



COMM-ENTARY



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CHANGING PERSPECTIVES: A MEDIUM ANALYSIS OF THE

LYTRO LIGHT FIELD CAMERA

KELLY MARTIN

The Lytro Light Field Camera

The first Kodak camera was available to the average consumer in 1888. George Eastman, the man behind the machine, described later that he had realized he was “starting out to make photography an everyday affair” (About Kodak: George Eastman). Now, over one hundred and twenty years later, we live in a society where studying photography and taking pictures has become second nature. Children learn what it means to have their photo taken at a young age, and a child’s fascination with picture taking seems to mirror our culture’s fascination with pictures and photography. The impact of *any* media, including photography, is evident across multiple areas of society and behavior. The influences of the camera can be seen in the realms of art, science, journalism, and law, to name only a few. Furthermore, developments in a specific medium, whether it be advances from telegraph to telephone, television to cable, or print photography to digital, further shape and influence culture. It is therefore reasonable to argue that new developments in any medium will significantly impact U.S. culture across a variety of areas.

In October 2011, a man by the name of Ren Ng introduced the newest development in consumer photography technology: the Lytro light field camera. Pictures taken by the Lytro camera can be viewed on a computer using specific software that comes with the camera. What makes these photos different than conventional photos is the ability to focus on any part of the picture—*after* the photo is already taken. By engaging with some of the sample photos the company has posted on its website, (www.lytro.com/living-pictures) one can see how clicking on different objects in the fore, middle, and background shifts focus, radically altering the original image (Living Pictures). The camera itself is a handheld device that has only a few physical features: the small rectangular box has a power button, an 8x optical zoom, a USB plug, a touch

screen, and an instant shutter button. The camera also features a very unique, constant $f/2$ aperture. Aperture refers to the size of the lens opening when a camera takes a picture, and in a conventional digital camera the larger the size of the opening (referred to as $f/2.8$ for example) creates a *shallower* focus. Conversely, the smaller the aperture ($f/16$) creates a *deeper* focus or a greater “depth of field.” A shallow focus means that only a small portion of the photo is in focus, such as one object placed in any field of focus. A picture with a deep focus is an image where the entire picture, from foreground to background, is in focus. This revolutionary technology that allows a constant aperture and yet incredibly interactive photographs, was once housed in an entire room full of cameras connected to a supercomputer. Now, that technology has now been shrunk into a small and portable consumer product. This study aims to speculate on the possible impacts of the Lytro camera and light field technology across a broad range of cultural arenas in American society.

How it Works: The Technology behind the Camera

The Lytro camera is truly unlike any other camera in existence today. Most digital cameras allow a photographer to focus on a specific point or object, capturing the intensity of light in one spot. This means that conventional photographs tell viewers very little about the light that is actually passing through the lens, a problem that Ng sought to solve in his PhD Dissertation from Stanford University. Ng describes this issue with a simple music-recording analogy, stating that “taking a conventional photograph is like recording all the musicians playing together, rather than recording each instrument on a separate audio track” (2006, pg. 17). The Lytro camera instead utilizes *light field technology*, which essentially means the lens captures the *entire* light field, or the amount of light traveling in every direction through every point in space. This in turn represents a much larger amount of data than in traditional photographs (The Science Inside). Information is captured with an innovative *light field sensor* which grabs the color, intensity, and direction of light in a grand total of “11 million rays (11 megarays)... each describing the intensity of light along a path through the sensor” (Lytro). Traditional cameras, on the other hand, only record a single amount of light by adding up the light rays, a method that lacks in directional information supplied by the light field sensor. The machine then relies on software inside the camera, which uses sophisticated algorithms to process light fields into the interactive photos that can switch from a 2-D to 3-D perspective with the click of a button, creating what the company calls “living pictures” (The

Why does it matter?

In order to analyze the Lytro camera's possible effects, it is important to look at other analyses regarding the impact of the medium of photography in general. Stanley Milgram's article, "The Image-Freezing Machine," describes many of the effects that picture-taking has on human behavior and experience. Photography, he states, extends the psychological functions of perception and memory, influencing both how we see and how we remember. Milgram explains that there are other important components and behavioral effects of photography that have not been fully explored. To elaborate, the presence of a camera can affect social behavior. Milgram describes an experiment, which found that people were more likely to donate larger amounts of money to a charity when their picture was taken, versus when it was not (Milgram, 1977, pg. 241). Milgram also details that there is a "privileged space" between a photographer and the subject of his or her photo, a line of sight or a relationship, that is purposefully uninterrupted by passerby's (1977, pg. 243). Milgram's analysis of these impacts regarding the medium of photography begs the question: how might the Lytro camera influence or change similar social behaviors and values? This study aims to answer this question and extend the knowledge of photography's newest impacts as a medium.

Digital photography in particular is important to examine, as it is essentially the direct predecessor of the Lytro camera. According to Ng, the most recent development in the history of digital photography is the commodification of digital image sensors that bring "a new-found sense of immediacy and freedom to picture making" (2006, pg. 20-21). However, these digital image sensors do not simply record images, but instead computes them because each pixel only records the red, green, and blue components of light. Algorithms are then used to essentially reconstruct the full color of each pixel. The Lytro camera, on the other hand, samples "each individual ray of light that contributes to the final image," creating an entire light field that allows people to change and control the image after it has been taken (Ng, 2006, pg. 22-23). This paper will later discuss how specific differences between digital cameras and the Lytro camera are changing the way people understand and interact with digital photos.

The theoretical rationale for this breadth study stems from the work done by Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan argued that "societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media

by which men communicate than by the content of the communication” (McLuhan, 1967, pg. 8). In other words, a message represented in media—whether the medium is book, newspaper, film, photography, telephone, and so on—is not so dependent on the actual content of the message, but is more influenced by the specific characteristics of the medium itself.

Joshua Meyrowitz examined the difference between a “book culture” and a “television culture” in the U.S. in regards to children engaging in adult-like behavior (and vice versa). A book and TV program may contain similar content, but when presented across the two different media, they impact behavior and social roles in very different ways (Meyrowitz, 1984, pg. 19). In a book culture, children do not have access to information their parents read because reading a book requires a very specific skill and gradual learning process. TV on the other hand allows multiple viewers to watch a program all at once, and watching TV doesn’t require any significant skill to understand. Meyrowitz therefore argues that the shift in medium from book to television impacted the merging of adult and child roles because children have significantly more access to information about the “secret lives” of parents and the world once kept hidden by the culture of books (1984, pg. 34-35). This example shows that the medium itself, not the content of the media, influences the shift in roles, or in the words of McLuhan: “the medium is the message” (1964, pg. 7). It is this concept that rationalizes why the study of specific media is so important in understanding the physical and psychological transitions in and characteristics of societies—more so than studying the content of messages alone.

While this analysis aims to speculate about the possible impacts of the Lytro camera across a broad range of cultural arenas in American society, the camera has already received some critic reviews. Complaints regarding the camera include its poor image resolution (about 1.2 megapixels, smaller than most camera phones), the inability to edit photos, and the heavy reliance on software for the extremely large file sizes (Goldman, 2011). Due to these reasons many consumers argue that the camera is merely the latest toy, and will in no way have an impact on photography, let alone society at large.

However, in further examining McLuhan’s theories, the Lytro camera’s initial criticism comes as no surprise. According to McLuhan, this kind of conflict naturally occurs in the transitional periods between two mediums because “our official culture is striving to force the new media

to do the work of the old” (1967, pg. 81). In other words, photos taken by the Lytro camera currently seem inadequate compared to traditional cameras based on traditional measures of “what makes a good photo:” image quality and size, and photo manipulation capabilities. However, as McLuhan explains, advances or changes in media impact culture in *new* ways—often in ways that the old medium is incapable of doing due to the differences in the characteristics of each medium. Therefore, analyzing the Lytro camera and its impact is in fact an important study, despite the camera’s shortcomings as defined by traditional standards.

Method

This study is an analytical breadth study, as it will be speculating on the possible impacts of the Lytro camera across a number of social and cultural sectors of U.S. culture. The study will theorize the possible influences the medium may have based on the camera’s technological capabilities and their relationship with external reality, or the generally observable phenomena that are likely to be influenced by such technology. An analytical approach of this issue is best because the medium has not fully integrated into society, and the effects can’t yet be recorded or observed in descriptive research. Additionally, while this study could be supported by experimental data, detailing a number of possible effects first is best; it gives a researcher a base of information to later design a strong experimental study to find a causal relationship between the Lytro camera and some behavioral, social, or psychological effect.

Specifically, this study tries to analyze the possible impacts the Lytro camera may have in the next two to ten (or more) years by analyzing how specific characteristics of the medium influence a range of cultural divisions such as the military, the issue of privacy, journalism and media, and the justice system. In addition to these social areas the study attempts to look at how the medium may influence other psychological realms including behavior, such as the role of the photographer and the experience of the photograph. These specific topics were chosen because they seem likely, at this point in time, to be influenced by the technological differences of the new medium over the old. Overall, the study will argue how the impacts of the Lytro camera will indeed be immense, because while the traditional photo and Lytro photo at first seem fairly similar to one another at first glance, they are in fact very different.

A new photograph: the interactive picture

Looking at photographs, especially those of family and friends, is a fun and cherished activity. Examining an interesting picture can be exciting despite the fact that traditional photos are simple, two-dimensional images. The Lytro camera, on the other hand, is a medium that is capable of completely changing not only how a person views an image, but *what* a photograph is.

The Lytro camera presents an entirely new way of engaging with photos. The pictures are participatory: they beg to be clicked on and manipulated because it is their main feature and purpose. Viewing photos becomes more of a game, and it develops into an interactive experience of exploration and discovery of new meaning, rather than a simple act of looking. Even the process of sharing photos becomes a different kind of involvement because it invites others to participate in the experience as well. The interactive characteristics of the medium completely change what it means to look at a picture.

McLuhan describes all media as being extensions of some psychic or physical human faculty (1967, pg. 26). For instance, a book is the extension of the eye, the radio is an extension of the ear, a microphone the extension of the voice, and so on. Moreover, the “extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act—the way we perceive the world” (McLuhan, 1967, pg. 41). McLuhan described the photo as the extension of the being; the Lytro photo could therefore be considered the extension of the active, participatory being.

Imagine a photo of you and your family during your last vacation on, say, a cruise to the Bahamas. With one click of the mouse you see the foreground: you, your family and friends laughing and smiling in some tropical port. This image stirs happy thoughts and cherished memories regarding the specific people in the picture. With a second click the focus shifts to the background, and while you and your comrades have gone blurry, the enormous cruise ship is now in focus sitting far behind in the water. This shift in focus completely changes the image and the memory. Old memories are rehashed: the games of mini golf you played on the deck, the jerk pork with mango chutney that you ordered nearly every night at the restaurant, among others. The switch in perspective is not just something you see, it’s something you feel. The Lytro camera is changing what a photo is and how we react to it. Changing the focus on a picture changes the entire memory, feeling, and experience of the photograph itself. The photograph is no longer a two-dimensional material object—it is a three-dimensional experience.

McLuhan's theory of extension can be taken a step further. Try this simple experiment: hold this very paper that you are reading about six to twelve inches in front of your face, with the top of the page being eye level. You can shift focus between this page and the far space in front of you (such as the wall you're facing, if you're in a room) by simply moving your eyes up to the background, and back down onto the page. Like the Lytro photos, the foreground of the page becomes blurry as you look to the focused background; conversely when you look back down to the page, the background becomes blurry and out of focus. There is something about the way we experience a Lytro picture that corresponds with how we see things in real life (and is nonexistent when we look at a normal, traditional photo). The image taken by a traditional digital camera is "determined by a set of data, but we must remember that this data—unlike light—is only representative of physical reality" (Lipkin, 2005, pg. 9). Instead, the Lytro camera records rays of light similar to the process performed by the human eye. It could therefore be argued that the Lytro camera is *literally* an extension of the eye in how it captures and presents pictures. This means that the way Lytro photographs represent reality is in fact a closer representation of how a person sees reality—versus a traditional photograph which uses far less real light data and computes the missing information. This is not to say that Lytro photos are a mechanical reproduction of reality, but are simply closer to representing reality than the traditional photograph.

If Lytro photos are better representations of reality than traditional ones, the photos could arguably impact the U.S. justice system, specifically evidence used in courts of law. For example, when a person describes what they saw at the scene of a crime, they are labeled as an "eye-witness." If the Lytro camera takes photos using similar light-information that the eye does (or at least closer in comparison to the traditional camera), a Lytro photo could be treated as more important than a traditional photo. Furthermore, a Lytro photo cannot change what it portrays (unlike a person whose story can be manipulated by memory, emotion, bribes, and so on). A Lytro photo could therefore be regarded as the closest evidence in portraying reality, rather than a human eye-witness or a traditional photograph with a competing perspective.

Disappearing Privacy

Nearly everyone today owns some kind of digital camera, whether it is a camera phone, a light-weight consumer model, or a larger and more expensive professional camera. Due to its incredible popularity

and abundance, the camera as a medium seems fairly harmless in terms of privacy. People are constantly taking pictures of friends, landscapes, flowers, animals, entertainment venues like ball games or concerts, and so on. No one flinches when a camera goes off in their direction—as long as the photo isn't focused on them and being taken without permission. It's reasonable that most people don't care about being in the background of stranger's pictures: the focus, literally or metaphorically, of the camera is on a closer, more visible subject, so what is there to worry about?

McLuhan argues that “electrical information devices...are causing a very serious dilemma between our claim to privacy and the community's need to know” (1967, pg. 12). While the abundance of the traditional camera has seemed to desensitize most people about the issue of being in someone else's photo, the Lytro camera is likely to impact people's feelings regarding the privacy of picture-taking in public settings. Its ability to clearly focus on background images after the picture is taken essentially makes every object and space inside of the Lytro camera frame an integral part of the picture. Milgram describes a “privileged space” between a photographer and his or her subject and “the reluctance of bystanders to violate the line of sight measures the strength and legitimacy that they ascribe to the photographic act” (1977, pg. 243). The Lytro camera essentially allows *any* object within the screen to be subject to the photographer's line of sight. At an amusement park, a stranger could take a picture with you in the background and clearly make out your face, expression, clothes, and so on, long after you are gone. This lack of privacy could also manifest in instances of spying or stalking. It gives strangers the ability to take pictures, pretending to focus on a closer image while having the intention of actually capturing the people in the unsuspecting middle and background. Perhaps your parents find an online picture of your friends at a party—until they click on another part of the photo and realize this is actually a picture of you, doing a keg-stand in the once secretive background. Privacy is an enormously serious and controversial issue. This new medium brings forth capabilities that further diminish the privacy of people in public settings.

Photography and Social Behavior

Photography has been shown to influence people's behaviors in social settings. As described earlier, experiments documenting the impact of photography on charity donations found that people donate more money when their picture is taken versus when it is not. Similarly, more cars come to a stop at a stop sign when someone is on the corner taking

pictures at the intersection. These pilot studies, conducted by students of Milgram, display how people feel accountable for their actions and the effect this accountability has on their behavior. The camera, Milgram argues, “carries the documentation of the act beyond the situation in which it was carried out...by permanently documenting the action, the photograph implies the polar opposite of anonymity and accordingly enhances social control” (1977, pg. 241). As explained earlier, the Lytro camera’s line of sight is essentially broadened to include nearly all things within the frame of the picture. Once the technology is widespread, this will only further impact people’s behavior in social settings such as the ones described above. Whenever a camera with light field technology is in use, people may become increasingly aware of their actions, thus creating an even stronger sense of social control.

Photojournalism and Media

Photojournalism in the media is often observed as unbiased and truthful, due to the camera’s supposed ability to reproduce reality. After all, is a photojournalist not simply photographing what he or she sees, so that others may understand what is *really* going on in a particular situation? While this tradition of presenting-the-truth-as-it-is seems to be the dominant discourse regarding photojournalism (and journalism in general), Rudolf Arnheim’s examination of film and photography would lead us to a different conclusion. Film and photos, Arnheim argues, are in fact no way a mere representation of reality. Instead, Arnheim explains that factors such as the camera position, distance, and framing are characteristics that can be manipulated in taking a picture, which do not correspond to how we perceive things in real life due to our ability to move around and see things outside of the frame (1957, pg. 9, 16). As a result, photojournalism lacks in its ability to represent reality because so much must be chosen and manipulated by the photographer.

Traditionally, photojournalists are able to consciously decide both the selection and depth of focus. Like all camera characteristics that can be manipulated, changing what is in and out of focus completely alters the photo itself in terms of content and how different subjects within the frame are likely to be perceived. For instance, imagine a photo in which a U.S. president is standing on stage with a camera zoomed in to a close-up on his face, placed in the foreground. The president’s wife can be seen also in a close-up, but she is standing behind and to the left of the president in the middle ground. In the background, to the far left is a crowd of people facing the politicians and holding colorful signs. When

the focus is set to the foreground and the rest of the photo is out of focus, the image is perceived to be about the president who is smiling and waving towards the camera. Now, imagine the focus has shifted to the middle ground, to the president's wife, which turns the image into a new, interesting photo. Instead of the focus being on the president—where it typically is—the focus, both figuratively and literally is on the first lady. This could put sympathy on the wife, or make her look more powerful than the president himself. Imagine now that the focus shifts to the background while the middle and foreground remain out of focus. Suddenly the image changes dramatically, the focused crowd can now be made out as angry protesters, not supporting the politicians, but adamantly against them, holding signs that can be clearly read and wearing expressions that can be clearly seen while the president and first lady are blurry, their details less recognizable. A traditional photojournalist or media outlet has the power to choose which of these scenarios to photograph or publish, and this ultimately impacts how an event, person, or scenario is perceived (Walker, 2011).

Envision the same image as described above is taken by a Lytro camera. The focus is not manipulated by the photographer; the picture is simply taken. Essentially, the power that was once in the hands of the photographer or the media publisher has now been shifted to that of the viewer, the average consumer who could manipulate the picture themselves. The above example shows how, in giving viewers the ability to see the image from multiple perspectives, one has access to more information of “what’s actually going on.” Of course, lots of other variables can still be manipulated by the photojournalist such as framing, angle, and so on, but this development is one step towards removing power from the photographer and giving it instead to the viewer.

It's important to note the fact that the Lytro camera indeed takes control away from photojournalists. This may result in professional photographers or news media avoiding the technology at first. Photos that present information (through focus manipulation) not in the best interest of the media outlet are likely to be avoided. However, the current availability of this technology at the consumer level is likely to produce these photos on websites, blogs, or social media pages of average citizens, not of large media conglomerates. Therefore the news media's avoidance of the technology during certain situations may not impact the availability of information to the public.

The Shifting Photographer

In addition to taking some control away from the photographer in terms of manipulating focus within a photo, the Lytro camera could influence the role and behavior of the picture-taker in other ways. As an example, skilled photographers can create truly stunning pictures by manipulating the focus themselves, a skill that becomes diminished when software is capable of focusing for you. Strategically-focused pictures taken by traditional cameras may lose some of their artistic credibility, and there may even come a day when new generations don't see artistic potential in old, well-focused pictures at all because the camera just seems to do that work for you. While this impact seems to diminish the artistic ability of the photographer, the camera's simplistic physical capabilities also make taking beautiful, interactive pictures a more democratic process—nearly anyone can do it. When using a traditional digital camera (without using automatic settings) a photographer usually needs to have some basic understanding of how to adjust different aspects of the camera in varying situations, such as the aperture or shutter speed. Yet, the Lytro camera's simplistic physical model eliminates the necessity of learning how to focus a camera in different kinds of light. There's essentially no learning curve to take clear, dynamic pictures in multiple light settings. Everyone now has the opportunity to create professional, interesting photos.

The Lytro camera may also affect the role of the photographer. Milgram argues that traditionally, a photographer “needs the aggressiveness to intrude himself into a situation where he is often irrelevant, and sometimes unwanted” (1977, pg. 244). Imagine a photographer ‘aggressively intruding’ on the scene of an accident or grief-stricken moment; he or she comes up close to an object and takes the time to focus the camera on the most shocking, thought-provoking, or otherwise important subject, over and over again. The Lytro camera, on the other hand, needs no setting adjustments besides zooming, therefore allowing photographers to take dynamic pictures of important subjects without necessarily intruding space for long amounts of time. This therefore lessens the photographer's role as an aggressive intruder and even gives the person an extra hand to help out at the scene. The Lytro camera not only influences *what* a photographer can do, but *who* a photographer can be, and what his or her role is as a picture-taker.

Wasting Time

Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter have all been accused of being chronic time-wasters, especially among

young people. While there are many theories as to why people spend so much time on these social networking sites, one Harvard business professor was curious as to what people actually do when they log on. Mikolaj Jan Piskorski found that the activity people spend the most time doing online is viewing pictures; 70% of all actions on social networking sites are attributed to either looking at pictures or at other people's profiles (Silverthorne, 2009). While the reasons for this activity are still hazy, the fact of the matter is that people spend enormous amounts of their time looking at photographs.

The Lytro camera's ability to change and manipulate pictures creates extremely interactive photos. In fact, depending on the content and depth of field in the picture, certain photos may have two, three, or more interesting perspectives. Essentially, one picture could be viewed as two or three pictures, each focal point becoming a new picture with new details to discover. While this phenomenon is very interesting on other social levels, the most basic effect the camera could have on behavior is the creation of a more powerful time-waster. Lytro camera pictures could arguably double or triple the amount of time people spend looking at photos online.

Research and Development

The act of taking a picture has always followed the simple steps of point-focus-shoot. Now, the Lytro camera has reordered those steps to point-shoot-focus. The impacts of this seemingly harmless change are important in military settings (Gaylord, 2011). The Lytro camera allows the photographer to focus after the fact, allowing for pictures to be taken at quick rates without the nuisance of fixing the focus or worrying about blurry pictures. The uses of this technology seem to have very important implications in military settings, where photographs become powerful tools used to document combat and provide military intelligence. For instance, the collection and analysis of images during military missions could become enhanced by the ability to focus on specific aspects of images after they are already taken. This becomes especially important in situations where taking the time to focus multiple shots is not an option.

Furthermore, as the U.S. puts enormous amounts of money into military spending, a large amount of those funds is used for research and development. It is likely that the camera's light field technology will be further developed, backed by this research and development funding, for other militaristic uses. For military purposes alone, the technology in

these cameras is likely to become available in smaller devices, becoming more powerful with better optical zooms and higher resolution. For example, the U.S. military currently relies heavily on aerial photography in order to map terrain and create topographical data for imagery intelligence. A technologically advanced light field camera could take aerial photos of terrain, focusing on important details after the photo has already been taken. These crucial details otherwise could be completely missed by a traditional camera. This technology would essentially give military operations access to more detailed information than was ever available by a traditional digital camera, and research and development funding could improve the technology, further encouraging the medium's influence on society.

Limitations of the study

The Lytro camera and its technology are very new on the consumer level—the cameras themselves have only been released via the company's website. These factors must be taken into consideration while reading and understanding this study because the findings argued are only speculative, since the effects have simply not played out yet. There could (and probably will be) events, developments, and factors that may affect the camera's influence that cannot be predicted at the time this study was written. Also, as an analytical study in general, the findings of this article cannot empirically point to any kind of causal relationship between the medium's characteristics and the final effects of the technology. These relationships and final conclusions will be important to examine in follow-up studies.

Where to go from here

As evidenced by the numerous preliminary ways that the Lytro camera could have an impact on social, behavioral, and psychological aspects of culture, the camera is a medium worthy of following and researching further. One strong follow-up study to this analysis would be a descriptive study that observes the actual impacts of the Lytro camera and technology once the camera has been fully introduced and meshed into American culture. This could take place in the future, whether that be two, five, or ten years down the road, and could compare the speculations made in this study to the actual effects and uses of the Lytro camera.

Light field photographs look very similar to the pictures that we are accustomed to today. However, as this study has shown, Lytro photos are

anything but traditional. The Lytro camera combines the two elements of the static image with moving perception. McLuhan states that “when two seemingly disparate elements are imaginatively poised, pit in apposition in new and unique ways, startling discoveries often result” (1967, pg. 10). The Lytro camera is a completely new way of looking at and understanding photography and the photo. As explained throughout this study, the impacts of this medium on social and cultural realms will be both significant and very different than those impacts created by the traditional digital camera. Only time will tell how the medium and its influences will specifically unfold, how our perspectives will be shifted, and how our lives will be changed—for better or worse.

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CORPORATE MEDIA ELECTIONS OF JUSTICES

MATTHEW S. JONES

In 39 states justices are popularly elected to their seat on the bench. Recently, the cost of individual state bench campaigns has been steadily increasing. Some campaigns have even topped one hundred million dollars. These small state-level campaigns raise money through special interest contributors funding justices who will rule favorably towards their case when it comes before the court. Most of this money is used through media outlets to gain the candidate air time through advertisements and to promote large campaign events that will garner media coverage. Candidates are winning elections because people know their names. To some, this is a good use of the capitalistic system, where to others, it is unethical and should be stopped.

In the past, the popular election of judges was assumed to be the fairest way of electing justices: letting the people decide who judges them in court seemed to be a reasonable aspect of democracy. The issue is the judicial system does not serve the same political functions as the legislative and executive branches of the government. The judicial system is not supposed to be conservative or liberal. A judge needs to look at the law and facts, ultimately ruling fairly on the issue. Every citizen should be subject to a fair hearing in court. Is it fair then, if the people before the judge in court are funding their political campaigns?

This issue of campaign spending began to gain steam after a controversial ruling by the Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission*. *Citizens United* is a non-for profit conservative political organization whose mission is “dedicated to restoring the United States government to citizens’ control” and to “assert American values of limited government, freedom of enterprise, strong families, and national sovereignty and security” (*Citizens United*). In this case, *Citizens United* was the plaintiff challenging the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, also known as the McCain-Feingold Act. The McCain-Feingold Act limits the role of soft money in campaign finance by prohibiting

national political party committees from raising or spending funds that are not subject to federal limits, including state and local races or issue discussion. It also prohibits the proliferation of political advocacy advertisements by a national corporation within 30 days of a primary election or caucus or within 60 days of a general election (Federal Election Commission). This case also overruled two precedents: “Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce, a 1990 decision that upheld restrictions on corporate spending to support or oppose political candidates, and McConnell v. Federal Election Commission, a 2003 decision that upheld the part of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act that restricted campaign spending by corporations and unions” (Liptak, p. 1). The Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission case was ruled in favor Citizens United, repealing the ban on spending by corporations in candidate elections.

In the legal world, decisions are rendered based on decisions of past cases. The decision in the Citizens United case brings up the question of politics in the Supreme Court. In a five-four decision, the court voted in favor of Citizens United on the basis of the First Amendment, which states the government has no place regulating political speech. This election induced a major shift in the financing of elections. In his majority opinion, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, stated that it is unlawful for the government to intervene and attempt to control thought. Is it illegal then, for major corporations to control the thoughts of the citizens by airing advertisements attacking the other candidates in the race?

With so much money being raised, one has to wonder, where is all of this money going? The main source of political campaign spending goes to media outlets in the form of advertisements. Helen Lavelle was a media consultant hired by Judge Tom Burke for a quarter of a million dollars to run his election campaign in Pennsylvania. This is something pertinent in national legislative and presidential elections, but rarely in the case of a state Supreme Court judicial campaign. Helen Lavelle states the importance of media portrayal of a candidate:

Am I concerned with having the most cinematic music that I can possibly have behind the radio spot? Am I concerned about what the light looks like when our candidate walks into a courtroom? Am I concerned about how he looks, that we present him the way he should be seen by the voters, as a dignified, wonderful, humble, hard-working, incredible, deserving-of-your-vote kind of guy?

Yes, I do. They are emotional ways, emotional angles that I go in. And yes, people do vote based on that (Bill Moyer's Journal).

This is the strategy that is part of the success in a judiciary campaign.

One might not realize the importance of this statement and campaign funding until they see the campaigns of the other candidates, specifically the advertisements. Another candidate in the election was Fred Pierantoni, who did not have major funding for his campaign. It was obvious in his advertisements as well. His advertisement reads as follows: "Over 25,000 cases in 7 years. Assistant district attorney 5 years, District justice 7 years, Judge Pierantoni, The experience you want. Pierantoni, the people's judge" (Bill Moyer's Journal). His advertisement includes no cinematic lighting and he cannot afford a quarter million dollar media consultant. His ad looks like a simple power point presentation that relies on loud noise and commentary to get viewers' attention. It is obvious that this is not going to trigger peoples' processing cues like the advertisement for Tom Burke. In Burke's ad, we see his smiling face. He comes across as a humble, dignified older gentleman that could be your father or grandfather. There is subtle music and good lighting. It is obvious which ad was more expensive to make. However, the individual citizen does not think like that. All they know is that Tom Burke seems to care more than Fred Pierantoni, which is all that matters in the minds of the voters.

The Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission case opened the door for the proliferation of political advocacy acts by national corporations. Spending goes to media outlets including television and radio stations. One could argue that the limits on how close advertisements can run to elections would not be important. However, data shows otherwise; "Spending on state Supreme Court TV ads has exploded nationally as Election Day nears, with \$3.3 million being spent in the week between Oct. 21 and Oct. 27. The TV binge has raised total ad spending to nearly \$13 million for the 2009-10 election cycle, with business and conservative groups outspending lawyers and unions in every major state except Illinois" (JAS, p. 2). Figures on the national level are even scarier,

From 2000 to 2009, an estimated \$93.6 million was spent on television advertising by candidates and interest groups

hoping to sway judicial contests. The period from 2007 to 2008 was the most expensive two-year cycle for television advertising in Supreme Court election history, with nearly \$27 million spent. Nearly another \$5 million was spent on television advertising in 2009, when only 3 states had races for Supreme Court seats. Eight states set records for spending on television ads from 2007 to 2008, and 2008 saw more television ads aired in Supreme Court contests than ever before (Skagg).

Television spending on Supreme Court justice elections is getting ridiculous to the point that it is undermining the justice system. A Today/Gallup poll conducted in February 2009 “found that 89% of those surveyed believe the influence of campaign contributions on judges’ rulings is a problem” (Skagg). People realize they are being corrupted by corporate America through the use of the media, but there is very little they can do about it. The law makes it so these actions are legal, and it is hard to fight corporations who have the law on their side.

Should corporations and media be kept out of the law? It is an interesting predicament. Corporations and the media are both open to free speech, but should that free speech come at the detriment of the individual citizen? The elections of these backed candidates are still popular elections, so individual citizens still need to vote the candidates into office. That is why most of the campaign money is spent on attack advertisements towards other candidates. “Much of the special interest money is used for attack ads, which leverage hot-button issues to demonize judicial candidates (Cohen, p.3).” Candidates who do not have large amounts of campaign funding cannot afford to produce expensive attack advertisements towards other candidates. Attack advertisements do not have to be entirely accurate either. They only need to depict the candidate in a negative light before the election. Then, retractions can be issued after the election, which at that point is too late.—that is the nature of politics. But the issue at hand is that the justice system is not part of the political system. Politicians have more room to be liberal and conservative but one does not need a partisan judge looking at whether a community should be uprooted to replace it with a massive plant.

The larger picture here is the flow of money throughout the system. If the Supreme Court is open to private interest groups funding campaigns then the individual citizen has no chance. One could question

why the media outlets do not police the amount of advertisements and attack ads slanted toward one specific candidate. In fact, the media outlets encourage the spending because all of the airtime generates revenue for the state media television and radio stations, and they are not going to turn down the revenue. In the minority opinion in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, Justice Stevens responded that people who invest in media corporations know “that media outlets may seek to influence elections” (Liptak, p. 1). Media outlets also hold interests in the election of judges and have strong political interests in regard to outcomes. They have the choice of which advertisements to run in which slot or which candidate to give more attention too. Media outlets are subject to the rule of law so it would be beneficial to them as well to contribute to the campaign process. Media outlets are controlled by large conglomerates, which have holdings in the businesses that want certain justices to rule their way. There is the chance for the development of the same vicious circle that we see in the legislature. Media owned corporations donate huge sums to candidate campaign funds. These candidates get elected and in turn pass laws that benefit the corporations that elected them. The problem with this is that the individual citizen is left to suffer while big businesses reap the benefits.

The greater point is that the floodgates have been opened. Major businesses have found ways to corrupt the institution of justice. The institution of justice in the United States is not supposed to be a partisan system. Is it just, when the Supreme Court is interpreting the facts to be biased towards their campaign contributors? The individual citizen is persuaded through media campaigns to elect corporate puppets to the bench who in many cases do not have the individual voter’s interest at heart. Big business has learned how to work the system. One cannot put the blame on the corporations in this instance of the political arena. Corporations are out to make a profit. Funding media time for a judicial candidate is a way of making sure their cases win in the courtroom. Any corporation that wants to remain competitive is going to try to work the system to its advantage. It is the purpose of the United States and the State level Supreme Courts to protect the rights of the individual citizens. The problem here is not the corporations or the media but the Supreme Court’s decision to allow these outlets to misguide citizens.

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THE GEEK MYSTIQUE:

HOW CULTURAL OVERSIGHT OF PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE REINFORCES TRADITIONAL POWER STRUCTURES

KENDRA MACK

Introduction

Welcome to the Internet circa 2012. It is a globally pervasive medium consisting of countless graphical pages, exploding with seemingly limitless information. A handful of these pages attract millions of worldwide users who are drawn to their easy-to-use communication tools, flashy and fun applications, and sleek user interfaces. This information is retrievable from desktops, laptops, smart phones, and tablets. As daily communication migrated onto these virtual spaces marking the dawn of the digital age, media outlets and media theorists alike flocked to the scene to report and analyze what this all means for human culture, communications, and everyday life. “Web 2.0,” “social networking sites,” and “killer apps” became and remain buzzwords surrounding the impacts of digital communication. While reporters and theorists are dazzled by the potential of these new technologies, the primary language of these communication tools, *programming language*, remains out of sight and culturally ignored. Without the fundamental programming scripts that serve as the groundwork of these technologies onto which daily communication is now taking place, the use of human language, as we understand it through status updates and tweets and search queries, would not be possible in this digital space. Programming language itself is a mode of communication that dictates what information is shared and how interaction takes place in digital media.

The “Geek Mystique”

There exists a peculiar quality about digital technologies. People send and retrieve email, play games on their iPhones, and interact with web pages like Facebook and Google. Communication is achieved, and everything is expected to work. Unlike with analog media such as film reels, record players, and even non-digital cameras, the quality of the

hardware is not solely what allows for the transfer of information. A unique characteristic of digital technology is the presence of an innovative mode of communication between this hardware and human language, which creates programming language. Programming language is what I define as the *primary language* of digital media in that without it, all other digital communication is not possible. Human language, the focus of much Web 2.0 analysis, functions as a *secondary language* as it is not necessary for the transfer of information. The primary language determines what can be said in the secondary language and how it can be said. For example, a Twitter update is limited to 140 characters. This limit on the human language is established by the primary language, programming. When playing a word game like Scrabble on a smart phone, the programming language dictates the rules and how the game functions. This differs greatly from print media which cannot function without human language at its core.

There is an overwhelming cultural perplexity surrounding programming language and how digital media are developed. Who are the people, programmers, who speak this language and determine how the rest of us use digital media? Where and how did they learn it? Most people send and receive email messages, Facebook comments, and tweets without knowing the underlying communicative framework that is the basis of their actions. I call this cultural oversight of programming language and the magical way technology “just works” the *Geek Mystique*. I of course do not intend to demean the actions of programmers with this definition, but rather seek to demonstrate the existence of the cultural “other.” This includes programmers, “hackers,” “geeks,” and “techies” who are viewed to exclusive knowledge that the general masses do not need to possess. But as I argue, basic programming knowledge *is* necessary in today’s digital media culture and should not be exclusive to a select few.

Significance: Exclusivity and the Control of Information

Programming language must be recognized as a critical part of today’s media environment, as continued cultural oversight leaves a door open to appropriation and control by traditional corporate and governmental power structures. Those who control information are not individuals who write the most popular or meaningful tweets, but rather the people who have developed and own the digital tool for publishing those tweets in the first place. Mass blind acceptance of digital media tools and platforms allow for a select few to act as gatekeepers of all current and future digital communications. It limits choice, supports corporate and

governmental surveillance and censorship, and subjects digital media to the corporate conglomerate abuses that they outwardly appear to circumvent. In the news and in media theory, people glorify the liberating power of Web 2.0 technologies. However more attention needs to be given to actually building, controlling, and manipulating secondary-language-based social media programs. For digital media to stand any chance to challenge the stronghold of traditional power structures, widespread understanding of digital media's primary programming language is vital.

Literature Review

Programming Language Versus Human Language

It is important to provide an overview of digital media before discussing the cultural relevancy and necessity of programming language. In the simplest terms, a computer functions using a series of on-and-off switches called transistors, zero representing off and one representing on. Computers execute programs using this binary numerical code. In this way, computers understand a strict, numerical, and logical language that in almost no way resembles human language. Programming language acts as a compromise between human language and machine language. This allows people to communicate with computers and write instructions that can make sense to humans, but still be read by the computer. Assembly language, a *low-level* programming language that works closely with computers, substitutes numerical instructions with human words. Assembly language is still very tedious for programmers to use (Petzold, 352). *High-level* programming languages provide an even higher level of abstraction from the numerical language of computers, making communication between humans and computers even easier. The oldest high-level programming language still in use, FORTRAN, was developed in the mid-1950s, and hundreds of other languages have been written since this time (Petzold, 354). Some of the most commonly learned and used programming languages, all with varying degrees of difficulty and appropriate uses, include C, Java, C++, PHP, JavaScript, Visual Basic, Ajax, and Ruby. Over time, high-level programming languages have become more sophisticated for both ease of use by humans and for computers to handle more complex tasks (Petzold, 365). HTML (HyperText Markup Language) and XHTML (eXtensible HyperText Markup Language) are two markup languages that serve to create the founding structures of web pages, and though they are not technically programming languages, I advocate for mass teachings of the basics of these languages as well.

In regards to programming, the interchangeability of the word “code,” or something to be deciphered, and “language,” or something natural, may reflect a cultural confusion about what programming is. But generally in programming, code refers to the instructional content of computer programs that people write using programming languages and the computer’s interpretation of these instructions. Charles Petzold says that in regards to cultural assumptions about code, “Sometimes we think codes as secret. But most codes are not. Indeed, most codes must be well understood because they’re the basis of human communication” (Petzold, 5). Upon the first glance at a piece of code written in a programming language, someone unfamiliar with such a language may indeed view it as some sort of secret, complex inscription. But a person unacquainted with the written letters and symbols that make up a human written language would likely approach the text with the same confusion and apprehension. Because children are taught their ABCs from a young age, such “code” is viewed as necessary and natural.

Some studies have explored the cultural oversight of programming languages and the connections between human language and programming language. Theorist Alexander Galloway argues in his book *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*, “the largest oversight in contemporary literary studies is the inability to place computer languages on par with natural languages” and that, “computer languages exhibit many of the qualities that define natural languages. Like the natural languages, they have their own sophisticated syntax and grammar” (xxiv). He supports his argument by exploring how languages do not need to be verbal in order to be considered natural, like the inclusion of the “dead language” of Latin in natural languages. Unlike Morse code or American Sign Language, programming languages are not simply “transcoding schemas,” but conveyors of meaning all their own (164). He claims that programming languages are “hyperlinguistic” in that they convey meaning like a natural language but are also executable. He asserts that,

Code has a semantic meaning, but it also has an enactment of meaning. Thus, while natural languages such as English or Latin only have a legible state, code has both a legible state and an executable state. In this way, code is the summation of language plus an executable meta-layer that encapsulates that language (166).

Programming language is indeed similar in many ways to natural language, but is unique in that written code can directly enact something to

occur when executed.

His theories support my argument that programming languages are culturally significant just like human language, but are largely ignored as such. However my theory takes this claim a step further by suggesting that programming languages need to become widely taught and learned, and that continued cultural oversight will reinforce traditional power structures.

Digital Media and Corporate Power

Many Internet theorists have examined how current Internet technologies could uphold traditional restrictive forms of corporate and cultural control rather than challenge them. One such theorist is open Internet activist Jonathan Zittrain. In his book *The Future of the Internet - And How to Stop It* (2008), Zittrain makes the distinction between *generative* technologies that invite user innovation, creativity, and programming versus the tethered *appliances* that come preprogrammed and do not allow user tinkering. The Apple II, released in 1977, was a generative personal computer in that it was essentially a blank slate, allowing purchasers of the technology to program the computer however they wanted with whatever they wanted. Thirty years later Apple released the iPhone, an appliance that came preprogrammed with an operating system that did not allow users to change features, write programs or applications not pre-approved by Apple (2-3). When creative iPhone customers did discover ways to “jailbreak” the iPhone’s operating system, or hack and program the phone in order to run *any* application (including ones not authorized by Apple), the corporation took customers to court (Kraevets). Though Apple lost, the lawsuit symbolized a recent trend of big tech companies trying to exercise full control of what can and cannot be done with digital media, much like the current media monopolies in other media industries.

Zittrain says that these sterile *appliances* like Apple’s iPhone are “tethered to a network of control” (3), and that today’s computer and web technologies “are not just products but also services, watched and updated according to the constant dictates of their makes and those who can pressure them” (5). He outlines the three ways in which the status quo of digital technology control generates and upholds three types of “perfect enforcement.” The first method is that of *preemption*, which is designing products to prevent any anticipated undesirable conduct like copyright infringement or hacking. The second is *specific injunction*, which is the taking advantage of communication that occurs between an

appliance and its corporate maker after the consumer purchase. Lastly is *surveillance* which addresses the transfer of information about consumers back to the corporations (105-109). The technologically restrictive qualities of today's digital media endanger consumer rights and prevent grassroots technological innovation and experimentation. Zittrain's theories about corporate appropriation of digital media coincide with my argument, but he advocates for open technology so that programmers may continue to innovate and challenge traditional corporate structures whereas I advocate for all people to be equipped with basic programming skills, not just the technologically inclined "programmers."

Digital Media and Governmental Power

Similar to corporate power structures, many theorists have explored how current patterns of digital information control may uphold traditional government power structures. One such theorist is lawyer and digital activist Lawrence Lessig, who in his 1999 book *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* states,

If the code of cyberspace is owned, it can be controlled; if it is not owned, control is much more difficult. The lack of ownership, the absence of property, the inability to direct how ideas will be used - in a word, the presence of a commons - is key to limiting, or checking, certain forms of governmental control (7).

According to Lessig, "code is law," because the regulations and limitations built with and around programming language determines the rights everyday people can or cannot have in cyberspace (6). In this way, code is closely tied with governmental control. Technology can be programmed to allow for an open experimental space of exchange, or code be locked down and privatized for governmental, as well as corporate, appropriation. If individuals program an application that collects classified government documents and distributes them through mobile phone operating systems, whether or not that individual can be arrested can support or challenge traditional governmental control. In extension of this, I argue that widespread knowledge of programming languages will keep governmental control of digital media in check, as more people will feel the repercussions of the stifling of technological creativity.

Evgeny Morozov is another digital theorist who addresses this issue of governmental control in the digital age. Though his book *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (2011) primarily explores governmental appropriation of Web 2.0 technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, he mentions ways in which authoritarian governments

use more hidden technological methods of control. In order to block a philosophy forum website, the Saudi Arabian government launched a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack against the site, flooding the site with too much traffic and making the site unavailable (107 - 108). Beginning in 2009, public computers in China came pre-programmed with GreenDam software, which monitored user activity, censoring content and adapting to the actions of users (98-99). While Morozov argues that the media should not be so quick to glorify the liberating power of the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies, I would add that having the technological knowledge to counter or circumvent these oppressive digital controls provides more opportunity for liberation than the Web 2.0 technologies that exist on the surface.

Method

In order to support my ‘Geek Mystique’ theory, I will first compare and contrast the existing hierarchies of information control in digital technology to the hierarchies of information control that have prevailed since the dawn of literacy. I argue that there are unseen similarities among these two media shifts. These similarities will perhaps provide a new perspective on the control of programming literacy and insight into the possible directions that the current digital information control can take. To accomplish this, I will examine Harold Innis’s theory pertaining to the monopolies of knowledge and explore how this concept can be applied to programming and society’s current state of information control.

Secondly, I will explore media portrayal, cultural assumptions, criminalization and the marginalization of programmers and hackers. Though not all programmers are hackers, I will choose to focus primarily on the portrayal of hackers because they are the cultural group with which media is most enthralled. The cultural preconceptions placed on “hackers,” or the people who experiment with digital technology, trickle down onto programmers who are a much larger demographic of people writing code for a variety of reasons. I will attempt to answer why a writer in our culture can be anyone from a best-selling author to a first-grader composing his or her first sentence, but a programmer is viewed as a particular type of person who possesses unique, elite skills. In particular, I will analyze the media portrayal of the hacker group Anonymous and the portrayal of tech company executives Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg.

Lastly, I will review current news articles and court cases surrounding digital laws and digital activism, exploring the ways in which programmers use their knowledge to disrupt the efforts and activities

of those in dominant control, specifically, corporate and governmental power. These explorations will follow the very recent activities of hacker group Anonymous. From this, I will draw conclusions on how knowledge of programming languages could potentially pose a great threat to traditional power structures.

Results

The Monopoly of Programming Knowledge

Harold A. Innis, a media theorist whose critical work on how the introduction of a new medium can build and collapse empires of control, has been hugely influential on critical media theory at large. For this argument, I will explore his concept of “monopolies of knowledge,” introduced in his 1950 book *Empire and Communications*. Innis argues that the introduction of written word first supported and bolstered traditional governmental and religious empires, as writing was a specialized task that only those in power had the knowledge to perform. “The sword and pen worked together. Power was increased by concentration in a few hands” (Innis, 10). It may be difficult to imagine in today’s society, in which reading and writing are deemed as an educational necessity. However, in ancient Egyptian culture, the “first consciously literary civilization to cultivate literature for its own sake” (23), writing was a skill tightly controlled by religious authorities and not taught to the masses. Innis says about writing in ancient Egypt,

Writing was a difficult and specialized art requiring long apprenticeship, and reading implied a long period of instruction. The god of writing was closely related to the leading deities and reflected the power of the scribe over religion. The scribe had the full qualifications of a special profession and was included in the upper classes of kings, priests, nobles, and generals...Complexity favoured increasing control under a monopoly of priests and the confinement of knowledge to special classes (24).

Innis calls this a monopoly of knowledge, and in other cultures, such writing monopolies have risen synonymously with the communicative medium. In Europe, during the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church was the dominant institution because they had the control of written communication in Europe; “One important pillar of Church authority...was the privileged position enjoyed by the literate clergy as guardians of the text in a largely illiterate society” (Diebert, 50). Scribes were the keepers

of written knowledge, and literacy was closely tied with spiritual authority.

In these early eras of written communication, distribution of literate knowledge to the masses was not regarded as a priority and would have threatened the monopolies of knowledge that the medium upheld. Much of the same can be said about today's current era of digital communication. While programming languages serve as the foundation of today's digital technologies, teaching literacy in programming languages is not viewed as an educational necessity, and thus is not included in most public education curriculums. Such mass teaching could very well threaten the current monopoly of knowledge possessed by today's dominant institution, the global corporation. Like the early Egyptian scribes or Roman Catholic priests' hidden texts, today's tech giants like Facebook, Google, and Apple privatize codes from the general public. They are the gatekeepers of knowledge, writing and copyrighting algorithms that determine what users of technology can and cannot do using their products and services. Former Executive Director of MoveOn.org and author of *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You* (2011), Eli Pariser concludes that technology corporations like Facebook and Google write algorithms that silently filter content based on what they believe individual users want to see. This is based on user statistics such as the location of the computer accessing the site, the web browser and computer being used, and what the user has already searched for (Pariser). The code is then privatized so that the basic web tools that users utilize, such as the Facebook news feed, cannot be used or altered by other programmers and web developers (Kirkpatrick). Similar to a clergyman speaking to the illiterate masses, choosing what parts of religious script to convey and which to omit, corporations use programming literacy to filter information and then proceed to discourage user exploration by selective filtering.

In the monopoly of knowledge of ancient Egypt there existed a collective mystery around the new medium of written language (Innis, 13) (Diebert, 50). It possessed a magical quality that the civilization manifested in myths. Diebert says about Egyptian writing,

[T]he reproduction of writing - whatever its ultimate origins - has always been closely associated with a spiritual elite... It is not surprising, then, that most early civilizations acquainted with writing shrouded their origins in myths and legends, such as the Egyptian god Thoth - the creator of writing (50).

These disseminated myths, including Thoth the god of writing, concealed or at least distracted from the true writing skills and histories from which written word originated. Similarly, there exists a mystique around programming. While today's culture doesn't exactly have a god of programming, technology just appears to work without open discussion about *how* to make it work or *where* these technologies came from. Theorist Ronald J. Diebert explains how in the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church consciously used art, pictures and sculptures, to spread its message to the illiterate population, a sort of "medieval multimedia experience" (59). The masses obtained their religious information through artful depictions that the Church chose to create and share with them. Like the Church-driven medieval multimedia experience, graphical user interfaces and flashy social networking tools convey the information that corporations want the masses to see, concealing and distracting from the true programming languages.

Programmers and Hackers as Criminals and Gods

Theorist Alexander Galloway best sums up the media portrayal and cultural conceptions of programmers and hackers when he says, "today there are two things generally said about hackers. They are either terrorists or libertarians" (151). As I will explore and describe, hackers and programmers who have succeeded in the corporate world are viewed as 'technological gods.' Labeling them with both of these cultural titles places hackers within the realm of a cultural 'other,' rather than part of a collective 'us.' Defining hackers as a particular type of people that the majority of the masses do not feel they can relate to discourages people from recognizing programming languages as important, and dissuades the masses from learning the specific skills of hackers and programmers.

The term "hacking" is indeed often laced with negative connotations of malicious intent. This used to be different. Hackers were (and still are) innovators, sharers of newfound technical discoveries, and oftentimes risk takers who challenge dominant institutions of power. In 1986, seven hackers were tracked and arrested in the first ever computer crime sting, and the arrestees included some of the most 'elite' hackers of that time. In 1987, 30 to 40 more were tracked and arrested by the United States Secret Service. Reports of hackers conducting malicious digital activities dominated their portrayal, and the positive, exploratory and experimental work was swept under the rug (Galloway 153-156). Lawrence Lessig says, "Our government has already criminalized the core ethic of this [hacker] movement, transforming the meaning of *hacker* into something quite alien to its original sense" (8). Today, hackers are seen

as terrorists and a threat to established government.

This portrayal still holds strong in news reports and media portrayals. The hacker group Anonymous has been a target of media criticism and confusion since it first surfaced from the Internet underground in 2007. Rather than a professional and organized network, Anonymous functions as a large group of like-minded individuals of varying skill levels and backgrounds. They communicate anonymously online, collectively “trolling” Internet users, concocting and executing digital and “in-real-life” culture-jamming schemes, and more recently, becoming involved in political activism. One of the first reports about this group was a 2007 *Fox News Investigates* segment that begins, “They call themselves Anonymous. They are hackers on steroids.” The report then goes on to describe Anonymous hackers as “domestic terrorists” who “attack innocent people,” organizing on “their secret website,” referring to 4chan.org, an openly accessible image board site that requires no user registration or identification. In addition, the news program revealed stock footage of an unrelated exploding van, an animation of Hitler, and interviews with “victims” of the group all overwhelmingly portray Anonymous as nothing more than wild digital criminals (“4Chan on Fox”). Two years later, a Fox online article once again addresses Anonymous, this time portraying them as a group of “antisocial, foul-mouthed, clever nerds” (Sautoff). *The Washington Post* also addressed Anonymous, calling them “hackers, slackers, and potty-mouthed geeks” (Hesse). A 2008 *New York Times* exposé of the Anonymous subculture entitled “The Trolls Among Us” chooses to focus on two hackers, Weev and Jonathan Fortuny, who live over-the-top lifestyles of malevolence and anonymity. Weev lives a completely anonymous lifestyle, moving place to place with no name or possessions, even though he has a chauffeur drive him in a Rolls Royce to the places he desires. Fortuny conducts online “trolling experiments” at the expense of innocent Internet users, and the article goes as far as to explore Fortuny’s history as a victim of sexual abuse as a possible explanation of his malevolence (Schwartz). These portrayals, no matter how accurate they may be, do not reflect the variety of everyday hackers that make up Anonymous. The news coverage Anonymous has received reflects a much larger cultural apprehension and misunderstanding of hackers and what they do.

The May 2010 issue of *Wired* magazine presented a bold cover design that brought together two technology corporation executives of two different generations - Microsoft co-founder and chairman Bill Gates and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg. Gates’ arms are crossed as the two sit next to each other, looking down at the viewer with what appears

to be smug satisfaction, a sky-like blue and gold behind them. Across their chests overlays the feature topic of the magazine written in bold white letters: GEEK POWER (*Fig. 1*). The message is unabashedly clear. These ‘geeks’ are two of the most powerful people in the world, looking down from their positions of dominance. Like the papal authorities of the Middle Ages, they are portrayed as technological gods. Inside the issue, the title of the actual article, “Geek Power: Steven Levy Revisits Tech Titans, Hackers, Idealists” conveys a spiritual message. These hackers, now billionaire corporate figureheads, are ‘titans,’ like the powerful deities of Greek myths. Though the article itself is rather levelheaded in comparison to the title, author Steven Levy splatters some spiritual and god-like rhetoric throughout. Bill Gates is said to have “*transcended* his hacker roots” turning hacking into a “global economic and cultural *force*” (emphasis added). Levy even states his “reverence” towards Gates. In addition, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is described as a technology extraordinaire, wielding power in large arenas. “When [Zuckerberg] began playing with computers, he didn’t hack motherboards or telephones but entire communities.” Next to the text are individual profiles of Zuckerberg and Gates (*Fig. 2 & 3*). In both images, their profiles are shot from a low angle, giving the illusion that they are higher than the viewer. Shadows cast an ethereal glow, behind them very low-set mountains and what appears to be a sunset sky, giving them the appearance of being even larger. Again, this reaffirms their portrayal as powerful, god-like ‘geeks,’ wielding their programming knowledge to become unearthly entities.



Fig 1. Wired May 2010 Issue Cover



Fig 2. Mark Zuckerberg, Wired May 2010



Fig 3. Bill Gates, Wired May 2010

On one end of the spectrum of portrayal, hackers are criminals, antisocials, and threats to government and society at large; this is exemplified in the portrayal of hacker group Anonymous. On the other end, hackers are powerful technological gods, particularly those who have

used their skills to become economically successful through the dominant corporate institution, such as Gates and Zuckerberg. In both of these extreme portrayals, hackers and programmers are not part of the cultural collective, marginalized and viewed as an 'other.' Both contribute to the cultural oversight of programming as important to all people, and something that the masses can and should learn.

Programming Knowledge as a Threat to Corporate and Governmental Power

In April 2011, attorneys of tech companies Google and Oracle went to the U.S. District Court of San Francisco over a patent dispute regarding the use of Java programming language in Google's open-source Android operating system. But this wasn't a trial. The trial isn't scheduled to occur until October 2011. The attorneys met before Judge William Alsup to give him a crash-course tutorial in Java and programming language so that he may be better suited to settle such patent disputes (Niccolai). After all, how can one make serious, effective judgment calls about programming when the very basics of such skills are not known or understood? This concerning question extends not only to courtroom judges, but the general public as well. Every year, important court cases raise questions and enact laws regarding the legal use and future of programming and therefore the future of digital communications. These laws can be discreetly put into place when there is no fear of a mass public outcry. This is because the large majority of people does not know or understand the programming concepts that underlie the issues. Would more people have noticed or cared about Facebook's patenting of the news feed if more people understood how tools like it work and possessed the capability to write and make their own on the web? Many of those who already do possess programming knowledge are fighting back because these issues directly affect their rights as innovators and sharers of information. This could quite possibly serve as evidence that mass education in programming language may lead to a more informed public that pressures and combats traditional corporate and governmental power.

The activism that has ensued in regard to fighting traditional corporate power structures following the *Sony Computer Entertainment America vs. George Hotz* court case has brought attention to the corporate digital stronghold and its offenses. In January 2011, the tech corporation sued 21-year-old hacker George Hotz under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act after he published online instructions on how jailbreak Sony's PlayStation 3 game console. This device, like the iPhone, allows

users to circumvent digital protections to run programs and games that are unauthorized by Sony. Jailbreaking is not illegal yet. However, the young programmer was forced to turn over his computer equipment, and in March, Sony was granted the right to collect IP addresses of Internet users who had visited Hotz's website. Hacker group Anonymous recognized this court decision as an infringement on privacy rights and Internet freedom, and threatened Sony to back down. On April 4, members of the group attacked Sony.com, SonyStyle.com, and Playstation.com with Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS). They attacked again only a couple days later ("Anonymous"). Though Sony and Hotz quietly settled the case (in summary, Hotz is not allowed to tamper with any piece of Sony technology ever again), throughout April and into May, Sony's PlayStation Network experienced attacks, downtime, and a security breach that exposed millions of Sony customers' information, including credit card numbers. Although some members of Anonymous have denied the group's involvement in the latter part of this battle, due to the amorphous nature of Anonymous, it is nearly impossible to claim this for certain (Schreier). It is likely that the attacks stem from the same grievances with the tech corporation.

A lesson can be learned from this escalating feud between grassroots hacker activists and a tech company giant. The struggle over power in the age of digital communication is a struggle over who can write the best code. Sony will likely continue as a digital media corporation, but the Anonymous attacks have no doubt smeared its reputation as a tech titan. They also have brought attention to the issues that should not be limited to programmers, but to anyone who cares about the future of innovation, consumer rights, and privacy. If more people possessed even the basic knowledge in programming languages, the threat to large tech corporations would be much larger. People may actually be inspired to explore the frameworks that make up the software that corporations so badly want to keep under control, discovering flaws and reappropriating technologies for the betterment of themselves and others.

In regards to fighting traditional governmental power structures, hacker group Anonymous has taken several actions in protest of government practices in and outside the United States that have gained the attention of mass media. The first surrounds the *United States vs. Bradley Manning* case in which U.S. soldier Bradley Manning, then serving in Iraq, was accused of aiding the enemy in collecting and releasing classified U.S. military documents through whistleblower website WikiLeaks. The lawsuit gained national attention and quickly became an issue of freedom of information. Anonymous, generally self-proclaimed defend-

ers of Internet freedom, acted in response to the issue by targeting digital attacks against WikiLeaks dissidents, PayPal, Mastercard, and Visa. Once again with DDoS attacks, Anonymous temporarily shut down the websites of these three major corporations. Though the recovery was quick, it was not as fast as the media that swarmed around the attacks, drawing attention to the pro-WikiLeaks activism (Bryan-Low). Additionally, when the CEO of security firm HBGary Federal, Aaron Barr, claimed to have the real names of the supposed top leaders of Anonymous and was ready to hand them over to the FBI, Anonymous took down HBGary Federal's website. They then collected and published over 40,000 emails within the firm (including Barr's personal emails), deleted backup data, and remotely hacked Barr's iPad (Anderson). In addressing governmental issues outside of the United States, Anonymous aided Tunisian protestors in January 2011 by attacking and taking down eight Tunisian government websites, once again gaining media attention for the protestors (Hill).

The underlying message of all of this hacker activism is the defense of citizen rights, particularly the right to information and privacy against government suppression and violations. Though these particular actions did not necessarily directly collapse governments, amend laws, or reverse government actions, digital activism is important for a number of reasons. First, it challenges the image of government as an all-powerful, untouchable entity. The fact that the websites of governments and their consulting security firms are vulnerable to attack by a web of anonymous tech-savvy citizens weakens the traditional idea of government as impenetrable and all knowing. It shows that in the current era of digital communication, traditional government may not be so powerful. Secondly, the digital activism generates media attention around these issues, spreading the message that there are people who do not agree with particular government decisions and actions. A takedown of the websites of two major credit card companies is far more likely to turn heads than a group of activists picketing. If more people are familiar with programming languages, the threat to traditional government could potentially be much larger than the current threat of Anonymous. Anonymous works partially because it has power in numbers. While one hacker *can* potentially take down a major credit card website, having a network of many people makes the task easier to execute.

Limitations

A key limitation of the argument made is that it does not provide specifics on how and where people will learn programming language. It does not distinguish whether or not the environment in which people

learn to program (school-taught versus self-taught) affects skill levels and different uses of the languages. Such hard data could support or weaken my thesis. This study assumes that people use programming languages in similar ways, when this in fact may be proven false by such data. I also do not offer explanations of educational methods to generate this mass knowledge of programming. This study merely serves as an introduction to the importance of programming language knowledge.

Additionally, this study mostly disregards the possible negative consequences of widespread knowledge about programming languages. With extended exploration, one may discover that the acceptance of programming as a necessary skill may result in different methods of strengthening traditional power structures instead of challenging them. Like with any theoretical research study, my claim is falsifiable and cannot be proven conclusively.

Conclusion & Future Studies

There is a scene in the 2010 film *The Social Network* that I believe encapsulates the empowering nature of programming languages. Though largely criticized as a product of fiction, the film gives an account of the almost accidental founding of Facebook. In the scene, Mark Zuckerberg's character, played by actor Jesse Eisenberg, sits down in a drunken rage at his computer and begins programming his revenge against his ex-girlfriend and the Harvard female population at large. He creates a website that showcases pictures of all the female Harvard students and allows users to rate and compare their attractiveness. Mark's voice over announces, "Let the hacking begin," and then proceeds to explain all of his actions as he extracts and stores images from Harvard's dormitory websites. What may sound like a string of verbal jargon is Zuckerberg's programming stream of consciousness. With every mouse click, keystroke, and the occasional algorithmic help from his friend, Zuckerberg launches a site that overflows Harvard's network due to its overwhelming popularity. With little time and effort and generally simple programming hacks, he creates a digital product that, for better or worse, engages a wide population and threatens the digital infrastructure of the dominant institution.

Theorist Jonathan Zittrain outlines some of the potential problems with generative technology that have drawn people to tethered technological appliances, problems like viruses, spam, identity theft, and computer crashes (3). The glossy foolproof technologies of today may indeed solve many of these problems, thus encouraging digital use and

participation from a wider range of people, and bringing access to more places. But these easy-to-use technologies currently come with a heavy sacrifice of user innovation. In hiding the technicalities, the ‘ugly’ programming languages and code that serve as the foundation of digital software, corporations have silently slipped in limiting restrictions on what users can and cannot do with their products and services. With continued cultural oversight of programming as an essential skill for all people, traditional forms of power will continue to hold their control on information without threat from the citizens and consumers who use the technology. This does not suggest that people must sacrifice the user-friendliness of such technologies. Compromises can and will have to be made between making technology easy to use, as well as open to user innovation and experimentation.

The monopolies of knowledge that existed at the introduction of written communication were eventually challenged with the rise of secular literacy. The public demand for knowledge and literacy and the rise of universities weakened the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church who held the monopoly of knowledge throughout the Middle Ages (Diebert, 62-63). Towards the end of the fifteenth century, printing presses were available in Europe, and books were printed in vernacular languages for the general public to understand (Innis, 143). In the same way, it is possible for the monopoly of digital knowledge to be challenged and disempowered. Change is likely to occur, but we cannot assume that this disempowerment is inevitable. Like the citizens who demanded literacy in the Middle Ages, digital citizens must recognize the importance of programming, demand information, and seek literacy in these new digital languages.

Some positive measures have been taken to bring programming languages into youth education. There are a few programming languages that have been developed for the sole purpose of teaching youth, elementary to high school, the basics of programming. Some of these educational programming languages include Scratch, Logo, Alice, and Squeak, each having unique characteristics, applications, and purposes (Kohl). For example, Scratch was developed in 2007 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab, and teaches programming basics to encourage young people to create and share animations, games, music, and stories on the web (“About Scratch”). These educational tools are not limited to youth, and can be useful tools for any individual who wants to learn and experiment with the basics of programming languages. Future studies may gather data on the usefulness of these tools in teaching programming basics and monitor their effects on long-term programming

literacy. If in the future education in programming languages becomes widespread, researchers ought to examine how masses use these languages to challenge or support traditional forms of power and be vigilant of new forms of power as well.

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MALE DANCER

KATELYN E MADDEN

Introduction

Usually the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions a male dancer is that he must be gay or at least confused about his gender. I have been dancing since I was three years old and have danced with my share of men, both gay and straight. I have seen both sides of the spectrum; the hyper masculine guys that dance in a strong manner and the feminine guys who enjoy the pure art of dancing. Dancing has always been a huge part of my life, which is why I am so passionate about this topic. I also have a twelve year-old cousin, Chris, who has followed in my footsteps and absolutely loves to dance. He has been taking dance lessons since he was very young, and his face lights up every time he is on stage, especially while tap dancing. However, my uncle does not approve of my cousin's hobby and rarely comes to his performances or competitions. To this day, he believes in his old fashioned mindset that dancing is for girls and football is for boys. It seems as though he will never change his ways regardless of his son's sexuality.

My cousin has been dancing for about seven years now; he is and remains to be heterosexual. He loves sports and watches almost every football game there is on TV. However, my uncle is not the only one who derides my cousin for taking dance classes. Chris has received taunts and ridicule from his peers and other adults over the years due to the stereotypes that have been formed regarding male dancers. Now that he is older, the amount of jokes has begun to decrease, but why were they said in the first place? Why are sports and activities gendered in ways that do not allow everyone to participate without being criticized? What makes one sport or activity more feminine than another? I seek to answer these questions in this papers, as they formulate the basis of my analysis.

My dance-infused background sparked my interest in this topic and caused me to explore and investigate the discourse that surrounds

male dancers in our society. In my research I have come across many different views and experiences involving men of all ages, shapes, and sizes that are or have been involved in the world of dance at one point or another. Some anecdotes involve young boys being ridiculed for taking ballet, while others show a huge increase in the amount of boys who have signed up for dance classes over the years. I have also discovered some useful information regarding the different types of male dancers. Dance is open to much interpretation, and therefore cannot easily be defined in a few words. Everyone seems to have a different attitude about the idea of dance, ranging from the idea of dance as a sport, a physical activity, or an art form. In the eyes of the lead in a ballet company, dance is their passion and their life. In contrast, the wide receiver for the NY Giants views dance as a way to improve his performance on the field. Despite these individual views, all men who are involved in the discourse of dance are judged in one way or another.

Research on the male youth in dance indicates prevailing social stigmas, narrow definitions of masculinity, and homophobic prejudice, as well as social isolation, peer harassment, and the lack of male role models. These ideas create a sense of shame among the male dancers, young and old, in our society. No one wants to feel shamed or rejected by society for not following the norm, but at the same time they do not want to squash their underlying motivation to follow their dreams. According to Merriam-Webster, masculinity is defined as “having qualities appropriate to or usually associated with a man.” But what are these qualities? We, as a society, have augmented our ideologies and understandings as the times have changed, however the discourse revolving around male dancers is slow to change and has remained in the past. Regardless of the prevalence of dance shows and competitions in popular media, male dancers are still stigmatized where female dancers are not. There is also an obvious discrepancy between a stereotypical male athlete and a male dancer. If athletes decide to take a ballet class to improve their overall technique, it is tolerable. On the other hand, professional dancers face challenges explaining their career and are susceptible to adverse judgment. In this paper I plan to explore and discuss how men are constrained in the world of dance and how they are stigmatized and stereotyped by society and the media.

Arguments

Whenever a parent signs their son up for dance lessons, friends and family immediately question this decision, as well as the child’s sexuality. It is true that most boys who dance will be ridiculed at some point

in their life, and some may quit dancing because of this. An anonymous author of an article from *Newsweek Magazine* entitled “Don’t Judge Me By My Tights” writes,

Male dancers must possess a special type of will and fortitude if they are to become professionals, for, like fish swimming upstream, we have to fight through the current of the thinly veiled contempt that much of society harbors for our chosen path. The boy who perseveres in dance must have a genuine hunger for it, must be uniquely motivated, and dedicated, and must develop a truly thick skin (2008).

Unfortunately, this is the reality for male dancers in our society today, struggling to perform their true identities. However, there should be no relation between one’s gender, sexuality, and the activities they choose to do.

It is my opinion that whether or not a boy chooses to dance does not decide his sexuality, but rather one’s sexuality is part of their biological nature. Thus, if a young boy wants to participate in a dance class, he should be able to do so without being immediately stigmatized by his family, friends, and the rest of society. An article written by Liz Lightfoot raves about the rise of boys taking dance classes in London. The head of dance at Park House, Sue Llewellyn, says “All the boys have to do dance as part of PE and you get some who moan about it but I’ve only had two serious conflicts in 20 years. The majority enjoy it as much as they enjoy any physical activity and we’ve got four boys this year going on to dance school who are all successful in other areas, such as playing rugby at county level” (Lightfoot, 2009). Chris Scott, a dance teacher who has given up his career playing rugby to concentrate on teaching dance, agrees, saying, “the boys were skeptical to begin with but I didn’t have a single problem. There were only 20 at the first auditions but more than 60 turned up this year, and half of them were boys.” More and more boys want to participate in activities when they have a good role model, like Scott. He asserts that, “dance can help to keep young people out of trouble and there are great benefits from feeling that you are part of the team. Everyone tries hard because no one wants to let the other dancers down” (Lightfoot, 2009). This sounds like the motto for any sport, whether dance or football.

In comparison to football, dance is always deemed the feminine or “girly” sport while football remains the masculine “manly” sport. What

do these terms really represent? The truth is that many football players take ballet, jazz, and yoga classes to improve their balance and agility on the field. A 1985 *New York Times* profile on Jets receiver Al Toon noted that he had studied dance and tai chi, admitting that ballet lessons “helped me learn to position my body to help me break tackles” (Pollack, 2005). Dance involves just as much physical activity as football but less physical contact. The article “Football VS Ballet and Soccer Too” compares the two perfectly. The author, Amy Jane, writes, “They both start with a dream. A young ballerina dreams of dancing the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy at Lincoln Center, the young football player dreams of the Superbowl, the soccer player dreams of the World Cup” (2008). They both require “dedication to their art [and] commitment: they begin training at a young age and work for years to enjoy a relatively short career in their chosen field, or on their chosen field, [and] they endure ample pain on the way to reaching their goals, sometimes doing permanent damage to their bodies [while] they risk injury daily. An injury could end their career in a moment” (Jane, 2008). These similarities beg the question of why is it acceptable for football players, but not other males, to take ballet?

Dance conjures a non-athletic, unserious vibe in the minds of people in our society. When a person tunes into ESPN’s *Sports Center* they will inevitably find the top ten plays or biggest hits from football, baseball, basketball, soccer, and even golf. Why don’t these channels ever mention the highlights of dance competitions? The sports I mentioned above are considered “real,” while dance is seen as a “fake,” unimportant sport. An article from *Dance Magazine* by Rachel Howard, a former dance critic, explains how Roni Mahler, an artistic associate for Ballet San Jose Silicon Valley, made connections between sports and ballet after attending a baseball game at Yankee Stadium. Mahler noticed that “A shortstop does a huge chassé (a gliding step in dancing in which one foot displaces the other) before releasing the ball and for both ballet and baseball you need strong ankles and knees.” He also noted that, “a basketball player can’t jump without doing a plié (a movement in which the dancer bends the knees and straightens them again, usually with the feet turned out and heels firmly on the ground). It may not be graceful and deep with your feet turned out, but it’s the same thing” (Howard, 2004). This research emphasizes that certain dance movements are fundamental to the movements one makes in sports. Therefore, male ballet dancers and football players execute similar movements in their individual activities, making them more alike than they seem on the surface level. People usually do not realize this because they are too busy highlighting the differences between

the two.

These differences emphasize the portrayal of the gender spectrum. According to John Stossel and Gena Binkley, authors of the article “Gay Stereotypes: Are They True?,” “the media focus on the extreme, the more flamboyantly feminine men and very masculine women.” In other words, the media shows us only one side of the gay spectrum and not the other. This, in turn, warps society’s view of homosexuals, which leads to the stereotypes we experience on a daily basis. Stossel and Binkley visited the Pennsylvania Ballet and questioned the male dancers on what they thought of these stereotypes. Zach Hench, a straight dancer, replied, “I think it’s quite silly because let’s think about it. You are working around beautiful women all day that are half naked. It’s a great job for straight guys.” What guy would not want a job lifting beautiful, thin women in leotards and tights all day? This is an example of the hyper masculine dancer; one who clearly defines themselves as straight while still identifying as a male ballet dancer.

At the other end of the spectrum, the media also displays the feminine male dancer on shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance*. In one episode of this show, two men audition with a samba-style ballroom routine. These men were the first same-sex couple to be featured on the show; Misha Belfer and Mitchel Kibel, were introduced with condescending dramatics including a clip of the song, “It’s Raining Men” along with many shots of the two spinning and twirling. Even though their technique was good and they performed the piece well, the judges could not wrap their minds around the fact that two males were dancing together in a non-normative way. The samba is a very sensual dance that is usually enacted by a man and woman; therefore the three judges strongly disliked the fact that a same-sex couple was performing it.

The common stereotypes of male dancers were evident in the judges’ critique. Nigel Lythgoe, the executive producer of the show and a professional dancer himself, says, “I’m certainly one of those people who likes to see guys be guys and girl be girls on stage...I don’t think I liked it” (jumperfaceyourdemon). Here he emphasizes that there are specific masculine and feminine qualities of dance rather than judging their performance. Mary Murphy, another judge and ballroom expert, agrees with Lythgoe in saying, “It would have been easier for me if one person was playing the female role and one was playing the male role” (ibid). She cannot fathom that two men could dance a samba together without displaying specific gender roles at the same time. This statement emphasizes

that there needs to be opposite gender roles present in each dance couple. Lythgoe brings an end to the audition by telling the two men, "I'd like to see you both dancing with a girl. You never know, you might enjoy that too" (ibid). This is implying that men should automatically prefer dancing with women rather than men. The judges adhere to the norms and stereotypes of society in making these comments on national television. However, dance is supposed to be an art form that pushes the boundaries and is open to new and creative ideas. If this is true then why do the judges have such a difficult time evaluating a male couple?

After the audition, AfterElton interviewed Misha, who is gay, and Mitchell, who is straight, where they shared more information from their audition that was not aired on television. Apparently, it was much more offensive than what the directors decided to show to the audience. Misha states, "Nigel told me that they [the show] has spent all these seasons trying to build up the idea that a male can dance and make it more acceptable, and we didn't really help the cause" also that "he's not sure that the fathers watching this at home would be encouraged to take their sons to allow them to learn to dance" (Jensen, 2009). When the judges continued to bring up the fact that a man and a woman are usually partners in ballroom dancing, Misha corrected them by saying "it's a leader and a follower." Why does a couple automatically reference a male-female relationship? The ideological assumptions related to the word "couple" alone call to mind a particular gender performance and expectations from society. It exemplifies that gendered norms are pervasive in all aspects of our lives, from the way we dress to the people we date, and in this case, who we dance with.

This thought directly relates to the ideas of Michael Warner and his book *The Trouble with Normal*. Warner believes that people tend to distance themselves from a non-normative behavior, meaning that they reject any person or couple that does not follow the norms of society. This is mainly because non-normative people do not fit into one of the specific categories that have been manufactured over the years and adopted into our culture. For example one might say that, "I don't have a problem with gay marriage, but I'm not gay." No one wants to be included in the outcast group that belongs nowhere, and therefore they feel as though they must clearly identify themselves to their peers and family members. Society has taught us to categorize people into two main categories, male or female. This leaves no room for gray area or exceptions to these strict norms, which in turn creates a feeling of shame among these people who become

the “outcasts” of society. People conceal their true identities and are afraid to admit that they are different because they do not want to feel this sense of shame from the general public.

In his book, Warner discusses a hierarchy of shame that explains how and why sex has a unique politics of its own. This hierarchy was brought into effect by an influential essay called “Thinking Sex” by Gayle Rubin in 1984. After researching the many sexual stigmas and stereotypes, Rubin challenged that people sort “good”, natural sex from “bad”, unnatural sex by a series of hierarchies. For example, heterosexual, married, monogamous, and procreative all fall under the “normal” or “natural” category. In contrast, homosexual, unmarried, promiscuous, and casual fall under the “abnormal” or “unnatural” category. Warner says, “if you are on the wrong side of the hierarchy you will be stigmatized in a way that could entail real damage” (2000). This shows how the gay community in general is stigmatized on a daily basis, regardless of if they dance or not. A stigma is defined as a permanent mark of disgrace on a person or group of people, and a “spoiled identity” according to Erving Goffman. Ordinary shame can pass, but a stigma lasts forever.

A stigma that Nigel Lythgoe has bestowed upon males in the dance world is that he does not like effeminate dancers in general. He believes that male dancers “need to be very strong. Dancing is role-playing most of the time. And you need to be strong and lift girls. You need to look stronger than the girl you’re dancing with. You control the dance, especially in ballroom. So if you mince about the stage, you’re not doing what the choreographer is asking you to do. He’s asking you to be strong” (Jensen, 2008). Lythgoe is sending the message that the only way a man can dance is strongly and that there are no other options. This enforces the fact that he expects a man and a woman to be dancing together first and foremost. He also insinuates that any man who dances effeminately is weak, rather than unique or different. On the contrary, a woman can dance in many ways without being stigmatized. When a woman dances slowly, controlled, and gracefully she is seen as beautiful, and when a woman dances with strength, energy, and power she is seen as sexy and aggressive. Society and the media only apply these negative stigmas and stereotypes to males involved in the dance world.

Conclusion

Rather than allowing men of all ages to embrace dance with open minds, society and the media have forced them to belittle their passion and

conceal their enthusiasm for this art, physical activity, or sport. TV shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* advertise an open-door policy to the opportunities of the world of dance. In reality they are hindering men from auditioning and putting themselves out there. These shows contribute to the stigmas and stereotypes that have been implemented by members of our society. Producers only look for the extremes such as the overly feminine men and the excessively masculine women because they make television more interesting for viewers. They never show a balance.

There are many implications that go along with the discourse of male dancers such as stigmas, stereotypes, homophobia, shame, and social isolation. A solution to this would be the creation of a solid role model by the media for young male dancers to look to for inspiration. Young boys hoping to become famous dancers in the future need a famous face to emulate just as aspiring football stars look up to famous players such as Rob Gronkowsky and Tom Brady for inspiration. There are some examples that show an increase in the amount of boys that are interested in dancing, but this activity would become much more socially acceptable if the media highlighted more aspects of the dance world. However, rather than promoting male dancers, the media, along with the majority of society, shoots down this idea altogether. We, as a society must develop a discourse of acceptance and equality for male dancers, erasing the negative stigmas that have been placed on this group.

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MEALTIME ROUTINES AS A RESOURCE FOR MEANING-MAKING

BRITTANY ADELHARDT

Introduction

Daily interactions and routines serve to expose children to the proper form of social conduct. During the early years of a child's life, these experiences serve as a learning ground for children to practice social engagement, in a manner of trial and error. These experiences demonstrate to children all the resources they will need in order to grow into fully functioning socially capable adults. One routine in particular, the mealtime, is especially rich in this sort of social affordance, because children are exposed to this interaction upwards of three times per day. The structure of the mealtime routine demonstrates how children acquire resources they need to develop proper social skills. The mealtime routine serves as a backdrop setting for children to explore various aspects of social interaction in an environment where caregivers are nearby to supervise and encourage appropriate behavior. This analysis will examine elements of caregiving, play, and joint attention during the mealtime setting to identify their crucial role in the development and proper socialization of children.

In her book, *Prompting Routines in the Language Socialization of Basotho Children*, Katherine Demuth studies Sesotho speaking caregivers and their interactions with children in Lesotho. She concludes that the use of "say..." is one of the most prominently used forms in the socialization of young children, because it "provid[es] them with a framework from which to recognize social situations and respond accordingly" (p. 52). She builds off the general theory that "children are taught how to speak and act appropriately" and that their entire lingual repertoire is one that has been taught to them by caregivers (p. 54). My research considerably contributes to this notion, as I will be discussing how it is that children come to learn correct social conduct through direct instruction and prompting by caregivers.

Sophi Alock (2007) answers one poignant question in her book, *Playing with Rules around Routines: Children Making Mealtimes Meaningful and Enjoyable*; she asks, “how do children create, re-create, externalize and internalize rules during routine eating-together times in an early childhood center setting?” (p. 281). She builds upon the *Socio-cultural Activity Theory* that postulates that children’s understanding of societal norms can be seen in their play. Her research investigates “the relationship between rules and children’s playful activity” (p. 282). Alock’s work becomes a basis for my hypothesis. I assert that in breaking societal norms by attempting to play during mealtime, one of the children of my study, Carson, is therefore creating his own rules. This will be further discussed later in the paper.

Contrary to former beliefs that caretakers solely influence children’s socialization, *Mealtime Rituals: Power and Resistance in the Construction of Mealtime Rules* examines how young children resist adult instruction during mealtime routines, voiding the idea that children are merely “passive recipients and respondents to their environments” (Grieshaber, 1997, p. 650). Grieshaber argues that children take an active role in their socialization and that the mealtime routine is one of the prominent settings that this takes place. The structure of the mealtime allows for the practice of social normalization through the use of several rules and regulations that are required to carry out the routine (p. 651). I predict that mealtime routines act as the foundation for the socialization of children.

Matthew Burdelski (2008), in his book *Socialization into Politeness Routines in a Japanese Preschool: Building Social Relationships and Group Harmony*, focuses on the ways in which children are socialized into politeness routines in a Japanese daycare. He studies the way caregivers use direct instruction and prompting to explicitly and implicitly socialize children into societal norms. He postulates these interactions occur in the daycare setting with caregivers who socialize children into becoming effective members of social life. This work runs parallel to my research that demonstrates the need for caregivers in the institutionalization of proper etiquette and societal norms in preschool aged children.

Lastly, I will integrate research conducted by Mardi Kidwell and Don Zimmerman (2007) in their book, *Joint Attention as Action*. They maintain the idea that social interaction is only capable of being engaged in when both caretaker and children are able to coordinate their attention with one another on a mutual interest, be it an object at hand or one in the immediate surroundings. They argue the idea that joint attention

only comes about through the means of an interactional process, one that requires the ability to understand the “the intentional, goal-directed behavior of others” so that mutual appreciation and understanding can be reached by both parties centered on a joint object (p. 592). This will be discussed in length later on as the means through which Carson attempts to gain another child’s, Emma’s, attention on an object he is holding. He uses this process of joint attention to construct a minimal sequence of play.

Data and Method

For my research, I chose to record video at the Child Study and Development Center (CSDC), a preschool for young children. I filmed three, three-year old children, Carson, Emma, and Jack , during free time for a total of 35 minutes of video. My analysis is from a ninety-one second segment of the film, which focuses on Carson and Emma during mealtime.

Analysis

The mealtime setting is a great opportunity for social interaction, as children have the chance to perform these sequences. Mealtime allows young children to become accustomed to daily routines and social norms, enabling them to experience and learn the social interaction structure. Children use this experience of social interaction structure to understand social norms before entering out into the real world by themselves. Caregivers are typically nearby to assist children in the flow of proper social interaction. Their guidance keeps the children on the right track as they practice mealtime social exchange with their peers.

During mealtime, many other important social exchanges occur, such as the roles of care-giving, play, and joint attention, making it seem as if only one interaction has taken place. In my analysis I will expose how the mealtime setting acts as a backdrop for several social sequences to occur, and then I shall analyze the role of a caretaker as guidance in this process.

The video clip starts off with Emma and Carson both sitting at a table with cereal bowls in front of them. Carson’s bowl is empty, signifying that he is done eating. Instead of removing himself from the table and clearing his setting, he decides to engage in a minimal sequence of play. From the onset of the video segment, Carson is seen with the spoon in his mouth. He proceeds by putting the spoon in Emma’s line of sight by leaning in towards her. She glances at him, signaling her understanding

that he is trying to interact with her, and then looks away. Carson then increases his attempt to engage her by further leaning in towards her and giggling loudly. She glances back towards him and again chooses to ignore him.

- 1 C C is waving a spoon around in his mouth and then leans in toward E and the spoon falls out of his mouth
Heh heh HEH H:EH↑

In this sequence, Carson is using the spoon as a medium for social interaction. He is attempting to gain joint attention focused on the spoon. Carson is enacting the notion of “observability,” as discussed in *Joint Attention as Action*, by placing the spoon in her line of site to designate that he is trying to gain her attention. He attempts to gain her focus through mutual orientation toward the object at hand, this being the spoon (p. 594). The sequence can be described as a “proof procedure,” which is broken down as follows: an initiating action, i.e. when Carson attempts to gain joint attention of the spoon by putting it in Emma’s line of sight; a responding action, i.e. when Emma ignores his advances and continues eating; and finally the evaluating action, taking form of the pursuit where Carson increases his efforts to engage Emma with a repeated waving of the spoon as he positions himself in front of her face (Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2007, pg. 594).

Furthermore, this sequence can be categorized as an attempt at play, where children typically try to gain the attention of others for a specific reason (Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2007, pg. 592). Carson’s actions are coupled with high-pitched laughter, signaling his own enjoyment and an attempt at play. As discussed in her book, *Play with Objects*, Catherine Garvey argues that objects can serve as a link between a child and his environment and can be used as a means to express his feelings, emotions, or concerns (1990, pg. 41). Also, objects serve as “the prime currency of social exchange for the toddler” (p. 51). Both of these ideas can be seen at work in the play sequence initiated by Carson. He relies on the spoon to act as the medium for a social exchange between Emma and himself. He also expresses his emotions through the spoon, by giggling and waving it around suggests that he may be feeling silly or playful.

Emma understands his invitation to play, but chooses to ignore it. Her non-verbal gestures such as her gaze support this idea. She meets his gaze when he initiates the action and again when he engages in a

pursuit. Both times she ignores it, dis-aligning herself from his attempt at joint attention. Another interesting point about Emma's gaze is that after Carson's initial attempt to gain her attention, she shifts the focus in front of her by glancing off to the front of the room. It can be hypothesized that what she is doing is making eye contact with the caregiver who subsequently comes over within the following seconds. She is exhibiting awareness that her and Carson's actions are observable to others, as described in *Formal Structures of Practical Tasks: A Resource for Action in the Social Life of Very Young Children* (2011). They elaborate this idea by stating that, "young children can count on having their own conduct treated as actions in a recognizable course of actions" and that they "can use a nearby caregiver's actions for positioning their own actions" (p. 44). In other words, from a young age, children are aware that their actions are observable by others and can adjust their behavior in accordance to gain an anticipated caregiver reaction. Such is the case with Emma ignoring Carson's actions. His behavior is perceived as unacceptable for mealtime etiquette, as inferred by Emma's dismissal of his playful endeavor. She looks from him to the caregiver, signaling that she is aware that their actions are observable to the caregiver, and therefore chooses to refrain from joining him in his playful behavior so as not to be implicated as such and yield a reprimand.

Following the notion that Carson's behavior is considered as going against the accepted mealtime behavior, it can be explained in two ways. The first way is "resistance," which is described as the phenomenon of children resisting the dominant rules (1997). Grieshaber argues, "discourse-embedded parental power, authority and associated social practices are constantly challenged by young children who respond through resistance" and that "children actively challenge and resist parental authority as part of daily domesticity while engaged in the social practice of consuming food" (p. 652). In this circumstance parenting can be switched out for care giving. Carson is therefore seen as resisting normal social practices, which in this case is that of consuming food. Consequently, parents and caregivers alike are seen attempting to normalize the behavior of children through "domestic organization" (Grieshaber, 1997, p. 652). Children require constant supervision to ensure that correct practice is followed through during daily routines, such as the mealtime, which can be seen in the following line of transcript where the caregiver immediately walks over to Carson to correct his actions:

2 CG CG comes over and whispers something inaudible into C's ear.

The second way in which Carson's behavior can be described as is creating his own rules that contradict social norms. Children often play and manipulate the rules that govern everyday routines and practices so as to create their own meaning and make routines more enjoyable. This theory is presented by Sophie Alcock (2007) in *Playing with Rules Around Routines: Children Making Mealtimes Meaningful and Enjoyable*, who argues, "children use their imaginations to re-create and make internal sense of external (sociocultural) rules" (p. 282). She goes on to discuss that one of the reasons for rule manipulation was to create a sense of "togetherness" amongst children, "children create and participate in their own unique peer cultures by creatively taking or appropriating information from the adult world to address their own peer concerns'.... these peer concerns can involve children creating their peer culture by resisting adult rules and authority" (pg. 286). Children modify existing rules so as to better fit their own agenda, such as in the transcript, where Carson manipulates the rules that guide the mealtime routine by introducing a segment of play. By disregarding proper conduct Carson is attempting to create a sense of togetherness between him and Emma. He appropriates the rule of the spoon—that says a spoon is for eating and not playing—by treating it as a toy to better fit his own agenda, inviting Emma into playful conduct during a time where this conduct is considered inappropriate. He uses the act of play to create a more enjoyable mealtime and to align with Emma, regardless of the fact that his attempts were unsuccessful.

With these two ideas in mind, it can be more broadly stated that what Carson is doing is breaching social conduct. His attempt at play is oriented as a breach of social norms by the caregiver, who immediately comes over to remedy the situation. It is unclear what she says, but through analysis of context and the immediately following actions, it is easy to discern as a reprimand of some sort to return him to following the proper conduct of the mealtime routine. After whispering in his ear, Carson abruptly ends his attempt at play and informs the caregiver that he is "all done", signaling that what was muttered by the caregiver was some type of prompt to enforce proper conduct at the table.

- 2 CG CG comes over and whispers something inaudible into C's ear
- 3 C I'm all done
- 4 CG *°Alright >let's put it away< because your other friends need to have snack too°
- *C gets out of his chair to start putting away his dishes

It is made clear that Carson's actions are oriented to as a breach through the caregiver's use of a problem remedy sequence, which is defined as a "response to the problem that the caregiver has witnessed unfold" by Mardi Kidwell in *Epistemics and Embodiment in the Interactions of Very Young Children* (p. 11). The caregiver witnesses Carson start to goof off at the table and then moves to correct his behavior. She orients to the instance as a problem by coming over and informing Carson on the unacceptable nature of his behavior. She remedies the situation by having him remove himself from the area since he is done eating. Kidwell goes on to say how children can orient to the caregiver's response and "can respond in anticipatory ways" (pg. 11). This is perhaps why Emma refrains from engaging in the play, so as to not be reprimanded as mentioned earlier, but also why Carson subsequently informs the caregiver that he is "all done". By mentioning that he has finished eating signals that he has at least a basic comprehension of the structure of the mealtime routine, that finishing eating is a crucial part of the routine and that a specific action follows. He orients to her response by informing her of this to bypass the fact that he had just misbehaved and return back to the proper structure of the mealtime, informing her that he is ready for the next step.

This sequence of care giving can also be qualified as an instance of "direct instruction", one of the socializing strategies as discussed by Matthew Burdelski (2008) in *Socialization into Politeness Routines in a Japanese Preschool: Building Social Relationships and Group Harmony*. Direct instruction is when a caregiver gives a verbal directive on what to do and not to do in a given circumstance and explicitly indicates the expected next action (p. 10). Here the caregiver comes over and explicitly instructs Carson on what to do. She reprimands him on his current action and provides direct instruction for proper conduct as inferred by the termination of his play action and his informing of "I'm all done," signaling that he is ready for the next step in the routine. Following his solicited information of having finished eating, she then further guides his action with another direct instruction of "let's put it away because your other friends need to have snack too." She is directly informing

him that the proper conduct is to clean up and remove yourself from the table once you have finished. This is further elaborated on by Katherine Demuth (1986) in *Prompting Routines in the Language Socialization of Basotho Children* who discusses the idea of “prompting,” stating that it “function[s] in the general instruction of various socially important issues and the teaching of certain values that are not explicitly discussed but rather implicitly suggested or demonstrated” (p. 63). This is relevant to the issue of picking up after oneself in the mealtime routine; it is implicitly understood that cleaning up is accepted social norm, and why Carson needs prompting to put away his dishes. Prompting in this case is used to illuminate and help solidify for Carson social values surrounding the mealtime.

Referring back to the caregiver’s instruction of picking up because his “other friends need to have snack too”, there is a double implication in this aside from the proper conduct of cleaning up after oneself. What she is informing him of in this instance is to exhibit mindfulness of others, signaling that since there is limited space at the table, it must be shared. This goes back to Burdelski’s notion of the politeness routine, in which its purpose is to “foster ‘kindness’ and ‘empathy’ in children” (p. 5), which is exactly what the caregiver is doing in relation to Carson, as she informs him of the need for turn-taking at the table.

Lastly, Emma is seen clearing her setting once she has finished eating without being directed to do so.

5 E E finishes eating and collects her dishes to begin putting them away. She makes her way to the trash can to throw out the napkin, then to the cart to return her sippy-cup and drop off her spoon and bowl (where we see C doing the same)

This is indicative that she has mastered some level of autonomy and understands proper social conduct procedure at the meal table. This reflects the notion that children orient their actions in relation to a caregiver’s, as discussed earlier (Kidwell, 2011, p. 11). By witnessing the caregiver’s instruction to Carson to clean up his place setting and to not goof around, Emma can then orient her actions in response to what has just transpired, as seen when she chooses to put away her dishes.

Conclusion

In the end, it is these simple interactions such as the mealtime that

prepare children to be socially capable adults, through repeated exposure to acceptable social conduct. It acts as the mere backdrop, where children are encouraged to practice social engagement on their own with caregivers nearby to guide and help them succeed. Children are young malleable creatures, and it is the necessary guidance of those around them that lead them to success. Children's worlds are maintained and molded by caregivers to ensure proper development. Also, we see major implications of culture at work with Emma and Carson clearing their place settings. In our culture, the social norm is to clean and pick up after yourself once you have completed an activity before you move on to the next one. Both children orient to this notion as intrinsic to proper mealtime etiquette. Emma and Carson are seen clearing their spots and returning their items to their proper place, clearly demonstrating their understanding of this norm.

TRANSCRIPT

Carson (C) attempts to engage Emma (E) in his goofing off at the table. The caregiver (CG) remedies the situation and tells him to clean up.

- 1 C C is waving a spoon around in his mouth and then leans in toward E and the spoon falls out of his mouth
Heh heh HEH H:EH↑
- 2 CG CG comes over and whispers something inaudible into C's ear
- 3 C I'm all do:ne
- 4 CG *°Alright >let's put it away< because your other friends need to have snack too°
*C gets out of his chair to start putting away his dishes
(14.0)
- 5 E E finishes eating and collects her dishes to begin putting them away. She makes her way to the trash can to throw out the napkin, then to the cart to
return her sippy-cup and drop off her spoon and bowl (where we see C doing the same)

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 PRODUCTION VARIABLE MANIPULATION AND THE VIEWER'S RESPONSE:

 A GRAMMAR PERSPECTIVE OF *NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN*

RACHEL PINK

In 2007, directors Joel and Ethan Coen premiered their film remake of Cormac McCarthy's novel, *No Country for Old Men*. The film earned an estimated 74 million dollars at the box office and garnered an impressive list of accolades including two Golden Globes and four Academy Awards. Most notably, *No Country for Old Men* won the 2008 Academy Award for "Best Motion Picture of the Year" ("Awards..."). Film critics almost unanimously praised the film. Noted film critic, Roger Ebert, describes the movie as "masterful" and claims, "*No Country for Old Men* is as good a film as the Coen brothers have ever made" (Ebert).

Yet, among all the praise that *No Country for Old Men* has received, there also exists a great deal of criticism toward the film's ending. Audiences left theaters "bitterly conflicted over an ending which leaves much to the imagination" (Adler). Actor Josh Brolin, who plays Llewelyn Moss in *No Country for Old Men*, acknowledges the criticism of the film stating, "...people leave the movie saying, 'I hate the ending. I was so pissed'" (Adler). The ending is described as "intensely important and yet maddeningly vague" and one that "will be obsessively taken apart...for years to come" (Eaton). Furthermore, the Coen brothers were accused of letting the film end "not with a bang but a whimper" (Nichols 209). It leads one to wonder how a film can receive extensive praise but also instigate intense audience disapproval.

A review of current literature concerning *No Country for Old Men* shows that researchers consistently turn their focus to the content of the film rather than the use of production variables. For example, Christopher McClure attests that audience scorn and ridicule comes from the "frighteningly boring" characters who are "clad in beiges and browns that fade into the landscape" (47). McClure only considers the appearance and demeanor of the characters rather than the way camera shots, for example, are manipulated in order to portray the characters in a certain manner. McClure offers an extensive explanation of the character Anton Chigurh

by focusing on Chigurh's behavior in the film rather than his grammatical presentation, or how production variables impact the portrayal of the character.

None of the reviewed works reconciled the discrepancy of general responses to the film. No author's analysis of the film's content explained the reason for the simultaneous praise and criticism of *No Country for Old Men*. Since content studies do not offer a substantial explanation, I hypothesize that this question can be answered more adequately with consideration of the film's grammar variables.

In this study, I examine how production variables are manipulated in an effort to frame the characters of *No Country for Old Men* in a particular way. Based on Joshua Meyrowitz's article, "Television and Interpersonal Behavior: Codes of Perception and Response," I reason that there might be a connection to the use of grammar variables and audience response to *No Country for Old Men* characters. In regard to on-screen characters, Meyrowitz claims that "In many social situations...we are a teammate concerned to some extent with their "carrying off" their performance before others" (266). It is possible for viewers to perceive a film character as their teammate, someone they want to see succeed and with whom he or she enjoys experiencing the events of the movie. Meyrowitz continues, "Our perception and orientation to situations varies tremendously depending upon those in the situation whom we see as teammates" (266). Based on this information, I reason that audience alignment with characters in *No Country for Old Men* could have an effect on a viewer's overall perception of the film.

This study is significant in that it could lead to an understanding of how to manipulate grammar variables in order to facilitate viewer alignment with characters and consequently, use viewer alignment as an explanation for, and possibly a predictor of, public reaction to a film. Furthermore, the ability to manipulate audience response may have larger implications for society, which will be discussed later in the analysis. This study also attempts to resolve the seemingly mismatched impact of *No Country for Old Men* on its audiences; viewers praise the film yet remain divided over the quality of its ending.

One of the few literary examples that touches on the possibility of grammar's influence in *No Country for Old Men* is addressed by Rick Wallach in a short paper titled, "Dialogues and Intertextuality: *No Country for Old Men* as Fictional and Cinematic Text." Wallach writes, "the film... effectively liberates the narratee (viewer) to accompany all of the charac-

ters and share their gazes of events as they happen” (xxii). However, Wallach neither expands this argument nor details the repercussions of a viewer’s freedom to share the characters’ gaze. He merely acknowledges that shared viewer-character gaze exists in *No Country for Old Men*, leaving room for this study to expand on what is already known. Wallach reveals that *No Country for Old Men* allows a viewer to see from the perspective of multiple characters. To build on this knowledge, this study seeks to demonstrate how grammar variables are manipulated in order to provide the viewer with the point of view of multiple characters. The essay will also explain the implications of the shared viewer-character perspective in relation to the mixed response to the film.

I began the grammar analysis by watching the film multiple times. With each viewing, I noted the production variables that were implemented to portray the characters of Llewelyn Moss and Anton Chigurh. Moss is a Texan hunter who coincidentally stumbles upon a large sum of money left at the site of a desert drug deal turned bloodbath. Chigurh, a seemingly merciless killer, is hired to recover the money from Moss. Chigurh relentlessly pursues Moss in a classic Hollywood game of cat and mouse. I concluded that I would study the production variables used to portray Moss and Chigurh based on their interconnectedness in the plot.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

The logic of this study is based on Meyrowitz’s para-proxemic and para-social models outlined in “Television and Interpersonal Behavior: Codes of Perception and Response.” I considered these models when examining how production variables are used in *No Country for Old Men* to allow viewer identification with characters. Specifically, Meyrowitz’s para-proxemic and para-social models were used to examine the production variables employed to frame Moss and Chigurh and how these manipulations can affect audience alignment with these characters.

METHOD

I examined the use of *visual* production variables in *No Country for Old Men* and how these variables can affect viewer alignment with either Moss or Chigurh. For this study, I define viewer alignment as when a viewer favors a certain character. The viewer prefers this character to others and roots for their success. A viewer is often granted access to this character’s back region, or private behavior, and experiences a scene as the character does.

The grammar variables I examined in the film and how I chose to

define these variables are as follows:

Close-up shots: The camera fills most, if not all, of the frame with the view of a character. The character's entire face is shown or the character is presented from the shoulders up.

Medium shots: The camera presents the character from about the torso up. This is not an impersonal, full body shot of a character, but nor is it close enough to suggest intimate distance between the character and the viewer.

Long shots: The camera includes all of a character's body. The relative size of the character may appear small in relation to the viewer's frame such as in a shot from a helicopter. Of all the camera shots examined, the long shot suggests the furthest distance between viewer and character.

Subjective shots: The camera presents an event from the perspective of a specific character within the scene. The camera allows the viewer to see what the character sees and how they see it.

Objective shots: The camera presents an event from the perspective of a bystander rather than a specific character in the scene. The camera does not allow the viewer to see what the character sees and how they see it. However, an objective shot may allow a viewer to view a character from the perspective of an invisible onlooker within the character's back region.

Shallow focus: The object in the foreground is most in focus while objects in the background are blurred. Though shallow focus was not a primary grammar variable for which I was looking, its use in one particular scene that I will discuss is relevant to viewer-character alignment.

For this study, a descriptive method was employed to observe the grammar variables present in *No Country for Old Men*. I first watched the film to become familiar with the plot. During the multiple viewings that followed, I recorded the grammar variables used in each scene featuring either Moss and/or Chigurh. I applied Meyrowitz's para-proxemic and para-social models to explain the use of these grammar variables in relation to viewer-character alignment. Though *No Country for Old Men* contains numerous instances of the manipulation of grammar variables to facilitate

viewer-character alignment, I chose to focus on five specific examples in the explanation of my findings. These scenes utilize grammar variables to invite viewer alignment with Moss and/or Chigurh.

RESULTS

According to Meyrowitz's para-social model, "the structure and arrangement of shots can establish a 'character' for the viewer; that is, the camera can make the viewer a teammate of selected characters"(266). In other words, manipulations of grammar variables can prompt a viewer to feel as though they side, or align, with a certain character. Meyrowitz also proposes a para-proxemic model, which asserts that a relationship exists between the viewer and an image on-screen. This relationship is dictated by the use of production variables (i.e. close-ups, subjective shots) that can be manipulated to suggest a certain distance between viewer and character. Meyrowitz claims that viewer response to a character's actions is often based off one's perceived distance from the character, a notion called proxemics.

Both of the models proposed by Meyrowitz contributed to this analysis of grammar variables in *No Country for Old Men*. An examination of the use of grammar variables in *No Country for Old Men* reveals that the characters of Moss and Chigurh are *both* framed in a way that invites viewer alignment. Viewer alignment with these characters is facilitated by the manipulation of camera angle, placement, and perspective to suggest close interpersonal distance between the viewer and Moss or Chigurh as well as to provide a look at events from their point of view. Below, five instances from *No Country for Old Men* are described in which viewer alignment with Moss or Chigurh is encouraged by the manipulation of grammar variables.

Identification with Llewelyn Moss: Hunting with a Teammate

The viewer first encounters Llewelyn Moss in an extreme close-up shot as he surveys a herd of antelope through the cross hairs of his gun. Moss's entire face fills the screen, which immediately suggests an intimate distance, and thus an intimate relationship, between Moss and the viewer. The viewer perceives this extreme close-up as clue to the interpersonal distance between themselves and Moss. It is as if the viewer is there next to Moss on this hunting trip. The camera cuts to a panoramic shot of a vast stretch of land with an antelope just barely noticeable in the center. This is a subjective shot from Moss's point of view. The viewer is seeing Moss's hunting ground as he sees it. The ability to witness this from Moss's perspective allows the viewer to feel even closer to him, even more involved

in the hunting trip. The camera cuts back to an extreme close-up of Moss and then cuts to a subjective view of what Moss sees looking down the barrel of his gun. Immediately, the use of close-ups and subjective shots establish a sense of intimacy and closeness between the viewer and Moss.

Later in the scene, after Moss discovers the aftermath of a desert drug deal gone awry, he realizes that there must be a sum of money left over from the scuffle. The viewer is included in Moss's search of the area for this money. First, a subjective pan shot is used. The viewer is presumably seeing what Moss sees through his binoculars as he scans the area. The camera cuts to a level angle, frontal view of Moss in a medium shot. Though Moss is talking to himself during this scene, the frontal shot at eye level suggests that he is addressing the viewer, as if he or she were in pursuit of the money with him.

Aligning with a Killer: Separating Anton Chigurh from his Violence

Throughout the film, Anton Chigurh commits merciless murders. However, the camera rarely depicts his use of a weapon in the same frame as his face. Accordingly, his acts of violence do not deter the audience from perceiving Chigurh as their teammate. An example of the disassociation of Chigurh from his murder weapon occurs when he interacts with a man on the side of the road. The camera shows a level angle shot of Chigurh from the subjective view of the other man as Chigurh asks him to hold still. Then, the camera cuts to a level shot of the man as Chigurh's hand enters the frame, raising the gun and shooting a hole in the man's forehead. The camera shows a long shot of the man dropping dead to the ground but the viewer only sees Chigurh from behind. The camera never reveals to the viewer a shot of Chigurh's face as he murders the man.

In another scene, Chigurh is attempting to infiltrate Moss's hotel room. The camera shows Chigurh's feet and the weapons that he carries as he walks down the hall to Moss's room. The camera cuts to a level, close-up shot of Chigurh from the shoulders up. From this shot alone, the viewer is not able to tell that he is carrying a murder weapon. The camera cuts back to the shot of Chigurh's feet and weapon as he makes his way down the hall. When he stops in front of a hotel room door, there is a brief long shot of his full body. The camera overexposes the brighter background behind Chigurh but underexposes Chigurh himself. The result is that Chigurh merely appears as a silhouetted figure. This full body shot of Chigurh holding a weapon does not dissuade the viewer from aligning with him because he is barely identifiable due to underexposure. Of course, the content informs the viewer that this figure holding a large weapon is indeed

Chigurh, however, based on grammar use alone, Chigurh is indistinguishable. The camera returns to a close-up of Chigurh's face but pans down to his arm just in time for him to raise the weapon to shoot off the doorknob of the hotel room. Again, the camera resists showing the viewer a shot of Chigurh's face as he uses a weapon. The viewer is unable to place Chigurh as the face behind the violence that occurs in the film.

After he forcefully enters the hotel room, Chigurh encounters not Moss, but three other men. The camera now shows Chigurh actually shoot his weapon twice. However, the death of his victim is shown in separate, subjective shots. The camera shows Chigurh shoot his weapon. Then, the camera cuts to low angle shot of a bloodied victim on a bed. The camera quickly cuts back to Chigurh in a medium shot, as he fires his weapon a second time. Again, the victim is shown in a separate low angle shot. The low angle shots of the victim suggest that the viewer is experiencing the scene from Chigurh's point of view as he stands and shoots above the victim. The subjectivity of these shots allows the viewer to align with Chigurh because he or she can see what he sees. Chigurh is never shown shooting his weapon in the same frame as the victim being shot. Once again, the viewer can separate their teammate, Chigurh, from the violence he commits. Therefore, grammar variables allow the viewer to align more easily with the killer.

A third example of Chigurh's violence occurs when he blows up a parked car. This is a clear example of alternating between shots to deter the viewer from condemning Chigurh for his violence. Chigurh limps over to the side of the car parked on the side of a road in a commercial area. This is shot in shallow focus where the car bumper in the foreground is in focus but Chigurh is out of focus in the background. By taking Chigurh out of focus as he approaches the car, the viewer can begin to separate him from his violent actions that follow. As Chigurh comes into focus, the camera shows only his thigh and hand opening the gas tank of the car. The camera cuts back and forth between low angle shots of Chigurh from the shoulders up and subjective shots that scan the sidewalks for onlookers. Chigurh is shown twice in a full-body long shot, an objective perspective from across the road. However, the camera is positioned in a way that the car he stands behind blocks the action of his hands. The camera cuts back to Chigurh's hands unscrewing the gas cap and inserting a cloth down into the tank. Chigurh is again shown from the shoulders up but the actions of his hands as he finagles a car bomb are not shown in the same frame. Shots of Chigurh's car bomb assembly are presented in a structure that allows the viewer to separate his violent actions from Chigurh himself. The manipulation of grammar variables maintains viewer alliance with Chigurh by disassociat-

ing him from the violence and murders he commits.

Travelling with Teammates

About forty-one minutes into the film, both Moss and Chigurh are shown travelling in separate vehicles. These travel scenes provide a clear parallel of the ways in which grammar variables are manipulated similarly to invite viewer alignment with both characters. First, the viewer sees Moss in a close-up shot in the backseat of a taxi, reinstating the viewer's intimate relationship with Moss. This close-up shot implies the close distance between two individuals having a personal conversation. The camera cuts to a series of subjective shots of Moss's perspective from the backseat as he scans the hotel front for signs of Chigurh. The subjective shots suggest that the viewer is in the backseat with Moss, seeing the hotel as he sees it. The alternating close-up shots of Moss and subjective shots from his point of view in the taxi allow the viewer to perceive a personal distance between themselves and Moss and to experience the ride in the taxi with their teammate.

The camera then cuts to a subjective shot from Chigurh's point of view as he drives, followed by a close-up shot of him. Then, Chigurh is pictured in side profile at eye level from the inside of the car. This shot suggests that the viewer is in his passenger seat driving with him. In a matter of seconds, the viewer has gone from being in close, personal proximity to Moss in the backseat of a taxi, to being in close, personal proximity to Chigurh in the passenger seat of his truck. In this short time, the viewer is exposed to intimate close-ups of both Moss and Chigurh and the viewer has seen the world from their perspective. Thus, these travel scenes demonstrate how grammar variables allow viewers to feel connected to both characters. The shot structure ensures that the viewer does not have time to align more closely with one character because the grammar variable manipulations are so similar.

The Viewer's Teammates Share a Phone Call

Moss calls the hotel room of a bounty hunter whom Chigurh has just executed, unbeknownst to Moss. Chigurh is shown in a level angle, close-up shot from the shoulders up answering the ringing telephone. Moss's voice is audible on the other line. The camera cuts to a medium shot of Moss holding the receiver to his ear. Though the audience can perceive an intimate distance between themselves and Moss, only Chigurh is shown in a close-up, frontal view. The viewer can read the expression on his face and feel as though they are looking at him, as if engaging in a conversation. The shot of Moss does not invite the same engagement.

The viewers perceive a close distance between themselves and Moss because of the medium shot however, the camera places the viewer behind him. The shot is contrasted in a way that Moss's face is dark and unreadable. Therefore, in this particular scene, the viewer aligns more easily with Chigurh because of the shot perspective.

The camera alternates between close-up shots of Chigurh from the front and medium shots of Moss from the back. This shot structure grants the viewer access to Chigurh's back region behavior. As Meyrowitz asserts, "...the camera makes the viewer a teammate by...giving him the back region view of the front region performance" (266). Though the content reveals that Chigurh is maintaining his front region role as a relentless hit man based on his dialogue with Moss, the viewer is allowed to watch this conversation in Chigurh's back region. The camera allows the viewer into Chigurh's back region, thereby strengthening the viewer's perception of him as his or her teammate. In addition, the close-up and level camera shots suggest that the viewer is at eye level with Chigurh and in close proximity to him as he converses with Moss. This choice of camera angle and placement also implies an intimate relationship between the viewer and Chigurh. The viewer is in the hotel room with Chigurh as well as in Moss's phone booth as both men participate in this phone call.

This scene is an unusual breach of a killer's back region that the viewer is not often granted. It is not common in film for the camera to show the killer on the other line of a phone call. This is done to maintain the mystery of a villain's back region and to prevent viewer alignment with the evil character. I have analyzed scenes from two different films in which the protagonist receives a phone call from the villain of the film. A description of these scenes frame the common film alternative to the manner in which Chigurh is shown in his back region conversing with Moss on the telephone:

When a Stranger Calls, 2006

The telephone rings, and the camera frame features a female babysitter in a close-up shot as she answers it. A threatening voice is heard on the other line as the babysitter remains in the close-up shot, listening. Later in the scene, the phone rings again as the babysitter answers in another close-up shot. The threatening voice delivers another line but is never shown. The protagonist remains in the shot throughout the duration of the phone calls.

Scream, 1996

A female character named Casey picks up a ringing telephone. The camera follows her around her house as she converses with the audible voice on the other line. Once Casey realizes the voice on the other line is a threat to her safety, the camera zooms in to a close-up shot. As the viewer understands through the movie content, the voice on the other line is a mysterious killer. However, the identity of the killer is never shown to the viewer during this phone call. Casey remains in the camera frame for the entire scene.

Later in the film, another female character named Sidney receives a phone call from the same killer. The camera shows her in a close-up shot as she answers the phone and converses with the killer. The camera never cuts away to a shot of the killer. The shot structure is centered on Sidney.

The grammar variables are manipulated in both films so that the villain is represented aurally but not visually. This prevents the viewer from perceiving any sense of physical closeness to the villain, thereby hindering the possibility of viewer alignment with a villain or killer.

The shot structure in the *Scream* and *When a Stranger Calls* prevents viewer alignment with a villain during a phone call scene. Conversely, the camera visually includes Chigurh in a phone call scene. The viewer is allowed access to a villain's back region behavior that is often kept private in films. The viewer perceives Chigurh as his or her teammate because he or she is able to watch Chigurh perform his front region role as a villain from a back region perspective.

Praise and Criticism: A Teammate Survives and a Teammate Dies

The *No Country for Old Men* scenes that have been discussed thus far serve to frame both Moss and Chigurh as the viewer's teammates. Through close-ups, eye-level angles, and/or subjective shots, the viewer experiences a sense of close, physical contact with these characters and often sees the world from their point of view. As Meyrowitz would argue, the grammar variables used to portray Moss and Chigurh invite viewer alignment with them. Furthermore, viewer alignment with Chigurh is maintained despite his murderous actions because the shot structure separates Chigurh's face from his violent behavior.

I argue that the grammatical framing of Moss and Chigurh as teammates of the viewer can be used to explain both the praise of *No Country for Old Men* and the criticism of its ending. It is important to

note that I do not define the ending as the absolute final scene of the film but rather the final scenes in which the viewer encounters his or her teammates, Moss and Chigurh.

Moss's Ending: The camera first shows Moss engaging in a conversation with a woman at a motel pool. This conversation is shown in alternating shots from an objective viewer's standpoint to a subjective, level-angle shot of Moss, which suggests that the viewer is the one conversing with him. The conversation ends with a subjective shot of Moss as the scene fades to black. The fade to black is symbolic of the viewer being in the dark about Moss's future. Minutes later, the viewer sees Moss dead and bloody on a motel room floor from the subjective view of Sheriff Ed Tom Bell. The viewer's teammate is dead. Worse, the camera has not shown the viewer what happened to their teammate. The shot structure before this moment has allowed the viewer to be there with Moss throughout the film. The viewer accompanied Moss on a hunting trip, sat with him in the backseat of a taxi and conversed with Chigurh from a phone booth. Suddenly, at the climax of the film, the camera denies the viewer access to their teammate in a time when Moss needs his teammates the most. The camera has robbed the viewer of the knowledge of what exactly happened to Moss. Thus there is criticism of the film's ending. The grammar variables were manipulated in a way that the viewer was made to continuously root for Moss only to be let down by his ultimate failure in the film's final moments. Additionally, the grammar variables that the viewer could rely on to maintain his or her alliance with Moss (i.e. subjective shots and close-ups) are suddenly manipulated in a way that prohibits the viewer from all of Moss's regions, both front and back.

Chigurh's ending: In the last scene in which the viewer encounters Chigurh, he is shown behind the wheel of a car in a close-up shot. The camera cuts to a subjective shot of Chigurh looking out of the car windshield. The camera cuts back to the same close-up shot of him behind the windshield. Now, the viewer subjectively experiences Chigurh's perspective as he looks in his rearview mirror and sees children riding their bikes behind him. The camera cuts back but now the perspective is from the point of view of someone sitting in Chigurh's passenger seat as the camera shows Chigurh's right side profile. Again, the viewer is provided with a subjective shot of Chigurh's view of the road from behind the wheel. The grammar variables used in Chigurh's last scene continue to maintain

viewer alignment with him. The viewer still feels like they are riding in the car next to him, seeing the world from his eyes.

Finally, the camera cuts back to the view of Chigurh's invisible passenger. When Chigurh's car is struck and totaled, the viewer is made to feel the surprise and impact of the crash because of the shot placing the viewer in Chigurh's passenger seat. The grammar variables are manipulated in a way that can be credited as a source of the film's praise. The close-up and subjective camera shots allow the viewer to feel connected to Chigurh right up until his final on-screen moment. The viewer is by their teammate's side in this moment of peril. Unlike the demise of Moss, the shot structure does not abandon the viewer. The viewer experiences the car accident and is not left in the dark as to Chigurh's fate. Later in the scene, the camera shows Chigurh from behind as he stands up and walks away from the wreck, battered but not debilitated. Grammar variables are used to assure the viewer that their teammate has survived. Though the viewer is critical of the failure of their teammate, Moss, the viewer is also left with a sense of satisfaction because their teammate, Chigurh, has triumphed. Thus, *No Country for Old Men* leaves open an arena for both viewer criticism and praise through the manipulation of grammar variables.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates how a viewer's alignment with a character can be manufactured through grammar variables. Viewer alignment can lead to both praise and criticism of a film, depending on the specific grammar variable manipulations. With this information, film directors can potentially manipulate grammar variables in order to generate a specific, desired response to both the characters and to the film itself. It leads one to inquire, how prevalent is the use of grammar manipulation to establish viewer alignment with a figure outside of movies? After conducting this study, I personally have begun to reevaluate the reasons why I voted for certain political candidates and why I enjoy cheering for some athletes but not others. Does society actually vote for a candidate based primarily on his or her political beliefs or does it have more to do with the way the camera portrays them participating in a debate or delivering a speech? Is a viewer's idolization of an athlete based on demonstrated athletic prowess or the camera's depiction of the athletes? Production variable manipulation muddies the water, and these nuances in shot framing and selection may impact our decisions more than we realize. An additional study would seek to answer these questions.

LIMITATIONS

When studying grammar variables, it is difficult to remove all consideration of the film's content. Therefore, this study is not wholly concerned with grammar. For example, when considering the shots used as Chigurh is driving, one must also consider the content of this scene. It is more effective from a research standpoint to describe how a subjective shot shows Chigurh's perspective of the road followed by a close-up of Chigurh from behind the windshield than to simply state that a subjective shot is used followed by a close-up shot.

A major limitation to this specific study is that I chose not to analyze the character of Sheriff Ed Tom Bell, though one could easily argue that he plays an equally important role in the film. A more in-depth analysis of the grammar variables used to (dis)allow viewer alignment with Sheriff Bell could affirm or refute the findings of my study.

Another limitation of this study is that I only consider the use of visual grammar variables. *No Country for Old Men* is noted for its lack of aural variables and background music. The minimal aural grammar variables included in the film may offer additional insight to the mystery of *No Country for Old Men*'s praise and criticism. Another follow-up study could focus on the manipulation of aural grammar variables in *No Country for Old Men* and how this affects viewer alignment with the characters.

This study considers the effect of grammar variable manipulation in just one film. Perhaps other films have received mixed reviews that could also be explained with the findings of this study or it may be the case that grammar variables do not play a part in the mixed reviews of other films. In order to generalize the findings of this study, more films with an incompatible viewer response should be analyzed in terms of grammar variable manipulation and the effect on viewer-character alignment.

CONCLUSION

Two articles that I encountered in the literature review process brought up points about that film that I would like to address and counter using the evidence from this study. McClure comments on the content of the film, observing that Chigurh "has no connection or attachment to anyone else," that he is "constrained by no human attachments" and that he exhibits a "total lack of humanity" (48). Mary P. Nichols adds, "...no one, not even the directors, could possibly admire him [Chigurh]" (211). These authors may ask of my study, how can a viewer align with Chigurh if he is not human? I attest that this study counters these content-centric statements by demonstrating how the manipulation of grammar variables actually humanizes Chigurh because the viewer is allowed to see the

world from his perspective and understand that he too undergoes human experiences. By allowing the viewer to identify Chigurh as a teammate, grammar variables detract from the perception of Chigurh as an inhumane killing machine. If Nichols had considered the possibility of viewer identification through grammar variable manipulation, she may not have stated that nobody can admire Chigurh based on the content of his behavior. I offer to McClure that Chigurh *does* have human attachments; perhaps they are not characters in the film, but members of the audience.

APPENDIX

Below is the template I created and used to record the instances of grammar variables in *No Country for Old Men*, with an example of a grammar variable description.

Time in Film	M o s s and/or C h i g - urh?	Gram- mar Variable Used	Comment on the Content of the Scene	Explain how this relates to Viewer Alignment
40:31	Moss	S u b - jective Shot	Moss returns in a taxi to scan the hotel for Chigurh. He sits in the backseat	Subjective view shows the hotel front from Moss’s perspective. Viewer sees what he sees, as if viewer is in the backseat with him.

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MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF REDHEADED MALES

THE NOT-QUITE-OTHER

JOE ROY

Background

For nearly two decades I have been a consumer of media, and in that time I have witnessed two significant yet contradictory themes. One theme has been a gradual trend toward political correctness in representation of minority groups; the other is a consistently negative portrayal of redheaded males. In general, people in modern society tend to be less ostracized on the bases of race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation than in the past. While far from free of prejudice and distasteful jokes, it can at least be said that media do not consistently relegate the members of any particular minority group to offensive, stereotypical roles. This is not true, however, for the redheaded male. Redheaded males are consistently portrayed negatively in media, and yet there has been little resistance to the stereotypes and the few critics who do speak up are not taken seriously.

Before delving too deeply into this study, I feel obligated as a redheaded male to admit to the possibility of a certain level of bias. However, while I confess this potential delimitation, I also say that I highly doubt it to be the case. The multiple instances of redhead stereotyping highlighted throughout this study are from media that I consumed growing up, and continue to consume now. I never actively sought cases of redhead male discrimination or stereotyping. On the contrary, I often found myself searching – in vain – for cases of positive redhead representation to counter the growing sense of inadequacy constructed by consistent marginalization. Further, I did not provide or make the initial judgments on the examples highlighted in this study. I observed a trend in media, and explored it more thoroughly. After years of recognition and acceptance, I have finally decided to examine the phenomenon more deeply in an attempt to bring it into public purview and provide a basis for answering some questions about the issue.

The primary objective of this study is to offer and analyze several examples of redhead stereotyping in order to validate the aforementioned claim. In doing this, I aim to highlight the blatant marginalization of a minority group within media.

I will also make a case for the significance of focusing primarily on animated media in such a study as opposed to live-action film. I argue that animated media, by enabling the creators to design the appearance of characters around the personality they wish to convey, serve as ideal vehicles for creating and reinforcing stereotypes.

Finally, I outline a theory that attempts to answer the following question: Why, in a society that preaches protection of minority rights and political correctness, is it acceptable for media to consistently marginalize redheaded males? There have been countless studies done in the past, which examine media stereotypes and unfair representation of minority groups. The justification for conducting such studies has historically been rooted in feelings of disenfranchisement within the particular groups. While similar feelings exist within the redheaded male group, there have been no studies done to highlight or combat their unfavorable representation. This study describes why this is the case and aims to establish a foundation for future confrontation of the issue.

Method, Strengths of Animated Media

Marginalization of the redheaded male is consistent across all media and is by no means a new phenomenon. The earliest instance that I encountered in my research was in fact, the Bible. Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus's twelve disciples, is best known for betraying the Christian savior for thirty pieces of silver (Cruz). He is most often depicted in artistic renderings as a redhead. Negative representations like this have been pervasive in history, but this study focuses on the most contemporary examples in visual media to support the hypothesis.

I began the study by asking a group of five acquaintances to list as many fictional redheaded male characters as possible from film and television. They were given one minute to complete their lists. This time limit served two purposes. First, I wanted to limit the number of examples to a reasonable amount. Had I allowed the participants twenty minutes to compile their lists, I may have ended up with too many examples to analyze, and would have had to choose certain characters. The choice to analyze some content at the exclusion of others is inherently

subjective and would have undermined the legitimacy of this study. The second reason for the time limit was to get only the most memorable characters. I felt that such examples would be most representative of general media portrayal simply by virtue of the fact that they are most retrievable from memory.

The participants came up with a total of nine examples of redheaded males in media. All participants had at least one answer in common with others, most at least two. Interestingly, the vast majority (7/9) of the redhead males recalled were from animated films and series. I was initially put off by this outcome because my intention had been to examine live action media. However, after considering the nature of animated media I decided that they are most capable of highlighting stereotypical representation for several reasons. The first is a matter of definitions. One of the key questions to consider in this study is: How does one define the term “redhead?” After all, there is an extremely wide spectrum of hair color that would qualify an individual as having red hair—from the darkest auburn to the lightest shade of strawberry blonde. There are no definitive hues that mark the boundaries between red and brown, or red and blonde. The broadness of this spectrum complicates the study with vagueness and conflicting definitions. There tends to be far less room for debate in animated media where red hair is concerned. Hues typically do not fall too near the hazy dividing lines. Red hair is usually depicted as an obvious red or orange.

The second reason that animated media are ideal for this study has to do with the question of intent. The primary hypothesis of this study is based on the assumption that redheaded males are intentionally used to fill negative roles in media. When live-action actors are cast as particular characters, casting agents have to take into account much more than hair color. Aesthetic traits, while important, are typically secondary to talent, fame, and other variables. Because characters in animation are entirely fabricated, creators need not concern themselves with appearances. Rather, aesthetic characteristics are based on the desires of the writers, and reflect an understanding of what will most please the audience. Each character’s clothing, height, size, shape of nose, and, even hair color, are decisions resulting from conscious thought and deliberation by writers and producers. The roles and personalities of characters are predetermined, and the various aspects of their appearance are chosen to best match those traits. Look is constructed around the character, and no aesthetic sacrifices need be made for superior acting ability. For

this reason, animated characters are ideal for this study because each characteristic implies intent on the part of the creators. Furthermore, the tendency for animated media to depict red hair as obviously red rather than borderline red suggests that the color is not arbitrary, but actually has meaning for the creators and the audience. As it turns out, even one of the provided examples of live-action redheads was actually constructed around the character's role. The brown-haired Mike Meyers does not look like himself when he assumes the role of Fat Bastard in the popular comedy *Austin Powers*. Instead, he wears a fat-suit and red wig. Apparently, the writers decided that red hair most adequately fit the personality of the character; this example will be addressed later in the analysis.

Having said all of this, negative representations of redheads are certainly prevalent in live-action film and television, and plenty of cases exist which support the claim that actors are cast in unfavorable roles because of their red hair. However, for the aforementioned reasons I feel that animated media provide the most fertile ground for examination.

After briefly examining the results of the one-minute surveys, I returned the lists to their creators and asked them to write a "P" next to characters which they felt were portrayed positively, and an "N" next to those they believed were portrayed negatively. Out of the nine redheaded males consistent across all lists, six were labeled negatively. One character, Fry from the popular cartoon *Futurama*, was labeled "P" on one list and "N" on another. I asked the participants to give a brief description of why they felt the way they did, something I will discuss later in detail.

The Redheaded Male in Media

While reading this analysis it is important to remember that I do not claim red hair to inherently carry meaning. Rather, regular use of red hair in conjunction with unfavorable characters such as those listed below, has created meaning. Based on my examination of the characters labeled "N," I have established three stereotypical categories to which redheaded males seem typically related via media representation: Antagonist, Idiot, and Social Outcast. I also established a fourth category addressing the characters labeled "P," and therein present an argument that even those characters (again, only 2 of 9) are actually negative portrayals of redheaded males.

Antagonist

The first redhead stereotype that I examine is that of the antagonist. A character in this category is primarily defined by his or her opposition to the main character. From the hit children’s cartoon, *Doug*, Roger Klotz serves as the primary antagonist. Generally disliked by all of his peers, Roger is characterized by a sniveling, high-pitched voice, bad attitude, and tendency to treat others with cruelty and disrespect; he also has bright orange hair. I searched for “Roger Klotz” on Youtube and found an episode that summarizes his role on the show well. The particular episode, titled “Doug is Quailman,” establishes Klotz as a mad scientist who uses a device to drain the knowledge of his classmates in an effort to pass a pop quiz. To the surprise of his teacher, Roger uncharacteristically passes the quiz while everyone else is left without a functioning brain. The protagonist, Doug, assumes the role of Quailman (superhero) and after some fighting saves the day by duping Klotz into draining the brain of a frog. At the end of the episode our redheaded antagonist is reduced to hopping around on the floor, eating flies.

Another listed example of an antagonistic redheaded male was Syndrome from the Disney & Pixar animated film, *The Incredibles*. This character also assumes the role of a villain bent on killing the protagonist; ironically his most distinctive feature is a figurative tornado of red hair. As a child, Syndrome was known as “Buddy” and held the protagonist in high regard while aspiring to be just like his hero. However, the protagonist rejects Buddy early on in the film, crushing his dreams and inadvertently creating the super villain who later opposes him. This is significant because as a child Buddy’s hair was not flaming red, but instead a much lighter blonde. I have provided images below to illustrate the contrast.





Buddy was friendly and sympathetic toward the superhero protagonist. Syndrome, on the other hand, fills the role of arch nemesis. This supports the idea of intentional use of red hair to describe antagonist characters because the writer specifically meant for the child version of Buddy to have light hair. The redness developed over time along with Syndrome's evil personality.

The third example is Fat Bastard from the popular *Austin Powers* film series. While the fat, redheaded Irishman is not the primary antagonist, he makes several appearances throughout the film and always attempts to hurt or otherwise disrupt the plans of the main character. In addition to his opposition of the protagonist, Fat Bastard is also characterized by his obesity and generally abhorrent behavior. In one particular scene, Fat Bastard describes with great emotion how he became the way he is. He refers to the vicious cycle that drives him, saying: "I eat because I'm unhappy, and I'm unhappy because I eat" (Austin). It is the only appearance by the character intended to elicit feelings of sympathy rather than laughter. However, immediately following the monologue, the seriousness of the scene is undermined by his release of a loud, prolonged fart, followed by an attempt to kill Austin Powers and his girlfriend.

Fat Bastard is a repulsive individual whose sole purpose is to provide the audience with humor. I again draw your attention to the matter of intentional use of red hair on such characters. Even though *Austin Powers* is a live-action film, the visual appearance of Fat Bastard is completely constructed. The actor is Mike Meyers, but in assuming the role, Meyers wears a (morbidity) fat suit and a red wig. It was a conscious decision to outfit the character in such a way, and thus further supports the

claim that media deliberately use red hair in depictions of antagonists, and moreover in depictions of disgusting characters.

Idiot

The second stereotype is the redheaded male as an idiot. This term generally refers to those depicted as being extremely unintelligent or clumsy. The first example that I will describe is Eugene from the cartoon *Hey, Arnold*. The participant who listed this character was unable to recall the name of the character and wrote, “the ginger kid from *Hey, Arnold*.” I was a big fan of the T.V. show growing up, but could only vaguely recall the character myself. After searching briefly for a clip involving Eugene, I quickly understood why I had wiped the memory of the walking stereotype from my mind. Eugene is characterized by his clumsiness. Every video that I found of the redheaded character shows him doing something embarrassing. The first page of a Youtube search yielded the following captions: “Eugene chokes on a hotdog,” “Eugene crashes into a car door,” and “Eugene fail.” The video accompanying the first of these captions was a montage of Eugene spending time with the show’s main character, Arnold. Within the twenty-four second clip the clumsy redhead chokes on a bit of hotdog and nearly suffocates. Arnold saves him with the Heimlich maneuver, but the hotdog bit shoots like a projectile, ricochets off a nearby sign, and hits him in the eye. In the next scene Eugene is seen wearing an eye patch. None of the other clips portrayed him as any less clumsy or accident-prone.

The second provided example of an idiot redhead is Fry from *Futurama*. As I mentioned earlier, the two participants who listed Fry were split in their decision to label him as positively or negatively represented. As a follow-up, I asked the two participants to briefly describe why they felt the way they did about the character. The one who labeled Fry with an “N” said “he’s portrayed as an idiot most of the time. He always gets himself and everybody into trouble and never does anything right.” The participant who labeled Fry with a “P” said, “he’s the main character. And he’s likable. He might be an idiot but in general he’s a likable character.” Even the participant who had labeled him positively admitted that Fry was portrayed as an idiot. His primary argument for positive representation was that “he’s the main character.” However, in viewing upwards of twenty clips involving the redheaded protagonist I found none that portrayed him as the typical “hero” type. I submit that Fry is a likable character, and while his idiocy may be his most defining personality trait, there is room to argue that overall, he is a positive

representation of the redheaded male. However, an important factor to consider with *Futurama* in particular is the rest of the animated cast. The show takes place thousands of years in the future, and depicts Fry as a remnant of the 20th century. The characters that surround him in his new life include a blue haired Cyclops, a robot, and a lobster-man. Realistically, Fry's red hair lends a level of strangeness to a protagonist that would otherwise be too "normal" to fit in.

Outcast

The third stereotype describes redheaded males as social outcasts. This term refers to characters portrayed to the viewer as being somewhat abnormal, or not accepted by their peers. The examples provided here are perhaps the most blatantly offensive of the three categories. The first redheaded social outcast is Mort Goldman from the popular animated comedy, *Family Guy*. Mort Goldman is the patriarch of the Goldman family, and like his son, is distinguished by his lisp, congested voice, acne, glasses, buck-teeth, general social awkwardness, and of course, red hair. Interestingly, his wife also shares these same characteristics, which strongly implies incest. The top hit from the Youtube search, "Family Guy Goldman," is a montage titled "Ode to Mort Goldman." This video covers the range of offensive traits and behaviors that describe this redheaded outcast. Mort begins the video with an appeal to a dating website. In doing this he quotes, "Ladies, I am a very desperate man. [...] I live with my mother, and I have very low standards" (Macfarlene). Prior to the conclusion of this video clip, Mort does several other embarrassing things such as peeing himself, describing his "terrible hemorrhoids," and checking his stool for blood. All of these instances degrade his overall image, and ultimately portray him as a stereotypical social outcast.

The second example of redheads as social misfits does not focus on any one particular character. Three participants listed "South Park Ginger Episode," or something similar, as negative representation of redheads. The plot of this particular episode goes like this: Eric Cartman, one of the show's four main characters, relentlessly picks on a redheaded boy at school. To punish him for his cruelty, his friends dye his hair red and use make-up to draw freckles on his face while he is asleep. Eric is mortified when he wakes and discovers that he has become a ginger overnight. He endures teasing at school, and makes it his mission to unite all redheads against the cruel world that belittles them. After successfully uniting all of "redhead-kind" against the world, and gaining more power

than he could ever wish for, his friends tell him that it was all a hoax. On the brink of world domination, Cartman gives it all up because he would rather be normal than the most powerful redhead in the world. This is not the only South Park episode that marginalizes redheads, but it is perhaps the most popular example on television.

These two television series deliberately use red hair on characters that are considered outcasts. In doing so, they have helped to construct one of the many unfavorable stereotypes that plague the redhead male minority group. Because of these two examples, and the five others which preceded them, members of larger society now associate red hair with the various negative character traits that it tends to accompany in media.

Protagonist? How about inadequate sidekick?

The characters that made multiple lists as positive representations of redheaded males were Chucky from the children's cartoon, *The Rugrats*, and Ron Weasley from the best-selling novel and movie series, *Harry Potter*. While I agree, to an extent, with the positivity of these characters' portrayals, I argue that the value placed in them by viewers is based primarily on the characters' alignment (Meyrowitz) with the main protagonists of their respective stories. I preface this argument with another admission of possible bias, but I nevertheless claim that consideration of these two subjects by themselves paints very different and far less favorable images. Furthermore, while the characters' relationships with the protagonists raise them up in some ways, they also define the redhead sidekicks as submissive and weak.

Both Ron and Chucky, like the characters listed under the idiot category, are characterized by their clumsiness. Throughout the Harry Potter series, it is not uncommon to see Ron make cauldrons explode in his face, break magic wands, or cast spells incorrectly, causing them to backfire. In fact, in one particular scene, he uses a broken wand to wrongly cast a spell, which backfires and causes him to vomit slugs for hours. Along with his clumsiness, he is also very poor and unconfident. While he does have shining moments, it is primarily his alignment with Harry, the protagonist, which causes the audience to view him positively.

The same is true for Chucky. Shy, timid, and accident prone, Chucky Finster is only perceived as a favorable representation of redheads because he is bestfriends with Tommy Pickles, the main character.

However, even while the two redheads' associations with the main characters are perceived as good things – perhaps the best things they have going – their relationships with the protagonists actually undermine their individual worth. Ron and Chucky are constantly overshadowed by the accomplishments of Harry and Tommy. They rarely, if ever, take the lead in particular episodes or scenes within the films, and are subsequently projected unto the audience as submissive followers.

Conclusion

I do not claim that most – or even many – films and T.V. shows choose to use redheaded males as antagonists, idiots, or outcasts. However, in light of this study, it should be clear that their use in such roles is disproportionately high compared to their representation as protagonists, or as smart, popular characters. While the examples provided were from a group too small for generalization to the greater population, more than two-thirds of the most retrievable characters were considered negative representations of redheaded males. Additionally, the prevalence of such stereotypes in animated media in particular highlights the underlying theme of redheaded male marginalization. Because each aesthetic characteristic is deliberate, the use of red hair primarily (if not exclusively) on unfavorable characters strongly supports the claim that media unfairly represent redheaded males. Why is this consistent unfavorable representation acceptable in media, and why have there been no efforts to confront the issue?

Why is it acceptable?

I searched far and wide for other studies to support my hypothesis and provide insight into why such unfair representation is tolerable, even encouraged. My search yielded no legitimate studies or research papers, but I was able to find several blogs, a few magazine articles, and even a website dedicated to highlighting and giving voice to those concerned. In reading these materials, I discovered some important themes that have shaped this study and also serve as bases for my theorized answer. Below, I provide answers as to why marginalization of redheads is acceptable, and why the redhead minority group has yet to successfully combat the unfavorable portrayal in media.

One of the reasons for their consistent marginalization is rooted in the perception that redheads will not be around for much longer. Occasionally, studies with no real scientific support claim that redheads will

be extinct within a matter of centuries, or even decades. These claims are largely accepted as true, despite the fact that the data that they cite as evidence are fallacious or misleading. One news report, for example claimed that “redheads could be gone as early as 2060” (news.com.au), citing the recessive redhead gene and the small percentage of the population with red hair. However, scientists have continually refuted such extinction claims. Red hair “can easily skip one or more generations [then] reappear” (Silverman). Even though claims of imminent redhead extinction are incorrect, they are nonetheless widespread, and this perceived temporariness contributes to the societal feeling that such discrimination is acceptable.

Another reason that unfavorable representation is accepted has to do with the purely aesthetic nature of the redhead “disorder.” Aside from sensitivity to the sun, the only thing that separates redheads from the majority is appearance. There exist none of the physical or mental handicaps that make other genetic abnormalities out of bounds. Redheads look very different, but the nature of the difference is benign, and therefore they are targeted.

Why is it accepted? The Not-Quite-Other

Media have constructed redheaded males as an “other” group; they continuously reinforce the idea that redheaded males are different and don’t belong. Defining a minority group as “other” is hardly uncommon. In fact, it is an inescapable part of living in a world separated by borders, with countless cultural dissimilarities and people defined by a wide range of aesthetic characteristics. However, the case of the redheaded male is unique for two major and interrelated reasons. First, redheads lack any real sense of unity. Redheads share no common background—no place of origin, no unifying cultural artifacts—and therefore do not accept being grouped into a category separated from the majority. The only thing shared by redheads is the age-old struggle to fit into dominant society. This, in and of itself, could be enough to unite all redheads in an effort to seek fairer representation. However, this is not possible because of the other major reason: the redhead population has been split down the middle. Female redheads are generally accepted into – and in many cases even envied or desired by – greater society. In my research I discovered a list titled “Redhead Actors and Actresses” on Listal.com, which supports this assertion. Of the first one hundred listed celebrities, only five were male (listal.com). That is a twenty to one ratio of redhead female to male representation. There were other similar lists of famous

redheads from other sources that proved the same point. Redheaded males are lumped into an “other” group, which they refuse to accept or even acknowledge, while redheaded females are considered normal in society. This split has effectively undermined any hope at redhead solidarity and independent sustainability.

All of this has left the redhead male minority group in a figurative limbo. They are considered “others” by greater society, but are unable to accept this categorization. By doing so, redheads unite in their struggle for better representation. They are a “Not-Quite-Other, Other.”

Implications

In addition to those listed in the study and the various psychological and emotional hardships that accompany insults against any person, redheads also have to deal with the reality of discrimination. Just earlier this year, a case of discrimination in football received brief media attention. Bruce Miller, a record-breaking college football star and then nation-leader in sacks was “barely recruited out of high school and is [now] considered, at best, a late round NFL draft pick” (Bianchi). Miller refers to the long history of prejudice against “Gingers” and cites a stereotype stating that they are perceived as being athletically challenged. There have also been reports of discrimination against redheads in the workplace, including instances where jobs were allegedly denied to applicants on the basis of their red hair. While such cases are difficult to prove, the mere existence of such allegations demands more serious examination of the subject.

Delimitations

It is important to state, and in some cases reiterate the various delimitations of this study. First is the possibility of personal bias. As a redheaded male, I have a personal connection to the theories and findings outlined in this piece. Additionally, my analyses of the provided content are just that – mine. The conclusions are based on the observations of one person. Readers should keep that in mind.

In conducting the descriptive portion of the study, I used a very limited sample size. Comprised of five people, this is hardly an adequate number to represent the feelings of greater society. However, these five individuals participated in the study with no knowledge of its purpose.

Finally, Youtube may not be the most legitimate source of

examples. Factors like popularity, date added, and specific clip names affect the search results and placement of videos. This may have yielded samples that were more or less supportive of my claims than the average representation of characters. However, I used non-leading terms in my searches and viewed most of the content. I did not screen for clips that looked like they would support my assertions.

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SILENCE AND SUSPENSE IN *NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN*:
A UNIQUE WESTERN FILM

ADAM PAIKIN

The film *No Country for Old Men* hit the box office in 2007, grossing over \$74 million in the United States alone. The film takes place in Texas in the 1980's, mirroring classic western style films in many ways. The story begins when a hunter, Llewelyn Moss, stumbles upon a drug deal gone wrong and winds up with a briefcase filled with over \$2 million in cash. The owners of the briefcase hire an assassin, Anton Chigurh, to hunt Moss down killing everyone that gets in his way, and even some that don't. The third character in the film is the county's sheriff, who represents a generation that can't understand the violence of their time, and is tasked with finding Moss before Chigurh can get to him. Although the plot of this movie doesn't seem too far-fetched in the realm of western films, this movie was perceived very differently than other popular westerns.

Question:

From shootouts to sheriffs and outlaws, the content in the film *No Country for Old Men* looks like a typical "wild west" movie. Why, then, was the movie received as a suspense thriller—almost horror—film when most other western style movies containing equally violent content are perceived as action films? There have been numerous accounts citing the acting of Javier Bardem and his portrayal of the violent killer, Anton Chigurh, as the reason why this movie provides more fear than excitement. Many of the murders this character commits during the film seem completely senseless and without justification, which some scholars believe is the most frightening aspect of the film. They would say that this character is the factor that separates *No Country for Old Men* from other western films. This study will assert that it is not the content that creates the fear and suspense that this film emanates, but that it is created through the use of silence, which is unique to *No Country for Old Men*.

In order to demonstrate this quality of silence, three movies will be examined in contrast with *No Country for Old Men* in relation to both their manifest content and their use of sound.

Literature Review:

Previous research on this topic suggests that the suspense this movie makes its viewers feel either comes from the actions of Chigurh, the villain of the film, or recognizes the use of silence as a sound variable that builds tension. Other research fails to compare the film with other western movies to demonstrate its unique qualities. While multiple other texts were viewed to complete this study, they all fell into these two categories. The best from each group were selected to represent the others.

Bernard Beck notes the idea of a “senseless killing” in his article, “Cold, Cold Heart: Who’s Afraid of No Country for Old Men.” He claims that people will often fear for those being killed in a film because they fear being killed themselves. People will then try to understand why the killing happened in the film and rationalize that they would not or could not be in those circumstances. Beck concludes that the fear audiences of *No Country for Old Men* feel comes from their inability to rationalize the killings taking place in the film. He states that the senseless killings committed by Chigurh are exceptionally terrifying because the audience cannot understand why the killings are happening, and in turn cannot separate themselves from those being randomly murdered in the film. (Beck, 215) However, Beck does not attempt to look at other western films where senseless killing occurs. If he had done so, he would find that most western movies do contain villains who kill at random, often without prejudice of race, age, or gender.

Dennis Lim of *The New York Times* wrote an article titled, “Exploiting Sound, Exploring Silence,” that credits the use of silence in *No Country for Old Men* as being the chief factor in creating suspense. He quotes the sound editor of the film, Skip Lievsay, who claims, “Suspense thrillers in Hollywood are traditionally done almost entirely with music.” Lievsay goes on to state, “The idea here was to remove the safety net that lets the audience feel like they know what’s going to happen. I think it makes the movie much more suspenseful. You’re not guided by the score and so you lose that comfort zone” (Lim, Para. 3). Lim goes on to assert that the soundtrack of *No Country for Old Men* comes not from music, but from background noises such as the sound of wind or the engine of a car, and more emphatic noises including gunshots and the beeping of a tracking device. While this article does more to rationalize its claims

than Beck's, it does not seem to notice that *No Country for Old Men* also falls into the category of a Western film. Lim fails to show a distinction between this film and other western hits, and is unable to demonstrate how the use of sound to create suspense separates this film from other westerns.

Significance of the Question:

Why pay attention to *No Country for Old Men* and its unique use of sound? One reason is that the film was a phenomenal success, a recipient of three British Academy of Film awards, two Golden Globes, and four Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director (Joel and Ethan Coen), Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor (Javier Bardem) ("No Country for Old Men"). The film reached millions of viewers around the world, redefining what was possible under the guise of a western film.

By focusing on what separates *No Country for Old Men* from other films within the western genre and noting that the prime distinction between the two is the use of silence, implications about sound as a variable can be made. Although sound is usually seen as a background variable that can be used to add to a scene or guide an audience in their reactions, this study could push sound to the forefront of grammar variables. If sound is able to be the defining factor in moving *No Country for Old Men* from the traditional action genre of western films to the genre of suspense thriller, then the implications of using sound are far greater than previously thought.

Theoretical Rationale:

Much of the rationale for this study comes from the idea that western films are traditionally classified as action and use soundtracks to guide audiences. An article written by Michael J. Blouin titled, "Auditory Ambivalence: Music in the Western from *High Noon* to *Brokeback Mountain*," highlights that underlying principle. Blouin states the music soundtracks are so much a part of western films that they seem to "[haunt] the American landscape." (Blouin, 1173) He associates soundtracks so strongly with western films that he is claiming the sounds to be a part of the western environment. Another scholar, K. J. Donnelly writes in *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television*, "Screen music is a controlling device, in that it wishes to influence behavior, shaping audience reaction to the film or television program in which it appears" (Donnelly, 4). Donnelly is commenting that music is capable of making an audience feel a certain way, and is a common tool specifically

for that. This is how sound is usually viewed in movies and within western films. It is through this understanding that the unique use of silence in *No Country for Old Men* is highlighted and made apparent.

Definition of Terms:

When I use the term “silence” in describing scenes from *No Country for Old Men*, I refer to the lack of any music track. There are no songs or orchestrated pieces of music that provide background for scenes in the film. There are, however, sounds that can be described as the “soundtrack” of the movie. These sounds come in the form of “ambient noises” and “emphatic noises.” Ambient noises are similar to white noise in that they are pervasive sounds coming from the environment. Examples of this could be the howling of the wind, a car driving by, or the sound of boots walking in the desert. Emphatic noises are louder noises that give emphasis to something, often being very sudden. Examples of emphatic noises used in *No Country for Old Men* come from gunshots, the beeping of a tracking device, and the cattle air gun used by the villain of the film. These noises combine to create a makeshift soundtrack that replaces the traditional use of music.

Method:

This is a descriptive study meant to compare *No Country for Old Men* to other western films to show a relationship in content and focus on sound as the primary difference for making *No Country for Old Men* unique. I chose three scenes to analyze along with similar scenes in three other western films. Each scene from *No Country for Old Men* is matched up to a related scene to make clear connections between each film’s content, and to demonstrate obvious differences in their uses of sound. Strong emphasis was placed on how suspense and tension were built by the variable of silence. Movies that were compared to scenes from *No Country for Old Men* include:

1. A scene from *The Searchers* (1956). Directed by John Ford and based during the Texas-Indian Wars. This film was named the Greatest American Western of All-Time by the American Film Institute. (“The Searchers”)
2. A scene from *True Grit* (2010). This film was directed by the Coen Brothers, the same directors who headed *No Country for Old Men*. It is a remake of a 1968 film starring John Wayne. (“True Grit”)
3. A scene from *3:10 to Yuma* (2007). This film is a remake of a 1957

film, *Three-Ten to Yuma*, and stars Russell Crowe and Christian Bale. (“3:10 to Yuma”)

Results:

1. Near the beginning of *No Country for Old Men*, Moss returns to the scene where he found the briefcase filled with \$2 million in an attempt to eliminate any evidence of him taking it. He approaches a car in which a dead drug dealer is still sitting in the passenger seat when he notices the headlights of a truck where he parked his car. The car, almost completely silent, starts to drive towards him, rapidly building the tension of the scene. He starts to run while the only sounds are the faint, ambient noises of his boots as he runs away and the low rumble of the car engine chasing after him. The silence is suddenly broken by the loud emphatic sound of a bullet barely missing Moss, easily startling an audience.

Our protagonist desperately tries to run towards a river as we hear only his labored breathing, the engine of the car, and emphatic bursts of a rifle being fired from the truck. Just before he makes it to the river, one of the bangs from the rifle is followed by a second thud of Moss being hit in the shoulder as he falls down to the river. The attackers release a dog to chase Moss as he swims across the river. While they both slowly swim across, the sounds of the river overtake the scene and the faint panting of the dog is heard in the background. Moss reaches the other side and mechanically goes through the process of cleaning his gun so it will fire by the time the dog reaches the shore. The audience hears the emphatic sound of the dog barking get increasingly louder as it gets closer to Moss. The suspense grows as the dog’s bark gets louder until Llewelyn finally gets his gun back together and closes the scene with the loudest emphatic noise yet as he fires a shot seconds before the dog reaches him (*No Country for Old Men*). The content in this scene may be enough to merit a feeling of tension or suspense from an audience, but the use of silence to begin a chase scene is unique to *No Country for Old Men*. In addition, a strong feeling of urgency is created by the gradual overtaking of ambient noise by emphatic noises in the conclusion of this chase.

In contrast, a scene from *3:10 to Yuma* involving a stagecoach chase builds tension through music as a cue for its audience. The scene opens with a subjective shot of a stagecoach coming into view around a bend accompanied by low, ominous tones. The tempo of the music builds speed as a dozen cowboys on horseback charge the stagecoach.

The tension in the scene and the soundtrack being played coincide to create a sense of urgency. Fast drumming and low tones are combined to create an apprehensive feeling as the people on the stagecoach get gunned down one by one. The music eventually slows as the stagecoach crashes and ends the chase (*3:10 to Yuma*). This example comes from a film that came out the same year as *No Country for Old Men*. Both films are suspenseful, but this tension is established differently for each. By using a music track, the scene from *3:10 to Yuma* feels more like an action sequence, where as *No Country for Old Men* makes its audience feel frightened and nervous through its use of silence.

2. The following scene in *No Country for Old Men* begins as the villain, Chigurh, enters a small convenience store and interacts with the store clerk. There is no music and virtually no other sounds besides the killer slowly chewing nuts while he is talking with the clerk. Somehow, the viewer knows something bad is going to happen, feeling distressed. The volume of Chigurh chewing nuts is amplified to become a focal point of the scene. Tension is built by the contrast between extreme quiet mixed with high volume sounds that would otherwise be seen as insignificant. When the clerk tells him that this store is not his, but owned by the father of his wife, our villain chokes on the nut he's eating. That sound is magnified, becomes an emphatic noise when paired with an otherwise silent setting, and could very easily make a person jump in their seat. When the killer finishes his nuts, he places the wrapper on the counter and the camera zooms in on it. Even the sound of the wrapper is nerve-racking. As the killer often does before he kills someone he then asks the clerk to "call it" before he flips a coin. He slams the coin on the table creating another emphatic noise that could easily make a person jump again. There is no telling when or if he is going to kill the clerk in this scene, with no music to guide the viewer. After some convincing to get the clerk to guess a side, he guesses correctly, and everyone can breathe a sigh of relief as the killer exits the store without killing him (*No Country for Old Men*). Normally, chewing nuts and flipping a coin would not be suspenseful, but silence coupled with high volume ambient and emphatic sounds effectively create a feeling of extreme tension.

This scene can be compared to a scene from *The Searchers*, which features John Wayne. The villain in this film is the head Native American portrayed as an evil savage. When the villain in this movie enters the scene, there is a close up shot of him paired with ominous music letting the audience know that he is the bad guy. The music begins to pick up as the Native Americans surround the heroes of the film, and there is suddenly a fast paced music score as a chase develops (*The*

Searchers). The suspense in this scene is constructed entirely by the music.

3. Later in *No Country for Old Men*, the protagonist and the villain meet for the first time in a gunfight. Moss is sitting in a hotel room in complete silence when he finds a tracking device in his bag. He calls down to the front desk where he had asked the clerk to phone him if there was anyone looking for him. We hear nothing but a quiet ringing followed by the soft sound of Moss placing down the phone and then picking up his rifle. Tension festers in the silence as he waits for the killer to approach his room. The audience hears no footsteps as the light coming under his hotel room door is blocked out, until the faint sound of the protagonist cocking his gun is heard. Then suddenly, out of complete silence, the lock of the door bursts out and hits the hero in the chest accompanied by the distinctive, emphatic sound of the cattle air gun used only by Chigurh. A loud bang follows as the protagonist fires his rifle at the door. He rushes to the window in an attempt to climb out, while the only sounds heard are his labored breathing and the sound of his footsteps. Another emphatic sound comes from the cattle air gun as a shot barely misses the hero's head as he climbs out the window (*No Country for Old Men*). This scene carries a great deal of tension and suspense as the audience waits for the encounter. This is done without any soundtrack by raising the volume of typically subtle sounds in convergence with loud, emphatic noises, and contrasting those sounds with complete silence.

In another modern western movie, *True Grit*, the protagonist and one of the villains of the film are gearing up to face one another. They face each other on their horses and yell from a distance. The villain has three partners with him to face the seemingly alone protagonist. Their conversation could be seen as working towards a resolution, but there is a subtle, high-pitched tone in the background that seems ominous to the audience. As the argument becomes more heated, the music picks up until they are charging at one another to an overpowering tone. There are high-pitched tones as the hero hits one of the villain's allies followed by a low pitch tone as the hero is hit in the shoulder (*True Grit*). This western was released around the same time as *No Country for Old Men*, yet in typical fashion, uses a music track to guide the viewer throughout the movie, laying the foundations for an action film instead of suspense.

Discussion:

As seen in the findings of the research, silence is used in a

unique fashion by *No Country for Old Men* that is not seen in other western films. Some scholars believe it to be the nature of Chigurh that placed this western film into the suspense-thriller genre. It has been demonstrated in the findings of this study that other western films contain villains who attack or kill for no reason, so it is unlikely that this is the variable that sets *No Country for Old Men* apart from other films.

By contrasting prominent scenes from *No Country for Old Men* to movies with scenes having similar content, it becomes evident that it is not only the content that makes the film unique. This implies that the only variable that is consistently distinctive in *No Country for Old Men* is the use of silence. This being the case, it may be necessary to rethink how sound affects the audience as a framing tool. If the nuances of sound have the ability to change how we classify what we see and how we interpret it, then what other implications might this study lead to? Is sound used as a variable elsewhere in the media to guide or skew an audience's perception? The results of this study suggest that further steps should be taken to examine how sound and silence is used across media to categorize content.

Delimitations:

As with any descriptive study, I could not show conclusively that silence caused tension and suspense. In order to do that, I would have had to conduct an experiment where I made one group watch a scene with a music track and one group watch the same scene without one. Even then, it would have been difficult to measure levels of tension in the subjects of the experiment. In addition, I studied a small variety of western films, and there are many films that would have applied well to this research of silence that I left out due to lack of related content. The goal was to identify uniqueness in *No Country for Old Men* when compared with other western films that relates to the grammar variable of sound, and not to document the sound used in every scene from every western movie.

Follow-up:

An appropriate way to follow this study up could be to look at the use of sound and silence in radio broadcasts. Radio lacks the visual component of film, so it would be interesting to see how sound is used when the variable is isolated. By comparing radio shows to one another, further implications into the use of sound to guide listeners' perspectives could be noted. In addition, this study could have subsections focused on how different forms of media use sound. A section could be dedicated to how televised news uses sound cues to guide its viewers.

Western movies continue to be produced, so another way to continue this study could be to reproduce the study with western films that come out in the near future. It may be that future films will copy or adapt this unique application of silence and sound in new ways. Noting the development of this variable will be important to understanding how and why sound is being used, as well as the profound effect it has on viewer perception.

Conclusion:

This study was designed to help understand why the film, *No Country for Old Men* was received and categorized as a suspense thriller when other western films with similar content and story lines were considered action films. It compared scenes from *No Country for Old Men* to other critically acclaimed western films to show a relationship in content, and to clearly illustrate the differences in how suspense was built up. The results showed that *No Country for Old Men* used a unique adaption of sound by replacing the typical soundtrack with silence, ambient noises, and emphatic noises. This atypical variable sound usage allowed for *No Country for Old Men* to transcend the limits of the typical western film. It is yet to be seen if future western movies will employ or adapt *No Country for Old Men's* unique use of sound and silence, but for now, this movie stands in a category all its own.

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BELONGING, CIVILITY, AND ACTION:**CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT FORUM**

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE COLLEGE STUDENT

ALEX BOURNE

Building communities is something that I have been working on for the past two years. As a former Residential Assistant (for those who might be unfamiliar with this infamous position, it is generally referred to as an RA) and a current Community Assistant (CA—you wouldn't have guessed that, *would you?*) my primary focus and collegiate life's work has been to construct welcoming communities for students. If one were to look at a brochure for an ideal community constructed by an RA or CA there would be no bias, no racism, and a community of welcome and inclusion. In essence, civil engagement is what I try to strive for, and hope those who I am in regular contact with will take notice of. On top of working in res-life, I am a director for a student organization. While this is all well and good, I have noticed a serious issue with participation in communities as of late.

To be blunt, student and civil engagement amongst college students is in a slump. I have come to this realization after experiencing fewer and fewer students show up to quality events on campus that I either host or co-host. Now, this statement is very vague and won't hold up well without specific evidence. Luckily, there are plenty of people out there to do some of this research for me! One research topic is consistent with fewer students showing up to community oriented events: Facebook. The adverse argument can be made that Facebook in its essence is a networking site and it spreads the word about events quicker than any one person ever could before, which it does, but in a study by Reynol Junco (2011) we see that Facebook is actually a *negative* factor in student and civil engagement. Here's why.

The claim that Facebook negatively impacts student engagement and involvement is highlighted in *The Relationship Between Frequency of Facebook Use, Participation in Facebook Activities, and Student Engagement* by stating, "while the use of Facebook does involve psychological energy, it does not seem that the investment is related in a posi-

tive way to the real-world construct of engagement,” (Junco pg. 168). In my experience, the use of Facebook for networking and event sharing, give people an “out.” I recently used Facebook to create an event for my student organization and invited my roommate to the event via Facebook. When I asked him in person if he would go to the event he said, “I declined it on Facebook.” This makes it look like Facebook is giving people a passive way of saying “No.” To make matters worse, Facebook has recently added a feature that tells the creator of an event exactly *who* said no to attending. It makes the host feel pretty bad about their self-esteem (personal experience).

While Facebook is a very specific example, the internet and all of its bells and whistles are causing people to be lazy and stay away from community events. For my CA and RA jobs, I gave up the online events and started going face to face and advertising with flyers on doors, all that really obnoxious stuff that people don’t like, but it works. More people show up to events that I personally promote. Which leads me to my main point: people need to get out more! There are so many positive things happening in every community and so many opportunities for civil engagement. We all know everyone goes to the big pop concert every year, or the huge hockey games, which is good! But people need to support the smaller organizations, poetry readings, local bands, theater, recitals, RA and CA sponsored events, and everything in between. Making real life connections is very rewarding and fun.

I work hard to make interesting things happen for people. Recently, the student organization I am in hosted a sold out concert, and it was terrific. There aren’t a lot of things that make you feel better than succeeding and making people happy, which is what civic engagement is really about to me. To elaborate further, a few months ago I was told by my residents to make chili, so I did. I had never made chili before, but somehow it turned out to be edible. Showing people that I worked hard to produce something for them made my chili event have a great turnout, a lot of people met each other and it helped build the community I am now a part of. In general however, events don’t turn out like this and student organizations suffer from lack of attendance. If students would just get out and build a stronger community, the college environment would be a more entertaining place to be.

All hope is not lost, however. A study of volunteerism amongst college students in 2010 showed that the number of Americans volunteering jumped by 1.6 million from 2009 for a total of 8.1 billion hours

(Elmasry 2011). If we can get past the slump social networking has put on the college generation, we can be a more productive and community oriented society. The way all the RAs in the world envisioned it.

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CONSUMERISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

MICHELLE MARTINELLI

Contemporary economic theory is based on neo-liberal economics and focuses primarily on economic growth. In the last 50 years, many developed countries have become “consumer societies,” where consumption is crucial to economic growth (Crane 354). Each year corporations produce more goods in hopes of larger sales figures, and in return consumers are expected to consume even more. The trends of increased consumerism and McDonaldization of shopping have negative repercussions for the planet, but fortunately reframing the practice of consumption and creating agency for change can cease the damage. These tactics range from individual action to getting as many people out protesting as possible. Until that agency is created, consumerism will continue to destroy planet earth.

American society has become obsessed with getting things, as quickly and efficiently as possible, a term coined by George Ritzer as McDonaldization (Ritzer, 1). Based on the principles of efficiency, calculability, control, and predictability, McDonaldization encourages consumption and has facilitated production. The move away from human work to machines and the assembly line, has allowed for increased and more efficient production. This obsession is the result of the overpopulation of fast-food restaurants, creating a need for speed when it comes to consuming goods. Along with fast-food restaurants appeared shopping malls, which have made consuming even more efficient. Later, the advent of the internet, which is accessible to nearly all consumers, provided an increasingly efficient way of consuming, which does not even require the buyer to leaving their home (Jurgenson, 162). Consumers are lured in with neon signs, clever advertisements, and manipulative sales techniques.

Neo-liberal economics, as a form of capitalism, relies on the belief that production and consumption are crucial to economic growth. Further, advocates of neo-liberalism wish the economy to become privatized rather than government monitored, which would mean the public would no longer have any say in the behavior of corporations. The possibil-

ity of change would be taken from the public and placed in the hands of big business; issues regarding the public ranging from the distribution of wealth to environmental effects would be ignored (Giroux, 2). Under these beliefs, neo-liberal economics and McDonaldization work hand in hand. In a neo-liberal society that requires increased production and consumption, McDonaldization is the ideal solution, with its core principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. Corporations can produce quickly, and shoppers can consumer faster, resulting in economic growth.

The consumption obsession is matched with disregard for the environment. Urry states that, "Much capitalist production in the neo-liberal era takes place without regard to need or public good. So the scale and impact of 'waste' production has moved dramatically upwards" (Urry 206). Corporations produce without consideration of the environment or community, on both local and global scales. In short, the planet cannot sustain increased production. According to Crane, "Indiscriminate production of consumer goods contributes to climate change, to shortages of basic commodities, and to the waste and exhaustion of many types of resources" (Crane 354). Locally, environments are drained of their resources and dangerous toxins fill the air and water supply. Globally, the toxins produced collectively impact climate. Unfortunately planet earth cannot sustain this trend much longer, as it has limited resources, and the effects are being felt around the globe.

In the last century global temperatures have raised .73 deg C, a result of increased greenhouse gasses and carbon emissions. These gasses are at higher levels than they have been in 650, 000 thousand years, indicating that this is not a naturally caused increase, but a man-made increase caused by consumerism (Urry 194). The factories that make the items, the vehicles that transport the products to distribution centers and to stores that will sell the goods, produce emissions, as well as the consumers who drive to the stores to purchase them. Science has proven that there are indeed environmental repercussions for excessive consumerism, ranging from depleted resources, extreme weather, and climate change. For example, according to the World Health Organization, climate change causes over 150, 000 deaths each year (Urry, 195). With effects including the loss of human life, a change regarding production and consumption practices must occur. Unfortunately, under neo-liberalism, there is no agency for change, meaning those who wish to see it must create it.

In order to get as many consumers to change their behavior as

possible, the framework in which consumption occurs must change. Currently, consumption is driven by individual choice and the creation of a lifestyle or social identity (Haanpää 479). Within this framework, one must consume to show their value and a desired image of themselves, which causes increased consumption. Fortunately there are numerous solutions to this problem, firstly, by modifying the framework of consumption. If the social notion were that consumption only occurred to attain needs rather than wants, the amount of consumption would greatly decrease. Another framework would include valuing green consumerism over non-green consumerism. Green consumerism consists of behaviors recycling and buying eco-friendly products. These behaviors portray an entirely different social identity than regular consumerism. The values associated with green consumerism merely represent a different lifestyle. Alternatively, the framework could be changed in such a way that devalued consumption. However, there is no agency for this to occur within the current system; many organizations and proponents of green consumerism work to create this agency.

Sustainable consumption researcher Komathi Kolandai-Matchett launched an informational campaign that was strategically framed, implemented effective communication techniques, and broadcast over a local media outlet (Kolandai-Matchett, 113). The campaign proved successful, with increased understanding of sustainable consumption and more concern expressed by the locals of the area to which it was broadcast. This study proves that the media is indeed a good place to create agency for change. Media, including television, news, and radio, can reach the greatest amount of people possible. Further, if the media presents a story, it becomes public concern, because if a story is on television than it is presumed to be important.

Anti-consumerist organizations such as Adbusters, a foundation and magazine that produces campaigns challenging consumerism, use detournement as means of bringing into question consumerist society and corporations. During the 1960's Guy Debord founded The Situationists, a group which, "famously designed and enacted a wide variety of reflexive critical interventions in the hopes of participating in breaking people out of their daily routines, encouraging political participation, and awakening class struggle" (Haiven 93). Among their tactics included Detournement, a tactic in which the Situationist's turned meaningful cultural objects into propaganda in order to raise awareness of a social issue. For example, one Adbuster campaign features the traditional shell logo, and red and yellow color scheme of Shell Gas Corporation. However, the image behind their stylized "advertisement" features a presumably dead bird

covered in spilt oil, along with the word “Hell” rather than “Shell”. This campaign is a commentary on the environmental effects of consumer society’s addiction to fossil fuels, specifically oil spills. By juxtaposing images typically associated with a brand such as shell, along with an opposing image such as a dead bird, the viewer can be jarred into bringing to question the ethics and underlying problems associated with consuming that specific product, providing agency for change, and perhaps encouraging a boycott.

However, Max Haiven argues that campaigns such as Adbusters are not enough to have substantial effect on public opinions of consumerism. The agency which they create, does not allow for substantial change. According to Haiven, acts of culture jamming rely too much on individual choice and that seeing a spoof ad on a billboard is not enough to encourage change. Instead, collaboratively building agency, or people working together, is the only way to bring about transformation (Haiven 107). For example, Step It Up 2007, was a day in which over 1400 coordinated rallies happened across America, and even more around the globe, with one common message, asking congress to cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050 (Step It Up, 2007). The next year, the United States government as well as the G8 nations, including France, Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United Kingdom, passed a bill vowing to cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050 (Romm, 2009). For Step It Up 2007, this bill was an indication of their success. When thousands of protesters gather with a common goal, their physicality alone—the occupying of public space—is often enough to create the agency for social change. Also when a large group of people assembles, others will often flock out of curiosity, quickly increasing their numbers. By occupying space, everyday activities are interrupted causing the public, the media, and the government to take notice. Because of this disturbance, the routine of normal life is changed, creating an opportunity for something to happen. Put simply, the greater the number of protesters assembled, the more attention and agency will be gained.

It is undeniable that consumer culture is to blame for much of the destruction of the planet. While the United States administration has vowed to make changes, the individual creates the real agency for change. Some methods for creating agency for change, such as Adbusters, depend on the fact that individuals will be affected by the campaign so much so to change their behaviors. Individual choices to only buy fair trade and green products can collaboratively with others who make the same choice, make an impact. Alternatively, group efforts, like protests, can reach greater numbers of consumers, informing them, and

creating change together. Neither individual efforts nor group efforts will make this problem go away, but both. Until consumption is no longer the basis upon which society produces value and worth, the cycle of destruction will continue.

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FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

MACKENZIE COLBURN

The amount of materials a school uses to administer learning and engage students in extra-curricular activities is very dependent on the amount of money the institution has available for funding. The quality of teachers is also dependent on how much a school's district can offer as an annual salary based on the teacher's qualifications, such as experience and amount of degrees attained. Children who are exposed to more in-depth and widespread learning are more likely to be cultured and educated by the time they go to college or begin working. Unfortunately, the appropriate funding needed for each child to experience the level of cultivation that is essential for obtaining the knowledge and confidence to succeed is not equally dispersed. Because funding comes from property tax rates, lower income families—and consequentially minorities—are negatively affected. Attitudes revolving around race are arguably the determinate factors pushing the segregation that separates many families from living in communities that provide a more than adequate education.

Many people would expect or at least agree that funding for public schools in America should be equal in order to provide each child with the same tools to achieve their educational and/or career goals. However, that is not how public educational funding works in America. The amount of funding a school receives is dependent on that district's property tax rate and rates vary by each district. Therefore, the more property taxes a district pays, the more resources their public schools receive and ultimately a better education is provided to those children. In other words, a student from a wealthy family who lives in a big house within a nice community pays higher property taxes and, therefore, contributes more to their public school in the district where the child experiences ample resources in the education system. However, just forty minutes away in the bustling inner-city, another family lives in a run down two bedroom apartment in a crime infested neighborhood where they pay much less in property taxes. This child has to attend the local elementary school with broken windows and a rodent problem where they have limited resources and overcrowded classrooms (Kozol, 2005). The

disparate educations given to children based off of geographical location and amount of parental income rather than the child's own abilities and aspirations is unjust.

In his book, *The Shame of the Nation*, Jonathan Kozol discusses how wealthier parents have the money to either move to a better district or apply to be accepted in a prestigious school. The end result is that lower class families are left behind in these subpar schools. Lower income families do not have the financial or social capital required to either move to a better community or have their children gain acceptance to a prestigious school. The application process is very extensive and requires a lot of preparation. Many lower income families may not have the time to practice interview questions with their child or the money to hire a consult to help. They also are more likely to lack the networks to these institutions that can help with advising about preparation (Kozol, 2005). In sum, lower income families are at a disadvantage because they do not have the resources or social capital to compete with these wealthy families that are able to provide so much for their children. A segregation of schooling is the result where privileged families benefit and unprivileged families must accept what they are handed within the education system.

The differences between an outstanding and adequate school are stark. Kozol cited that in the 2001-2002 school year, there was about an \$8,000 difference in spending per pupil from the lowest to highest spending districts on Long Island, New York (Kozol, 2005; pg. 151). When considering what the \$8,000 provides to students, it is no wonder why competition to get into such selective schools is so fierce. Hunter College Elementary School in New York City uses tables and chairs instead of desks among other tactics to help the children develop necessary skills and understanding of what they are learning (Kozol, 2005). By providing such a rich learning experience, these prestigious schools set their students up to continue on through prestigious high schools and universities. They provide students with a deep knowledge and understanding that sets them apart from the students that attend ordinary elementary schools.

In comparison, students in a fourth grade classroom from Boston described what they thought of their school. One student wrote, "I see dirty boards and I see papers on the floor. I see an old browken window... I see cracks in the walls and... pigeons flying all over the school." Another student wrote, "I see new teachers omots every day," (Kozol, 2005; pg. 162). The conditions that these children are exposed to are unthinkable and it is hard to believe that they encourage learning. These inner city schools do not provide a safe and stimulating environment for

their students. They are short on supplies that encourage learning such as books, pencils, and project materials. Instead of promoting widespread knowledge, a lot of these inner city schools prepare their students for managerial work and standardized testing. The saddest part is that most of the students blame themselves for their situations. When they are exposed to what students from better schools experience, such as new playgrounds and extensive libraries, and compare that to what they have, they begin to wonder why they do not have those simple luxuries. These feelings of doubt spiral into a self-fulfilling prophecy where the students will begin to believe that they do not deserve and cannot have a better education (Kozol, 2005).

These patterns of segregation are not only present in Boston and New York inner-city schools—they can even be examined throughout the education system of New Hampshire. Statistics from the New Hampshire Board of Education were compared between two different districts throughout the state: Durham and Manchester. Durham is located in the seacoast region in the eastern part of the state with 2,037 students enrolled in K-12 in the district. Manchester is located in the center of the state and is one of New Hampshire's largest cities with 15,732 students enrolled in K-12 in the district (NH Department of Education, 2010). Each of these districts pays different rates on their educational tax. In Durham, a whopping 15.7% goes to education. Only 6.7% goes to Manchester's schools (NH Property Tax Rates, 2011). When comparing the schools' student-teacher ratios, annual cost per pupil, pupil demographics, and number of safety incidents to the tax rates and school population, it is evident that more attention is given to schools in better off communities and which often have a denser white population.

For example, the district that spent the most on each of their students in the 2009-10 school year was Durham with \$15,748. There were 11 students for every teacher and only 23 safety incidents/1,000 students in a year. 92% of the students were white and only 5% on reduced or free lunch (NH Department of Education). When comparing Durham to Manchester, the social differences between the students are apparent. Manchester spent \$9,375 per student. In 2010-11, there were 14 students per 6 teachers and 154 safety incidents/1,000 students in that year. Only 69% of the students were white and 46% of the students were on reduced or free lunch (NH Department of Education). Not only is there a difference between the socioeconomic status of these students, depicted by percent on reduced lunches and property tax rates their parents pay, but the racial makeup is disparate as well. Kozol stated that, "a segregated inner-city school is 'almost six times as likely' to be a school of concentrated pov-

erty as is a school that has an overwhelmingly white population,” (Kozol, 2005; pg. 20). These demographic patterns resonate not only through inner cities but throughout other parts of the nation too, as shown in New Hampshire. Although the levels of racial and socioeconomic segregation are not as prominent in New Hampshire schools in comparison to Boston or New York, it does exist.

Is it mere coincidence that poor minorities are receiving less of an education than middle and upper class whites? Tara Jackson (2004) seems to think it is not. In her study contributing to the Civil Rights Project, Jackson found that personal racial preferences are the greatest determinant factor for where people live followed by housing market discrimination and economic differences. The argument for economic differences driving racial housing segregation relies on the assumption that non-white populations simply cannot afford the same housing that white populations can and therefore are separated by economic community lines. However, research is mixed on this explanation. Racial discrimination in the housing market takes the theory a step further by suggesting that real estate agents, banks, and lenders control segregation by limiting the residential mobility of non-white populations by providing them with fewer residential options that pin point them in and away from certain neighborhoods. But it is racial preferences that most affect where a family will choose to reside. Jackson noted that whites prefer lower percentages of diversity in their neighborhoods than minorities do and that these preferences are what set segregation up (Jackson, 2004). If a community becomes too diverse, then whites with these racial attitudes will move to more desirable communities, if their finances allow for it. Meanwhile, minorities can withstand higher levels of minority population in their area so they stay in these communities that white families leave.

The end result is communities filled with white families with uniform attitudes and communities left with black and Hispanic families that end up getting stuck there because of plummeting property values due to the white flight and lack of demand to live in a minority neighborhood (Brown Lecture, 10/17/11). Because property values drop in these neighborhoods, the monetary support towards education from property tax rates diminishes with them. It is a vicious cycle where because of racial discrimination and prejudice, minorities are forced into living situations where it is increasingly hard to escape due to the fall in property values. And property taxes that feed into the education system of that district depend on those property values. In the end, lower income and minority children face the burden of a people that consciously and even subconsciously discriminate against race.

Nearly sixty years ago, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court decided that segregation of schools by race went against the Fourteenth Amendment and wheels were set in motion to remedy this issue. However, it is evident that racial segregation exists still today. This segregation has more of an impact on children than one would expect. Edelman and Jones (2004) claim that black children are nearly twice as likely to dropout of school than white children and that a black boy has a one in fifty-five chance of earning a master's degree but a one in five chance of going to prison before he turns thirty (Edelman & Jones, 2004; pg. 134). The impact does not only affect their experience in school, what they learn, and how they view themselves but it affects their futures as well. The fact that black men are more likely to go to jail than get a master's degree is an example of how seriously some children are being affected.

In conclusion, the issues surrounding segregation are almost as apparent as they were sixty years ago. Despite efforts made to give children equal opportunities to learn, not every child is receiving the education they deserve. Patterns of racial and class segregation are widespread throughout the country and even exist in places unexpected, like in New Hampshire. Racial preferences, housing discrimination, and economic differences have been used to explain segregation in America. Despite any efforts by the government and the Supreme Court, full integration can be said to only be achieved when the American people have more similar and favorable racial attitudes and can exist side by side whether that is in the classroom or in the community. Funding each child an equal education provides them with a future they can choose for themselves without the limitations of scarce resources, inexperienced teachers, and hopeless attitudes.

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BEAUTY & WEIGHT

MARIAH CUMMINGS

What is beauty? How does it relate so closely to our body weight? Why do the two so often define our self-identities and how we compare ourselves to others? These are the types of questions that the Dove beauty campaign is posing in order to challenge the idea of what it means to be beautiful. In our culture, there is a strong misconception as to what “beautiful” is defined as. In addition, it is strongly engrained in our thinking that fat correlates with unhealthiness and a need for change, while being thin is associated with beauty and overall societal acceptance. While these societal delusions work against the acceptance of all people, including their weight, size, color, and gender, some advertisements are beginning to re-define what beauty is in order to limit these discriminations and stereotypes.

Through our social institutions such as our media, schools, and families, we are trained to see beauty as a narrow physical entity, that leaves no space for anything out of its small box. All too often, we are taught through these institutions that beauty is not found in the eye of the beholder, but instead on a Victoria’s Secret advertisement, with an unrealistic, digitally-altered, model. As Deborah Rhode claims in the article, *The Beauty Bias*, “The public’s repeated exposure to airbrushed, surgically enhanced fashion models and Hollywood celebrities further reinforces unrealistic standards...and efforts to replicate their figures often lead to eating disorders and related psychological dysfunctions” (Rhode. 9). These types of unrealistic media images are detrimental in creating a healthy, real portrayal of beauty and finding it within one’s self. Additionally, it is difficult to look through a magazine and find “larger” people who are demonstrated in a positive light, or without a weight-loss company associated with their picture. In a recent edition of *People* magazine there were many articles relating to weight loss, with titles such as “*Fit is Sexy*” and how six men reclaimed their “sexy status” through losing weight. This is just one example of how much this criticism and discrimination of weight is infiltrated and taught to us. In my opinion, there is a much needed change in our advertisements and the messages being sent

in popular media, such as *People* magazine.

Dove's Real Beauty advertising campaign, however, resembles a wide variety of women's body sizes and ethnicities which paints a very realistic picture for viewers. The advertisement reflects confidence, happiness, and acceptance with each of the women smiling and embracing their bodies and themselves. Additionally, the women who would be considered of 'larger size' are not covered up in layers of clothing to be hidden, but instead are proudly showing their figures in underwear and bras. Next to the women are the words, "New Dove Firming. As tested on real curves", which indicates that these are *real* women with *real* bodies who resemble the majority of our population. I believe that this advertisement successfully helps expand the notions of beauty in our culture by representing different body types, skin colors, and connecting happiness and fulfillment within these bodies. We have built such a strong idea that in order to be beautiful and satisfied with oneself, one must conform to a specific body type and look. This advertisement undermines this belief and proves it is a strong misconception.

Our culture's idea of beauty and its connection to weight is strongly misunderstood. As Rhode explains, "As with other forms of prejudice, bias based on appearance often rests on inaccurate stereotypes" (Rhodes. 11). These types of stereotypes that are built within our social institutions discriminate against and create unequal opportunities for individuals and society to accept them as beautiful. Beauty is a belief and we must recognize that. While many advertisements demonstrate unfair and unrealistic portrayals of beauty conformities, the *Dove* advertisements successfully add diversity to this beauty belief. It shows how not only weight, but also race and size do not, in fact, define one's identity or beauty, and do not limit one to feeling worth. This is an important concept that should be echoed into our social institutions and into the ears of our society.

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RAW MILK: OUR FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

SAMANTHA CUCCARO AND EVAN GIBARD

Raw milk, milk that has not been pasteurized, is a hot issue in food safety and government intervention within the food system. Some people seek raw milk because it is a raw, fresh product, others seek it for its health benefits and nutrients (those that are removed during pasteurization), others for their desire to purchase food more locally, and others to support a small scale farmer. On the opposite end, many discrepancies exist between and among state and federal government regarding the legality of raw milk. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) states that ‘raw, unpasteurized milk can carry dangerous bacteria such as Salmonella, E. coli, and Listeria, which are responsible for causing numerous foodborne illnesses’ (FDA, 2011). It is illegal to sell raw milk in nearly half the U.S. and all of Canada. In some places, farmers have been dragged away in handcuffs, their barns raided and their milk seized as evidence, yet advocates are still demanding it. When Rick and Julie Vreeland, raw milk producers at Freedom Hill Farm started selling raw milk, they sold 13 gallons in the first month back in 2007; and just a year later were selling closer to a thousand gallons in a month (Pashman, 2008). The curiosity and demand for raw milk is at an all-time high, but the consumers, farmers, and government agencies are not seeing eye-to-eye on the issue.

In most cases, the raw milk we refer to is that purchased from small farms where there lies the opportunity for dialogue with the farmer, as well as transparency. It is about much more than the consumption of a product. In our burgeoning desire to know the origins and growing practices involved in the food that we consume, raw milk serves as a connection between us and our local producer. It is not that it is it, and you are you. It is that you are part of it, and it is part of you. It is food that you can appreciate for all that it is worth and taste the difference. There is a long-standing tradition in New England of supporting what is produced in the region and those who produce it.

New England formerly had rich, productive grazing lands that reached from city outskirts into the mountains. This region was a dairy mecca that lost its prominence over time as competition in other regions and economies of scale grew. The globalization of food put the New England dairy industry in a chokehold. This meant that the number of producers and variation in dairy products available plummeted. The USDA and FDA have established a system of regulations and restrictions that are aimed toward the larger producers who make up an increasing majority of the industry market share. Here in New England, dairy producers are minuscule in comparison to those in the Midwest. Costs to do business here in New England is greater as compared to the western half of the US. Generally in food production, there is an inverse relationship between quality and output, i.e. health and food safety risks are more prevalent in higher output operations. Therein, if we are to give greater consideration to food safety and trust in our producer to provide something that is safe for our health when we weigh our food decisions, then we ought to consider the scale of the operation, who produces it and how.

Smaller scale production does cost more; and smaller scale production in New England costs even more still. The economics no longer favor the small scale. However, unlike traditional economics that only provides insights on activity using empirical data, gross national happiness [GNH] takes into account the significance of health, livings standards, education, community vitality, cultural resilience, and good governance and benefits. So, what cannot be quantified cannot be ruled out and must be taken into consideration in determining the strength of our communities and health of the people. There must be more that paints a picture of our well being and helps us guide our decisions even if they defy economics. Freedom of food choice paints that picture.

Raw milk is an ideal example. The economics do not favor raw milk. The fact is that raw milk will not be produced on a larger market scale that lacks the food producer-consumer interaction that is so imperative in a strong community. The demand is present and growing, and the competence of producers can be trusted as they have an absolute desire to produce something safe and nutritious that is beneficial to the earth and those who consume it. In raw milk production, there exists a dynamic between producer and consumer that is undeniably rooted in a strong sense of belonging and wellness.

Raw milk has been gaining an increasingly strong following in recent years, one of its primary group of advocates being parents seeking

a healthier option for their children. However, due to the inconsistencies in legality among states, it can be incredibly difficult to find a reliable source close to home. Liz Reitzig, a mom in Maryland, a state where raw milk is illegal, travels more than 2 hours to Pennsylvania on a regular basis to buy raw milk for her family. Reitzig's family "started drinking raw milk about six years ago, after her second child was born. And she says the family has not had to make many trips to the doctor's office since; allergies have cleared up, and milk intolerances have gone away" (Fulton, 2010). Reitzig has realized the benefits outweigh her costs (such as travel time, transportation, and higher price of raw milk) and continues to provide raw milk for her family. Reitzig's trust in raw milk can be attributed to a combination of her own awareness and that of her competent producer.

On February 22, 2012, Daniel Allgyer, an Amish farmer who owns Rainbow Acres Farm in Kinzer, Pennsylvania, was banned from selling raw milk to out-of-state customers and has voluntarily shut down his operation as a result of a 2-year sting operation by the FDA. Allgyer, who never transported or shipped his product beyond the Pennsylvania border, was raided at gunpoint by the FDA. Allgyer has succumbed to the pressures and stress placed on him by the FDA and has ceased a tradition that dated back centuries in his community.

New Hampshire is one of the few states in which the sale of raw milk is legal. We are so blessed and ought to find pleasure in maintaining clear visibility of productive agriculture lands, thinking of them as our future here in New Hampshire and neighboring states. We may never reclaim our dominance in the dairy industry, but our heritage won't ever be lost, much less forgotten, if we insure our capability of rejoicing in and supporting a unique part of our local food economy

There is a budding opportunity to play your part in the preserving and revitalizing of food culture in New Hampshire. On October 24, national Food Day, there will be a raw milk toast to kick off the celebration. The aim of the toast is to provide a chance to become aware of the facts of raw milk and celebrate in solidarity with the growing number of raw milk supporters, thereby expressing our happiness with the state of NH and its peoples' decision to act sustainably, socially, environmentally, and economically. Here in New Hampshire, we rejoice in our freedoms to choose what we feed ourselves.

Sustain our land, the soils, and our food from it.

Sustain our choice for the good.

Slow it down.

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THE AMERICAN DISCIPLINE: A LETTER IN SUPPORT OF CRITICAL DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT

DANIEL HEALY

To whom it may concern,

From what I have heard throughout various communities on campus— that programs involving women’s studies and ethnic studies were under review in 2011 due to lack of student interest— I feel that the university’s current political and economic paradigm will soon short-change the ideal American Discipline: making room for human plurality. Accordingly, as a student of critical race theory and as a man completely changed by feminist thought, the future of plurality at UNH is looking pretty grim from my perspective.

I believe there is a basic necessity for the act of boundary crossing for one’s proper education and development. I myself will soon be an English teacher, but of course I will not restrict myself to a curriculum populated solely with works of the white male canon. I will use a curriculum that allows for the self-recognition of any and every possible student who could learn from it, much like the coursework I experienced at UNH. A culturally sensitive curriculum does not have to happen at the expense of classic works, either. A teacher may use them as educational tools to demonstrate both the precepts for artistry and how historical and epistemological context inform a sexist, classist, internalized racist, or homophobic outlook. It is easy to think students may simply “know” a priori what inequality and marginalization look like, but the techniques of privilege are complicated and a powerful aid to willingly ignore social problems.

Women’s Studies, Queer Studies, Africana Studies, and Race, Culture, and Power programs at UNH must be preserved. If it is seemingly financially impossible to do so, I can assure you that in fact it is not. Some seem to be making it politically impossible to implement the American Discipline of democratic thinking in its purest form. In terms of practical inclusion of women’s and ethnic studies on campus, even

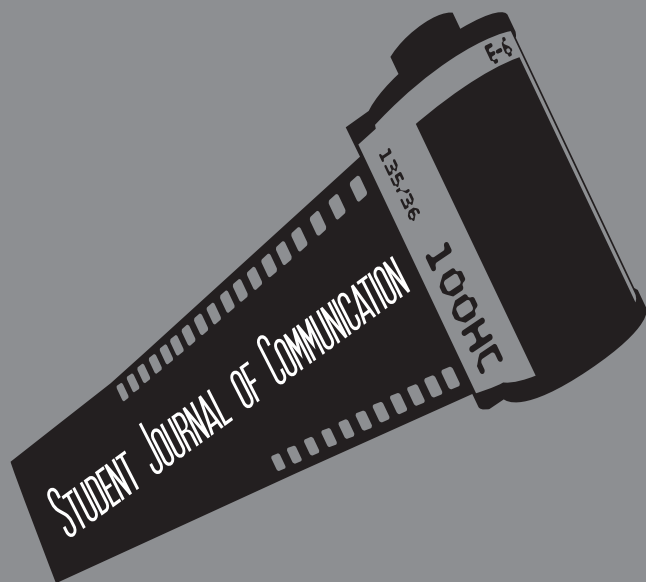
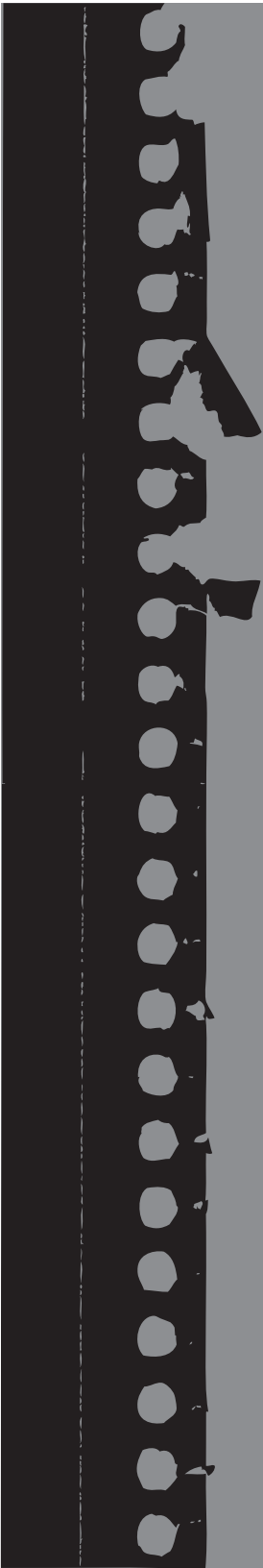
outside of proprietary programs, I have experienced cross-listed coursework that has indelibly altered my career and my sense of intellectual fulfillment. Robin Hackett's ENG 514 course elegantly integrated postcolonial studies, women's studies, history, and discourses on power into our study of British Literature. I consider Reginald Wilburn's black women's literature and social constructivist theory course, ENG 517, to have been the foundation for who I am now working to be as a person and scholar. Also, Jane Stapleton's "Race, Class, Gender and Families" was pivotal for increasing my understanding of sociology and alternative approaches to demography, and I was able to professionally relate all of it to teaching.

A curriculum of multiplicity is the next logical step of the civil rights and women's movements. Great strides in thought and action were made by the likes of Sojourner Truth, W.E.B Du Bois, and all the way up through Tony Kushner and Patricia Hill Collins. Every revolutionary step forward, however, has its Thermidorean reaction, and I do not want UNH to fall prey to what has already happened in Tucson, Arizona because of Senator Russell Pierce and others' anthropocentric legislation there. Nor will I keep quiet now that a campus I love mirrors an increasingly dehumanizing national attitude to the lives and rights of good people, people who could not help being born into poverty, belonging to an arbitrary economically or democratically beaten-down ethnicity, loving someone of the same sex, or questioning their gender. We live in a globalized, heterogeneous society in which difference needs to be understood and accepted. Please keep essential coursework like that I have described alive and changing people. After all, if we have no systems for realizing a society of plurality, do we live in the America we think we do?

Thank you,

Daniel Healy, English Teaching '12

Proud Feminist



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