the

participants' experiences and observations overlapped with the previous findings and themes suggests that the patterns of negative perceptions and discourse about mental illness persist in the Black American community. The perceptions and discourse cyclically influence each other.

I began this paper with a personal story because this topic is as much personal as it is social. Conducting a review of literature and interviewing my fellow young Black Americans affirmed that we as a community must shift conversations about mental illness. This begins within one's own family. Earlier in the year, I was able to present this research at a local conference. I invited my father to come to listen—a bifurcation point in our conversation. He sat in on my presentation and told me afterward how insightful it was and how his perspective on mental illness began to change as he listened to me talk. A new social world is forming in my family, and I hope to do the same with others. My sister said it best after reading this paper: "Open up that dialogue. It needs to be heard so others can understand."

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