Editorial Statement

Colloquy is a journal of the Department of Communication Studies, funded through Instructionally Related Activities at California State University, Los Angeles. *Colloquy* aims to represent the variety of scholarship conducted in the Department of Communication Studies as well as representing different types and levels of academic thought. Writing style varies with students' experience with writing as a scholarly enterprise.

The editorial board is comprised of students in the Department of Communication Studies and a supervising member of the Communication Studies faculty. Typically, the membership of the editorial board changes with each issue. The intention of the editors is to ensure that essays appearing in the journal are checked for consistency in style and general clarity in writing. Owing to the breadth of theoretical, methodological, and rhetorical approaches within the purview of communication studies, the editors subscribe to a general ethic of inclusiveness, and they endeavor to treat all essays with this ethic in mind.

As representative of the scholarship in communication studies, a number of essays in *Colloquy* have been presented at national and regional conferences, including the National Communication Association convention and the Western States Communication Association conference. As such, *Colloquy* highlights the achievements of students in the Communication Studies department while providing a forum for scholarly discussion and innovation.

The editorial board wishes to thank all those who contributed to this volume, including the authors who submitted essays, the faculty members who solicited materials and mentored students, and members of the production staff.

Editorial Board

Emily M. Adams
Anthony W.Karambelas

Supervising Editor
D. Robert DeChaine, Ph.D.

Copyright 2017, the Authors

Colloquy

A Journal of the Department of Communication Studies
California State University, Los Angeles

Volume 13 **Fall 2017**

Regular Articles

The Impact of Media Framing on Female U. S. Service Members 1
Emily M. Adams

Fake News: The Increased Use of False Reports as Credible Sources To Make Informed Opinions 15
Lorèn Hanna, Eric C. Siberio, Jackson Spencer, and Nathan K. Wensko

Disability and the Sovereign Citizen: A Rhetorical Criticism of Ableism And Erasure of the Disabled Identity 41
Raquel D. Moscozo

Spelled Out in Black and White: Media Framing of Rape Cases and the Effects of Race Representation on News Credibility 55
Paulina Lainez, Jennifer Oliva, Melissa Flores, and Nancy Meza-Gil

Disney Narrative of the 21st Century: How Disney Constructs or Adopts Cultural Progressions 76
Nathan K. Wensko

Media Content Influences on Attitudes and Perceptions: A Study of The Beyhive 92
Lorèn Hanna, Niloufar Melamed, and Lane Schwager

Featured Section

Selected Writings by Communication Studies Majors at California State Prison, Los Angeles County, City of Lancaster 105
Co-Edited by Kamran Afary and Frances Chee

About the Authors and Editors 159

Colloquy
Vol. 13, Fall 2017, pp. 1-14

The Impact of Media Framing on Female U.S. Service Members

Emily M. Adams

Abstract

This literature review examines media framing and its impact on societal perceptions of women, war, and women who go to war. With regards to media coverage, a frame is a perspective through which information is presented to an audience. In the United States, mainstream media outlets tend to depict female service members as damsels-in-distress rather than equals-in-arms, and war itself as a simple matter of good destroying evil. This article includes an exploration of a parallel phenomenon: how media's framing of women in sports presents them as vessels of femininity first, and as athletes second. Existing research indicates that media outlets tend to portray women who choose careers considered traditionally masculine as intruders and weak links. The intent of this article is to set up the case that for females in the military, such a negative portrayal of them could prove detrimental if it makes these females feel that by seeking mental help when they need it, they become what they are told they are: weak and in need of male protection. This literature review serves to lay the foundation for a study aimed to answer the question: Does the media frame of females in uniform contribute to these women's reluctance to seek mental health treatment?

A snapshot represents a solitary moment in time, and what events are captured within that moment depend upon countless factors, including who is holding the camera, where the photographer is situated, and the choice s/he makes with regard to using the camera's zoom or flash features. If several people snap a picture in the same room at the same time, each will encapsulate at least subtly different perspectives of a shared moment. This concept forms the basis of framing theory (Entman, 1993). A journalist, for example, must choose which facts of a story to present, and which to ignore.

Few single photographs come to represent an entire nation's overall opinion of a war better than the one snapped by Nick Ut in Vietnam on June 8, 1972 (Hariman & Lucaites, 2003). The photograph, referred to informally as "Napalm Girl," depicts a nine-year old girl screaming in pain while running down a road naked after suffering a chemical attack. Such framing of the conflict in Vietnam

helped shape the public's negative opinion of it (Hariman & Lucaites, 2003). According to Rockett (2015), what was missing completely from news coverage of the conflict, though, was any mention that women were serving in it.

Advancements in society and technology over the ensuing decades since the unpopular Vietnam conflict have both ushered in a new era for women in the military and changed the way the media cover wars. In August 2015, two commissioned officers became the first females to graduate from U. S. Army Ranger School (Wood, 2015). But instead of lifting these women up, some media outlets immediately called into question the validity of their accomplishment, speculating that their landmark achievement was the result of special treatment (Keating, 2015). This presents a no-win scenario for the way that women in the military are portrayed.

If the two women, Kristen Griest and Shaye Haver, did complete Ranger School on their own merits, the media's framing of the groundbreaking event was diminished by a manufactured controversy, based on a presumption that they must have only done so with a helping hand from their male counterparts (Keating, 2015). But if Griest and Haver did indeed receive special treatment, then it opens up the possibility that U. S. Army officials used these women as a tool for shameless self-promotion through the media.

The basis for this study stems from the premise that the viewing public in the United States is inundated with positive images of service members and war, such as stories about women who have shattered another of the military's glass ceilings, and this has fueled a growing complacency about the resulting collateral damage two decade-long wars has done to service members and their loved ones. This research works from the assumption that a major contributing factor to such complacency involves the way mainstream media portray these wars, which includes a wide variety of happy reunions, with men or women in uniform surprising their family members at graduation ceremonies and holiday celebrations.

Researchers have studied how media framing presents females' roles in arguably two of the most male-centric fields: athletics and combat (Holland, 2006; Messner, 1988). In addition, researchers have applied framing theory to the stories of female prisoners of war [POWs] (Holland, 2006; Nantais & Lee, 1999), and pushed the agenda of a justified invasion of Iraq (Hayes & Guardino, 2010). What seems to be noticeably absent from media coverage of the U. S. military and its service members in uniform is the portrayal of the female service member as a uniformed equal.

Females in the Military

According to Nantais and Lee (1999), throughout the world it is primarily men who engage in the defining characteristic of war: combat. This means that stereotypical gender roles are entrenched in the mindsets of military men, and male pronouns become the default during discussions relating to the military (Nantais & Lee, 1999). But at the dawn of the 1990s, women joined the ranks at an unprecedented level. President George Bush sent a half-million service members to fight in the Gulf War in 1991. This troop count included 6.8 percent women, the highest percentage ever of females in uniform to that point (Nantais & Lee, 1999).

Results of a meta-analysis by Robinson Kurpius and Lucart (2000) showed how women's integration in the military feels from perspectives of both genders. This research came at a time when the U. S. military academies were 85 percent male and 15 percent female (Robinson Kurpius & Lucart, 2000). Results indicated that male cadets at the Naval Academy viewed women cadets least favorably, while male Air Force cadets had the least concern training and serving alongside women (Robinson Kurpius & Lucart, 2000). Females were in the military to stay, whether the males liked it or not.

Female Athletes

Like the military, sports link men to a patriarchal past (Messner, 1988). According to Krane et al. (2004), female athletes manifest a paradox of the ideal feminine body juxtaposed with an athletic, i.e., muscular frame (p. 315). Contempirary hegemonic culture dictates that the ideal female body is thin and toned (Krane et al., 2004, p. 316). What this means is that women who are at the top of the heap athletically must exude a stereotypical femininity, while at the same time being as masculine as they must be in order to play their respective sport well (Krane et al., 2004).

Messner (1988) explains that as organized sports came into prevalence, they served to offer men an escape from femininity. The first year that women were included in an organized sport was 1935, and that was roller derby (Messner, 1988). Female athletes would have to wait another four decades, though, before challenging cultural perceptions of what it meant to be one of them: a woman athlete (Messner, 1988).

Results of a nationwide study of 1,682 female athletes showed that nearly all (94 percent) of them feel their femininity aligns effectively with their athletic prowess (Messner, 1988). Fifty-seven percent of the same women, though, conceded that society forces women to choose athletics or femininity, suggesting

that stereotypical images of femininity run counter to an athlete's muscular form (Messner, 1988). Messner (1988) illustrates this point through bodybuilding competitions, wherein the winner represents a standard against which the outer limits of acceptable femininity are judged.

These competitions are mostly judged by men, and while it may defy common sense, these men do not choose the winner based on which woman is the most muscular (Messner, 1988). Instead, Messner (1988) points out that judges give the award to a woman whose muscles do not overtake her curves (p. 203). Winners of female bodybuilding competitions are thus women who still look like women (Messner, 1988).

Messner (1988) goes on to mention that female athletes still continue to struggle to gain ground against the media's marginalization of them. He explained that sports reporters are primarily male, and a whopping 90 percent of sports coverage is dedicated to that of men (Messner, 1988). When these newsmen do report on women, they usually mention female athletes in terms of playing like men, or by their respective personal opinions of their beauty, or in regard to their role as a wife and/or mother (Messner, 1988).

Though Messner's research is dated, a content analysis by Cooky, Messner, and Musto (2015) of sports coverage on three major local news stations in Los Angeles found little change in the amount of coverage devoted to female athletes over the entire past quarter-century. These affiliate stations even reported on male athletes who made off-season public appearances more often than on females in sport (Cooky et al., 2015).

The media's scant coverage of women in sports is arguably attributable to framing theory. The topics covered in a news program compose the agenda, while the angle given to each is the frame. The agenda tells an audience what to think about, whilst the frame suggests to that same audience how to think about the topics put forth on the agenda (Goffman, 1974). While at the same time these reporters highlight muscular, brooding men who often resort to engaging in physical violence with each other on the field or court, they minimize—and often dismiss—the intense coordination and athleticism required of women who engage in more female-oriented sports like cheerleading or synchronized swimming (Cooky et al., 2015; Messner, 1988).

Framing Theory

Framing theory pioneer Goffman (1974) asserts that how a particular situation is presented to an audience is indicative of how the audience will process the content within the message. As it pertains to media, framing refers to the

phenomenon that a person's perspective on any issue is formed by the information with which s/he is presented, and with whom or where her/his allegiance already lies.

According to Chong and Druckman (2007), framing theory is based on the premise that out of any issue arises countless perspectives, and portraying one vantage point means discounting the rest. A frame in a communication context serves to provide an interpretation of a series of events (Chong & Druckman, 2007). According to Entman (1993), "Frames define, diagnose, make judgments, and suggest remedies, though maybe not all at once" (p. 56). Framing is the process of emphasizing specific aspects of a phenomenon and subduing others (Entman, 1993). The dominant meaning of a text or news story is one that is likely supported most effectively by the audience (Entman, 1993). While journalists have a duty to report objectively, they frame the news in such a way to keep the majority of the audience from evaluating a situation in a just, unbiased manner (Entman, 1993). In other words, a reporter rarely presents opposing perspectives on the same news story.

Hayes and Guardino (2010) found the media frame war in a context that is overwhelmingly positive. They conducted a content analysis of *CBS, NBC,* and *ABC*'s coverage of the eight months preceding the 2003 Iraq invasion, analyzing 1,434 total news stories. The researchers analyzed and coded each statement made in every story on these networks that was related to President Bush's lead-up to war. They coded the stories for six elements, including whether each was supportive of, against, or neutral toward the Bush administration, in addition to coding the general pith of each. Their content analysis found that nearly one-quarter of news stories involving Iraq centered on Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Due to the volume of stories slanted toward the reasons to invade Iraq, Hayes & Guardino asserted that such framing went a long way in molding its favorable public opinion (Hayes & Guardino, 2010).

Hayes & Guardino (2010) thus found media framing served to sell U. S. Americans on the case for war. The anti-war voice—and that of social movement organizations—was muted. Coverage of war opposition received minimal media attention. A major criticism of media coverage during that time is that reporters were overly eager to accept Bush's plan to invade Iraq, while scant few raised any questions about the president's assertions that Saddam Hussein was harboring WMDs (Hayes & Guardino, 2010).

Another key finding by Hayes and Guardino (2010) was 79 percent of people making statements in these newscasts during the pre-war period analyzed were official sources. Thus, sources considered unofficial—people on the street,

religious leaders, and members of political special interest groups—were inconspicuous at best (Hayes & Guardino, 2010). Furthermore, Hayes and Guardino called out Dan Rather specifically for steering his interview subjects away from discussing the scant evidence of Saddam Hussein's Iraq possessing WMDs, and back onto Hussein being a bad man guilty of war crimes. Hayes and Guardino (2010) mentioned that a future direction for researchers who analyze content of news coverage of the ongoing war in Iraq should be to examine if the anti-war opinions of people in other countries, particularly those in Europe, influence viewing audiences in the United States.

The media proved it could sell U. S. Americans on a case for war, while simultaneously devaluing and marginalizing the women sent to fight in it. Nantais and Lee (1999) discuss the case of Melissa Rathbun-Nealy, an Army soldier who was captured by the enemy in January of 1991 and held for 33 days. Poignantly, it took officials in the United States nearly four weeks to call Rathbun-Nealy a prisoner of war (Nantais & Lee, 1999). By virtue of her enlistment in the Army, she was deemed a *protector*, but the media coverage and opinions of the public and fellow military members had framed her as *protected*. Rathbun-Nealy resented the media for its continuous false reporting that she had been raped (Nantais & Lee, 1999). A male soldier was captured at the same time as Rathbun-Nealy, yet media reports rarely mentioned him (Nantais & Lee, 1999). The media repeatedly focused on Rathbun-Nealy, and reporters called into question what the capture of this woman meant for the future of females in the military (Nantais & Lee, 1999).

Upon the release of both of these POWs, *USA Today* framed the female, Rathbun-Nealy, as having run into her mother's arms crying (Nantais & Lee, 1999). Meanwhile, according to Nantais and Lee, coverage of the male captive's release was framed with him as being the recipient of affection, rather than the giver of it, like Rathbun-Nealy (p. 188). Rathbun-Nealy was a POW, but media outlets reported it as though she was a "woman POW" and must have therefore been raped by her captors. The frame of women as protected and men as protectors prevailed following the first Gulf War (Nantais & Lee, 1999).

According to Holland (2006), the media created the Rathbun-Nealy of the second Gulf War in Army Private Jessica Lynch. Lynch was captured during an ambush in the first few hours of the invasion of Iraq (Holland, 2006). Lynch became a celebrity; the media framed her as a poster child of sorts for both the paradox of women in combat, and the problem with war overall (Holland, 2006). The news coverage of Lynch's capture focused on her as a White female embodiment of femininity from a small town in the South (Holland, 2006). The

media rarely mentioned the two female soldiers who died in that same ambush in Nasiriyah (Holland, 2006). One of these casualties was the driver of the Humvee, an African-American woman who remained virtually nameless (Holland, 2006). The other was only mentioned in news reports as "Jessica Lynch's best friend," rather than "Lori Piestewa, Hopi Indian, mother of two" (Holland, 2006). Holland (2010) sizes up framing of the Iraq war's media darling:

> The representation of Lynch as the embodiment of both the vulnerability associated with the female body and the innocence and helplessness associated with a child construct Lynch as the ultimate victim. [As with Rathbun-Nealy, she was reportedly raped.] Lacking the mental and physical capacity to defend her adult female body, her attempted performance of masculinity places her in grave danger. Thus, her endangered presence in the male-dominated combat zone legitimates her masculine protectors' assertion of their phallic power. The reification of the protector/protected categories is facilitated by Lynch's embodiment of the Woman/Child. Moreover, her iconic representation of infantile female vulnerability leaves the audience questioning whether women should be afforded *any* role in the U. S. military. (p. 39)

The psychology of framing theory is explained through Kahneman and Tversky's (1984) study on risk aversion. In their study, the researchers presented respondents with an opportunity to potentially win money (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). They framed the premise in different ways when presenting the scenario to respondents. Sometimes, Kahneman and Tversky (1984) approached the respondents and presented the proposal as an 85 percent chance for them to win 1,000 dollars; to others the researchers highlighted that the respondent had a 15 percent chance of losing ten dollars. When phrased the first way, most of the respondents decided to take the risk and try to win 1,000 dollars. On the contrary, few of the respondents who heard the gamble proposed as a potential risk to lose their ten dollars took the risk to do so. As Kahneman & Tversky's study demonstrates, the way that a message is framed impacts the way that people will react to it.

Masculine Ideology

Framing has the capacity to render consequences more serious than a gambling loss of ten dollars. According to Katz (2003), the U. S. military spends 100 million dollars annually on advertising, primarily during sporting events and in men's magazines. The focus of these ads is rarely on the financial or educational benefits

related to serving the country, and instead on catering to young males' fantasies for "adventure, masculinity, violence, and aggression" (Katz, 2003).

Such advertising by the military feeds masculine ideology, at the core of which lies a devaluing and fear of femininity, and the idea that a man should never appear weak (Zurbriggen, 2010). One of the markers of male status in many cultures is to "have" an appropriate woman in his keep, such as a woman who is available to only men of high status (Zurbriggen, 2010). The characteristics of the high-status woman might vary by culture, but the commonality is that she is treated like an object, as a "trophy wife" that brings status to the man who has "won" her (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 540).

Historically, men have viewed fighting in wars as the penultimate male experience. Thus, once women were authorized to fight right alongside them as equals, at least in the legal sense, it left men without a forum all their own through which they could display their masculinity in full. It makes sense, then, that a female who joins the ranks of the military is at an automatic disadvantage. This is because the marketing materials targeted toward the men that surround her have sent the message that the military is for the rough and tumble, not the prim and proper (Zurbriggen, 2010). Encompassed within such framing by the military itself is not only that military life is "for the boys," but that it is *only* "for the boys."

Katz also points out that it is no coincidence that the best-selling brand of condom, Trojan, is named for a king (Katz, 2003). Men often base their self-image on their masculinity, and a facet of that is to ensure they set themselves apart from the femininity indicative of women. According to Kohn (1981), men fight in wars; it's what they do. It's an experience shared by men among men (Kohn, 1981).

The Hollywood movie industry perpetuates male ideology as well. Filmmakers have unleashed on society a consistent stream of male icons who exhibit—even glamourize—violence (Katz, 2003). What the physical body of these characters exudes is a "manhood" that permeates strength, aggression, and an attitude of control that is only capable of manifestation through the embodiment of maleness (Katz, 2003). While these characters want the audience to notice how richly endowed they are in masculinity, encompassed within that request is an implied demand to be considered as non-feminine as possible (Katz, 2003). Masculine is the opposite of feminine, and in the movies, it is masculinity that makes someone capable of great feats of heroism.

Rape and Military Sexual Trauma

If men view masculinity as a form of power, then it is fair to assume that a man will fight against a woman who threatens that power simply by virtue of having to consider her an equal partner in a career field traditionally reserved only for men. A 1996 survey by officials at the Pentagon found that the rate of male-to-female sexual harassment was a full 20 percent higher among military personnel than within the population-at-large (Nantais & Lee, 1999).

But a still greater display of a male's power over a woman than sexual harassment is rape. Watson-Franke (2002) attributes rape to the West's patrilineal ideology. In her article, she asserts that women in matrilineal cultures are respected, and rape simply does not exist (Watson-Franke, 2002). People in these cultures believe that the act of procreation requires respect for the woman who will nourish the baby (Watson-Franke, 2002). In the West, according to Watson-Franke (2002), heterosexual interaction is laced with authority, domination, and control, and this often results in rape.

After people in general have become victims of trauma, their risk of experiencing anxiety and other psychological problems increases (Zinzow et al., 2007). Naturally, then, they should eventually want to seek mental health treatment (Zinzow et al., 2007). However, according to Zinzow, Grubaugh, Frueh, and Magruder (2008), only one-quarter of male and 38 percent of female sexual assault victims sought treatment a whole year after reporting the incident.

The Veterans Administration defines military sexual trauma [MST] as "experiences of sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that a veteran experiences during his or her military service" (va.gov, 2015, para. 1). Survivors of MST may experience relationship difficulties, problems sleeping, emotional numbness, and more (va.gov, 2015, How can MST affect Veterans? section).

Zinzow, Grubaugh, and Monnier (2007) sought to understand why sexual trauma befalls many women during their time in the military. They concluded that one reason women join the military could be to escape a violent environment. Independent of military affiliation, exposure to prior trauma increases a person's susceptibility to future trauma (Zinzow et al., 2007). Zinzow et al. (2007) found that the majority of female service members and Veterans have experienced a sexual trauma at some point in life. Women who are both service members and survivors of sexual trauma bring certain added risk factors onto the battlefield (Zinzow et al., 2007).

Campbell and Raja (2005) studied nearly 300 female veterans—mostly low-income African-Americans—who self-reported for a survey while waiting in the

lobby at a Veterans Administration hospital in advance of their appointments. These researchers found that 82 percent of the women in this study who experienced a sexual assault whilst on active duty were victimized by a male fellow service member (Campbell & Raja, 2005). And in most of these cases, regardless of the time or place of the assault, the women were victimized by a person with whom they were familiar (Campbell & Raja, 2005). Most of these women escaped without injury, and most of their attackers did not use a weapon in the course of the assault (Campbell & Raja, 2005). Campbell and Raja (2005) also found the majority of these women were deemed to have been stone-cold sober at the time they were assaulted. That information is relevant to refute society's tendency to blame the victim for her own assault by telling her she should have consumed less alcohol, worn a longer skirt, or stayed home at night.

Notably, 70 percent of the time that a female service member reported she was sexually assaulted, she was told that the incident was not serious enough to pursue (Campbell & Raja, 2005). According to Campbell & Raja (2005), "[S]omething in the interactions between victims and military medical professionals was distressing because these survivors were significantly more likely to report feeling blamed, depressed, anxious, distrustful of others, and reluctant to seek further help than victims who described incidents of nonmilitary assault" (p. 103). When the women reported their assaults to military personnel, 65 percent of the time the service members to whom the women reported it refused to document it, as compared with 47 percent when it was reported to civilian law enforcement (Campbell & Raja, 2005).

Walter et al. (2014) conducted a study of 100 female Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of MST. Results showed that 55.5 percent of the sample subjects reported having suffered childhood sexual abuse, while 44.5 percent did not (Walter et al., 2014). Walter et al. (2014) found that these Veterans had co-existing psychological disorders, among which were major depression, alcoholism, cocaine addiction, and panic disorder. These researchers used a more limiting definition of military sexual trauma, one that includes only rape and attempted rape (Walter et al., 2014).

As studies have shown, the media frame women as generally physically and emotionally weaker than men (Messner, 1988; Holland, 2006; Nantais & Lee, 1999; Cooky et al., 2015). It is a reasonable assertion, then, that female service members are reluctant to seek treatment due to the belief that doing so would mean embodying such a perception.

Mental Health

The grim fact is that 13 percent of rape victims attempt suicide (Women Vote PA, para. 1). Hyman, Ireland, Frost, and Cottrell (2012) examined suicide rates for active duty military members from 2005 to 2007, and found that they increased for all services during this period. Deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan was a factor among service members in all military branches who succumbed to suicide in 2007, while two years prior, that was only a factor among Army soldiers (Hyman et al., 2012). Hyman et al. (2012) also found that suicide rates increased among service members who received a diagnosis of a mental health disorder, were in the process of marital separation or divorce, and/or were disciplinarily reduced in rank. Furthermore, their research revealed that suicides are more frequent among enlistees than commissioned officers (Hyman et al., 2012).

During the two years covered in Hyman et al.'s study, the percentage of troops on active duty who were male, while varying by service from slightly more than 80 percent to nearly 94 percent, remained virtually unchanged (Hyman et al., 2012). Hyman et al. (2012) found both prescription sleep aids and a diagnosis of a mental health condition to be prevalent among service members who completed suicide. Results of Hyman et al.'s (2012) study showed that the strength of an association between relationship problems—separation or divorce—and suicide risk was equal to the strength of association between service members who experienced one overseas deployment and suicide risk. Also, financial and/or legal problems increased a service member's risk of suicide, as did alcoholism (Hyman et al., 2012). A limitation to the study by Hyman et al. was that it did not look at the impact of dissolution of nonmarital relationships, history of suicide prevention training at the unit level, or the severity of any mental health diagnoses pertaining to those service members who had completed suicide (Hyman et al., 2012).

According to Harrell and Berglass (2011), "From 2005 to 2010, service members took their own lives at a rate of approximately one every 36 hours" (What We Know About Military Suicide section, para. 1). The U. S. Army reported that the 2008 suicide statistic was 20.2 soldiers per 100,000, a rate that eclipsed that of civilians for the first time since the Vietnam conflict (Hyman et al., 2012). The Navy also saw an increase in the suicide rate among sailors when compared to the general population (Hyman et al., 2012). By January 2009, according to Hyman et al. (2012), more service members died by suicide than combat.

Suicides among Air Force personnel reached a staggering high in the first half of the 1990s, so the vice chief of staff implemented a suicide prevention program (Knox et al., 2003). Knox et al. (2003) reported that this program reduced by 33

percent the likelihood of airmen completing suicide. Results of a 1999 random survey showed that nearly three-quarters of commanders of Air Force units ranked suicide their number one concern in regards to the behavioral health of the airmen in their charge (Knox et al., 2003).

According to *Journal of the American Medical Association,* of the service members who complete suicide, 73 percent do so with a firearm, while 21 percent hang themselves. The risk of suicide among Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom Veterans is statistically insignificant beyond that for the general population (*Journal of the AMA*, 2008). An increase is seen, though, for military personnel in the active duty component, as well as for those diagnosed with mental health issues (*Journal of the AMA,* 2008).

As gleaned from the gaps in existing research, evidence supports a correlation between the media framing of female service members and Veterans, and these women's willingness to reach out for mental health treatment when necessary. In addressing what appears to be a continuing pattern of neglect by reporters and news outlets to include fair and accurate coverage of the female service member's reality, this research has underscores the need for further research on media framing, and in particular, ways in which media framing of females in uniform contributes to these women's reluctance to seek mental health treatment as needed.

References

Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (2005). The sexual assault and secondary victimization of female veterans: Help-seeking experiences with military and civilian social systems. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 29*(1), 97-106.

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science, 10*(1), 103-126.

Cooky, C., Messner, M., & Musto, M. (2015). ''It's dude time!'': A quarter century of excluding women's sports in televised news and highlight shows. *Communication & Sport, 3*(3), 261-287.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*(4), 51-58.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience.* Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Hariman, R., & Lucaites, J. (2003). Public identity and collective memory in U. S. iconic photography: The image of "Accidental Napalm." *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *20*(1), 35-66.

Harrell, M. C., & Berglass, N. (2011). *Losing the battle: The challenge of military suicide,* Center for a New American Security. Policy brief [Internet]. Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security.

Hayes, D., & Guardino, M. (2010). Whose views made the news? Media coverage and the march to war in Iraq. *Political Communication, 27*(1), 59-87.

Holland, S. L. (2006). The dangers of playing dress-up: Popular representations of Jessica Lynch and the controversy regarding women in combat. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 92*(1), 27-50.

Hyman, J., PhD., Ireland, R., M.D., Frost, L., PsyD., & Cottrell, L., M.S. (2012). Suicide incidence and risk factors in an active duty US military population. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*, S138-46.

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1984). Choice, values, and frames. *American Psychologist, 39*(4), 341-350.

Katz, J. (2003). Advertising and the construction of violent white masculinity. In Gail Dines & Jean M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race, and class in media: A text-reader* (pp. 349-358). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Keating, S. (September 25, 2015). Was It Fixed? Army General Told Subordinates: 'A Woman Will Graduate Ranger School,' Sources Say. Retrieved from http://www.people.com/article/female-ranger-school-graduation-planned-advance

Knox, K. L., Litts, D. A., Talcott, G. W., Catalano Feig, J., Caine, E. D., & Romano, J. (2003). Risk of suicide and related adverse outcomes after exposure to a suicide prevention programme in the US air force: Cohort study. *BMJ (British Medical Journal), 327* (1376).

Kohn, R. H. (1981). The social history of the American soldier: A review and prospectus for research. *The American Historical Review, 86*(3), 553-567.

Krane, V., Choi, P. Y., Baird, S. M., Aimar, C. M., & Kauer, K. J. (2004). Living the paradox: Female athletes negotiate femininity and muscularity. *Sex Roles, 50*(5-6), 315-329.

Messner, M. A. (1988). Sports and male domination: The female athlete as contested ideological terrain. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 5*(3), 197-211.

Nantais, C., & Lee, M. F. (1999). Women in the United States military: Protectors or protected? The case of prisoner of war Melissa Rathbun-Nealy. *Journal of Gender Studies, 8*(2), 181.

Risk of suicide among US veterans after returning from the Iraq or Afghanistan war zones. (2008). *Journal of the American Medical Association, 300*(6), 652-653.

Robinson Kurpius, S., & Lucart, A. L. (2000). Military and civilian undergraduates: Attitudes toward women, masculinity, and authoritarianism. *Sex Roles, 43*(3), 255-265.

VA.gov. (May 2015). Military sexual trauma. Retrieved from http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/mst_general_factsheet.pdf

Walter, K. H., Buckley, A., Simpson, J. M., Chard, K. M., Suffoletta-Maierle, S., & Frueh, B. C. (2014). Residential PTSD treatment for female veterans with military sexual trauma: Does a history of childhood sexual abuse influence outcome? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 29*(6), 971-986.

Watson-Franke, M. (2002). A world in which women move freely without fear of men: An anthropological perspective on rape. *Women's Studies International Forum, 25*(6), 599-606.

Women Vote PA. Suicide. Retrieved from http://womenvotepa.org/2013/10/02/13-of-rape-victims-attempt-suicide/

Wood, J. (December 2015). History of women in the U. S. military. Retrieved from http://www.dailypress.com/news/military/dp-nws-evg-vietnam-female-vet-20151128-story.html

Zinzow, H. M., Grubaugh, A. L., Frueh, B. C., & Magruder, K. M. (2008). Sexual assault, mental health, and service use among male and female veterans seen in veterans' affairs primary care clinics: A multi-site study. *Psychiatry Research, 159*(1–2), 226-236.

Zinzow, H. M., Grubaugh, A. L., & Monnier, J. (2007). Trauma among female veterans: A critical review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 8*(4), 384-400.

Zurbriggen, E. L. (2010). Rape, war, and the socialization of masculinity: Why our refusal to give up war ensures that rape cannot be eradicated. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 34*(4), 538-549.

Colloquy
Vol. 13, Fall 2017, pp. 15-40

Fake News: The Increased Use of False Reports as Credible Sources to Make Informed Opinions

Lorèn Hanna, Eric C. Siberio, Jackson Spencer, and Nathan K. Wensko

Abstract

This paper sets out to examine individuals' attitudes toward fake news. Examining the rise of fake news being shared on social media, and how it affects perceptions about where people obtain information, is a unique phenomenon. This study looks to two specific points as indicators of why fake news is more influential in individuals' understanding of topical news. The negative view of traditional forms of news sources and the increase of positive attitudes in the way fake news is marketed indicates crucial variables of credibility and a change in latitude of acceptance for nontraditional forms of news online. Using a factorial analysis of credibility indicators to assess participants trust in traditional versus non-traditional forms of news gives insight into why fake news was a pervasive component during the 2016 election. The way fake news was packaged, and how people viewed the packaging, also positively adds to the issue of how so much fake news saturated mainstream search engines and invaded many personal social media streams. Furthermore, the notion that fake news saturated the news feeds of information seekers, and that it was viewed as credible, calls for more investigation into the communication factors that allowed this reality to exist.

According to abcnews.com.co, "President Obama made what could very well prove to be the most controversial move of his presidency with the signing of Executive Order 13738, which revokes the federal government's official recognition of the Pledge of Allegiance." The article furthers that under the new legislation, the law forbids any federally funded agency to display or recite the pledge of allegiance (Rustling, 2016). However, despite this article being shared over two million times on social media, it is completely false. This baseless rumor that President Obama banned the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools originated from a satirical article posted that year. Yet, the nature of its satire is called into question because the site is designed to look like ABC News. Instead, the publishing website uses the URL "abcnews.com.co," the first tip-off that this isn't a legitimate news site (Wallace, 2016). While this may seem like an isolated

incident of pure ignorance, the publishing and widespread use of fake news has significantly increased via social media.

A recent study done by Stanford University (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017) found that social media was an important but not dominant source of news in the run-up to the election, with 14 percent of Americans calling social media their "most important" source of election news. They additionally claim that for fake news to have changed the outcome of the election, a single fake article would need to have had the same persuasive effect as 36 television campaign ads. Theoretically, if fake news can change the outcome of an election, it can be considered one of the most effective tools of persuasion, by far.

Flaxman, Goel, & Rao (2016) showed that articles located via social media or web-search engines are indeed associated with higher ideological segregation than those read by an individual by directly visiting news sites. However, the study also found, somewhat counterintuitively, that these channels are associated with greater exposure to opposing perspectives (Flaxman, Goel, & Rao 2016). What the research did not find was if the opposing perspective was accurately conveyed. The study also concluded that the vast majority of online news consumption mimicked traditional offline reading habits, with individuals directly visiting the home pages of their favorite, typically mainstream, news outlets (Flaxman, Goel, & Rao 2016). We thus uncovered evidence for both sides of the debate. Flaxman, Goel & Rao suggest that to understand how news is being read, affecting attitudes of the readers should be investigated further (2016).

This speculative proposal for a future study relies upon surveys to examine if negative attitudes towards traditional forms of news increase the use of less credible outlets via social media, and if people's attitudes toward the packaging of fake news changes their perception.

Literature Review

Social Judgement Theory

Social Judgment Theory is designed "to predict the degree of discrepancy between a communication and the person's attitude that will arouse psychological discomfiture, to predict his reaction to the communication, and to predict how it will or will not affect his attitude" (Sherif & Sherif, 1967). According to the theory, the individual's own attitude or opinion serves as an important anchor in his or her perception of others' attitudes or opinions, thereby influencing consequent attitude formation/change in a social setting (Ledgerwood & Chaiken, 2007). Using Sherif & Sherif's Social Judgment Theory, it is important to determine to what degree the public values credibility. Once

credibility is identified as socially favorable, it can then be evaluated as a correlation to improving the perceptions, or attitudes, the public has of online news. Social Judgement Theory will provide a foundation by which to understand how persuasive communication works.

Negative Attitudes Toward Traditional Media

Traditional media is defined as conventional forms of advertising media such as television ads, television programs, newspaper ads, and newspaper articles (Huh, DeLorme & Reid, 2005). With unprecedented ease, individual news consumers can sidestep traditional news mainstays such as daily newspapers, weekly magazines, and network news. By simply clicking the remote control or computer mouse, individuals can access any one of the countless news sources that best fits their personal preferences (Morris, 2007). The research of Tsfati and Cappella (2003) found that individuals slightly tailor their media consumption habits to account for which sources they trust to be accurate and even-handed. The authors argue that lower levels of trust in mainstream media drive a greater tendency to use newer sources of news, such as the Internet and talk radio (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003). The realities of the "fragmented" media age, on the other hand, have altered this situation (West, 2001), resulting in the empowerment of individuals to avoid political news sources that they perceive to be biased (Morris, 2007).

Marchi (2012) explains how today's youth exhibits a clear disdain towards the media and politicians, while also feeling a lack of obligation towards the government. This disparagement towards traditional media outlets has led to the rise of alternative media news channels. Marchi (2012) makes a clear distinction that it is not necessarily that today's youth is uninformed. Rather, they choose to seek information through newer platforms that are more aligned with them socially and culturally instead of relying on old traditional outlets that they deem as boring, thus fulfilling the ideas of Social Judgement Theory. However, because young people are so inclined to new forms of media, there have been adverse effects on more traditional forms of news.

The credibility of online information is of particular interest to traditional mass media outlets, which have seen their perceived credibility decline since the mid-1980s (Greer, 2003). More than 20 Percent of the public now say they do not believe much or all of the news reported by national news media (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 1998). This evidence may seem outdated; however, the current standing of self-reported confidence has dropped to a mere 8.8 percent in 2012 (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2016). Greer (2003)

continues to report that web users see online news sites as more credible than their traditional counterparts. The problem for news media comes when the public struggles to distinguish information produced by trained journalists from information placed online by groups or a group of people who produce false information just to make money. Orville Schell predicted a long time ago the loss of credibility, stating, "At a certain point, people won't be able to differentiate between what's trustworthy and what isn't," and that it will be "a corrosive effect on society in general—especially given the media's importance as a political, cultural, and economic watchdog" (quoted in France, 1999, p. 122). Thus, credibility in online news media and how it is changing is a very important aspect of persuasion to study in a contemporary context.

In terms of less credible news outlets, a 2014 study conducted by Pew Research Center found media outlets such as *Buzzfeed*, *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, *The Glenn Beck Program*, and *The Ed Schultz Show* to be some of the most untrusted news sources (Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley, & Matsa, 2014). Those that seem to be considered less credible typically have a strong left or right leaning bias in the news they report. The same study found those considered most credible were media outlets such as BBC, The Wall Street Journal, ABC News & USA Today (Mitchell et al., 2014).

Negative Attitudes and Peripheral Processing

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty & Wegener, 1999; Petty & Briñol, 2012, 2015) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the effects of a host of source, message, and receiver factors on persuasion. The ELM stipulates that there are two distinct ways people process communications (Perloff, 2017). These are called routes, suggesting that two different highways crisscross the mind, transporting thoughts and reactions to messages. The ELM refers to the two routes to persuasion as the central and peripheral routes, or central and peripheral processes (Perloff, 2017). The central route is characterized by considerable cognitive elaboration (Perloff, 2017). The peripheral route is entirely different. Rather than examining issue-relevant arguments, people using the peripheral route will examine the message quickly, or focus on simple cues to help them decide whether to accept the position advocated in the message (Perloff, 2017).

Ingraham (2016) explains how fake news creators specifically target conservative readers over their liberal counterparts, partly due to how much conservatives adopt the issues in relation to their own worldviews. By processing peripherally, it appears conservatives exhibit a need for cognition that is not by

any means a measure of their intelligence, but in fact a measure of motivation to process information quicker. This allows them to make decisions that are in high congruence with their own beliefs, regardless of the content ascribed to the news source (Ingraham, 2016). This tactic of peripheral processing does not exist solely within the conservative population. Our youth exhibits a similar mental cognition regarding news outlets. The argument advanced by Social Judgment Theory is that individuals evaluate new information by comparing it with their current beliefs and those of their reference group to determine how they should react or behave (Sherif & Hovland, 1981).

Negative perceptions have shown to reduce traditional media use, as people tend to obtain information from media they trust and to avoid those they distrust (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2016). Additionally, it is important to know that journalism is affected by technology by changing the dynamics of economical, political, social, and organizational contexts (Clerwall, 2014). Clerwall conducted a study in regards to such contexts. The study looked at the credibility of sources made by a person and by software. It concluded that online readers are not able to discern automated content from content written by a human (Clerwall, 2014). Previous work has been done on the effects of trust in mainstream news media, as Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga have pointed out (e.g., Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger, & Bennett, 1999; Jackob, 2010; Tsfati, 2010; Tsfati & Cappella, 2003). What is more important to note is that the outcomes of trust in citizen or alternative media are still virtually unexplored (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2016). Previous research has not determined whether trust in non-mainstream media drive news consumption either in similar or different ways than trust in traditional media does (Clearwall, 2014). A similar gap in the literature exists regarding the possible effects of media bias perception on citizen journalism exposure as well. (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2016).

When considering the relationship between online media and trust, the research of Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell (2011) conducted for the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project was reviewed. Hampton et al. discovered that internet users report being more than twice as likely as other non-internet users to agree that others can be trusted. They found that internet users appear to be more trusting than non-users: 46 percent of internet users reported that "most people can be trusted," a significantly greater trust score than non-internet users, with 27 percent reporting that 'most people can be trusted.' Hampton et al. additionally reports that Facebook users are even more trusting than other internet users.

Some indications of how trust and credibility is found, and how online users also view various websites in a similar fashion which could reveal a pattern, have not yet been identified or integrated. Consider Win & Lin's analysis on brands and trustworthiness. Consistent with the thesis of the bandwagon effect (something that attracts adherents by its timeliness, showmanship, vigor, or novelty) (Rikkers, 2002), a person's perceived trust in an eWOM (electronic word of mouth) message was also found to be greater when that message was annotated with a high user rating (Wu & Lin 2017). This result demonstrates that beyond the source trustworthiness of the website where the user-generated consumer review appears, people believe to trust more in an eWOM message when it was given a strong approval from other consumers (Wu & Lin 2017). This example represents a heuristic cue using peripheral processing. It may indicate that credibility is more associated with people that share similar views, and this may impact the change in trust among news sites.

News Use on Social Media

Access to information allows individuals to be active and informed members of society. New forms of communication, such as social media networks, allow citizens to access timely information at little to no financial cost, become well-rounded individuals, and participate in civic affairs should they wish to do so (McVie, 2015). The benefit of social media networks such as Facebook or Twitter is that there is an accessible forum to view metadiscourse, the "everyday talk about communication," and contrast it not only with theory but also with the results of formal assessments such as elections (Craig & Muller, 2007). It is important for those who are trying to influence or persuade an audience to grasp an understanding of contrast and assimilation errors, as well as the role of discrepancy and attitude change. The two-step flow of communication hypothesis (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944) states that personal influence exercised by other people normally plays a more critical role in everyday decision making than information obtained from mass media. Marchi (2012) essentially highlights how the two-step flow is still a major factor in deciphering what news outlet our youth chooses. Opinion leaders still process the media's message to our youth through three main formats: trusted adults, social networking/blogs, and late night political shows/comic sketch shows (Marchi, 2012). Marchi (2012) also noted how social media created a sense of immediacy for individuals. It created a space for their opinions to be shared with others, as well as an opportunity to connect through comments and shared news articles. Unlike long-established media platforms such as television and newspaper, social media allow

individuals to create and share content online (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), promoting interactive, two-way communication between organizations and their publics (Solis, 2007; Wright & Hinson, 2008). However, herein lies the problem. As Ferenstein (2016) pointed out, most of the links shared on Facebook are not even clicked on because people are anchored in their own beliefs and make judgments based solely off the article titles.

Participants' social media reading frequency did not correlate with their interest in news (Hall, 2013). By having the information sent by friends or credible news outlets, consumers may find the information more compelling and be more interested in reading the story (Hall, 2013). Repeating information from multiple sources may also create higher interest in the news stories, similarly to how McCombs and Mauro's research (1977) found the amount of space devoted to the story improved readership. The more times a person sees a story through social media, the more space that story is taking up. Metaxas and Mustafaraj (2012) explain that the Internet is organized in a way that mirrors our classical, offline "trust networks." Users decide what to believe based on mental notes on who they are familiar with, and the connections between those entities. This means that, without adequate training and practice, users could be susceptible to believing and sharing unverified, skewed, incorrect, or partisan information, confusing this information with "fact," and then making decisions and bold claims without checking for authenticity and rigor (Feldman, 2015).

Social media does not allow readers to interpret the "importance" of the news the same way a print paper does by using headline size and placement (Hall, 2013). One specific subset of problematic online content are articles that contain headlines that mislead the reader. Ohlheiser (2016) highlights just how frequent catchy titles can go viral and shape public belief: *"FBI AGENT SUSPECTED IN HILLARY EMAIL LEAKS FOUND DEAD IN APPARENT MURDER-SUICIDE"* was shared over five-hundred thousand times on Facebook. The formula is quite simple, a fake news site does not care if you linger on its page; its goal is for the consumer to click and share (Ohlheiser 2016). These titles often attempt to make the story seem more sensationalist to gain more readers (Konnikova, 2014). This is important not just because a social media user might read the headline without even reading the entire article, but because even a user who goes on to read the article is likely to be biased by the headline (Feldman, 2015). What makes the circumstance more troublesome, is when this bias influences the reader's future conjectures, assessments, or conclusions based solely on the headline. The headline or summary of a news article often conveys whether the message is two-sided or one-sided and which stance toward a topic is advocated. This

information is crucial in the decision of whether to read an article or not, which is typically based on rather quick heuristics—for instance, the presumed utility, newsworthiness, or credibility of the full article (Sundar, Knobloch-Westerwick, & Hastall, 2007; Winter & Krämer, 2014).

The internet, in conjunction with computers, has helped media companies evolve exponentially throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Frank (2015) discusses how computers offer multiple functions of use for society. Computers serve us in a business capacity, yet also function as the ultimate toy. Many media companies have shifted their news platforms to online only, creating a variety of different options for the consumer. One would think that having options is always good for the consumer; yet, as Marchi (2012) posits, if individuals are constantly acquiring their news from different sources, it diminishes our ability to hold any type of significant discourse amongst each other. A cultural-technological divide already exists among adults and their teenage counterparts when it comes to how they each acquire their news.

Coupling the persuasive strategies inherent in fake news articles with the peripheral processing used by teenagers creates the perfect breeding ground for the proliferation of fake news. As Marchi (2012) noted, many teenagers enjoy the links embedded in stories on their social media platforms because it has allowed them to learn about issues and share comments with like-minded individuals.

The twenty-first century has proven itself to be a time where facts are not important (Berghel, 2017). Debates rage on whether this is due to a severe sense of gullibility, or a lack of basic critical thinking skills. Berghel (2017) posits that the non-exposure of critical thinking skills during elementary and secondary grade levels has led to the inability of young adults to accurately discern between fact and fiction. The *Wall Street Journal* found that 82 percent of middle schoolers did not understand the difference between sponsored content and factual news (Shellenbarger, 2016). Borchers (2016) posits that this problem reaches even deeper levels of academia: namely, college. The answer to solving the fake news issue may lie in reforming the entire American educational system (Farenstein, 2016). Even though this information regarding our youth is alarming, fake news is not just a problem that affects children and young adults. It has fooled opinion leaders such as Rush Limbaugh, Matt Drudge, Sean Hannity, and Jim Hoft (Borchers, 2016). Borchers (2016) explains how many people, day in and day out, are conned by fake news. Either they lack the ability to tell fact from fiction, or they simply do not want to exert the energy to do so. Ego and gullibility become serious catalysts for deception.

Packaging of Fake News

To be clear, fake news has always been around (Berghel, 2017); it was just a lot easier to spot in the past. *The National Enquirer* has forever been an entertaining read, as it often detailed end-of-times prophecies from Nostradamus, shocking deeds of mistrust amongst our most beloved celebrities, and the infamous UFOs that created crop circles in the Nevada desert. Discerning between fact and fiction was not a difficult task for most individuals that enjoyed the folklore of the past. However, those days are behind us, and we now find ourselves in the midst of an era where truth really is stranger than fiction. The problem with fake news is that there is a demand for it (Berghel, 2017). Borchers (2016) posits that this demand will only continue to exist because people believe it to be true.

So, is the consumer entirely to blame for the mass consumption and spread of fake news? Yes and no, actually. Part of the reason that so many people get confused between real news and fake news is because of how authentic some of these fake news outlets are. As noted earlier by Berghel (2017), there is a demand for fake news, and with this demand comes suppliers. Initial credibility from the website producing fake news is very important. Frank (2015) explains how individuals with writing and production skills can create stories that look and feel as though they come from legitimate newspaper outlets. If an individual is lacking the skills previously mentioned, then they can feed their story to a fake news generator that will add both verbal and visual credibility to the story (Frank, 2015). Frank (2015) explains how these generators have a variety of different outlines and formats to match and add the appropriate credibility for use in arenas such as emails, blogs, and social media accounts. Fake news has permeated our society, challenging our attitudes and behaviors regarding truth and knowledge. We can no longer tell the difference between fact and fiction. One of the main reasons why it has become so difficult is because of the change in content and packaging through online distribution (Cantech, 2016).

Social media has altered the accessibility, design, and believability of fake news. Thus, this speculative study seeks to answer the following research questions:

> **RQ1:** *Did negative attitudes towards traditional forms of news increase the use of less credible outlets via social media?*
>
> **RQ2:** *Did the packaging style of fake news change people's perception?*

Methods

Subjects

This survey will be seeking non-Cal State L.A. participants. While the campus affords a rich diverse population, it does not account for a large variation in regard to attitudes toward current journalistic issues (maybe in small groups). Instead, participants will be sought out on social media sites that will represent a broader range of political and generational diversity of perceptions.

Procedure

The survey will be disseminated through non-random convenience sampling practices. A surveymonkey account will be created and linked to the authors' social media accounts. The survey will be available to respondents for one month. The minimum sampling size will be n=200. The survey is set to test two notions: that of credibility among traditional news outlets, and attitudes towards how news is packaged and presented. A factor analysis has been constructed using measures produced by Gaziano and McGrath (1986).

Measuring changes in credibility variables

Negative attitudes towards traditional news sources. Traditional news sources are defined in this study as any news outlet that has established a strong credibility on multiple platforms, i.e., television and print, that do not exist only in an online capacity. A more tangible example would be an examination of *The New York Times* in order to understand if individuals have lost credibility in traditional news outlets. This could be an indication of a mass migration of information seekers to other sources. Participants will be asked questions in a Likert scale measure to identify the level of credibility of traditional sources such as *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and *The New York Times*. The scale has been modified from a traditional measure created by Gaziano and Mcgrath (1986) to measure the three components of credibility: trustworthiness, goodwill, and expertise.

Increase the use of less credible outlets via social media. If credibility among traditional news sources has been reduced, individuals are still seeking information, just through other means. News sources such as *Buzzfeed* and *Vox.com* are highly visible forms of news through the Internet. Using the same parameters to test the credibility of traditional sources, a contrasting data set should appear to indicate that individuals are migrating away from old sources to new online created news outlets. Questions have been modified for this particular study, but they draw on the same measurements to collect data that already have been validated (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986). Questions are asked on

a spectrum format, such as "Do you think *Vox.com* is opinionated (1) or factual (7)?" Also, "do you think *Vox.com* cares about its customers (7) or is it focused on making money (1)?" Online news sources also present their content in different ways than traditional sources, which may have an impact on individuals and their attitudes toward credible sources of news.

Measuring Attitudes About How News Looks at First Glance

Packaging styles of fake news. The way a website or news article is presented varies among the various sources on the internet. Television and newspaper are confined to set format for the most part, but websites are innovative spaces wherein content can be arranged in multiple ways. News outlets that were born on the web have a very different perception as regards the packaging and marketing of their content. Traditional news sources like the *New York Times* continued to use a format that was familiar, much like reading through a newspaper in most aspects. This allowed them to keep some sense of credibility for a while (Perloff, 2016). Fake news in particular is presented in and around news that is set in actual fact, but in no way looks any different. *Buzzfeed* allows a user to scroll through and pick and choose for themselves what is important. This could mean that titles and pictures as quick reference may have an impact on why an individual would choose the fake news over a factual article. Additionally, the packaging of the fake article may make it easier to share through multiple social media sites that would increase saturation exponentially of the article. How a website optically arranges its homepage and news articles can mislead the authenticity of the information. What is needed is a valid scale of how the packaging adjusts perceptions towards source credibility (Greer, 2003, Wu & Lin 2012). This measure has been modified for our study. The proposed study presents websites' home pages and also fake news articles and then asks respondents to answer the following: "On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being strongly agree, this site offers everything you need to know about a topic."

People's attitudes towards packaging (DV). Individuals' perception is based on how they feel about something. Attitudes are adjusted to see fake news due to the way it is packaged. If the study reveals positive attitudes toward unreliable sources, it would indicate that marketing strategies have been successful to obtain attention from information seekers. The survey asks individuals to rate "real" or "fake" on a Likert scale based on snippets pulled from various online news sources such as *Buzzfeed*.

Data Analysis

Mean scores will be calculated for credibility, which is measured through categories of trustworthiness, goodwill, and expertise. The three credibility measures will then be combined into a credibility index, with scores ranging from 4 to 20 for each of the online and traditionally delivered sources. The next step of analysis compares assessment of credibility of each of the new online sources to its traditional counterparts online.

Expected Results

In regards to our research question of whether negative attitudes towards traditional forms of news increased the use of less credible outlets via social media, this research hypothesizes a positive correlation between these negative attitudes and an increased use of less credible sources. We have seen the patterns of our prediction in different studies, in which researchers take into account attitude change, credibility, and some type of belief; their findings were also consistent with the predictions of Social Judgement Theory (Thorson et al. 2010; Rhine & Severance, 1970; Chebat, 1990; D'Alessio, 2003). Similarly, Rhine & Severance (1970) use Social Judgement Theory to make predictions about the effect on attitude change of discrepancies between a person's own position and a persuasive message. Consistent with Social Judgement Theory, their study found that attitude change was an increasing monotonic function of discrepancy for low ego-involvement, and a non-monotonic function of discrepancy for high ego-involvement. We believe our findings will be consistent with results of past research. We believe the findings of this research will contribute to our research area of source credibility and social media. Never have we had so much information at our fingertips. Whether this bounty will make us smarter and better informed, or more ignorant and narrow-minded, will depend on our awareness of this problem and our educational response to it (Stanford, 2016).

Practical Implications

With an understanding of the ways in which attitudes toward traditional media have given rise to an increase in fake news articles on social media, it is imperative to draw some critical implications. This speculative study looks at practical implications for social media sites, media outlets, and readers of news.

There are practical ways that social media sites can avoid the issue of sharing fake news. Findings from the present study should indicate that social media increases the widespread sharing of fake news articles. While they have been criticized for their role in sharing false information, social media sites have done

little to nothing to change this. In November of 2016, Facebook's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, posted on his Facebook account letting the community know that he and the Facebook company would be researching ways to make their "News Feed" section more appropriate and accurate. Zuckerberg provided a link on the page so that users can be frequently updated on changes to the "News Feed" feature. After looking at it, nothing has been posted on the page since January. This is an issue that needs to be addressed with haste. The practical way that companies like Facebook should address the circulation of fake news while maintaining their integrity and freedom of speech is to remove the option to share false news articles. If a user wants to post their opinion, social media sites should grant them the freedom of speech to post in their own words, but the use of articles indicates credibility and trust, which is deceitful to users.

There are also implications for media companies and traditional news outlets. Findings from the study suggest that packaging plays an important role in the ways that users develop attitudes toward news. With this information, traditional media outlets must reconsider the way that they package their articles and information. Fake news articles might have been successful for their attention-grabbing titles and clear attitude toward political candidates. Traditional media outlets are typically left or right leaning, but not as up front with this bias as the most frequently shared fake news articles. Perhaps, traditional media needs to make a bolder stance to attract readers whose attitudes are in line with that of the media outlet. This would allow information from at least some of the published articles from a given news source to fall within the reader's latitude of acceptance.

Finally, consumers can adhere to some practical implications as well. It is necessary for readers to think more critically about article sources and headlines. Instead of throwing around the term "fake news," it is important to understand what that really means. It is information that is completely falsified and unverifiable. Thus, as readers, it is important to read information from a variety of sources and weigh the accuracy of the obtained information.

Limitations

The assumption of credible news sources is one limitation of this proposed study. Millennials have experienced a rapid change in technology. With this change, many traditional news outlets were either unable, or refused to keep pace with the rapid change (Newspaper, 2014). Alternative news outlets were able to step in and produce news at a rate consistent enough to induce saturation of the market. This potentially impacts the scope of our study if millennials were never

indoctrinated with traditional credible news outlets. Social media also lends a hand in limiting our study by offering its own credibility and ease of access through multiple platforms. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and other platforms all come equipped with their own base of users. Through the interconnectedness of individual users and subsequent opinion leaders, messages are relayed and shared regardless of how it is packaged. The power of these social media networks and opinions of revered private individuals can prove to have a stronger impact on people than how media outlets have chosen to package their news. Future research should focus on the relationship between social media opinion leaders, their followers, and shared news sources. Research focused in this area could potentially uncover the derived credibility perceived to exist within opinion leaders that is authorized by their followers.

Appendix: Survey

Credibility

Since the internet is a main source to find news, we would like to understand how you feel about online traditional news sources in general. A good example would be the *New York Times*. Below, Please answer the following questions by indicated (1) not at all to (10) all the time

1. News reporters usually try to be as objective as they possibly can be.
Reporters frequently overdramatize the news.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. The news media put too much emphasis on what is wrong with America and not enough on what is right.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3.The news media often make people accused of crimes look guilty before they are tried in court.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4.The news media give more coverage to stories that support their own point of view than to those that don't.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Most news media are careful to separate fact from opinion.
is opinion.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6.Most news media don't do a very good job of letting people know what is fact and what is opinion.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7.Topics are covered on the necessary regular basis.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8.Selectivity of facts is fair.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Reporters frequently overdramatize the news.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When thinking about a new source, please identify how you feel about each one by indicating (1) for strongly agree and (7) for strongly disagree.

CNN

The focus is on important facts

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

All important information regarding the topic is given.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Reporting includes different points of view.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The information in a report would be verifiable .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The reported information is true.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The reports recount the facts truthfully.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The facts that I receive regarding are correct.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Criticism is expressed in an adequate manner.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle the number under the category that best identifies how you feel about the website. Each end of the spectrum is the extreme form of that idea.

CNN

fair unfair
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

biased unbiased
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Tells the whole story (1) or doesn't tell the whole story (7)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Invades privacy respects people's privacy
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Is (1) or is not concerned about the community's well-being (7)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Does (1) or does not separate fact and opinion (7)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Can be trusted cannot be trusted
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Is concerned about the public interest or is concerned about making profits. (7)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Is factual Is opinionated
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has well-trained reporters or poorly trained reporters
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Cares or does not care what audience thinks
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Sensationalizes or does not sensationalize
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

moral immoral
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

BUZZFEED.com

The focus is on important facts

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

All important information regarding the topic is given.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Reporting includes different points of view.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The information in a report would be verifiable .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The reported information is true.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The reports recount the facts truthfully.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The facts that I receive regarding are correct.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Criticism is expressed in an adequate manner.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle the number under the category that best identifies how you feel about the website. Each end of the spectrum is the extreme form of that idea.

CNN

fair unfair

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

biased unbiased

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Tells the whole story (1) or doesn't tell the whole story (7)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Invades privacy respects people's privacy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Is (1) or is not concerned about the community's well-being (7)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Does (1) or does not separate fact and opinion (7)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Can be trusted cannot be trusted
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Is concerned about the public interest (1) is concerned about making profits. (7)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Is factual is opinionated
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Has well-trained reporters or poorly trained reporters
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Cares or does not care what audience thinks
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Sensationalizes or does not sensationalize
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

moral immoral
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How does it look?
Based off the site's Home page picture provided, please identify how you feel about the online news source (1) is strongly disagree and (10) is strongly agree

Packaging and attitudes towards new sources

MSNBC.com

Fairness
This site provides information that is neutral.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site provides information that is not balanced.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is biased in the information it provides.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is slanted in the information it provides.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is even-handed in presenting information.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Depth
This site does not provide in-depth information.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is not comprehensive.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site offers everything you need to know on the topic.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Goodwill
This site has my interests at heart
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is uncaring about its visitors.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is not concerned about its visitors.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Trust/expertise
This site appears to have experts on the topic discussed.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is ethical.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site appears to be a leader in its area of specialty.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is not trustworthy.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Vox.com
Fairness
This site provides information that is neutral.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site provides information that is not balanced.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is biased in the information it provides.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is slanted in the information it provides.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is even-handed in presenting information.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Depth
This site does not provide in-depth information.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is not comprehensive.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site offers everything you need to know on the topic.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Goodwill
This site has my interests at heart
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is uncaring about its visitors.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is not concerned about its visitors.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Trust/expertise
This site appears to have experts on the topic discussed.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is ethical.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site appears to be a leader in its area of specialty.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This site is not trustworthy.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Survey Demographics

What age group do you belong to?
a. 18-25
b. 26-35
c. 36-45
d. 46-55
e. 56-80

How do you best identify politically?
a. Republican
b. Democrat
c. Liberal
d. Conservative
e. Libertarian
f. Green party
g. Socialist
h. Other

Which sex to you most identify with
a. Male
b. Female
c. Other

References

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. https://web.stanford.edu/~gentzkow/research/fakenews.pdf.

Ardèvol-Abreu, A., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2016). effects of editorial media bias perception and media trust on the use of traditional, citizen, and social media news. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 1077699016654684.

Bailey, M., Sigelman, L., & Wilcox, C. (2003). Presidential persuasion on social issues: A two-way street?" *Political Research Quarterly, 56*(1), 49-58.

Berghel, H. (2017). Lies, damn lies, and fake news. *Computer, 50*(2*),* 80-85.

Borchers, C. (2016). A harsh truth about fake news: Some people are super gullible. *Washington Post* – Blogs, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/22/a-harsh-truth-about-fake-news-some-people-are-super-gullible/?utm_term=.0f68d2953e6a.

Bortree, D. S., & Seltzer, T. (Sep 2009). Public relations review. *Silver Spring*, *35*(3) 317.

Chebat, J. (1990). Limits of credibility: The case of political persuasion. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *130*(2), 157-167.

Clerwall, C. (2014). Enter the robot journalist. *Journalism Practice*, *8*(5), 519-531. doi:10.1080/17512786.2014.883116

Craig, R.T., & Muller, H.L. (2007). Theorizing communication: Reading across traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: *Sage Publications*.

D'Alessio, D. (2003). An experimental examination of readers' perceptions of media bias. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *80*(2), 282-294.

Donath, J., & Boyd, D. (Oct 2004). Internet news takes off. *BT Technology Journal*, *22*(4), 71-82.

Feldman, E. (2015). The influence of social media on adult learners' knowledge construction and democratic participation. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, *27*(4), 59-65.

Ferenstein, G. (2016). If fake news wasn't on Facebook, people would find it somewhere else: People no longer agree on what high-quality news is. *Washington Post* – Blogs, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/11/19/if-fake-news-wasnt-on-facebook-people-would-find-it-somewhere-else/?utm_term=.821a68f5de04.

Flaxman, S., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 80298-320.

Frank, R. (2015). Caveat lector: Fake news as folklore. *Journal of American Folklore*, *128*(509), 315-370.

Gaziano, C., & Mcgrath, K. (1986). Measuring the concept of credibility. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *63*(3), 451-462.

Greenberg, S. E. (2013). Impact of social media as an instructional component on content knowledge, attitudes, and public engagement related to global climate change. Available from *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection*, 1466665856.

Greer, J. D. (2003). Evaluating the credibility of online information: A test of source and advertising influence. *Mass Communication & Society*, *6*(1), 11-28.

Haeberle, S. H. (1999). Gay and lesbian rights: Emerging trends in public opinion and voting behavior. In E. D. B. Riggle & B. L. Tadlock (Eds.), *Gays and lesbians in the Democratic process* (pp. 146 – 169). New York: Columbia University Press.

Hall, A. (2013). Tweeting the headlines: The impact of social media endorsement on young adult news readers. n.p.: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Hampton, K., Goulet, L., Rainie, L., & Purcell, K. (2011). Social networking sites and our lives: How people's trust, personal relationships, and civic and political involvement are connected to their use of social networking sites and other technologies. *Pew Internet*, http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2011/PIP%20-%20Social%20networking%20sites%20and%20our%20lives.pdf

Huh, J., DeLorme, D., & Reid, L. (2005). Factors affecting trust in on-line prescription drug

information and impact of trust on behavior following exposure to dtc advertising. *Journal of Health Communication*, *10*(8), 711-731.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2016). Fake news is all about technology, not journalism, says concordia prof. *Cantech Letter*, https://www.cantech-letter.com/2016/12/fake-new-technology-not-journalism-says-concordia-prof/

Kaplan, A., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons, 53*(1), 59–68.

Kim, H., & Ball, J. (2013). Multiple levels of influence in pharmaceutical branding: An examination of industry trust, corporate credibility, and brand credibility. *Paper presented at the American Academy of Advertising Conference*, Minneapolis, MN.

Konnikova, M. (2014). How headlines change the way we think. *The New Yorker*, https://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/headlines-change-way-think.

Lazarsfeld, P.F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The people's choice: How the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ledgerwood, A., & Chaiken, S. (2007). Priming us and them: Automatic assimilation and contrast in group attitudes. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *93*(6), 940–956.

Marchi, R. (2012). With Facebook, blogs, and fake news, teens reject journalistic "objectivity." *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *36*(3), 246-262.

McCombs, M.E., & Mauro, J.B. (1977). Predicting newspaper readership from content characteristics. *Journalism Quarterly*, *54*(3), 49.

McVie, C. (2015). Exploring the predictive power of social media in elections. n.p.: *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*.

Metaxas, P.T., & Mustafaraj, E. (2012). Social media and the elections. *Science*, *338*, 472-473.

Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., Kiley, J., & Matsa, K.E. (2014). Political polarization and media habits. *Pew Research Center*, http://www.journalism.org/2014/10/21/political-polarization-media-habits/

Morris, J. (2007). Slanted objectivity? Perceived media bias, cable news exposure, and political attitudes. *Social Science Quarterly*, *88*(3), 707-728.

Mussweiler, T. (2001). ‘‘Seek and ye shall find’’: Antecedents of assimilation and contrast in social comparison. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *31*, 499–509.

Mussweiler, T. (2003). Comparison processes in social judgment: Mechanisms and consequences. *Psychological Review*, *110*, 472–489.

Mussweiler, T., Ruter, K., & Epstude, K. (2004). The ups and downs of social comparison: Mechanisms of assimilation and contrast. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87*, 832–844.

Newspaper death watch: A graphical view of newspaper innovation. (2014). *Newstex Trade & Industry Blogs*, http://newspaperdeathwatch.com/a-graphical-view-of-newspaper-innovation/?utm_content=buffer78070&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer.

Ohlheiser, A. (2016). This is how Facebook's fake-news writers make money: "I make like $10,000 a month from adsense," one fake-news writer said this week. *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/11/18/this-is-how-the-internets-fake-news-writers-make-money/?utm_term=.38451cb4d575.

Perloff, R. M. (2017). *The dynamics of persuasion: Communication and attitudes in the 21st century* (6th ed.). New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Petty, R. E., & Briñol, P. (2012). The elaboration likelihood model. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 224–245). London, UK: Sage.

Petty, R. E., & Briñol, P. (2015). Processes of social influence through attitude change. In E. Borgida & J. Bargh (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology (Vol. 1): Attitudes and social cognition* (pp. 509–545). Washington, DC: APA Books.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 19, pp. 123–205). New York: Academic Press.

Petty, R. E., & Wegener, D. T. (1999). The Elaboration Likelihood Model: Current status and controversies. In S. Chaiken & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual-process theories in social psychology* (pp. 41–72). New York: Guilford.

Rheingold, H. (2008). Using participatory media and public voice to encourage civic engagement. In W. Lance Bennett (Ed.), Civic life online: Learning how digital media can engage youth (pp. 97-118). Cambridge, MA*: MIT Press.*

Rhine, R., & Severance, L. (1970). Ego-involvement, discrepancy, source credibility, and attitude change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *16*(2), 175-190.

Rikkers, L. (2002). The bandwagon effect. *Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery*, *6*(6), 787-794.

Rustling, J. (2016). Obama signs executive order banning the Pledge of Allegiance in schools nationwide. *Snopes.com*, https://www.snopes.com/pledge-of-allegiance-ban/

Shellenbarger, S. (2016). Most students don't know when news is fake, Stanford study finds. *The Wall Street Journal*, https://www.wsj.com/articles/most-students-dont-know-when-news-is-fake-stanford-study-finds-1479752576

Sherif, C.W., Sherif, M.S., & Nebergall, R.E. (1965). *Attitude and attitude change*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company.

Sherif, M.S., & Hovland, C.L. (1961) *Social Judgment: Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Communication and Attitude Change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sherif, M.S., & Hovland, C. I. (1981). *Social judgment: Assimilation and contrast effects in communication and attitude change. Santa Barbara, CA*: Praeger.

Sherif, M.S., & Sherif, C. W. (1967). Attitude as the individual's own categories: The social judgment-involvement approach to attitude and attitude change. In C. W. Sherif & M. Sherif (Eds.), *Attitude, ego-involvement and change* (pp. 105–139). New York, NY: Wiley.

Silverman, C. (2016 November 16). This analysis shows how viral fake election news stories outperformed real news on Facebook. *Buzzfeed*, https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/viral-fake-election-news-outperformed-real-news-on-facebook?utm_term=.slyelParr#.uj4kn25yy.

Solis, B. (2007, June 11). The future of communications - A manifesto for integrated social media into marketing. *SocialMediaToday.com*, http://www.briansolis.com/ 2007/06/future-of-communications-manifesto-for/

Sundar, S. S., Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Hastall, M. (2007). News cues: Do indicators of newsworthiness by newsbots affect our perception of news stories? *Journal of the American Society of Information Science and Technology*, *58*, 366–378.

Taylor, M., Kent, M. L., & White, W. J. (2001). How activist organizations are using the Internet to build relationships. *Public Relations Review*, *27*(3), 263-284.

Thorson, K., Vraga, E., & Ekdale, B. (2010). Credibility in context: How uncivil online commentary affects news credibility. *Mass Communication and Society*, *13*(3), 289-313.

Tsfati, Y., & Cappella, J.N. (2003). Do people watch what they do not trust? Exploring the association between news media skepticism and exposure. *Communication Research*, *30*(5), 504-529.

Wallace, C. (2016). Obama Did Not Ban the Pledge. Retrieved April 17, 2017, from http://www.factcheck.org/2016/09/obama-did-not-ban-the-pledge/

Why conservatives might be more likely to fall for fake news. *Washington Post* – Blogs, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/12/07/why-conservatives-might-be-more-likely-to-fall-for-fake-news/?utm_term= .7a2a671517bf.

Wineburg, S., McGrew, S., Breakstone, J., & Ortega, T. (2016). Evaluating information: The cornerstone of civic online reasoning. *Stanford Digital Repository*, http://purl.stanford.edu/fv751yt5934

Winter, S., & Krämer, N. C. (2014). A question of credibility: Effects of source cues and recommendations on information selection on news sites and blogs. *Communications*, *39*, 435–456.

Wright, D. K., & Hinson, M. D. (2008). How blogs and social media are changing public relations and the way it is practiced. *Public Relations Journal*, *2*(2), 1–22.

Waters, R. D. (2007). Nonprofit management and leadership; *San Francisco*, *18*(1), 59.

West, D. M. (2001). *The rise and fall of the media establishment*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Wu, T., & Lin, C. A. (2017). Predicting the effects of eWOM and online brand messaging: Source trust, bandwagon effect and innovation adoption factors. *Telematics & Informatics*, *34*(2), 470-480.

Colloquy
Vol. 13, Fall 2017, pp. 41-54

Disability and the Sovereign Citizen: A Rhetorical Criticism of Ableism and Erasure of the Disabled Identity

Raquel D. Moscozo

How Do You See Me?

In March 2016, the Italian organization Coordown released a PSA titled "How do you see me?" starring Olivia Wilde as Anna Rose Rubright, an 18-year old woman with Down Syndrome. The video is also narrated by the real Anna Rose Rubright. The focus of the video features Wilde portraying Rubright in several social situations such as cooking for a restaurant, running on the beach, and singing karaoke with her friends while she is smiling uncontrollably. She is also featured crying as well. At the end of the video, Rubright the narrator asks, "How do you see me?"

Driven by the hashtag #HowDoYouSeeMe on social media sites (mostly Twitter and Facebook), the PSA intended to change the way Down Syndrome is viewed by casting a young, attractive, and successful Hollywood actress to play the role of Rubright. Although this ad was meant to celebrate Down Syndrome, the PSA does not accurately represent nor recognize the disability at all. Although Rubright is the narrator of the story, her voice may be heard, but she remains unseen and out of visibility until the last remaining seconds. Despite her performance as Rubright, Wilde is "putting on" the identity of disability in a similar fashion as putting on a costume or applying makeup on a person's face.

The only time the audience sees Rubright is at the conclusion of the clip, where she is asking: "How do you see me?" This ad "encouraged others to look beyond their perceived identity and instead consider the whole person" (Donovan, 2016). Yet, the "whole person" remains out of view because Wilde works better as the "face" of the campaign, while Rubright's disability excludes her from actually being in a video that is about her. The privilege of Wilde's lack of disability affords her access to opportunities reserved for non-disabled individuals.

When we think about privilege, we often make assumptions associated with either race, gender, or socioeconomics. Typically, we do not imagine the ability to stand and move about as we please, or even something as fundamental as being able to talk and communicate with others, as a sort of privilege. However,

for persons living with disabilities, the lack of those abilities is a debilitating impediment to their full participation in the world. Instead, because of their disabilities, such individuals live in a separate reality, one whose borders are delimited by exclusionary language and social practices. Baynton (2013), co-author of *The Disability Studies Reader*, states:

Disability has functioned historically to justify inequality for disabled people themselves, but it has also done so for women and minority groups. That is, not only has it been considered justifiable to treat disabled people unequally, but the concept of disability has been used to justify discrimination against other groups by attributing disability to them. (p.17)

This labeling of difference between able-bodied and disable-bodied creates a disparity, which is of significance in relation to the central focus of this paper. Foucault (1977) attributes the act of binary assignment of social bodies as an "underlying project of exclusion which exists to surveil, control, and possess power." From the lens of #HowDoYouSeeMe, the disabled identity of Rubright's true self is kept out of view and replaced by a highly paid actress who is simply "putting on" her identity as a guise. Why couldn't Rubright play herself? The idea that an able-bodied person such as Wilde is necessary in the commercial to portray Rubright, a disabled person, perpetuates a distinction between able-bodied and disable-bodied. Did the audience need Wilde to portray how Rubright feels? In this sense, disabled persons are shown as victims, needing to be saved by some external group. This idealized portrayal of Rubright by Wilde is characteristic of the borders separating the able-bodied and disabled groups through the #HowDoYouSeeMe project.

Those living with disabilities are subjected to "the binary division and branding between one set of people and another… multiple separations which are under surveillance and control by exclusion" (Foucault, 1977, p. 198). Through Foucault's idea of binary division and branding, the "abnormal" members of society are tagged and separated from the "normal" population. Those labeled as abnormal are subsequently excluded from the dominant discourse of society and denied participation and recognition in physical contexts. Through this branding process, disabled individuals become subject to discrimination in social settings. Sometimes this discrimination is explicit, but other times it is implicit. Imagine a hypothetical situation where a disabled person arrives to a social function and sees that there is no wheelchair access. This is a sign to them that they are not allowed to exist in some physical contexts. This results in them having to maneuvering through the world differently from able-bodied individuals.

Disabled individuals live in a world of borders. Like geographic borders, the space where their bodies are allowed to move is limited as their they cannot access certain physical spaces. DeChaine (2009) asserts that "borders have a traditional view as stable entities which clearly recognize, measure, and map the parameters of an area. Yet, borders not only exist spatially. As ordering apparatuses, all borders are socially motivated constructs" (p. 44). The borders around disability "perform both division and containment functions" that are similar to the coercive assignment of Foucault's Panopticism (DeChaine, 2009, p. 44). As disabled persons are branded by exclusion of abnormality and framed within the social constructions of borders, the disabled identity remains unseen and unrecognized by a society that values able-bodied citizens.

An ableist-favored society that borders, brands, and differentializes disabled bodies prevents those bodies from participating in a citizenry. Able-bodied persons can exist as individuals with unlimited freedom and opportunities as citizens of a sovereign nation. Able-bodied persons are a synecdoche of sovereignty itself. Those who identify as disabled are met with exclusion, which causes their experience to be disregarded and even misrepresented. Thus, who is the sovereign disabled citizen?

Burgett and Hendler (2014) characterize "*citizenship* as a relation among strangers who learn to feel it as a common identity based on shared historical, legal, or familial connection to a geopolitical space" (p. 37). However, the disabled identity is placed outside the borders of citizenry and cannot share a "common identity" that is not prescribed by the dominant discourse of ableism and Othering of the disabled. The Other is abnormal, an outsider, and remains branded by exclusion. "The concept of *sovereignty* relates to a condition of limited personal autonomy that the state has a responsibility to protect" (Burgett and Hendler, 2014, p. 37). In relation to sovereignty, those with disabilities can relate to the limitations of personal autonomy, yet "the promise of U.S. citizenship to deliver sovereignty to all its citizens has always been practiced unevenly, in contradiction with most understandings of democratic ideals" (Rancière, 1998).

Disabled persons are challenged to create their own sovereign citizenship against the constraints of branding, division, and bordering. In light of the issue presented, this rhetorical criticism is guided by the following question: What role does rhetoric play in constructing the discourse of disability? Who is included in the discussion about disability? In this rhetorical criticism, I argue that the rhetoric of disability has the potential to change through social justice movements as the Invisible Disabilities Project (IDP) to provide a new public space

in which to enact citizenship. Asen's (2004) discourse theory of citizenship reformulates the relationship between the citizen and citizenship from "what" citizenship is to "how" citizenship is enacted (p. 191). This approach challenges the bordering of disability as Other and counters the binary division and branding (Foucault, 1977) of the abnormal/ normal. Using Asen's discourse theory helps in a project that resists the abled/disabled branding that functions to surveil and control both groups away from each other. These borders and binaries can be rhetorically interrogated through social justice projects such as the Invisible Disabilities Project (IDP) to resist marketing campaigns like #HowDoYouSeeMe from constructing disability in discourse that promotes ableism. Through the lens of Foucauldian discourse analysis, specifically Foucault's theory of panopticism, the relationship between power and language exemplifies the discursive constructions of disability in society today.

Rhetoric plays a significant role in constructing disability and influences societal members to talk about disability in negative, inaccurate, and oppressive ways. The #HowDoYouSeeMe campaign reinforces the socially constructed binaries of normal/abnormal and perpetuates the discourse of ableism and erasure to falsely represent disabled experience. Such actions prompt new modes and practices of social justice such as the Invisible Disabilities Project (IDP), which provides a public for disabled persons to enact their citizenry as sovereign members who are appreciated and valued. First, I will discuss the focus of disability in the United States, and I will explain my rationale and the effect of the disabled being Othered. Second, I will explicate the methodology that guides this rhetorical criticism employing Foucault's concept of panopticism and the discursive process of bordering. After explaining the methods, I will share the findings from my research. Finally, the last section will discuss my final thoughts and offer future directions for scholarship concerning disabled persons, citizenship, and bordering.

Disability in the United States

When President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in April 1990, he declared that this law would ensure people with disabilities "the opportunity to blend fully and equally into the rich mosaic of the American mainstream" (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1990). Disability disclosure grants access to reasonable accommodations for those who qualify through the ADA. After years of struggle experienced by the disabled community through prejudice and segregation, the ADA became law in 1990 to protect the civil rights of individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life,

including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the public. This act provides equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities and ensures for them the same rights and opportunities as everyone else (TheADA National Network, n.d.).

The ADA's definition of disability regards "qualified persons" as individuals with "physical or mental impairments that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or requires an existing record of such an impairment; or regards this individual as having an impairment" (ADA National Network, n.d.). Life activities in accordance with the ADA includes not being able to care for oneself, performing mental tasks, seeing, communicating, working, reading, etc. Evidently, the language used by the ADA provides a broad framework of provisions for individuals with disabilities to qualify, and recognizes that not all impairments are physical, nor do they manifest in the same ways.

Despite the success of the ADA, disability in dominant discourse is continuously misunderstood, misrepresented, and ridiculed through lack of education and awareness of this diverse community. Cultural members who are able-bodied are defined by being without disability or considered non-disabled. Again, a discourse of binaries that divides and brands individuals as abled versus disabled is used to clearly distinguish what (and who) is "normal" from the disabled and abnormal. These binaries are perpetuated through a variety of discursive means. Cherney (2011) states:

> Within the space allowed by rhetorical premises, ableism appears natural, necessary, and ultimately moral discrimination required for the normal functioning of civilization. Consider a set of stairs. An ablest culture thinks little of stairs, or even sees them as elegant architectural devices—especially those grand marble masterpieces that elevate buildings of state. But disability rights activists see stairs as a discriminatory apparatus—a "no 'crips' allowed" sign that only those aware of ableism can read—that makes their inevitable presence around government buildings a not-so-subtle statement about who belongs in our most important public spaces. (p. 1)

Citizenship is in some ways built upon the ability of its members to contribute to a capitalist form of meritocracy. The autonomy of ability is the cultural norm. In American culture, any condition that hinders a person's performance in school or at work, whether physically apparent or hidden, can elicit judgment by others; if any of these societal expectations are violated by a member, it conveys that they are "not doing their job." Attaching capitalistic notions to American citizens through unrealistic beliefs of "success" and "worth" is tantamount to

commodifying their experience and value in society. Similar to "cogs in a system," able-bodied citizens are oppressed, too, especially if a citizen is female or belongs to a minority group such as people of color or members of the LGBTQAI community. Despite social and physical limitations, by law it is the right of persons with disabilities, under the ADA, to access reasonable accommodations at work, at school, and throughout society. Recently, the United States Department of Labor reported that individuals with disabilities are entering the workforce at a high rate of 20.5% of labor force participation (2015). Thus, it is a crucial time to discuss how disability is constructed discursively because the disabled identity is present more than ever. After discussing the focus of this rhetorical criticism, I will now move to detailing the aspects of the site to be critiqued.

Framing Disabled Citizens

Although the creation of the ADA has helped to protect many individuals with disabilities, the framing of disability in the media persists through misrepresentation and inaccuracy. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) state that "frames are central organizing ideas for making sense of and interrupting, by showing certain associations of elements in social reality" (p. 3). A frame is an "abstract concept—meaningful collectively shared patterns or structures" which, in Erving Goffman's terms, "helps us locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its limits" (Goffman, 1974). By attaching "abstract concepts" to advertising, the media is able to spin rhetoric in a way that facilitates its agenda. However, in academia and in the workplace the ADA has protected discrimination from employers and institutions of higher education from impacting the lives of disabled persons in a negative way. Denhart's (2008) qualitative research in *Perceptions of Students Labeled with Learning Disabilities in Higher Education* found in many of the participants' experience that "the voice of those labeled with learning disabilities speak of being regarded as intellectually inferior, incompetent, lacking effort, or attempting to cheat or use unfair advantages when requesting accommodations" (p. 484). This treatment also extends beyond the classroom into the discourse of disability as citizens are isolated, illustrated as lesser than, and as such, become the alien.

Stigma Discussed

The lack of representation coupled with the alienation of the disabled community is implicated by the stigma of disability from society and non-disabled members. Living in a country that perpetuates ableism as a "mental framework that is

transmitted through rhetorical devices including language and systems of representation" (Cherney, 2011, p. 13), it is disadvantageous to be labeled with a disability. Another aspect of stigma concerning disability relies on the popular notion that if "it is not obvious, then it cannot be real," or "it is only real if we see it," a notion that governs American mentality and encourages homogeneity of identity. Any disruption of this popular belief affects those who live outside the margins and whom are more likely to experience lack of employment, poor academic performance, and low social status. Hence, it would be the logical choice to "pass" as "normal" if an individual was privileged to do so in order to avoid hardships (i.e., disabled is not physically apparent such as in the case of blindness and/or extreme cases of Down Syndrome).

"Passing" is a common diversion to avoid attention from oneself, and many identities live by it. For example, homosexual men and women choose to stay in the closet in fear of the repercussions of "coming out." This choice can mean the difference between life or death in some situations. By suppressing an individual's identity, they "pass" as average hetero societal members. Passing can also be the only viable option a person with an invisible disability can resort to in order to get into college, obtain a job, and be an active social member. These individuals face the decision to neglect their own identities while taking on one that is not their own, essentially silencing one identity to perform "normalcy." Yet, recently individuals with invisible disabilities are speaking against the discrimination they have experienced and admit that disclosing their disability to their University or employer is truly a catch-22.

Bordering of Disability through Framing

Similar to how framing places a border around the messages it wishes to transmit and communicate to the masses, so does the act of bordering itself. DeChaine (2009) asserts, "borders are socially motivated constructs: they bound, order, and function to designate, produce, and regulate the space of difference" (p. 44). Thus, the rhetoric of bordering creates the alien "to render individuals and groups abject and unassimilable—irredeemable others whose putative exclusion from the national body is virtually absolute" (DeChaine, 2009, p. 45). Historically, socially, and politically, the alien persona has taken the form of the disabled person to highlight what a person with a disability cannot do, instead of what they can do. Baynton (2013) reaffirms how disability as a discursive practice has also determined citizenship to be earned or denied:

Disability was a significant factor in the three great citizenship debates of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: women's suffrage, African American freedom and civil rights, and the restriction of immigration. When categories of citizenship were questioned, challenged, and disrupted, disability was called on to clarify and define who deserved, and who was deservedly excluded from, citizenship. (p.17)

Dating back to the early Americas, the discourse of disability has been constructed by those governing citizenship to inhibit civic experience by the non-disabled, and it continues today. As Gerber and Reiff (1991) affirm, "what has not been sufficiently capitalized upon in research efforts is that the experience of being an adult with learning disabilities can be conveyed via adults with learning disabilities themselves" (p. xiii). However, if bordering continues to be applied to the bodies of disabled individuals, their existence will continue to occupy the margins and they will remain outsiders or alien. Linton (1998) points out a similar treatment of the alien, stating that "disabled people are [usually] studied only in their particularity, which is not considered generalizable or relevant to non-disabled people, or they are studied as deviation from the norm" (p. 73). The discursive nature of disability sorts, labels, and classifies the bodies of the disabled in contrast to normalcy and ableism. I will next discuss my personal connection to this topic of disability, and how I employ my disabled identity as a mode of public engagement and citizenship.

Disability as a Mode of Public Engagement and Citizenship

Inspired by Asen's *Discourse Theory of Citizenship* (2004), I feel compelled to share my experience facing the social constructions of disability, which has directly impacted my life. Asen asserts that "citizenship is not a spectator sport;" instead, it calls citizens to action (p. 189). Viewing my citizenship as "a mode of public engagement" and as "a process" has enabled me to acquire agency in speaking out about my experience with disability (p. 190). As a disabled scholar of communication studies, I have spent a great deal of my time in academia talking about the importance of the disabled identity. However, I would not be in higher education if it was not for the experience early on in my K-12 education, which clearly defined how I viewed my disability for years until my late twenties.

I was taught that disability ruined me, that it a curse. I was told by teachers that I had nothing to offer because of it. I swallowed my disability by denying it for years, and after all the self-destruction, depression, and thoughts of suicide, I finally realized that I was allowing society to define me. I said no more. After dropping out of community college years prior, I returned and took a public

speaking class at East Los Angeles Community College. I was never the same again. It was the best class I ever took because it provided a safe space to be heard, and it encouraged me to find my identity. And I did.

Despite my learning disabilities and the struggle I experienced, I graduated from community college and went on to pursue my Master's degree in Communication Studies from California State University, Los Angeles. Although I fully acknowledge my biases of disability, I also feel that through my experience living with disabilities marked on my body, my identity, and my career, I see the dire need in academia, more than ever, to talk about disability.

It is important scholarship for communication studies scholars to recognize the interlocking systems of oppression that subjugate the disabled individual. Challenge yourself, challenge your experience, and check your privilege to take part in deconstructing the rhetoric of disability. For far too long, disabled identities have been silenced because of stigma, societal pressure to pass, and non-citizenship; this silencing cannot go unnoticed. I encourage those who are professors, students, and/or non-students/non-disabled/non-binary identities to find new ways of talking about disability that challenge the present discursive practices. By viewing citizenship as a process, I enacted my own citizenship and it enhanced my experience. In the following section, I will explain why Foucault's conception of panopticism resonates with this research about how rhetoric constructs disability.

Panopticism

French philosopher of postmodern thought, Michel Foucault, contributed a great deal to various fields such as history, epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy to gain an understanding of systems of power. Jeremy Bentham, the creator of the Panopticon, proposed a unique form of prison architecture designed to provide a safer, more humane way of incarcerating criminals. The circular construction of inward-pointing cells would allow individuals to be constantly monitored by a central observation tower. The tower would also include special shutters that would shield the guards from the prisoners' view. By blocking the prisoners' view of the guards, incarcerated individuals would never actually know when they were being watched and would eventually assume they were always being watched. Additionally, the walls between the prison cells would be solid, thereby blocking communication between prisoners, which would effectively complete the isolation experience. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Bentham also believed his system of constant observation would work well for hospitals, poor houses, and schools.

Through Foucault's adaptation of Bentham's Panopticon, "Panopticism uses *individualization* to mark exclusion and can be found in institutions of academia, medicine, and reform." As Foucault contends, "authorities function according to binary division and branding (mad/sane; normal/abnormal) and also, coercive assignment which asks who he is; where he must be; how he is to characterized; how he is to be recognized and how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way" (p. 199). In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault recognizes the function that the constant division between the normal and the abnormal serves: the "techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising, and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms to which the fear of the plague gave rise" (p. 199).

Monk, Winslade, and Sinclar (2008) contend that through Foucault's explication of dividing practices, "some identities are produced to be recipients of social privilege and others to have limited access to privilege. Some are given ample opportunity to step into positions that govern the lives of others and some are expected to submit to being governed by others" (p. 312). The disabled identity is constantly monitored and watched, whereas those who identify as able-bodied are less prone to scrutiny and humiliation because of their physicality. Through the institutions of education, Morgan (2005) "believes that the creation of special education actually stigmatizes students for deviating from the norm. Once a student has been classified as disabled, the typical school site separates the disabled students from 'normal' students and concentrates on the student's inabilities while ignoring their abilities" (p. 69). With an understanding of the origins of Foucault's Panopticon and how scholarship deems it useful in rhetorically criticizing the discourse that constructs disability as abnormal and the constant need of surveillance, I now turn to a discussion of my findings.

Findings

The #HowDoYouSeeMe PSA resembles Foucault's "coercive assignment," which brands normalcy against abnormality, signifying procedures of control and execution of power over Othered bodies (Foucault, 1977). Through coercive assignment, authorities of power in institutions of school, work, medicine, and in this instance, media, can define "who he is; where he must be; how he is characterized; how he is to be recognized…and justifies a constant surveillance to be exercised over him" (p. 199). This short film, created by non-disabled persons, uses the rhetorical appeal to pathos to attract audiences by "patting themselves on the back" for "talking" about disabilities such as Down Syndrome, but does not really recognize disability at all. Clearly, this discourse devalues the experience of

Rubright completely by not talking about real disability at all. Linton (1998) states, "the relationship between the disability and its 'owner' has not been adequately studied" (p. 74). How can disability be adequately talked about if it is ignored and/or replaced by a false identity? By framing disability as replaceable by abled bodies, the # HowDoYouSeeMe campaign falsely advocates disability awareness on the surface level. Yet, below the surface, the rhetoric of disability within this campaign devalues disabled citizens by contrasting them against ableism and societal expectations of beauty.

Rubright asked her audience, "How do you see me?" Unfortunately for Anna, she was not seen at all. Her disability, her identity, and her struggles living with Down Syndrome were erased, and a fantasy of normalcy was constructed for her through media framing. This binary division between abled/disabled and normal/abnormal reinforces Foucault's concepts in *Discipline and Punish* of lepers as plague victims to ultimately "individualize and mark the excluded" (1977, p. 199). Nevertheless, the PSA was marketed as inclusive for disabled persons and received praise on Twitter from users as "heartwarming," "fantastically real," and "powerful." This site of discourse functioned as "all mechanisms of power do by [branding] the abnormal individual… to alter [them]" (Foucault, 1977, pp. 199- 200).

Notwithstanding such praise, the PSA was also received by the disabled community, and posts on Twitter and Facebook in response to #HowDoYouSeeMe criticized the ad for its promotion of ablest ideals that suppress disability instead of celebrating it. A poster on Facebook said, "When I look in the mirror, I see my disability. I'm okay with that. It's a part of my identity." Another response on Twitter revealed, "I am my disabilities. These are not all separable. The #HowDoYouSeeMe hashtag implies separability [sic] of a person from disability."

If disabled persons cannot be accurately represented by the dominant discourse, I offer a new space, or rather, a new public for disabled citizens to voice their experiences and become sovereign citizens. This public does not separate its citizens, nor does it brand them exclusively to oppress their identities and/or lived experience. On the contrary, by openly celebrating the intersections of disabled, citizenship, race, gender, sex, and class—the grassroots social movement of the Invisible Disabilities Project (IDP) has developed the *This is Me* campaign to account for the "invisible experiences" that disabled individuals face (Invisible Disabilities Project, 2016). Repurposing the discursive methods of Foucault's binary division and coercive assignment to remove the labels of

"abnormality," visibly or invisibly disabled, and Other replaces the stereotypical and discriminatory treatment of disability with new notions of inclusion such as *Normal is fantasy. Bodily diversity and neurodiversity are real* (Invisible Disabilities Project, 2016).

Instead of marketing unrealistic and fantasy-based Others to represent disability, why not provide an outlet or public for disabled citizens to enact their citizenship by sharing their lived experiences and celebrating their identity through their own perspective? Asen (2004) reformulated discourse theory to challenge the relationship between the citizen and citizenship, changing the questions from "*what is citizenship?*" *to* "*how is citizenship enacted?*" (p. 191). This mode of public engagement removes bordering disabled bodies and also redefines the citizen from a point of respect and belonging (DeChaine, 2009), from the perspective of the disabled citizen. Through the IDP's *This is Me* project, disabled citizens are redefined, able to enact their citizenship, and are represented authentically to "interrupt old ways of thinking… One person at a time" (Invisible Disabilities Project, 2016).

Final Thoughts

Warner (2002) contends that for a public to be self-organizing, first "it must first have some way of organizing itself as a body, and of being addressed in discourse. Also, a public organizes itself independently of state institutions, laws, formal frameworks of citizenship, or pre-existing institutions such as the church" (p. 414). The IDP has both a website and a Facebook page where public members can share their experiences through the *This is Me* campaign. The campaign was designed to create a space where participants can voluntarily submit their stories to be posted on social media. After filling out a brief application, a citizen is born. Secondly, Warner (2002) asserts that "a public is a relation among strangers: reaching strangers is the primary orientation; through electronic media, strangers can be treated as already belonging to our world. More: they must be. A nation or public in which everyone could be known personally would be no nation or public at all" (p. 417).

Furthermore, the IDP does not pressure its citizens to submit their stories, but rather, allows a place for it to be done and recognized by others who may or may or not have disabilities. The fact that this website and movement exists proves that citizens of disabled communities feel comforted by sharing their identity and how they navigate through their experience. According to Warner (2002), "the public is constituted through mere attention. The existence of a public is contingent on its members' activity… not on the member's categorical

classification, objectively determined position in social structure or material existence. Publics resemble the model of voluntary association" (p. 419). Thus, I suggest that the IDP can be considered a newfound public, as those who choose to participate in the *This is Me* project can submit their stories and voice their experiences authentically. Likewise, audience members are also citizens who constantly add to the mediated conversations that take place, by either supporting others or simply "liking" the Facebook page or Twitter posts.

The future directions for changing the way rhetoric constructs discourse is ongoing. What I have presnted is only a small glimpse of a movement that is deconstructing and offering repair of the years of damage that has been imposed on the disabled identity through the discursive practices embedded within ableism—rhetoric that has branded, bordered, and labeled those with disabilities as abnormal. The fight for equality, much like the rhetorical struggles over gender, race, class, and sex, continues.

References

Asen, R. (2004). A discourse theory of citizenship. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *90*(2),189-211.

Baynton, D. C. (2013). Disability and the justification of inequality in American history. In L. J. Davis (Ed.), *The disability studies reader* (pp. 33-57). London: Routledge.

Bentham, J. S. (n.d.). Panopticon. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/foucault/.

Burgett, B., & Hendler, G. (2014). Keywords for American cultural studies. Ithaca: NYU Press.

Cherney, J.L. (2011). The rhetoric of ableism. *DSQ: Disability Studies Quarterly*, *31*(3). DOI:10.18061/dsq. v31i3.1665.

Coorsdown (2015, March 14). HOW DO YOU SEE ME? [Video File]. Retrieved From https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhCEoL1pics

DeChaine, D. R. (2009). Bordering the civic imaginary: Alienization, fence logic, and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *95*(1), 43-65.

Denhart, H. (2008). Deconstructing barriers: perceptions of students labeled with learning disabilities in higher education. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *41*(6), 483-497.

Donovan, L. (2016, March 18). Olivia Wilde has the special needs community divided with her new controversial role. Retrieved from http://www.attn.com/stories/6672/olivia-wilde-down-syndrome-community-psa.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (1990). Remarks of President George Bush at the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*. Retrieved from https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/videos/ada_signing_text.html.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage.

Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, *95*(1), 1-37.

Gerber, P. J., & Rieff, H. B. (1991). *Speaking for themselves: Ethnographic interviews with adults with learning disabilities*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hundley, G. (2008). Assessing the Horatio Alger myth: Is self-employment especially beneficial for those from less-advantaged family backgrounds? *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, *26*(4), 307-322.

Invisible Disability Project. (2016). Retrieved December 01, 2016, from http://www.invisibledisabilityproject.org/

Monk, G., Winslade, J., & Sinclair, S. (2008). *New horizons in multicultural counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Linton, S. (1998). *Claiming disability*. New York: New York University Press.

Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. *Public Culture*, *14*(1), 49-90.

Colloquy
Vol. 13, Fall 2017, pp. 55-75

Spelled Out in Black and White: Media Framing of Rape Cases and the Effects of Race Representation on News Credibility

Paulina Lainez, Jennifer Oliva, Melissa Flores, and Nancy Meza-Gil

Abstract

Public events are presented to our society through the media in forms that are interpreted differently by audiences depending on how media outlets choose to manipulate and present reality. Audiences process what is presented to them by ascribing meaning to these strategically framed representations. Within news framing, racial framing presents inequalities in the way media messages are presented and received. The current study examined the relationship between the way race is portrayed in media framed cases covering rape, and how race in these stories affects the credibility of the news source in the eyes of the public. In addition, preexisting racial tendencies were taken into account. A 2 x 2 x 2 online experiment was conducted which supported a significant two-way interaction between racist tendencies and the race of a perpetrator. The significance of these findings is discussed.

Media framing of race is a phenomenon that has caused a wide range of review, most prominently in 2016 media representations of rape cases such as those of Brock Turner, the Caucasian "baby-faced Stanford Swimmer," and Michael Brown, the African American who was referred to as "no angel" (Lopez, 2016). Recent debates have argued that racial categories are diminishing, suggesting the idea that individual quality, like behavior or personality, is more of a focus than race (Mazzocco, 2015). Critical scholars have pointed the finger at certain media outlets for participating in this type of colorblind racism ideology (Rose, 2014). Rose (2014) posits that the medium's usage of a colorblind framework in the form of soft racial framing has the ability to sway public acceptance and opposition. Public opinion is greatly influenced by media coverage and the phenomenon of framing effects; therefore, the way media presents an issue or event will affect audience opinion (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Media coverage of minorities, specifically, tends to be negatively biased in presentation (Schemer, 2013). Consequently, such stereotypical news portrayals of race perpetuate prejudice (Schemer, 2013).

Oliver (2003) explains that the misrepresentation of both African American and White male perpetrators serves to reaffirm existing stereotypes. Current representations of race in the media overrepresent African American perpetrators and underrepresent White perpetrators by highlighting different details and diminishing others (Oliver, 2003). Previous research has focused on the biased representations of African American males versus White males, but has yet to cover the external effects of media framing (Druckman, 2001). As Cissel (2012) states, the news source itself also affects public perception of an issue, making it important to assess how the reaffirmations of stereotypes constructed through framing affects news credibility. Previous studies have shown that race is often framed differently in media coverage, but analysis of the effects of different framing on news credibility is an area of research that warrants further development.

The purpose of this study is to highlight how audiences process and evaluate news stories when race is a factor. As media framing perpetuates highly criminalized coverage, an audience's predispositions and beliefs on race are reaffirmed. This study conducts an online experiment examining the effects of race, racist tendencies, and news framing on evaluating news stories on rape cases. The following sections review prior research on framing effects, the use of race in the media, and the influence of racist tendencies on content perception.

Framing Effects on News Credibility

When an issue is viewed from a certain perspective, an audience may reorient its thinking based on how the information is presented. Goffman (1974) posits that in Framing Theory, media sources communicate information to their audiences in a way that presents a "perceived reality" of occurrences or life experiences. The way in which the information is presented to an audience is defined as media framing (Chong & Druckman, 2009; Cissel, 2012). Media outlets use framing as a tool to direct their audience to a desired frame of mind (Cissel, 2012). According to Scheufele's (1999) process model of framing, mass communication in general is based on the idea that media has significant effects on the construction of social reality. Viewers and audiences use mass media to interpret and discuss public events, employing the media as a frame of reference (Scheufele, 1999). Text manipulation, as Luntz (2006) states, in both positive and negative frames should subconsciously influence the reader's frame of mind. Tankard (2001) suggests that most recipients are unaware that this influence is occurring.

For journalists, the framing of an issue is influenced by variables such as socio-structural, organizational, or ideology-based concepts like race and crime

(Scheufele, 1999). On the topic of crime, media outlets can potentially victimize or overrepresent individuals belonging to certain social groups, promoting misleading ideas about crime, and who should be feared (Bjornstrom, Kaufman, Peterson, & Slater, 2010). Positive and negative framing patterns in news coverage have presented audience concerns about crime, the potency of crime, and who is responsible for it (Bjornstrom et al. 2010). Common representations of violent crime such as rape, murder, or assault are typically framed with a negative lens (Bjornstrom et al. 2010). A recent concept of "normal crimes" suggests that crime news coverage involves a typical set of circumstances which highlight identifying markers such as race and social class (Bjornstrom et al. 2010). Those in power in the media approach news story content selection based on aspects of crime that are considered newsworthy (Bjornstrom et al. 2010). Greer (2007) suggests that crime in the news can impact society, resulting in influences on individual belief and perception.

Sundar and Nass (2001) define news content perception as measurable evaluation of news stories that has four dimensions: credibility, liking, quality, and representativeness. Content perception provides a structured analysis of how audiences evaluate news stories, and it is also crucial to review common factors that influence results (Sundar & Nass, 2001). In the context of the current study, media framing can have persuasive effects on content perception as it studies the intentions and effects of media messages (Tankard, 2001). By using words that "pop" and phrases that resonate with the audience, content perception variables such as credibility, liking, quality, and representativeness of the content are affected (Luntz, 2006; Sundar & Nass, 2001). Media framing, as a lens, can provide multiple presentations of a single message (Luntz, 2006). Message intent, featured details, and even the media outlet affect how news is framed; however, negative and positive framing of news has shown to be an influential predictor on audience's news evaluation (Luntz, 2006; Tankard, 2001).

Negative and positive framing of news can affect content perception, specifically when analyzing credibility, liking, quality, and representativeness of the content (Hass, 1981; Sundar & Nass, 2001). The media outlet's intentions toward the audience is laid out in the framing of its news content; the agenda-setting tactics influence the information the audience perceives and analyzes (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Within content perception, credibility is one of the most frequently examined, and is broadly defined as the global evaluation of the extent to which the message source is believable (Berlo, 1960; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). The credibility of a news story lies in its framing of the information being presented, but also in the audience's confidence in receiving correct, unbiased

information (Sundar & Nass, 2001). By framing a news story to include typical characteristics such race or ethnicity, the medium's presented bias helps shape an individual's attitudes and opinions, specifically when measuring for perceived credibility, quality, liking, and representativeness of the content (Bjornstrom et al. 2010; DeLung, Magee, DeLauder, & Maiorescu, 2012; Sundar & Nass, 2001; Cissel, 2012). Current knowledge on positive and negative framing and its influence on content perception leads us to propose the following hypothesis:

> **H1:** Framing will have an effect on (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking of content, (c) quality of content, and (d) representativeness. Specifically, negative framing of news articles covering rape cases will be evaluated as having higher perceived credibility, liking, quality, and representativeness than a positively framed article.

The Use of Race in Media

Theorists emphasize that while race is not concrete or fixed, it is essential to human bodies and much more than simply an illusion (Winant, 2000). Race is socially constructed through human interaction and relationships between people and institutions (Carrasco, 1997). As a social force, race has consequences and associations that play out in the images produced through media, as well as the way audiences process the information (Dowler, 2003). The medium's framing of race reinforces the hegemonic portrayal of racist stereotypes and the underlying racial hierarchy that exists, that is not readily visible or accepted (Rose, 2014).

In Druckman's study (2001), the author examined how elite manipulation of the media can lead to citizen incompetence, when an audience automatically adopts hegemonic views. When the elite want to get a specific message across, they will use arbitrary information to manipulate their audience to form a preference and reach a conclusion in the elite's favor (Druckman, 2001). Current media framing of race follows hegemonic standards in which racial factors play a significant role in shaping public opinion (Bowen, 2015). Media framing currently reaffirms stereotypical representations of race, remaining unchallenged and accepted by audiences (Bowen, 2015). Scholars like Collins (2004) and Entman (2001) introduce concepts like "new racism" and "modern racism" to further explain the media's manipulation of information shared with their expected audience and their influence in perpetuating racists ideals (Rose, 2014).

The media are controlled by the elite, and the elite dictate what information is extended to the public and how that information connects the publics (Rose, 2014; DeLung et al. 2012). As a social force, race provides direct implications for

racial principles that are deeply embedded in society (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012). Whiteness is often considered as the standard and unspoken norm, while all other categories are compared subconsciously (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012). Previous studies have shown that the primary goal for African Americans should be to integrate with Whites in the eyes of society (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012). In studies that seek to examine black crime, the idea that few Americans consider African Americans as knowledgeable about Whiteness is a common assumption (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012). Despite an increase in support for racial equality in the last half-century, the White population is still weary of supporting policies that would meet racial equality goals (Bobo & Fox, 2003). The media furthers racial inequalities by framing and overreporting African Americans and minorities as perpetrators, and rarely ever reporting them as victims (Bjornstrom et al., 2010). These constant representations of African American criminals thus affect an individual's attitudes toward race portrayals. According to Social Judgment Theory, prevailing attitudes toward minority groups can subsequently bias news processing and evaluation.

Sherif, Sherif, & Nebergall (1965) advanced Social Judgement Theory (SJT), explaining that an audience can decode media messages through multiple processes and apply specific meaning or judgement. An audience analyzes the position of a message that creates attitude change based on the initial judgment (Sherif et al., 1965). Specifically, an individual's judgment can fall within various areas, including the latitude of acceptance, which is the area of acceptable positions for each individual, and the latitude of rejection, which is the message positions that the recipient is likely to disagree with or contest (Sherif et al., 1965). If the message reflects the acceptable beliefs of the recipient, that recipient is likely to agree with the message, whereas a message that falls within the latitude of rejection is likely to be dismissed (Sherif & Hovland, 1961).

In the context of media framing of race, predispositions of racial stereotypes influence the effectiveness of media messages depending on an audience's latitudes (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997). Hurwitz and Peffley (1997) explain that accepted stereotypes of African American individuals, such as violent behavior, create certain expectations. An audience that accepts racial stereotypes would expect criminal or violent behavior and would recall more instances where African American men are involved in crime (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997). If media framing perpetuates existing racial stereotypes and attitudes, the message falls under the latitude of acceptance, which is likely agreeable (O'Keefe, 1990). Given that media framing of African American individuals is related to public opinion and perception, the current study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2: The race of the perpetrator will affect (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking of content, (c) quality of content, and (d) representativeness of content. Specifically, in comparison with a news story featuring a White perpetrator, an African American perpetrator will be perceived as having a higher level of perceived credibility, liking, quality, and representativeness.

H3: There will be interactive effects between framing and the race of the perpetrator. Specifically, in comparing a negative news story featuring a White perpetrator, a negative news story with an African American perpetrator will be perceived as having a higher level of (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking, (c) quality, and (d) representativeness. In contrast, a positively framed article featuring a White perpetrator will be perceived with better news story evaluation than the positively framed article featuring an African American perpetrator.

Moderating Effects of Racist Tendencies

McGuire's (1968) Information Processing theory (IPT) proposes that upon exposure to a message, receivers who attend to and comprehend the message content will compare their position on an issue with the position advocated by the source. Media channels are seen as sources of information, and once the message is distributed, processing occurs (McGuire, 1968). Receivers compare the old information they possess on the issue, residing in existing knowledge structures, to the new information provided in the message (Bettman, 1970). If the new information is accepted, it is integrated into the receiver's knowledge structures (Anderson, 1971).

Information processing is primarily represented in terms of the cognitive abilities of the audience to learn, make sense of, and make decisions about media messages (Cassino, Taber, & Lodge, 2007). An audience's interpretation is influenced by a variety of factors such as values, beliefs, culture, and differences in power (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Environmental conditions may still be the stimulus for the occurrence of information processing; however, the emphasis is based on the influence of audience perception (Sujan, Bettman, & Sujan, 1986).

There are many elements that contribute to media perception of race. Although the media's framing of a perpetrator has an impact on the perception of the viewer, so does an individual's preconceived notions based on racist tendencies. When studying information processing with media framing of race, how information is presented and expressed by news coverage can play into how a viewer processes information and forms their decision in regard to the message

being presented (Domke, McCoy, & Torres, 1999). Portrayals of African Americans have been known to influence audience perception of the group as well as other minority groups (Greenberg, 1972). Negative media portrayals of minority groups and news credibility perception is also influenced by preexisting racist tendencies within the audience (Oliver, 2003). Data also shows that individual perceptions of African Americans as a threat to economic resources is a strong predictor of punitive policies within regions that are suffering from unemployment, rent hikes, or a recent increase in the African American population (King & Wheelock, 2007).

Racism and racist tendencies have long been a topic of inquiry when examining the effects on message processing. Ramasubramanian (2007) and Oliver (2003) explain that racism serves to sustain stereotypical ideologies and can therefore influence how information is processed. Within the purview of media framing, race has been represented in a limited frame perpetuating stereotypes. African Americans are many times perceived as a threat by the media sources along with being placed within the frame of a criminal action or a group that needs to be feared (King & Wheelock, 2007)**.** This limited representation of race warrants the audience to a singular view which influences the perception of news credibility (Armstrong & Neuendorf, 1992). Framing of news coverage further diminishes the opportunity for alternative views or explanations of a media message (Scheufele, 1999). This can inherently affect how credible certain media messages are perceived (Scheufele, 1999). Therefore, the current study proposes the following hypotheses:

> **H4:** There will be interactive effects between the race of the perpetrator and racist tendencies. Specifically, individuals with higher racist tendencies will perceive the article with the African American perpetrator as having a higher level of (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking, (c) quality, and (d) representativeness.
>
> **H5:** There will be a three-way interaction effect between framing, race, and racist tendencies. Specifically, an individual with high racist tendencies will perceive the negatively framed news article with an African American perpetrator as having a higher level of (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking, (c) quality, and (d) representativeness.

Methods

Design Overview

The current study conducted a 2 (framing: positive vs. negative) x 2 (race of the perpetrator: African American vs. White) x 2 (racist tendencies: high vs. low) online experiment. All participants (*N*= 237) were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The race of the perpetrator was manipulated by changing the description of the perpetrator in the text of the article, as well as the race of the man in the image that accompanied the text. The media framing was manipulated by changing the way in which the perpetrator was described and the tone in which the news story was told, in either a negative or a positive frame. Another independent variable, racist tendencies, was measured by using Henry and Sears' Symbolic Racism scale (2002).

Participants

A total of 255 college students participated in the survey to earn extra credit points for a class. A majority of the participants were female (73%) and the average age was 22.5 (*SD* = 6.621). Regarding ethnicity, the majority of the participants were Hispanic or Latino (*N*=129, 54.4%) followed by White (*N*= 42, 17.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (*N*= 29, 12.2%), other (*N*= 25, 10.5%), and African American (*N*= 11, 4.6%).

Procedure

All participants were given the link that directed them to the online experiment through a recruitment email. The students first viewed an informed consent letter, and upon approval, each read one of the four articles randomly distributed via Survey Monkey. After reading the news story, the participants completed a questionnaire that asked about the perceived credibility, quality, liking, and representativeness of the article, as well as a set of questions measuring their racist tendencies and demographics.

Stimuli

In this study, the articles presented were manipulated in terms of framing. The positively framed stories mentioned that the perpetrator had a "bright future ahead of him" and highlighted that the evidence used against the perpetrator may have been insufficient. Terms like "sexual assault" were used in the positively framed articles, as opposed to the term "aggravated rape" that was used in the negatively framed articles. The titles of the articles were manipulated as *"UCLA student, Steven Rossmore, accused of sexual assault, pleaded not guilty"* in the

positively framed articles, in contrast to *"Steven Rossmore, charged with aggravated rape, had a previous criminal record"* in the negatively framed articles. The stimuli also differed in the race of the perpetrator. Half of the articles featured an African American perpetrator and the other half featured a White perpetrator. In constructing the simulated news article, we used a screenshot of the existing header and logo from previous online *Huffington Post* articles, replacing an existing news article format with the simulated articles and images (See Appendix B).

Measures

Perceived Credibility. Perceived credibility of the news article was assessed on a 7-point scale (1 being "describes very poorly" and 7 being "describes very well") with 17 adjectives (i.e., believable, accurate, biased, objective, fair, sensationalistic, clear, comprehensive, concise, disturbing, important, informative, insightful, relevant, timely, well-written, and coherent; Cronbach's α = .86) (Sundar & Nass, 2001).

Perceived Liking. Perceived liking was measured on a 7-point scale (1 being "describes very poorly" and 7 being "describes very well") with 5 adjectives (i.e., boring, lively, enjoyable, interesting, and pleasing; Cronbach's α = .72) (Sundar & Nass, 2001).

Perceived Quality. Perceived quality was measured on a 7-point scale (1 being "describes very poorly" and 7 being "describes very well") with 5 adjectives (i.e., clear, coherent, comprehensive, concise, well-written; Cronbach's α = .92) (Sundar & Nass, 2001).

Perceived Representativeness. Perceived representativeness was measured on a 7-point scale (1 being "describes very poorly" and 7 being "describes very well") with 5 adjectives (i.e., disturbing, important, informative, relevant and timely; Cronbach's α = .86) (Sundar & Nass, 2001).

Racist Tendencies. Racist tendencies were measured on a 7-point scale (1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree") with 4 items (e.g., "Over the past few years, African Americans have gotten more economically than they deserve;" Cronbach's α = .74). To assess the independent variable of racist tendencies, a median split was conducted to convert the racism scale responses into a nominal variable. The median for the racism scales was 2.25, therefore any

score under the median was considered as low racist tendencies while any score higher was considered as high racist tendencies (Henry & Sears, 2002).

Results

Hypothesis 1 predicted that framing of the perpetrator would affect (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking, (c) quality, and (d) representativeness. To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was completed to examine the effects of framing. There was a significant effect of framing on perceived credibility, F (1,229) = 6.167, $p < .03$ (See Table 1). Negatively framed articles were perceived as more credible than positively framed articles. However, there were no significant effects of framing on liking, F (1, 229) = .106, p = .745, quality, F (1, 229) = 1.471, p = .226, or representativeness, F (1, 229) = .716, p = .398. Therefore, H1 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the race of the perpetrator would affect (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking, (c) quality, and (d) representativeness. The results of a one-way ANOVA demonstrated a significant effect of the race of the perpetrator on perceived credibility, F (1, 229) = 4.939, $p < .03$ (See Table 2). Interestingly, the article featuring the White perpetrator was perceived as more credible than the article featuring the African American perpetrator. However, there was no significant effects of race on liking, F (1, 229) = .470, p = .291, quality, F (1, 229) = .497, p = .481, and representativeness, F (1, 229) = .001, p = .970. Therefore, H2 was partially supported.

According to Hypothesis 3, framing and the race of the perpetrator would affect (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking, (c) quality, and (d) representativeness of the news article. The results of a two-way ANOVA demonstrated no significant effects of framing and race of the perpetrator on perceived credibility, F (1, 229) = 1.249, p = .265, liking, F (1, 229) = 1.119, p = .291, quality, F (1, 229) = .497, p = .481, and representativeness, F (1, 229) = .001, p = .970. Therefore, H3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the race of the perpetrator and racist tendencies would affect (a) perceived credibility, (b) liking, (c) quality, and (d) representativeness. The results of a two-way ANOVA demonstrated that the combinations of race of the perpetrator and racist tendencies did have significant effects on perceived credibility, F (1, 229) = 5.651, $p < .03$ (See Table 3), and quality of the content, F (1, 229) = 4.392, $p < .05$ (See Table 4). Individuals with high racist tendencies perceived the news article with the African American perpetrator with more credibility and higher quality. Alternatively, individuals with low racist tendencies perceived the article with the White perpetrator with

more credibility and quality, illustrating opposite results. However, there were no significant effects on liking, F (1, 229) = .009, p = .926 or representativeness of the article, F (1, 229) = 3.008, p = .084. Therefore, H4 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 5 examined the possible interactive effects of frame, race of the perpetrator, and racist tendencies on the dependent measures. To test this question, a three-way ANOVA was completed which displayed no significant effects on perceived credibility, F (1, 229) = 1.086, p = .298, liking, F (1, 229) = 2.320, p = .129, quality, F (1, 229) = .327, p = .568, and representativeness, F (1, 229) = .152, p = .697.

Summary of Findings

This study investigated the effects of framing (positive vs. negative), race of perpetrator (African American vs. White), and racist tendencies (high vs. low) on news content perception (perceived credibility, liking, quality, and representativeness). The study demonstrated main effects of framing and race on perceived credibility. Findings show an interesting interaction effect of race and racist tendencies on perceived credibility and quality of the content. Specifically, individuals with higher racist tendencies perceived the news story with an African American perpetrator to have more credibility than the condition featuring a White perpetrator.

Discussion

When considering Hypothesis 1, the current study revealed a significant effect on framing (e.g., positive or negative word choice) in which the negatively framed story with aggressive language was perceived as more credible than the story that rationalized the perpetrator's actions. As proposed by Bjornstrom et al. (2010), news stories that use a frame of criminalization are likely to retain more readers. When using a negative frame, most headlines are meant to entice the reader to stop and review (Luntz, 2006). In doing so, there is a reproduction of aggressively framed language, especially with cases involving sensitive material, such as rape cases. The results of this study reaffirm the power behind framing as a specific lens of reference for audiences (Goffman, 1974). News stories that rely on biased frames for coverage continue to create a sense of fear in readers and perpetuate familiar, violent characteristics of criminals (Bjornstrom et al., 2010). These stereotypical characteristics, then, influence the overall news story evaluation especially when it comes to news credibility. Hass (1981) explains that predispositions towards certain factors, including race, affect how trustworthy

the message is assessed. When used specifically for news coverage on rape cases, the negative frame is expected and therefore deemed as more credible.

As previously discussed, the sensitive nature of the news topics covered in this study is expected to have a certain connotation towards what is highlighted in the news article. If implications of race are then considered, there should be a difference of overall news evaluation based on race of the perpetrator. Interestingly, Hypothesis 2 resulted in significant effects of race on perceived credibility in a way that the article featuring the White perpetrator was perceived with more credibility than the article with the African American perpetrator. Though these results may seem contradictory, there must be a consideration for previous research and implications provided by the body of participants. Emirbayer and Desmond (2012) explain that Whiteness is perceived to be a standard in the hegemonic view of society. In that case, other representations are challenged and resisted. A larger portion of the participants identified as Hispanic or Latino, another minority group that provides possible predisposition of criminalization toward White perpetrators. As minorities are constantly marginalized in the media and framed as crime-prone, it can be speculated that the participants analyzed the news articles trying to overcorrect and fight the racist perception of other minorities in the media messages. Therefore, an article featuring a White perpetrator is more like to fall within the latitude of acceptance, when considering the participant's predispositions towards criminalizing the hegemonic standard (Sherif and Hovland, 1961). News story evaluation is a personalized process that is evident in the results of this study. Another possible explanation for this result is the fact that UCLA's student body is predominantly Asian and White, with White being chosen for the stimulus (UCLA Undergraduate Admission, n.d.). Due to common knowledge of the student population, the setting of the stimulus could potentially change participants' evaluations, which led to the finding that the news story featuring a White perpetrator was perceived as more credible than its counterpart featuring an African American perpetrator. In this case, it can be concluded that racial stereotypes continue to play a role in the overall processing of news (Oliver, 2003).

Due to the effects of framing and race on overall news story evaluation, it is expected that the combination of race of the perpetrator and racist tendencies would create an interesting effect on evaluation. The study revealed that race and racist tendencies had a significant effect on the perceived credibility and quality of the news story. As Social Judgment Theory explains, predispositions and current attitudes dictate judgements (Sherif et al., 1965). The current study revealed that predisposition of racist tendencies and current attitudes toward

race influence the initial judgement of the rapist upon reading the manipulated article (Sherif et al., 1965). Individuals with high-racist tendencies evaluated the news article with the African American perpetrator as more credible and of higher quality.

As previously discussed, racist tendencies are instilled and become a powerful influence on perceptions of reality (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012). When combined with the factor of race, racist tendencies reinforce preconceived racial stereotypes, therefore influencing how the audience is able to process information (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012). Ramasubramanian (2007) and Oliver (2003) have previously explained how racism and racist tendencies heavily affect message evaluation. Information Processing Theory suggests that when an individual receives a message, they compare the message to their own existing beliefs, thus comparing their position on an issue to the issue being presented by the source (McGuire, 1968). When considering the results of this study, typical representations of race are recalled by an audience. The sense of fear and violence are then combined with an individual's racist tendencies to process the message presented. More importantly, the results of this study highlight the implications of racism and news story evaluations. Research proposing that emphasis no longer lies on race but on other characteristics, such as personality, have missed the vitality of racist tendencies (Mazzocco, 2015). Although a colorblind perspective can imply a regenerative growth in news story evaluations, this study implies that in today's era of overexposure to media messages, racist tendencies continue to sway an audience's perception of credibility and quality of content.

In addition to theoretical implications, the findings of the current study present a series of practical implications for future news source representations of minorities in contrast to news representations of White individuals. The results generally suggest that media sources should be more conscious of audience hyperawareness of media framing and their representation of minorities. Taking into consideration audience hyperawareness of the media's tendency to negatively frame non-white individuals and present a manipulated reality demonstrate the need for improved media literacy. As constant consumers of media messages, strong critical thinking skills are necessary to analyze the message presented by the news source. The need for stronger media literacy will also be beneficial for recognizing bias and the missing pieces of a news story. Neutral framing of minority races can suggest better overall news story evaluation of media messages.

Limitations

There are various limitations to this study. As a result of our local outreach, the ethnicity statistic of the participant pool is overwhelmingly high as a result of targeting local colleges who have a predominantly Hispanic and Latino student base. Expanding the participant pool to include students from various institutions could potentially improve the study by including a more diverse sample. Finally, the word "rape" was used within the title of the study conducted, which might have deterred students from participating in the study since it is an issue that might affect them personally. A more neutral title for the study might lend support in achieving a desired sample pool for generalizability of study results.

Appendix A: Tables and Figures

Table 1

Main Effect of Framing on Perceived Credibility

	Negative	Positive
M	4.613	4.33
SD	0.076	0.084

F (1, 229) = 6.167, $p < .03$

Table 2

Main Effect of Race of the Perpetrator on Perceived Credibility

	African American	White
M	4.348	4.598
SD	0.085	0.074

F (1, 229) = 4.939, $p < .03$

Table 3

Interactive Effects of Race and Racist Tendencies on Perceived Credibility

Race		**Racist Tendencies**	
		Low	High
African American	*M*	4.175	4.521
	SE	.125	.115
White	*M*	4.693	4.503
	SE	.104	.106

F (1, 229) = 5.651, *p* < .03

Table 4

Interactive Effects of Race and Racist Tendencies on Quality

		Racist Tendencies	
		Low	High
African American	*M*	4.261	4.871
	SE	.203	.187
Race			
White	*M*	4.876	4.719
	SE	.169	.172

F (1, 229) = 4.392, *p* < .05

Figure 1

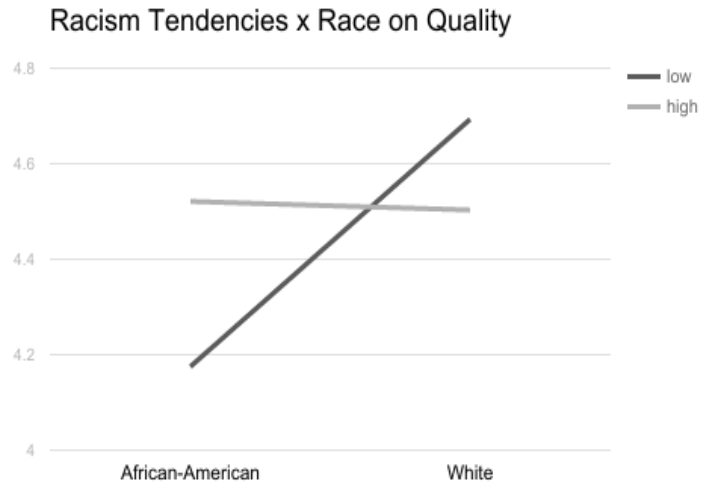
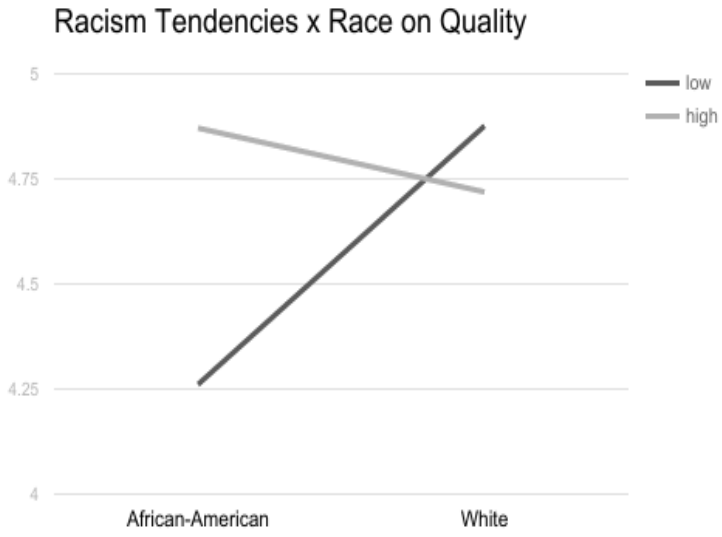


Figure 2



Appendix B: Webpage Stimuli

Stimulus 1



UCLA student, Steven Rossmore, accused of sexual assault, pleaded not guilty.

By: Alex Ramos
October 15,2016



In the middle of his academic year, UCLA student, Steven Rossmore, was accused and charged of sexual assault. On September 15th, 2016, the accuser, 19-year old Sarah Davis was found unconscious and half naked in a backyard of a UCLA frat house in Los Angeles. The young woman was found by two other party-goers in the early morning.

According to students who were present at the party Rossmore was seen with the victim, Sarah Davis, who was heavily intoxicated. Other party-goers have reported to have had some interactions with Rossmore before the alleged assault occurred, as they were all celebrating the beginning of the new school semester. Other students who were present at the party have reported that Rossmore has had previous suspicious behavior

Rossmore pleaded not guilty in court yesterday but has been convicted of sexual assault and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Rossmore's lawyer Jason Wilner, stated "Steven is an exceptional student and has a bright future ahead of him. At this time, we don't believe the evidence was sufficient for this sentence." UCLA has yet to release a statement.

Stimulus 2



UCLA student, Steven Rossmore, accused of sexual assault, pleaded not guilty.

By: Alex Ramos
October 15,2016



In the middle of his academic year, UCLA student, Steven Rossmore, was accused and charged of sexual assault. On September 15th, 2016, the accuser, 19-year old Sarah Davis was found unconscious and half naked in a backyard of a UCLA frat house in Los Angeles. The young woman was found by two other party-goers in the early morning.

According to students who were present at the party Rossmore was seen with the victim, Sarah Davis, who was heavily intoxicated. Other party-goers have reported to have had some interactions with Rossmore before the alleged assault occurred, as they were all celebrating the beginning of the new school semester. Other students who were present at the party have reported that Rossmore has had previous suspicious behavior

Rossmore pleaded not guilty in court yesterday but has been convicted of sexual assault and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Rossmore's lawyer Jason Wilner, stated "Steven is an exceptional student and has a bright future ahead of him. At this time, we don't believe the evidence was sufficient for this sentence." UCLA has yet to release a statement.

Stimulus 3



Steven Rossmore charged with aggravated rape, had previous criminal record.

By: Alex Ramos
October 15,2016



On September 15th, 2016, 19-year old Sarah Davis was found unconscious and half naked in a backyard of a UCLA frat house in Los Angeles. The young woman was found by two other party-goers in the early morning.

Rossmore, a student at UCLA, has been charged with aggravated rape. Other students who were present at the party have reported that Rossmore has had previous suspicious behavior. That night he was seen following the victim, Sarah Davis, who became heavily intoxicated. Other party-goers have reported to have had some interactions with Rossmore before the rape occurred, as he boasted about taking the young girl home knowing well that she was intoxicated. She was not seen until the next morning.

After an emotional trial and a detailed letter written by the victim herself, Rossmore has since been convicted of aggravated assault and has been sentenced to 15 years in prison. Rossmore's lawyer, Jason Wilner is looking to appeal for a lighter sentence and stated that Rossmore "has a bright future ahead of him." UCLA has yet to provide a statement.

Stimulus 4



Steven Rossmore charged with aggravated rape, had previous criminal record.

By: Alex Ramos
October 15,2016



On September 15th, 2016, 19-year old Sarah Davis was found unconscious and half naked in a backyard of a UCLA frat house in Los Angeles. The young woman was found by two other party-goers in the early morning.

Rossmore, a student at UCLA, has been charged with aggravated rape. Other students who were present at the party have reported that Rossmore has had previous suspicious behavior. That night he was seen following the victim, Sarah Davis, who became heavily intoxicated. Other party-goers have reported to have had some interactions with Rossmore before the rape occurred, as he boasted about taking the young girl home knowing well that she was intoxicated. She was not seen until the next morning.

After an emotional trial and a detailed letter written by the victim herself, Rossmore has since been convicted of aggravated assault and has been sentenced to 15 years in prison. Rossmore's lawyer, Jason Wilner is looking to appeal for a lighter sentence and stated that Rossmore "has a bright future ahead of him." UCLA has yet to provide a statement.

References

Anderson, N. H. (1971). Integration theory and attitude change. *Psychological review*, *78*(3), 171.

Armstrong, G. B., & Neuendorf, K. A. (1992). TV entertainment, news, and racial perceptions of college students. *Journal of Communication*, *42*(3), 153-176.

Bettman, J. (1970). Information processing models of consumer behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research, 7*(3), 370-376.

Bjornstrom, E. E., Kaufman, R. L., Peterson, R. D., & Slater, M. D. (2010). Race and ethnic representations of lawbreakers and victims in crime news: A national study of television coverage. *Social problems*, *57*(2), 269-293.

Bobo, D. L. & Fox, C. (2003). Race, racism, and discrimination: Bridging problems, methods, and theory in social psychological research. *Social Psychological Research*, *66*(4), 319-332.

Bowen, S. (2015). A framing analysis of media coverage of the Rodney King incident and Ferguson, Missouri conflicts. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, *6*(1), 114-124.

Carrasco, E. (1997). Critical race theory and development. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law), 91*, 427-428.

Cassino, D., Taber, C., & Lodge, M. (2007). Information Processing and Public Opinion. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift, 48*(2), 205-220.

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *10*, 103-126.

Cissel, M. (2012). Media framing: A comparative content analysis on mainstream and alternative news coverage of Occupy Wall Street. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, *3*(1), 67-77.

Collins, P. H. (2004). *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. London: Routledge.

DeLung, J., Magee, R. G., DeLauder, R., & Maiorescu, R. (2012). Proximity and framing in news media: Effects on credibility, bias, recall, and reader intentions. *Journalism and Mass Communications*, *2*(7), 748-757.

Domke, D., McCoy, K., & Torres, M. (1999). News media, racial perceptions, and political cognition. *Communication Research*, *26*(5), 570-607.

Dowler, K. (2003). Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice: The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture, 10*(2), 109-126.

Druckman, J. N. (2001, September). The implications of framing effects for citizen competence. *Political Behavior, 23*(3), 225-256.

Emirbayer, M., & Desmond, M. (2012). Race and reflexivity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *35*(4), 574-599.

Entman, R. M., & Rojecki, A. (2001). *The black image in the white mind: Media and race in America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Greenberg, B. S. (1972). Children's reactions to TV blacks. *Journalism Quarterly*, *49*(1), 5-14.

Greer, J. D. (2003). Evaluating the credibility of online information: A test of source and advertising influence. *Mass Communication and Society*, *6*, 11-28.

Hass, R. G. (1981). Effects of source characteristics on cognitive responses and persuasion. In R. Petty, T. Ostrom, & T. Brock (Eds.), *Cognitive responses in persuasion* (pp. 44-72). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Henry, P. J., & Sears, D. O. (2002). The symbolic racism 2000 scale. *Political Psychology*, *23*(2), 253-283.

Hovland, C. I., & Weiss, W. (1951). The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *15*(4), 635-650.

Hurwitz, J., & Peffley, M. (1997). Public perceptions of race and crime: The role of racial stereotypes. *American Journal of Political Science, 41*(2), 375-401.

King, R. D., & Wheelock, D. (2007). Group threat and social control: Race, perceptions of minorities and the desire to punish. *Social Forces*, *85*(3), 1255-1280.

Lopez, G. (2016). The media's racial double standard in covering sexual assault cases, in two tweets*. Vox,* https://www.vox.com/2016/6/6/11871228/brock-turner-rape-race

Luntz, F. (2007). *Words that work: It's not what you say, it's what people hear*. Hachette Books.

Mazzocco, P. J. (2015). Talking productively about race in the colorblind era. *Kirwan Institute*, http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/docs/ki-race-talk-0115-05.pdf.

McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *36*(2), 176-187.

McGuire, W. J. (1968). Personality and attitude change: An information-processing theory. In A. G. Greenwood, T. C. Brock, & T. Ostrom (Eds.), *Psychological foundations of attitudes* (pp. 171-196). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

O'Keefe, D. J. (1990). *Persuasion: Theory and research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Oliver, M. (2003). African American men as "criminal and dangerous": Implications of media portrayals of crime on the "criminalization" of African American men. *Journal of African American Studies, 7*(2), 3-18.

Ramasubramanian, S. (2007). Media-based strategies to reduce racial stereotypes activated by news stories. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *84*(2), 249-264.

Rose, J. P. (2014). The new racism in the media: A discourse analysis of newspaper commentary on race, presidential politics, and welfare reform. Thesis, Georgia State University, https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1051&context=sociology_theses

Schemer, C. (2013). Media effects on racial attitudes: Evidence from a three-wave panel survey in a political campaign. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *26*(4), 531-542.

Scheufele, A. Dietram. (1999). Framing as a Theory of Media Effects. *Journal of Communication*, *49*(1), 103-122.

Sherif, M., & Hovland, C. I. (1961). Social judgment: Assimilation and contrast effects in communication and attitude change. *American Journal of Sociology*, *68*(1), 126-127.

Sherif, C. W., Sherif, M., & Nebergall, R. E. (1965). *Attitude and attitude change: The social judgment-involvement approach*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders.

Sujan, M., Bettman, J., & Sujan, H. (1986). Effects of consumer expectations on information processing in selling encounters. *Journal of Marketing Research, 23*(4), 346-353.

Sundar, S. S., & Nass, C. (2001). Conceptualizing sources in online news. *Journal of Communication*, *51*(1), 52-72.

Tankard, J. (2001). The empirical approach to the study of media framing. In S. Reese, O. Gandy, & A. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life* (pp. 95–106). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Winant, H. (2000). Race and race theory. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*, 169-185.

Wood, R., & Bandura, A. (1989). Social cognitive theory of organizational management. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(3), 361-384.

Colloquy
Vol. 13, Fall 2017, pp. 76-91

Disney Narrative of the 21st Century: How Disney Constructs or Adopts Cultural Progressions

Nathan K. Wensko

Abstract

This paper looks at one of the largest culture producers, Disney, and critically evaluates the princess narrative packaged and consumed by the majority of the United States youth in the 21st century. I contend that Disney is attempting to reconstruct the princess narrative to reflect modern ideologies of women. I maintain throughout this paper that Disney has made significant changes in modernizing the princess narrative to adapt to cultural norms; however, there are still lingering aspects that continue to be problematic when the story is told. I employ Angela McRobbie's "double entanglement" criticism to view three of the most recent Princess narratives released: Brave, Frozen, and Zootopia. This study extends critical research on how Disney and other mass media companies utilize progressive and traditional gender norms to construct the reality of culture.

Introduction

Disney movies have been a part of U.S. culture since 1928. That was the year that Walt Disney unveiled the iconic figure known today as Mickey Mouse (Lessig). Over the course of the past 80 years, Disney has become a household name, especially when it comes to capturing the hearts of any child growing up in the United States. The animators at Disney have created an entire world of characters and art that is so much a part of people's lives; billions of dollars are spent living such movies out at Disney theme parks that stretch around the world. While many animations are made, one of the primary animations and stories portrayed is the princess story. In 1937, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was released to the big screen (IMDB). Since then, the princess narrative has been used consistently to retell the fairy tales that stem from European culture.

This may seem innocent and aesthetically appealing to us all. However, when a company like Disney gains notoriety through the medium of film, it can begin to create or reinforce hegemonic practices of a culture that may not actually reflect the entire population (Tavin and Anderson 23). Furthermore, it can seek to create an institutionalized form of power whereby any other cultural narrative could be repressed by such popular recognition and acceptance. As Whelan

suggests, princess narratives are never about the princess and her dreams, but rather, her marriage to the prince (32). Thus, the male becomes the center of the story. This is an important aspect to highlight because our culture has progressed in many ways over the past decade. Women in different media roles have become the center of the story line in order to balance the male-dominated narratives that are told through the cinematic screen. *Star Wars*, which has been recently bought by Disney, is a prominent example of a large franchise reordering traditional narratives that were male-driven into a female-centered story. After my initial viewing of Disney's *Zootopia*, I left the theater pondering: Is Disney trying to construct better narratives for female lead roles, or is it just pandering to the masses? U.S. culture has progressively changed in the recent decade, and with that change has come a recognition of the hegemonic, and sometimes misogynistic, messages that were portrayed in princess narrative animations (Olsen 475). Olsen's argument is grounds for further analysis of the princess narrative in the 21st century. Disney has recently recognized the shift in our culture that women are underrepresented as the main character without any agency to drive the story. Therefore, it is essential to take a look at how Disney is attempting to retell the stories that are consumed by our children.

To establish whether Disney princess narratives are impacting our culture with new dynamic films, I will examine three movies over the last three years, beginning with *Brave,* moving on to *Frozen,* and ending with *Zootopia*. Examination of the three films will help to illustrate any trends that Disney is trying to establish in contemporary film. Our contemporary female stars and the narrative used to drive their story will help us answer a salient question: Has Disney kept pace with new norms of culture, or is it telling a traditional Eurocentric male-oriented narrative? I contend that Disney is attempting to reconstruct the princess narrative to reflect modern ideologies of women. Furthermore, I maintain that Disney has made significant changes to modernizing the princess narrative to adapt to cultural norms; however, there are lingering aspects that continue to be problematic when the story is told. The persistence of social justice movements to advocate for a populace awareness of feminist discourse is a topic that Disney should be heavily invested in if they understand that the stories they tell construct culturally normative roles for the children in a global society. The research question that I am proposing from this concept is, how does Disney use shifts in cultural norms to construct contemporary representation of the modern princess?

An additional question that begs consideration is whether Disney narratives present princess narratives that use both old and new forms of gender roles. I

maintain that while Disney does adapt to ever changing cultural constructs of what a princess should be, it continues to embed traditional feminine cultural roles and performances within the princess narrative. Even though modern princess films have women performing masculine gender roles in order to deconstruct traditional performances of gender, there is still a strong presence of traditional female gender roles at work that should be investigated by further research (England, Descartes, Collier-Meek 564). I will begin by looking at literature that can help construct a framework to analyze the three movies. Then, I will use the framework to review significant moments in the narrative. I will end by drawing some conclusions that could direct further research.

Literature Review

Narratives

Narratives are essential for humans to help make sense of the world (Kent 481). I will begin by establishing the need to examine films through narrative, and then move on to how Disney films have been researched thus far. Drawing from Burke and Fisher, Kent explains that "Narrative is a natural and normal part our everyday lived experience as actors on the stage of life" (482). On the individual level, we use stories every day to connect and construct a reality around us. Additionally, narratives are a strong influence in society and can move a culture to adopt ideas that may not be beneficial to all the people within the culture. Kenneth Burke understood this, and argued that Hitler's scapegoating of Jews was an enactment of storytelling that changed an entire country's perception of the world (Burke 1). Beyond the subjective view of how narratives influence us, there have been quantitative studies as well. A mixed methods study examined this idea by looking at children's responses to princess movies using cultivation theory and the constructivist approach. It concluded that watching gendered content, such as Disney Princess movies, may influence a child's gender development (England, Descartes, Collier-Meek 566). The need to view narrative in contemporary animated films is necessary as we must continue to grow our understanding of gender performance in a new light (England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 565). The article demonstrates that a subjective rhetorical analysis should further help to reinforce the concept that narratives are influential and offer some critical advocacy.

Fisher support Burke's concepts with the idea of narrative fidelity, which seeks to explain how true a narrative is based on culturally established norms (Fisher 270). Bormann asserts that the relationship between a rhetorical vision and fantasy is the reason why there is so much repetition of the same persuasive

message (396). As Fisher states, we are *homo narrans*; we create a view of our world through the stories we tell (78). Therefore, the stories told by our culture are taken as fact even when they may only be a well-constructed myth. Therefore, it is important to continue the practice of critical analysis of mass media's commodities (movies) even though it has been done before, because with every new generation also comes new stories that will be told.

Narratives are especially salient subjects when they occur in the context of a Disney film. Disney in particular holds a unique space in the United States culture. The company seeks to immerse and saturate our world with the stories it is telling. Henry Giroux asserts that the role Disney plays in constructing individual identities and social meaning is the driving force for scholars to analyze the influence of Disney's imagined cultural landscape, especially in the United States (68). Taking a step back to understand why Giroux believes this to be true, we must look to the notion of a culture industry. Adorno and Horkheimer advance the thesis that capitalism has constructed an industry, or matrix of industries, to create culture for the masses. Such industries gather data of narratives to package and sell to the masses; in turn, they make more money. What sells best is then repeated over and over (Adorno and Horkheimer 44). Culture making industries do not vary much from their standard platform due to the fact that anything new or novel would not be profitable. If a company like Disney is in the practice of packaging culture for us to consume, then Giroux is accurate in his claim that Disney constructs children's sense of what our culture is (70). Disney establishes the power to institute general paradigms that do not change over time by making the social norms performed feel "natural" to people watching. This is represented not only by the highly successful film industry, but also the multiple avenues in which the characters in stories jump off the screen and invade the real world through commodification of the characters. Even though there has been much discussed about what Disney creates in regards to film, we must continue to focus a critical lens on the company due to the fact that it continues to be a large cultural producer in the western world. More specifically, Disney's role in constructing reality for children, who are more susceptible to ideas without question, should always remain under the microscope of critical scholars.

Disney Princess

The Disney princess narrative affects the minds of children greatly, so much so that a professor of psychology, Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, created a course outline to understand how it actually does so and how (232). A contemporary example would be the latest Disney film *Moana* and the Halloween costume controversy.

The costume was recalled due to the racist brown-face representation that ended with a required intervention from a Tahitian cultural consultant (Robinson). This controversy illustrates Disney's influence and how it extends beyond the screen. In this case and without a thought, the company constructs something that is racially insensitive. Often Disney will prioritize capital over cultural sensitivity. Even though Disney does recognize the importance of sensitivity, the constant state of transition between the two worlds can be muddled (Sandova 45). Thus, Disney's design of commodities that children can use to act out their favorite characters in real life can be problematic, particularly if Disney does not recognize new narratives of gender roles, and more. Because Disney is such an influence on culture, culture in turn puts pressure on Disney as well. With regard to race, Disney saw the necessity to break the tradition of the white princess when creating *The Princess and the Frog* in 2009 (Gehlawat 428). This illustrates that Disney began breaking from traditional roles of race, but still had some way to go with gender roles performed simultaneously. Within the film, the princess was portrayed as a very good cook and a good waitress, and the narrative maintained a heterosexual romance as the central focus of the movie (England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 556). Thus, we must focus on how Disney after 2009 has reconstructed cultural gender performances that may or may not be as progressive as Disney's efforts to adjust for racial representation.

What the princess of today is now experiencing is known as postfeminist rhetoric. Rosalind Gill (39) explains how "Media and advertisers have attempted to include the cultural power and energy of feminism while simultaneously neutralizing or domesticating the force of its social/political critique." Disney utilizes postfeminist rhetoric in two ways: the content of the films acknowledges the gains of feminism, while marketing strategies paradoxically reverse the message to convey postfeminist ideals (McRobbie 2004, 255). When Disney did this, the hypersensitivity of the company made the issue so complex by compounding other societal issues that it ended with a complete silence of race and a perpetuation of even more stereotypes (Gehlawat 427). In the period leading up to the second-wave feminist movement, Disney women were derived entirely from Grimm's fairytales—voiceless heroines who performed conventional gender behaviors like housekeeping and nurturing (Stover 2). Disney attempted to retain traditional ideals of femininity while speaking to a changing generation. The reason was to continue to implement the formula of entertainment. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the culture industry must present the uniformity of ideas to not allow imagination to roam freely, but rather, to coincide with the reality on the street (45). The critical and popular

failure of Disney films during the second-wave feminist movement suggests that the new generation of filmgoers found the rigidly defined gender roles of Disney princesses less desirable and irrelevant to their experiences (Gabler).

With this in mind, it is unsurprising that the period between 1960 and 1989 saw no princess films. A time of experimentation in social life as well as in cultural media, this era of American filmmaking coincided with massive campaigning for gender equality as well as questioning of previously unchallenged gendered images (Mulvey 286). However, while the presence of the second-wave feminist movement and the subsequent visibility of powerful, influential women did not comport with Disney's image of the passive princess in the 1960s and 1970s, the presence of antifeminist backlash and the subsequent rhetoric of postfeminism encouraged its resurgence in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Mulvey 287). In this period of postmodern filmmaking, feminist film critic Laura Mulvey notes a political shift in "aesthetic and intellectual priorities" towards "neoliberal imperialism" as the foundation of 1980s antifeminist backlash (288). This lull in princess movies suggest that Disney was regrouping to understand what the new formula would look like in order to incorporate reality with traditional packages of narratives, as Horkheimer and Adorno would assert (52). Furthermore, the timeline illustrates that the trends of our political culture influence gender norms and how they are performed by the culture industry.

The advent of Reaganomics and subsequent conservative trends of the 1980s fostered an environment of antifeminism, propagated through visual media such as advertising, television, and most significantly, cinema. With a little refurbishing, the Disney female character joined the ranks of women's magazines and TV shows as the perfect vehicle for postfeminist rhetoric in the guise of promoting "new womanhood" (Mulvey 287). The clear example is the 1989 film *The Little Mermaid*. The film portrays a strong woman who wants nothing more than to rebel against her father's dominating demands and rules. Using magical means to transform into a land-dwelling woman, she must sacrifice her agency in order to find true love. Ariel chooses to sacrifice her voice and stand in silence. The Sorceress that gives her the magic explains to her that men do not like to hear women speak anyway, so it is not much to sacrifice for true love. The film's narrative is centralized around a woman that is silent, and while this may seem to be a conflict, it is the formation of how the prince falls in love with her, even though she cannot speak. While it seemed as if Ariel was a new form of woman that was fighting against traditional roles set forth by the patriarchal establishment, the solvency of the story reaffirmed conservative views of the woman, i.e., "women should be seen and not heard." Despite Ariel's attempt to

break away from her father's oppression, the constant message of a woman being strong but still having no voice is reinforced through the movie (Whelan 30). What is most intriguing, besides the blatantly misogynistic message, is that this was the only princess film made by Disney during the Regan era of politics. It illustrates that any other narratives may have washed out the cultural message of how woman should perform their roles during a conservative period of politics. The next princess film, *Beauty and the Beast*, was not released until 1991, and continues the theme of gender performance illustrated in *The Little Mermaid*, owing in part to the continued conservative environment of the United States (George H. W. Bush is President at this point).

The history of the princess narrative and how it has appeared and disappeared paved the way for Angela McRobbie's critique of "double entanglement." This concept describes the coexistence of neoconservative values in relation to gender, sexuality, and family life with processes of liberalization in regard to choice and diversity in domestic, sexual, and kinship relations. It also encompasses the coexistence of feminism as at some level transformed into a form of common sense, while also fiercely repudiated, indeed almost hated (McRobbie 257). What this means is that feminism as a movement is taken "in the aftermath" (which we are not in, of course, in any perceived way), and anyone that continues the fight is discredited or shoulder-shrugged away. The situation constructed is tense and complicated, which makes advocacy a bit opaque sometimes. McRobbie maintains that gender roles for a modern woman become a complexity of both the traditional and the modern form of feminism and becomes problematic (260). McRobbie also asserts that this is problematic as it deconstructs any power dynamic that is constructed by one side or the other (262). If this is the case, then looking at films that are trying to break the mold of the traditional princess by incorporating new ideologies given should reveal complicated messages. Within narratives, they are more confusing than supportive for children as structures through which to construct culture.

Method

Using the notion of double-entanglement as a framework to view gender performance in film will allow the analysis to look both at traditional and modern concepts of gender. As such, I will be employing a content analysis to enable a wide scope of view of how Disney is constructing contemporary narrative. Two of the three films (*Brave* and *Frozen*) are actually princess films, while the most recent film portrays a heroine (*Zootopia*). The heroine story is now the focus of Disney, due in large part to attempt a rebranding of social progressive ideas

(discussed below). By means of a rhetorical content analysis, I will be able to find patterns across the films and across a larger timeline. The analysis will also be able to identify differences that each film may have in the same narrative. Since there is a four-year difference spanning from 2012 to the most recent in 2016, the films' detail of each narrative might illustrate progression or similarities from the traditional princess narrative that has been presented since *Snow White*. The ability to obtain a clear picture of the contemporary narrative Disney has designed will allow for a greater comparison to the traditional story.

Analysis

Brave

As Brave begins, we are introduced to a young princess, Merida, who is the first born of the family. This is where we get our first narrative construction of gender roles. The King (Merida's father) gives agency to the young women by presenting her with a bow and arrow. Without hesitation, the Queen replies, "A bow? She's a lady." As a child she is treated as a boy, due to the lack of male lineage in the family. This circumstance changes when the triplet sons arrive. Now Merida is bombarded with an overwhelming critical life, where the Queen is trying to mold her into a proper lady. The final teaching that the queen gives is that, "Above all else a princess strives for perfection." Elinor (The Queen) begins programming the roles a woman should present due to status within the culture. Thus, the conflict is presented with the Queen attempting to instill traditional roles of a woman i.e., a lady should be proper, talk softly, and have good posture. Merida opposes such roles due to her experience of freedom or liberal affordances to a woman that is treated in an equal gendered environment at a young age. Her choices and freedom to be out on her own come to a halt as Elena explains that being a lady entails sacrifice. The rebellious actions of Merida seem to subvert traditional narrative. However, as Adorno and Horkheimer point out, the narrative of people making their own choices and not fitting within the system are only objective artifacts deployed in the service of entertainment (58).

At this point, the conflict between both gender roles is exacerbated by the announcement of an official courtship called by the queen from the other families. This invitation was unknown to the princess, and is followed with a response that one would expect. The tradition of marriage is the final cement of traditional roles that must be assumed by the young princess, as it represents the ultimate sacrifice of freedom for our main character. The three princes are presented as comically drawn figures that only reinforces Merida's distaste for the entire tradition. It also allows for her father to enable her thoughts as the joke

about how silly each prince looks or acts. Merida decides that as the first born she has the right to fight for her own hand in marriage in an archery contest which the rules do suggest she has the right to do; in turn, she is shamed by her mother. Merida runs away into the woods, only to find a witch that can change her fate with her strong magical potion. The potion changes her mother, but not as Merida intends. Elinor becomes a bear, and they must resolve the conflict in three days or the magic is permanent. Meanwhile, all-out war begins between the families because a choice is not made highlighting the significance of a marriage as the tradition that keeps the land united. The ending is a moment of self-evaluation that is a reverse of the subversion that all is wrong and that we must adhere to tradition.

Through our lens of the double entanglement in the story, the narrative illustrates a clear clash of both neoconservative traditions and also liberal aspects of feminism. On the liberal side of the narrative, the princess is given freedom of choice regarding how to live. That freedom gives birth to the idea that she, as a woman, has the power to change her fate. Once Merida is confronted by the concept of marriage because it is her duty, she fights to hold on to her empowered self. Her fight to hold on to her liberal narrative is constructed around a physical transformation of her mother, which represents the traditional forms of female gender roles.

Disney is using the conflict of both narratives in this movie to illustrate the struggle that exists between the two ideas of gender performance that take a unique form. The mother turns into a bear, representing a monster style of form, signifying what happens to us if we cling to outdated ways of thinking about gender roles. This presents a progressive movement toward a liberal narrative that gives agency back to the female role; however, the complexity of the situation diminishes the liberal forms of thought. Merida must take a step back from her overbearing approach to change the mind of her mother. The very notion that Merida's backlash towards the conservative views of the Queen is presented as the action that causes her mother to become the monster in the first place. This interpretation could be taken in as a critique against the liberal feminist narrative to stand down and approach the cultural issue with less ferocity, in order to access a way to account for male-dominated ideas of gender roles in our culture.

Frozen

Frozen is a story that is focused on sisters that are coming of age. During this process, tragedy strikes in many ways. The loss of their parents creates a rift

regarding how each sister begins viewing the world around her without any guidance from a stable form of parenting. As such, they seem to have a stagnation in their maturity. One isolates herself, and the other holds onto very uninformed views of society. The traditional role of a princess to find love is introduced very early on, and is meant to serve as a catalyst for Disney to continue a narrative that pits traditional gender roles against liberal feminist roles. Meeting "the one" is introduced almost immediately. The Knight in shining armor is introduced for the young sister, Anna, to present our traditional narrative. Elsa, the older sister, continues to keep herself isolated and seems to represent the liberal sense of individual empowerment. The gendered roles clash when Anna finds her "love at first sight" and expresses her wishes toward her older sister to receive her blessing. Elsa denies her the positive response, expressing her fears of Anna's immaturity regarding the situation. When the conflict grows, Elsa's magical powers respond in an out-of-control way. Elsa is identified as an oddity that should be contained. Elsa decides to escape from society and create a castle of ice in the mountains to continue her life in isolation. Her perception of this choice is that it gives her the freedom to live with choice and self-fulfilling goals without interruption from anyone living in fear of her. Anna goes after her, but in order to embark on this journey, she must ask her newfound love (Hans) to tend to her city, and she must rely on help from another man (Kristoff) to finish her quest. The twist at the end does reveal that love at first sight is not ideal, as the prince has a plan to take over her city and steal Anna's legacy. Elsa attempts to come to her aid, along with Kristoff. The ending gives us what we think will be a traditional ending, with Kristoff finding Anna in the storm and resolving the issue. Instead, however, it is Elsa and Anna's bond that is actually portrayed as the "true love" that can mend the damage done.

The storyline of *Frozen* was interpreted from the original Scandinavian legend to create a new liberal narrative. The ending provides an optimistic outcome: if the princess is in trouble, she can be saved by another women and not by a true love story. The new gender role illustrated is that women have their own agency to resolve conflict with the power of their own free will. From the conservative traditional narrative, Anna cannot complete a quest without the help of a male character, which decreases her agency throughout the majority of the film. Again, a clash of both liberal and conservative narratives is interwoven in the film by Disney to express the culture clash that exists between gender roles present in society. Elsa is isolated due to her wish for freedom from the fear of others about her magic, while Anna falls into the hands of a corrupt prince by buying into the notion of "happily ever after."

Zootopia

Zootopia opens with a telling of evolution. However, it is an evolution of how prey and predator come to coexist with each other, rather than in competition for survival, throwing the entirety of Darwinian theory out of the window. The lead female protagonist, Judy Hopps, was chosen as a bunny from the rural roads outside the city. This lends an impression of a small and frail physical character, which supports the traditional view of women. At a young age, Judy does a great job with the liberal sense of empowerment; her positive, goal-oriented persona gives the sense of a young woman who is motivated by personal growth rather than validation through a male figure of any kind. Much like the rebellious Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*, Judy seeks her goals despite a constant message from her father that her dreams of being a police officer will only end in disaster. Judy's strong ambition is very reminiscent of a G.I. Jane style of female lead role, which seems to be a move from an entanglement of traditional female gender roles. Her father, much like the father in *Brave*, seems to reinforce Judy's personality with some more masculine one-liners. The nickname he gives Judy is "Jude the dude," which implies that her personality is perceived in a masculine way. What is interesting is that one-liners such as these are seen as banal to the story plot and are overlooked for the most part.

The double entangled view of this movie has less to do with *what* and more to do with *how* Judy resolves the conflict. Much of the traditional gender roles are small in comparison to what Disney has done well with the main character and her ability to follow through with her goals. The lead role, however, needs the aid of a male counterpart that illustrates a loss of agency to fulfill the narrative's resolution. From a number of standpoints, it could be argued that Disney attempts to illustrate healthy mutual respect between genders, and that each character compliments the other. I would agree in part with this idea, except that Hollywood as a whole tends to allow for male lead characters to resolve conflict in narratives on their own. Again, the complication of both traditional and liberal gender roles in a narrative creates an opaque message to the audience. I do not think the film would have lacked any less entertainment if Judy was allowed (note the word *allowed*) to resolve the conflict on her own accord.

Discussion

The contemporary Disney image of the princess continues to progress. That is, it attempts to be in line with newly constructed cultural norms that are accepted in our society. The princess narrative has taken the task of using the double entangled narrative and using it as a site of conflict to represent our own personal

battle with traditional conservative gender roles pitted against the new liberal gender roles that are being constructed through the feminist narrative in contemporary culture. This was a unique observation that was not originally thought to be present. The use of magic seems to be a vehicle to illuminate the strong conflict between both narratives. In *Zootopia*, the magic no longer consists of spells or potions, but rather, the peak of capitalistic society that seems to work as a medium, much like magic. What is more, the magic creates a space that can describe how one narrative can push another into becoming a monster or an outcast of society. The magic is a site that speaks to a serious concern: that liberal gender roles should not be so overbearing in relation to traditional roles, because it may induce chaos and conflict. Instead, the message is one of taking a softer approach when confronting the institutional dynamics of normative roles. I find this to be a disturbing message, as it quells the frustration that for centuries gender norms in culture have been oppressive. The notion that a softer approach needs to be taken could fracture and open our culture to regress into the same oppressive forms of gender roles that are currently in the process of crumbling.

In *Brave*, it seems that we find a true subverted narrative. The truth is that the empowered princess gains her narrative of individualism from her father. While early Disney films featured wicked stepmothers and fairy godmothers, postmodern Disney has updated the mature authority figures to male adults as a source of approval and justification for the heroine's aspirations, a transformation that in fact reduces her agency and independence. Valerie Walkerdine notes that throughout popular culture, the "Daddy's girl" representation of childish innocence is "more alluring" to the viewer, "corruptible," and "vulnerable" (Walkerdine 2).

In *Frozen*, we find a very traditional story of two princesses that Disney attempts to reconstruct for a modern-era culture. The film features a number of deviations from standard narratives and how they are resolved. The true love to end the conflict is that of the sister, and not the romantic focus of a man. In this instance, the focus stays with the lead female characters. A closer look, however, reveals some issues of the empowered woman. Both female characters can only end the conflict with considerable assistance from a male counterpart. Disney explains this as a way to illustrate platonic teamwork in an equal society. It seems that the traditional narrative is used to invoke a plot twist for the conclusion of the conflict. In an era of pervasive antifeminist backlash, media professor Karen Ross warns against the "replacement of one set of stereotypes for another" disguised as "genuine progress" (Ross 3). The strong female role is now the final

solution to conflict, but she must seek assistance from a male character to get to that point of the story.

Zootopia does show a real leap forward by Disney, No longer should the female role be a princess; instead, she can be the hero. In place of the double entangled princess, we are given the image of the liberal policewoman—the full embodiment of a hero. This film transcends, for the most part, the majority of gender roles that could be implemented in a traditional narrative. The heroine does embody a very liberal, empowered woman who does not look outside of herself for any validation. Instead, this film deals with the much larger cultural issue of divisive othering. More specifically, the film sets to reconcile the most basic primal divide: the prey vs. predator hierarchy. The message that two very different sources of identification live in relative harmony due to evolution indicates a discourse that Disney was trying to get at. The way the narrative is told, however, seems very reminiscent of an earlier divisive stance in the political discourse of the Occupy Wall Street movement. The repetition in *Zootopia* of the message that "there are more of us [prey/Beta] than them [predator/Alpha]" seems to be a call to the masses, as was the Occupy movement's mantra that "We Are the Ninety-nine Percent." If one takes a step back from the plot and observes the images that are given, one will notice that the majority of all leadership roles are fulfilled by predators, or the one percent.

All three of the films indicate a positive move toward a narrative that is more empowering of female roles than in previous films. As mentioned above, there is a clear progression of reducing (if not reworking) traditional gender norms, which culminates in *Zootopia*. However, it does so with a princess-turned-heroine narrative that hides in a capitalistic solvency, masking subtle notes of disempowering the contemporary reframing of female norms. It is my assertion that the salient issue this analysis reveals is how the existence of both traditional and liberal gender roles constructs grounds for our culture to substitute old stereotypes for new ones. The best example is given in *Zootopia*. Old stereotypes or gendered performed roles are found in Judy's personal, goal-oriented character. The film has a strong liberal feminist narrative, which is subdued by supportive characters treating Judy more like a man than a woman. Nicknames such as "Jude the dude" go quietly by without notice, yet have a profound impact on the frame of the female character.

Conclusion

As a cultural site, *Zootopia* should be the focus of extended research. The plethora of concepts that are juxtaposed against each other in the film gestures

toward the feel of a large city, but also, that Disney may be getting too complicated with their message. There are strong indications that the plot is a reinforcement of traditional roles that should be utilized in the capitalistic system of western civilization. For example, the name *Zootopia* is a representation of an ideological utopia. Through this metaphor, a large, crowded, urbanized, and gentrified area is what Disney illustrates to children as a model of how members of society should live. Additionally, there are many scenes in which the exchange of money for commodities are subtly present in the background, but also thrusted into the main plot.

The princess narrative is a significant site for continued critique, as we move toward a more conservative era in the United States. Researchers should be focusing more on how media is constructing our views of cultural ideas, as this paper has done, rather than looking at the reactionary outcome. More focus on how men are being portrayed in such films should be examined as well. Our culture is leaning toward a more equality-centered norm for both male and female roles, which is what *Zootopia* illustrates in its ending with the lead male and female becoming partners. The male role must be addressed in order to reveal whether, or to what extent, as we are changing the idea of the female we are also changing the male. If this is not the case, then it seems that we may not move any of our narratives forward enough to escape the continued hegemonic norms of gender past.

Works Cited

Bonds-Raacke, Jennifer M. "Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty: Developing a Course on Disney and Fairytale Movies." *Journal of Instructional Psychology* 35.3 (2008): 232-234. Print.

Bormann, Ernest G. "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58.4 (1972): 396. Print

Brave, Directed by Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman. Disney Pixar, June 22, 2012. Film.

Burke, Kenneth. "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle." *The Southern Review* 5 (1939): 1. Print.

England, Dawn Elizabeth, Lara Descartes, and Melissa A. Collier-Meek. "Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses." *Sex Roles* 64.7-8 (2011): 555-567. Print.

Fisher, Walter R. “Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm.” *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*. Eds. John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill. New York: Guilford, 1999. 265-287. Print.

_____. “The Narrative Paradigm: In the Beginning.” *Journal of Communication* 35.4 (1985): 74-89. Print.

Frozen, Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, Disney, 2013. Film.

Gabler, Neal. *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination.* New York: Knopf, 2006. Print.

Gehlawat, Ajay. “The Strange Case of the Princess and the Frog: Passing and the Elision of Race.” *Journal of African American Studies* 14.4 (2010): 417-431. Print.

Gill, Rosalind. “Empowerment/Sexism: Figuring Female Sexual Agency in Contemporary Advertising.” *Feminism & Psychology* 18.1 (2008): 35-60. Print.

Giroux, Henry A. “Animating Youth: The Disneyfication of Children’s Culture.” *Socialist Review* 24 (1994): 65-79. Print.

Horkheimer, Max, and Theodore W. Adorno. “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception.” *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*. Eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006. 41-72. [Orig. 1946] Print.

Kent, Michael L. “The Power of Storytelling in Public Relations: Introducing the 20 Master Plots.” *Public Relations Review* 41.4 (2015): 480-489. Print.

Lessig, Lawrence. “The Creative Commons.” *Montana Law Review* 65 (2004): 1. Print.

McRobbie, Angela. “Post-Feminism and Popular Culture.” *Feminist Media Studies* 4.3 (2004): 255. Print.

Mulvey, Laura. “Looking at the Past from the Present: Rethinking Feminist Film Theory of the 1970s.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30.1 (2004): 286-292. Print.

Olson, Kathryn M. “An Epideictic Dimension of Symbolic Violence in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*: Inter-Generational Lessons in Romanticizing and Tolerating Intimate Partner Violence.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99.4 (2013): 448-480. Print.

Robinson, Tasha. “Moana Review: After 80 Years of Experiments, Disney Has Made the Perfect Disney Movie: The New Film Uses Plenty of Familiar Disney Tropes, But Polishes Them to a New High Gloss.” *The Verge*. November 26, 2016. http://www.theverge.com/2016/11/26/13749060/moana-film-review-walt-disney-animation-dwayne-johnson-diversity

Ross, Karen. *Gendered Media: Women, Men, and Identity Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. Print.

Sandova, Marisol. "Corporate Social (Ir)Responsibility in Media and Communication Industries." *Javnost-The Public* 20.3 (2013): 39-57. Print.

Stover, Cassandra. "Damsels and Heroines: The Conundrum of the Post-Feminist Disney Princess." *LUX: A Journal of Transdisciplinary Writing and Research from Claremont Graduate University* 2.1 (2013): 29. Print.

Tavin, Kevin M., and David Anderson. "Teaching (Popular) Visual Culture: Deconstructing Disney in the Elementary Art Classroom." *Art Education* 56.3 (2003): 21-35. Print.

Walkerdine, Valerie. "Thank Heaven for Little Girls." *Daddy's Girl: Young Girls and Popular Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998. 1-11. Print.

Whelan, Bridget. "Power to the Princess: Disney and the Creation of the 20th Century Princess Narrative." *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 29.1 (2012): 21-34. Print.

Zootopia, Directed by Byron Howard, Rich Moore, and Jared Bush, Disney, 2016. Film.

Colloquy
Vol. 13, Fall 2017, pp. 92-104

Media Content Influences on Attitudes and Perceptions: A Study of the Beyhive

Lorèn Hanna, Niloufar Melamed, and Lane Schwager

Abstract

The goal of this research is to understand the perspective that Beyoncé fans, or the "Beyhive," have of Beyoncé. This population will be used in order to better articulate how social identity theory constructs, and influences, the beliefs of a fan base. Furthermore, by solidifying the importance of fandom, this review establishes Beyoncé as an influential feminist icon. Finally, using communication accommodation theory this research seeks to quantify if members of the Beyhive adapt to Beyoncé's feminist identity and self-identify as feminist as a result.

The notion that fans' identities, beliefs, and values have a direct correlation with an idol celebrity is not a new one, but rather, a generational conviction that society has seen repeatedly throughout the decades, with each entity building off its predecessors (Browne, 2009). Celebrity pop icons that have transcended the test of time include Madonna, Lady Gaga, and the subject of this study, Beyoncé (Brown, 1990; Kumari, 2016). The success of these three women is their ability to create and maintain dual identities and alter egos that transform them from pop stars to leaders in the feminist movement (Kumari, 2016). Madonna, for example, can be seen as conforming to patriarchy's positioning of women, or as resisting that subordination (Brown, 1990). Madonna's strong following among young girls most often is attributed to the way she challenges patriarchal definitions of feminine sexuality and to how her "look" can be appropriated by a "girl culture" that resists masculine privilege, parental authority, and institutional constraints (Brown, 1990). Lady Gaga and Beyoncé are contemporaries to Madonna; however, they stand out as self-proclaimed feminist performers who not only use sexual empowerment to challenge feminine roles, but gender identity as well (Kumari, 2016).

What continues to set Beyoncé and Lady Gaga apart is the connection they have not only to their performance, but with their fans (Kumari, 2016). Their pop persona is generously available as a reference point for identifying as avid fans—if the performer wears her "alien fashions" at home, her fans should feel free to do the same (Ventzislavov, 2012). Gaga refers to her fans as her "Little Monsters,"

and part of what draws them to her (and "Mother Monster" to them) is ostensibly the communal refusal of mainstream norms (Ventzislavov, 2012). Similar to Lady Gaga's relationship to her "little monsters," Beyonce has her "Beyhive" and she is the "Queen Bey" (Trier-Bieniek, 2016).

While Gaga and Beyoncé each have the admiration of their fan bases, what makes Beyoncé particularly influential is her continued financial success despite changes in the music industry (France, 2016). Due to digital file sharing, MP3 and record sales have declined tremendously (Cusic, Fulk & Lambert, 2005). However, this decline does not seem to apply to Beyoncé. Beyoncé's total number of albums sold is currently at 17.2 million (Caulfield, 2016). She has also debuted at Number 1 on the Billboard 200 chart for all six of her albums (Caulfield, 2016). Her record sales help to solidify her recognizable brand, which makes her an exquisite commodity in the celebrity culture (Cashmore, 2010). Despite outside influences in the music industry, the Beyhive perseveres in keeping Beyoncé at her highest relevancy, a relevancy that this research argues has a direct relationship with her fans. The goal of this study is to understand the communication between Beyoncé fans (The Beyhive) and Beyoncé when it comes to identifying as a feminist. This prompts the first research question under consideration:

> **RQ1:** Do Beyoncé fans identify themselves as feminist as a result of their celebrity following?

Defining feminism is a highly nuanced task because frequently authors shy away from offering concrete interpretations of the term (Thompson, 2010). This is largely due to a fear of association with the negative aspect of the word (Thompson, 2010). For the purpose of this research, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's definition of feminist will be used throughout the research as the primary explication. Beyoncé, in her music video *Flawless*, cites Adichie's definition of feminist as "a person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes" (Beyoncé Vevo, 2014).

Beyoncé

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter is arguably one of the most influential and powerful celebrities of the past decade (Hare, 2014). She has been able to transcend the label of a pop singer and mold her image into that of a mogul and an advocate for feminism (Trier-Bieniek, 2016). The performativity of Beyoncé feminism became a central concept in defining her as a feminist (Kumari, 2016). According to Kumari (2016), Beyoncé, alongside Lady Gaga, offers new possibilities for performance,

and their "regular exhibitions of female and sexual empowerment disrupt traditional notions of femininity" (p.403). Kumari (2016) furthers that these performances are in service to feminism, and challenge gender norms. Feminism plays an important role in communication by addressing theories of gender, communication, and social change (Rakow & Wackwitz, 2005). It provides potential to help individuals understand the human condition, name personal experiences and engage these experiences through storytelling, and provide useful strategies for achieving justice (Rakow & Wackwitz, 2005). Differences between gender norms influence the way that people of different genders communicate (Boundless, 2016). Through communication, society learns about what qualities and activities cultures prescribe to each sex (Boundless, 2016).

The type of feminist Beyoncé portrays has been met with both praise and critique (Trier-Bieniek, 2016). Among her critics is bell hooks, who calls her a "terrorist and anti-feminist" (Sieczkowski, 2014). hooks (2016) further contends that Beyoncé's brand represents nothing more than a well-crafted commodity, and Beyoncé's best commodity is her physical image. To some, Beyonce's image represents a reclamation of the black female body. hooks (2016), however, believes that Beyonce's image is nothing more than a perpetuation of the black female slave, bought and sold to the highest bidder. hooks (2016) concludes that this communication makes Beyoncé a negative role model, especially for young women. By contrast, many others conclude that she is part of a new wave of feminists, embracing sexuality and empowering women of all ages (Trier-Bieniek, 2016). This dichotomy represents a much larger issue as to whether or not a celebrity can exhibit feminism successfully. The celebrity feminist is a synthesized phenomenon created by a clash of feminism and media attention (Lilburn, Magarey & Sheridan, 2000). Beyoncé, despite criticism, self-identifies as a feminist (Kumari, 2016), making her a valid source of discussion. The research conducted by Trier-Bieniek (2016) offers a detailed orientation of Beyoncé's role within the feminist framework, specifically her visibility as an artist. At the 2014 MTV Video Music Awards, Beyoncé stood unapologetically in front the word "Feminist" (Bennett, 2014). This performance immediately connected Beyoncé to the feminist movement in a highly publicized way because she was now not only a performer, but was also a "game changer" (Trier-Bieniek, 2016). Beyoncé represents the complexity of femininity and feminism, cataloguing the two concepts into a single brand and bringing feminist practice into mainstream pop music (Kumari, 2016). Because of Beyoncé's recent move toward a feminist identity, this research hypothesizes that:

H1: Beyoncé fans will have a positive response to Beyoncé's role as a feminist. In order to better understand this hypothesis, this research first examines social identity theory.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory posits that a portion of one's self-concept is dependent on the importance and relevance placed on the group membership(s) to which an individual belongs (Turner & Oakes, 1986). The theory suggests that individuals' drive for positive identity and esteem influences the social comparisons they make (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In particular, group/category comparisons that accentuate group distinctiveness in favor of one's in-group over a relevant outgroup are privileged. As a result, when a particular group becomes salient, the features associated with that group guides one's attitudes and behaviors (McKinley, Mastro & Warber, 2014). At the core of community identification is an individual's desire to belong to a particular community and behave according to established norms and values (Heere et al., 2011). Within this desire, the search for a "social identity," to create and foster one's personal identity, is a valuable aspect of such affiliations (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Durkheim, 1965; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Tajfel, 1978). Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin- Volpe (2004) noted that an individual's social identity is formed by the perception of belongingness to a group or community (i.e., community identity). Thus, community identity is not only used to enhance the individual's self-esteem (Hogg & Turner, 1985; Tajfel, 1978) but, more importantly, one's sense of self-identity is dependent on the specific community identities.

Consumers who believe that an organization "shares" with them a subset of distinctive characteristics will find that organization an attractive target for identity creation and social fulfillment (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005). Community identity can be strengthened by emphasizing the positive aspects of identifying with the community (i.e., in-group) and by minimizing the negative aspects (Heere et al., 2011). By promoting certain representations (which feature particular aspects of groups) and ignoring others, the media play a role in creating shared norms and activating the use of these constructs in subsequent evaluations (Harwood & Roy, 2005). In particular, media messages have the potential to (1) influence the importance/relevance of, and ability to prime, different group memberships; (2) contribute to viewers' perceptions about the features/dimensions that characterize different groups; (3) provide norms of treatment for different groups; (4) define the status and standing of different groups; and ultimately (5) normalize these notions by suggesting that media

representations are consensually accepted (McKinley et al., 2014). This research aims to identify an association between social identity theory and the Beyhive by analyzing Beyoncé's fans' self-reported identity as feminists.

North, Sheridan, Maltby, & Gillett (2007) suggest that there may be a positive relationship between self-esteem and specifically entertainment social celebrity worship (North et al., 2007). The authors state that there is a long history of research on the potentially positive and negative effects of the media on viewers' or listeners' behavior (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). In particular, recent years have given rise to an increase in the attention paid by social scientists to the correlations of interest in the lives of celebrities and their products (e.g., movies, TV series, CDs), and also to the lifestyles of specific groups of media fans (North et al., 2007). Their research concerning celebrities and their outputs has frequently considered perceptions of the self relative to others (North et al., 2007). They discuss the concerns on how celebrity worship might relate to self-esteem (North et al., 2007). Pantaleoni (2015) uses social identity theory to develop an understanding of fan followings on Facebook. Specifically, the study used five focus groups to gather participant reason and opinions for following athletes on Facebook while also exploring the primary themes for fan engagement on athlete Facebook fan pages (Pantaleoni, 2015). Moreover, the study explored the themes connected to self-perception, self-esteem, and in-group favoritism and outgroup bias found in social identity theory (Pantaleoni, 2015). In doing so, the study provided a better understanding of Facebook fans and the intentions they sought when choosing to follow an athlete (Pantaleoni, 2015). Similarly to Pantaleoni (2015), this research will use social identity theory to develop an understanding of the in-group workings of The Beyhive.

Fans

According to Couldry and Curran (2003), celebrities use the media to pursue their endeavors because it is such a powerful source. When celebrities want to share information about either their personal or professional life, they rely on social media (Couldry & Curran, 2003). It helps build a bridge between fans and celebrities and vice versa. Most importantly, it can be used by celebrities to make an impact (Aaker & Smith, 2010). In a book written by Aaker & Smith (2010), the term "Dragonfly Effect" was explained and applied to social media. The authors illustrated that for those who are motivated to make social change, with the right energy, focus, and wireless connection, it is possible. Through media, a celebrity can share influential information, which can help them establish fans by potentially being able to reach a global audience (Aaker & Smith, 2010). The

Internet and digital media has allowed not only Beyoncé, but also Beyoncé fans, to actually publish their own "news" to a global audience—therefore becoming part of a production cycle of influences and information (Summers & Johnson Morgan, 2008). On the other hand, there are celebrities who do not understand the power of media and how it can harm their career, often resulting in the loss of their fans (Aaker & Smith, 2010). Fans can create a sense of belonging with celebrities when their messages serve as a respondent in their lives (Whitfield, 2010).

The more quality a celebrity portrays, the bigger their fandom gets (Stever, 1991). Stever (1991) conducted research in which a questionnaire was distributed to 367 participants in order to be able to describe and explore interactions. The questionnaire weighed heavily on the quality of a celebrity, and it was illustrated in this research (Stever, 1991). The participants were given an example of a hero—a celebrity—and asked if they perceived the celebrity to be honest, generous, and courageous; if they agreed, then that celebrity was in fact a hero (Stever, 1991). Whatever this celebrity says or does will be influential to this fan (Stever, 1991). As digital technologies, the World Wide Web, and social media expand the scope and sophistication of mediated communication, Beyoncé's fame and celebrity seems to increase in cultural relevance, significance, and influence (Soukup, 2006).

An analysis by Théberge (2006) found the importance of fan clubs for celebrities. Théberge (2006) explained that celebrities build small communities of their own, also known as fan clubs, to be able to form connections and relationships with their fans. If these communities were non-existing, celebrities would have a harder time building relationships with their fans in order to keep them engaged (Manifold, 2009). Ethnographic research suggests that strong empathy and emulation of the values and beliefs of the celebrity (such as Beyoncé) can develop into an involvement in a social network or community of shared values, exemplified by the celebrity (Benson & Brown, 2002). This identification, both with Beyoncé and the community of fans, is central to the experience of fandom (Soukup, 2006).

Values are the perceived skills of the celebrity, the celebrity's dedication, and celebrities' ability to balance everything in their chaotic lives (Whitfield, 2010). Value is a big part of a celebrity's identity and an even bigger part of the attempt of making connections with their fans (Whitfield, 2010; Théberge, 2006; Manifold, 2009). Fans' engagement with fan phenomena is to find the core self, or their identity, through similarities with celebrities (Manifold, 2009). This shows the amount of power that celebrities hold over their fans. Much like a "friend" in

a social network, Beyoncé fans so strongly identify with her that he or she provides Beyoncé support and advocacy (Soukup, 2006). In these cases, a strong relationship (nurtured by feelings of identification, liking, and attraction) appears to contribute to the fans' desire to construct a community bound by a common identification fascination with Beyoncé (Soukup, 2006).

The fandom culture is built through love and dedication to a celebrity. In a study done by Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter (2014), they investigated fandom users' motivation for being involved in the fandom culture. Hillman et al. (2014) found that the fandom culture helps create a space for fans to share their common interest with people who are willing to analyze and obsess over the same things. With the use of the Internet on the rise, fans get to build "fan clubs" which can then be regarded as a type of community (Théberge, 2006). When fans meet other fans, whether online or in person, they become constant companions in each other's lives, because they are considered, for the most part, as like-minded peers (Manifold, 2009). They get to work together to build a foundation that helps to enhance their understanding of the messages that celebrities portray, and the meanings that represent them (Sperb, 2010). In the case of Beyoncé, her fan group—The Beyhive—is a noteworthy example of the powerful dynamic that a fan group can have in popular culture (Trier-Bieniek, 2016). Because of this information gathered on fandom and self-identification, this research proposes its second hypothesis:

> **H2:** There will be a significant correlation between being a Beyoncé fan and self-identifying as a feminist.

Communication Accommodation Theory

Communication accommodation theory is a model for understanding the way two people interact with each other and revolves around the principle that their interaction is fundamentally transactional in nature (Coupland, Coupland, Giles, & Henwood, 1988; Giles, 1973). Due to the increasing role that the entertainment industries play within the general social dynamics, popular culture seems to have reached its spectacular climax (Dumitriu, 2015). In the wide-scale addiction for entertainment that people are coping with, media has facilitated the rise of the celebrity culture and its snowball effect (Dumitriu, 2015). This phenomenon is translated into a media landscape animated by celebrities and celebrity-related issues that our day to day discussions bring to the fore, and also into a growing research interest in the celebrity culture (van Krieken, 2012; Rein, Kotier & Stoller, 1997; Rojek, 2001, 2012). Mastro, Mastro, Tamborini & Hullett (2005) hypothesized that on dimensions primed by media exposure, increased celebrity

recognition will be significantly and positively associated with social attraction toward the celebrity (Mastro et al., 2005). In particular, they propose that a liking of a media celebrity is predicted by the perception of his or her in-group prototypicality along comparative dimensions activated by media exposure (Mastro et al., 2005). The impact of representations on audience members' preferences for celebrities and reaction to media content can be explained as resulting from accommodation of attitudes (Mastro et al., 2005).

People are thought to make behavioral adjustments to manage their levels of social distance when interacting with others, and communication accommodation theory provides a theoretical basis to forecast and account for such adjustments (Mickel, Mcguire & Gross-Grey, 2013). In essence, communication accommodation theory explains how speakers adapt behaviors to become more like those with whom they are interacting, which is understood as influence in status-characteristics approaches (Haas, 2005). Several theories explain how this process works, including implicit personality, expectancy, exchange, and status-generalization theories (Haas, 2005). The present study shows that communication accommodation theory shares ideas with these theories about (1) direct behavior and influence and (2) self-identification (Haas, 2005). Communication accommodation theory additionally explains how performance expectations for those of higher status encourage actual competence or influence (Haas, 2005). That is, although expectations are often inaccurate, they can, because of cultural reinforcement, bias information processing in ways that serve to bolster stereotypes. The aforementioned findings of Haas (2005) relate to circumstances of Beyoncé fans accommodating their behavior to mimic the values of Beyoncé. As Ridgeway (1991) explains, "Once formed, this shared, often implicit order of performance expectations tends to become self-fulfilling by shaping an interactant's propensity to offer goal-related suggestions" (p. 373). For example, if Beyoncé is expected to be sociable, her fans respond to attractiveness in ways that cause them to internalize sociability and then to behave in a sociable manner, thus bringing behavior in line with expectations (Haas, 2005).

Convergence is a general communication strategy that refers to synchronizing or adapting to others' communicative behavior (Giles & Coupland, 1991). Convergence and accommodation are two concepts from communication accommodation theory that also pertain to status-characteristics theory (Giles & Coupland, 1991). According to communication accommodation theory, convergence is produced when an interactant acknowledges a power differential by accommodating to another. Accommodation is a strategy of adjusting

communication relative to others' perceived status or power, and the quality of communication may depend on interactants recognizing their relative standing in groups (Haas, 2005). Willer, Lovaglia & Markovsky, (1997) states that as status differences occur, members of a group will change their behavior to conform with the advice of high status members because that advice is expected to be competent and valuable to that group. Using communication accommodation theory as a vehicle to understand the phenomenon, the research concluded with its last hypothesis:

> **H3:** Beyoncé fans will accommodate their viewpoints to mimic the values of Beyoncé.

References

Aaker, J., & Smith, A. (2010). *The dragonfly effect: Quick, effective, and powerful ways to use social media to drive social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Adichie, C. N. (2013, April 12). We should all be feminists—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie at TEDxEuston. [Video file]. *Ted.com*, http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/We-should-all-be-feminists-Chim.

Ahearne, M., Bhattacharya, C.B., & Gruen, T. (2005). Antecedents and consequences of customer-company identification: Expanding the role of relationship marketing. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*(May), 574-585.

Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2002). The effects of media violence on society. *Science*, *295*, 2377–2378.

Ashmore, R.D., Deaux, K., & McLaughlin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multi-dimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin*, *130*(1), 80-114.

Bardsley, A. (2006). Girlfight the power: Teaching contemporary feminism and pop culture. *Feminist Teacher, 16*(3), 189-204.

Bennett, J. (2014, August 26). How to Reclaim the F-Word? Just Call Beyoncé. *Time.com*, http://time.com/3181644/beyonce-reclaim-feminism-pop-star.

Benson, F., & Brown, W. (2002). Media, celebrities, and social influence: Identification with Elvis Presley. *Mass Communication & Society*, *5*, 183–207.

Beyoncé Vevo. (2014, Nov 24). *Beyoncé—***Flawless ft. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyuUWOnS9BY.

Boundless. (2016). Gender differences in social interaction." *Boundless Sociology*, https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/gender-and-socialization/.

Brown, J., & Schulze, L. (1990). The effects of race, gender, and fandom on audience interpretations of Madonna's music videos. *Journal of Communication*, *40*(2), 88-102.

Browne, R. B. (2009). Foreword: Popular culture's roots run deep. In B. Batchelor (Ed.), *American Pop: Popular Culture Decade by Decade* (Vol. 1, pp. viii-xi). Greenwood Press.

Cashmore, E. (2010). Buying Beyoncé. *Celebrity Studies*, *1*(2), 135-150.

Caulfield, K. (2016, June 8). Beyoncé scores her sixth million-selling album in U.S. with "Lemonade." *Billboard.com*, http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/7400402/beyonce-lemonade-sixth-million-selling-album.

Chen, J. (2007). A study of fan culture: Adolescent experiences with animé/manga doujinshi and cosplay in Taiwan. *Visual Arts Research, 33*(1), 14-24.

Couldry, N., & Curran, J. (Eds.). (2003). Contesting media power: *Alternative media in a networked world*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Coupland, N., Coupland, J., Giles, H., & Henwood, K. (1988). Accommodating the elderly: Invoking and extending a theory. *Language in Society*, *17*(1), 1-41.

Cusic, D., Faulk, G., & Lambert, R. (2005). Technology and music piracy: Has the recording industry lost sales? *Studies in Popular Culture, 28*(1), 15-24.

Dumitriu, D. (2015). The face management challenges of sport celebrity. *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy*, *3*(1), 79.

Durkheim, E. (1965). *The elementary forms of the religious life*. New York: Free Press.

Ferris, K. (2001). Through a glass, darkly: The dynamics of fan-celebrity encounters. *Symbolic Interaction, 24*(1), 25-47.

France, C. J. (2016). *Buzzing with Bey: How a global pop icon disrupted the music industry using unconventional marketing wisdom* (Unpublished master's thesis). American University, https://www.american.edu/soc/communication/upload/Corey-France-Capstone.pdf.

Giles, H. (1973). Communicative effectiveness as a function of accented speech. *Speech Monographs*, *40*, 330-331.

Giles, H., & Coupland, N. (1991). *Language: Contexts and consequences*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Haas, A., & Gregory, S. (2005). The impact of physical attractiveness on women's social status and interactional power. *Sociological Forum*, *20*(3), 449-471.

Halberstam, J. (2010, March 17). You cannot gaga gaga. *Bully Bloggers*, https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2010/03/17/you-cannot-gaga-gaga-by-jack-halberstam/.

Hare, B. (2014, June 30). Beyoncé: Forbes' most powerful celebrity. Forbes.com, http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/30/showbiz/celebrity-news-gossip/beyonce-forbes-100.

Harwood, J., & Roy, A. (2005). Social identity theory and mass communication research. *Intergroup Communication* (pp. 189–211). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Heere, B., Walker, M., Yoshida, M., Ko, Y., Jordan, J., and James, J. D. (2011). Brand community development through associated communities: Grounding community measurement within social identity theory. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *19*(4), 407-422.

Hillman, S., Procyk, J., & Neustaedter, C. (2014, February). Tumblr fandoms, community & culture. In *Proceedings of the companion publication of the 17th ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work & social computing* (pp. 285-288). ACM.

Hogg, M.A., & Turner, J.C. (1985). Interpersonal attraction, social identification and psychological group formation. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *15*(March), 51-66.

hooks, b. (2016). *Moving beyond pain*. *bell hooks* I*nstitute*, http://www.bellhooksinstitute.com/blog/2016/5/9/moving-beyond-pain.

Jenson, J. (1992). Fandom as pathology: The consequences of characterization. In Lisa A. Lewis (Ed.), *The adoring audience: Fan culture and popular media* (pp. 9-29). London: Routledge.

Kumari, A. (2016). Yoü and i: Identity and the performance of self in Lady Gaga and Beyoncé. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *49*(2), 403-416.

Manifold, M. (2009). What art educators can learn from the fan-based art making of adolescents and young adults. *Studies in Art Education, 50*(3), 257-271.

Mastro, D., Tamborini, R., & Hullett, C. (2005). Linking media to prototype activation and subsequent celebrity attraction: An application of self-categorization theory. *Communication Research*, *32*(3), 323.

McKinley, C., Mastro, D., & Warber, K. (2014). Social identity theory as a framework for understanding the effects of exposure to positive media images of self and other on intergroup outcomes. *International Journal of Communication*, *8*, 1049-1068.

Mickel, J., Mcguire, S., & Gross-Gray, S. (2013). Grey's anatomy and communication accommodation: Exploring aspects of nonverbal interactions portrayed in media. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, *7*(1), 138-149.

Muniz, A.M., Jr., & O'Guinn, T.C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *27*(March), 412-432.

North, A., Sheridan, L., Maltby, J., & Gillett, R. (2007). Attributional style, self-esteem, and celebrity worship. *Media Psychology*, *9*(2), 291-308.

Pantaleoni, A. (2015). *Developing an understanding of fan followings on Facebook: An examination of social identity theory*. n.p.: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Rakow, L., & Wackwitz, L. (2005). Feminist communication theory: Selections in context. *Women in Management Review*, *20*(5), 376-379.

Rein, I., Kotier, P., & Stoller, M. (1997). *High visibility: The making and marketing of professionals into celebrities*. Chicago: NTC Books.

Rhein, S. (2000). Being a fan is more than that: Fan-specific involvement with music. *The World of Music, 42*(1), 95-109.

Ridgeway, C.L. (1991). The social construction of status value: Gender and other nominal characteristics. *Social Forces*, *70*(2):367-386.

Rojek, C. (2001). *Celebrity*. London: Reaktion Books.

Rojek, C. (2012). *Fame attack: The inflation of celebrity and its consequences*. London: Bloomsbury.

Sieczkowski, C. (2014). Feminist activist says Beyonce is partly 'anti-feminist' and 'terrorist.' *Huffington Post*, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/09/beyonce-anti-feminist_n_5295891.html.

Soukup, C. (2006). Hitching a ride on a star: Celebrity, fandom, and identification on the world wide web. *Southern Communication Journal*, *71*(4), 319-337.

Sperb, J. (2010). Reassuring convergence: Online fandom, race, and Disney's notorious song of the south. *Cinema Journal, 49*(4), 25-45.

Stever, G. S. (1991). The celebrity appeal questionnaire. *Psychological Reports*, *68*(3), 859-866.

Summers, J., & Johnson Morgan, M. (2008). More than just the media: Considering the role of public relations in the creation of sporting celebrity and the management of fan expectations. *Public Relations Review*, *34*(2), 176-182.

Tajfel, H. (1978), The achievement of group differentiation. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 77-100). London: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Théberge, P. (2006). Everyday fandom: Fan clubs, blogging, and the quotidian rhythms of the internet. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *30*(4), 485-502.

Thompson, D. (2010, October 16). Defining feminism. *Australian Feminist Studies, 9*(20), 171-192.

Trier-Bieniek, A. M. (Ed.). (2016). *The Beyoncé effect: Essays on sexuality, race and feminism*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.

Turner, J. C., & Oaks, P. J. (1986). The significance of the social identity concept for social psychology with reference to individualism, interactionism, and social influence. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *25*, 237–252.

van Krieken, R. (2012). *Celebrity Society*. London: Routledge.

Ventzislavov, R. (2012). The time is now: Acceptance and conquest in pop music. *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *24*(1), 57-70.

Whitfield, S. (2010). How to create value in the phonographic industry for consumers between the ages of 20-25? A study on whether consumers who find value in artists show more behavioral intent to buy than those who do not, with regard to the phonographic industry." *Theseus.fi*, http://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/17301.

Willer, D., Lovaglia, M.J., & Markovsky, B. (1997). Power and influence: A theoretical bridge. *Social Forces*, *76*(2), 571- 603.

Williams, J. (2014). 'Same DNA, but Born this Way': Lady Gaga and the possibilities of postessentialist feminisms. *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *26*(1), 28-46.

Colloquy
Vol. 13, Fall 2017, pp. 105-158

SPECIAL FEATURE

Selected Writings by Communication Studies Majors at California State Prison, Los Angeles County, City of Lancaster

Edited by Kamran Afary and Frances Chee

Editors' Introduction

In Fall 2016, the Department of Communication Studies at California State University, Los Angeles began offering classes inside a maximum-security prison facility in order to offer incarcerated persons the opportunity to achieve a Bachelor's degree in Communication. In this special section of *Colloquy*, we present a selection of writings by incarcerated persons in two classes offered during the Spring semester of 2017.

Cal State L.A. is one of 67 postsecondary institutions to participate in the Second Chance Pell Program, and the only one that offers a Communication BA. This one-of-a-kind degree program is the result of several years of creative collaboration by many participants across the university who are dedicated to abolishing the dehumanizing environments created by mass incarceration and the prison–industrial complex. Faculty and administrators combined efforts to create a learning community inside prisons to both enlighten and empower, as a form of activism for engaged citizenship. They had to create a department infrastructure, train instructors, develop sustainable funding, design courses to meet the needs of prisoners, and develop collaboration between campus and prison students.

Their work was also made possible in part by recent prison reform policies initiated by the state of California that moved away from "tough on crime" policies that gutted earlier rehabilitative programs, freeing up some of the state's budget for more educational programming (Widdoes, 2016). As the Vera Institute of Justice has suggested: "education is key to improving many long-term outcomes for incarcerated people, their families, and their communities—including reducing recidivism and increasing employability and earnings after release (diZerega, 2017).

As two faculty members in the department, we (Afary and Chee) were fortunate to receive offers to teach communication courses during the Spring

2017 semester. Afary taught a course in Interpersonal Communication using a textbook by Solomon & Theiss (2013) and Chee taught a course in Argumentation using a textbook by Hollihan & Baaske (2016). This was the first year (and the second semester) that a cohort of twenty-two students took two communication courses each semester.

We faced challenges and received much support from our colleagues to ensure proper arrangements for access to classrooms in a maximum-security prison and to bring teaching resources to a place where Internet access is not readily available. But once inside the classrooms, we found a new reality behind bars: We met face to face with incarcerated men who have lived "inside" for 10, 20, 30 or more years. Most of our students were sent to prison for life because of a crime they committed at a very early age, most during their teens. Here we found a welcoming, engaged, and deeply enthusiastic group of students who were eager to inquire, to pose questions about communication theories and practices. Many of them had already taken college courses and were building on knowledge and skills they had already mastered. Several of our students were social justice activists, working on some form of restorative justice project. Many had made their amends to victims long ago and were focused on contributing and being of service to other prisoners, and to the "outside" world.

The following student writings include several genres. The writings from Interpersonal Communication include excerpts from individual students' formal papers, film reviews, writing prompts, journals, and poems. The excerpts from the Argumentation class include several debate packets prepared by student groups. They are a testament to these students' readiness to engage with what the discipline of communication studies has to offer and to contribute to a dialogue on social justice.

There are so many individuals that both of us wish to acknowledge and thank. Afary wishes to thank the following for their inspiration, mentorship, encouragement, and support in this endeavor: David Olsen, Chair; Taffany Lim, Senior Director of the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good; Bidhan Roy, English Department; Kristina Ruiz-Mesa; and Rob DeChaine. I also wish to thank Roy Underwood, J.D. Hughes, and Elizabeth Malone. Chee wishes to thank my colleagues who made this program what it is today, and for extending the opportunity for me to teach in this space. I would like to thank Luis R. for lending his time to be a sounding board. I would particularly like to thank our students for having engaged with the subject of argumentation with vivacity, and for challenging me to rethink some of the premises upon which I had previously built the course.

As we advocate for more college education opportunities for incarcerated people we also discover through these writings the unique ways in which those who are in prisons are ready to create more dialogic forms of social engagement. This special feature of *Colloquy* speaks to a more dialogic, two-way road of learning and growing!

Works Cited

diZerega, Margaret. "College in Prison: Postsecondary Education Opportunities for Incarcerated People." *Vera Institute of Justice, 2017,* www.vera.org/projects/college-in-prison.

Hollihan, Thomas A, and Kevin T. Baaske. *Arguments & Arguing: The Products and Process of Human Decision Making*. 3rd Ed. Waveland Press, 2016.

Solomon, Denise, and Jennifer Theiss. *Interpersonal Communication: Putting Theory into Practice*. Routledge, 2013.

Widdoes, Adriana. "What Prison Reform Looks Like Inside California State Prison, L.A. County." *KCET,* 1 April 2016, www.kcet.org/shows/departures/what-prison-reform-looks-like-inside-california-state-prison-la-county.

Poem

Clifton Gibson

From interpersonal communication, my mind began expanding
Family life and choices took on a whole new understanding
Back in the days, things appeared hunky dory
Chasing lizards and catching snakes is the beginning of my story
Poor country folk, was my subculture's foundation
Happy faces littered with internal tears of maladaptive marginalization
Behind one of our Joharis windows was pain and suffering
Hidden and under a closed system we were buffering.
What was disclosed and what was not
In a difficult situation I was caught
Coercive power was my predominant socialization
Arguments and fights linked emotions with communication
I became witty, sarcastic, violent with no empathy in place
Conflict became dominating and integrating with a negative face
Years of this behavior led me to jail
Morally and emotionally I was an empty well
Run-en and gun-en taking what I want
My victims piled up and me they began to haunt
I drug regrets behind me with secrecy rules
I was stuck in muck till I developed coping tools
Through inner and higher education
I began regulating my self-talking conversation
Emotional intelligence started to grow
My kindness and core-self began to show
I pushed away my old negative face self
Cleared drugs, trauma, and violence from my shelf
My ability to reason and compromise changed me from a jerk
Professor Afary taught me integrative conflict strategies that work
No longer is the solution violence or moping
I have been armed with problem and emotion-focused coping.
Seeking healthy solutions displayed by men
Now both parties may walk away with a win-win

Communicating Comfort and Support

Brad Arrowood

[Excerpt from a class presentation]
What can be said to comfort someone with cancer? How can you help someone? Your actions and words are important. I have learned today that support from friends and family help people fight illness. Solomon and Theiss (2013) argue that there are two types of coping processes: Problem-focused coping and Emotion-focused coping.

In prison, I think most of us are pretty good at the problem-focused task. We are good at volunteering data, deciphering data for others that do not understand it, and the rest comes from staff, such as medical data. Unlike the outside world, we do not have cancer support groups, online chat rooms, or the daily support of our loved ones. This makes it difficult to get the emotional support needed for a good fight.

The text shows that quite often people out there do not get to support they want or need. Friends stop calling, almost as if they think cancer is contagious. Now you think about here in prison. So many of us are closed off emotionally for self-preservation, thus creating a larger distance between an ill person and us. We see this in this very class. When was the last time you asked Marvin, "How are you feeling today? Can I help you with anything? Do you want to talk about it?" I am just as guilty of this. We see Marvin in a good mood or putting on a brave face, okay, we can go talk to him about legal stuff or whatever, not cancer though. Let's keep that hush. Let's keep that under the table. Then if he's having a bad day, let's just avoid him today. Yet this might be when he needs it the most. Cancer is not just a day thing; it's not just during the treatment times; it's the in-between times, too.

The text claims that we need to find ways to cope with our own reactions to someone's illness that does not further the cancer person's burden. We are a unique yard; where we are learning to open up our own feelings. Let's take advantage of it even if it's just a smile and a minute of your time.

This was a very informative class. The value of interpersonal communications is wide reaching and has affected me and my daily life as well as my other class with Professor Chee. Interpersonal Communication is ideal for prisoners in a confined setting, especially if they are trying to change and rehabilitate themselves. This prison has made great strides in changing our normal labels of

ourselves, that it takes us to change our view of others first not just ourselves. I have come to enjoy this class.

Interpersonal Communication as Self-discovery

Darren Robinson

[Excerpt from a paper]
Prisons have a menacing way of stripping you down to just a couple of identities. The guards require you to act a certain way as well as the inmates. These two authorities demand to be respected or you will be continuously transferred. However, once you're semi-comfortable and at least safe for now, men's dreams are subtly revealed as they start disclosing where they are from (identity) and where they would like to go "goals."

With the rate of substance or alcohol abuse and the high concentration of childhood traumas, people in here find trust to be the biggest hurdle. There is no neutral environment in prison except for school, and here is the theme I find most fascinating: Self– discovery on the path of just knowing who you are in the big picture of the world. I've always said (after learning about prisoners) that ex-prisoners should be our TSA agents in the airports. We have honed our visual acuity of survival to identify threats on the yard. We see the nervous energy under false sense of empowerment, hiding fear of the violent acts. We listen with not just our ears but pick up clues of human tensions. Navigating on a daily basis in the shark pool of humanity hones this skill.

Interpersonal conflict needs to be studied here in these prisons within the dynamics of power. It's a fundamental NEED of every person to feel safe and all communication strategies should lead to that safety. Understanding our cues and clues to these safeguards could prove to be a foundation for future evolving communication studies.

The Ripple Effect of Communication Reshaping Prison Culture

Allen Burnett

[Excerpt from a class presentation]
There are 33 prisons in the State of California. Each prison has its own culture, each prison is divided by facilities, and each of these facilities has a culture within themselves. The prisoners define these cultures; prisoners create the social rules and speech codes.

Traditionally, violence has always been the response to conflict in prison, and often rewarded by other prisoners ultimately encouraging more violence. A simple misinterpretation of a look or comment would result in an assault or worse. Prisoners combat a multitude of social issues, including stress, depression and anxiety where there are no available mediums or channels to deal with in a productive manner. Conflicts are inevitable as social rules are established to either prevent a person from becoming a victim or promote victimization as a self-defense mechanism to ward off any future harm.

Professor Afary introduced me to Interpersonal Communication study this semester. It didn't take long for me to understand just how important this study is, especially in a prison setting. Focusing on Conflict Management—this particular component of Interpersonal Communication would benefit the prison culture and aide tremendously in the rehabilitative process.

Conflict Strategy is defined as the overall plan for how people will communicate about their conflict. As I mentioned above, the end of conflict in prison is violence. Developing a comprehensive strategy would provide prisoners with an alternative to violence. For example, Interpersonal Communication offers a "win-win" solution to conflict called Integrative Conflict Strategy, where each party asks important questions to determine what is mutually beneficial, an ideal strategy for cellmates. It has been my personal experience that men living together in a room the size of a Honda Civic will develop negative emotions about one another, resentment, frustration, even jealousy. Prisoners need to have alone time (cell time). The problem is that prisoners try to avoid conflict and avoid uncomfortable conversations that may lead to physical conflict. However, avoiding exacerbates negative feelings and leads to hostile episodes.

Interpersonal Communication—Conflict Management offers an opportunity to improve your personal relationships by providing guidelines that help prisoners/people to restructure their activities, identify values in the person in

conflict, or finding points of agreement among other skills. The goal in any conflict is to find a "win-win" outcome, especially in an environment like prison. This study suggests as a solution to conflict that the focus should be on a specific behavior rather than the individual. This will prevent the person in conflict from feeling as if they are being attacked, thereby putting them on the defense.

I would like to see Interpersonal Communication offered to the population here on the Progressive Programming Facility (PPF). The majority of the men here are potentially returning home to their families and community. This study would not only improve their/our social rules here at the prison, but we will carry these tools with us when we are released, taking our newly acquired social rules into society.

As I stated above, the culture of the prison is determined by prisoners. Interpersonal Communication Studies would help provide the population with new social rules that would help quell violence, encourage self-help, higher education, reshaping the prison culture and prisoners' mindset, which will affect change in our communities as a whole.

Communication Theory, Within and Without the Walls

Dortell Williams

[Excerpt from a paper]
There were many new and intriguing themes offered in Interpersonal Communication that gave me more insight to the overall communication process. I will focus on listening and support strategies, with an emphasis on perspective-taking.

Personally, I make earnest attempts to listen to the communicator. Yet I find myself hearing, more than practicing active listening. On occasion this bad practice has resulted in misunderstandings on my part. On other occasions, I have listened to the communicator to an extent, but then found myself presupposing what they were going to say. Of course, this extracurricular mental activity distracted me from the communicator's message. Most of the time I was wrong in my supposition about what was to be said. These personal bad habits diluted the message and negatively affected the communication process.

Active listening helps me focus, like blinders on a horse. This concentrated focus helps me note subtle cues expressed by the communicator, and it helps me to interpret and attach meaning to their overall message more accurately.

Practicing these techniques have assisted me in being a more effective communicator and listener. For instance, nonverbal cues have helped me time an interjection, or ask for clarity without a mid-sentence interruption. Repeating, or as the text says, "paraphrasing" what the speaker just said helps me understand better and assures the communicator that their message has the necessary clarity. Paraphrasing also helps me remember what was said, as well as evaluating the message.

All of these individual techniques, like single threads, weave themselves into support strategies that also aid in the communication process. For example, the subtle, nonverbal cues mentioned earlier, that the speaker emits, can also signal the need for an empathetic response from the listener. A sullen face, for example, may signal the need for a pat on the back, the grasp of their hand, or to simply lean in closer. Eye contact and simply nodding my head can signal to the listener that I care without verbalizing it. Certainly, I knew some of these concepts, but in the aggregate, as the "tools" weave themselves together, I am made more conscious, and understand their effects more intimately.

Touching is another effective way of validating the communicator's feelings. This component of the process is officially referred to as "person-centeredness" in the text. Person-centeredness requires empathy, and there's no doubt that our apathetic world could use just a little more empathy. For me, the most insight offered was on perspectives. This chapter reminded me of, and put into context, the wonderful world of diversity we are now enjoying. In the past I have interpreted someone else's message from my own myopic worldview, not taking into account nuances in perspective such as culture, age or gender; all of which are important to consider. By broadening my perspective to include the worldviews and experiences of others, my understanding widens and the entire world becomes more relevant and relational to me. I found this profound because, in its simplest terms, by understanding the world as a whole, it is a lot smaller and less complex. Through this wider lens of culture, age and gender, misunderstandings are minimized; conflict is avoided and problem-solving increases. […] In the overcrowded world of confinement, where egoism and pride run men, interpersonal skills are the perfect panacea to conflict de-escalation, violence diffusion, and calming; making the world—inside and out—a more peaceful and civil place to live.

Interpersonal communication reminds me of how valuable collectivism and interdependence are as opposed to our culture of individualism. It was by these skills that individuals reached the collective success of Words Uncaged [WordsUncaged is a website hosted by Cal State L.A. that features writings of

prisoners housed at the Progressive Programming Facility in Los Angeles County], that translated into the collaborative success of our transformative journal, *Human*. [*Human* is the title of the transformative journal/anthology that prisoners produced in an effort to describe and demonstrate personal redemptive value.] In fact, in my opinion, Communication Theory, as a major, makes the world a better place, both within and without the walls.

Internalizing Communication Ethics

Jeff Stein

[Excerpt from a paper]
It is with gratitude and enthusiasm that I reflect on this course, what I learned, how I applied it, and the immediate benefits of doing so. Whether one's major is in theoretical physics or mass marketing, I recommend at least a course or two in communication studies. Having Interpersonal Communication skills has made me a better employee, scholar, friend, and family member. I am confident that I have not only the good intentions, but the valuable and much needed skills required to be someone's intellectual and emotional equal, a good lover, and a suitable mate. I owe a significant part of that to my study and application of the Interpersonal Communication skills. Today I understand my community and myself in a deeper way that allows me to appreciate the contexts we interact in. Interpersonal Communication skills helped me to develop consequential aspects of my character that were largely underdeveloped… I have become a much better communication partner and can also recognize a good communication partner more easily. These are skills that I lacked previously.

Since communication is the foundation of any collaborative effort, it puzzles me that the study and development of quality communication skills is not as strongly encouraged as subjects such as math, science, or other "core" courses. For example, I was taught to solve math problems that take up the whole blackboard—yet somehow, I went through life for decades with woefully inadequate interpersonal communication skills. I can only conclude that many of my personal and interpersonal difficulties such as substance abuse, deviant behavior, and poor relationship quality are directly linked to my lack of situational awareness and emotional intelligence—Interpersonal Communication concepts I learned and applied this semester. Although I was becoming a fully functioning, psychologically healthy person, I still lacked a few pieces to the puzzle. Therefore,

the new skills I developed over the course of the semester filled some of those gaps in my personal make-up.

Since I meant well but did not have the most ideal role models growing up, I would often start off great when it came to jobs, relationships with others, school, sports, or just about anything you can name. Yet because I "improvised" my way through life, I often compromised what few scruples I had. By internalizing Interpersonal Communication Ethics, I am more careful now to communicate (and think) ethically rather than say, "The end justifies the means." Not only does this have me feeling much better inside, but I can see how careful attention to my motives and techniques as a communicator now promote the health and wellbeing of others. I am conscious to promote and attend to values, which need to be protected rather than cast aside! Additionally, I consider the impact of my communication with others and preserve relations with them instead of see them as a means to an end. Finally, I help others and myself to make informed decisions instead of stubbornly clinging to old, worn-out positions out of pride and selfishness.

In Solomon and Theiss (2013), I found out that "emotional intelligence is revealed as a consequential aspect of people's personality" (196). Now that I have wrapped my head around that, I have well-founded confidence in my abilities as a communication partner.

With that, I truly enjoyed the text's description of one technique people employ to reduce relational uncertainty-Secret Tests (246-7)! So, in the past, before my enlightenment, I may not have appreciated any secret tests. Although I may have meant well, I was without the reference point of an enlightened Interpersonal Communication scholar, so I was too often a less-than-ideal relational partner because I misconstrued secret tests and other means of reducing relational uncertainty on the part of my significant other. However, knowing how vulnerable someone feels when they care about another, I can understand and even appreciate secret tests. In fact, I think they are totally cute—provided the person utilizing secret tests is not doing so in a maniacal manner. More generally, I now understand that the secret tests are simply a caring person's way of protecting their precious heart from unnecessary hurt. This world will chew us up and spit us out if we are not at least a little bit careful. Keeping that in mind, I am improved as an individual and as a communication partner.

Another key concept that I quickly internalized is the "win-win" Conflict Strategy. Also called the Integrative Conflict Strategy, this approach to resolving conflict involves cooperating with a conflict partner to reach a mutually satisfying solution. When I was younger, I had no definitive conflict orientation. I was all

over the place. Sometimes I would achieve a "win-win" with a conflict partner, but it was rarely a decided goal on my part. Often, I would damage the relationship at least temporarily over a relatively trivial disagreement—and more than half the time I was the problem, not the other party. And still other times, I would use the Avoidant Conflict Strategy, which left me feeling turmoil because I felt mistreated and had let something unpleasant happen to me.

This made me feel like I lacked voice and agency. Over time this led to resentment that manifested itself in many areas of my life that were unhealthy. In addition, I harmed others around me in various ways that they did not deserve; I lied when they deserved the truth; I was an addict when they needed me at my best; and I was selfish when they needed me to be considerate of their feelings. By making a conscious, informed decision to always find a win-win outcome, I will be a blessing to others who really need me to be at my best. What happens if there is no win-win outcome possible? Well, then I reframe the situation; at the very least, for me, a win-win is a result where I do not harm anyone in any way and do not use substances or break laws. While my main objective at that moment may not be realized, I can see someone else happy while I continue to have a life worth living. So, no matter what, a win-win is the result!

Recognizing the Consequences of Reification

Jesse Crespin

[Excerpt from a paper]
Studying Interpersonal Communications has influenced my life journey as an incarcerated individual, because I have a responsibility to demonstrate my rehabilitation, regardless if I will ever get out of prison or not. There are a few ways that interpersonal communication demonstrates this, such as managing conflict. It is crucial for an individual in prison to have the ability to recognize conflict. Knowing how to manage it is extremely valuable—especially when on the path toward rehabilitation.

The study of interpersonal communication has revealed some characteristics of managing conflict that allows an individual, including me, to reevaluate their position during conflicts.

This, therefore, provides them with a moment to figure out what is the expected outcome of this conflict, ultimately allowing a person to set some conflict goals, and the five that are examples in our interpersonal communication

textbook not only coincides with my walk as a Christian man, but also displays the growth of a person who has embraced rehabilitation.

Within the goal of managing conflict, it is important to overcome the obstacles of language, because there are consequences to language. This is a reality in prison, because people hold themselves to certain labels attributed to them, which, for some, purposely causes others to believe they are the accurate representations of the individual's reality. Recognizing the consequences of reification in this environment causes an individual to look beyond labels, so they recognize, for themselves, that there is value in all people.

Overcoming obstacles demonstrates an individual's embracement of rehabilitation, because it reflects how they utilize the tools of interpersonal communication's conflict management to de-escalate and promote healthy conflicts. One of these useful tools happens to be listening, where if an individual engages in active listening, which is rare in prison, they are not only able to look beyond a person's labels, but, in a sense, synergistically strengthen their own position as one who is rehabilitated.

Developing Emotional Awareness and Intelligence

Clifton Gibson

[Excerpt from a paper]
Interpersonal communication skills were (and are) vital to my survival. Without having the ability to recognize signs of anger, animosity, pain, and love, I would not have been able to survive in the dysfunctional household I grew up in or in the concrete sarcophagus of prison in which I now reside. The study of interpersonal communication has helped provide me with the insight to understand how I survived in an unhealthy environment and how I can thrive in a healthy one.

Growing up, the communication norms of my family dynamics were dysfunctional and on the dark side. I learned to instantly recognize the channels of nonverbal behavior and adapt my responses. For example, if my older brother Steve had a rigid stance, clenched fist, and teeth, he was upset. The snarl, growl, and narrowing of his eyes conveyed to me to tread lightly and keep a safe distance or I may suffer a beat-down delivered through verbal and physical force. These channels of kinesics, facial expressions, eye behaviors, paralinguistics, and proxemics communicated the message that in order to survive I needed to convey

to him that I was not a threat and to expand the distance between us. “Out of sight, out of mind” was the protective ploy I employed.

My family often solved our problems through force and violence. There were very few moments of immediacy. Hugging, kissing, or support was suppressed by anger and animosity. Eventually my unhealthy communication techniques led to choices that landed me in prison.

Within prison, I wore a mask of toughness and intensified my feelings of anger. I figured if I simulated being a “tough guy” and intensified my fear, then I would survive this arena, too. It worked physically, in juvenile hall and county jail, but I was hurting on the inside. Within my inner core, I did not want to be mean and tough.

I really started to listen to my emotions, becoming aware that my social emotions were being stymied and exacerbated in a fraudulent manner. I resolved my hostile feelings of anger, hurt, envy, and resentment through self-help and reflection. My melancholic emotions of depression, sadness, and loneliness were identified and addressed at the root. I was able to become a better person. The affectionate feelings of warmth, joy, passion, and love were found again and cultivated with the help of the love of my life, Julie.

It is through interpersonal communication that I was able to develop emotional awareness and intelligence. I now understand the physiology of my feelings. The elevated heart rate, sweaty palms, and flushed face are triggers, warning me that I am experiencing strong emotions. I also have new reliable and healthy coping tools to deal with conflict.

Open, honest, and assertive interpersonal communication has given me the ability to compromise and find healthy win/win/ solutions to disagreements. My ability to actively listen, empathize with my communicating partner, and read between the lines provides healthy solutions to complicated discussion. Instead of just surviving in this world through understanding interpersonal communication, I am able to thrive and make this planet a better and safer place to live.

No Longer Just a Conversation Like Every Other

Tin Nguyen

[Excerpt from a paper]
Perhaps it is difficult to believe that a sixteen-week course can have such an influence on an individual's life style that it changes the way he or she lives. In the beginning of this course, I felt arrogance for what a course in Interpersonal Communication could teach me that I have already known. I have survived nearly two decades of incarceration, and that takes a well-versed individual in Interpersonal Communication. In hindsight, I recognize my ignorance. Interpersonal Communication has taught me a wealth of information, techniques and tools that I have at my disposal when the occasion arises. However, the three most important aspects of Interpersonal Communication are perception, listening, and interpersonal conflict.

I have found that in perception and interpersonal communication, understanding attribution biases has influenced my thinking, decisions, and actions when I engage in a conversation with a friend or family member. For instance, a friend and teammate of mine has not cleaned the dog crate for quite a while. In the past, I would assign this behavior as internal, for his laziness, which is a fundamental attribution error. However, I now would consider the external factors that cause his actions, and that are his long work hours and academic obligations. Another element of attribution biases that has influenced my thinking is the actor-observer effect, which is defined as "explaining one's own behavior in terms of external, rather than internal, causes" (Solomon and Theiss 107). When I fail an exam, I no long place the blame on the instructor using ambiguous and vague questions, but instead evaluate if I had put enough time in on my study. These two elements have increased my understanding of perception and interpersonal communication.

The chapter on listening has altered my style of communication. From this chapter, I realize that through my life, I hear more than I listen. By recognizing the barriers to effective listening, my interpersonal communication has improved immensely. As I begin a conversation with a friend, I would observe my internal and external environments for noise, any obstacles that impede our conversation would be addressed. During the conversation, I would attempt to comprehend the feature of the message and evaluate my thought and feeling to consider factors that might influence our conversation. I would make effort to be engaged in our conversation and be aware of all of the forms of non-listening, such as

pseudo-listening, monopolizing, selective listening, defensive listening, ambushing, and literal listening. Awareness of barriers to effective listening has made me an effective interpersonal communicator and appreciate and value the conversation.

However, interpersonal conflict has the most impact on my life, for now I know how to dispel my conflict, which is always a plus. By understanding the conflict strategies, I would recognize the strategy I am using. If my strategy were distributive conflict (win-lose), which is always the case, I would make every attempt to guide my conflict strategy to a more integrative conflict strategy where everybody can win, a "win-win." In most situations, I would not use an avoidant conflict strategy, unless the circumstance is unique. For instance, a partner that is extremely hot tempered and violent, I would use the "lose-lose" approach. Using these interpersonal conflict strategies, I can resolve my conflicts; it is especially significant in a prison environment.

In conclusion, I have found this course to be very resourceful. Beside the benefits that I have stated above, interpersonal communication has not only mended many of my relationship with family members and friends, but also, it has improved my relationship with those current relationships that I love and value. Interpersonal communication is no longer just a conversation like every other, but I take a more personal and positive attitude toward my interactions with the people I value. To be concise, interpersonal communication has taught me to be a better communicator; thus, I am a better man.

The Importance of Communicating with Competence

James Cain

[Excerpt from a paper]
Throughout this Interpersonal Communication learning process, I have reflected on my life, what I have learned, and how different my life could have turned out had I learned how to communicate properly, understand and manage my own feelings, recognize the moods and emotions of others, and apply these to form healthy and lasting relationships.

Life is a learning process, yet I didn't learn the skills associated with Interpersonal Communication early in life, and instead created a lot of wreckage along my life's journey. I shudder at my part in unfulfilling romantic relationships, and I wonder just how positively I could have enriched my partners' lives if I had

learned the skills of a competent communicator, been an emotional rock, and nurtured relationships through thick and thin. I imagine that my quality of life as well as those I have come into contact with would have been so much better, and so much more fulfilling had I not made so many immature and unethical decisions. I wish I had not minimized the feelings of others, as I am sure I would probably have lived a higher quality of life and experienced more fulfilling friendships and relationships. My life would have been so much more meaningful and successful had this class been required in high school.

With hard work and dedication, I have learned the importance of communicating with competence, how to adjust the way I relate to my circumstances when experiencing emotional highs and lows, and how to communicate and cope with my emotions rather than resorting to destructive behaviors as I had in my past. I have learned the importance of listening and the important differences between listening and hearing. I have learned how to develop healthy relationships, as well as how to work through the steps of dissolution if the relationship loses takes its course and its gratifying feeling.

It is these learning experiences and more that have helped me develop into a thoughtful, understanding, ethical, empathetic interpersonal communicator, able to cope with my feeling as well as understand and help others cope in a healthy, mutually gratifying way. The most important thing to keep in mind about interpersonal communication is that as your skills improve, so does your quality of life and your relationships. Although the academic material that I have learned about communication competence, communicating my emotions, developing and ending relationships is all in theory, I understand the mistakes I have made in my past by recognizing the behaviors, and now I am able to label them with the terms I have learned in Interpersonal communications. Therefore, as I encounter previously misunderstood feelings and behaviors with an understanding of how or why I had made bad choices, I am now able to competently cope with my feelings and with all friendships and relationships.

What the Future Holds for Me

Thomas Wheelock

[Excerpt from a paper]
When I came to prison, I found myself wanting to change who I was and wanting to repair all of the damage from my past. It all seemed to stem from my school

experiences. So, I decided to teach myself and develop my education in meaningful ways. I soon became complacent with my education. It was not until the daily prodding of my best friend, Charlie Praphatananda, that I finally gave in and enrolled in Community College. I was so terrified because I still felt that I was not smart enough for higher learning. My parents could not believe that I enrolled in College. I think that they just assumed that I would give up soon after I enrolled in school. I was really fortunate to have a really great support group around me that kept me motivated and focused. As the semesters passed by, my self-confidence increased and I felt really proud about my grades. My parents were so happy and proud of my accomplishments. I told them that I wanted one of my majors to be a Math and Science Degree because those where my two worst subjects. My Dad would always talk to me about the benefits of school and he would say that it doesn't matter where you are at the moment; the only thing that matters is what you do in that moment. I began to get A's and B's in college, and I realized that maybe I really am smart enough for school. My parents were so happy that I was going to college. When the Cal State L.A. Communication Studies Bachelor's program became available to the prisoners on this yard, I had doubts that I could handle being a part of the program and take junior college classes. Once again, Charlie Praphatananda was there to prod me to go with him into the Bachelor's program. So, while I am in the Bachelor's program, I am also finishing up my degrees at Junior College. I just wish that my Dad could have seen me graduate from college. He passed away last December from cancer. I was so devastated when he passed away, I wanted him to see me graduate and I wanted to show him the four degrees that I have earned at junior college. I wanted to prove to him that I was somebody; I wanted him to be proud of me. His passing is something that I am still trying to work through. I know that he was proud of me, I hope, at least he knew that I was trying to become a better person and student. This summer I will be graduating with four degrees, and yes, one of those degrees is a Math and Science Degree. Now I cannot wait for what the future holds for me. I want to continue my college education and I really hope that I will be able to get a Master's Degree after the Bachelor's program is ended. In going to college, I discovered that I could succeed in whatever I try to do. I also learned that it is no big deal to ask for help when I really need it. College has changed my life immensely and for the better.

Rules of Language: Making Conversations

Daniel Whitlow

Q: *Have you ever communicated with someone who didn't seem to share your goal of advancing that conversation? How was their lack of cooperation evident and how did it make you feel?* (Solomon and Theiss 139)

I doubt I can count high enough to keep track of all the times a conversational companion sighed or rolled their eyes as I continued rambling on and on about whatever it was I thought interesting. To say I am verbose is an understatement. I acknowledge my loquacious manner; I embrace it, actually. I believe that if you wish to say something, or speak your mind, you should (ethical and moral exceptions). Whether it takes you two minutes or two hours is a completely different problem. Suffice it to say, I have experienced passive toleration by a listener many times.

Body language is an important sign of someone who has essentially "checked out" of a conversation. When they roll their eyes (as I mentioned) or sigh, or fidget, like picking at their nails or fiddling with a fraying edge on their shirt. Looking away as if searching for an exit—desperately pleading with their eyes, intensely staring, casting nets with their gazes, telepathically summoning an interruption of *any kind—anything* that would free them from the constricting confines of my let loose, half-coherent, interminable ranting. I notice the gestures; I see the signals of their friendship-obligated discomfort. If I am in a good mood, I release them like a bored angler returning an unnecessary catch, done out of sport—if in an ill humor, a silent, fiendish cackle erupts, reverberating in the cavernous depths of my mind, and I continue my bombast fully aware of the listener's distress.

I am only joking, of course, about all that—just being creative for the assignment—but the body language is something I encounter quite often. I suppose it depends on who I am talking to when considering the effect it has on me. If I were talking to an acquaintance about something mundane, their disinterest probably would not affect me; I would ignore it. If I were addressing someone I care about and were speaking about something I care about, then the effect would be much more profound, obviously. Their indifference has the ability to puncture our fragile spirits, with jagged barbs, tainted tips dipped in poisonous avoidance and toxic triviality.

The job of a listener is not easy. If someone enjoys or is interested in a subject, then listening is no problem—it is not a chore or an inconvenience. On the other side, when confronted with an undesired social situation, politeness and social onus, either positive or negative, compels us to listen to each other but the habitual superficiality of how we listen and what we listen for (during those awkward conversations) has led to the practice of quasi- attending, or whatever you would call it. People catch buzzwords, listen for notable terms or shifts in vocal pitch denoting emotional or contextual importance. We do it all the time, regardless of how hard we try to listen genuinely, for a slew of reasons, perhaps most prescient being the influence technology and the art of convenience has on our family life and upbringing. It is much easier to listen when you want to, as opposed to when you need to, and people fail to listen properly because they simply do not want to.

As I said, I have experienced innumerable situations where the other person in a conversation has detached—I understand why and try to not let it get to me. Unfortunately, that is a hit and miss, coin toss, random sort of thing; either way, I am going to keep talking.

Culture, Emotions, and Communication

Terry Don Evans

Q: *Think about a family story told within your family and shared with others. What does that story reveal about your family's speech community?* (Solomon and Theiss 53)

My family's history is orally iterated concerning Tribe Wolof (Senegal, West Africa) and Tribe Falasha (Ethiopia, Africa). Our speech code consists of religious rites, symbols, rules, and other sacred stories about heroes and villains. These myths communicate culturally in core themes and significant events ranging from important moments in my familial history to the weddings performed through scripted performance values.

Q: *Think of the last situation that made you feel anxious. How was your increased vigilance an advantage or disadvantage as you coped with that situation?* (Solomon and Theiss 188)

My vigilance proved to be advantageous because instead of pleading guilty to a crime I did not commit, in order to receive a lesser sentence, I pleaded not guilty. Although I was found guilty in a trial by jury, I can at least find solace knowing that my faith is unwavering in existence of a higher power. I will one day walk out of prison a free, exonerated man.

"Positive" Stereotypes

Marvin Johnson

Q: *Consider a positive stereotype you might hold, for example, that Asian Americans are intelligent or that first-born children are ambitious. Can you think of any downsides of being the target of such "positive" stereotypes?* (Solomon and Theiss 118)

I will go beyond this—consider the "positive" stereotypes that a culture possesses. In American culture, the stereotype is that anyone can be anything they want to be. The stereotype for Roman Catholic priests is that they are all celibate and trustworthy. Both of these positive stereotypes are false/have been proven false. In a similar way, cultural stereotypes affected my family and me. The pressure to be everything I could be, to succeed as a college student (the first college student in my extended family), to prove that I was a smart as I "tested," to prove that I was gifted simply because I was in gifted classes—but in truth, I did poorly in these classes, I shouldn't have pushed myself to live up to these wholly arbitrary stereotypes.

Just because someone has the benefits of being a wholesome, all-American does not mean that he or she will be able to be anything that individual wants to be. Just because you are the first-born son of a devout Roman Catholic family doesn't mean that you have to be a priest or you fail your faith (better to fail your faith rather than molest a child because of the frustration of the vow of celibacy). And just because I was given some IQ test which said I was "almost" a genius doesn't mean that I should have been pushed into upper-division classes, had the demands of college placed upon me at the age of 15, forcing my whole family to live beyond their means as I "needed" to participate in all the extra-curricular activities, like Academic Decathlon, the Debate Team (all the groups that require expensive trips if your group does win, and carry the pressure to win, to show that you are smart, especially since you are only getting B's or C's or good God

D's! in a "gifted" class) and to perform beyond my abilities.

I have slowly developed my intelligence over the years, but I have been incarcerated for 27 years and the one thing that a person does in a cell is read and absorb information. This was a slow process for me. I am proud I remember so much of the material I have been exposed to, but this occurred based on a firm foundation that I developed over ten years, not after being thrown into "gifted" classes in 8th grade, more than halfway through my first twelve years of schooling. Being thought of as smart was a terrible detriment for me in reality.

[Excerpt from a paper]
My paternal grandfather was a Grand Wizard in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). He was an old Texan, a racist, and participated in at least one lynching that he personally bragged about to me. Seeing his robes hanging in the closet, with that classic KKK hood, but in red, was a shock. I was a 5-year old and was revolted by this information.

When I came to prison, though, I discovered I was a racist. A huge majority of the individuals incarcerated in prison are people of color. Because of the interactions with various races, because of racial tensions, I found inside me a well of racial bias and hatred that I wasn't aware existed. It dismayed me, but even with my understanding of the underpinnings of Psychology, I haven't been able to break this pattern of thought. Yet, in looking at the general model of stereotypes and intergenerational communication, I have been able to pinpoint conversations that created these underlying thoughts and judge the communications clinically so that I have reduced the effect of my grandfather's stereotypes on me. This required reducing thoughts regarding my grandfather, but becoming a better person makes me realize the effectiveness of communication theory.

Communicating through Nonverbals and Emotions

Duncan Martinez

Q: *Reflect on your life and identify one experience that was especially important to vou. How did that experience make you feel? How important were your feelings as a part of that experience?* (Solomon and Theiss 183)

I am thirteen years older than mv sister, which means I was old enough to understand that her coming meant more work for me and less attention/stuff. I would have to babysit and there would be fewer perks. I got that, and I was therefore not very excited for her birth. I wasn't against her, but I wasn't excited, either.

When she was born I was taken to the hospital, but unable to go in because she was born premature, and that section of the hospital had age requirements. I didn't mind, but my uncle did, and he dragged me there to see her through a window. What's the hurry, right? But, when our eyes locked for the first time, something in me changed forever. I went from antipathy to extreme love. The emotional shift was the greatest I have ever felt. Understand that I went from a rational place of understanding: I would have to be the babysitter, do more chores, and get (essentially) nothing out of it. I went from that to a bond that was so deep I would have done anything for her immediately. Whenever I would pick her up, she would smile, even if she was crying. To this day, and she is almost 35, we have never had an argument. Seriously, not one!

My love for her is deeper than the word, a thing that is more than the word emotions can express. We share something intangible and it is amazing.

I wish everyone could understand something so intense.

Q: *Have you ever had a feeling you couldn't fully express through words? How did the emotion reveal itself through your body? How does your voice change when you're feeling happy, angry, or sad?* (Solomon and Theiss 163)

Recently, I was speaking to my sister on the phone and I started to feel wrong. Not sick or anything, but off, as if I had done something wrong—something akin, I thought, to guilt. The feeling of "off" stayed with me for a few hours until I realized what it was: in a sense, it was guilt, but it was deeper than that, as my sister had started to ask me a question and I cut her off "so I wouldn't forget to ask something."

We never got back to her thing. There are so many layers to this that I feel I must walk through them slowly. From in here we have a different relationship with everyone, because everything depends on them making a huge effort, and/or spending money (calls only come collect). She is my kid sister, one of the most amazing people on the planet, and the single most important person to me. I have one odd quirk: when I have something in my head, like a question, I can get stupid until I get it out (almost like an OCD).

So, I was in part ashamed that I had been selfish, frustrated that I had failed to go back to her question, and guilty for having cut her off when she so clearly needed to ask whatever it was.

I felt that way until I was able to talk to her about it. She, of course, hadn't even noticed.

As for vocal changes, my voice gets higher, faster, and trilly when I'm happy, and quieter when I'm scared. It gets deeper and louder when I'm angry, and timid or tremulous when I'm sad.

On Communicating Changing Identities

James K. Heard

Q: *In what ways did your identity change—or how has it been changing—between the ages of 18 and 25?* (Solomon and Theiss 89)

As a bi-racial child, I initially wrestled with my identity. I was averse to self-disclosure to others. By the age of eighteen, my self-concept had greatly changed from high self-esteem to very low. I was a young person whose goal was to work in pharmaceutical research in an effort to find a cure for breast cancer or HIV/AIDS. My self-worth changed in part because of the deterioration of my family unit, as I knew it, and without the proper coping skills, I began to question my identity, socially comparing myself to others because my norms had transformed.

As I learned more about family history and myself, my standpoint began to change. I sought to enhance my self-esteem by recognizing my strengths and weaknesses. One strength I came to learn was my ability to deliver a speech effectively. This newly found strength enabled me to discard negative labels, which were attached to my self-concept. The personal layers of identity varied depending on the environment. At home, I was a studious young person focused on my goals and dreams. In addition, depending on whom I interacted with, be it my fellow college classmates (prior to prison), or members of our track and field team. The characteristics formed during this time have to do with the relational layer of identity.

Intimacy and Communication

Jimmie Gilmer

Q: *Have you ever been "head over heels" in love? If so, what impact did your feelings have on your communication with your beloved partner?* (Solomon and Theiss 283)

This is a textbook question for me because I have been married for over 25 years. There have been times when I could not only finish my wife's sentences, but I could tell her what she was thinking. I remember this one time when I asked her to do something for me, and right away, I knew that she did not do it. I do not know how I knew, but I did and I told her so. She looked up at me and she said, you know me too well. She gave me the song and dance that she wanted to do this and that before she took care of what I asked her to do for me.

Being in a relationship as long as I have, there are bound to be times when your prediction of what your partner will say or do can go awry. There was a time when I made the mistake in thinking that my wife knew about a friend of mine's wife and the relationship that she and I shared. We were very acquainted with this couple, but my wife did not know that I called my friend's wife "my girlfriend." I had been calling her that for years and never realized that my wife didn't know it. I could see the light in her eyes dim. She looked at me; at first, I missed it. But then I saw it, and I knew that look, but I waited just to make sure that I saw what I thought I saw in her eyes. My wife was upset with me immediately. But she held her cool, which is one of the things I love about my wife. Her eyes said it all. Later that day, I knew that this talk was coming. She said, "So when did Kim become your girlfriend?" I knew that she was going to say it. I knew it.

But this was one of those times that I could not finish her sentence for her; she had to say it and you had to let her say it. After that run-in of miscommunication, I had to change the way I address my female friends. My wife and I still have fun finishing each other's sentences and knowing our thoughts. Maybe one day it may become frustrating. But for now, it's ok, because I love the ice queen.

We Need Less Technology and More Human Contact

Richard Fontes

Q: *What proportion of your interpersonal interactions calls for the use of technology? How much of your personal work relationship would be different if you didn't have technology to help you stay connected?* (Solomon and Theiss 15)

I chose this question because a person in prison is uniquely isolated from all forms of modern communication devices (cell phones, computers. the internet. etc.)—sans the phones on the wall that allow us to make collect calls.

People in the real world have forgotten how to write a personal letter. Inmates rely almost exclusively on letter writing ("snail mail") to communicate with friends and family. However, those in the "real world" rely almost solely on technologies (e-mail, text, etc.) to communicate. Obviously, there is a tremendous chasm between inmates and their ability to communicate with loved ones in society.

Technology has created the unintended effect of impersonal, robotic societies incapable of meaningful relationships. Personally, I have lost contact with many friends over the twenty-plus years of my incarceration simply because I lack access to social media. The convenience of all forms of social media made sending a letter an antiquated process, heavy on the physical burden beyond merely pressing "send" *(*stated with great sarcasm). Prior to the introduction of the Internet, I went from receiving 15 to 20 missives a week to four or five a month. While I'm not the biggest fan of C.G. Jung, his prophetic words foretold of the effects of the Internet: "Reforms by advances, that is by new methods or gadgets, are of course impressive at first, but in the long-run they are dubious and in any case dearly-paid-for. They by no means increase the contentment or happiness of people on the whole. Mostly, they are deceptive sweetening of existence, LIKE SPEEDIER COMMUNICATIONS [emphasis added] which unpleasantly accelerate the tempo of life and leave us with less time than ever before" (Jung 236).

To answer the second part of the question above: The fact is, I think society as a whole suffers from the effects of technology. An inmate's utter isolation is partly defined by his/her lack of access to social media, but I would argue that society has isolated itself by relying so heavily on social media. A hug has been replaced by a silly emoji, and heartfelt words have been replaced by Internet colloquialisms (LOL, etc.).

My proportion of interactions based on technology is zero; perhaps, society would be more civil if they relied on less technology and more on actual human contact...

Communicating Emotions

Stephen Houston

[Excerpt from a review of the film *Oleanna*]
As I reflect on the interaction between the student and the professor, I can see a whirlwind turbulent relationship. The movie starts out with a discussion between them both with the professor explaining to Carol a question: "What is a term of art?" It is a very uncomfortable situation for them both as the conversation is lopsided and unconventional. The plot and scenario of the movie is focused on sexual harassment, dominance, manipulation and the apathy that leads to resentment.

The professor displayed an alpha male-type prowess throughout all of the one-on-one meetings that he had with the student, a format for him to feel superior to the student. Little did he know that the tables were about to turn very ugly for him. Communicating emotion is a primary function of nonverbal messages to let the other person know how you are feeling (Solomon and Theiss 163). She is completely confused at this point. The "favors" he said he would do for her was mainly because he said he liked her. They proceed on to the subject of higher education. Carol brings out an excellent point, that college is instructive. She then goes on to tell the professor she doesn't understand him. The phone rings, and the caller and the professor get into a heated argument about the house. But, before it is all said and done, he finds out his close friends are throwing a surprise party for him. All of the professor's facial expressions while engaged with the student and on the phone clearly channeled the full energy of all of his emotions (Solomon and Theiss 163).

Although much of nonverbal behavior is natural and automatic, one can be considered as a learned response to different social situations, as stimulation, intensification, de-intensification, and masking in all these instances as an example. Because the voice is more difficult to control than facial expressions, it can be a more reliable indicator of a person's feelings.

Signs of deception flowed strategically throughout the entire movie (Solomon and Theiss 173). Patterns of the professor's unconscious inconsistencies signaled

the inconsistencies in the contractive and underlying motive of deceit he embellished. He emphasized that he refers to the status quo. Carol has become very upset and confused. She agrees to meet the professor at his office for the third time. Firecrackers were about to erupt. She hits him hard, like a ton of bricks, threatening to ruin his life and career. She tells him she's going to the authorities and accuses him of rape. The professor snaps. Carol is manipulating everything the professor is saying now. He expresses to her that her plan will never work. She fires back, telling him that he exploits the people that helped him sustain. Like in the scene from the movie *Gone with the Wind*, with Clark Gable and Catherine Hepburn, he backhands Carol and then slaps her over and over again and finally told her he doesn't give a damn. The movie finally ends in disarray with neither side winning.

Our examination of the relationship between emotions and interpersonal communication reveals four distinct links. Because emotions involve action tendencies, they can motivate communication to address the conditions that produce her feelings. The dynamics are that you might use communication to describe your feelings to others. You can also make them feel guilty or evoke feelings of love. Finally, your own feelings bring how you interpret the message you receive from others. In these ways, emotions permeate both the creation and conception of interpersonal communication.

Forming Social Bonds, Reflecting on Our Identities

Charlie Praphatanada

[Excerpt from a review of the movie *Crash*]
When Officer Ryan (the character played by Matt Dillon) realizes that his relational layers and communal layers of identity don't overlap, he begins to question his self-conception. This makes him see the identity gap that exists within him and causes Ryan to look at his behavior with new insight.

When we analyze our interpersonal communication skills, we get an understanding of our strengths and weaknesses. The more we understand about what shapes our identities, the better communicators we can become. But, we can only become better communicators if we work at it.

Interpersonal communication is how we form bonds with each other; it's how we navigate our society and the world we live in. The way we bond and the people we bond with all shape our identity. Our intercultural communication, self-

conception, and standpoints all play roles in how we go about practicing Interpersonal communication.

The unique qualities that make me "me" play a role in how others will interact with me. It's the way in which I present myself, which will draw or rebuff people from interacting with me. Those who choose to practice interpersonal communication with me have interpreted some symbols or actions that draw them to believe we have something in common. This could be a T-shirt that voices a point of view ("Trump Sucks") or some cultural symbol that's only understood by people of my culture. This leads to interpersonal communication.

We as humans are irrational beings. Our interpersonal communications shape our identities, morals, and values. But, if we don't practice self-reflective acts or at least become aware of who we are, and why we do the things we do, then we squander potential opportunities for new friendships, lovers, and understanding of ourselves. This squandering also stunts our growth as individuals and human beings, as Ryan finally learned.

Poem: On the Paradox of Knowledge

Robert M. Mosley IV

I, Robert Mosley IV, am over 63 years of age and incarcerated for more than 20 years. I have been striving to complete a bachelor's degree since 1970. Along the way, one thing keeps presenting itself. I have summarized it in the following poem.

Do You Know?

The more you know, the more you know you do not know
So many times, one has decried, from the wishful state of ignorance
That things observed
With nouns and verbs
Do not really make a difference
Contrary to that train of thought
Which leads to lengthy damnation
Is the truth of years of proof, brought in by a summation...
As you know, you grow
And
The more you know
The more you know you do NOT know.

Does the Designated Hitter Make Sense?

Marvin Johnson, Darren Robinson, Duncan Martinez, and Jimmie Gilmer

In the Macropædia article on baseball, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* quotes Walt Whitman concerning its place as the American pastime. "'It's our game,' exclaimed Whitman more than a century ago, 'that's the chief fact in connection with it: America's Game.'" (qtd. in Peterson 724). Moreover, the same article quotes from a 1911 edition of *Everybody's Magazine* that called the World Series "the very quintessence and consummation of the Most Perfect Thing in America." Every element of the game of baseball, all of it, brings out a love of not only the game but of the idea of America itself. As one saying relates, "America, Baseball, Mom and Apple Pie!" Baseball has woven itself into the national experience.

This advocacy paper intends to address the American League owners, American League players, and American League fans by discussing the history, values, and definitions of Major League Baseball. Next, a chain of reasons will be formed from these common principles that sets out ills in the current situation in American League baseball and the cause of these harms—a structural inherency in the American League system itself. Lastly, a proposed cure will be proffered for the issue.

History of MLB

The history of Major League Baseball (hereinafter MLB) traces its roots back to 1865. A convention of the original amateur associations called a meeting that year and set out the first rules of baseball. Two leagues were subsequently developed in order to use professional (paid) players: The National League (the NL), which originated from the National Association of Professional Baseball Players, founded in 1871; and the American League (the AL), a merger of various teams from out of the Western League, originally established in 1893. These two professional leagues continued to use the 1865 rules. Then, in 1903, the leagues adopted noteworthy additional rules—one that prohibited single ownership of two clubs in the same city, and a second designed to allow for the transfer of players from one league to another (Peterson 725-6).

As the professional sport of baseball grew and matured, its "Golden Age" emerged. The Golden Age of baseball in the 1920s included the premier hero of the age, George Herman Ruth, aka Babe Ruth. As discussed in his biography in the *World Book Encyclopedia*, Ruth, originally a pitcher for the Boston Red Sox, set a record of 60 home runs in a single season in 1927. Babe Ruth also set the record

for career home runs (totaling 714), which would not be broken until 1974 (Lang 568). Ruth, playing for the Yankees, would with these records represent the peak of offensive ability for over three decades. "The House that Ruth built" was in fact Yankee stadium. Ruth was also a part of the unwritten historic tradition of baseball with the Red Sox "curse." Babe Ruth, originally a pitcher for the Red Sox, was traded to the Yankees (a league and divisional rival for the Sox). This curse hypothetically blighted the Red Sox from ever winning or even entering the coveted World Series. This curse would last 90 years. Tradition plays such a significant role in baseball that fans earnestly believe in the reality of a curse to this day.

As baseball approached its 100th year, there appeared an overall offensive sputter in the game as a whole. This inability of teams to earn runs resulted from the continued development of pitching prowess, which not only impaired a team's offense, it also caused overall attendance to seriously fall. Buehler and Calandrillo explain that pitching began to dominate the game in the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s because of rules changes that included, in 1962, an enlargement of the strike zone; and the development of new pitches by some of the all-time greatest pitchers like Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale. Team managers also learned to make better use of relief pitchers in games, forcing batters to contend with multiple pitching styles (2089).

In order to answer the concerns of worried owners, angry players, and dissatisfied fans, and to stop the drop in attendance at the ballpark, the MLB Rules Committee met in December 1968 and adopted rules to counteract the power of the new breed of pitcher. Three rule changes were adopted: (1) reducing the height of the pitcher's mound from 15 inches to 10 inches; (2) changing the size of the strike zone back to the 1950s dimensions; and (3) ensuring that umpires would strictly enforce rules regarding illegal pitches. These illegal pitches consisted mostly of putting foreign substances like spit or Vaseline on the ball, or scuffing or cutting the ball with a sharp object like a tack hidden in the glove (Buehler and Calandrillo 2089-90).

These three rule changes would work well for the National League, but the American League, after a brief respite, once again saw fan interest and attendance stall. In response to the problems with attendance, the American League would implement, on a trial basis, the designated hitter rule in 1973, as explained below (Buehler and Calandrillo 2088). With a fear that low attendance would become a permanent condition, the AL's then president, Joe Cronin, proposed to the leagues the designated hitter rule (Buehler and Calandrillo 2091). The *designated hitter rule* (DH rule) itself states in essence that the pitcher may

have another player substituted to hit for him, without affecting the pitcher's place in the game. President Cronin likely felt that offense brought fans to the ballpark because of the wild popularity of Babe Ruth who set the record of 60 homeruns in '27, which was thought impossible to break. Yankee Roger Maris brought in droves of fans as he worked to and ultimately did surpass Ruth's home run record with 61 in '61. As such, after much lobbying by Cronin, the AL chose in 1973 to adopt the DH rule. The NL, however, refused to do so. Although the AL initially stated it would only use the DH rule for a trial run of three years, because of extraordinary fan response the AL voted to make the rule permanent prior to its expiration in 1976.

The Dangers of the Designated Hitter Rule

Moral Hazard. The DH rule abounded with controversy from its inception. Even within the AL, players and managers initially split on the effects of the rule. Ted Williams, the "Splendid Splinter," who formerly played as a Red Sox and later a manager for the AL teams the Washington Senators (now Minnesota Twins) and Texas Rangers, is arguably the best all-time hitter in MLB (Nightingale 312). Williams argued that the DH rule would result in specialist players that would undermine baseball's fundamental strategy, altering the essential fabric of the game (Buehler and Calandrillo 2092). The DH rule has changed the game significantly. First, the DH rule created what is termed a "moral hazard" for AL pitchers (2095-2102). A moral hazard exists when some type of insurance protects an individual from the repercussions of his reckless acts. In baseball this means that, because the pitcher will not bat (he is "insured" against having to bat by the DH rule), he may hit a batter on the opposing team without fear of retribution to himself—the reckless behavior/moral hazard. The Buehler and Calandrillo article proves this point clearly (Buehler & Calandrillo 2103-7). As such, the DH rule drives reckless behavior and even violence in the sport of baseball.

This issue has empirical proof. This season, as recently discussed on *The Rich Eisen Show*, a series of games in late April 2017/early May 2017 took place between AL teams Boston Red Sox and the Baltimore Orioles. A bad slide by player Manny Machado of the Orioles prompted pitchers on both teams to start throwing beanballs (Eisen). Beanballs are pitches thrown with the intention of hitting the player at bat. Moral hazard presents a perilous ill to baseball—Hall of Famer Kirby Puckett suffered a severe head injury while playing for the Minnesota Twins that ended his career. It also perverts the "Most Perfect Thing" (Peterson 724) into something ugly and reprehensible.

Loss of Strategy in Baseball. A second serious ill to consider when examining the DH rule is the loss of strategy in baseball. While the DH might "knock the ball out of the park," hitting a home run, there is no guarantee that this will win games. Even on AL teams, strategy is necessary. Baseball fans who are true fanatics of baseball love a well-played game with well-rounded, superior players. As stated in the Williams' quote (Buehler and Calandrillo 2092), specialists result in a loss of skilled players. The *World Book Encyclopedia* describes the four broad, basic skills of baseball: (1) Pitching; (2) Batting; (3) Fielding; and (4) Base Running (Honig 127-8). Because a designated hitter is just that, a designated hitter and nothing more, he lacks the three other fundamental skills that are necessary to a truly skilled baseball player. An otherwise weak player, that would not last in the NL will, by virtue of a single ability, continue in the AL for years past his prime. Some of the older designated hitters cannot even run the bases, meaning that if he does not hit a home run, the opposing team has ample time to tag him out at first.

The choice of stealing a base (advancing when the ball is live, but prior to it being hit) is another element of strategy affected by the DH rule. The NL on average earns more stolen bases in a season than the AL does. AL players hit without the finesse of a skilled batter, and then wait on base for the team's fêted designated hitter to bring in the runs. If this fails to happen, the team's ultimate result is men stranded—left on base without having scored—whereas a careful stolen base may result in a runner advancing to scoring position who can then run home on the next successful hit ball.

The Myth of Higher Interest and Attendance for the Stadium. Finally, this paper will address the axiomatic reason for the original implementation of the DH rule. As discussed in Part I.A, supra, the DH rule was created for the express purpose of increasing attendance. However, when teams in the same or similar markets are considered, NL teams inevitably have higher attendance per home game than AL teams, as shown in the following table:

MLB TEAMS IN SIMILAR MARKETS AVERAGE ATTENDANCE FOR HOME GAMES (2015)					
TEAMS WITHIN 75 MILES OF EACH OTHER			TEAMS WITHIN 500 MILES OF EACH OTHER		
Ex. #	Team (League)	Attendance	Ex. #	Team (League)	Attendance
1	Washington **(NL)**	**32,344**	1	Cincinnati **(NL)**	**29,870**

	Baltimore (AL)	29,246		Cleveland (AL)	17,361
2	L.A. Dodgers **(NL)**	**46,479**	2	Miami **(NL)**	**21,557**
	L.A. Angels (AL)	37,195		Tampa Bay (AL)	15,254
3	San Francisco **(NL)**	**41,678**	3	Milwaukee **(NL)**	**31,390**
	Oakland (AL)	21,829		Minnesota (AL)	27,408
4*	N.Y. Mets (NL)	31,725	4	St. Louis **(NL)**	**43,468**
	N.Y. Yankees ***(AL)***	**39,430**		Kansas City (AL)	33,439
5	Chicago Cubs **(NL)**	**36,039**			
	Chicago W. Sox (AL)	21,677			

Figure 1. Team Attendance (Source: *Sports Reference*, "2015 MLB Attendance & Misc.")

As shown in Figure 1, with the exception of the starred example (No. 4), the AL team the N.Y. Yankees, every NL team in a comparable market attracted more attendees than did its market-similar AL team. The Yankees exist as the sole exception because they are a storied franchise that has stayed in the same market for over 100 years, and because the team is one of the original teams in baseball. The very reason that the DH rule was implemented, to increase attendance that rivals NL teams, has shown no change. AL teams still lag behind NL teams in terms of attendance. The boost in attendance from the new home run record breakers, Mark McGuire, Barry Bonds, and Sammy Sosa all benefited specific NL teams—respectively, the St. Louis Cardinals, the San Francisco Giants, and the Chicago Cubs. While home run hitters will create a bump in attendance in a single season, the overall data supports the claim that NL teams have a larger overall number of attendees at each game. The DH rule did not even accomplish the greater attendance numbers hoped for when it was instituted.

Who Controls the Rules of Baseball? Creating a Cure

As covered at the start of this paper, the principal rules for the MLB were codified in 1865. However, rules have been modified and added over the years, including the DH rule. The present system created the DH rule using the voting power of the AL league. The owners of each league and the collective bargaining association for the players vote on a proposed rule. In the case of the DH rule, then AL President Joe Cronin proposed the rule, and with heavy lobbying, a

sufficient number of AL team owners voted for it. Then, a similar majority of players in the AL voted for the implementation of the rule. Finally, the AL fans chose to embrace the change. This did not happen in the NL, resulting in the current split in the leagues. The AL bears the blame for the ills previously described: the moral hazard and the loss of strategy with AL teams creating an overreliance on a player with only one trick—hitting home runs. The AL also will never achieve the same number of attendees at games that similar NL teams have while chasing the myth that a home run hitter brings in fans. If the AL fails to vote to abolish the DH rule, then (1) the moral hazard will continue to exist because pitchers will never pitch; (2) the AL coaches will maintain an overreliance on DH hitters to make home runs and bring in base runners in order to win games; and (3) the AL will also never achieve the number of fans NL teams have because their popularity rests on a single player who must have a good game every time—a statistical impossibility. The AL system must solve its structural inherency in order to stop reprehensible acts like beanballs, to create opportunities for strategic plays, and to prove or disprove the myth of DH popularity.

The cure is simple: the AL should abolish the DH rule with all expediency. AL teams will adapt, coaches will use more strategy, the payroll spent of expensive DH players will be freed to spend on other players who increase strategic possibilities, and AL teams will be able to attract fans of baseball. The All-Star Game holds a home run derby each year. Fans are able to see which player is the best home run hitter then. While home runs help teams of baseball, home runs do not constitute the complete game of baseball, and should not be the focus of any team, much less an entire league.

Do not let the AL be the league that leaves Hall of Famers like Kirby Puckett injured, suffering from a serious brain injury that results in his death two years later. Do not let the AL be the league that fails to achieve greatness because it places an overreliance on a single player for a team's greatness. Do not let the AL languish in the shadow of the NL, a result of a relatively recent rule that most people do not even understand in a historical context.

With this advocacy paper, the authors have shown that the DH rule is a blight in baseball. The rule creates a moral hazard for pitchers, it reduces the effective strategy used by AL team managers, and it doesn't even solve the original problem it was meant to address: the inequities in attendance between NL and AL teams. The authors hope that the AL will realign itself with the more traditional and more preeminent NL and rise to its own greatness.

Works Cited

"2015 MLB Attendance & Misc." *Sports Reference.com*, Sports Reference LLC. n/d. Web. 11 May 2017.

Buehler, Dustin E., and Steve P. Calandrillo. "Baseball's Moral Hazard: Law, Economics, and the Designated Hitter Rule." *Boston University Law Review* 90:2083 (2010): 2083-2119. Print.

Honig, Donald. "Baseball." *The World Book Encyclopedia*. 2010 ed. Print.

Lang, Jack. "Ruth, Babe." *The World Book Encyclopedia*. 2010 ed. Print.

Nightingale, Dave. "Williams, Ted." *The World Book Encyclopedia*. 2010 ed. Print.

Peterson, Richard F. "Baseball." *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*: *Macropædia*. 15th ed. 2003. Print.

The Rich Eisen Show. Exec. Prod. Rich Eisen. Contrib. MLB Expert Analyst MLB Network Don Plesac. Audience. DirecTV. Los Angeles. 4 May 2017.

The Best Argument in Baseball: A Refutation

Duncan Martinez

In 1973, the American League (AL) began the Designated Hitter (DH) experiment to boost offense, and thus—they hoped—increase the popularity of their league. Not only did it spark popularity, but it began perhaps the greatest ongoing debate in the history of sports, because the other half of Major League Baseball (MLB), the National League (NL), chose to *not* adopt the DH. While the DH became official in the AL in 1976, the debate continues today. The culture of baseball is evenly divided between those who love the DH and those who hate it; in the past two seasons, it has come to the forefront as pitchers retaliated for conduct on the field. The conversation continues. Having the DH in the AL is not only good for baseball, it is great for the growth of the game: not because it is better than the lack of a DH, but because it foments this argument. It forces fans to take a side. The controversy keeps baseball relevant—it gives fans something else to root for, to be fanatical about.

Points of Contention

Tradition. Tradition is the first argument for most NL fans, the idea somehow that the game of baseball has not changed, but for the DH. This is a ridiculous notion; baseball, like most things in this world, is evolving constantly. Gone are the short

pants with sanitary socks and stirrups, seasons are longer, mounts are lower and uniform, performance enhancing drugs are regulated, with more changes every year (Peterson 726, Dougherty 10).[1] The DH has been around for 40 years and is now entrenched in the AL, and "the AL isn't going back. Their fans love having that extra bat. They think it makes the game better" (Justice 2). Tradition is great, but the DH does not violate some obscure rule about what can and cannot be changed. The DH is simply, to some, an improvement.

Loss of Strategy. Opponents of the DH claim that it affects the strategy of the game: "The DH rule robs managers of a key bit of strategy: the double-switch" (Nilsson 2). The idea that the DH eliminates strategy is absurd. It absolutely changes baseball, and changes the required strategy, but it does not eliminate it. In fact, by having two styles of play it makes for more complicated discussion about strategy. How does an NL team prepare a roster when they have to play with a DH some of the time? What changes need to be made from stadium to stadium? Every element of the game creates strategy, so the fact that the DH changes some things is well taken, but it does not hold any real weight: It *is* different, meaning different complexities, not less important ones.

As for the loss of the double-switch, which is a real loss, it is traded for the DH. The idea from 1973 was to increase offense. They traded one strategy for a better bat, and it worked: according to Nilsson, "the batting averages for the AL have been better than the NL every year between 1973, when the DH was instituted, and 2008" (3). The 2010 article also points out that while the NL had a better average in 2009, the best hitting teams were in the AL (3). The double switch was traded for better hitting, and AL fans seem to like that.

Not Hitting as a Benefit. Some argue that pitchers benefit in the AL because they do not have to bat, but this is, on the surface, moot. No matter the league, both teams play by the same rules, and thus, whether or not the pitcher gets to rest is meaningless. If NL pitchers had to bat against AL teams while AL pitchers did not, that would be unjust. Many AL pitchers have argued the opposite, that not going to the plate left them feeling "like I'm not part of the game" (Buehler and Calandrillo 2092). As long as the rule is the same, therefore applied evenly, nothing else matters.

Moral Hazard. In the case of the DH, the pitcher in AL games does not himself go to bat, so if he hits an opposing player, he cannot be retaliated against by the opposing pitcher—he does not face getting hit. While it is true that more batters are hit in the AL, the point is irrelevant for several reasons: first, the custom is to hit the opposing big hitter in response (and thus force the opposing team to police itself); second, this is a business, not a kindness convention—the hitting of batters

is good for revenue, especially if there is controversy attached; third, the fallout of the feuds so-created drives ratings; and finally, the increase is effectively trivial, where "the AL hit batsman rate exceeds the NL by [only] 7.5 per 10,000 at-bats" (Buehler and Calandrillo, citing Trandel, White, and Klein 2102).

Fewer Stolen Bases. "[T]he stolen base is not a strategy that most teams use with any regularity. This year there were all of 3538 attempts across the majors: the fewest in a full season since 1973" (Tayler 82). The DH may be a factor in decreased steals, but it is not the major factor: "there are many reasons for the decline of the stolen base. Foremost is the sabermetric revolution, which emphasizes the value of not making outs" (Tayler 84). The stolen base has become an "antiquated weapon" (84). The DH may have hastened this along, but the math speaks for itself. The stolen base will continue to be a fading commodity.

Cost

Baseball is, first, and foremost, a business; it is important to remember that fact. "Let's face it, NL fans think their game is better…[a]nd the AL isn't going back" (Justice 2). If the DH were added to the NL or removed from the AL, an entire group would be alienated. The game cannot afford such a move. The costs of adding and losing the DH would be tremendous, as both revenue dollars would go away, but so would the controversy. The latter is the key: this debate makes baseball relevant in months when it is often ignored. In the average month of May, the NFL has their draft while both the NBA and NHL have playoffs. Baseball is just starting a slow grind, with numbers that don't mean a whole lot for months. But, when the Red Sox and Orioles go at it, and pitchers throwing at hitters comes to the forefront, every baseball fan chimed in with their take on the DH. It has been called, "[b]aseball's most divisive debate" for a reason (Justice 3). When Sports Center starts with Chris Sale throwing behind a batter without hitting him before they get to LeBron and the NBA Playoffs, that says something.

Conclusion

The DH is now a part of baseball, and, despite the fact that it is not liked by everyone, belongs in baseball. Having differences makes for all sorts of fun, and having the DH allows for arguments and discussions that we would lose without it. Baseball is better for having the DH, as long as it stays in the AL; if it is lost or adopted in both leagues, then all of the positives, in reality, go away.

Endnotes

1. Before standardization, groundskeepers would change the mound height each day, depending on the home team's pitcher (Buehler and Calandrillo 2090).

Works Cited

Buehler, Dustin E., and Steven P. Calandrillo. "Baseball's Moral Hazard: Law, Economics, and the Designated Hitter Rule." Boston University Law Review (2010). Print.

Dougherty, Michael Brendan. "Don't Bring the Designated Hitter to the National League." *The Week*. 2015.

Justice, Richard. "DH Debate Picking Up Steam." *MLB.com*, 2016.

Nilsson, Jeff. "The Designated Hitter Debate." *The Saturday Evening Post*. 2010.

Peterson, Richard F. "Baseball." *Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia*, 15th Edition (2003).

Tayler, Jon. "Can Trea Turner Save the Stolen Base?" Sports *Illustrated*. 15 May, 2017.

Be it Resolved: That the State of California Should Eliminate the Sentence of Life Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP)

Daniel Whitlow, Richard Fontes, and Robert Mosley

An Independent Auditor's Report indicates that for the 2016 fiscal year, the operating expenses for Los Angeles-area St. Jude's Children's Hospital totaled $943,934. In the same fiscal year, the entire St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital organizations' total functional expenses covering patient care, research, education, training, community service programs, and administrative and general expenditures from dozens of facilities across the country, added up to $1,179,594,998. By comparison, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) reported that the State of California spent a staggering $2,748,001,284 to house prisoners for the 2013 fiscal year, which would effectively cover St. Jude's annual functional expenses, for every hospital incorporated in their organization, 2.3 times over.

Such spending disparity seems symptomatic of a state of dysfunction within our justice system and is suggestive of California's elected representatives'

problematic disconnection from reason—choosing to spend more money to permanently incarcerate prisoners than giving sick children a chance at life. This uneconomical misappropriation of funds must be solved, particularly given a prison population that continues to grow. According to the previously cited report, the total inmate population is projected to reach 131,092 inmates by the year 2020 (CDCR). These advocates will show there is a better, more efficient, way—by affecting positive economic and restorative change. Be it resolved, that the State of California should eliminate the sentence of Life Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP). This paper will begin with an examination of the problems at hand.

Financial and Moral Insolvency

The perpetual nature of LWOP is propelling the State of California into a haze of financial and moral insolvency by ensuring a constant, expanding fiscal obligation and a hopeless death sentence for its populace. According to a state-compiled January 2016 report, there are 5,012 LWOPs in California, making up 3.9% of the overall incarcerated population. California's Legislative Analyst's Office (2017) determined it costs $70,812 a year to house the average inmate. That would mean the state of California spends $354,909,744 a year to permanently house the current LWOP population. Furthermore, the State of California reports that the cost per inmate has increased at an average of $4,000 a year. This trend assures that more money will drain into a faulty mechanism, producing continued economic strain. The ever-inflating cost for housing LWOP inmates continues to take away much needed funding from other important facets of California's budget, including medical research, educational needs, and much needed infrastructure projects. The money that California spends to confine LWOPs would keep the aforementioned Los Angeles Children's Hospital expense-free for 375.9 years.

More significantly, LWOP as a sentencing policy offers no means or motivation for the prisoners to better themselves, corroborating the general presumption that those sentenced to LWOP are worthless, and incapable of redemption. In the minds of LWOP prisoners, this systemic neglect and disregard gives control to self-hating opinions of uselessness, anger, and despair, which often leads to bitterness, depression, and violence. Without the impetus to grow, thousands of LWOP men and women deteriorate in stone cells, with no incentive to understand their crimes and take steps towards developing a healthier understanding of how they can make amends for their actions and restore their humanity.

Failure in Design and Attitude

Responsibility for the dysfunctional state of affairs falls on two fundamentally flawed structural and attitudinal inherencies within the prevailing system. If the current system is allowed to continue without change, the problems will certainly persist, along with the growing prison population and its corresponding cost.

First, the current system focuses solely on housing the incarcerated population, providing facilities and beds for the ever-increasing number of inmates. It fails to address its moral and financial responsibilities by not removing antiquated and inequitable mandatory sentencing laws. Dow notes, "China and Pakistan, hardly exemplars of progressive criminal justice policy, allow prisoners serving life sentences to come up for parole after twenty-five years. Meanwhile, the United States imprisons wrongdoers for sentences that are five to seven times longer than sentences for comparable offenses in, say, Germany." It also fails by not offering adequate resources to programs designed to encourage rehabilitation for prisoners to reduce the overall prison population.

Second, in addition to structural flaws with existing laws, political efforts to fight legislative attempts to change the "tough on crime" paradigm California maintains suggests an inherent attitude that remains flawed. According to Dow, "sending a prisoner to die behind bars with no hope of release is a sentence that denies the possibility of redemption every bit as much as strapping a murderer to the gurney and filling him with poison." While there has been judicial progress in the form of the recent passage of senate bills affording approximately 300 juvenile LWOPs potential sentence relief, the problem exists and will continue to exist until failures in sentencing laws and attitudes toward said laws are addressed.

Low Recidivism Rates

There has been progress creating reform for Juvenile LWOPs, namely *Miller vs. Alabama* (2012) and California's Senate Bill 9 (2012), which allows Judges to consider the juvenile's post-conviction rehabilitative efforts in the process of applying their discretion and resentencing the youth offenders to a 25-to-Life sentence, effectively removing the juveniles' LWOP. While this is a step in the right direction for California, as mentioned, it only pertains to a small percentage of the total LWOP population.

According to the CDCR's website, during Governor Brown's term in office over 4,000 Lifers have been granted parole. The current recidivism rate for those 4,000 is under an astonishing 1%. Recidivism rates for non-lifer parolees varies and is as high as 48%. Weisberg et al. found the recidivism risk of recently released

California lifers to be minimal (364). If the Lifers are able to reenter society and pose a minimal risk to their communities, as the recidivism numbers indicate, LWOPs are just as capable. The only difference between "Life With" and "Life Without" is generally a result of legal technicalities, though both sentences are still indeterminate by nature.

With the removal of LWOP, the number of prisoners with the present *lowest recidivism rates* would potentially expand by over 20%, allowing the Board of Parole Hearings to do their job and give the prisoners the chance to earn their release, which over time would begin to relieve the fiscal burden permanent imprisonment imposes on the state. If the LWOP population were fixed at the amount given by the January 2016 CDCR report referenced earlier—5,012—after 20 years, the state would spend a minimum of $7,098,094,640 to house them. After 30 years, over $10.64 billion, and that is not taking into consideration the consistent population increases already mentioned, or the ever-increasing medical costs of an aging LWOP population. CDCR also suggests that "state officials looking to reduce prison expenditures can get only so far by trimming per-inmate costs. Far bigger savings can come from proven steps that reserve incarceration for those who most warrant it and reduce prison populations by developing lower cost alternatives for others."

Conclusion

The elimination of LWOP will not be a "quick fix". There is no easy, instantaneous solution for California's prison-based financial gridlock. State Legislators need to enact policies aimed at utilizing restorative justice reforms *in addition* to abolishing draconian sentencing laws, like LWOP, that seek to minimize rehabilitation and restorative reform and maximize the continuation of mass incarceration and population inflation. By comparison, countries like Croatia, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain have "no legislative provision for life imprisonment at all" (Appleton and Grover 601). Dissolution of LWOP would potentially lighten the persistent financial burden imposed on the penal system and the State budget by reducing overcrowding, resulting from the permanency of LWOPs. Additionally, by increasing the number of parole-eligible Lifers, and offering more rehabilitative opportunities to supplement their development, more prisoners that are capable of reentering society will have the ability to prove they deserve another chance to contribute to their respective communities.

Refutation to the Refutation: An Op-Ed

Richard Fontes

The availability of copious evidence for a specific, even intimate topic, blinds the prison-group to the obstacles of writing a refutation paper. For example: Life Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP) is a sentence that produces a great deal of articles in the con (no pun intended), and the emotional response of a college cohort, most of whom are serving LWOP, is undeniable. Also, a college student who is personally impacted by LWOP is understandably inspired by the prospect of highlighting the plethora of flaws surrounding such a draconian law. However, this tunnel-vision approach omits the second half of the assignment: the refutation.

An argumentation course includes teaching "two of the most important objectives for the use of arguments: effective decision making and the desire to achieve social harmony," but the group setting in a college cohort—in prison, no less—diminishes an individual's creativity and desire to expand understanding beyond the low-hanging fruit of legal policies. Additionally, the goal of social harmony is unavoidably ridiculed by the individual writing the refutation on his or her obligatory (LWOP) policy. Clearly, another objective for the course is to develop a skill set to effectively argue from either side of the policy, using the communication skills and understanding of argumentation derived from the course. It stands to reason that the individual student (without the unwanted influence of the group's binding decision) would enjoy a great deal more satisfaction from the opportunity to argue, in earnest, from either side of the policy, thereby creating a more constructive process during the refutation paper.

A group's selection of LWOP for a proposed policy change has limited resources to support claims in the refutation paper. The primary argument, as indicated by limited resources, made it in favor of LWOP and stems from the notion that LWOP is a humane alternative to the death penalty. However, according to Wright, as cited in an Oxford journal article, "LWOP prisoners 'vehemently disapprove of their sentences' and would prefer to be executed rather than kept alive behind bars for the rest of their lives" (Appleton and Grover). The vast majority of inmates serving on death row would rather be serving LWOP due to better legal assistance and compassion. So, how does a writer of a refutation paper argue realistically for the support of LWOP? Albeit rhetorical, such questions support the claim for the need of freedom to write independent of a group's influence (under these unique circumstances), pro or

con. Once again, the ability to write from either side of the policy is recognized as one of the primary objectives for argumentation, and, indeed, this is not lost on the arguer. Nevertheless, the pursuit of meaningful evidence to support the sentence of LWOP in a refutation paper is an offense to anyone serving LWOP.

Those who rely on extreme cases (i.e. Charles Manson, etc.) as justification for the policy, incorrectly apply the facts. In suggesting that the heinous nature of Manson's crimes is a prime example for the need of LWOP, the proponent fails to acknowledge that Manson was not sentenced to LWOP once he was convicted. The "life" sentence Manson received several decades ago has provided the Board of Prison Terms (BPT) with sufficient tools to keep him behind bars in perpetuity. Furthermore, anyone arguing for the benefits of LWOP while serving the inhumane sentence does so at their own peril. If LWOP remains a viable sentencing option, the potential for abuse and inconsistent applications of LWOP remain very real possibilities. Worse yet, an argument in favor of LWOP requires the proponent to dismiss the idea of a path to redemption and fails to recognize some of the questionable benefactors of LWOP. A few of the primary examples of the benefactors of LWOP and who would wish to remain anonymous: The Correctional Officer's Union (CCPOA)—life sentences provide job security and an ever-expanding budget for CDCR; and victims of violent crimes—LWOP serving as a form of revenge, without the moral burden of taking the offender's life. It also serves as a cover-up for the clandestine ambitions of political groups such as the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). If you think it's odd that crime victim advocates and law enforcement professionals would champion a cause with a slogan, "Sign up to Help End the Death Penalty," your suspicions would be warranted. PPIC's true agenda was revealed, and it turned out to be an effort to rewrite the LWOP law in such a manner to exclude a path of redemption, no matter how much time an individual has served. Knowing this, a writer's effort to complete a refutation paper on LWOP requires that they (as a person of LWOP status) must sacrifice their integrity to achieve this goal. Arguably, the students are merely demonstrating a required skill for the course, but this attempt to satisfy the professor is executed with great dissatisfaction to this writer.

In the final analysis, members of this cohort will provide, ostensibly, plausible arguments for their refutation papers in favor of LWOP. In doing so, they will have unwittingly contributed to an egregious platform for misinformation. Yes, they will have satisfied the assignment, but at what cost? Ethos must not be sacrificed to satisfy any assignment. Furthermore, some in this cohort are made unwilling participants, by virtue of majority rules, for LWOP's deceptive benefits. The arguments *against* LWOP has the potential to produce powerful rhetoric; the

argument *in favor* of LWOP is fertilization for deception. There are two options to rectify the problem of LWOP as a refutation paper: (1) eliminate the mandatory groups for this particular assignment; or (2) eliminate the option of LWOP as a potential policy challenge. Either way, a person serving LWOP will not be asked to argue for their demise…unless they chose that option.

Works Cited

Appleton, Catherine, and Bent Grover. "The Pros and Cons of Life Without Parole." *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2007. DOI: 10.1093/bjc/azm001.

California State, Legislature. Senate Bill 9. *California State Legislature,* 3, Sept. 2012, http://www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120SB9.

Dow, David. "Life Without Parole is a Terrible Idea." *The Daily Beast,* www.thedailybeast.com/life-without-parole-is-a-terrible-idea. Accessed 13 May 2017.

Kazemian, Lila, and Jeremy Travis. "Forgotten Prisoners: Imperative for Inclusion of Long Termers and Lifers in Research and Policy." *Criminology & Public Policy*, 2015. DOI: 10.1111/1745-9133.12126.

State of California. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations. *An Update to the Future of California Corrections.* 2016.

United States' Supreme Court. *Miller v. Alabama.* 25 June, 2012. *Legal Information Institute,* Cornell U Law School, www.law.cornell.edu/supct/cert/10-9646.

Villaume, Alfred C. "'Life Without Parole' and 'Virtual Life Sentences': Death Sentences by Any Other Name." *Contemporary Justice Review*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2016, pp. 265-277, DOI: 10.1080/10282580500132997

Weisberg, Robert, Debbie A. Mukamal, and Jordan D. Segall. *Life in Limbo: An Examination of Parole Release for Prisoners Serving Life Sentences with the Possibility of Parole in California*. Stanford Criminal Justice Center, Stanford University, 2011.

Be it Resolved: The United States Federal Government (USFG) Should Ban Smoking in All Public Places

James Cain, Jimmie Gilmer, James Heard, & Jeff Stein

[Excerpt]
Thomas Jefferson once said, “one person’s rights end where another person’s begins.” Today we know that millions of Americans have died from second-hand smoke as a result of others who exercised their rights to smoke (Center for Disease Control). While there exists a patchwork of ordinances banning smoking in public places at the local and state level, such as the city of Solana Beach in San Diego, California, which has passed ordinances creating smoke-free beaches to improve public health, no comprehensive regulation exists nationally that would protect non-smoking citizens from health dangers inherent in second-hand smoke. These dangers include heart disease, stroke, cancer, respiratory problems, and death. Such significant harms should be addressed at a national level to ensure the health of all Americans. As such, the United States Federal Government should ban smoking nationally in all public spaces. We will examine the existing problems within the status quo, the roots of the problems, and what can be done to mitigate the problems.

A Well-Established Problem

There is no question that prolonged exposure to smoke from burning tobacco products as well as exhaled tobacco smoke is dangerous. Researchers suggest that there are 7,000 compounds in cigarette smoke, 250 of which are known carcinogens such as cyanide, carbon monoxide, and ammonia (National Cancer Institute). In fact, the same study notes that 7,300 lung cancer deaths and 34,000 heart disease deaths per year can be attributed to the harmful effects of smoking and second-hand smoking. The American Lung Association suggests that involuntary exposure to cigarette smoke increases the risk of stroke by a whopping 20 to 30 percent. Moreover, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that approximately 2.5 million nonsmokers have died from health problems attributed to second-hand smoke since 1974. This habit also affects the most vulnerable amongst us. DiFranza and Lew found that 53,000 babies required intensive care at birth because their mothers smoked during pregnancy.

Lack of Holistic Approach*.* Simply put, there is no federal law that protects Americans in public spaces from the harms of cigarette smoke. At present, it is

left in the hands of local and state agencies to implement policies that outlaw smoking in public spaces. However, such ordinances leave many citizens unprotected and at risk of health issues related to involuntary smoking.

Efforts to address the issue are tempered by big business and those who profit from cigarette sales, and are leading factors why such a risk to public health exists. The United States Government and the Big Tobacco business have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, regardless of the number of citizens affected. Maloney reports that 42 percent of an average pack of cigarettes in the United States costing $6.42 went to taxes, thus creating a mutually beneficial situation for the federal government in collecting taxes, and Big Tobacco who continue to profit despite a drop in the number of smokers. The sales are enormous, and influence from the tobacco industry has resulted in woefully inadequate regulation that fails to keep nonsmokers safe.

Conclusion

Evidence overwhelmingly shows that second-hand smoke or involuntary smoking results in negative health consequences for those subjected to it over time. Over 2 million non-smoking individuals have died since the 1970's while the federal government has failed to create a national policy to address this problem. The extent and impact of inhaling second-hand smoke in public places far outweigh whatever costs, real or imagined, that may or may not be incurred by various interests opposed to a national ban, and should be remedied by the United States Federal Government.

Local Control Lets Us All Breathe Better

Jeff Stein

[Refutation Excerpt]

Individual citizens, businesses, and states have been protected from the overreach of the United States Federal Government by the Constitution since the founding of our democratic republic. Local governments already work with their citizens to create desired public smoking bans—provided that the constituency votes in favor. This paper will argue that the proposition as stated by the advocates is unwarranted given existing local ordinances, the actual magnitude and extent of the problem that remains unknown, and the prohibitive costs that such policy would incur.

Although the idea of protecting non-smoking citizens from the health hazards of exposure to smoke is worth considering, there are a number of ways in which the advocates' position fails. First, while a causal correlation between second-hand smoke exposure and health implications such as cancer, stroke, and death are undeniable, the advocate does not maintain that exposure occurs solely in public spaces rather than private homes or individual vehicles (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention). The advocate fails to differentiate in data provided, and unless the numbers are clearly delineated, creating a national ban makes little sense as we do not know the actual extent and impact of second-hand smoke exposure to citizens while they are in public in *every* part of America. Second, the proposed ban will carry costs that outweigh the advantages. Costs include a loss of tax revenue, jobs, and the states' rights to self-regulate. The British Broadcasting Company reports that Big Tobacco pays a significant portion of the United States' bills through federal taxes paid on tobacco sales. They write, "the U.S. Treasury is estimated to have pocketed $118.6 billion in U.S taxes" over 10 years. Even with a modest decrease of 10-15 percent in tobacco sales annually to drop in smokers or with the proposed ban, it would lead to a loss of billions of dollars that our Treasury can ill afford. Third, the proposed ban would also lead to job losses (CorpWatch). Lastly, a nationwide ban on smoking in public spaces is an unnecessary and possibly unconstitutional overreach of federal authority. Local communities such as Solana Beach, California and many others have enacted their own smoking ordinances based on votes by their respective constituents. High-minded and well-meaning laws such as the proposed ban creates more Big-Brother like intrusion into the lives of millions of Americans.

Instead of relying on the federal government to resolve issues, we can advocate and build communities locally. In the end, whatever cure we enact to remedy an ill must not create more problems than it solves. A national ban on cigarette smoking in public will have many unintended consequences and may not effect much of a cure, as this paper has illustrated. Let us think globally, but act locally.

Works Cited

Letterman, Gretchen. "Tobacco's Tiniest Victims." *St. Petersburg Times,* 16, April 1995, p. 6D.

National Cancer Institute. *Harms of Cigarette Smoking and Health Benefits of Quitting*. 2006.

Register, Kathleen M. "Cigarette Butts as Litter: Toxic as Well as Ugly." *Bulletin of the American Littoral Society,* vol. 25. no. 2, 2000.

"Secondhand Smoke (SHS) Facts." *Center for Disease Control and Prevention.* www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_fact/index.htm

Seymour, Tom. "The Reasons Why Smoking is Bad for You." *Medical News Today.* www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/10566.php. Accessed 13 May 2017.

"The Economics of Tobacco." *British Broadcasting Company*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/459157.stm. 28 September, 1999.

"Tobacco's Impact on the Economy." *CorpWatch.* 30 June, 1997, http://corpwatch.org/article.php?id=4000

United States Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*: *A Report of the Surgeon General*, 2014. Atlanta, GA.

Be it Resolved: That California State University Make Mental Health Screening Mandatory for its Students

Tin Nguyen, Clifton Lee Gibson, Dortell Williams & Stephen Houston

On May 2, 2017, at approximately 2pm, Kendrix J. White viciously attacked four students on the University of Texas campus. Armed with an army knife, White left one dead and three wounded and an entire campus community paralyzed with fear (Chavez and Sanchez 1). White reportedly suffered from an unspecified mental illness, with comparison drawn to the perpetrator of the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, who also suffered from mental challenges. Studies reveal that most college students with mental issues do not receive treatment, and existing policies that rely on self-diagnosis are inadequate. The prevailing stigma around mental health issues further dilute the effectiveness of policies with this approach, as is the case with the California State University system-wide policy. While CSU campuses have been incident free, it is precisely due to the possibility of a violent attack by a student suffering from mental distress that we propose that CSU make mental health screening mandatory for all students.

Untreated Problems

College campuses are grounds for unique stressors that can cause or worsen mental health issues such as separation anxiety, binge drinking, poor nutrition, chronic stress, and financial strain (White 1). In fact, Mistler, Reetz, Krylowicz, and Barr report that roughly 42% of college students suffer from anxiety, and 36% of

college students suffer from depression. More significantly, from the same study, 347 out of 363 university and college counseling center directors believed that the number of students with significant psychological problems was a growing concern on their home campus as they observe an increase in a student population who experience mental distress (174). Yet the most recent data from large multi-institutional studies indicate that most students with mental health problems do not receive treatment. While suicide is the second most common cause of death among college students (Henriques 2), a study by the National Research Consortium of Counseling Centers in Higher Education reports that fewer than half of the students who had seriously considered suicide in the year prior did not receive professional help (Eisenberg 224). These statistics paint the portrait of a college population with members who are struggling silently, with the potential for their mental distress to escalate if left untreated.

Flawed Policy

In 2010, three years following the Virginia Tech shooting, the CSU system implemented Executive Order No. 1053. Designed to "maintain and enhance the academic performance of matriculated students and to facilitate their retention in state-sponsored programs of the university," services provided are to include "professional mental health care; counseling, outreach and consultation programs; and educational programs and services" (Reed 1-2). However, the policy itself is structurally unsound for a few reasons. First, the order itself is wholly inadequate given its voluntary nature, putting the onus on students to self-diagnose. This is not a population that is equipped to recognize the signs of depression or risks of suicide; thus, to expect self-diagnosis with follow-up to treatment is unlikely. Next, it offers inadequate protection for a population that is otherwise occupied by classes, assignments, meetings, social gatherings, and other activities (Eisenberg 229). There is no significant attempt to create a space for students to seek counseling given these preoccupations. Finally, this executive order does not adequately address the cultural stigma associated with mental health, whether it is shame or denial by family members, judgment from peers, or shame experienced by the students themselves. This policy assumes that students are able to recognize and to navigate the subtle nuances of mental health and its surrounding issues.

To its credit, the CSU Mental Health Initiative of 2015, a product of Proposition 63, reaches a population of nearly 300,000 individuals. The proposition itself provides an additional $7.1 million to increase mental health awareness and to respond to students experiencing issues (Chapin 1). However,

the report fails to distinguish whether the number of individuals reached represent that of the study body, or what protocols are in place to ensure that those who need help are taken care of. While it acknowledges that 19 percent of CSU students report impaired academic functioning due to mental distress, assuming there are 30,000 CSU students enrolled on a given campus, the percentage of students *known* to be suffering from mental health would amount to nearly 6,000 students (Chapin 1). It only takes one mental break and one gun to turn these inadequacies into tragedy. More drastic measures need to be implemented to address the policy issues.

Refutation [Excerpt]

Tin Nguyen

Imagine a student relying on a scholarship for their education, where they must keep a certain GPA and work a part time job to maintain a sustainable living, in addition to fulfilling other requirements that pertain to the scholarship. The stresses that these elements produce can be overwhelming for a middle-age individual with a fully developed and mature brain, and yet with the present proposal, students are expected to be screened for mental health issues or face repercussions. These challenges will place further burden and stress on a mind that is not fully developed. Therefore, this paper will demonstrate that the proposed proposition is not only unnecessary, but is detrimental to the student body of California State University system. This paper will begin by showing how mandatory screening can be detrimental to students, followed by a demonstration that the current policy is adequate and sufficient without the need for additional policy change.

Points of Contention

Detrimental for Students. In January of 2015, an undergraduate Yale student committed suicide as a result of her depression. White refers to this incidence as justification for mandatory screening. White believes that had the student's mental disorder been caught in its earlier stage, the student's life could have been saved. Yet, the student herself had expressed fear of being expelled from Yale as a result of her depression (1). This is a prime example of how stressors can lead individuals to develop mental disorders. There are numerous studies that suggest that the reason for youth to take risks and act impulsively is that their minds are not fully developed. Dobbs exclaims, "they act that way because their brains

aren't done" (3)! Researchers suggest that the brain between the age of 15 and 25 "undergoes extensive remodeling, resembling a network and wiring upgrade" (2). The brain's growth during this period is at its slowest, and since the growth begins from the back and works its way to the frontal area where most of the exclusive decisions are made, the students—by nature—are wired to be reactive, impulsive, and risk-taking. This period "brings peaks in all sorts of risky ventures and ugly outcomes" (4). As such, the additional mandatory mental health screening with a risk of repercussions may not only push the young minds beyond their capacity to handle stress, but it may also lead to undesired consequences where they hurt themselves or others.

Executive Order No. 1053. California State University's Executive Order is voluntary, and therein lies its potential. It provides sufficient services and channels for students to seek mental health help without placing additional stress factors on the individual student. For instance, it mandates that all CSU shall provide at the minimum: (1) counseling and psychotherapy; (2) suicide and personal violence services; (3) emergency/crisis services; (4) outreach; (5) mental health consultation; and (6) referral resources (Reed 1-2). While students with anti-social tendencies are less likely to seek help, there is no reason to believe that the range of services offered are inadequate.

Proposition 63. Proposition 63 provides $7.1 million to CSU to fund mental health programs that have increased "awareness of student mental health issues and campus resources—as well as effectively responding to student distress" (Chapin 1). Furthermore, the initiative has introduced a collaboration between the CSU system, the University of California (UC) system, the California Community College (CCC) system, and local agencies to train police officers to "recognize health illnesses and effectively de-escalate dangerous situations" (1). In conjunction with the Executive Order, the current policies render mandatory screening moot, unnecessary, and with the risk of becoming a source of stress for students—potentially harmful.

Refutation [Excerpt]

Dortell Williams

In this, our "Land of the Free," no one should be compelled to do anything against their will. The very notion of a mandatory proposal to screen young citizens for mental health is, in and of itself, unpatriotic. Mandatory screening is intrusive and has no place in voluntary institutions such as on a college campus. It should be

emphasized that California has not experienced the type of violence cited as a catalyst for the mandatory screening proposal. The advocates focus narrowly on issues of mental health in the CSU system, but according to the CSU Mental Health Initiative, CSU has trained nearly 500 vigilant campus police officers to quell the rare occurrence of an insidious attack (Chapin, p. 1). Furthermore, to implement such a screening process in response to two tragic, though out-of-state incidents, opens the door for other institutions to use compulsion in medicine as a means to their own ends.

It is wrong to propose to hold hostage the very education students need to better understand themselves through a mandatory screening. Consider, for decades past, that the cigarette industry concealed the harmful effects of smoking. When government subsidies finally ceased and the legislature acknowledged the truth of smoking's effects, the government responded not with mandatory requirements, but an aggressive educational campaign to challenge the attitudes of Americans. Today, it is unlikely for a person to be unaware of health hazards associated with the use of cigarettes. As an educational institution, the CSU should follow suit, and aim to educate students at the fullest breadth and depth, and teach them to be well-informed, independent thinkers. Mandatory screening fosters handholding, and risks paternalizing young adults, who may come to depend on institutions to tell them what they can and cannot do, what is good and what is not, thus failing to promote the free thinking that has made American universities the premiere institutions they are today. As such, the advocates' push for an awareness campaign will more than satisfy this particular agenda, by alerting students of the signs of mental distress, symptoms of depression, and risks of suicide so they can learn to take independent action.

Furthermore, whether an educational institution should be so deeply involved in medical services provided to students should be questioned. As a result of the wide array of medical advances and the growing efficacy of medical service-providers, most people who experience mental challenges can be treated in short termed outpatient facilities. These local facilities already focus on the type of mental health challenges the advocates cite and provide services such as visits with health professionals, counseling and therapy sessions, and annual depression screenings (Medicare). By leaving mental health care and medication distribution to the institutions that regularly practice this care, our institutions of higher learning can focus on what they do best: educating our future generations. As it is, the current policies as delineated in Chancellor Reed's 2010 memorandum are more than adequate and should not undergo costly changes.

Works Cited

Chavez, Nicole, and Ray Sanchez. "UT Stabbing Suspect May Have Had Mental Health Issues, Police Say." *CNN*, www.cnn.com/2017/05/02/us/ut-stabbing/index.html. Accessed 13 May 2017.

Chapin, Elizabeth. "CSU Mental Health Initiative Reaches 288,000." *The California State University*, www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/csu-mental-health-initiative-reaches-288000.aspx. Accessed 13 May 2017.

Dobbs, David. "Beautiful Brains." *National Geographic,* Oct. 2011, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2011/10/teenage-brains/dobbs-text.

Eisenberg, Daniel. "What Should Colleges Spend on Student Mental Health?" *Psychology Today.* www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/investing-in-healthy-minds/201507/what-should-colleges-spend-student-mental-health. Accessed 13 May 2017.

Henriques, Gregg. "What is Causing the College Student Mental Health Crisis?" *Psychology Today.* www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theory-knowledge/201402/what-is-causing-the-college-student-mental-health-crisis. Accessed 13 May 2017.

Mistler, B., D.R. Reetz, B. Krylowicz, and V. Barr. "The 2012 Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors Annual Survey." *Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors,* 2013.

Reed, Charles B. "Memorandum: Policy on Student Mental Health—Executive Order No. 1053." *CSU Office of the Chancellor*, 6 December 2010.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Emily M. Adams is a second-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Melissa Flores is a first--year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Lorèn Hanna is a first--year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Paulina Lainez is a first--year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Niloufar Melamed is a first--year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Nancy Meza-Gil is a first--year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Raquel D. Moscozo is a first-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Jennifer Oliva is a first-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Lane Schwager is a first-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Eric C. Siberio is a second-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Jackson Spencer is a second-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Nathan K. Wensko is a second-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Emily M. Adams is a second-year M.A. student in the Communication Studies program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Kamran Afary is an Assistant Professor of Intersectional Identities and Relationships in the Department of Communication Studies and a recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Lecturer Award at California State University, Los Angeles.

Frances Chee is a Lecturer at California State University, Los Angeles.

D. Robert DeChaine is Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Communication Studies at California State University, Los Angeles.

Anthony W. Karambelas is a B.A. student in the English program at California State University, Los Angeles.

Call for Submissions

Colloquy solicits manuscripts related to a variety of scholarship conducted in the Department of Communication Studies as well as representing different types and levels of academic thought. The journal invites submissions using any appropriate methodology for the question being investigated. Articles should focus primarily on issues related to communication studies.

Manuscripts submitted to *Colloquy* should subscribe to the National Communication Association (NCA) guidelines for publication. These guidelines request that the authors use inclusive and non-defamatory language. In addition, submissions should meet the following standards for publication:

(1) The manuscript is original work and proper publication credit is accorded to all authors;

(2) All legal, institutional, and professional obligations for obtaining informed consent from research participants and for limiting their risk are honored;

(3) The scholarship reported is authentic.

Submitted manuscripts should conform to the most recent edition of the *Style Manual of the American Psychological Association* or the *Modern Language Association Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. Article manuscripts should generally not exceed twenty double-spaced pages. The submission may be an excerpt of a longer work, but it should stand alone.

Papers submitted for consideration of inclusion in *Colloquy* will be reviewed following a blinded peer review protocol. All submissions should be accompanied by a cover letter that includes a 75-word biographical statement for the author(s) and full contact information including an email address.

Manuscript submissions should be sent via email to:

D. Robert DeChaine, Ph.D.
Supervising Editor, *Colloquy*
Department of Communication Studies
California State University, Los Angeles
ddechai@calstatela.edu