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Roasted: Coffee, Insult, Rhetoric

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ROASTED:
COFFEE, INSULT, RHETORIC

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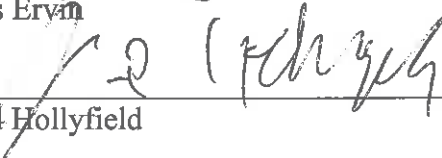
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Directed by: J.A. Rice, Chris Ervin, and Jerod Hollyfield

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While insult has been a frequent topic for rhetorical study in the past, little if any work has gone toward the formation of a systematic theory of insult. Karina Korostelina has proposed a theory of intergroup identity insults, which appears promising from a socio-cultural perspective. However, her theory does not address the particularly rhetorical characteristics of insults, preferring instead to analyze them with reference to their socio-historic context. While her theory proves sound under scrutiny, it does little to shed light on pejorative rhetoric *as* rhetoric.

In what follows, I would like to propose certain characteristics of pejorative rhetoric that may prove useful in developing a rhetorical understanding of insult. I will be using Korostelina's theory as a starting place to ground my discussion of insult, but I will go beyond the socio-historic contexts to suggest a purely rhetorical aspect of insults that creates new meanings and associations independent of larger cultural contexts. While independent of cultural contexts, these new associations are still informed by cultural contexts. As such, I will be using coffee, a cultural artifact with a variety of social and culture meanings, as a lens from which to examine pejorative rhetoric. Ultimately, I propose that insult functions by drawing from the associations inherent in cultural artifacts in order to transform those associations into purely rhetorical associations, that is, associations that could not exist without the influence of pejorative rhetoric, thereby creating a rhetorical context independent of large cultural contexts.

Latte-Sippin' Idiots:

An Introduction

"It is the word *pejorative* that hurts."
 ~ Wallace Stevens, "Sailing after Lunch"

"Food, eaten and digested, is not rhetorical. But in the *meaning* of
food there is much rhetoric, the meaning being persuasive enough
for the idea of food to be used, like the ideas of religion, as a
rhetorical device of statesmen."
 ~ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*

"And there's a chick in the coffee shop who's caught my eye
But she never talks to me when I walk by
So I sit there and I cool it and I'm oh so sly
And I have myself another espresso."
 ~ Shel Silverstein, "Have Another Espresso"

In the background, above the shouts of protestors, an American flag hangs from

the side of a building, its white stripes tarnished by yellow highlighter. We hear an

argument; an older women shouts, "My father fought for this country in the Army, this is

a disgrace," while a younger woman, holding a sign, replies with various profanities. The

argument goes back and forth, each woman trying to raise her voice above the other.

This short scene took place in front of Donald Trump's newly-opened hotel in

Washington in late October 2016, where a crowd of both protestors and supporters had

gathered. In response, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee had this to say about

the protestors, singling out the young woman mentioned in the exchange above: "You

know, it just stuns me that somebody who grew up in this country could believe that we

are what that latte-sipping idiot must've been thinking when she said that!" ("Huckabee

Slams"). His sensibilities having been offended, Gov. Huckabee's anger is

understandable. But the particular form that his insult toward this protestor takes is

especially interesting: he calls her a "latte-sipping idiot." "Idiot" is certainly insulting enough, but "latte-sipping" seems, at first, fairly benign, though Gov. Huckabee's tone of voice assures us of the opposite. In what way is "latte-sipping" insulting? If Burke, quoted above, is right, and food carries meanings that can be exploited rhetorically, then what does a latte *mean*?

The purpose of this essay is to answer that question by investigating the rhetorical potential of coffee, specifically its potential in pejorative contexts. More specifically, though, I want to investigate the ways that insult functions to not only reinforce social boundaries but also *create* social boundaries through shared cultural artifacts and images, in this case coffee. I will be using Karina Korostelina's theory of intergroup identity insults to inform my analysis. Korostelina's theory, which draws heavily from social identity theory, posits that "[i]nsult is a social act constructed mutually by social groups on the boundary between them," and is used by social groups to reinforce those boundaries (215). While her theory does much to explain insults from a social perspective, our interest lies in the rhetorical aspects of insult. I would like to suggest that coffee-related insults function by providing a shared cultural context from which both groups in intergroup conflicts can draw, creating rhetorical possibilities not accessible through other means. Effectively, groups use the associations inherent in a given cultural artifact such as coffee as insult

Coffee's widespread popularity, both historically and geographically, make it profitable for such a discussion. Steven Topik describes coffee as a "social drug," and indeed coffee may be *the* social drug, insomuch as it has harbored a social character since Yemeni Sufis first introduced it to the Middle East (81, 87). This is important to keep in

mind, since very few of coffee's associations (at least, the associations we will cover) have to do with the beverage's taste, ingredients, or physiological effects. These factors helped establish coffee within certain social situations, but most of the popular associations about it derive from exterior social forces. With that in mind, we will note at the outset that our discussion will not only be about coffee itself, and certainly not only one type of coffee. In order to fully understand the range of coffee-related insults, we need to consider the specific locales in which coffee was habitually consumed, as well as the clientele that frequented those locales. Since the latte was our starting point, our discussion will favor the development of gourmet coffee, as that type of coffee seems to hold more cultural currency in contemporary America, and has garnered associations not found in "normal" coffee. To do this, of course, we will have to examine normal coffee first, as many of the associations inherent in gourmet coffee originated with normal coffee. We should also note that this essay makes no attempt at covering every association that coffee has garnered. In fact, it does not even cover every possible *pejorative* connotation about coffee. Instead, the subjects of focus will be those pejorative associations that 1) are more or less traceable throughout the history of coffee in Europe and America, i.e., that persist despite large changes in context, even if they persist in discrete manifestations within those contexts; and 2) lend themselves more readily to analysis through the theoretical lens from which I have chosen to examine them. While these associations are certainly not the only negative ones surrounding coffee, they do seem to surface more often than others, and thus give a clearer picture of their function as insults.

Korostelina's intergroup insult theory will work particularly well for our analysis. She defines intergroup insult as "a conflict-driven aspect of the mutual process of the (re)production of meaning of social identity and power" (216). To Korostelina, insult cannot exist without social identities and power; indeed, it is the imbalance of power between social groups, along with the status quo this imbalance creates, that provokes insult in the first place. She clarifies her definition by adding that insult is "an act constructed on the social boundary between the insulting and the insulted groups," a definition that emphasizes the separation between social groups and identities as the motivating factor in disputes (216). This separation, or boundary, as Korostelina calls it, results from the differences between groups, whether that difference be expressed in terms of values, attributes, status, etc. Because all social groups seek a positive social identity, insult occurs when one group (the in-group) exploits this boundary in order to inflate or reinforce its own positive image at the expense of another group's (the out-group) positive image[1] (214-16). It is also worth noting that Korostelina a wide range of insults, including verbal, visual, symbolic, and ritualistic insults. For the purposes of this essay, I will primarily be focusing on verbal insults, though a few visual insults may surface, as well.

Korostelina distinguishes six types of insult, all of which in some way attempt to bolster the identity of the in-group by targeting an out-group: identity insults, which specifically target the identity of the out-group as inherently negative; projection insults,

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[1] Korostelina offers a fuller, if more cumbersome, description of this phenomenon: "Through insult, parties deprive themselves of the creation of the opportunity for a common meaning, resulting in painful and stressful acts of communication. Intergroup insults represent attempts to strip the insulted group of a positive identity and decrease its power. Such acts are intended to redefine the social boundary and power hierarchy between the parties, leading to the disruption of established positive relationships or perpetuating such disruption" (216).

which project insecurities or faults of the in-group onto the out-group; divergence insults, which attempt to delineate the boundary between in-group and out-group; relative insults, which couches the in-group favorably in relation to either the out-group or a third party; power insults, which utilize or call attention to the power of one group over another; and legitimacy insults, which attempt to legitimize the in-group and/or delegitimize the out-group (215-21).

Analyzing coffee-related media through this lens reveals not only the pejorative connotations inherent in coffee, but also the underlying social forces shaping and informing those connotations. As insults presuppose an in-group and an out-group in every pejorative situation, analyzing them yields a deeper understanding of the ideological and social underpinnings of each group. Coffee's profound social character and its widespread use throughout the world make it fruitful to analyze from the rhetorical perspective of insult, allowing us to define the boundaries between social groups via a common denominator, so to speak. One is reminded of Aristotle, who notes that "rhetoric is concerned not with what seems probable to a given individual…but with what seems probable to men of a given type" (27). Similarly, we are concerned with insults that certain types of people will find offensive in order to understand the social groundwork informing those insults. If rhetoric "is persuasive because there is somebody whom it persuades," as Aristotle says, insults are insulting because there is somebody who finds it insulting, as well as someone who utilizes it to insult others (27). Again, coffee's peculiar social character makes it useful for elucidating these types of rhetorical/social conflicts.

Coffee's social character combined with an informative theory of insult will provide us a systematic method for investigating the pejorative potential of coffee. More importantly, viewing coffee this way may afford some insight into the rhetorical dynamics of insult. If coffee harbors cultural associations, and social groups use coffee as insults, it stands to reason that they do so because of those associations, allowing them new pejorative meanings they would not otherwise have access to. With that in mind, we first turn to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, where the coffeehouse first debuted in Europe. From there, we will then turn to twentieth-century America to examine beatnik culture and its influence on gourmet coffee, before closing with a topical application of Korostelina's theory.

Chapter1:

A History of the "Coffeehouse Politician" in England

Introduction

In this chapter, we will look at insult as it relates to cultural context. I have chosen two essays on a similar topic, one written a century after the other, that demonstrate the persistence of rhetorical contexts and associations across time and political climate, as well as an example from visual culture. Specifically, I have chosen essays by William Hazlitt and Joseph Addison that each deal with the "coffeehouse politician" stereotype. First, we will examine the particular cultural and political climate that produced associations of superficial sociability in the English coffeehouse, after which we will discuss the transformation of a purely cultural connotation to a rhetorical association by looking specifically at Addison's essay as an example of popular contemporary attitudes. Finally, we will discuss the implications of rhetorical contexts vis-à-vis their seeming ability to transcend social and political context to create new rhetorical meanings.

Virtuoso Culture and the English Coffeehouse

While it is virtually impossible to determine the first European to come into contact with coffee, the most significant was probably Leonhard Rauwolf, a German physician commissioned by his merchant brother-in-law to find exotic drugs and spices while traveling in the East. There, while immersing himself in Ottoman culture, he encountered, in his own words, "a very good Drink, by them called *chaube,* that is almost as black as ink, and very good in illness, chiefly that of the stomach" (qtd. in Cowan 17). Cowan notes that Rauwolf was succeeded by a wave of European travelers, all of whom wanted to experience "the exotic customs of the peoples living in the large 'oriental'

empires of Asia," among which customs was the social drinking of coffee (Cowan 17).

Europe's first proper introduction to coffee, however, likely occurred in Venice, where, due to its proximity to the Levant, merchants would have had more opportunity to trade for it (Ukers 20-2). According to John Burnett, Venetian traders bought coffee from merchants in Istanbul/Constantinople around the year 1600 (72). The rest of Europe followed suit in subsequent decades; the first recorded instance of coffee-drinking in England was in 1637 by Nathaniel Conopios, a Greek student studying at the Balliol College at Oxford (Burnett 73).

Though Europeans initially regarded coffee with suspicion and veiled interest, by 1650 the first coffeehouse in England had appeared, marking a significant turning point in the history of coffee (Cowan 25). It would be difficult to overstate the impact that the coffeehouse had on both coffee consumption and contemporary ideas about coffee in England, ideas that continue to affect our own conceptions of coffee today. Spray describes the English coffeehouse, as well as its Parisian counterpart the café, as "a leveling ground" where the importance of "social relations prescribed by rank and birth" began to diminish (98). Of course, social eminence did not diminish entirely, or even suddenly, but the coffeehouse represented a noticeably egalitarian shift in social relations in Enlightenment and Restoration England. Whether the coffeehouse itself was an actual agent in forming this shift, or merely emblematic of it, is more difficult to determine, though there is likely some truth on both sides of the argument. It is clear, though, that, merely representative or not, the coffeehouse undoubtedly helped precipitate a change in the public's perception of and interactions with coffee.

To understand the English coffeehouse and its myriad associations, we first need to understand the broader social movements that influenced its development, the most formative of which was probably the cult of the virtuoso. In the context of Enlightenment England, the virtuosi were a group of amateur scholars and travelers obsessed with classical learning and knowledge of foreign lands. The virtuoso originated in Italy, where the term referred to "individuals with an interest in promoting an interest [*sic*] in arts and antiquities." These virtuosic interests eventually made their way to England, where self-professed virtuosi sought "to associate themselves with an international world of elite cultural interests strongly rooted in knowledge about classical antiquity and Italianate Renaissance learning." Not surprisingly, these English virtuoso self-consciously aligned themselves with social and cultural elitism, but they also aligned themselves against established educational conventions, preferring to hire tutors and conduct experiments on their own than engage in what they considered the pedantry of the universities. In retaliation, the more conservative and classical universities attacked the virtuosi on the grounds that the extent of their learning was superficial, lacking real depth in any subject in favor of breadth in a variety of subjects[2] (Cowan 10-2).

The main focus of these attacks on the virtuosi centered on one of their key investigative principles, which they called "curiosity." As its name implies, curiosity

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[2] Cowan notes that this charge of superficiality has persisted, with many modern scholars dismissing the virtuosi as shallow eccentrics whose scholarly contributions were minimal, and who engaged in scholarly work merely as a means of inflating their own social prestige. He also notes, however, that while the Baconian method employed by virtuosi was "by its very nature unfocused," it helped lay the foundation for future empirical studies based on evidence rather than theory. Furthermore, Cowan argues that to emphasize the superficiality of virtuoso culture is to miss the point: Cowan sees social prestige as the outcome of virtuosic learning, rather than the reverse, and many virtuosi used their findings to establish a claim to "gentlemanly status" instead of enhancing an already established social elitism (12). Cowan's claims do not necessarily negate the charge of superficiality in the work of the virtuosi, but they do help to contextualize it and, more importantly, to show the profound influence that Enlightenment attitudes still carry today.

entailed a keen interest in anything exotic, novel, strange, or foreign (Cowan 11). Though

commissioned by his brother-in-law to explore eastern lands, Leonhard Rauwolf,

mentioned above, was no doubt guided by such curiosity when he first encountered the

Turks and their coffee, and many virtuosi read the memoir he produced of his travels in

the East (Cowan 17). The discovery of a new and exotic substance like coffee naturally

excited the imaginations of the virtuosi, whose initial interest in coffee stemmed from its

supposed medicinal properties. Cowan argues that coffee gained popularity so quickly

because both the Ottomans and the English shared the humoral model of medicine

proposed by Galen, thus allaying the foreignness of coffee somewhat while still retaining

its novelty. In any case, coffee became more and more accepted, in part due to the

influence of the virtuosi on its behalf, and the first British coffeehouse opened at Oxford

in 1650 (Cowan 22-5).

Though it may appear incidental that the first English coffeehouse was located

near Oxford, this had a significant impact on the formation of the culture associated with

coffeehouses. As the virtuosi had espoused the use of coffee upon its introduction into

England, they were naturally among the first to begin frequenting coffeehouses, where

their particular form of sociability imparted an air of "civility, curiosity,

cosmopolitanism, and learned discourse" that would influence the culture of coffeehouses

in England throughout succeeding decades (Cowan 89-91). Because of the hostility

between them and university scholars, the virtuosi began to utilize coffeehouses as de

facto meeting places, where they could read, debate, and generally engage in learned

discourse with one another. These meetings were deliberately and emphatically anti-

university, and provided the virtuosi with "an alternative space for the promotion of virtuosic interests" (Cowan 91).

Naturally, university scholars did not take kindly to the virtuosi's newfound gathering places. Many openly resented the coffeehouse, due to the odd mixture of study and sociability the virtuosi had instituted there. The universities themselves even began to regulate their student's use of coffeehouses, presumably viewing them as bad influences on their young minds, and not wanting them to become inured to the easy sociability found therein. Most scholars or men of letters regarded coffeehouses with such misgiving because they saw the learning of the virtuosi as superficial and frivolous, and the coffeehouses themselves as places that permitted "the uneasy cohabitation of intellectual achievement and social cachet, between learning and fashionability" (Cowan 92-3). This is an understandable reaction, as scholars did not want their students mingling with people they believed would damage their students' intellectual development.

Despite the universities' efforts, however, the coffeehouse became an extremely popular, perhaps even necessary, establishment in English life. Cowan notes that because the first coffeehouses were founded around Oxford, they initially attracted the notice of prestigious university scholars, before the virtuosi claimed the coffeehouse for their own and established themselves as regulars. Owing to a history of distinguished clientele, coffeehouses generally catered to customers of higher social standing, no doubt thanks to the influence of the social-climbing, often extravagant virtuosi. (91). In contrast, Wolfgang Schivelbusch contends that, while the upper class did drink coffee as a symbol of luxury, the middle class seized upon the drink for other, more practical uses (19). Once coffee was introduced and the coffeehouse firmly established, the middle class seized it

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as an instrument to promote their own values. Filled with merchants and growing increasingly Protestant, the English middle class began to value sobriety, rationality, and hard work as means to success (Schivelbusch 34-9).[3] As a result, coffeehouses transformed, in Schivelbusch's words, into "places to do business" (51).

"Business" in this case is not restricted to its mercantile sense, although that of course is true as well. Rather, we might think of business as productivity, the set of things that middle- to upper- class men in the Enlightenment could be expected to do. Such business included everything from actual commercial business to amateur scholarship to discussion and lectures about art, literature or philosophy (Schivelbusch 51, Spray 97). The coffeehouse rapidly became the center for social life in its broadest sense, but above all a center for communication and discourse. As an example of how important the coffeehouse was to communication and the spread of information, consider that Richard Steele listed the address for *The Tatler,* his famous periodical, as a coffeehouse named the Grecian, and that he gave credit for each news story published by listing the coffeehouse where he had first heard it. And, as an example of how important it was as a center for business, consider that Lloyd's of London, the insurance market, began as a coffeehouse frequented by insurance agents (Schivelbusch 57, 51). These are of course the most exceptional examples, but they demonstrate the vital role the coffeehouse played in Enlightenment England as a center for business and discourse.

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[3] In contrast to Cowan, Schivelbusch sees the burgeoning middle class and its Protestant work ethic as the primary reason coffee became so popular, without so much as mentioning the virtuosi. Until the introduction of coffee, chocolate, and tea, beer had been the principal drink for most Europeans, since it was fairly easy to make and provided much-need calories. But as the Protestant middle class began to grow, they began to favor coffee for the energy and focus it provided, as well as its purported ability to induce sobriety in the already-drunk (34-39).

Despite this sudden increase in business and productivity, it is important to keep in mind that the virtuosi provided the template for coffeehouse conduct. Excluding themselves from the universities, they sought a suitable meeting place to gather and discuss their ideas. The new coffeehouses suited that role perfectly, with the added benefit that it helped promote their interest in coffee, as well. Rather than resorting to taverns and other such places, the virtuosi settled on a space that allowed for conversation without the stultifying effects of alcohol. The added focus and energy coffee provided only helped foster and enhance their conversation, leading to an atmosphere of conversation and leisure.

The close association coffeehouses and, by extension, coffee had with work and productivity was passed down to American coffeehouses, as well, though of course it developed in different contexts. As Schivelbusch suggests, the physiological effects of coffee alone help to explain its association with productivity. Caffeine makes one feel more alert and energetic, a state highly conducive to work of all kinds. It is also true, though, that the coffeehouse played a role in developing this close association, beyond what the physiological benefits could have developed by themselves. People needed energy to be more productive, yes, but the coffeehouse also afforded them a space to be productive in, the public nature of which became especially advantageous for business and communication. As a consequence, coffee and coffeehouses seem to have developed opposing associations. On the one hand, the coffeehouse clearly began as place for leisure and sociability, with the virtuosi using it as a place where they could share ideas and engage in learned discourse. On the other, coffeehouses developed into centers of business and communication, far more important as a public institution than merely

providing a forum for conversation. As we will see, this latter aspect of the coffeehouse

was lost somewhat in America because coffee entered the private sphere more quickly

than it had in Europe, but the association between work and coffee remained, and actually

strengthened due to the particular social climate of America in the late-nineteenth and

twentieth centuries.

Hazlitt, Addison, and the Coffeehouse Politician

Bearing in mind the cultural context that informed the coffeehouse's popular

connotations, we now move to examples of those connotations in action. In his aptly-

titled essay "On Coffee-House Politicians" (1821), William Hazlitt summarizes

contemporary attitudes toward coffeehouses and, more specifically, coffeehouse patrons.

Hazlitt's commentary is both perceptive and biting; he describes certain of these

coffeehouse patrons, the titular "coffeehouse politicians," as those who "spend their time

and their breath in coffee-houses and other places of public resort, hearing or repeating

some new thing" (189). The sarcasm of "some new thing" is palpable: their favorite

activities include "[sitting] with a paper in their hands in the morning, with a pipe in their

mouths in the evening, discussing the contents of it" (189). "The Evening Paper is

impatiently expected" by them, as it contains only the latest news; they have no

knowledge of "the practical value of things" (190).

Hazlitt's main critique about these so-called coffeehouse politicians is that they

represent and foster a culture of superficiality linked inextricably with their supposed

sociability. Hazlitt sees this superficiality in the variety of topics they discuss: "The

World before the Flood or the Intermediate State of the Soul are never once thought

of…the whole creation, history, war, politics, morals, poetry, metaphysics, is to them like a file of antedated newspapers, of no use, not even for reference" (190). In other words, their choice of topics never verges on anything useful, profound, or distinguished but instead on superfluous subjects. Hazlitt says, regarding their choice of subject matter, that "they feel no interest in it at any time, but it does for something to talk about," supplying them with a "cue" for conversation (190). Though they take no interest in their subject of conversation, they persist in spreading "noise and empty rumours" derived from "[a] dearth of general information" and "the absence of thought, imagination, [or] sentiment" (191). Hazlitt directly links their volubility with outright stupidity, contrasting it with the silence often found in their more intelligent counterparts: they "cannot see the use of the learned languages, as…the greatest proficients in them are rather taciturn than otherwise, and hesitate in their speech more than other people" (191). To Hazlitt, "[t]here is neither sincerity nor system in what they say," and he finds only "false wit and spurious argument" in their conversations (193). He best summarizes his views by saying that their particular form of conversation "is not conversation, but rehearsing a part" (194).

For Hazlitt, conversation should accomplish something, but the conversation he finds so frequently in these patrons is hollow, only meant to facilitate superficial sociability rather than accomplish anything substantive. It is interesting to note, however, that Hazlitt does not direct his critique of "coffee-house politicians" toward politicians generally, or any other broad social stereotype; that is, the modifier "coffee-house" is operative. The fact that, by the time Hazlitt was writing, tea had replaced coffee as the most popular non-alcoholic beverage in England[4] seems suggestive, as it implies that

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[4] According to Wolfgang Schivelbusch, tea displaced coffee in a remarkably short period of time, with imports multiplying by roughly 200 from 1700 to 1750 (79).

Hazlitt was singling out the coffeehouse rather than using it as a representation of public life at large. He might have easily mentioned inns or taverns as places where people met to socialize, but he singles out this type of politician as indigenous to the coffeehouse. Nor does the coffee itself appear important to Hazlitt, as he never mentions the beverage at all. It is specifically the coffeehouse, and the influence it has apparently had on these politicians, that interests and disgusts him. Even more specifically, it is the *culture* of the coffeehouse that irritates him, a culture that both creates these "coffee-house politicians" and is sustained and propagated by them. Sociability and conversation were key parts of this culture that, according to Lawrence E. Klein, helped differentiate the coffeehouse from inns, taverns, or other public places (32).

Hazlitt was far from the first critic of the coffeehouse. According to Klein, many considered the coffeehouse a place that "[fostered] an anarchy of misinformation and miscomprehension" (Klein 37). Once coffeehouses opened to the general public, they transformed into "unsupervised distribution point for news, whether transmitted in oral or printed form" (Klein 36). While taverns and the like were also public spaces, the difference, according to Klein, is that the intoxicating nature of alcohol made the conversation in those places less focused and more genial. In contrast, coffee was associated with the "sobriety, seriousness, and mental briskness" that facilitated more serious conversation, often about such heavy topics as religion or politics (Klein 40-41). While the coffeehouse allowed for serious discussions in a way that taverns did not, its openness as a public space earned it a reputation as a place for "babble and chatter," as Klein says (38). This by itself might be a sufficient reason to distrust and malign coffeehouses, but the root cause of mistrust in the coffeehouse traces back to the political

climate of the Restoration, during which time the spread of information was a key concern for many. Unsurprisingly, the open conversation afforded by coffeehouses did not fit the agendas of many politicians and social elites (Klein 39-43)

Eventually, though, the coffeehouse became a political tool in its own right, which helped improve its reputation. As Whigs and Tories engaged in heated political debates, Whig activists found it difficult to uphold a sense of order given that "their ideological baggage was profoundly oppositionalist." In order to preserve their own liberatory politics while still maintaining political control, Whig activists and journalists began to espouse what Klein calls "the paradigm of politeness," which necessitated a "moral renewal of England after a period of decline, often identified as the 'debauchery' or 'depravity' associated with Stuart rule" (Klein 46). One of the most important aspects of "politeness" was the art of conversation: good conversation edified and enriched its participants, and was meant "to enhance interaction by making it more pleasurable and also more instructive." As a center for public life and discussion, the coffeehouse naturally found its way into this new paradigm (Klein 47-49). As Klein shows, writers and public critics like Joseph Addison and Richard Steele inculcated this sense of politeness into the discourse of coffeehouses, frequently characterizing them as places of refined and polite conversation, and even criticizing those who broke up such conversations in favor of petty argument and unrefined chatter (49-50). Whether or not coffeehouses actually reflected Addison and Steele's image of them is, of course, another matter, but the coffeehouse undoubtedly helped spread the ideal, if not the fact, of politeness in conversation. Crucially, the paradigm of politeness was a direct response to the influence of the virtuosi, which some saw as detrimental to their own political ideals.

The direct cause of concern was the sudden shift in social relations that accompanied the public nature of coffeehouses, but the connotation with superficial conversation derives directly from the virtuosi.

Apropos of Joseph Addison, that writer also happened to write an essay on the coffeehouse politician, nearly a century before Hazlitt. Though less caustic than Hazlitt, Addison also targets the superficiality of coffeehouse talk in "Coffee House Politicians." It describes a series of encounters and conversations taking place in various coffeehouses throughout London and Westminster. The narrator admits that "when any public affair is upon the anvil, I love to hear the reflections that arise upon it" by visiting the coffeehouses (142). Visiting around like this allows him to "…know the faces of all the principal *politicians* within the bills of mortality; and as every coffee-house has some particular *statesman* belonging to it…I always take care to place myself near him (142, emphasis added). In this case, the "public affair" in question happens to be a report about the King of France's death. The narrator begins his tour, first stopping at St. James, where he finds "a knot of theorists" discussing the news (143). From the news of the King's death, the "theorists" extrapolate and exaggerate the story to the point that the narrator "heard the whole Spanish monarchy disposed of, and all the line of Bourbon provided for, in less than a quarter of an hour" (143). A few stops later, he arrives at Jenny Man's, where he witnesses this exchange:

> Upon my arrival at Jenny Man's, I saw an alert young fellow that cocked his hat upon a friend of his who entered just at the same time with myself, and accosted him after the following manner: 'Well Jack, the old prig is dead at last. Sharp's

the word. Now or never boy. Up to the walls of Paris directly.' With several other

deep reflections of the same nature. (143-144)

Several more similar instances occur in different coffeehouses, after which the narrator

learns that the King of France is actually still alive.

    Addison clearly mocks the conversation of these "politicians." In the first

anecdote, at St. James, their conversation ends up in wild, even fanciful extrapolations

about European politics, showing their complete lack of discernment in issues they

purport to know much about. In the second anecdote, at Jenny Man's, Addison mocks the

"deep reflections" of the two men conversing, which only amount to pleasantries or

platitudes, without any substance. Further, any valid points the speakers had been making

are rendered invalid by the King's still being alive. As with Hazlitt, it is interesting to

note that all these conversations occur in coffeehouses. Recalling Klein, we remember

that Addison and journalists like him were especially influential in shaping the discourse

of coffeehouse conversation. To Addison, this kind of conversation should accomplish

something, unlike the conversations he relates in this essay. The "politicians" he

encounters only speak idly, without accomplishing anything, thereby breaking the rules

of politeness and civility. We should of course note that Addison's essay is not

necessarily factual; while Addison himself did frequent multiple coffeehouses to hear the

latest news and stories, the exact scenario presented in this essay likely never occurred.

Further, his motivation in this essay is not just to poke fun at coffeehouse politicians. He

is also surveying the various districts around London and Westminster, plumbing them

for differences, as he explains in the first two paragraphs of the essay. Still, the fact that

he chooses coffeehouses as a venue to hear the latest "judgement on the present posture

of affairs" is telling (142-43). This choice implies that he will, indeed, hear the latest news and gossip, but the satirical tone he takes throughout the piece informs us that neither he nor we should take said news seriously, since it is hollow and idle.

Addison's essay demonstrates popular attitudes toward so-called coffeehouse politicians, which seem especially revealing considering that he was one of the foremost journalists of that time. Granted, his writings helped shape popular attitudes and opinions, particularly in relation to politeness and conversation, as Klein shows; but he was also appealing to a shared culture, a coffeehouse culture with which his readers would have been familiar. After all, he and other journalists distributed their writings primarily in coffeehouses. More importantly, though, Hazlitt *also* shares this cultural context, despite the gap in time between the two writers. Rather, we might say that Hazlitt shares the same *rhetorical* context as Addison. On closer inspection, it becomes obvious that he is participating in a dialogue between politeness on one hand and idle chatter on the other. As an example, Hazlitt introduces us to Mr. E, "a fellow that is always in the wrong...an everlasting babbler on the stronger side of the question—querulous and dictatorial" (197). Mr. E, one of Hazlitt's fellow patrons, epitomizes the superficial sociability Hazlitt detests so much:

> Mr. E— having thus triumphed in argument, offers a flower to the notice of the company as a specimen of his flower-garden, a curious exotic, nothing like it to be found in this kingdom, talks of his carnations, of his country-house, and old English hospitality, but *never invites any of his friends* to come down and take their Sunday's dinner with him. He is *mean and ostentatious* at the same time,

insolent and servile, does not know whether to treat those he *converses* with as if

they were his porters or his customers… (197-198, emphasis added)

Hazlitt's use of Mr. E's language—"a curious exotic, nothing like it to be found in this

kingdom"—clearly mocks his arrogant and hollow mode of speech. Mr. E's sociability,

at least as Hazlitt presents it, is superficial and vainglorious, as his method of talking is

self-centered and "ostentatious" rather than constructive—thus, in the paradigm of

politeness, obviously impolite. Instead of inviting his friends to see his garden, he merely

brags about it, and in his conversation he treats those around him like "porters" or

"customers," that is, as mere listeners rather than actual interlocutors.

Mr. E is not the only specific person Hazlitt mentions, but he probably best

represents the lack of politeness in conversation that bothers Hazlitt so much. Mr. E's

manner of conversing is self-centered, not constructive, and ultimately superficial, being

for show rather than anything productive or constructive. Despite the difference in time

and context, both Hazlitt and Addison seem to share the same rhetorical context. That is,

they each appeal to specific insults in relation to the social type they encounter: a shared

cultural connotation, between coffeehouses and superficiality, informs the insult each

chooses to level at his opponent. This same pattern occurs in a print, aptly titled "The

Coffee-house Politicians" (see Fig. 1, pg. 22). Dated circa 1733 by the British Museum,

the print depicts a scene involving two such coffeehouse politicians, who are holding

what is most likely the latest edition of the *London Gazette,* chuckling conspiratorially

over some of the information found there. Their less-than-clandestine meeting appears to

have disturbed some of their neighboring patrons: their meeting has somehow overturned

the dishes of both a small boy waiting tables, on the left, and a

Figure 1: "The Coffee-house Politicians" print, circa 1733 ("The Coffee-house Politicians")

seated patron, on the right, who give the pair looks of surprise and indignation. Behind

them at table sit another pair of patrons disagreeably discussing the contents of a paper,

though their intentions are less clear than the central pair. In the background, over the

shoulder of the main pair, a woman, most likely the proprietress of the coffeehouse, looks

at the two with apparent distaste.

Even without the title across the bottom of the image, we can infer just from the

inclusion of the newspaper that the central pair are Hazlitt's coffeehouse politicians. As

the coffeehouse politicians must stay updated on the latest information, it is imperative

that they have the most recent edition available; the man holding the paper appears not

even to have removed the knife used to post the paper. We are not permitted to know

what they are discussing, but the way they are discussing it has evidently caused some

disruption. The lone patron at the table on the right looks aghast at the pair as they talk.[5]

As with Addison and Hazlitt, this print is appealing to a shared rhetorical context, one

which associates coffeehouses with superficiality and hollow sociability. This rhetorical

context is, of course, informed by a larger cultural context, in this case the influence of

the virtuosi on the development of coffeehouses sociability and the opposing paradigm of

politeness. But Hazlitt also uses the term, despite not sharing the same political context as

Addison; that is, he is participating in a rhetorical context informed and sustained by

insult.

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[5] As there is no apparent reason for the pair's talk to disturb this patron, another reading could be that the lone patron is in fact a part of their group, discussing the salacious material that has brought such a shock to his face. Either way, the result is the same: their discussion is causing quite a stir in the coffeehouse, enough that the seated patron has spilled his drink and the small boy has overturned his tray.

To see this process more clearly, let's return Addison's "coffeehouse politicians."
He clearly means for this term to be pejorative, as the tone of his essay testifies. As we
noted while discussing Hazlitt, the term "coffeehouse" is operative. These are no ordinary
"politicians," but specifically ones indigenous to the coffeehouse. "Coffeehouse," then, is
the catalyst for the insult in this phrase; this is not insulting without the association with
coffeehouses. Specifically, the insult here has to do with the reputation that coffeehouses
had in England, i.e., that they were places of idle and superficial sociability. Thus, adding
"coffeehouse" as a modifier directly connects the negative associations of coffeehouses
with "politicians," creating a pejorative meaning that could not exist otherwise.
Addison's point is that the patrons in question treat themselves with the gravity of
politicians but without having a politician's influence, or without achieving any actual
political goals. Calling them "coffeehouse politicians" emphasizes this point by directly
associating them with places known for superficiality, in this case the coffeehouse.[6] In
this case, the coffeehouse politician is clearly constructed as the out-group, with Addison
and others espousing the paradigm of politeness being the in-group. The specific type of
insult in this case would be an identity insult: Addison sees the coffeehouse politician as
a threat to politeness and the politics it entails. He therefore constructs an image of them
as superficial, idle, and generally asinine, fulfilling Korostelina's definition of identity
insults by "attributing to [the out-group] negative features, evil motivations, or foul
values" (217).[7]

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[6] One might argue that coffeehouses gained a reputation for superficiality in part because of patrons like
coffeehouse politicians, which would seem make the above claim a case of circular reasoning. However,
we should remember that coffeehouses' association with superficiality dates back to their very inception
with the virtuosi; Addison's specific politics may inform the insult, but the reputation of coffeehouses
informs his politics.
[7] I do not mean to imply throughout this paragraph that Addison invented the term "coffeehouse
politicians," but he is clearly utilizing it in the manner discussed here.

The point is that, by constructing an identity insult in this way, Addison draws a distinction between his in-group and the out-group of coffeehouse politicians. To say it another way, this insult creates a boundary between in-group and out-group that, crucially, could not exist without its relation to coffeehouses. Addison's motives are, ultimately, political, since the patrons he insults violate the paradigm of politeness crucial to Whig political interests. But the specific *form* his insult takes does not resort to politics to achieve its effect: by associating his rivals with coffeehouses, he draws from a shared cultural context—the reputation of coffeehouses—to reinforce the boundary between groups. Rather than insulting them on political grounds, Addison chooses to associate them with a place that itself has certain negative connotations, showing the associative power of pejorative rhetoric. The print of the coffeehouse politicians clearly shows this shared cultural association. The two figures depicted are clear caricatures of the coffeehouse politicians that display the defining features of that stereotype.

Perhaps even more fascinating is that Hazlitt is able to draw from this rhetorical context to insult his own targets over a century after Addison. Indeed, it is a *rhetorical* context; Hazlitt's insult, while informed by the politics that initially spawned the insult, is not political, but social. The thrust of his rhetoric, at least as far as we can determine, derives from his frustration with his fellow patrons' social bearing, rather than their political opinions. Undoubtedly, Hazlitt is also bringing his own politics to the table, implicitly if not explicitly, but those politics derive from a different cultural context than Addison, meaning their connotations would be lost in the translation between contexts. That is, Hazlitt draws from a specifically *rhetorical* context, the main thrust of which has to do with sociability rather than politics. The coffeehouse provides a shared cultural

context, for both in-group and out-group, across differing political contexts, in which to reinforce social boundaries.

Chapter 2:

Beatniks and Hipsters in Contemporary America

Introduction

In the last chapter, we saw that rhetorical contexts persist, albeit sometimes with shifting meanings, despite large changes in cultural context or political climate. In this chapter, I would like to explore the mechanics of how rhetorical contexts form in the first place. Specifically, his chapter will focus on coffee developments in contemporary America, a term I will broadly use to refer to America from the early twentieth century to the present. Probably the two most important developments in coffee during this time, at least as far as pejorative rhetoric goes, are the rise of the beatnik and the hipster. The beatnik provides us an interesting case, in that the rhetorical associations it derives from its association with coffeehouse is directly related to its use of those coffeehouses. Tautological as it may seem, the beatnik will help demonstrate the subtle shift from a purely cultural connotation to a rhetorical association filtered through rhetoric. The hipster, in turn, will demonstrate the complex rhetorical web of meanings and associations that occurs in a pejorative situation.

Work and Standardization in the American Coffee Scene

In America, coffee did not see widespread use until about 1830, following a repeal of high import taxes that had all but restricted its use to the wealthy (Smith 235, Jiménez 39). Soon after this repeal, though, coffee expanded rapidly. Lower import prices, improvements in coffee processing, and the rise of manufacturing and capitalism greatly increased coffee-consumption. Workers, blue and white collar alike, grew

accustomed to drinking coffee in stores and eateries away from home, where grocers and merchants could now stock the beverage much more cheaply than any time previous; coincidentally, home consumption increased as well, since coffee was now a readily-available commodity. This initial increase in consumption eventually culminated in the consolidation of a new core market, one fueling its business and industry with coffee. Such was the growth during this period that coffee, Jiménez remarks, became "society's paramount beverage, commonly used in households, available in ever more numerous public spaces, and offered to consumers in many novel forms" (39-42).

Despite this market dominance, the coffee business itself faced various challenges as it made its way into the early and mid-twentieth century. Despite even the impact Prohibition had on coffee consumption, coffee prices began to rise, and consumption, if not outright declining, began to level off (Jiménez 42-44). In response, coffee corporations and lobbyists launched campaigns aimed at revitalizing interest in their drink, specifically targeting the national psyche and taking coffee "beyond the calculus of the pocketbook into the realm of psychological and cultural marketplaces hopefully less vulnerable to price fluctuations." These campaigns were designed "to invest coffee with a symbolic value which resonated to the prevailing social norms in the Unites States and drew on that society's major sources of cultural legitimation" (Jiménez 48-9). One such source of legitimation was America's preoccupation with work. Though the campaigns used other tactics as well, the theme of work quickly became a recurring element; Jiménez points out that "[coffee's] qualities as a stimulant could be easily harnessed to the logic of the modern capitalist order: an instrument to sharpen the rational and energetic completion of everyday tasks" (51). Not surprisingly, these campaigns were on

the whole successful, and coffee gained a positive association with work and productivity.

The success of these productivity campaigns further entrenched coffee as a staple and ultimately contributed to the standardization of coffee, especially once organizations like the International Coffee Organization and International Coffee Agreement began to form, as this gave producing countries an incentive to provide a low-risk, predictable product. But despite (and, in part, because of) standardization, coffee sales actually suffered a precipitate decline in the decades following World War II, with average consumption per person per day dropping from 3.12 in 1962 to 2.02 in 1980. Part of the reason for this decline had to do with young people, who thought of coffee as an artifact of the older generations, and who preferred the option of much sweeter soft drinks to quench their thirst. Chance played a role, as well: in 1975, a frost in Brazil hurt the coffee crop, boosting prices significantly, even for lower-quality, standardized coffee. America had invested too much into coffee for it to disappear completely; the lowest rate of consumption from 1965 to 1991 was in 1988, when it dipped to 1.67 cups per person per day. On the whole, though, the coffee business suffered during those decades (Roseberry 152-54).

Standardization had occurred primarily in the arena of big business; meanwhile, smaller corporations and local businesses had been serving gourmet and specialty coffee for some time, though it had historically been a very small portion of the market. But, with the downturn in coffee consumption generally, as well as the effects of the 1975 frost, people gained an interest in gourmet coffee; naturally, people felt there was no point in paying high prices for poor-tasting coffee when a higher-quality option was

available for a comparable price. In fact, while total coffee sales declined, the specialty/gourmet coffee business improved drastically, growing from total sales of $330 million in 1985 to $500 million in 1987; and during the 80s, annual growth for specialty/gourmet markets increased anywhere from 30 to 50 percent (Roseberry 154-57, 159-60).

The gourmet coffee revolution began in local stores and cafés, rather than large corporations. Because part of the allure of gourmet coffee was its freshness, suppliers and roasters tended to ship their gourmet stock regionally rather than nationally or internationally, allowing local shops to gain a foothold over larger businesses in the gourmet market. Coastal cities, like Seattle and San Francisco, quickly became hotbeds for the gourmet coffee business (Roseberry 155). The most famous and, for our purposes, most important of these local shops—Starbucks—opened in 1971 in Seattle. Since then, Starbucks has become all but synonymous with gourmet coffee, and its success mirrors that of its chief product, generally: from 1982 to 2007, gourmet coffee had grown from 2 percent of the coffee market to 20 (Smith 242-46). It has become, by a wide margin, the largest coffee retailer in the world.

Beatniks, Coffeehouses, and the Paradigm of Work

In the midst of these developments, certain cultural forces started shaping coffee business and culture throughout the rest of twentieth-century America. Perhaps the most influential of these forces occurred during the 1940s and 50s with emergence of the "hipster." In the wake of mass consumerism, and especially after World War II, many became disillusioned with society and sought to withdraw from it. A subset of these

cultural rebels became known as hipsters, a self-conscious rebel against the established

conventions of mainstream society. A contemporary commentator, writing in 1959,

claimed that the hipster "disaffiliates" him- or herself with "the senseless organizations of

orthodox society, whether these be political parties or corporations" (Burdick 554). Ico

Maly and Piia Varis identify the advent of mass consumerism as one of the main focal

points of rebellion for hipsters, as it produced a commodified and "heavily mediated

mainstream culture" (638). Hipsters lamented the change in humanity that accompanied

modern society, a critical part of which was widespread consumerism.

The most important and famous hipsters were the Beats, a group of friends and

writers who came to define hipsterism for many Americans. Inevitably, the Beats gained

both detractors and, crucially, imitators. These imitators, popularly known as "beatniks,"

were self-stylized rebels and bohemians who based their image and lifestyle on mediated

images of the Beats, now a favorite subject and target of the media (Watson 257-260).

Like their namesakes, the beatniks immediately became identified with cafés and

coffeehouses; Watson notes that the stereotypical image of the beatnik frequently

featured espresso, and, one of the "indigenous habitats of the beatniks [was] a dark North

Beach coffee house," at least in the popular imagination (258-259). Naturally, these

coffeehouses took advantage of their newfound publicity, expanding from small local

businesses concentrated in Greenwich Village at the end of World War II to a $5,000,000

industry by 1959 (Petrus 10).

According to Watson, the heyday of the beatniks was from 1957 to 1960, after

which the movement began dying out (260). So swift was its demise that a "Hipitaph"

published in *Time* in 1961 declared that "the only durable mark that the beatniks made on

America is the coffeehouses that flourish in a dozen cities," a remark that shows the close association they had formed with coffeehouses (qtd. in Vartbedian 212). Few mourned for the beatniks, though, as the public had always viewed them with hostility. While there were several reasons for this hostility, a major one was the fact that the stereotypical beatnik worked as little as possible. As the Vartabedians put it, beatniks "who were in the mainstream chose to be disenfranchised" economically as a revolt against the corruption of consumer society (214). Unfortunately, Stephen Petrus notes that many Americans, having lived through the Great Depression and World War II, "valued stability more than anything," economic and material stability in particular. The beatnik threatened this newfound stability, and in more conservative areas was identified as a vagrant (Petrus 13-14). As one police officer from Hutchinson, Kansas said, the beatnik "doesn't like work…any man that doesn't like work is a vagrant, and a vagrant goes to jail around here" (qtd. in Petrus 13).

In the popular imagination, then, the beatnik worked as little as possible, preferring to sit in coffeehouses all day while listening to jazz or poetry readings. This naturally created an association in the public imagination between the beatnik and the coffeehouse, an association that surfaces in two articles published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1959. Though neither of these articles explicitly attacks or insults beatniks, the underlying pejorative implications are obvious in the rhetoric they use to describe various coffeehouses. The first, Harry Klissner's "No Dens of Iniquity: Coffeehouse Tabs Too Rich for Poor Beatniks' Pocketbooks," seems at first glance to defend beatniks from popular criticisms of laziness. He acknowledges the widespread notion that "every establishment which sells café espresso is an iniquitous den—the hangout for the

beatniks." Klissner, however, claims that this is "phony," insomuch as actual

coffeehouses do not resemble such common stereotypes. So far, so good. As the article

goes on, however, it actually begins to endorse negative views of beatniks, particularly

those about their work ethic. Klissner interviews the owner of a particular coffeehouse,

Bob Hare, who admits that establishments like his "can't afford to cater to the beatnik"

because "[t]he beatnik usually doesn't have the money to bury our product. He may have

plenty of ideas, but we can't afford to stake him to free beverages." Hare's comments

explicitly address the dichotomy of intellectual productivity and business productivity: he

admits that beatniks might have be intellectual stimulated enough to produce "plenty of

ideas," but such ideas are not going to provide his business with any money.

From there, it quickly becomes evident that Klissner intends not to defend

beatniks, but to defend coffeehouses as legitimate places of business *despite* their being

beatnik hangouts. Later in the article, Klissner comments on negative views of beatniks:

"The popular conception is that he rarely bathes or shaves and usually refuses to hold a

job because he is either in rebellion against society or *too lazy to work*" (emphasis mine).

He neither endorses or denies this view in regard to factuality, but notes that "this type

usually isn't found in coffee houses. My inspection…shows that most men and women

who flock here want to be entertained." The rest of the article describes the interior and

atmosphere of a typical coffeehouse, seemingly intending to persuade "normal" people

that such places provide leisure and entertainment without the intrusion of too many

beatniks. Another article from the *Los Angeles Times,* published just a few weeks before

Klissner's, appears to corroborate the shift from beatnik hangout to legitimate business

enterprise that Klissner demonstrates. Will Kern's "But No Beatniks: Coffee Takes On

Intellectual Air" profiles various coffeehouses that began attracting teenagers. As Kern

notes, "These are not hangouts for beatniks. There's not a real beatnik in the

county…The proprietors of these coffee houses are frank to admit that they are in

business for the money," implying that beatniks would not be interested in attending

coffeehouses that *were* in business for the money.

In both of these articles, money and work contrast explicitly with the beatnik

lifestyle, including the traditional beatnik coffeehouse. In Klissner's case, both Klissner

himself and Hare admit that the coffeehouses in question cannot support themselves by

relying on the patronage of beatniks, the implication being that they are lazy and have no

money to spend. Klissner's description of beatniks as "too lazy to work" precedes the

description of the coffeehouse, a description highlighting the coffeehouse's commercial

appeal for "normal" people. In fact, Klissner actually contrasts the new commercialized

version of the coffeehouse with the older beatnik one: "Coffee houses in the South Bay,

instead of being a congregation point for the beatnik, are turning into a center for the

square who wants a home away from home *after he has finished his day at the office or in

a factory*" (emphasis added). Similarly, Kern's article specifically notes that absence of

beatniks in an establishment frank about its determination to earn money.

These articles demonstrate the beatnik's association with laziness in the popular

imagination. Even without Klissner's explicit description of the stereotypical beatnik as

"too lazy to work," we can infer this association from the treatment of beatniks in relation

to new commercialized coffeehouses. In each case, beatniks are taken as the opposition

of a profitable establishment, and are even maligned on the basis of their not having

enough money to pay for coffee. Again, the insult here is implicit rather than explicit,

relying on a shared cultural assumption for its effect. From the point of view of

Korostelina, this would probably qualify as a power insult, an insult that "aims at

restoring a balance of power by decreasing positive social acceptance of [the out-group]"

(220). The insults Klissner and Kern direct toward beatniks are certainly less aggressive

than those of Addison or Hazlitt, but they nonetheless demonstrate the power dynamics

between beatniks and society at large. By slighting beatniks in this way and portraying

them as lazy and poor, Klissner and Kern reinforce the boundary between in-group and

out-group by minimizing the social acceptance of beatniks, as Korostelina predicts.

From this point of view, it is especially interesting that Klissner and Kern's insults

relate to coffeehouses. On the pragmatic level, coffeehouses are the focus of their story,

not the beatniks; their choice of locale is meant foremost as a story, rather than an insult.

Still, the fact that they feel the need to assuage the fears of the public in regard to these

coffeehouses is telling, even more so when we consider that coffee came to stand for

work in the American psyche. Like Hazlitt, it seems that Klissner and Kern are drawing

form a rhetorical context to inform the implicit insults in their articles. The popular

discourse surrounding coffee emphasized work and productivity; as shown in the last

section, advertising campaigns utilized the rhetoric of work to associate coffee with

productivity. Klissner and Kern are clearly drawing from this rhetorical context, as their

articles reflect the productive connotations of coffee: they each represent the

coffeehouses as places of business first and foremost. Klissner in particular emphasizes

the coffeehouse's capacity for leisure *after* a hard day's work. As Jiménez notes, leisure

became part of the paradigm of work promoted by advertisers:

…coffee, together with other products…provided the bursts of energy to sustain productivity and also allowed the recouping of that energy…But more than an instrument to raise productivity, the particular way in which coffee helped construct the nature and purposes of leisure time reflected the emergence of a consumer society in the United States... (51-52)

If Jiménez is correct, we see that Klissner and Kern are participating in a rhetorical context that associates coffee with work and work-induced leisure. As with Addison, this rhetorical context is informed by the larger cultural contexts at work but is also distinct from the cultural context, in that the campaigns that created the coffee-work paradigm mainly occurred decades earlier than Klissner and Kern wrote. The associations at play in their articles derive not from an immediate cultural context, but form a rhetorical context shaped by a cultural context much larger in scope and time. And, as with Hazlitt and Addison, this rhetorical context creates meanings and associations via insult that otherwise could not exist. Bearing in mind the implicit nature of the insults in this case, Klissner and Kern's pejorative rhetoric plays upon popular notions of coffee to cast beatniks as antithetical to the coffee-work paradigm. This effectively excludes them from participating in the large social in-group that does participate in that paradigm, thus creating a power insult by minimizing their social influence. Coffee and the coffeehouse, once again, act as the catalyst that creates this negative association between beatniks and work.

Granted, coffeehouses gained a reputation for laziness because beatniks happened to frequent them, rather than the other way around. But, as we saw in the examples above, this association created a rhetorical context separate from the cultural context,

such that coffeehouses were popularly associated with leisure more than beatniks, to the point that they could capitalize on this association monetarily, even to the exclusion of beatniks. This rhetorical association with leisure, an association constructed out of rhetorical rather than cultural material, then transferred to the Klissner and Kern's insults, which furthered maligned beatniks for laziness in a way that would not have been possible without it.

Hipsters, Starbucks, and Inauthenticity

More or less since they started appearing, beatniks were accused of inauthenticity. The beatnik phenomenon grew as rapidly as it did due to advances in media technology, as the Vartabedians have pointed out. These advances allowed information and images to spread across the country more quickly than ever, and the Beats' sudden notoriety in the media accelerated the beatnik trend. Crucially, though, beatniks had a *mediated* exposure to the Beats, since they, like the rest of the country, were likely introduced to them via media. These circumstances gave fodder to critics accusing beatniks of inauthenticity, who could justifiably argue that beatniks were just following the fad set by the Beats. In response to a story on beatniks, one such critic, Ruth Isely, wrote to *Life* in 1959 complaining about their supposed inauthenticity: "Can the nonconformist beatnik explain why all beatniks look so very much more alike than any two squares in the world?" (qtd. in Petrus 2). Isely's critique highlights the perceived contradiction at the heart of the beatnik lifestyle: they claim to be nonconformists, yet conform to the image of the Beat and other hipsters as seen through media.

Despite their short lifespan, the legacy of the beatniks resurfaced in the years following the gourmet coffee boom initiated by Starbucks, this time calling itself the "hipster." This "new" hipster, a throwback to the original hipster from the 40s and 50s, holds most of the same values as its beatnik forebears, leading it to share many of the same criticisms, as well. According to Maly and Varis, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the new hipster is his or her "'culturally sensitive' consumer attitude" (Maly and Varis 639). Maly and Varis describe them as being "progressive, alternative, and reject[ing] commercialism," similar to the older hipsters and beatniks. This rejection stems from their search for "authenticity," a sense of self unmediated by consumerism and mass culture, again similar to the beatnik. To Maly and Varis, this search for authenticity ultimately ends in a paradox: "…being a hipster comes with very strong and reoccurring identity discourses that all focus on authenticity, yet paradoxically form the basis of a very collective style" (644). In other words, the hipster strives to achieve an authentic and genuine self, but this search has culminated in the hipster "style." Rather than achieving authenticity solely through the self, hipster authenticity is informed by and mediated through the "hipster style." This style manifests in certain ways of living, dining, and clothing, among other things, that have become common among hipsters.

As Maly and Varis note, hipsters have developed interesting rhetorical strategies to overcome this paradox: "…the rejection of 'hipster' as an identity category for self-identification seems to be an essential ingredient in the production of 'real' hipsters" (645). A "real" hipster refuses to identify with hipsterism, on the basis that identifying with a certain lifestyle or aesthetic is to succumb to a mainstream culture, instead of an authentic self. As an example, Maly and Varis cite an article written by Joshua Wartena,

a student at Utah Valley University, who explains his lifestyle by expressly distancing himself from the intention of hipsterism:

> I wear clothes from thrift shops, listen to independent bands, shop at health food stores and read 'artsy' books. I don't watch TV or associate myself with mainstream American culture, but am I really a hipster? I just do things that make me a happier and better person. I don't reject mainstream attitudes or wear mismatched clothing because it's fashionable; I do those things because that's a reflection of how I view the world and who I am. (quoted in Maly and Varis 645)

Wartena's reaction to hipsterism is to reject it, implying that his hipster-esque habits and tastes are merely a reflection of his authentic self, rather than the reproduction of a style. The rejection of hipster identity often manifests rhetorically in certain phrases that have become associated with hipsters, such as doing something "before it was cool," or rejecting something for being "too mainstream."

Mainstream or not, the hipster has once again become synonymous with coffee and coffee shops. It is difficult to account for this exactly, at least at first. The simplest answer would be to say that "new" hipsters are merely an extension of the old and therefore gravitate toward the places that hipsters have always frequented, or that the hipster sees Starbucks and gourmet coffee as compatible with his or her search for authenticity. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the hipster has become strongly associated with Starbucks and gourmet coffee shops generally, and vice versa. This is not to say that everyone who drinks gourmet coffee is by extension a hipster, but the hipster ethos seems to have had a pervasive impact on the rhetoric of gourmet coffee drinking itself, such that the two at times appear inextricable. As these two internet memes (see

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Figs. 2 and 3, pg. 40) show, gourmet coffee—in both cases, Starbucks—is assumed as a

part of hipster identity. In the first (Fig. 2), we see a cat dressed in a hoodie and glasses,

clearly signaling itself as a hipster. The caption explicitly mentions a "Starbucks frapp"

as the cat's drink of choice. Through some clever wordplay, the cat directly connects its

hipster identity with its coffee-drinking: it mentions drinking Starbucks coffee "before it

was cool." This identifies the cat as both a consumer of gourmet coffee and a hipster,

implying that that those two facts are linked. Drinking gourmet coffee is represented as

an intentional choice, a choice designed to lead the subject (in this case, the hipster cat) to

an authentic self.[8] The second meme (Fig. 3) reemphasizes this point. The man in the

meme is clearly a hipster, as his wardrobe suggests.

Figure 2: Hipster Kitty meme ("I burn my mouth")

Figure 3: Hipster/Starbucks meme #1 (jro1)

Like the cat meme, this meme makes the connection between his hipsterism and his

choice of coffee explicit. The caption alerts us to the fact that the hipster works at

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[8] Granted, this meme is satirical. It may seem ridiculous to talk about a cat identifying with hipster culture or achieving an authentic self. Satire by its very nature, however, is only possible by reproducing reality: if the point of satire is to ridicule someone's foibles, there must be actual foibles to satirize. Thus, even though the cat hipster meme is clearly intended to be funny and satirical, it still represents popular attitudes and perceptions regarding hipsters.

Starbucks, underscored by a parenthetical "duh," meaning that the hipster's association with Starbucks is taken to be a given just by his being a hipster.

I mentioned a few paragraphs ago that it is difficult to account for Starbucks' popularity with hipsters. Examining it more closely, however, it becomes evident that Starbucks in fact fashions itself rhetorically in ways that would attract hipsters, even if hipsters themselves are not the sole targets of such rhetoric. If, as Maly and Varis, assert, the hipster is driven by a distrust of mainstream consumerism and wants to be responsible with his or her choices, Starbucks would seem to fit that bill—at least, on the surface. In separate studies, both Paula Mathieu and Greg Dickinson agree that Starbucks has crafted specific rhetorical strategies to disassociate itself with mass consumerism (despite its being the most successful coffee chain in the world) in order to cultivate an ethos of responsibility for itself. Dickinson argues that Starbucks stores are designed to "[embed] the consumer in a practice of production and consumption emphasizing nature," practices that "create a stabilized, localized authenticity." From the aroma of coffee one smells upon entrance to the green colors so abundant in a Starbucks, the stores are designed to make the coffee-drinking (and, more importantly, coffee-buying) experience seem natural and, therefore, unaffiliated with the capitalism and consumerism of modern society. Dickinson also singles out visual displays and pamphlets as rhetorical strategies. Various displays throughout the stores emphasize the "journey" that coffee has undergone to arrive at Starbucks: from green bean to the roasted final product, these displays explicitly portray the journey coffee makes from producing countries to roasters to the end product. Dickinson sees these displays as other ways to emphasize the naturalness of Starbucks coffee; the ability to trace the coffee to its place of origin "matters in an embodied way

through taste and is generated by the vary materiality of the production of the beans"

(Dickinson 10-13). Conveniently, though, Starbucks never addresses any of the issues

connected with this trail of production, such as the wages of the workers who grow the

coffee or the conditions they live in. Similarly, Mathieu mentions Starbucks' robust

ordering vocabulary as another way of masking its capitalist agenda. Mathieu argues that

the "specialized terminology" of ordering a drink at Starbucks creates "the illusion that a

drink choice is tailored specifically to one's individual desires," rather than that one is

simply digesting a predetermined set of options created and reproduced by nebulous

capitalist forces (117-118).

  To Dickinson and Mathieu, Starbucks' fashions its rhetorical strategies to mask its

powerful consumerism. Dickinson perhaps says it best: "…the coffee buying and

drinking is a *ritual* that provides *indulgences* that can cover the sins of living a

postmodern life. The irony, of course, is that the indulgence…is a constitutive element of

the sins for which the indulgence is a cover," in this case mass consumerism (21). This

irony, that consuming Starbucks coffee functions as an "indulgence" to mask the "sins"

of consumerism, has not been lost on critics of hipsters, who use it to question the

hipster's authenticity. Figures 4-7 (see pg. 43) demonstrate this attitude toward hipsters.

Each of the four examples features a man, whose thick-rimmed glasses, scarf, and general

demeanor clearly present him as a hipster. The top caption of each meme describes the

hipster's stereotypically nonconformist attitude toward modern consumer society, such as

that he is "anti-establishment" or that he blogs about "the rise of corporate America." The

bottom caption then reverses the top caption, demonstrating its irony. For instance,

though the hipsters claim to be anti-establishment, the bottom caption reveals that he

"only drinks Starbucks," which is the most mainstream coffee brand in the world.

Figure 4: Hipster/Starbucks meme #2 ("Just got done blogging…")
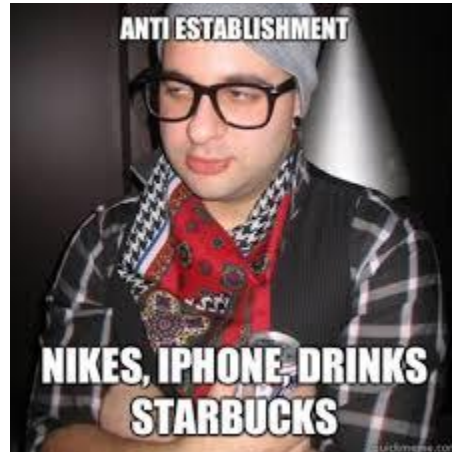

Figure 5: Hipster/Starbucks meme #3 ("Anti establishment, Nikes…")

Figure 6: Hipster/Starbucks meme #4 ("Anti establishment, only drink…")

Figure 7: Hipster/Starbucks meme #5 ("Calls himself an anarchist")

These memes represent one of the usual attacks on hipsters, but it is more than simply a common complaint. As we saw earlier, this attack traces back to the beatniks, who had similar charges of inauthenticity brought against them. A charge of inauthenticity to a hipster is particularly devastating, since the hipster ethos revolves around discovering an authentic self. Starbucks appears to offer hipsters an authentic drink alternative, one that is "natural" and untainted by mass consumerism, but Starbucks achieves this appeal through various rhetorical strategies designed to mask its affiliation with global capitalism, as we have seen. This makes Starbucks one of the most popular tools for attacking the inauthenticity of hipsters.

We will classify these Starbucks-based insults as legitimacy insults, which Korostelina defines as an insult that "initiates and promotes a recategorization process that legitimizes one side and delegitimizes the other" (220). In this case, questioning a hipster's authenticity cuts to the core of the hipster ethos; if a hipster is not "authentic," the entire hipster persona becomes delegitimized. Insults of this kind clearly mean to delegitimize hipsters by calling attention to the perceived incongruity between their actions and beliefs, legitimizing the criticizing in-group and reinforcing the social boundary between the two groups.

Like the coffeehouse politicians and the beatniks, this insult is constructed rhetorically, though perhaps in a slightly different way. In those two examples, the in-group drew on a rhetorical context informed by yet separate from the larger cultural context. In the case of the hipster, though, the insult seems to be drawing from the rhetorical context constructed *by* hipsters and Starbucks, rather than the context constructed *around* them. For example, in the case of the coffeehouse politicians and

beatniks, particular rhetorics formed around those groups informed by a cultural context, specifically in relation to their association with coffee or coffeehouses. Thus, coffeehouse politicians are coffeehouse politicians insomuch as they frequent coffeehouses, those being places of superficiality; and beatniks, in some sense at least, are beatniks because they also attend coffeehouses, which denotes them as lazy. The rhetoric surrounding these places, though informed by cultural associations, developed new rhetorical meanings that in-groups utilized in forming insults toward certain out-groups.

In contrast, the out-group in this case (i.e., hipsters) seems to have created the rhetorical associations itself, at least up to a certain point. As Maly and Varis pointed out above, hipsters themselves fashioned rhetorical strategies to protect themselves from charges of inauthenticity by consciously rejecting the label of hipster and all associations with anything in the "mainstream." Thus, hipsters helped create a rhetorical context surrounding themselves, one that implies the rejection of anything popular or trendy. In the example memes shown above (Fig. 4-7), the in-group draws on this rhetorical context by making the hipster's rejection of the mainstream explicit: the top lines of these memes all ground their hipster subjects within this rhetorical context, framing them as stereotypical hipsters vis-à-vis hipsters' anti-establishment rhetoric.

In the bottom lines, of course, the insult itself comes into play. By associating the hipsters with Starbucks, a mainstream company with ties to global capitalism, these memes delegitimize the hipster rhetoric found in the top lines. Note that two of the memes above (Figs. 4 and 5) mention other mainstream companies other than Starbucks, such as Apple and Nike. While this represents the ability for other cultural artifacts to inform insult in the same way as coffee, it is interesting that Starbucks is the only

company mentioned in all four memes. The best way to account for this is to recall

Mathieu and Dickinson's comments about Starbucks' own rhetorical strategies, which

attempt to portray the company as a socially responsible product while masking its ties

with consumerism and global capitalism. The incongruity of Starbucks' rhetoric and

actions reflects that of the hipsters, providing the impetus for insult. Again, we see coffee

acting as the catalyst for insult: hipsters identify with Starbucks' rhetoric of responsibility

because it appears to reinforce their own rhetoric of responsibility. Starbucks' rhetoric,

however, does not match up with its actions. This creates a space for insult, as we see in

these memes, by explicitly attacking the hipster's affiliation with a company whose

rhetoric does not reflect its actions. Crucially, the link between hipsters and Starbucks is

constructed rhetorically, i.e., Starbuck's rhetoric of responsibility appeals to hipsters, who

use it to enhance their own rhetoric of authenticity. This explains why Starbucks features

more frequently in the memes. While any affiliation with capitalist cultural artifacts, such

Nike or Apple, could do the trick, the rhetorical link between hipsters and Starbucks

makes it a more potent insult because it specifically confronts hipsters on a rhetorical

basis. Once again, we see an insult creating boundaries between groups that could not

exist independent of its rhetorical context. In this case, the legitimacy insults used in

these memes create social boundaries about the authenticity of hipsters, utilizing the

rhetorical context constructed by hipsters and Starbucks.

Chapter 3:

Femininity and the Rhetoric of Insult

Introduction

The previous two chapters have treated the subject of insult from a chronological

perspective, that is, isolating particular instances within their socio-historic context. For

Chapter 3, I would briefly like to take a topical approach to the coffee-related insults by

tracing the development of a specific pejorative association, in this case gender. Though

not immediately noticeable in the historical overviews already given in previous chapters,

femininity in particular has played an important rhetorical role throughout the history of

coffee, particularly in relation to gourmet coffee, as we will see below. This topical

approach will allow us to track the rhetorical development of coffee and gender spanning

multiple cultural contexts. We saw a similar process in our discussion of Hazlitt and

Addison, and to a lesser extent beatniks, but this topical approach will cover much more

ground in terms of time and culture. Tracing gendered associations of coffee this way

will allow us to more fully appreciate the rhetorical context from which various insult are

drawing as they restructure social boundaries. Though we will briefly discuss gender and

coffee in the context of English coffeehouses, most of our discussion will focus on more

modern associations between femininity and gourmet coffee.

Women and Coffee

When coffeehouses first appeared in England, women were given limited access

to them. Because coffeehouses were centers of public life, and women were relegated to

being caretakers of the private and domestic, they tended to have little access to coffeehouses, at least initially[9]. As coffee became more available for widespread private purchasing, it slowly shifted from the public to the private sphere, and people's interactions with it began to transform. For men, coffee became a breakfast drink, a drink to help start their day with energy and focus, as we have already noted. In contrast, women began to have widespread access to coffee for the first time. In reaction, women across Europe started hosting "coffee parties," social gatherings almost analogous to the kind men had been having for years in coffeehouses. These parties, Schivelbusch notes, were specifically by women, for women; Schivelbusch sees them as "compensation for women's exclusion from another, more public domain" (63, 69).

The influence of coffee parties helped make coffee a less exclusively masculine beverage and a more universal one, albeit one that still retained sexist attitudes toward women. Morning coffee, in particular, became a major focus for American advertisers in the early twentieth century: as caretakers of their home, women were expected to make their husbands coffee in the morning. As Jiménez notes, "advertisers directly associated women's self-esteem to their ability to make a good cup of coffee" for their husbands (50). The ads below (Figs. 8-10) demonstrate women's increasing association with coffee

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[9] The traditional view has been that women were completely excluded from coffeehouses, at least in England. Recently, though, many historians have begun to question this assumption. In his article "What was Masculine about the Public Sphere? Gender and the Coffeehouse Milieu in Post-Restoration England," Brian Cowan admits that "it can no longer be maintained that women were simply excluded from the social world of the English coffeehouse." However, he wisely also notes that "it would be equally wrong to assume that women had the same unfettered access to the coffeehouses as men," and that "[e]ven if some women could and did enter into the metropolitan coffeehouses, they could never join the company there and feel entirely 'at home' with the men" (149). Thus, while it might be accurate to say that women were allowed inside coffeehouses, it is probably a mistake to assume that access to coffeehouses also implied access to the public sphere and increased social influence for women in the same way that it did for men.

"The coffee is simply un-drinkable this morning"

Don't be content with "once-in-a-while" Coffee!

Men: don't say unkind things about the coffee-making ability of wives! If the coffee isn't good day after day it is not their fault. Ordinary coffee simply does not lend itself to the wonderful uniformity of flavor that men ask.

But now we offer a coffee for consistent keen enjoyment. It is ready for instant serving at odd hours or mealtime, and best of all, the flavor is not only irresistibly fresh, but absolutely unchanging. This is why. We make the coffee for you. Our prize coffee-makers use our extra-grade coffee and guard each step in the making, as only they know how. Then all the water is evaporated, the grounds discarded, leaving a delicate aromatic powder that is the concentrated essence of the finest coffee you have ever tasted.

A half-teaspoon in a cup, boiling water, and you have a cup of coffee that is a treat in quality and flavor. Compare it with the finest coffee you have ever had. Then consider this: no waste, no muss, no bother with pots. Try this wonderful coffee today.

Faust Instant Tea is a similar product, with the usual Faust quality, economy and convenience.

At your dealer, or write us.

C. F. Blanke Tea & Coffee Co.

St. Louis, Mo.   Chicago: 159 North Clark St.

Proprietors of the World-Famous Faust Coffee and Teas. Manufacturers of Faust Chile Powder, the new all-round seasoning.

BLANKE'S FAUST INSTANT COFFEE

1¼¢ a cup

Figure 8: Faust Coffee ad (Display Ad 8…)

during this period. The first ad for Faust Coffee (Fig. 8, pg. 49) shows an image of a man and a woman, presumably husband and wife, sitting at a table. Looking toward his wife, the man wipes his mouth and exclaims, "The coffee is simply undrinkable this morning." Below this image, the advertisement addresses men directly: "Men: don't say unkind

things about the coffee-making ability of wives!" This line implies that it is the wife's

responsibility to make her husband a cup of coffee in the morning, corroborating

Jiménez's point about advertising in this period.

While coffee may have associated itself with women purely on the basis of their

homemaking abilities, in just a few decades advertisers were targeting women as much as

men, if still through the veil of sexist attitudes. Two ads from 1950 (Figs. 9 and 10), each

in comic strip form, demonstrate this newfound attitude. The first ad, for Nescafé (Fig. 9,

pg. 51), a man working on a construction site tells his partner about how tired he is, after

which his partner gives him Nescafé to perk him up. Toward the end of the ad, though,

the man and his wife are shown in their kitchen, each drinking a cup of coffee. While the

man does congratulate his wife about the coffee's taste, implying that she made it, she

also drinks it, even quipping, "From now on it's Nescafé for *us*!" (emphasis added). The

Faust ad (Fig. 8) portrays the man's wife primarily as a coffee-maker; though we can see

her holding a cup of her own, the ad gives no indication that she either enjoys it or is

disgusted by it. She has no comment on it at all. The poor taste of the coffee only affects

the man, implying that it was made *for* him. In the Nescafé ad, on the other hand, both the

man and his wife comment positively on the taste of the coffee, implying that taste is a

concern for each. The ad self-consciously markets itself to both men and women.

Similarly, the ad for Postum coffee substitute (Fig. 10, pg. 51) directly targets coffee-

drinking women. The woman in this ad, suffering from "coffee nerves" brought on by the

caffeine in coffee, opts to switch to Postum at the suggestion of her friend. Here, we see

Postum explicitly targeting female coffee-drinkers, again showing coffee's shifting

gender associations.

Figure 9: Nescafé ad (Display Ad 105)

Figure 10: Postum Coffee Substitute ad (Display Ad 82…)

Gourmet Coffee and Femininity

No doubt, the legacy of the coffee party played a role in normalizing women's

drinking of a "masculine" drink like coffee, a process that was normalized even further

by widespread domestic coffee-drinking, as the above ads show. But the growing

popularity of gourmet coffees during the latter half of the twentieth century developed

new gendered associations around coffee, especially with the widespread introduction of espresso, which in many ways "reclaimed" men's exclusivity to coffee. Julie Kjendal Reitz sees espresso as a predominately masculine drink, in contrast with ordinary coffee, the introduction of which into the domestic sphere expanded its gendered meanings to include both men and women. According to Reitz, "[e]spresso drinking has been, and continues to be, a classically public phenomenon," and this public quality has allowed espresso to maintain its masculine associations (12). Just as ordinary coffee lost its exclusively-masculine associations by entering the domestic sphere, espresso has retained its masculine associations by remaining a public drink. According to Reitz, espresso's particular qualities as a beverage have helped it remain a public drink. Much like a shot of hard alcohol, a shot of espresso is a stronger, concentrated form of coffee, and as Reitz points out, "[c]ulturally and historically…men drink the hard, strong stuff," the idea being that "strong drinks are for strong bodies" (13, 15). She also claims that hard, strong drinks have traditionally marked the distinction between public and private life for men, meaning that espresso has avoided entering the domestic sphere at large because of its hard, "masculine" qualities (13).

On the other hand, gourmet coffee bars and cafés frequently use espresso in many of their drinks, and, as we have seen, gourmet coffee has garnered widespread and universal appeal with all genders. Reitz accounts for this by noting that gourmet coffee bars like Starbucks tend to dilute their espresso with milk, water, or other additives, a process that "feminizes" it. Milk, in particular, seems especially culpable:

The claim of strength is lost the minute espresso is adulterated with milk. For

example, a cappuccino or a latte does not possess the masculine image that

espresso holds. Milk feminizes the drink. Milk, of course, is inextricably linked to

mothers…Adding milk to the dark, frothy beverage immediately lightens and

dilutes it, creating not only a less potent form of the drink, but also a markedly

different *looking* drink; dare I say, a tamer drink. (Reitz 15-16, original italics)

Gourmet coffees, Reitz suggests, tend to feminize masculine espresso by diluting it with

milk, an inherently feminine drink. We should note that the addition of milk does not

simply make espresso a universal drink like regular coffee, but instead actively feminizes

it. Ordinary coffee gained its universal character through its presence in both the public

and private spheres; anyone, male or female, could get access to it. But, as Reitz asserts,

espresso has remained a public drink; few people drink it domestically. That, as well as

the strength of its flavor, has given espresso a specifically male association. Similarly,

milk is explicitly associated with females. Because of these ingrained associations,

adding milk to espresso is an explicit feminization of a masculine beverage. The result is

that gourmet coffee often harbors an effeminate association, as if it were unfit for "real"

men to drink it.

We see this attitude in Figs. 11-12 below. Fig. 11 (pg. 54) is a meme featuring an

image of Ron Swanson (played by Nick Offerman), a character from the television show

Parks and Recreation known for his hyper-masculine lifestyle choices. The caption

reads, "Real men don't go to Starbucks," a claim reinforced by the appearance of

Swanson. Straightforward as this meme is, it clearly demonstrates the feminine

association that gourmet coffee has gained. Swanson's appearance in the meme gives it a

masculine ethos before we even arrive at the caption; even viewers who have never seen

Park and Recreation recognize the clean haircut, thick mustache, and business suit as

Figure 11: Ron Swanson/Starbucks meme ("Real men don't…")

tell-tale signs of stereotypical masculinity. Presumably, it is this ethos, the image of

classic masculinity, that issues the warning about Starbucks coffee, making it an even

more powerful assertion of masculinity. In Fig. 12 (pg. 55), we again see the close

associations gourmet coffee has with hipsters, but this time the focus is not on the

hipster's perceived inauthenticity, but rather the feminizing qualities of gourmet coffee,

in this case Starbucks. The template for this particular meme, featuring the character

Boromir (Sean Bean) from the *Lord of the Rings* films, is generally used as a method of

humorously conveying given information, that is, information the intended audience will

already have taken for granted. In this case, that information is that walking into

Starbucks makes one feel like a "gay hipster." "Gay," here obviously used in a pejorative

sense, refers to the perceived feminization of Starbucks customers; here, drinking

Starbucks feminizes the (presumably male) customer into a "gay hipster."[10]

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[10] "Hipster" here is also clearly pejorative, but the exact sense in which it is pejorative is unclear. The insult is once again related to Starbucks, but this seems to merely be a reference to the close association between hipsters and Starbucks. It seems to be taken as inherently pejorative, as if being a hipster were a negative thing irrespective of outside associations.

Figure 12: Boromir/Starbucks meme ("24 Starbucks Memes…")

The particular type of insult used in both of these examples is a divergence insult,

which, according to Korostelina, attempts to "enhance differences and the social

boundary if one group does not want to acknowledge similarity or resemblance" (218). In

both memes, the in-group attempts "to stress the differences between groups emphasizing

the negative characteristics of an out-group" (Korostelina 218). The in-group is difficult

to determine exactly, due to the anonymous nature of most internet memes, but it appears

to be those that value more traditional notions of masculinity. Thus, in Fig. 11, the in-

group attempts to differentiate itself from contemporary ideas about gender, using

Starbucks as the catalyst: if gourmet coffee like Starbucks is effeminate, and men drink it,

they must not be "real" mean, since they are consuming a beverage inappropriate for

notions of traditional masculinity. Fig. 12 also uses Starbucks to differentiate in-group

and out-group, both groups presumably being the same for both examples. As noted

above, this particular template of memes is designated for shared information,

information that members of an in-group would take for granted. The implication of the meme is that members of the in-group do not have to worry about becoming "gay hipsters," whereas those in the out-group do, since they frequent Starbucks. Because of this shared information and the supposed security it offers, members of the in-group are able to insult those in the out-group, resulting in a divergence insult, a strict demarcation between "us" and "them." The in-group constructs a dichotomy between themselves and "gay hipsters" in order to highlight the favorability of their own group.

The association that developed between gourmet coffee and femininity is a cultural one, independent of the rhetoric that disseminates it, such as the two memes above. This cultural context informs the insult in these memes, however, forming a new rhetorical context: the negative association between gourmet coffee and masculinity *is* a purely rhetorical association. The specific form of insult used in these memes helps create this new association. Divergence insults assume and reinforce an oppositional social dynamic between groups, meaning that what one posits about the out-group implies the opposite about the in-group. In this case, the in-group directly insults the out-group by associating them with gourmet coffee, which has a feminine association. This accomplishes two things: 1) it helps to establish the in-group's views about masculinity, effectively reclassifying them as "real men" by positioning them opposite the now feminized out-group; and 2) it creates an explicit rhetorical connotation between male Starbucks customers and femininity, an association not possible without the pejorative link to gourmet coffee.

In many ways, these two memes function similarly to Addison's use of "coffeehouse politicians." By associating those patrons with the coffeehouse explicitly, it

effectively transfers the associations of the coffeehouse onto those patrons, a rhetorical

process not achievable through cultural association alone. Similarly, these memes transfer

the associations of gourmet coffee (in this case, Starbucks) onto the male patrons that

frequent Starbucks. Each instance uses insult as the vehicle for this transfer of

associations. Indeed, insult seems particularly useful for this, since, if we follow

Korostelina's theory, insult functions by reinforcing boundaries between social groups.

By transferring the cultural associations of one thing onto another, insults can actually

create new boundaries between groups that would be otherwise inaccessible: this

negative association between men and Starbucks is not possible except through insults of

this kind. The association between gourmet coffee and femininity was a cultural

development, but the transfer of these associations to men is a purely rhetorical one.

One could argue that this negative association is merely implied in its inverse;

that is, that a positive female association with gourmet coffee necessarily implies a

negative male association with it. In a certain sense, this may be true: Schivelbusch notes

that when women began attending coffee parties, they quickly became the target for

men's ridicule, often of a playful or satirical sort. But parody does not amount to a

negative association, especially since men seem to have been satirizing the coffee party

itself, as an institution, rather than the coffee or its gendered meanings (69). Coffee

parties did not masculinize women in the same way that gourmet coffee appears to

feminize men.[11] Furthermore, pejorative associations are strictly rhetorical almost by

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[11] An alternate reading of this could be that men began satirizing coffee parties because they attempted to simulate public (masculine) life in a private (feminine) space, as Schivelbusch seems to suggest, and in that sense represent a negative feminine association. However, if we continue the comparison, we fail to find anything analogous in regard to gourmet coffee, especially Starbucks, which is a public rather than a private establishment. Thus, the associations surrounding it, following the above logic, would be traditionally masculine, rather than feminine, negating any attempt at insult from the outset.

definition, since they must necessarily form via insult to be pejorative in the first place.

Effectively, there is no other way to achieve the negative association between men and

gourmet coffee, as seen in the memes above, without resorting to insult, making it an

exclusively rhetorical meaning.

Coffee Break:

A Conclusion

Before concluding, we should revisit the question that began our study: what does a latte mean? The most obvious answer to this question comes from the popular insult "latte liberal," a slang term used by political conservatives to denote a "financially comfortable person who claims to support liberal causes, then acts completely different [sic]," or alternately, "liberals who sit around and drink overpriced diluted Starbucks coffee while lamenting the plight of the poor," according to the *Urban Dictionary* ("Latte Liberal"). At first glance, this seems like an overtly political insult, and in many ways it is; but, while coffeehouse culture in England was steeped in Whig and Tory politics, and while the beatniks' later political nonconformism was likely alarming to many, this term does not engage with coffee's political associations to inform its insult. "Liberal" carries enough political weight itself to get the point across, but "latte" is clearly the operative word.

Examining the above definitions in more detail, we notice that both of them have to do with inauthenticity or superficiality, associations we have already covered. Oddly, the first definition does not mention coffee except in the titular "latte," focusing instead on the perceived hypocrisy of the people in question, who act "completely different" than liberal opinions would suggest. The second definition makes the connection between inauthenticity even more explicit: "liberals who sit around and drink overpriced diluted Starbucks while lamenting the plight of the poor." There are doubtless numerous examples this person could have given to illustrate this hypocrisy, but their choice of coffee evokes associations of inauthenticity and superficiality already inherent in coffee

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and coffeehouses, particularly of the gourmet variety and its association with hipsters. The definition goes on: "Latte Liberals have no sense of discretion and usually forget what they're arguing about soon after other latte liberals judge newer causes…to be more worthy" ("Latte Liberal"). It is difficult not to hear Hazlitt in this definition; the complaint seems to be that latte liberals are "rehearsing a part," in much the same way Hazlitt describes coffeehouse politicians. This definition redefines "liberal," at least for a certain subset of liberals, as hypocritical, serving to delegitimize them and, presumably, legitimize the in-group, and resulting in a legitimacy insult. If this particular set of liberals are hypocritical, as the label suggest, it follows that the alternative will be more trustworthy, thus validating the in-group at the expense of the out-group. As in the previous example, it is the mention of coffee that effects this process: "liberal" by itself is not pejorative, but the associations latent in "latte" cause the two terms to become pejorative when combined.

But this explanation still does not quite answer our question. What, specifically, does Gov. Huckabee mean when he refers to the protestor as a "latte-sipping idiot"? This insult seems to have nothing to do with authenticity, or with laziness like the beatnik, or with gender like gourmet coffee. The true answer may be that Gov. Huckabee's insult derives from some other association we have not even touched on here, some other connotation of "latte" that yet remains elusive. In any case, the "latte liberal" insult helps us contextualize Gov. Huckabee's insult by demonstrating the rhetorical power of insult in creating new associations out of existing cultural artifacts. We have now seen the same process at work in essays, newspaper articles, images, and memes, across multiple historical period and contexts. In each case, we can observe insult's capacity for creating

new meanings, meanings that would be inaccessible except through a form of pejorative rhetoric.

As I noted at the beginning, coffee's social character makes it a good choice for examining this process. Given its widespread use and broad circulation, as well as the peculiar places it tends to concentrate, it has developed numerous associations that lend themselves to this rhetorical transfer. As we saw in Fig. x, though, coffee is by no means the only cultural artifact for which this would be applicable. Artifacts, images, and rituals from a shared cultural context should, in theory, also contribute to rhetorical contexts, which could then be utilized pejoratively. Korostelina's theory, too, seems to have proven useful. First, it allows for a relatively simple method for categorizing insults, irrespective of whether those be verbal, visual, or active. More importantly, her theory's foundation in social identity theory, along with the particular dynamics she posits for each type of insult, allow us to isolate and understand both the social boundaries and the rhetorical dimensions at play in each pejorative situation.

These two factors reveal the dynamics of insult at work in the various examples we have seen throughout. In the case of the coffeehouse politicians, Addison helped create a rhetorical context associating certain patrons with superficial sociability, a rhetorical context that lasted long enough for Hazlitt to participate in it despite changes in the social and political context. Similarly, popular responses to both the beatnik and the hipster showed us insult's potential to create new associative meanings by drawing from a large cultural context. Finally, we traced the development of coffee's relationship with gender all the way to Starbucks, where we saw insult's capacity for creating new and negative associations between cultural artifacts and social out-groups.

While we may not have answered the question of what, exactly, a latte means, we have seen that a latte can not only have multiple meanings, but can also help *create* new meanings through insult. The various associations attached to social out-groups via insult draw from the surrounding cultural context in each case: coffeehouses, for Addison, were associated with superficiality; gourmet coffee formed an association with femininity, etc. But the transformative power of insult in transferring these associations between social groups demonstrates the creation of purely rhetorical associations, connotations which could not exist without using pejorative rhetoric as a catalyst. Future research may more clearly reveal the dynamics at work in these transfers of meaning, as well as explore the pejorative potential of other cultural artifacts. Until then, though, we have no choice but to sit back and, as Shel Silverstein advises in the epigraph to this essay, have ourselves another espresso.

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