

Comm-entary

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Rhetoric

The word "Rhetoric" is presented in a large, bold, black serif font. Behind it, the same word is written in a smaller, lighter, grey font, which is filled with a dense pattern of tiny, illegible text, creating a textured, stippled effect. The entire graphic is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

*War Photography:
The Effects of Soldiers Becoming Photojournalists*
By Samantha Jason

In this paper, I have collected and analyzed six photographs from the Iraqi war. Three of the images were taken by American soldiers fighting in Iraq: MSNBC photojournalists took two, and one photograph was taken by an American civilian working in Iraq. The images are a small representation of the soldier's lives in Iraq, as well as the Iraqi civilians surrounded by the combat. The soldier's photographs were posted on yafroo.com, a website that was set up for the purpose of viewing photographs taken by soldiers at war.

Of all the photographs I found that were taken by soldiers, I could easily find a similar image taken by a photojournalist. It is not the images that separate these two types of photographers, but the reason and meaning behind the various connotations of the photographs. When I began, I thought that soldiers had more of a right to document the Iraqi war because it was "their" war, but as I sorted through hundreds of photographs taken by both soldiers and photojournalists, I began to realize that this was everybody's war. Whether you are in Iraq fighting, there to document it, or even at home in the states, everyone has some connection to it. And all of the photographs can give us some insight into the war.

John Berger wrote in "Understanding a Photograph" that the underlying meaning of any photograph is "judged by all that I am willingly not showing because it is contained within it" (294). Since the beginning of war photography, American citizens have relied heavily on the images taken by photojournalists as glimpses into the total realities of war. Past photojournalists have done an amazing job of documenting and bringing these realities of war home to Americans. Mathew Brady's Civil War photos, as well as the complete anthologies of the Vietnam War produced by *Life* photojournalist David Douglas Duncan, were the first of their kind to document all aspects of a war.

However, in past years there have been more limitations and restrictions put on photojournalists. What was once open for anyone to photograph during war has since been restricted by the government and their public relations managers. Tom Bishop, a well-known war photojournalist, wrote that the best photos are the ones taken from the front. "Modern technology enables photographers to transmit their images straight from the frontline— now, it is becoming frustratingly

difficult to get close enough to the action. The reason for this is the PR managers for the President" (1). Images they feel will have a negative impact on the morale of the country have been censored from our sights by government policy and news media conventions—until now.

With the creation of digital photography and the Internet, it is possible for soldiers to photograph all aspects of life and war in Iraq. This new phenomenon has given soldiers the freedom to photograph anything, including events the government would usually have censored. The Internet allows anyone to view the pictures the soldiers have posted without restrictions (at least so far). These images portray all aspects of the war, including those that are restricted for photojournalists.

This recent shift of attention away from photojournalist's images and towards those taken by the soldiers has created a shockwave in America. The Abu Ghraib prison scandal has shown that photography is still a valuable medium. These photographs brought to light the atrocities that were committed and revealed them to the American people. Susan Sontag wrote,

The pictures taken by American soldiers in Abu Ghraib reflect a shift in the use made of pictures – less objects to be saved than messages to be disseminated, circulated. Where once photographing war was the province of photojournalists, now the soldiers themselves are all photographers – recording their war, their fun, their observations of what they find picturesque, their atrocities.

(3)

The production and distribution of these images acted as undeniable evidence of the often unseen atrocities of war. What made this even more of an issue was how easy it was for these photographs to circulate either by email or by being posted on websites. No longer was this scandal something that the Bush administration could cover up, deny, or brush aside. In a recent article in the journal, *News Photographer*, a staff member commented on this new phenomenon:

Digital snapshots made by 'insiders' are redefining photojournalism. Images of naked prisoners abused by their captors, and flag draped coffins lying inside the cold interior of a military cargo plane. In times passed, stories such as these were harder to document. Photographic access was limited as outsiders were shunned and insiders were silent. Photojournalists faced insurmountable odds in their pursuit

of newsworthy stories. Today, however, those involved in these events are also documenting their own activities.

Photographic amateurs (soldiers) are making and publishing compelling images with simple digital cameras (2).

For the time being, soldiers are allowed to become amateur photographers and show their reality to the world.

Like the Abu Ghraib photographs, my first photo is an example of an image the Bush administration did not want Americans to see: the flag-draped caskets of soldiers returning home from war. When we first view this photograph, we are unaware of the controversy that surrounds it. Terry Barrett says that sometimes viewers rely on original and external contexts to make sense of a photograph. Without the knowledge from original and external sources, we do not know the history connected to the photograph. The American who took these photographs was working in Kuwait. Her job was to send the deceased soldiers home to their families. This photographer lost a son to the war years before. This service was more than just a job to her; it was a promise to herself and to the families that she would return their sons in a respectful manner. By taking these photographs, the woman broke the laws as outlined by the U.S. Department of Defense and was fired from her position. Their public release was not at her discretion, but that of her friend back in California to whom she had emailed the images. Her friend brought them to a Seattle newspaper that decided to run them in the next issue. The photographer did not ask for or receive royalties from the photo. She thought she was sharing her experiences with a friend, who then shared them with America. Viewers would never be able to read or extract this information from the photograph simply by viewing it. The internal information, which we can decipher by looking at these photographs, tells us a different story: that underneath the flags lay fallen soldiers, and that this is a military ceremony welcoming them home.

The administration claims that all photos of this nature are to be withheld from the public as an act of privacy and respect for the families. Others believe that these photographs were prohibited from publication because of the effect that they could have on American morale and support for the war. These images represent a co-existence of two discourses and two meanings: one interpreted by the photographer and the other the government. Each rival discourse can make the photograph say different things in support of rival political agendas. This photograph cannot be viewed without invoking one discourse or another. In this case, the text does not speak about the meaning of the photograph, but the meaning behind the production and release.

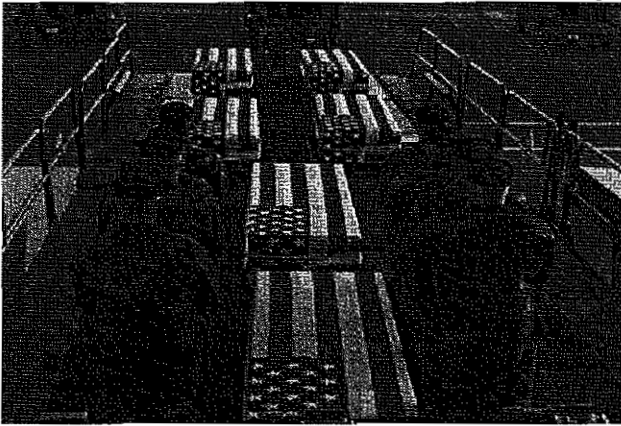


Figure 1: FLAG DRAPED CASKETS

Roland Barthes' notion of connotation is relevant to the motives the photographer had for taking the photo. This photographer worked at a US Air Force base, which is responsible for shipping home the deceased soldiers. The assumption for photographing this event seemed to be the symbolic nature of these deceased soldiers returning home to their families under the solitude of the American flag. The flag is a symbol of pride for our country, the reason that many of these soldiers went to war. The flag-draped coffins belong to what Barthes would refer to as *studium*, the cultural web of values and motives that moved the photographer to take the photograph. As the observer of this event, the procession of the caskets and the marching soldiers, you feel as though you are being voyeuristic into this private and quiet moment. For the government, keeping these photos private was about protecting their families (Barthes, 26).



Figure 2: PICTURE OF IRAQI BOY

Figure two shows the aftermath of a clash between Iraqi civilians and US troops in Mosul. A father sits back against the hospital wall praying at the foot of his son's bed. The boy had been an onlooker when a riot among fellow Iraqis got out of hand. American troops stepped in to stop the riot and shot blindly into a crowd of Iraqis, accidentally shooting the boy in the stomach.

In his essay "The Photographic Essay: Four Case Studies," W.J.T. Mitchell notes that the relationship between the text and a series of images can be one of equality, independence, collaboration, and resistance (290). This is to say that texts and images can function independently or work together to create and explain the meaning of an image. The text is important to this image, because it explains to the viewer what led to this moment. Without the title or accompanying explanation of this photo we would never know that this was a father's son that lay in a hospital bed, or why he was even there.

In this instance where photographs are mass distributed and produced, a text of some kind should accompany them to explain the meaning of an image. The text should not claim to speak for the image, but rather give the viewer an explanation about what they are seeing. The text accompanying this image explained what happened to the boy in the hospital bed. Similar to the photograph of the flag-draped coffins, the text accompanying this photo explains what we see. When viewing a photograph separately from the text, we create our own meanings. When the text accompanies the photograph, it changes the meaning that we may have attributed to the photograph had there not been text.

This image, taken by a photojournalist, shows the different nature of photography between professionals and soldiers. In this situation, the photojournalist has the same access as soldiers, yet this photo is not likely to have been taken by a soldier. Although photojournalists do not share the same access as soldiers in all situations, the images they generate show a different side to the war. One of the limitations that soldiers might have is that important moments or events might seem routine to them, since they live it everyday.

Kress and van Leeuwen wrote that image and text give meaning without each other, and that separately they can function rhetorically (15). At the moment we look at a photograph, we are already attributing meaning to it. Words and thoughts come to mind and ideas are discussed. This is what Barthes refers to as the readability of an image, or the connotation, the meaning we attribute to the image as if it were a trace of an event (1). A female American soldier in Iraq took the third photograph; there wasn't any text with this image, so we don't know

anything about the subjects or the operator. The meaning, then, of this image is only that which we attribute to it after viewing it.



Figure 3: PICTURE OF IRAQI GIRL

The soldier who took this photograph may have done so because she felt the experience was worth recording and remembering. We can only infer that this was a friendly encounter between the soldier and the Iraqi civilians. The bright teal green pencil makes me think that this might have been a present from one of the soldiers, which is why this seems to be a friendly meeting. The pencil struck me as an odd commodity for the little girl to have and be chewing. What also caught my attention was the gaze of everyone in the group, which is focused away from the camera. This view makes us spectators to the event, and is giving us a glimpse into their reality. Berger wrote that what makes a photograph important is everything that is not in it (292). As the viewer, I wondered what caught the attention of these girls. The photographer knows what is important in the photograph because she was a participant in the event. To the photographer, the event means something different than it does to us. The cultural differences between us also affect our views of this photograph. We create new feelings and new meanings. The photographer is allowing us the opportunity to view a separate reality of war, by giving us a glimpse into their lives. Each of us interprets this image to mean something different, which is the pleasure of being a spectator of photography.



Figure 4: AFTERMATH IN MOSUL

Figure four is another photograph taken by a photojournalist. It is the only photo I chose that depicts soldiers in combat. What really caught my attention were the troops who are placed in contrast to a young Iraqi girl. This photo reminded me of a photograph in Barthes book, *Camera Lucida* (22). Barthes talked about what struck him in his photograph: three soldiers on patrol in Nicaragua and behind them crossing the street are two nuns. The co-existence of these two opposite elements are what we both found to be odd in both of our images.

In this particular photograph, the girl represents a clean image of childhood. She is clutching what looks like a doll close to her face as she stands half guarded behind a cement wall watching these two soldiers, only one of which seems to be aware of her presence. The soldiers themselves look as though they are hiding from something, crouched behind the same wall. This photograph seems surreal; the soldiers and the little girl look like they are engaged in a game of hide and seek. The reality is that this isn't playtime for any of the subjects, especially the soldiers. The little girl represents innocence and the soldiers represent the reality of war. What once was a game of "war" has now become their life. The possible connotation I saw for this image was the co-existence of these two opposing elements.

The title of this photograph, "Aftermath in Mosul," does not seem to fit this photograph either. There can only be an aftermath once the war has come to a conclusion. The little girl may be free from Saddam Hussein's rule, but she still has to live in this war zone. This is why I agree with Mitchell's theory that in some instances texts cannot speak for images. The title did not change the way I viewed the photograph; it only made me wonder about the life that the little girl must be living right now. Her childhood has been ruined by the war: she can't even go out and play without running into soldiers. This photograph represents a limitation that soldiers have; photojournalists

have the opportunity to capture images like this—the contrast between civilian life and a soldier's duty.

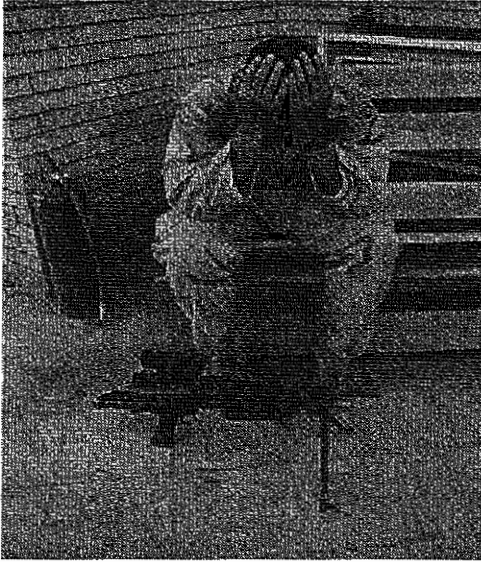


Figure 5: ANOTHER FREAKIN MISSION

The title of my fifth photograph, “Another Freakin Mission,” shows that in some instances a text can speak for an image. I agree with James Agee’s theory that the photo and text are coequal, which means that the text and photographs can speak for themselves or work together to create meaning. This is one of the distinct features of photographs taken by soldiers: many do not require explanation but they can exist together. I also related this photograph to Barthes’s theories of denotation and connotation. Denotation, he says, is what we take the photograph to represent, and what we take it to represent is not far from what we take it to mean (19). For me, this photo shows a soldier at war that is tired of fighting and tired of the war that he is fighting in. This soldier could be a representation of all the young soldiers who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. In effect, the meaning and the representation from this photograph are almost the same, or as Barthes says, “never far apart.” Since the photographer wrote the caption “Another Freakin Mission,” he is in a sense speaking for the subject. But the photographer is also a soldier, so he could be conveying his own feelings through text and image. Photographs are read as a trace of an event. This is the connection between denotation and connotation. The photographer has a connection with the subject, and the subject is, in return, capturing the feelings of the photographer. The subject could also be representative of how all soldiers feel. The title allows the soldier to

speak and gives the photographer a chance to speak. Although the photograph does not need any text to convey meaning, in this instance it represents the feelings of both subject and photographer. This is an advantage that soldiers have—they can capture their own feelings in the eyes of their subjects.

A soldier also took the last image in this anthology. It gave me the same sense of meaning as the previous photo. It was actually my inspiration for creating an anthology of photographs taken by soldiers and photojournalists. This photograph looks more like an advertisement for the Marines than it does a snap shot of reality. The soldier who took this picture did not have any text accompanying it, except for the title, "Sunset in Iraq." Although these last two images have different photographers, the subjects portray the same ideas and meanings. The possible connotation for the fifth photograph could also have been the inspiration for this last photograph. Both images are a representation of these soldiers' lives in Iraq.



Figure 6: SUNSET

What first interested me about this type of photo is that there have not been many like it. Some photos taken by soldiers while at war have been around since Vietnam, but they were never shown to the public. When I first came across this photograph it reminded me of Susan Sontag's article "What have we done?" The essay condemned the American soldiers for the atrocities that they committed at Abu Ghraib, and compared them to acts of violence such as lynchings in the south, and the Holocaust. While I don't disagree with Sontag on her view of the prison photographs, this photo seemed as far away from Abu Ghraib as war photography could get. To me, this photograph represents the idealized image of a strong soldier fighting for his life, his family, and his country. The photograph of this soldier standing alone, peacefully watching a sunset amidst a war made me think that there must be images of events and experiences that soldiers felt were worth documenting that weren't atrocities like Abu Ghraib.

Sontag's theory about this shift in war documentation is that it has been a change for the worse; however, I see it as a change for the better. Atrocities like Abu Ghraib could have gone on during all wars, but since the development of digital photography and the Internet, now we can see first hand what war is like for some. This photograph is a perfect example of what soldiers find to be important, and beautiful. In his experience—amid the death and tragedy he sees everyday—I believe this soldier realized that, apart from the confusion, there are still beautiful things in this world, even if it's as simple as a sunset. For me, this image created a meaning that represented peace of mind and a quiet moment for one soldier. This distinction between what a soldier photographs and what is reported on are different. In the news, we see tragic images and stories of death and loss. I also discovered that photojournalists also capture the day-to-day realities of war, some can be very similar to the images that we see taken by soldiers. The question then is, where is photography going in the future? What opportunities will soldiers be given? Will the restrictions placed on photojournalists be lifted?

The fact that soldiers can take photographs of their daily lives and post them on the Internet only means that there will be more life experiences documented for our own viewing. All of these images offer us a total picture of war. Instead of a one-sided view, we can experience the war from different perspectives. Although censorship will most likely become an issue and Bush will instate some sort of ban on all foreign photographs, for now, at least, we have the opportunity to view all kinds of war photography.

The rhetorical power of the photograph is that it brings to light important events that might otherwise have gone unnoticed, whether they be atrocities or sunsets. The photograph documents a reality, and in that way it becomes evidence and a connection to memory. The photos begin to tell the story of war in Iraq, from the point of view of the American soldiers who are living it and the view of the photojournalists who are documenting it.

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*The Political Advertising of the 2004 Presidential Race:
The Effects on the Consumer Sphere*

By Lauren Sica

Introduction

Advertising as an institution is one that relies heavily on creativity and innovation. In today's American culture, advertising has great influence in both the commercial and political realm. However, in terms of sheer frequency and exposure, the presence of political advertising is infinitely smaller than that of consumer advertising. Despite this significant disparity in size, as well as the considerable constraints on the genre, political advertising has developed into a dominating force within the field, ultimately influencing the news as well as consumer advertising as a whole.

In his book entitled Advertising Wins Elections, published in 1962, Maurice McCaffery stated that, "Television is the power play of politics!"(81). Using this maxim as a basis for analysis, the intent of this piece is to investigate the television advertising campaigns of the 2004 Presidential election in order to demonstrate the extensive influence of political advertising.

First, parallels will be drawn between political advertising and the marketing of consumer goods. Then, a brief history of televised political advertising will be recounted, providing a backdrop for the study of the current election. Tracing the evolution of this medium will undoubtedly reveal its significance in contemporary communication practices. After that, I will establish campaign advertising as a prominent form of political language, performing all of the necessary functions to be considered as such. From there, this investigation will reveal the ever-expanding trend of politicians and constituents to rely on advertising as a primary method of communication. Continuing on, the various types of political advertisements will be demonstrated and discussed. This investigation will ask if the advertisements of this election perform the specific functions their genre entails, as well as to analyze each spot in the terms of consumer advertising's styles and appeals. The next section of this analysis is based on the effect political advertising has on the news media, and the consequences this has on the way we view candidates and their campaigns. Finally, all of this information will culminate to prove how political advertising has come to influence the much larger genre of consumer advertising.

Selling Candidates to the Public

In today's world, advertising is accepted as a pervasive and inescapable feature, one that is largely regarded as a legitimate form of communication. It is no surprise that companies have long used advertising to sell products to our largely consumption-driven society. However, it does not end there. The advertising that enables businesses to sell everything from soap to sneakers is also used to mass-market ideas to voters.

Marketing is the process by which companies select customers, identify their needs, and then, based on that information, innovate, strategize, advertise, and distribute a product or service. The same method is used in the political arena, where "the application of marketing centers on the same process, but the analysis of needs centers on voters and citizens; the product becomes a multifaceted combination of the politician himself or herself, the politician's image, and the platform the politician advocates" (Newman 3). In short, instead of selling a product, political advertising allows candidates to sell themselves to the American people.

Like in consumer advertising, where research is done to find out the tastes and preferences of customers, political advertising uses market research to find out who the voters are, and what they want a candidate to stand for. This information allows candidates to know what will be successful so they can use it in the marketplace. Ultimately, "a President, no different from a McDonald's or a Chrysler, must be able to anticipate needs and wants of the marketplace to be successful. However, in politics, the process is much more fluid, dynamic, and unpredictable because of the various forces and varied competitors" (Newman 4).

In his book The Mass Marketing of Politics, Bruce Newman explains the various similarities and differences of political and consumer advertising. First, they both rely on the tools and strategies of marketing (such as market research). Second, they both use the same models and theories to study voters/consumers in the marketplace. Lastly, both deal in highly competitive marketplaces and rely heavily on similar approaches to winning.

Although political and consumer advertising seem remarkably similar on a fundamental level, there are important distinctions. First, there are significant differences in philosophy, where the goal of a business is to turn a profit, and the goal of American politics is ultimately the successful operation of democracy. Second, in consumer advertising, the results of marketing research are almost always used. However, in

politics, each candidate's view affects the extent to which marketing research influences strategy. An important distinction between consumer and political advertising that Newman mentions, but does not specifically delineate, is that of regulation. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction over the content of commercial advertisements, and has the authority to eliminate ads that make false claims. However, due to a 1976 Supreme Court ruling, political communication has been equated with free speech, which thereby prevents government regulation of its content. The result of this decision is that a candidate may make unfounded accusations without being held accountable for them.

The lack of legal accountability of political advertising and the failure of campaigns to adhere to any ethical standards has led to another distinction between the two forms, the excessive use of negative political advertising. This type of advertisement makes exaggerated or downright false claims in order to criticize or discredit an opponent. And whereas negative or "comparative" ads are widely implemented in political campaigns, they are hardly ever used in the consumer sphere. It can be said that, "market-driven politics, along with all the campaign changes, brings with it a price that is revealed in polls that measure the degree to which Americans hold their president in high esteem...a generation ago, most Americans liked or admired the man they elected president. Lately, pollsters tell us that people regard their candidate as the lesser of two evils" (Newman 7). This not only turns off the electorate by instilling skepticism and mistrust, but it also damages the reputation of consumer advertising as a whole.

Another very important difference between the two forms of advertising lies in public awareness. As was said before, it is no surprise that companies use advertising to sell products. However, it is not widely recognized within the constituency that these same techniques are used to sell candidates. The "danger to society is that the same consumers who are accustomed to product marketing are not paying close enough attention to the politicians' use of these tactics" (Newman xvi). The potential threat that this lack of awareness poses lies in the tremendous weight advertising has come to have in the American political process.

The History of Televised Political Advertising

The American electoral system was created with the intention of enabling candidates to inform voters during their campaign. However, a growing trend in American politics has allowed candidates to utilize contemporary commercial marketing techniques to influence voters.

Presidential elections before 1952 operated primarily on the principle of “machine politics,” where behind-the-scenes party bosses would choose the candidates and their platform. Interpersonal communication between the candidate and the electorate was usually conducted during events controlled by the party. Candidates campaigned through grassroots movements that consisted of thousands of volunteers with leaflets, buttons, posters, and stickers. Stump speeches were given around the country to let the polity know who a candidate was and what they stood for.

When televised political ads got their start in 1952, “candidates embraced television as a new means of independent communication with the voters”(Ansolabehere 1). These initial ads would certainly be considered simple according to modern standards. They traditionally incorporated the form of press conference footage or testimonials by prominent citizens, but most commonly they were “talking head” advertisements in which the candidate spoke for the entirety of the time without interruption or cuts to other locations (Perlmutter 27).

With the advent of new technologies, advertisements have grown more visually interesting and therefore more compelling to the polity. These developments spurred the growth of advertising as a prominent communications device between the candidates and the voters. It was believed in the 1960s that the primary objective of advertising for a political candidate was to “build a positive identity for that candidate” (McCaffery 4). While this is undoubtedly one goal of modern political advertising, its evolution has stimulated many changes in the way ads are viewed and the functions they can perform.

In the campaigns of the 1980s, political advertising became widely recognized for the central role it had taken in the communication strategy of politicians. It was during this period that, “Political ads came to dominate whatever portion of public attention is reserved for things political. In fact, by 1990, during the first election of the new decade, there was at least as much discussion about the number and nature of the ads being used as there was about the candidates themselves” (Trent & Friedenberg 120). This trend has certainly continued into contemporary elections, with the focus on all-things-advertising becoming more and more common in political discussions. The far-reaching effects of the political ad can be shown on many levels and in a variety of ways. The following discussion of the 2004 election campaigns will show where it is today.

Advertising as Political Language

In their book Presidential Communication, Denton and Hahn explain that, “what makes language political is not the particular vocabulary or linguistic form but the *substance* of the information the language conveys, the *setting* in which the interaction occurs, and the explicit or implicit *functions* the language performs” (6). As our society has grown increasingly dependent on mass media, the functions of political language have remained, while the setting and the substance of political communication has shifted. In this turn, television advertisements have become a predominant form of political language, one with a resounding influence on the constituency.

The five functions of political language as delineated by Denton and Hahn are information dissemination, agenda setting, interpretation and linkage, projection for the future and past, and action simulation. While political advertisement is only one form of communication that performs these functions, it has steadily gained power and reach in the American constituency.

The first function of political language is information dissemination, which is essentially the explicit transfer of knowledge from politicians to the polity. This can be accomplished through a variety of means, however, more and more it is achieved through political advertisements. It seems commonsensical that the news would be a politician’s most frequently used method of getting information to the polity, as well as the public’s main resource for getting this information. However, the expected is not always the case. In her recent article entitled “Television Primary Information Source for Most 2004 Voters,” Darlisa Crawford wrote, “In the 2004 presidential campaign, television will be voters’ primary source of information but, in spite of the extensive news coverage and high-tech innovations, advertising may ultimately play a more important role than journalism” (1).

The second inherent function of political language is agenda setting, which primarily communicates a politician’s specific goals for their term. It is incredibly common for an advertisement to focus on one aspect of a complete agenda. This year’s election is no exception. Both Bush and Kerry have utilized their advertisements to explain their policies on the war in Iraq, healthcare reform, education, jobs, Social Security, and many other important issues.

Thirdly, the interpretation and linkage function of political advertising allows candidates to put a specific spin on an issue in order to control the public’s perception of it. Because advertising is created solely by one campaign, it is possible for the content of the

ads to be framed in a specialized and favorable way. This has manifested itself in the current election in various ways. Both candidates use their advertising to present pertinent issues in different ways, to illuminate their own strengths as well as their opponent's weaknesses.

Projection for the future and past is frequently accomplished through the use of advertising. Candidates (especially an incumbent) use ads to reflect on their history as leaders, as well as the past achievements of the nation. Both Kerry and Bush have done this in their current campaigns, as well as to project a view of optimism and hope for the future. Both candidates emphasize change, progress and success in the coming term.

Lastly, while action simulation can sometimes be obscured in other forms of political rhetoric, for example a farewell address, such is not the case for political advertising. An implicit call for action is always a central part of any advertisement. This can be summed up in the statement, "Vote for Me." Advertising is a very commonly used tool in the attempt to garner support, whether it is through attracting voters directly, or by default through turning them off of the other candidate. The implication is always the same: take action and vote. In this close election, the candidates must rely on this function of advertising to create a margin of victory. This may explain the high proliferation of advertising this year.

The Ads of Senator John Kerry & President George W. Bush

It is no surprise that as the function and reach of political advertising have expanded, that its form has as well. "Since their entrance into the presidential campaign arena, the form and style of televised spots have, from election to election, undergone change" (Trent & Friedenberg 124). Over the years, the stylistic and functional categories have transformed so much, that any ad could easily be analyzed in countless ways. Rather than confuse the issue by listing the various classifications that each ad could embody, the most practical endeavor is to "reduce ambiguity by classifying spots according to their primary rhetorical purpose" (127).

Using rhetorical function as a characterizing trait, political advertisements can be broken into three main categories: ads that praise the candidate, those that condemn the opponent, and those that respond to charges. Each of these rhetorical functions will be demonstrated using ads from the 2004 election. However, before beginning, another dimension of this analysis must be explained. Based on the previous establishment of political advertising as

fundamentally similar to product advertising, it seems appropriate to also analyze the ads of the 2004 election in the terms of consumer advertisements. For an analysis of this kind, it can be said that there are two main factors that go into the creation of an advertisement, the advertising appeal and the creative execution style. An advertising appeal is “the approach used to attract the attention of consumers and/or to influence their feelings toward the product, service or cause” (Belch 266). Within this, there are two basic types of appeals, informational/rational (which focuses on the practical, functional, or utilitarian need for the product), and emotional (which relates to the consumer’s social and/or psychological needs). Creative execution can be defined as “the way a particular appeal is turned into an advertising message presented to the consumer” (266). There are many different types of creative executions, several of which will be discussed below.

The first category, advertisements that extol a candidate’s virtues, can come in an infinite number of styles and communicative functions, and fulfill a wide variety of crucial roles. The foremost rhetorical objective of this type of advertisement is to praise the candidate, while ignoring their opponent. A second function that may be performed by these ads is the description and construction of the candidate’s stance on important issues. Other tasks that these ads might seek to accomplish are: reinforce the positive feelings of supporters, construct the candidate’s image, raise money, or present statistical information.

In the 2004 campaign, there are a wide variety of examples of advertisements that extol the virtues of both candidates. Bush’s ad entitled *Lead* is a perfect model. The primary function of this spot is to reinforce President Bush’s ethos (which is a rhetorical appeal based on the reputation and character of the speaker), although it also incorporates elements of pathos (an emotion-based appeal often used in consumer advertising) and logos (an appeal driven by logic and reasoning). In this ad, President Bush’s values are constructed numerous times, for example through the line delivered by First Lady Laura Bush, “the strength, the focus, the characteristics that these times demand.” *Lead* also delineates President Bush’s position on critical issues, “I know what we need to do to continue economic growth so people can find work, to raise the standards at schools so children can learn, to fulfill the promise to America’s seniors.” Most importantly, unlike so many of this election’s ads, *Lead* never mentions Senator Kerry.

Lead accomplishes its purpose through its appeals to the audience and creative execution. First, this ad is an example of an

emotional appeal, in that it attempts to inspire hope and trust within the American public. Words like, “entrepreneurial spirit,” “strength,” “growth,” “free,” “peaceful,” “American dream,” and “optimistic” are used to instill hope and invoke the power of pathos. The music in the ad is primarily violin and piano based, the melody slow but pretty. It features people of all ages working and spending time with their families, all looking happy. There is also a very minor rational appeal present, where President Bush offers very general solutions to Americas’ problems. This rational appeal uses logos to bolster and ground the emotional appeal with practical information, such as, “as the economy grows, the job base grows and somebody who's looking for work will be more likely to find a job.”

A testimonial creative execution style is used in *Lead*.

Testimonial ads present their message through a third party who can speak about a “product” based on their experience with it. In this case, the person testifying is Laura Bush, regarding the “product,” George W. Bush. She says “The strength, the focus, the characteristics that these times demand,” which is in reference to the qualities of the President. Also, the President is really giving a testimonial himself, although he is not technically a third party. Parts of this ad could be referred to as a “talking head” ad, while there is also the element of the “man on the street,” although none of the ordinary people actually speak.

Another example of an ad that praises virtue is Senator Kerry’s *Heart*. This ad, like Bush’s *Lead*, also creates ethos. However, *Heart* is much more focused on constructing John Kerry’s character: “He has shown an ability to fight for things that matter. John is the face of someone who’s hopeful, who’s generous of spirit and of heart.” However, *Heart* does not set any sort of agenda, and like *Lead*, it never mentions President Bush.

Heart uses a combination of rational and emotional appeals. First, it sets up a logical argument that proves John Kerry’s character is that of a President, such as “For more than 30 years, John Kerry has served America,” and “The decisions that he made saved our lives.” These statements are meant as evidence that will substantiate Kerry’s value to the American public. However, there is also a strong emotional appeal present. Phrases like, “We’re a country of optimists, we’re the can do people and we just need to believe in ourselves again,” are meant to touch the hearts of the audience. *Heart* also features pictures from Vietnam, black and white pictures of Kerry and of his family, and slow, beautiful music. These all serve to make this advertisement one that triggers emotion.

Heart's creative execution style is also that of testimonial.

However, unlike Bush's *Lead*, this ad uses numerous sources such as: Teresa Heinz Kerry, Vanessa Kerry, Del Sandusky, and Jim Rassmann. These various testimonies reinforce the message *Heart* sends to the American public.

The second category of televised political advertising is ads that condemn, question, or attack the opponent. The primary rhetorical function of these ads is to "place the opponent in an unfavorable light or in an uncomfortable position" (Trent & Friedenberg 129). They focus almost entirely on the negative attributes of the opponent instead of the positive aspects of the candidate.

An example of one of the more controversial attack ads of the 2004 election is President Bush's *Windsurfing*. This ad features John Kerry windsurfing to the "Blue Danube" waltz, changing directions every few seconds. *Windsurfing* is unique in this campaign because it uses a humorous execution style. First, the musical selection is very lighthearted, and the colors are bright and cheery. Another element that adds humor is Kerry's appearance, because he is in a wetsuit, which is contrary to how the American public is accustomed to seeing him. Kerry looks carefree and slightly ridiculous as he changes direction over and over, as the announcer describes how he changed his mind on important issues. With the exception of the last line, "John Kerry. Whichever way the wind blows," the announcer's dialogue is not truly a piece of the humorous execution.

The ad primarily attempts to construct Kerry as inconsistent and unreliable, a "flip-flopper" in Bush's campaign terms. It lists his record on various issues ("Kerry voted for the Iraq war, opposed it, supported it, and now opposes it again") and concluded by saying, "John Kerry. Whichever way the wind blows." This is part of a rational appeal to the audience, which states Kerry's record, as an attempt to portray him as erratic or easily swayed. This evidence is given to factually prove to the polity that Kerry would not be a good leader.

In terms of rhetorical theory, *Windsurfing* does not specifically demonstrate ethos on the part of President Bush, but rather, detracts from the ethos of John Kerry. In a two-candidate race, ads like this are useful because they make one candidate look better by comparison. Further, this ad created a whirlwind of controversy and media coverage upon its release. However, another important effect it had was the creation of a Kerry campaign ad responding to it, representing the third and final type of political advertising. Ads responding to an opponent's attacks attempt to answer any charges made and reduce the negative impact the

ad has on the electorate. The only “rule” regarding this category of ad is that they must be released very rapidly after the initial attack.

In response to the initial release of *Windsurfing*, the Kerry campaign put out *Juvenile* mere hours later. *Juvenile* attempted to counter the possible negative effects of *Windsurfing* by calling it a “juvenile and tasteless attack ad.” This criticism attempts to remove credibility from the initial attack, and was embedded in very serious problems that face American today, such as “Two Americans beheaded just this week.” *Juvenile* is the epitome of “being the bigger man,” so to speak, and constructed Kerry as seriously committed to America’s success.

However, *Juvenile* does not only serve to refute the claims made in *Windsurfing*. It may be viewed as a freestanding advertisement that has a style all its own. First, it attempts to construct John Kerry’s ethos, while severely and explicitly undermining that of President Bush. Also, unlike *Windsurfing*, *Juvenile* does not use humor as its method of execution, it uses fear. This kind of execution attempts to evoke an emotional response from the audience, in hopes of inciting action to remove the threat. *Juvenile* features very slow, ominous music, and the dominant imagery is the American flag waving in the background. The messages delivered are frightening, such as “two Americans beheaded just this week,” and “the Pentagon admits terrorists are pouring into Iraq.” The advertisement also uses a comparative execution style, which matches up the candidates. Kerry attacks Bush by saying, “In the face of the Iraq quagmire, George Bush’s answer is to run a juvenile and tasteless attack ad,” and then shows how he is the better candidate by saying “John Kerry has a plan for success.” The appeal used in this ad is a combination of emotional and rational, in that it tries to scare voters into voting against Bush, as well as offers solutions to the problems it presents.

Clearly, each category of televised advertisement has a different rhetorical function and therefore has certain criteria as well as constraints. These differences allowed the exploration of how the campaigns of President Bush and Senator Kerry have used these methods in the 2004 election.

Advertising’s Effect on the News

Over the years, advertising has gained so much influence that it has come to not only reach its intended audience (the constituency) but also has come to affect the news media. In *Dirty Politics: Deception, Distraction, and Democracy*, Kathleen Hall Jamieson explains that, “campaign ads have the potential to shape the visual and verbal language

of news, and in recent campaigns they have been increasingly successful" (124).

In this current election, an excellent example of this phenomenon is Bush's *Windsurfing* ad and the media frenzy it caused. While the ad was eventually pulled off the air, and a counter-attack ad was released within hours by the Kerry campaign, its influence was amplified by the extensive media coverage on the topic. News stories tell the intentions of the ad to depict Kerry as a "flip-flopper," while simultaneously expressing Kerry's concerns that Bush is trying to be funny in serious times. This coverage resulted in voters seeing and hearing content to which they otherwise would not have been privy.

For example, in an article entitled "Debate on Iraq Intensifies in Campaigns," by Susan Malyeaux et al. the advertisement was described as "underscoring the Bush attacks on Kerry," and was justified in terms of the concerns of the Bush campaign. Bush campaign spokesman Scott Stanzel was quoted saying that, "What the ad spells out is that it's important to have a leader whose word we can believe not only on the day they say it but the next day as well. There is no weather vane on top of the White House. This country needs leaders who stand for something when the times are good and when the times are bad" (36). These comments reinforce the Bush campaign's attacks on Kerry through the use of a credible news source, and incorporate yet another sound bite into the media's coverage. However, members of the Bush camp were not the only ones allowed to comment on this issue. Kerry spokesman Mike McCurry commented on the ad, calling it a, "shameful advertisement that shows a disturbing disregard for those fighting and sacrificing in Iraq." This argument would have never been accessible to the public had the media not been involved, which would have lead to a more one-sided message being sent to the public.

The news coverage of the *Windsurfing* ad served to not only broadcast the claims made by both campaigns, but also gave the advertisement free airtime and the legitimacy of being featured in the news. In addition, the discussion of the ad squeezes the vocabulary of both campaigns into the news media, making their use more widespread. Terms of this election encapsulated in this coverage were: "flip-flopper," "war on terror," "protect our troops," "juvenile," and many others. This use of the news to export the language of the campaigns to the public is indicative of the growing relationship between advertising and the news. As Jamieson summarizes, "Where news once contextualized ads, visually evocative and easily edited oppositional ads backed by reinforcing candidate speeches and pseudo-events now have the capacity to shape the language and pictures of news" (135).

In terms of added value, the news coverage of ads like *Windsurfing* can be seen to both help and hurt the way it is received by the public. First of all, news coverage of any advertisement serves to reinforce and legitimize the message it sends, as well as reaches audiences that may not have seen it on television the first time around. These factors serve to make the advertisement more effective in the "marketplace." On the other hand, news coverage offers the opposition a chance to counter the claims made in an advertisement. Also, the news' discussion of an advertisement reveals the construction of an advertising message, in that voters are exposed to the implications of the ad, rather than just taking its message at face value. These reasons demystify and undermine the advertisement, ultimately making it less effective.

Political Advertising's Effect on the Consumer Sphere

Despite the fact that political advertising has grown exponentially over recent years, it is still nowhere near the size of consumer advertising. However, the concern of many prominent advertising experts is not based in the size, but rather the influence of political marketing. As the chair of the *American Association of Advertising Agencies* John O'Toole claimed in 1984, political ads were "giving advertising a bad name" (Iyengar 2). This is based on the idea that public apathy created by unethical and unregulated negative political advertisements "may damage the credibility, and ultimately the persuasiveness, of more traditional forms of advertising" (Iyengar 1). However, as the prevalence of political advertising has increased, this assertion is only one of several different ways that it impacts consumer advertising.

Another way that political advertisements have influenced those of the commercial genre is the explicit use of political style images and messages. A perfect example of the implementation of political tactics is the recent Miller Lite campaign. These ads depict the Miller Lite "candidate" in a faux presidential debate with the "candidate" from the "King of Beers" (a direct attack on Anheuser-Busch). The director of brand development for Miller, Victor Rutstein, explains that the purpose of this campaign is to, "reawaken consumers on the fact that they do, indeed, have a choice and that Miller is a choice," and ultimately establish Miller as the "beer of the people" in American democracy (cited in Howard 2). Not surprisingly, surveys have shown that 26% of consumers that have seen the ads were "turned off" by their content, as opposed to the typical 13% (Howard 2). These figures are indicative of the public's generally negative feeling about political advertisements. However, while consumers may not have received the advertising

message well, the ads were proven effective by a 15% rise in Miller's sales after their airing (Howard 3). The Miller campaign is an excellent example of not only the effect political advertising has on consumer advertisements, but of a larger trend. Despite public disapproval of political ads, those consumer spots modeled after them have been proven effective. Regrettably, this may mean that this type of ad could become more and more prevalent both in the political and consumer sphere.

The influence of politics on consumer advertising can also be subtle. As was discussed previously, political advertising typically incorporates a negative or "comparative" style, whereas consumer advertising has traditionally not done so. However, recent trends in the advertising industry have shown a shift in these conventions. Lately, consumer ads have begun to implement negative tactics, usually by overtly criticizing a competitor.

An example of this is Subway's advertisement that basically attacks McDonald's. In the spot, Subway spokesman Jared claims that three foot-long Sweet Onion Chicken Teriyaki subs have less fat than one McDonald's Big-Mac. Officials of the National Legal and Policy Center have threatened an FTC intervention based on the fact that the ad is "grossly misleading" about the health benefits of the product. Ken Boehm of the NLPC said that "Those same three footlong sandwiches contain more than three and a half times as many calories as one Big Mac. Ditto on cholesterol. They have six times the sodium, seven times the carbohydrates and 14 times as much sugar" (Arends 1). The ad's claim that the Subway sandwiches are healthier is very characteristic of political advertising's deception and negativity. This use of political tactics in consumer advertising is questionable not only in terms of the ethicality of it, but also the legality of the practice. Ultimately, political advertisements are not regulated in the way consumer ads are, so they can get away with this practice. But, as the two genres become more and more similar, the question is: where do we draw the line?

Conclusion

Clearly, over the history of its development, televised political advertising has grown over the years into a super-medium, through which candidates can achieve any number of their campaign goals. Whether it is to get information to the polity, set an agenda, interpret and frame political events, make projections for the future, or stimulate action, advertising acts as a fully functioning and effective form of political language. Beyond that, candidates may construct their own

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public image, attack or condemn their opponent, as well as reply to attacks made against them.

The capability of political advertising to reach the electorate is unmatched in our contemporary society. While realizing the goals of the candidate, the significance of political advertising also reaches into the realm of the news media, constructing and shaping the issues that are looked at and how they are addressed. Its influence can also be seen in the changing face of consumer advertising, where political tactics are now being implemented to sell consumer goods.

The significance of political advertisements has undoubtedly increased over the years. "Not only are television spots the largest single expenditure in campaigns, they are a major source of information for voters and a tool for influencing the way reporters cover political races" (Perlmutter 27). The election of 2004 between President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry underlines the role advertising plays in how candidates are viewed, and ultimately, who is elected. Whether the proliferation of televised political advertising is viewed as a positive or negative change, there is no doubt that it is significant. The consequences of this trend have a profound impact on democracy in America. The mass marketing of political candidates has created an irreversible shift in the way Presidents are elected in the United States. In the future, it can be expected that advertising's impact on politics will only get more powerful, as technological advancements break new ground, and as the mass media becomes more and more integrated.

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"Windsurfing"

President Bush: I'm George W. Bush and I approved this message. [*President Bush has his arm around Laura Bush while standing on the front porch of a cabin-like house*]

Narrator: In which direction would John Kerry lead? [*John Kerry shown in a wetsuit. The music playing in the background is the "Blue Danube" waltz, a very lighthearted classical piece.*]

Kerry voted for the Iraq war, opposed it, supported it, and now opposes it again. [*Kerry is shown windsurfing, the words "supported" and "opposed" alternate on the screen as he switches the direction he is surfing.*]

He bragged about voting for the 87 billion to support our troops before he voted against it. [*Same visuals as above continue throughout the ad with alternating "supported" and "opposed" being used as the narrator says them.*]

He voted for education reform and now opposes it.

He claims he's against increasing Medicare premiums, but voted five times to do so.

John Kerry. Whichever way the wind blows. [*The bottom of the screen reads, "Approved by President Bush and Paid for by Bush Cheney '04 Inc." in very small letters.*]

"Juvenile"

Narrator: 1000 US casualties. [*An American flag waves in the background, ominous music plays. The screen reads, "1000 US casualties." Two americans beheaded just this week. [The screen reads, "Kidnappings and Murders."]*]

The Pentagon admits terrorists are pouring into Iraq. [*The screen reads, "Terrorists pouring into Iraq." In the face of the Iraq quagmire, George Bush's answer is to run a juvenile and tasteless attack ad. [The screen reads, "In the face of the Iraq quagmire, George Bush runs a juvenile and tasteless attack ad."]*]

John Kerry has a plan for success. Get allies involved. Speed up the training of Iraqis. Take essential steps to get a free election next year. [*The screen reads "John Kerry has a plan," "Get allies involved," "Speed up training of Iraqis," and "A free election next year." On Iraq, it's time for a new direction. [Screen says, "On Iraq, it's time for a new direction." Shows John Kerry speaking in front of a large crowd, and then in front of a small room full of people.]*]

John Kerry: I'm John Kerry and I approved this message.

“Lead”

President Bush: One of the things that must never change is the entrepreneurial spirit of America. This country needs a President who clearly sees that. [*A diner's "Open" sign blinks on, it is still dark out and the street is wet. Then the camera zooms in to show a woman walking around inside. Next, President Bush and Laura Bush are shown in a close up shot of them sitting together.*]

Laura Bush: The strength, the focus, the characteristics that these times demand. [*President Bush is shown in an office on the phone and looking in a folder. Then, back to the close up shot of the First Lady talking.*]

President Bush: And as the economy grows, the job base grows and somebody who's looking for work will be more likely to find a job. [*Various people are shown, a man on a cell phone, a woman in a suit, construction workers. Then it cuts back to the President talking.*] I know exactly where I want to lead this country; I know what we need to do to make the world more free and more peaceful.

I know what we need to do to make sure every person has a chance at realizing the American dream. [*Various people are featured again, a woman in an Army uniform with a small child, two men in business suits, a woman on the phone, a family of four.*]

I know what we need to do to continue economic growth so people can find work, [*Again, it is back on the President*] to raise the standards at schools so children can learn, to fulfill the promise to America's seniors. Americans are hard working, decent, generous people. [*A classroom, an elderly woman with a young woman, and a family interacting in their home.*]

I'm optimistic about America because I believe in the people of America. [*Shows President Bush talking.*]

President Bush: I'm President Bush and I approved this message. [*President Bush is walking in a suit. Then the screen goes blank and it reads, "President Bush Steady Leadership in Times of Change" as well as, "Approved by President Bush and Paid for by Bush Cheney '04 Inc." in very small letters at the bottom of the screen.*]

“Heart”

John Kerry: I was born in Fitzsimons Army Hospital in Colorado. [*John Kerry speaks alone in a close up shot.*] My dad was serving in the Army Air Corp. [*Shows a black and white picture of his dad. Caption reads, “Father was an Army Air Corps pilot.”*] Both of my parents taught me about public service. [*Shows black and white picture of his mother. Caption reads, “Mother was a community leader.”*] I enlisted because I believed in service to country. [*Shows an old picture of Kerry in Vietnam with four other soldiers.*] I thought it was important if you had a lot of privileges as I had had, to go to a great university like Yale, to give something back to your country. [*Shows Kerry speaking and then a clip of him walking out of the jungle in army gear.*]

Del Sandusky: The decisions that he made saved our lives. [*Sandusky talks alone in a room. Caption reads, “Del Sandusky U.S. Navy Kerry Crewmate, Vietnam.”*]

Jim Rassmann: When he pulled me out of the river, he risked his life to save mine. [*Rassmann talks alone in a room. Caption says, Jim Rassmann U.S. Army Special Forces, Vietnam.”*]

Narrator: For more than 30 years, John Kerry has served America. [*Shows a black and white picture of Kerry on the phone.*]

Vanessa Kerry: If you look at my father’s time in service to this country, whether, it’s as a veteran, prosecutor, or Senator, he has shown an ability to fight for things that matter. [*Briefly shows Vanessa talking, then jumps to a picture of Kerry with 3 other men, all in uniform. Next it shows a black and white picture of Kerry in a courthouse. Then it shows Vanessa talking again.*]

Teresa Heinz Kerry: John is the face of someone who’s hopeful, who’s generous of spirit and of heart. [*Shows a black and white picture of Heinz Kerry and her husband, then shows a close up of her talking.*]

John Kerry: We’re a country of optimists, we’re the can do people and we just need to believe in ourselves again. [*Kerry addresses the camera in a close up shot.*]

Narrator: A lifetime of service and strength. John Kerry for President. [*Shows Kerry waving to a large crowd. Screen reads, “A Lifetime of Service and Strength,” then goes black and a variety of old black and white pictures pop up, as well as a small frame of Kerry waving.*]

John Kerry: I’m John Kerry and I approved this message.

“The Perils of Indifference”:
Elie Wiesel’s Rhetoric of Hope
By Melissa LaSalle

Rhetoric is an important component used in American society to speak to large audiences. Throughout history, leaders, authors, and other dignitaries have used rhetoric to discuss issues of importance with the American public. In order to make an effective speech, one must use certain artistic talents to relay their message. Aristotle had a school of beliefs regarding three artistic proofs: ethos, pathos, and logos. By using any- or all three- of these proofs a speaker is able to achieve his or her goal of persuading the audience. Through the use of the Aristotelian artistic proofs, Elie Wiesel was capable of capturing the emotion and understanding of the Holocaust and its impact on the world of the past, present, and future.

On April 12, 1999, Elie Wiesel, a well known Holocaust survivor and novelist, gave a speech about the perils of indifference at a White House Symposium (www.americanrhetoric.com). Wiesel lost his family in the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald. In 1986, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Although he has spent many tragic years in this world, he still believes in human tolerance, learning, and faith. In his work, Wiesel shares with his audience his hope for the world to remember the Holocaust with the intentions of it never happening again.

Aristotle believed in three means of effective persuasion: ethos, logos, and pathos. These three ideas became his artistic proofs, which are qualities that are inherent in the speaker and always available to him or her. Logos is the ability to reason logically while pathos is the ability to understand emotions. Ethos is the ability to understand human character and goodness in their various forms. These artistic proofs are the opposite of inartistic proofs, which are facts or things that can be proved objectively. Statistics would be a good example of an inartistic proof. Artistic proofs are used to bring together an audience and a speaker.

In his speech, “The Perils of Indifference,” Wiesel used life experiences during the Holocaust to impact the audience with the emotions felt by the people whom this tragedy affected. The first story told after greeting the audience is the story of a young Jewish boy freed from the Buchenwald concentration camp: that boy was Elie Wiesel. His

experience is used to give the audience a personal account of the traumatizing events and how people survived. Wiesel states, "He was finally free, but there was no joy in his heart. He thought there never would be again." Wiesel uses pathos to appeal to the emotions of the audience by giving them something to picture in their mind and imagine the pain felt by the Jewish people. There was fear in Wiesel that the rest of his life would be without joy because he had lost not only himself, but also years of his life spent in the concentration camps. His family and those years of his life are things that he can never get back. Although the audience will never feel the pain Wiesel felt, their hearts go out to him for enduring such a horrific period of life.

Victims and children bring out emotions that are buried beneath people's exteriors. People do not want to hear about others as victims of crimes or tragedies; they especially do not want the victims to be children. This is often used as a defense mechanism to turn away from the events to pretend things really are not as bad as they seem. "It is so much easier to look away from the victims. It is so much easier to avoid such rude interruptions to our work, our dreams, our hopes. It is, after all, awkward, troublesome, to be involved in another person's pain and despair." While it may be troublesome to be involved in someone's pain, it is important to understand that there is pain in the world and that emotions are a part of life. Victims of terrible events should be recognized, not ignored, in order to help prevent future problems. Wiesel points to the ways of thinking that people use in order to forget that every unfortunate event has a victim and that, at times, it can be children.

Wiesel points to the importance of emotions when it comes to making changes in the world or even one's own life. The specific example he uses is the influence of anger. Anger can be an extremely powerful emotion in a positive, as well as a negative, way. A positive expression of anger, as noted by Wiesel, is the creativity that can appear. One can use anger to make art, write novels, or make speeches that can impact society in a way that makes it possible to fix the wrong in the world. Anger can evoke emotions and motivation in people to do something about the injustices that occur regularly in today's society.

Through the use of character construction, the speaker invites the audience to view him or her in a certain way in order to achieve credibility as a part of his or her ethos. Good character can only be proven through the speech act itself with no prior reputation. Confidence in a speaker's character has three components: good will, good moral character, and good sense. Good will or political trust involves a genuine concern for others. When a speaker is a person of honor or integrity in

the realm of civic affairs he or she is displaying good moral character or ethical trust. Good sense or intellectual trust is practical wisdom that displays prudence in decision-making. These characteristics are all found when a speaker is using ethos to help send his or her message.

Good character is important when speaking to a large audience because the audience should believe in the inherent goodness of the speaker. Wiesel said, "Gratitude is a word that I cherish. Gratitude is what defines the humanity of the human being." A quality, such as gratitude, displays a sense of character and what is important to a person. By sharing his thoughts with the audience on gratitude, Wiesel is showing them his character and what qualities are of importance to him as characteristics of human beings.

A speaker can also use a speech as a plea for the future to help create a better environment to live in. Wiesel asks his audiences, "Does it mean that we have learned from the past? Does it mean that society has changed?...Has the human being become less indifferent and more human? Have we really learned from our experiences?" This is a call to the audience to help change the world for the better by looking to our past experiences and learning from them. It is important to learn from the mistakes made in history and not to repeat them. Wiesel hopes that the Holocaust will never be forgotten and never repeated; the Holocaust was a crime against humanity and we, as people of the world, should never again let this happen to our own people no matter what race, religion, or ethnic background. He is using his good sense to aid the public in using practical wisdom as a form of decision-making. With this statement, Wiesel leaves it up to the audience to determine whether they trust his intellect enough to agree with what he is saying and help make a better future. Wiesel is calling for us to learn from our experiences, embrace differences, and let them flourish.

Wiesel proves that he is a man of good will and political trust during the end of his speech, stating "And yet, my friends, good things have also happened in this traumatic century." He is looking to a positive future as a politician would. Politicians are always promising things will change and the future will be different. Also, the word "friends" appeals to the audience to make them feel like equals with Wiesel. When he says "friends" he is showing trust and trust is a common bond shared between friends. Through this assertion he is implying that the audience can trust him and believe that they are all on an equal playing field when looking to the future. Following this statement, Wiesel provides a list of events that have occurred and are important or positive pieces in history. By listing positive aspects he points to the good in the world and that all things are possible if we only try.

The most powerful facet of the speech is also one of the simplest statements. "It's always in our hands." This statement is short but very powerful in its meaning. The past, present, and future is in our hands. What happens in the world is up to those who live in it and Wiesel is pointing out that we can change things.

Aristotle's artistic proofs can be used as a base to build upon when constructing a speech. How one uses the proofs determines the quality of the speech and the impact it will have on the audience. Words in a speech are not simply words; they are instruments in creating something appealing to an audience. The power of a speech is determined by the use, meaning, and character of the speaker and his or her words. Elie Wiesel uses Aristotle's proofs to inform the audience of the severity of the Holocaust and how it has affected the world in the past, and also how it continues to do so today. Wiesel relays his message profoundly as a survivor with hope for a better world that has learned from this tragedy and will never forget the Holocaust.

Interpersonal

A Case Study in Gender Breaching By Molly Conley

Recently I preformed a gender breaching experiment--that is, I did something abnormal for someone of my (female) gender to do. The following essay is my analysis of this breaching experiment. However, I would like to preface my essay by relating two scholarly works to my own findings. I would first like to introduce the reader to Agnes through an article by H. Heritage in "Maintaining Institutional Realities: Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology." Agnes was born a male, but had a female gender identity. He/She was able to convince doctors that he/she was "essentially" and 'all along in the first place' a female." (Heritage, 1984: 182) Agnes' case relates to my own study. One challenge for Agnes was that of staying out of social situations in which people would find out her secret: "a central preoccupation was to avoid the disclosure of her secrets." (Heritage, 1984: 184) In my experiment, I had to let others see my gender breach. I, like Agnes, feared their reactions and judgments. W.E.B. DuBois wrote the second article that relates to my findings, entitled "Double Consciousness and the Veil." DuBois explained that "one ever feels his twoness--an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings..." (1903: 487) By double consciousness, DuBois means that there are two views of him, which he always is aware of: his own view of self and his sense of self through others' view of him. In my experiment, I also had two views of self: my own view and my sense of self through the view of those I interacted with. The veil to which DuBois is referring is racism, and he had to see himself through that veil. He explained that "his own soul rose before him, and he saw himself--darkly as through a veil; and yet he saw in himself some faint revelation of his power, of his mission." (DuBois, 1903: 489) The veil, in my case, was the gender breach I preformed. I saw myself as I usually do, yet I also saw myself as others saw me, and it made me uncomfortable.

The skill I chose for my breaching experiment was that of shaving. Although women obviously have the skill of shaving many parts of their bodies, that of shaving the face is not usually one of these skills. The reason I chose this skill for my experiment is that it challenges default assumptions, or "the way we automatically think about people, objects, and events in the world" (Kidwell: 9-9-04) For most people, a default assumption about shaving is that only men shave their faces, because only men grow facial hair. I conducted this breach

by waiting in the bathroom of my suite one morning with shaving cream on my face, waiting for someone to walk in, before beginning to “shave.” I used a razor with a clear blade cover in place, so that it looked like I was really shaving. My relationships with my suitemates vary from close friendships to friendly acquaintances. Most of my suitemates’ reactions to this breach, this challenge of default assumptions, were sensemaking techniques.

Erica was the first to wander into my experiment. I turned toward her and said “good morning” but she stopped dead in her tracks and looked at me with a confused expression for a moment. Then, she started laughing as she asked me what I was doing. “Shaving. What’s so funny?” I answered. “You don’t shave your face!” she replied, smiling. I asked her what she meant, and told her that this was a normal part of my everyday routine. “No it isn’t! I’ve never seen you shave before... I know you don’t shave... This must be a joke or something,” she said. (Erica: 9-24-04) Three types of sensemaking were involved in Erica’s reaction to my gender breach. Right when she walked in, she seemed confused and outwardly displayed this confusion by her facial expression. Then she reframed the situation in two ways: the use of humor and seeing through the ploy. In fact, Erica found humor in what I was doing because she had seen through my ploy. All of Erica’s sensemaking techniques resemble those which Harold Garfinkel found in his own breaching experiments.

The next suitemate to walk into the bathroom was Whitney (toothbrush in hand). As soon as she saw me she asked “what are you doing!?” I told her I was shaving, and that I was surprised that she didn’t know about it because I do it almost every day. She said “okay” with a tone that told me she was confused and did not know what to think and then left the bathroom without brushing her teeth. I later told her what I was really doing, and asked what had gone through her head when she saw me “shaving.” Whitney told me that she had believed what I had told her but was still confused about it because she had never before known a girl who shaved. She said that she thought about it, and just figured that I had a facial hair problem. She said that she was thinking about suggesting waxing to me because it lasts longer. Whitney’s reaction, like Erica’s, was a set of sensemaking techniques that resemble those found by Garfinkel in his breaching experiments. First, she was confused by the entire incident; this was due to the fact that she had never seen me, let alone any other girl, shave her face. Second, she created an alternative definition for what I was doing; that is, she reasoned that I had to shave because for some reason I grew facial hair. “I didn’t know what to think. I knew it wasn’t right, but part of me

thought that maybe you do shave or have a facial hair problem or something. But it was weird because I had never seen you do it before and no one in the suite had said anything about seeing it for themselves. I'm glad that wasn't real." (Whitney: 9-24-04)

The final person to walk into my experiment was Julia. Stepping into the bathroom, Julia saw me, turned around, and left, without saying a word. I gave her most of the day to think about it, acting as if nothing had happened, and finally confessed. Upon my confession, Julia was very relieved. When I asked her what she had been thinking all day she said "it was like I was seeing you do something I wasn't supposed to see. It was really awkward and I just wanted to get out of there." (Julia: 9-24-04) She told me that she had thought I had really been shaving and it was one of the weirdest things she had ever seen. Julia had completely fallen for my experiment and her reaction is also one of Garfinkel's findings, that of creating an alternative definition. She thought that even though it was weird, shaving was just something that I did, but that it wasn't something she ever wanted to see again.

The documentary method of interpretation is the use and selectivity of documents, or details, as ways of seeing the underlining pattern. (Kidwell: 9-7-04) In other words, people select certain details out of the plethora of those they sense at all times to create an understanding of what is happening around them. When these documents are put together into an unfamiliar pattern, this is a sort of breach. Because "human beings are overwhelmingly sensemaking creatures," (Kidwell: 9-7-04) they place what they "see and experience into pre-established frameworks." (Kidwell: 9-7-04) Traditional gender norms, or behaviors, make up one of these pre-established frameworks. For example, a female gender norm is shaving the legs. A man with shaved legs would be breaching this pre-established framework of gender normality. The smooth legs would be the document by which others would interpret that the man had shaved his legs. In my experiment, the shaving cream on my face and razor in my hand were two documents, which allowed my suitemates to interpret the situation and conclude that I was shaving.

For my suitemates, these documents were mixed with previous knowledge of my behavior. I found that the better and the longer the experimentee knew me, the more likely they were not to believe that I was really shaving. Erica said that she knew I do not shave my face and that it had to be a joke. In this way, Erica was using documents from the past to make sense of the situation. As one of my closest friends, and as my roommate for one year, she figured that she would have known if I shaved my face. I have known Whitney for about eight months, and our

schedules are so different that we do not often encounter each other in the bathroom. This lack of previous documentary evidence accounts for the sense that she made of the situation; that is, she thought I was really shaving. Julia had even less past documentary evidence with which to use in her sensemaking of the situation. Julia and I are not close friends and rarely share the bathroom space together, especially in the morning. This helps to explain her willingness to add up only the documents before her to deduct that I was shaving. Because she does not know me well, she felt awkward about asking me what I was doing or even staying in the bathroom.

I think that in our culture, people's reactions to violations of gender norms vary based on many factors. In my gender breach, people acted differently according to how well they knew me. Nobody got angry over my breach, although Whitney did not stay in the bathroom to brush her teeth, and Julia got out of what she considered an awkward situation right away. Another factor about my breach, which may have affected my suitemates' reactions, is that while I was behaving in a "male" way, I was doing so in order to look feminine. This may have made it more acceptable, which is why Whitney was going to recommend waxing instead.

Because my breach did not incite anger among my suitemates does not mean that Garfinkel's findings of vehemence and anger would have been absent had someone else walked in. Another factor in their choices of reactions was probably the fact that they will be living with me for the rest of the year and do not want this incident to affect our relationships throughout the year. If strangers had walked in, rather than friends, they might not have been as accepting of my breach. Through this experiment, I found two major responses to gender breaching: curiosity and a feeling of awkwardness. My personal response to my gender breach was a feeling of nervousness and of being out of my own character as I preformed it. It helped me to appreciate how scary the world must be for someone like Agnes who lived his/her whole post-surgery life with fears of being caught in a gender breach. I also felt akin to W.E.B. DuBois and his "double consciousness" because I saw myself as I knew others were seeing me.

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Media

*Influencing Viewers to Perceive Characters Positively:
Interaction of Grammar Variables and Content in
Goodfellas*

By Jennifer Kelley

Martin Scorsese's film *Goodfellas*, an adaptation of Nicholas Pileggi's book *Wiseguy*, is violent to the core. Examining the life of gangsters from the 1950s through the 1970s, it depicts the underbelly of life in and around Little Italy. Despite the film's shocking violent nature and explosive portrayal of the life of mobsters, the film was highly popular with audiences and garnered six Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture, Best Supporting Actor (Joe Pesci), and Best Director. It was ranked among the top 100 movies of all time by the American Film Institute, and enjoyed success on the big screen, with continuing popularity today. On the surface, the content of the film encompasses an ugly subject, the lives and actions of immoral and dishonest mobsters, who are all too happy to break laws for their own fortune. At the same time, however, the viewer is drawn to the lives of the characters, even finding compassion and acceptance for these criminals. How is this possible? How is it that viewers are willing to overlook the blatant acts of violence by these mobsters and obvious lack of moral values, and root for them to get away with murder, literally? Although some critics and moviegoers alike have criticized *Goodfellas* for "celebrating" and "glorifying" violence, there is still a wide audience that praises the film's semi-factual account of mobsters striving to move up the gangster hierarchy.

In this study I will argue that production variables and content used throughout the film interact to influence the viewer to associate, identify, and even accept the bad guys. The validity of this study is apparent in the questions it answers about how viewers perceive characters, as well as how content and grammar intersect in affecting this response. The findings of this study may further reveal the ways in which audience members are manipulated to respond to characters. Most importantly, this study will attempt to answer the way in which grammar variables and content influence viewers to perceive characters in a positive light, despite very clear negative attributes concerning their lives. It will answer this question by dissecting the relationship between content and grammar, shedding light on how the interaction between the two can manipulate the response of viewers.

In order to adequately address the production and content elements that work to influence the audience to side with the bad guys it is important to have something to contrast it with. Therefore another movie will be used that clearly portrays bad guys as villains, persuading the audience to root against them and side with the good guys. If the production variables and content used to influence viewers to dislike the bad guys varies from, or even opposes, the techniques used in *Goodfellas*, one could logically argue that this variation supports the claim addressed here. Furthermore, if the production variables used to shoot the good guys are similar to those used for the mobsters in *Goodfellas* it would again support the argument that the viewers are being manipulated to side with the bad guys. The movie *Patriot Games* will be analyzed in terms of production variables and content in an effort to note and interpret the manipulation of viewers to side with the good guys and root for the demise of the bad guys. I have chosen to use the movie *Patriot Games* because I feel its genre is similar to *Goodfellas*, with both movies representing storylines involving crime and violence. Also, the movie pits a former CIA agent against terrorists and focuses on the battle between good and evil. By interpreting two movies that portray bad guys in different ways I will be able to better reveal the magnitude to which production variables and content interact to manipulate the response of viewers.

Viewer Perception of Characters

Various research has been devoted to analyzing and interpreting just how viewers perceive and respond to characters in television and film. The different elements of grammar and content that influence and affect this perception and response have also been studied and analyzed in an attempt to understand the ways in which audiences are manipulated. Theories regarding viewers' response to and perception of characters have been developed, including Joshua Meyrowitz's *para-proxemic model* and *para-social impressions*. In his article "TV and Interpersonal Behavior" Meyrowitz details how the simulation of interpersonal behavior codes in television and film affect viewers' responses to shot structure and content in terms of their evaluation of characters. Meyrowitz applies these theories to a more general analysis of viewer response to characters, whereas this study will specifically note the manipulation of viewer response in relation to approving of and identifying with "bad guys." Other works have analyzed the way grammar variables influence a viewer to identify with characters, such as the article by Shannon Robinson and Day Evans, "*Platoon: The Implications of Grammar Variables on Viewer Reaction.*" Although this

article touched upon the way grammar variables are utilized to manipulate viewers to respond to characters in a more positive way, it analyzed the response of viewers to American soldiers, who are rarely considered “bad guys” or villains. However because these soldiers are depicted doing bad things, Robinson and Evans’s analysis relates to the more general area of analysis addressed in this study: positive viewer response to characters that embody negative attributes.

A study that did analyze the influence of grammar variables on positive viewer reaction and response to characters was done by David Miller in “Loving the Sopranos for All the Wrong Reasons: An Introspective Analysis On *The Sopranos*.” This study differs from the proposed study because it analyzed “bad guys” in a television series. It is important to note that in a television series the viewers learn about the characters each week, and this regularity and frequency in itself creates an ability to influence the viewer to identify and associate with the characters. The viewers are with the characters each week as they encounter new problems and situations, again influencing and perhaps strengthening the bond that may grow between viewer and character. This study will analyze how viewers interpret characters in a major motion picture, where they are not given as great an opportunity to bond with the characters as within a weekly television program. It will also contrast this portrayal of characters to a movie where bad guys are clearly represented as evil and villainous and the good guys are shown as heroes. Thus any variation in the production variables and content of the movies will lend further evidence to the claim that they influence viewer perception of characters.

In his book, Bullets Over Hollywood: The American Gangster Picture from the Silents to the Sopranos and Beyond, John McCarty looks at the popularity of gangster films in America, focusing on the persona gangsters embody in films. He also points to the themes and characters reflected in these movies as main factors for their popularity. McCarty’s main focus, however, remains on the content of these films, rather than the production variables that influence viewers to find these films appealing. Although McCarty does analyze the characters in relation to the popularity of the films, his general argument relates to the genre of gangster films as a whole.

Donald Horton and Richard Wohl’s concept of “para-social interaction” relates to viewer perception of characters because it describes the way in which media, such as television, radio, and the movies, provide audiences with the illusion of face-to-face interaction with the performer. In their work, “Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction: Observations on Intimacy at a Distance,” Horton and

Wohl examine “the bond of intimacy” that develops between viewer and performer. This bond of intimacy created by the illusion of face-to-face interaction influences the viewer’s perception of the performers, thus influencing their acceptance of the characters. Meyrowitz analyzes the implications of this illusionary face-to-face interaction in “The Majority Cult: Love and Grief for Media Friends.” He states that viewers develop “media friends” to whom they feel an attachment. This study will build upon this idea by directly examining the way grammar variables and content influence viewers to become attached to characters, sympathizing and identifying with their “mediated” lives.

Getting to Know the Wiseguys

Drawing upon the work and theories of Erving Goffman, Joshua Meyrowitz, and Michael Gillett I will attempt to analyze and interpret the use of production variables and content to manipulate viewers to perceive and respond to characters in a certain manner. In order to interpret the effects of grammar and content on viewers’ response to characters, this study will analyze the use of the following grammar variables in the movie *Goodfellas*: use of voice over/narration, subjective shots (camera shots that show the action through the eyes of a character within a scene or seeing what the character is seeing) and objective shots (camera shots that show the action from the vantage point of someone outside of the scene.) For the purpose of this study objective shots will refer to the adapted version discussed in Meyrowitz, “TV and Interpersonal Behavior;” that is, any shots where a “character” is created for the viewers, from which to view the actions of the characters. This is an important factor in the interpretation of scenes because the objective shots of this nature often help align the viewer with other characters, making the audience feel as though they are part of the “team,” because they are viewing the action from an insider’s point of view. Close-up shots (shots showing a character from the shoulders up, often showing only the character’s face), medium to long shots (shots from at least the waist up to shots that show the whole figure of the character), high angle, low angle, and medium angle shots will also be noted and analyzed. The content of the movie, as well as the manner in which it is presented, will also be examined and judged to interpret its ability to affect the way viewers perceive characters. The portrayal of back region and front region behavior of characters will also be noted.

The idea of back region and front region behavior influencing the audience’s alignment with characters stems from Erving Goffman’s ideas concerning impression management. Goffman breaks down the impression management of an individual’s behavior into backstage

behavior and onstage behavior. Onstage behavior consisting of the actions and behavior an individual performs in the presence of others, or an “audience.” And backstage behavior consisting of regions hidden from the “audience” but shared with people that share similar roles or a special connection to the individual, such as family.

To further clarify the objective of the study, the term “bad guys” will encompass any characters who would normally be viewed negatively by society due to flaws regarding their personalities, actions, occupations, or overall moral demeanors. This would include characters who participate in illegal acts, violent acts, criminal acts, or are blatantly dishonest and immoral. In order to interpret these variables, several scenes from the movie *Goodfellas* will be discussed, linking aspects of these scenes that relate to the proposed question regarding viewer response. The scenes’ grammar variables and content will be analyzed, both individually, and in relation to one another. For example, the study will note the type of camera shots used, while also commenting on the dialogue and action that take place during the shot. Therefore this study will be primarily analytical in nature but will rely heavily on extensive descriptive support from actual scenes in both *Goodfellas* and *Patriot Games*.

From an Insider’s View

As the film *Goodfellas* opens, the viewer is riding in a car with Henry Hill, Jimmy Conway, and Tommy DeVito, the three main mobsters the film follows. Immediately, the viewer is aligned with the gangsters as an objective shot creates a “character” for the viewers through which the action is seen. This scene ends in a great deal of violence, as the mobsters stab and shoot an already beaten gangster from an opposing group, whom they have been carrying in the trunk of their car. However, the violence is depicted through a long shot, inhibiting the ability of the audience to identify or sympathize with the victim, as he is never shown in a close up shot that is personal or intimate. The final shot of the scene consists of a zoom shot and a freeze-frame that holds on Henry’s face. The audience is drawn away from the violence and back to an intimate and personal shot of the characters.

The next scene of the movie opens with the narration of Henry Hill, as he confides in the audience about growing up with dreams of becoming part of the mob organization. Narration is used throughout the film, chronicling the life of Henry as he grows up, and is a driving force in connecting the audience to the main character. By using narration, the story is told through the point of view of Henry. The audience is influenced to sympathize with the troubles of Henry as his voice-over

recounts the story. The use of narration is heavy in the beginning of the film, so the audience gets to know all the characters from the point of view of an insider, further aligning the audience with the gangsters. Later in the movie, Henry's wife, Karen, narrates for a portion of the story. Here the audience is manipulated to sympathize with Karen, even though she stays with a disloyal husband who mistreats her. Narration plays an important role in influencing the audience to identify with and respond positively to the characters because viewers inevitably view the action from Henry's or his wife's point of view, as no one else narrates the film. Therefore, the audience is less likely to see the story from the view of law enforcement, which is given no voice in the film. Also the narration makes the story more personal, as though it were being told by a friend, which also persuades viewers to identify with the main character.

Another important factor to consider in viewer response to the mobsters is the way in which back region and front region behavior are conveyed throughout the film. The movie continuously moves from the front region to the back region, hiding nothing from the viewer. The audience is privy to the bribing of cops and judges and to the planning of illegal dealings. This element of the content addresses the audience as though they were part of the organization. As Joshua Meyrowitz notes in "TV and Interpersonal Behavior," audience members can be made to feel as though they are teammates if they are simply placed in the back region. Here an audience member's perception of the situation is shaped by what they know and from which perspective they view it. In this film, the relationship between the viewer and the characters is shaped through the depiction of back region behavior, which results in teaming the viewer with the mobsters. It is also important to note that during many scenes that reveal the back region, close-up shots are used when the mobsters are discussing important matters. Thus the distance of the shot interacts with the content to advance a personal and intimate feeling, one that influences the viewer to associate with the character.

One of the most noted features regarding the film *Goodfellas* is its violent nature. Shooting a violent act from a distance inhibits the ability of viewers to react emotionally to the scene because no one is shot in a personal or intimate way, so the viewer is not directly relating to those who are being injured. In "The Comic Distance" Michael Gillett states "Comedy uses long and medium shots which result in an emotional distance for the viewers, enhancing the humor and comic tone." This idea relates to this scene because the scene's comic tone is enhanced by a long-shot that encompasses the character and his environment, as opposed to a close-up that may elicit more of an

emotional response from viewers, as they sympathize with the injured character. This idea is demonstrated in the scene where one of the main gangsters, Tommy DeVito, shoots a young boy in the foot while trying to make him dance. The action is depicted using a long shot. The content of this scene also affects the way in which the mobster and the scene are perceived by viewers. The mobster shoots at the young bartender in a playful manner, clearly trying to entertain and impress his friends. Thus this scene is a prime example of how content and grammar interact to influence the audience to accept the mobster, despite his carelessness and violent nature. The audience reacts to the scene with more levity because it is conveyed in a comedic tone, which may influence them to associate the mobster with humor rather than violence. Another example of the comic distance is evident when Tommy breaks a glass on a restaurant owner's head. This scene is also depicted using medium and long shots. Tommy's friends in the scene react to his actions by laughing and encouraging his actions, rather than admonishing him. Here again the content along with the shot structure work to influence the viewer to regard the mobster's actions as humorous, even playful, rather than violent and cruel.

The violent scenes in this film are shot with objective shots. Thus the action is never seen from the victim's point of view, which limits the viewer's ability to identify with the victim. The one violent scene that uses a subjective shot is when one of the gangsters, Tommy DeVito, is executed to avenge the killing of a "made man" done by Tommy. Here the camera takes the point of view of Tommy as he realizes he is going to be killed. This scene is meaningful because it influences the audience to identify with Tommy.

Level shots were primarily used throughout the film. This choice in camera shot allowed the audience to feel as though the mobsters were on their same level, making it easier to identify with them. They were not shot with low angles to look powerful, which may have alienated the audience, nor were they shot with high angles which would have made them look weak or inept, possibly making the audience feel they were unappealing.

In the film's last major sequence Henry narrates as he has to maneuver several jobs around town as he is followed by helicopter surveillance. This scene relies heavily on subjective shots, as the audience sees the helicopter from Henry's point of view, feeling his paranoia as Henry's voice-over gives a first-hand account of the action. In this scene, Henry's car is shot from a high angle, making Henry appear weaker and helpless. This aspect of the scene works to draw sympathy from the audience.

The final scene of the movie has Henry talking directly to the camera, as if it were a friend. The last shot of the movie is Henry looking right at the camera, out to the audience. This not only connects the audience to Henry, it creates a final impression for the audience, where Henry is addressing them in an intimate and private way. The content during this scene also deserves attention. At the end of the film, the main gangster, Henry, ends up in the witness protection program and is living in a suburban neighborhood. And as he looks directly at the camera he states, "Today, everything is different. There's no action. I have to wait around like everyone else. Can't even get decent food...I'm an average nobody." Henry is now an average guy, and the audience has watched his life go full circle, from a teen wanting to get into the mafia, to a middle-aged man who has experienced the life of a gangster and is now forced to live a quiet, normal life. The audience is persuaded to feel for the misfortune Henry has experienced, while identifying with his current situation.

The Good Guys vs. The Bad Guys: *Patriot Games*

The main villain in the movie *Patriot Games* is a terrorist named Sean, who is part of an attempted terrorist attack against members of the royal family in England. When a former CIA analyst, Jack Ryan, gets caught in the middle of this attack and kills Sean's brother, Sean becomes devoted to seeking revenge. Throughout the movie multiple scenes of back region behavior are shown. However it is the content of these back regions that affects the audience's alliance to characters. For example, when Sean and the other terrorists are shown participating in back region behaviors it often involves discussing or planning their next attacks, against both Jack Ryan and the royal family. Also, by the time the audience views the back regions of the terrorists they have already been manipulated to side with Jack. When the CIA and Jack Ryan are shown in back regions they are discussing ways to prevent any harm to Jack's family by these terrorists. In one scene, Jack and other CIA agents are looking at mug shots and old surveillance photos of terrorists and discussing their pasts, including past attacks and criminal records. Here the audience is given the same information that the CIA agents have, thus the content is working to align viewers with Jack.

Jack Ryan, who rejoins the CIA to help protect his family and find the terrorists, is photographed numerous times with close-ups. In one scene, after Jack has been shot by one of the terrorists he is shown in a hospital bed, and the camera slowly pans in and then stops in a close-up of Jack's face. Here the audience is persuaded by the close-up to sympathize with the injured Jack, as they see him in an intimate shot

while he is vulnerable. The camera angle used in this shot is slightly high, adding to the vulnerability and weakness of Jack. The terrorists are also shot with close-ups several times throughout the movie, although not as often as Jack. What is important to note during these close-ups is the content. For example in one of the first scenes the viewer witnesses the terrorists loading their guns, and then the camera captures them in a close-up. During the opening terrorist attack, the main terrorist, Sean, is shown multiple times in a close-up, however he is wearing a black ski mask that covers his face. This close-up works to disconnect the audience from the terrorist, who appears faceless. The terrorists are shown again in a close-up as they plan an attack against the royals. All these instances of close-ups of the bad guys are coupled with content that discourages the viewer to identify with them, instead influencing the viewer to fear and dislike them by providing evidence of their criminal acts and violent intentions.

Subjective shots were used in the movie to show the action from the eyes of Jack as well as several of the terrorists. Again, this feature is important to note in relation to the content depicted through the shots. In one scene, Jack is being followed by a member of the terrorist organization, and the audience views much of the sequence through subjective shots that represent Jack's vantage point. Here the audience members are influenced to feel the fear and paranoia that Jack feels because they witness the ensuing danger as if they were in Jack's shoes. Thus the audience ultimately identifies with Jack's situation. In another scene, the viewer experiences the action through the subjective shot of the terrorists, seeing everything through night vision goggles that the terrorists are wearing. However in this scene the terrorists are using the goggles to hunt down Jack and his family, leaving the audience with the impression that they are seeing what the hunter would see when chasing his or her prey. By this point in the movie, the audience has already been manipulated to align with Jack and his family, and therefore this subjective shot persuades the audience to disapprove of the terrorists and their actions even further.

Discussion

Joshua Meyrowitz's concept of para-proxemics outlined in "Television and Interpersonal Behavior" forms a key part of the argument of this study because it explains the manner in which camera shots influence a viewer's perception of characters. Meyrowitz proposes that the "framing variable" in camera shots creates a mediated distance between the viewer and the character depicted in these shots. Therefore, a close-up represents a more personal and intimate distance, whereas a

long shot creates an impersonal distance. In the movie *Goodfellas* the viewer is influenced to feel a personal and intimate connection to the gangsters because they are often depicted in close-ups, which creates a close mediated distance between viewer and the gangsters, like the distance friends would share. It is easier for the viewers to accept and understand Henry and the other gangsters when they view them in close-ups, as opposed to long shots that are colder and more removed.

The camera shots used to shoot the criminals in *Patriot Games* were more variable than those used to shoot the *Goodfellas* gangsters, although both were shot several times in close-ups. The criminals in *Patriot Games* were often shot in medium and long shots, whereas the gangsters in *Goodfellas* were shot more frequently in close-ups. This variation in camera shots lends credence to the argument that production variables such as camera shots affect whether viewers perceive bad guys in a positive or negative manner. However, production variables are not the sole factor in shaping how viewers respond to characters. And when considered alone, production variables may actually not determine whether a viewer perceives a bad guy positively or negatively. By looking at two movies, both of which show criminals in close-ups, but portray these characters in different ways in the content, it is obvious that viewer perception of villainous characters results from the interaction of content and production variables. The camera distance or angle chosen to depict a scene or capture a character may be carefully chosen to elicit a certain response from viewers. Nonetheless, the content also works within the frame created by the camera to influence a viewer's response. Therefore it is important to consider content and production variables in relation to one another, noting the interaction of the two to form an overall effect. A close-up of a killer may actually influence the audience to identify with the killer's situation, and understand his actions to a degree of acceptance. However in a larger context of a storyline a close-up of a killer may make a viewer feel uneasy about sharing such a close mediated distance with someone who has been portrayed as violent and immoral. In media studies it is important to recognize that every aspect, from the medium used to convey the message, to the content or message itself and the way the content is delivered through production variables, interacts and builds upon the next to achieve the end product.

The narration and shot selections used in *Goodfellas*, coupled with the way the lives of the mobsters are portrayed, creates a frame that is personal, even intimate at times, eliciting identification and acceptance from viewers. Also, the violent content of the film is downplayed by long shots, whereas the characters are depicted in close-ups, influencing the audience to overlook the flaws of the characters and identify with

them on a personal basis. This conclusion relates to what is already accepted about the manipulation of viewers by grammar variables and content because it takes into account concepts such as *para-proxemics* and *para-social impressions* by addressing the influence that production variables have on the framing of characters. It also relates to the conclusions developed by Shannon Robinson and Day Evans in “*Platoon: The Implications of Grammar Variables on Viewer Reaction.*” In their study, Robinson and Evans found that grammar variables such as camera angles influence viewers to perceive characters based on identification rather than the content of their actions. This study further develops that idea by noting that, while grammar variables influence viewers to respond to characters based on the way the camera frames them; the content of the shot is not overlooked and also elicits a reaction from viewers.

Ultimately, this study has uncovered the power that the interaction of grammar and content wields in the manipulation of viewers. The results of the study are also symbolic of a larger trend, in which all aspects of media-content, medium, and grammar-interact to create and form the nature of media images. Essentially, production variables and content work together in influencing the reaction of viewers in response to characters. Alone, both these aspects of media have the capability to influence viewers to some degree, but their ultimate power is realized in relation to one another.

Delimitations

It is important to note that because this study was conducted analytically any of the arguments produced in the study are theoretical, meaning there is no empirical data to prove the results conclusively. Also, this study looks only at two movies, both of which are from very similar genres. A good follow-up study may look at how grammar variables and content interact in a comedic or tragic film to influence viewers to perceive characters in a positive light. A further study could focus on interpreting how grammar variables and content are used to influence viewers to perceive and respond to characters in a negative way. As this study showed different aspects of media are inherently connected. A further study could build on this idea and test how the interaction of different media and content affect an audience's perception of characters. For example, a study could examine the change in a viewer's response to a character from reading about the character in a book versus seeing the character through a visual medium such as television or film.

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The Two-Tiers of Television

By Micheal Parisi

“What is she doing,” Neil asks as he, Bill, and Sam continue to watch their first porno film. Bill replies, “she’s in good shape (Feig 312).” At the same time, Lindsay is feverishly writing down the answers on the math test Daniel has just stolen. Daniel says, “Damn it’s weird that you can do all of this in your head. You’re like a brainiac or something (Feig 306).” Do these sound like characters and situations you’ve heard and seen before? A good portion of the American public was never able to identify with these well-developed characters when the show *Freaks and Geeks*, in which they were featured was cancelled after just eighteen episodes. Fortunately, with the popularity of the DVD (digital versatile disc), a whole new group of people will be exposed to some of the most original and realistic drama/comedy that has ever aired on network television.

It Takes Two

Why do networks green light shows that they know are too realistic/depressing or too surreal to gain big ratings? Why would they green light shows that were destined to fail? Television has entered a new realm in the last few years (due mostly to the inception of the DVD). It currently exists as a two-tier system. It is separated into on-air successes and on-air failures that lead to off-air successes. This study will show that the two-tier system that exists in television allows for “cult” shows to gain popularity and become moneymaking entities even after they have been canned. I believe that network executives now factor these things in when selecting new shows for the upcoming season. The mere attachment of the term “cult” to a television program is an instant selling point in the media marketplace today. This study is important because this two-tier system allows many more different types of shows to get to see the light of day. Also, this two-tier DVD television system permits more people to enter previous cults and keeps cancelled shows from being forgotten.

The mainstream media have caught on to how DVD sales can really boost the popularity (as well as the gross) of many films. The Jerry Bruckheimer big budget action film Bad Boys II cost over \$170 million dollars to make and earned only \$138 million dollars in theatres (www.boxofficemojo.com). This didn’t worry Bruckheimer and Columbia Pictures because it is estimated that movies at this time

generate fifty percent of profits from DVD sales alone. Another film, *The Bourne Identity* started a franchise with the help of video rentals and sales. I believe that network executives now approach television shows with these things in mind. The difference is that the notion of cult television is now believed to be a moneymaking system. Cult shows' main selling point is that they are advertised to include things that people cannot get anywhere else. This two-tier system is beneficial for the networks (more revenue) and is also beneficial to the viewing audience because it encourages the networks to take more chances on different and possibly groundbreaking programs.

The Past

I could not locate any previous studies that explore the two-tier system I have studied here. Instead, most television articles/studies focus solely on successful shows that networks are currently airing or what types of shows networks need to pick up in order to generate some type of ratings boost. It has been mentioned many times that the DVD sales of popular films are currently part of a huge moneymaking industry, but I have not found many studies that have explained the importance of DVD with cult television. *USA Today* ran an article on *Family Guy* early last year attributing the show's gaining popularity to DVD. Also this year, *Entertainment Weekly* dedicated a small section of its "TV on DVD" issue to must-own cult television shows. No articles or studies that I could locate have even mentioned the notion of the existence of a possible two-tier system. The mainstream media still look at television in terms of on-air successes. Everything is grouped into two categories in the media: the on-air successes that live on and the failed shows that will be forgotten. By the end of this study it will be clear that the networks are thinking much farther down the line than what appears and has been written about.

The Suspects

I have selected five cult shows to analyze and provide an analysis for my two-tier system claims. These shows have been selected based on cult status dictated from print media, positive reviews, DVD sales, and fan appreciation. They are each unique in their own ways, but also similar as well. Their similarities in content and approach are probably what lead to their on-air downfall in the end. They true are representations of what I have labeled as cult. While this was primarily analytical study, I still used some descriptive observations to guide my findings. I looked at the similarities between shows that failed as well as the uniformities that successful on-air television shows exhibited. In

comparing these types of shows I conjured up follow up questions to my thesis.

1. **Do networks purposefully select shows that they know have no chance of on-air success?**
2. **Do cult shows strive for a type of separation from popular shows? Is that what ultimately leads to their downfall?**
3. **Is the notion that cult is something special that others do not know about part of the draw of cult shows?**

Five cult shows that will be analyzed in this essay. *Freaks and Geeks* ran on NBC in the fall of 1999 to the summer of 2000. It took place circa 1980 and followed around two groups of high school students. The first group, the freaks were the burnouts who skipped class and did drugs. The second group, the geeks were the socially awkward kids who got death threats on a daily basis and spent the rest of their time watching *Star Wars*. The show was critically acclaimed, but could not find a large enough audience to keep it going on air. It was an atypical high school drama because it was also really funny at times. Plus, it was actually designed for adults instead of just teenagers. None of the actors wore any makeup, and they all looked like the people you actually went to high school with. The story lines didn't have big morals and they didn't deal with huge social issues in a falsified way. The episodes were about high school kids just trying to get through the day. The endings weren't always happy, and oftentimes they were downright depressing. Real life isn't always about victories, but unfortunately that was what the mass viewing audience was looking for in this type of show. After being cancelled by NBC, *Freaks* was picked up briefly by the Fox Family Channel so that most of its unaired episodes could be shown.

My So-Called Life lasted for 19 episodes during the 1994-95 season. It followed 15-year-old Angela Chase through her sophomore year in high school. The show focused mainly on drama and like *Freaks* it never took the easy way out. It garnered decent ratings for a while, but was still outdone every week by the more popular teen drama *Beverly Hills 90210*. The show was downright depressing at times. The episodes were meant to make the audience cry. The networks and the audiences alike weren't ready for this type of show. It actually gained cult status due to sporadic airings of marathons on MTV during the next couple years after it was canned.

Get A Life was a Fox show that was hilarious, but also bizarre. It centered on a 30-year-old mailman named Chris who still lived with his parents. The show parodied the essence of sitcoms with story lines that seemed to be conceived from acid trips. Aliens invaded and roller skating tigers led this show to an early grave.

Sports Night premiered on ABC and lasted for just two seasons. It was a comedy/drama about a mock sports show. But, most of the main focus was on what went on behind the scenes. It focused on the back region of news and sports broadcasts. It confused audiences with its dramatic story lines mixed comedic undertones. Unlike most half hour "dramedies," this show was biting satirical. Its ratings were also hurt by the fact that there was no laugh track. Audiences weren't sure if they were supposed to be laughing or taking the show seriously.

Family Guy was a cartoon similar to the *Simpsons* that debuted on the Fox network in 1999. It centered on a very strange and off-the-wall family that included a talking/homicidal baby, a talking alcoholic dog, a moronic son, and a father more moronic than Homer Simpson. And that's just the immediate family. The show conjured many of its jokes from random flashback scenes and large amounts of 80's pop culture references. Fox let the show run for three seasons before determining that it was just too strange for most people to handle. The one thing that *Family Guy* has over the rest of these shows is that it will be returning to television in April 2005--thus, making it the first show to return after being cancelled. Reasoning for *Family Guy*'s return can be mostly credited to its almost three million DVD sold and the 1.9 million viewers a night it attracts on Cartoon Network. It is the second highest selling cartoon on DVD after the *Simpsons*. The network executives were rewarded twice over by taking a chance on *Family Guy*. It made them large profits in video sales, and now it will likely become a hit primetime show.

Defining the Cult

Television shows that reach cult status usually differ substantially from the shows that dominate in the television ratings. They reach a niche group of people who can identify with the source material that so many other people cannot understand and identify with. Shows that become cult favorites are like outsiders. They are passed off as unimportant and meaningless by most, but those who identify with them, really identify with them.

The content in cult television shows differs substantially from the content of the shows that dominate the television ratings every week. A typical episode of the hit show *Friends* features another problem in the

on again off again relationship of show stars Ross and Rachel or the wacky-adventures of Phoebe and her guitar. These light-hearted and easily accessible topics are not found in cult television shows. Cult shows push the limits and hardly ever offer easy answers and outcomes. In episode 106 of the cult hit *Get a Life* the main character Chris finds a girlfriend, gets engaged, gets married, and gets divorced all in the span of one day. Episode 105 of the show *Freak and Geeks* ends in the most original and odd way of any television show that I have ever come across. Lindsay, after watching her friend Daniel continue to lie about cheating, bursts out laughing and continue to do so for over a minute until the credits roll.

The content in the second tier (cult) of television is not for everyone. These shows aren't designed to necessarily give things a utopian perspective. *My So-Called Life* was thought to be too dark for the teen audience. The majority of people didn't want to tune into a show that was going to make them depressed every week. The brilliant and surreal show *Sports Night* created by Aaron Sorkin (*The West Wing*) left audiences confused. It was unclear to many whether it was a drama or comedy. These are the types of content issues the separate cult from the rest. The above differences in content are why small cults develop. But, there are people out there who want innovative and experimental television.

The themes of cult television can be put into two categories. Those that are too strange/barely existent and those in which the themes are too real. The first category is where I would place shows such as *Family Guy*, *Sports Night*, and *Get a Life*. These shows all differ from television's on-air successes because the themes in these shows are just plain weird/and not always easy to grasp. *Family Guy* seeks to incite laughter by packing as many flashback pop culture references into a 22-minute episode as possible. Every episode of *Sports Night* works on several emotional levels. Relationship problems were combined with on-air reports and backstage antics created on-air mishaps and tension. *Sports Night* showed the front and back regions of sports wrap-up show. Once again, it was just too different for the masses to accept.

Shows such as *Freaks and Geeks* and *My So-Called Life* fit into the latter category of shows that were too realistically themed. Both of these shows tried to make the stories as true to life as possible. These shows dealt with controversial race, sex, and violence issues. This alienated many possible fans because it would seem that the mass public would rather watch a glorified falsification of high school instead a bitingly real depiction of it. Take *Beverly Hills 90210* for example, the show lasted for ten seasons, but was representative of very few actual

high schools. All of the actors were beautiful people and were much older than the characters they were portraying. *Freaks and Geeks* was a representation of what the majority of high schools were like. According to creator Paul Feig, the show was really just about regular kids trying to get through the day. *My So-Called Life* was similar to *Freaks* in that respect. The American audience it seems would rather watch a show about what they wish their lives could be like, or about unrealistic situations, than see reflections of their lives on the screen.

The characters in cult shows are often very different from mainstream television characters. They are either too real or too fake. *Freaks and Geeks* was specifically cast to look like people you would have talked to and interacted with in high school. The actors weren't even allowed to use makeup. This was unheard of for any television show. The characters were all based on real people, so that the cartoon-like element of over exaggerating was not present. Most mainstream dramas contain quirky characters with abnormal habits and even the "losers" or "nerds" in these shows are better looking than most kids in high school. For example, in the very popular show *Dawson's Creek* the character Joey (played by Katie Holmes) was supposed to be the ordinary looking friend who was always thought of as a friend to guys. In episode 112 she gets dressed up and all of the sudden all of the males in the show find her to be sexually attractive. In real life Katie Holmes models in commercials and has been featured on the cover of almost every men's magazine available. Most popular shows are afraid to commit fully to having actors who look real for the parts they are playing. The ugly people are still in fact, beautiful people.

Many cult shows are very character driven. The comedy or drama depends on the deliveries from the actors. *Get A Life* is the prime example of a show that a network didn't know what to do with. Fox cancelled the show in 1992 because the majority of television viewers didn't want to tune in and watch 30-year-old mailman deal with aliens and go on undersea adventures in his bathtub every week. This show was the anti-sitcom, but unfortunately the public was anti this show. The majority of the viewing public wants quirky characters, but once characters are completely absurd and ironic, the appeal is lost. The *Simpsons* is currently in its 16th season on Fox. Its popularity stems from its satirical characters and over-the-top story lines. *Family Guy* featured a homicidal baby, a talking dog, and was as close of a show to the *Simpsons* to hit the mainstream in years. The characters were a bit more controversial than those in the *Simpsons* and thus the show was pushed to cult status. Whether the characters were the reason the show was

cancelled is not the issue here. The issue is that in cult shows the characters either are too real or too absurd for the mass public to handle.

Old Model

The old television model was a bit different from the current one that has been proposed here. A show cancelled after a brief run was a failure, plain and simple. A show lasting only a few seasons did not get syndication deals. Shows such as *Police Squad* (lasting only six episodes) are just a glimmer of a memory now. It gets played about once a year on a cable station during a *Naked Gun* marathon, but that's it. That show was a blunder, but a possible DVD release could raise it up from the grave. The old television model was simple. In 1970, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) implemented the Fin-Syn (Financial Interest and Syndication) rules. The rules dictated that networks could not participate in the financial interest of television's programming after the first-run and were banned from the creation of "in-house syndication arms" (McAllister). A show's success was therefore contingent on first run success. Most shows that got syndicated were on for close to 100 episodes. This type of model in no way dictated a second chance to shows lasting only a few episodes like *Freaks and Geeks* or *My So-Called Life*. In 1991, however, the FCC eased the Fin-Syn rules, and by 1995, court rulings essentially eliminated them. Currently, shows cancelled after very few episodes get airings on cable channels before being totally cut from television. *Freaks and Geeks*, *My So-Called Life*, and *Sports Night* have all benefited from short runs after their initial cancellations. The networks once again capitalize on many levels with this type of move. Not only do they make money off of the broadcast rights to each show, but they also gain more fans for the show, which generates more revenue for a possible DVD release.

Mythologies

The myths surrounding network rejection and cancellations have always stemmed from three main theories. The first is the constant changing of a show's timeslot or a "bad" timeslot to begin with. *Family Guy* saw its timeslot switched eight times during its initial run on Fox. *Family Guy* Creator Seth McFarlane said, "We kind of gave up a while ago" (Levin). *Freaks and Geeks* was ushered in on Saturday nights at 8 o'clock, which was called the "death slot" according to executive producer Judd Apatow (Apatow). Changing a new show's timeslot has proven to be bad signs as far as cancellation goes. It usually means two things. The first is that the networks have little faith in the shows and are pushing for some type of miracle that might occur. The second, is that

many people who are fans of the show will lose track of when it is on and won't be able to willingly watch it even if they wanted.

This leads to the myth of network push. The best way for new show to gain a viewing audience is by ample advertising so that people know the show is out there to watch. But the trend seems to be that advertising falters when a show is doing poorly in the rating department. Winnie Holzman, as well as the rest producers of *My So-Called Life* all still believe that the show failed because "ABC failed to promote it properly" (Jensen 132). *Freaks and Geeks* was getting just over 2 minutes of primetime advertising space after its initial few episodes aired. That got the show about 10 "TV spots" in a given week. Most shows normally get at least ten times that amount of advertising, if not more.

Another myth that is tagged as a reason for cancellation is when networks put shows on hiatus. *Family Guy* aired for two seasons and then was put on an eleven-month hiatus (Levin). Since the show was not interrupted mid-season, fans thought the show had ended. People working on the show knew after a few episodes into the season that the show would not last. *Freaks and Geeks* only aired two episodes before its first hiatus. By the time the show was cancelled, it was on for twelve out of twenty-six weeks. It is nearly impossible for a show to build a fan base when it is only on sporadically. It is especially important for shows such as *Freaks* and *My So-Called Life* because the episodes promote a continuous story line. Interruptions in airing shows interrupts the story lines.

The Fans

The most important ingredient in cult shows is the audience/fans. They are the few that love and appreciate the shows that so many people didn't. They prove that despite the lack of mainstream appeal, these shows do have somewhat of a significant impact, just not a big enough interest according to ratings standards. I believe that when networks produce these shows on home video they are actually catering to the diehard cult fans. These people (myself included) are eager to re-experience every episode of these short-lived shows that they loved when they were on T.V. When the shows are released on video they include bonus features and unaired episodes. These are the exact things that cult fans want. They'll do anything for new source material of a show that they feel is their little secret. As I stated previously, DVD sales can generate as much revenue as the shows garnered when they aired. These five shows I have used as examples have the potential to generate millions of dollars. *Freaks* and *My So-Called Life* both received DVD

releases because over forty thousands fans signed online petitions to get the shows on video. It's pretty safe to say that both shows will easily sell well over forty thousand units given word of mouth alone. *Freaks* received two releases: a regular edition and a fan edition that included many more hours of supplemental materials, all of which is included in an 80-page full size yearbook that retails for \$120.00. The "TV on DVD" market is so popular now that *Entertainment Weekly* dedicated an entire issue to the best of "TV on DVD." The issue was separated into categories with *Freaks and Geeks*, *My So-Called Life*, *Sports Night*, and *Family Guy* all making the list.

What's it all Mean?

My research shows that television has undergone a significant change in the last few years. Many new and original ideas have the potential to become a television series because the two-tier system does not limit the types of shows networks have to choose to make. What we have is the potential for a much broader choice of television. This also means that smaller networks like MTV and HBO can take more chances because they can make up production expenses and lack of viewers in DVD sales. Also more expensive shows have the potential to get made because back-end DVD sales can recoup the difference. Most importantly is that this study shows that there is plenty of money to be made from certain cult shows because the people that embrace them will do anything to keep on reliving the experience. This means increased revenues for the networks. Therefore this two-tier system can benefit two groups: the audience and the networks. The networks get increased profits, and the fans get to enjoy their favorite shows forever.

Delimitations

Since this is only a short study, there are obviously some aspects of the issue that I have purposely left out. Television show "success" in financial terms is based primarily on advertisement sales. Therefore, network decisions to cancel shows are sometimes based on the fact the "wrong audience" (from advertiser's perspective) is being reached by certain programs. Cancellations could have nothing to do with number of viewers, but rather with type of viewers in terms of desirable demographics. I do not feel this was the case here because this study primarily dealt with the two types of television, not simply a comparison of ratings for successful and non-successful television shows. Also, DVD sales profits do not always go to the networks. Deals are worked out before a show airs with regards to royalties, so sometimes it is safe to say that networks have no interest in a show after it has been cancelled.

Additionally, I used only a small sample of cult shows in my study. There could be many other popular cult shows that do in fact have the same characteristics as mainstream shows. Truly, I did not have space to go into detail about the exact characteristics that create hit television shows.

In the Future

The best way to extend this study would be to look at a much larger sample. For example, one might look at the last three television seasons. In each season, one could look at the number of returning shows and the number of cancelled shows. Are networks taking more chances on shows and are the shows being cancelled getting DVD releases? I know, for example, that the show *Greg the Bunny* aired only eight of its thirteen episodes, but still received a DVD release due to online petitions. Also, Fox's show *Wonderfalls* aired only four of its initial thirteen episodes, but it too is receiving the royal DVD treatment due to a fifty-thousand fan internet plea. Do the networks give new shows only minimal chances before canceling them in order to keep unaired episodes as incentives to buy the DVD of the show? Do networks order only half seasons of shows (thirteen episodes) because they feel they have little chance of survival? These are all questions that could be explored in another study.

Conclusion

This study has challenged the current television model. Despite many television shows being revived on DVD, the television model has not been described as two-tiered. My study has examined how success is not contingent on on-air ratings, but rather on off-air successes, which include merchandising, reruns, and home video sales. This study makes the claim that Networks have at the very least taken this two-tier system into account and have thus used it to benefit them. Television revenue is now based on much more than on air success and at the rate things are going, on-air success could become just a portion of what is considered a successful television program.

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Teen Magazines and Lack of Young Female Voters By Rachel Russell

In 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was passed stating that, "The right of all citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."¹ This amendment was a victory in a long, hard fought battle by Susan B. Anthony and supporters who spent over seventy years organizing, planning, and protesting for women's rights. August 26, 1920 marks a memorable day in history for all women and serves as a reminder of dedication and perseverance.

Fifty years later, the 26th Amendment was approved, granting "The right of citizens who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of age."² Although these two amendments are relatively new, voters seem to be taking these rights for granted already. There are approximately forty- three million US citizens between the ages of eighteen and thirty.³ Only about sixty-four percent of these citizens are registered to vote, accounting for twenty-four percent of total eligible voters.⁴

More specifically, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that over thirty-eight million eligible female voters abstained from the 2000 presidential election.⁵ Twenty-two million of those females were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four; with college-aged women being the largest group of non-active voters.⁶ Single women are one of the most progressive demographic groups in the country, yet fifty million didn't vote in the 2000 election.⁷ Ironically, women account for fifty-

¹ U.S. Constitution. Art. XIX

² U.S. Constitution. Art. XXVI, Sec. 1.

³ Lopez, Mark. "Youth Vote Coalition: Facts about Young Voters" Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning. 2004. Youth Vote Coalition. 26 October 2004. <<http://www.youthvote.org/voter/facts.cfm>>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Andre, Jill. "American women are taking their voting right for granted." The Easterner. 12 October 2004. 10 October 2004. <<http://www.easterneronline.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2004/10/12/416dbd33d57c6>>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Dawn, Laura. "Join the National Women's Election Action Day" Email to Joshua Meyrowitz. 14 Sept. 2004.

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one percent of the American population and could technically change the outcome of the election.

A poll last year conducted by *Women Voices Women Vote*, a group that encourages unmarried women to vote, surveyed three thousand women and found that sixty-five percent believed the country was not following the correct path.⁸ Young women could in fact influence the direction of many policies including childcare, personal safety, economic security, environment, and abortion rights. The economic issue most pertinent to women is the minimum wage increase due to the fact that this would benefit sixty-one percent of women.⁹ Young women should be concerned about funding for education, and financial aid that would help with a college agenda.¹⁰ The most important issue at the current time would involve women sending their sons, daughters, and husbands off to a war and risk the chance of losing them in battle.

This trend of abstaining from voting isn't a new one; voting has been slowly decaying since 1972 when the amendment was passed to grant adults eighteen and older the right to vote. In 1972, 18-30 year olds had a fifty percent turnout, while in 2000 a mere thirty percent voted.¹¹ This is not a hidden fact that goes ignored. Presidential candidates know that their young listeners aren't going to have an influence in the election because of low voting rate, so they refrain from aiming their campaign at them. Politicians rarely aim their campaign towards concerns of young adults because young adults are extremely unpredictable. Candidates are smart and promote issues that target the older population since they are the ones most likely to vote.

The New Generation

This year, in the 2004 Presidential Election race, uproar was created to rally young adults to register to vote because a close election was predicted. Celebrities, activists, and political groups marketed products, people, and magazines to the college student in hopes to get them to the polls on November 2nd. Sean Combs (a.k.a P. Diddy) tried to

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Andre, Jill. "American women are taking their voting right for granted." The Easterner. 12 October 2004. 10 October 2004.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Patterson, Thomas. "Election Interest among Young Adults is Up Sharply from 2000." Vanishing Voter. 12 Mar. 2004. John F. Kennedy School of Government. 26 Oct. 2004.

<<http://www.vanishingvoter.org/Releases/release031104.shtml>>.

make voting a hip thing to do, creating shirts that say, "Vote or Die" worn by famous celebrities like Paris Hilton. Awareness was also increased by actress Drew Barrymore who took it upon herself to make a film interviewing other political elites and celebrities on why young voters aren't encouraged to vote. MTV's slogan, "Choose or Lose" was broadcast throughout the popular music video show "Total Request Live" popping up reminding you to vote on November 2nd.

Recent teen pop star, Ashlee Simpson wore t-shirts saying, "I like to get it on with boys who vote." Howard Stern's website asked viewers to register to vote before browsing the website. The bandwagon was the popular force that was being used to drive in the votes. This isn't surprising since when the American Bar Association asked students, "What steps can society take to encourage more youth to vote?" students offered more MTV and student interviews with candidates, internet voting, interesting TV and commercial and radio ads, etc.¹²

All the political pandemonium raised in the 2004 elections made political analysts believe that young voters could possibly spike the declining voting trend. Heightened political interest among young voters was the largest increase of interest. They were proved to be right after ballots were cast showing, "approximately 51-52% of eligible 18-29 year olds voted, compared to 42% in 2000."¹³ Although this is an improvement, at the present time we don't know how many women voted. Doug Lewis, head of The Election Center, a non-profit group says that, "Voting is a learned behavior. After you've voted three times, you're likely to continue voting."¹⁴ If voting is learned, then a key question is: Why aren't women learning how to vote?

Socialization of Women

This question can be explored by looking at the political socialization of women, meaning how women acquire political views, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors and how they change over time. Political socialization can be drawn from four sources. Family is a major indicator, because both sexes are heavily influenced by their parents'

¹² "Law Day Student Survey 2000: What Do High School Students Think and Know about Topical Legal." American Bar Association. 2000. <<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/studentsurvey2000.html>>.

¹³ "Quick Facts: Youth Turnout 2004." CIRCLE. 2004. <http://www.civicyouth.org/quick/youth_voting.htm>.

¹⁴ Ricketts, Camille. "Millions Rushing to sign up to vote." Knight Ridder Newspapers. 4 Oct. 2004. <<http://www.centredaily.com/mld/centredaily/9829294.htm>>.

views and political party. School and religion also play parts through messages sent by reciting the pledge the allegiance or ideas voiced by ministers as ethical. When students reach junior high and high school age, peers are involved in the political socialization processes because this is often the first time both males and females actively discuss politics.

Carol Conaway, Assistant Professor at the University of New Hampshire expresses that there is a "critical juncture" at graduation. Many women don't want to seem aggressive towards men so they suppress their political interest. She confirms that women do indeed have definite ideas about the way society should progress, but many are either afraid or unsure how to express it. Women who tend to go straight to the job market and have no college education are more politically aware in a job situation due to exposure to diversity and the need for skills in a political career.

The fourth major source of political socialization consists of the media. Professor Conaway suggests that media are in fact more important influencers than parents or schools. Each sex turns to the media to see their place in society, and in many media women are most often portrayed as being dependent on a man. MTV, the popular station for teenagers, plays upon the pimp and prostitute fantasy. Women in scantily clad outfits are seen hanging onto men wearing gold chains. Not only are programs on television enforcing this image, but so are advertisements. Men are rarely shown mopping the floor advertising the latest cleaning product. Women are put in this role as the homemaker to keep them in the private sphere; they aren't supposed to be political.¹⁵

Because many women are hesitant to express political interest and lack the aggression that men have, they are seen as being dependent on a male. Teen magazines enforce this role by playing on the importance of women to "Get your Perfect Look"¹⁶ or "Guys, Guys, Guys! 486 Things You Gotta Know About Him."¹⁷ Although teen magazine editors promise to promote more worldly material in their issues, we have yet to see it happen. "I hate to say it, but they're so much smarter than I was when I was their age," says Atoosa Rubenstein, editor of Cosmo Girl. "They have huge ambitions. These are girls who want a lot. I have 15-year-old girls asking me about internships. If we only

¹⁵ Conaway, Carol. Personal Interview. 13 Dec. 2004.

¹⁶ Teen People. Sept. 2004.

¹⁷ Ibid.

showed them pages of clothes, I don't think that's giving them a sophisticated read."¹⁸

Due to the political socialization from family, school, religion, peers, and the media, women aren't encouraged to participate in political affairs. Growing up, teenage girls often need popular teen magazines. What do those magazines teach their readers about women's roles in society? Do teen magazines contribute to the low voter turnout among young females?

Other Studies

Airbrushed icons, dating guides, and advertisements on the most fashionable clothes and jewelry fill the pages of teen magazines today. Teens are drawn to these magazines by the covers featuring the hot and upcoming celebrities. Readership of leading teen magazines generates over ten million dollars from subscriptions.¹⁹ As stated earlier, this decrease in voting among young women is something that is disrespectful and embarrassing to female heritage. To look at why this is happening I turn to these teen magazines, to see if they contribute to the lack of voting because of the absence of political material.

There have not been very many studies conducted on the media and the influence on voting, so I looked more generally at teen magazine influence. One article I found, "Negotiating Femininity: Girls in Early Adolescence Read Teen Magazines" expressed that femininity begins at an early age. Lisa L. Duke and Peggy J. Kreshel's research revolves around the consciousness of women and the ads that are targeted at them. They interview ten girls between the ages of ten and thirteen who were regular readers of *Seventeen*, *Sassy*, *YM*, and *Teen*. Because Duke and Kreshel weren't interested in generalizing to all American girls, they just focused on particular young women to get personal reactions. Interviews were done in the comfort of the home to make the girls relaxed. They were told to purchase a magazine of choice to be read prior to the meeting with the interviewer. Interviews showed that teen magazines only reinforce the place women occupy in society.²⁰

¹⁸ Associated Press. "Teen Magazines: Fewer fashion tips, more worldly fare." *USA*. 18 July 2002. <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0718/p17s01-ussc.html>>.

¹⁹ Norton, Bonny. "When is a teen magazine not a teen magazine?" *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. 45 (2001/2002): 296-300.

²⁰ Duke, Lisa and Peggy Kreshel. "Negotiating Femininity: Girls in Early Adolescence Read Teen Magazines." *Journal of Communication of Inquiry*. 22:1 (1998): 48-71.

An article titled, "Voter Turnout among Young Women and Men" covered 1972-2000. It was filled with statistics and graphs which explicitly showed turnouts among voters by sex, nationality, and age throughout the years. I was most interested in the data that showed single young women voters declining by "18 percentage points since 1972."²¹

A startling study was done by Kate Pierce on the "Socialization of Teenage Girls through Teen-Magazine Fiction: The Making of a New Woman or an Old Lady?" She did a content analysis on *Teen* and *Seventeen* magazines and found that a large percentage of the articles portrayed the main character as being dependent on someone else. Pierce conducted the study by looking at fiction stories from 1987-1991. She found that a significant number of fiction stories had to do with males and emphasized that females should not be "aggressive or solve problems."²² This study suggests that teen magazines reinforce the role of a woman's place and possibly deter women from taking political action.

Marnina Gonick did a study involving feminist theory where she talked with many girls about creating a teen magazine. Responses were heard about including fashion, makeup and other stereotypical attributes. Gonick wasn't the least bit surprised but wanted to expand their minds. She knew that "Conventional teen magazines use powerful hegemonic discourses of femininity, heterosexuality, romance and morality in an explicit attempt to win consent to the dominant order,"²³ but didn't know what a non-commercial magazine would contribute. The result ended up being positive meaning the girls came up with something that Gonick was hoping for, suggesting that we can make a positive change in media and its influence on teenagers.

Researching the teen market on magazines is also pertinent to my study. An article written by Cristina Merrill comments on what attracts readers to certain magazines, and it focuses on the marketing strategies for companies to sell their product. Surveys were taken polling

²¹ Lopez, Mark and Emily Kirby. "Voter Turnout Among Young Women and Men" CIRCLE. 2003.

²² Pierce, Kate. "Socialization of Teenage Girls Through Teen- Magazine Fiction: The Making of a New Woman or an Old Lady?" Sex Roles. 29 (1993): 59-68.

²³ Gonick, Marnina. "What is the 'Problem' with these Girls? Youth and Feminist Pedagogy." Feminism & Psychology. 11 (2001): 167-171.

teenagers, and statistics were shown indicating the most popular magazines. What I found interesting about this article was that Internet use was higher than TV watching and that encourages magazines to have online websites to further boost the number of readers.²⁴

To add to these compilations of articles I will look at teen magazines and political content in the 2004 election and generalize how content included contributes to voting or in fact lack of it.

Method

My method included a descriptive study of popular teen magazines. I chose to look at *Seventeen* and *Teen People*, two of the more popular ones with circulations of 2,129,622 and 1,536,394 respectively.²⁵ My goal was to code all political content focused around the 2004 Presidential election in September and October issues. I chose these two months because I thought the most articles should be found in these, since they are the two months prior to the voting day. Issues generally come out about a couple weeks before the month approaches so I believed the November issue would be out of date. By political content I mean any subject matter relating to, or dealing with the structure or affairs of government, politics, or the state.

I decided to look primarily at presidential material because national politics is more likely to appear in these magazines than local political issues. I looked for political content on the covers of these glossy magazines, in the back advertising section, and of course in the core of the magazine. I was looking for pictures, slogans, articles, political advertisements, polls, opinion pieces, etc. Anything that referred to the election or that might motivate young voters to get to the polls was pertinent to my study. Any celebrity, political elite, or writer mentioning the election or preparing for it was noted.

Delimitations

My study has boundaries concerning the number of magazines I have examined. There are many teen magazines which are produced in the United States that I am ignoring for the sake of time. It would take

²⁴ Merrill, Cristina. "Keeping Up With Teens." *American Demographics*. 21:10 (1999): 27-31.

²⁵ "Average Circulation for top 100 ABC Magazines." *Magazine Publishers of America*. 2004.
http://www.magazine.org/Circulation/circulation_trends_and_magazine_handbook/11186.cfm.

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too much time to search all teen magazines for political ads or feature articles. The best I can do in this pilot study is to take the top two and generalize to all teen magazines from looking at the most consumed ones. Another limitation is going to be the election years covered. Most libraries don't keep teen magazines longer than an average of six months, so I had to focus on 2004.

For the purpose of my study I chose to look primarily at 2004 magazines to get an accurate, up-to-date look at teen magazines. A further study could be done to compare other election years to see if the political content differs. In the future, as women continue to evolve from their role as the caretaker to the breadwinner it will be interesting to see if political content increases in these magazines and the stereotype of the woman as passive goes out the window.

Results

Teen People's September issue had a picture of Chad Michael Murray on the cover. "Back to School Blowout!" "Quiz: Is he the Guy for You?" and "Real life Murder Mystery" were headlines on the front page. This double issue included tips on fashion, makeup, and hair with some gossip about the latest on Mary-Kate Olsen's eating disorder. Nothing on the cover indicated that there might have been any political content inside the magazine. Looking through the third table of contents under the "Your Life" section I found that on page 136 there was an article on abortion rights. It read "Debate Club: Reproductive Rights, Where Do You Stand on the Issue of Abortion?" The article included an editorial on both positions of the topic. Tying in the political aspect, a box above the print said, "President George W. Bush is Pro-Life. Senator John Kerry is Pro-Choice. The outcome of the presidential election could have huge consequences for abortion rights. Where do you stand on this controversial issue?" Below the article there was a pink box in the right corner saying, "Get Political! For more information about election issues or to register online to vote, log on to rockthevote.com."²⁶

Another two-page spread promoted by DKNY Jeans and Rock the Vote explained the importance of voting. Maroon 5 and Kate Bosworth were shown wearing black t-shirts reading, "Rock the Vote." The page said, "It's up to you! You have the power. Vote. It's important. You Decide. Vote." The combination of a mainstream band and sexy model was used to promote the popularity of it. In the right hand corner the ad said, "Look cool and make a difference. Call 1-800-

²⁶ Teen People. Sept. 2004.

777-4524 to find out where you can get this t-shirt. A portion of the proceeds go to Rock the Vote. Register to vote at www.rockthevote.com.”²⁷

Looking at the October issue of *Teen People* again nothing from the cover made me suspect that political content was present. There was nothing in the table of contents that mentioned voting awareness. Flipping through the pages, I found pictures of celebrities on page 49 sporting voting gear. The page was titled, “Star Tracks” and P. Diddy was shown wearing his “Vote of Die” shirt. Amber Tamblyn and Natalie Portman were named voting vixens by bearing a necklace and a John Kerry shirt, respectively.²⁸

The September 2004 issue of *Seventeen* had an article titled, “Why you should vote for my father!” in the Real Life Section. It was written by the daughters of both Kerry and Bush. There were links to both the candidate’s websites and information on voting. In an interview with Natalie Portman, many questions were asked that referenced the election. As an advocate for women empowerment, Portman voices that “we have the right to vote” and “it changes not just our lives- but people in the world’s lives.”²⁹ In the “Little Black Book Section,” an advertisement for the “American Candidate” let viewers know that there are more options in the world that aren’t on the ballot. Under the events category in the “Little Black Book” there was a box about the Republican National Convention which highlighted where it was and at what time it premiered.

The fourth magazine I looked at was *Seventeen*. The October 2004 issue had an article, “Why don’t women vote.” It was found in the Real life section of the magazine making readers aware of the voting statistics. Actresses Alyssa Milano and Rachel Bilson were pictured as making a difference on the election trail. Eve Ensler, creator of V-day (Vote Day) interviewed six girls about the need to get the new generation to vote. Both presidential candidates were pictured when they were seventeen and links were given to Eve Ensler’s webpage and to *Seventeen*’s election page.

An interview with P. Diddy was inserted into the “Little Black Book” section. It explains why P. Diddy started to raise awareness, when he began to vote, and why the issue is important to him. He

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Teen People*. Oct. 2004.

²⁹ *Seventeen*. Sept. 2004

believes “when you vote for somebody, you’re putting your life in their hands.”³⁰

Discussion

Although there was some political content in these magazines, the editors weren’t willing to brag about it, meaning they weren’t advertising it on the cover. While doing the study, I found it hard to locate material. Many references to the election were intertwined in interviews, advertisements, polls, and articles. The content of the articles seemed to be mostly about the personal aspects of the candidates. Besides the stances on abortion rights, no sides were shown on other popular topics. The main message sent to these girls flipping through the pages was to vote because it was important. Nowhere did I find information on what to vote for or where the candidates stood on most issues. Teen magazines are popularizing voting by using celebrities and slogans but not politically informing girls.

Teen magazines are taking an “objective” position, trying not to take sides. Heavy material is not aroused for fear of losing readership. Controversy and discussion are absent because feelings aren’t to be hurt. The lack of expression of opinions and the real facts on what really matters is not found beneath the cover of these brightly colored covers. Although teen magazines promise to be worldlier since we are evolving into a more conscious environment, the substance just isn’t there yet.

Putting it All Together

Campaign 2004 might go down in history for being the most advertised election by celebrities, but the content in teen magazines surrounding these short political articles still contain the same confusing message to teenage girls. Currie noted that magazines tend to “encourage girls to make themselves desirable for boys, but on the other hand, encourage girls to ‘be yourself.’”³¹ Teen magazines act as form of social control over girls.

If women believe that their world is being put in the hands of someone that isn’t leading them in the right direction, then they should vote, not abstain, for fear that men might find them aggressive. What is

³⁰ *Seventeen*. Oct. 2004.

³¹ D. Currie. *Girl Talk: Adolescent Magazines and their readers*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

wrong with being aggressive? It is such a turn off for men that women can be independent and self sufficient? Two amendments have been passed allowing young women to vote and help decide the future for their family and for themselves, yet for some reason many women have not been participating. It is one thing to be aware of voting and another to be an informed voter. With access to all sorts of information in this technological era, women have the resources to educate themselves without relying on the media. Professor Conaway says, "I personally don't believe women and girls are positively portrayed on television with the exception of PBS." Looking to the media to reinforce positive roles for females isn't a successful strategy. Women must be strong and create a sense of who they are by educating themselves. Teen magazines, along with television and movies, don't empower women by teaching, they use tactics of control. Thankfully, there are alternative magazines that our daughters, cousins, and friends can pick up such as "Teen Voice" and "Reluctant Hero," which challenge media images of women and celebrate individuality.

Honors Projects

Honors Projects

The Rhetoric of the Self-Portrait
Communication Honors Thesis Abstract
By Lara Wolfson

The photograph has its roots in science as an “artificial retina.” According to Gregory Wickliff, “In the case of photography, the first products, the daguerreotypes, were compared to the products of human vision and widely argued to be direct and unmediated representations of nature itself” (5). This natural and truthful reputation lives on in photography. Like a science, we believe in photography as an objective representation- the truth. But when photographers take liberty by putting themselves in that truth, a self-portrait, we must reexamine our conception of photography. With the self-portrait, no longer can we glance and accept a photograph as truth. We must examine the professional and what they share with us of their world, and what we make of ours. Historically, we usually think of photographic self-portraits as an aesthetic, indulgent genre. Not only does the self-portrait show an artist who has turned the camera in on him/herself as the genre suggests, but also rhetorically a self-portrait is a public document, a window into a whole reality where we can look in and examine someone else’s world as well as our own worlds and our civic culture (Berger 294). In my honors thesis I will analyze the photographic self-portrait as a rhetorical genre.

The photographic self-portrait serves several rhetorical functions- most obviously is the documenting of the subject. While there is much to infer in a self-portrait about society and civic duties, “the simple *thereness* of the body, which seems to need no narrative or other linguistic frame in order to express meaning” (Elkins 30) can say quite a lot. Elkins says, “Looking at a body that has no obvious purpose is an opportunity to rethink what I am-to see, by comparison, what I believe myself to be, what I am not, or what I may want to become.” (160)

When viewers look at Nan Goldin’s “Nan one month after being battered” they imagine seeing Nan with her two black eyes, her red lipstick, and her strand of pearls. But they must also think of others: Themselves in a situation like that, who did this to her, her perspective audience for this photograph. Viewers also might think about Nan and her relationship with her boyfriend, men and women, and maybe even *their* relationship with Nan. It is through these questions that self-

portraits find a rhetorical function commenting on culture. When we recognize that the *see-er* has stepped out from behind the camera *to be seen* we look for new perspectives on our cultural expectations of photography.

Nan Goldin's self-portraits are what I call the "The Straight Document." Simply, Nan documents herself through her self-portraits, and they are what the majority considers the self-portrait. There are other kinds of self-portrait as well: Cindy Sherman is an example of "The Staged Document." Sherman is best known for her untitled "film stills" where she depicts clichéd feminine roles. These photographs, while visually misrepresenting Sherman herself, express vast amounts of social commentary. Because of the theatrical nature of these photographs, they may be easier for some audiences to examine themselves and their own roles in society.

A third category of self-portrait is "The Trace Document." This self-portrait never shows the photographer visually complete, but often times you get a superior sense of the photographer. This genre of self-portraits includes photographs where the photographer's reflection is in a metal object, or their shadow is in the frame. Slightly more abstract is Sally Mann, who photographs almost exclusively adolescence, mostly her children. Through getting to know Mann's children and her home, seeing the activities they do, and where the children sleep, a very real picture of Sally Mann herself emerges. We see what is important to the photographer and can reflect on our own values and ideas.

The photographers mentioned, as well as all photographic professionals, often go unnoticed. Their presence, their skill, and their objective are usually ignored in an act of acceptance. The self-portrait flaunts the photographer, making audiences uneasy questioning photography's reputation as "the pencil of nature" and truth. Audiences have pretended that photography protects us from biases, and ourselves, but the photographic self-portrait points to the rhetoric of all photographs. Photography has always had a perspective behind it, we must face this and work with it to examine the outlook of a professional and reflect on what the photographers see in themselves and their worlds so that we may see *ourselves* and understand our civic culture.

