2017
Sosland Journal
of Student Writing

Ande Davis, Editor
Lindsey Weishar, Asst. Editor

UMKC

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Submission is open to UMKC students in writing classes. Guidelines are available at our website.

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the 2017 edition of *The Sosland Journal*. We received a great deal of impressive submissions for this year's issue, and what you are reading were judged to represent the top examples of academic writing from UMKC and our HSCP scholars. We had so many great submissions, in fact, that the job of narrowing down finalists and selecting winners for the Ilus W. Davis competition was a difficult proposition for our readers, our judges, and us as editors. But we did it, and the essays we present here span from personal narratives to examinations of representation in pop culture to discourse analyses of political regimes to studies of print culture and a number of things in between. We're beyond thrilled at the results of our process, and all the writers who entered our contest should be proud of the work they produced. We were privileged to receive a number of works that introduced new perspectives into broader discussions and provided a motivated critique of the world and its current condition. At its best, this is what academic writing is meant to do, and the work produced by our students is no different. We hope you'll find as much enjoyment in reading these fine essays as we did.

Of course, this journal exists because of the contributions of so many others. Perhaps most importantly, we are deeply

indebted to Rheta Sosland-Huwitt and the Sosland family, without whose generosity this publication and a number of other associated programs and awards would cease to exist. We also would like to show our gratitude to Dr. Daniel Mahala, Director of Composition at UMKC and the faculty advisor for this journal; our readers, Lerie Gabriel, Ryan McHale, and Mary Jean Miller, who worked hard to help narrow down a list of finalists; and our final judges, Rhiannon Dickerson, Shelia Honig, and Desiree Long, who collaborated beautifully to decide our competition winners. Thank you all for helping put this issue together. Finally, I want to express my personal thanks to our incredible Assistant Editor, Lindsey Weishar, whose brilliance, hard work, and keen eye are the primary reason you're able to read these words. I look forward to seeing what good things are to come with the journal when she takes over as editor.

Before I sign off, I wanted to draw attention to the effort we've made over the last couple years to help *The Sosland Journal* become more useful as a pedagogical tool. After each essay, you'll find reading questions that can help students and teachers alike to examine these essays and use them to better grasp the craft of academic writing. We'd love to hear what else you might like to see in order to further this goal of making the journal a better resource in the classroom. Feel free to email us at soslandjournal@gmail.com with suggestions.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Ande Davis
Editor, *The Sosland Journal*

Essays

Introductory Category Winner

The Power of Silence

Emily Grace

Exiting the school building as the final bell rings, I smile as my keys jangle in my hand. The Friday sun seems to shine brighter as I cross the parking lot at the end of another week. The lot fills quickly with shouts from excited teenagers. Everyone is looking forward to their weekend plans. I let out a long-held breath as I settle into my Honda Fit. The week's stresses seem to lift as I begin to relax from the pressure of everyday life: being around other people. The weekend is my time to recharge from the social expectations the world imposes on me. I am an introvert. I, and other introverts, "gain energy from quiet reflection and solitude." Extroverts, by contrast, are valued by society for their outgoing personalities, confidence, and enthusiasm: "Extroverts are valued by society for commanding attention" (Gordon). Today's society caters towards extroverts, from school to work; from expectations to reality. We live in an extrovert's paradise. And thus, the introverts are being left behind in the modern world.

Let's shoot down a major misconception off the bat. Introversion is not a negative, derogatory term. And, most importantly, an introvert is not reserved, shy, or unconfident, though there are introverts, as well as extroverts, that possess these qualities. Many people believe that introverted people are

shy, however "shyness and introversion are not the same thing. Shyness is the fear of negative judgement, and introversion is a preference for quiet, minimally stimulating environments" (Cain). An introvert enjoys a nice quiet evening at home while performing activities they find meaningful, such as photography, playing a musical instrument, writing, baking, or reading. People who are introverted enjoy spending time with close friends and having deep conversations. Introversion is known for prioritizing downtime and preferring silence and intimate conversations to small talk. In fact, people who are introverted experience social situations differently than extroverts. As an active member of my high school's band program, I am constantly surrounded by three hundred teenagers for practices, bus rides, and long trips. During all the crazy yelling, loud ruckus, and overall chaos, I often find solitude in these events by looking through a different angle. I make a large group of people seem small by isolating the events that I find enjoyable, such as watching other bands perform and spending time with my friends.

Depending on what study you look at, one third to one half of the American population is introverted, and worldwide this percentage may be higher, possibly due to the great migrations of humans across continents around 60,000 years ago. The theory explains that the extroverted peoples living in Africa and Asia decided to migrate and leave their homelands, perhaps driven by a sudden cooling in the Earth's climate, and the introverted people stayed in Africa and Asia. This idea explains the introverted Asian and African cultures compared to the extroverted American and European cultures. Though all societies are a mix of introverted and extroverted personalities, the American culture is one of the most extroverted in the world.

The American culture as we know today is the result of an early 1900s movement where extroversion became the cultural ideal. Susan Cain brilliantly names this phenomenon as the move

from the Culture of Character to a Culture of Personality. Prior to the 1900s, the United States was an agricultural country where nearly all members of society lived in a rural setting. In these close-knit environments, the community was closely connected. Citizens had time to develop their personal relationships with their co-workers and employers, as the connections were slowly built up over time. But everything changed when America saw the rise of industrialization and urbanization. As cities rapidly grew, society changed as jobs changed to meet the demand of a larger public to serve. Jobs became more competitive and applicants had but a few minutes to create an impression that took years of creating before the 1900s. Citizens became one face in the crowd, and to secure a job, they had to become energetic, forceful, and memorable. The urbanization movement changed society into an extroverted world, and extroversion is still running our society. In my personal finance class, the required credit in which students learn life skills, students are ingrained with the idea that their ability to perform in an interview decides their entire career. We are taught to smile, be joyful and confident, and portray happiness and excitement, all while persuading the interviewer of our supreme leadership and group skills. Even from high school, society is melding the lives of its children to be tossed into a world of extroverts. It is ridiculous that I must act as an extrovert to receive a career. Every aspect of society caters towards extroverts, from marketing to business, school and jobs. Introverts do not need to act extroverted to succeed in today's society and "nobody should succumb to the social pressure to make this a fully extroverted world" (Shakoon), but in order to be successful in the American world you must be an extrovert or pretend to be one.

We gravitate toward the loudest, flashiest, and most noticeable people. From schoolchildren wearing the trendiest clothing to adults who drive the expensive cars, the most outgoing members

are worshiped by society. Extroverts are leaders because of their confidence, even if the information being portrayed is incorrect. Examples include teenagers taking control of a class discussion while having no knowledge on the topic, or members of a company's board following the loudest person at the table, who has no idea how to address or solve the topics on the table. As a race, we flock to the most extroverted and popular members of society. And this is most evident in American high schools. At my high school, extroverts run the student body. Walking through the crowded hallways, I am constantly squeezing around large cliques of teenagers, all huddled around select figureheads. I can name every member of the most popular group in the grade. Everybody can. My school is a popularity contest. From running for the homecoming court, Student Senate, and officers in all the clubs, the most known students rule the class and school. Even when voting for National Honor Society officers, we are deciding the candidates' popularity. And NHS is the club with the best and brightest senior students. During the year, countless posters fill the hallways for upcoming voting. However, instead of stating the candidates' qualifications or ideas for the school, the posters are only filled with pictures of girls in their prom dresses. And only the extroverted teenagers have any chance of making offices and titles. Even if I have a revolutionizing idea about how to increase the popularity of the football team, I would never be chosen because I am a quiet introvert. In offices all over America, introverts are being left out and behind. Brilliant ideas about saving the failing budget or pitching a project theme become overlooked as the heads at the table turn to the booming voice. The smart, but introverted, member at the group table may have the answer to solving the problems of the company, but because of the Culture of Personality, introverts are being overshadowed by extroverts.

But extroverts do not receive all the limelight in the making

of American society. Introverts are active in all aspects of today's culture, including Mahatma Gandhi, whose profound spirituality and belief in justice inspired the world; Warren Buffet, one of the most successful investors in the world; and Hillary Clinton, former Secretary of State and presidential candidate for the Democratic party in 2016. The modern world has been created by introverts.

An example of where introverts greatly impacted history is the Civil Rights Movement. When the Civil Rights Movement comes to mind, images of marches, protests, speeches, and boycotts prevail. These events are expected to be led by extroverts, when the Civil Rights Movement was actually started by an introvert. Rosa Parks' famous bus boycott seems like the work of an extrovert. History depicts Parks as boldly refusing to give up her seat on the bus for a white man; she is a heroine, an extrovert. But Parks was a quiet and reserved member of the NAACP. She was a follower, not a leader. When Parks refused to move by saying "No" in a calm, clear voice, her quiet, but powerful, way of standing up for her rights made her actions memorable. If she had overacted and yelled, her actions would be written off as just another protest. With a simple, strong "No," Rosa Parks helped to jumpstart the Civil Rights Movement and the Montgomery bus boycott and, ultimately, inspired Martin Luther King Jr., an extrovert, to march to Washington. Her effective, introverted way of standing up for her rights, beliefs, and community shows how powerful and influential introverts are in society.

Introverts have found a new way to influence society: online. American society is turning digital. Employees work from home, and rarely come into the office. My cousin is a computer engineer working for a company in Orlando, Florida. And yet, Jon lives in London, England. His entire job is online. Our society is changing once again. Computers and the Internet have become the most influential creations of mankind. Connections stretching across

continents and seas allow for a new world to develop. A world designed for introverts. As Susan Cain states in *Quiet,* "The same person who would never raise his hand in a lecture hall of two hundred people might blot to two thousand, or two million, without thinking twice" (63). The Internet allows the introverted to establish a presence online, and many introverts claim that it is easier to be outgoing online than offline. The ability to be online creates a social barrier. To Introverts, the Internet is their oyster. Introverts are now able to express facts about themselves online that their friends and family would be surprised to read. Those who find it difficult to talk to new people suddenly have the whole world available to them. And studies show that "it was found that introverted people locate their 'real me' on the Internet" (Amichai). The Internet gives quiet people a voice. A strong voice that is leading the way as our society turns digital.

As I close the car door and pull out of the parking lot, the warm sunshine filtering through the windows, I look forward to the quiet weekend ahead. I know I will enjoy playing my flute, reading, and watching movies from the comfort of my own home. I am an introvert. I may be quiet and reserved, but I am a powerful member of society. The power of introverts is expanding as society turns digital. Introverts who dislike talking to new people now have the world at their fingertips. Introverts with brilliant minds are now free to share their ideas with the whole world. Introverts will no longer be forced to become an extrovert. The world is changing, and the introverts are already on board.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. According to the author, why does American society seem to favor extroverts over introverts?
2. In what ways is society becoming friendlier toward introverts?
3. How has the author structured her arguments in this essay? How does this structure shape the overall message of the essay?

Style

1. How does the author's voice highlight the ethos of this essay?
2. How does the author connect her personal examples of living in an extroverted society to her sources?

The Door to Literacy

Joseph Allen

How might Deborah Brandt's concept of literacy sponsorship be applied to your own history and experience as a reader, writer, or public speaker?

As I approached this question, I found myself thinking back through my experiences with literacy development. The concept of literacy as a resource is presented in Deborah Brandt's *Sponsors of Literacy*. Brandt believes that our literacy skill and understanding is something that we acquire from a sponsor, someone who has the resource of literacy and can pass it along. The cost of the literacy resource does not come without benefit to the sponsor; it is more of an exchange of services. The sponsor offers literacy through an unspoken agreement of ideological cooperation: "obligations toward one's sponsors run deep, affecting what, why, and how people read and write" (Brandt 47). In essence, the initial influence that a sponsor has over the sponsored is powerful enough to shape and form their political, educational, and religious credence for life. With this mindset, Brandt makes the connection between individual literacy and economic literacy. In considering her essay, I find it striking how much of an impact literacy has on an individual. Through my

experience, literacy has opened doors and created opportunities for better jobs, education, and personal connections. Literacy has given me the means by which I can expand my knowledge in the pursuit of wisdom and understanding.

My first and most influential sponsors were my parents and grandparents. My family came from college backgrounds, so education was always thought of as a priority. From a young age, I struggled with learning how to read. With books about apples being red, and cows jumping over the moon, I simply could not see the value in it. I preferred spending my time daydreaming. The stories I could create in my imagination were far more interesting than the simple ones that were written down on a couple of small pages. As far as I was concerned, I was not interested and therefore it was not important. Of course, my family knew better. They painstakingly spent hours working with me and making me sit and practice. It took determination to overcome my stubborn persistence, but eventually, despite my best efforts, I began to learn how to read. Slowly I graduated from mind-numbing readers to chapter books, this transition taking more time than the average child. You see, reading did not come easily to me, but every step of the way my parents encouraged me to press on. I may have begun slow, but all at once I found myself engrossed in tales of dragons and adventure, time travel and invisible men. My imagination would more often than not, catch me up into a dream world and now I had books to facilitate the formation of new ideas and enhance creativity. The library soon became one of my favorite stops, and books began to pile up in every nook and cranny. My family did not direct me towards certain books, nor try to impose any filters on my access to literature. As long as I was reading something, the act of reading itself was an accomplishment. I believe that this openness to literature gave me the opportunity to explore ideas across all genres and schools of thought, allowing me to form

opinions based on what made the most sense instead of what most closely reflected the opinions of my sponsors. In this regard, Brandt's ideas do not necessarily line up with my experiences.

Once the seed had been planted, I became my own sponsor. I was not satisfied with just reading novels; I wanted more. No longer was I learning to read, or simply reading for the pleasure of its company, I was reading to learn. Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged,* Immanuel Kant's *A Critique of Pure Reason, Beowulf,* or Wolfgang W.E. Samuel's *German Boy: A Child in War*-- if it peaked my curiosity, I would read it. The school system could not keep up with my appetite. By the time my high school assigned Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, I had already read all of Austen's works. Meanwhile at home, dinner table conversations often turned to discussions of politics, economics, philosophy, religion, etc. Nothing was ever thought of as being too advanced or too sophisticated for discussion. This was the kind of atmosphere that did not just require a broad range of knowledge, but also the ability to weigh and defend positions. This discourse may sound intimidating, but it was the kind of environment that I needed to push me deeper into literature.

Leaning on the ideas that Gee proposed in "Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction," the broad academic and etiquette-based discourse that my family used became my primary discourse. Growing up in a generation with a very different and somewhat conflicting discourse to my own, it has often made it difficult for me to be included in the more 'mainstream' discourses. During my freshman and sophomore years of high school, I worked at developing a secondary discourse that I could use in my high school environment. I must be honest; this was psychologically one of the most difficult things that I have faced. My mind was torn between who I was and who I thought I was supposed to be. The conflict between these two discourses left me emotionally exhausted. Eventually,

I resolved myself to the fact that the mainstream discourse of my generation was not something that I could be fluent in. I had to be myself, and either society would accept me or not. Where I come to my disagreement with Gee is my belief, from experience, that people are more than willing to go out of their way to include other, foreign, discourses. I have found friends with all kinds of primary and secondary discourses, and our differences do not divide us. It is the friendship and betterment which we offer to one another that brings us together.

My imagination, which once held me back from learning how to read, soon led me to my next sponsors. Through the years, I always had a passion for constructing stories of adventure, tragedy, and intrigue, but I was not very good at putting my stories down on paper until I found a group of individuals who shared my passion. Together we began writing down our stories and each week we would trade copies for editing and critique. My writing, which up to this point was decent at best, improved tremendously with each revision. These friends became sponsors for my writing literacy. As a result of their encouragement and support, I am currently in the process of writing my first book.

Brandt is right: in this modern age, literacy is an invaluable resource. It often determines whether a person will rise or fall in an economy. Society judges each individual's literacy and determines their potential by it. I know that in my experience, I would not have been able to get where I am today without my sponsors of literacy. That is why I believe, once the door to literacy is opened, there is no telling what an individual may be able to learn, create, and achieve.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. Who were the author's primary and secondary sponsors of literacy?
2. For the author, where does Gee's argument about discourses depart from the author's own?
3. What points does the author make about the importance of literacy sponsors and environments in his own life?

Style

1. How is this essay organized? How does the organization contribute to the overall understanding of this paper?
2. How does the author blend the voices of his sources with his own voice? What is the effect in terms of the readability of the paper?

Knowing Your Worth

Michaela Lopez

School is the place where we learn. We learn how to read, write, problem solve, multitask, discover who we are, discover friendships and where we thrive. School is a great place, but there is one thing missing in most schools that is limiting students from reaching their fullest potential—mental health classes. It is for this reason that the Blue Springs School needs to implement mental health classes into the curriculum.

According to Sabrina Zavernise from the *New York Times*, adolescents are just as likely to die from suicide as they are from a traffic accident. This pandemic is sometimes swept under the rug. The problem is people tend to ignore the illness because some don't believe it is real, and others don't have time to deal with it. The major problem in today's society is people don't know how significantly mental illness' can affect adolescents. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, in 1997 alone 13 percent of all deaths in the 15- through 24-year-old age group were due to suicide. The actual number may be higher because some of these deaths are recorded as "accidental."

Mental illness is a real thing. I know this firsthand; as someone who has struggled with depression, I understand how serious it can be. I felt like there was a voice inside my head constantly

conveying negative thoughts and putting me down. I often felt overwhelmed and tended to also struggle with anxiety. It's sad to say, but I know a few other teens my age that share the struggles I did. Thankfully I have a very strong support system full of family and friends who care about me and helped me through my difficult times, but sadly some are not as fortunate. Stacey Freedenthal from Speaking of Suicide states that the main reason teens choose not to talk to their parents when they are having suicidal thoughts is because they are afraid their parents will "freak out." Of course it may be upsetting, shocking news that their child wants to end their life, parents are the best resource a teen can turn to. Teens are just so afraid to speak out because they don't want to hurt others by sharing their pain and inflicting it on others. It is for this reason exactly why our school district needs to implement mental health classes into the curriculum.

If students understood from freshman year what mental illnesses are and how to avoid and detect them this could help students understand that it's okay to not be okay. Students could understand the science behind mental illness and understand that it is normal to feel what they are feeling and when they do feel like they are struggling with a mental illness it is okay to talk to someone about it. Currently a health class is required for students in the Blue Springs School district in order to graduate. I took the health class freshman year, and we learned basic knowledge about our body and about sexually transmitted diseases. Although I thought the class was interesting and important to take, I feel as though a mental health class would be just as beneficial if not more. According to KMBC 9 News, at least four students in the Blue Springs School District took their own life in 2016. KMBC 9 also stated that parents and students said that they were worried the problem wasn't being adequately addressed. If the District implemented a mental health class this problem could be rectified.

We need to work toward the integration of education and mental health in schools. If the district implemented a required mental health class into the curriculum, students would become more aware of the problem and it wouldn't be such a scary far off thing. More teens have some sort of undetected depression than most would think. Some times teens feel as though it is normal to be having a prolonged state of sadness because people will say things like, "she is just going through a weird stage" or "he is going through puberty and has become a real grump." Often students don't even understand that a mental illness can be very serious.

Mental illness not only leads to suicide but can also lead to gun violence as well. As we hear on the news about mass school shootings, most of the time the shooter had some sort of mental illness and end up taking his or her own life. For example in the tragic instance of the shooting at Sandy Hook the shooter, Adam Lanza, struggled with mental illness. Lanza struggled with anxiety, which was improperly addressed growing up by Lanza's mother and educators. According to an article from CNN, "teachers may have limited training or expertise to identify or respond to a student who may be progressing academically but who is also exhibiting difficulties in social emotional development" and urged additional training. If educators were more knowledgeable on the topic and knew how to properly address children who show signs of a mental illness we could be stopping a larger problem down the road.

The next step is to figure out how to make this vision tangible. There is no monetary value for suicide. Educators and policy makers solely need to stand behind the facts. Mental illness is real, and there is a way to help students who struggle with it. If the monetary aspect of this affliction is a problem, I am sure that we could find a way to solve it. Our school district leaders and administrators are knowledgeable and compassionate men and women, and I believe that there is enough evidence for them to

understand how significant this problem is and how they have the opportunity to make a difference in their students' lives.

On November 4th of this year my life turned upside down. As my sister and I walked through the door after school, we were totally unaware of the news that was about to be shared with us. I remember it like it was yesterday. The mood was very somber throughout the house as my parents sat us down on the couch. They told us that my cousin, Uziel, had taken his own life that morning. At first I was in shock, saying that no way this was possible, out of all people I knew he would not be the one to do that. He was smart, talented, outgoing, charismatic, and just an all around extraordinary human being. He was in a band, played three varsity sports and had a scholarship to Mizzou in January. Uzi was only three months older than I am, so all of this was just so surreal. No one saw this coming—not his parents, siblings, cousins, friends—no one. Uzi had kept all his thoughts bottled up and didn't want to worry anyone with the horrible thoughts that he felt with day to day. He didn't want to hurt anyone or for anyone to feel blamed for how he felt. But that is exactly what he did. Uzi was in pain; he was drowning in his own thoughts and didn't want anyone to know. By taking his life, he ended his pain but at the same time he spread pain to others. The ripple effect—the continuing and spreading of an action. Uzi's action affected every single person who loved him. Suicide is never the answer; no matter what someone is going through it simply never is. It is for this reason that people need to understand that you cant bottle up your feelings, you need to talk to someone when you are feeling down. Whether it is a teacher, parent, friend, counselor, you need to speak up and know that it's okay. Uzi was an incredible person and was loved by so many. His life simply ended too short all due to a horrible illness.

Some might say that mental illness classes aren't very beneficial for schools because not everyone struggles with mental

illness. First off, the school offers a lot of different classes that are not beneficial for all students. But to refute that point, if students are aware of what a mental illness is and how to detect one, they can help others who may be struggling. By implementing this class we are not only helping those struggling with a mental illness but all students become aware of what they are. We will be helping parents have a stronger relationship with their teen who is no longer afraid to talk about their feelings, and teachers have less empty seats.

Students need to know about mental health early on; they just might be able to help somebody someday and know how to help themselves. We need to begin learning in-depth as an adolescent. We need to learn now what are the signs to a mental illness before it is too late.

Everyone needs to know that they are valued. By implementing mental health classes we will see so many benefits throughout our school as well as our community. In order for students to reach their fullest potential, our school district needs to allow students to understand more about themselves. Administrators need to work towards integrating education and mental health. It is for these reasons that the Blue Springs School District needs to implement mental health classes into the curriculum.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. What benefits would mental illness instruction bring to the school district according to the author?
2. What problems can mental illness introduce into the school environment?
3. How does the author suggest her solution could be feasible?

Style

1. How does the author blend personal anecdotes and research to make her point?
2. What counterarguments might be made about the points being used to construct the author's argument?

The Impact of Discourse and Sponsors

Mara Meneely

As James Paul Gee describes in his scholarly article, "Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction," literacy comes from so much more than just reading and writing. From a definitional standpoint, literacy is "the ability to read and write," but also "knowledge that relates to a specific subject" ("Literacy"). This means that literacy can be demonstrated through reading and writing skills but a person can also be literate in sports, music, education, medicine, etc. Gee describes each different type of literacy as discourses. In order to be a member of these discourses, a person needs someone who guides the learning and acquisition of the discourse. Deborah Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy" explains the importance of sponsors, those who have impacted someone's learning in literacy, who act as the guide to the learning and success in a discourse.

I strongly agree with Gee's statement that "a discourse is a sort of 'identity kit' which comes complete with the… instructions of how to act [and] talk" (7). One major discourse in my life has been gymnastics. For thirteen years this sport was my identity. Since the age of five, I trained at a competitive level and gained

innumerable life lessons. I developed a strong work ethic as a result of thousands of hours spent conditioning, working on my flexibility in warmups, and increasing my agility and skills in each event: vault, uneven bars, balance beam, and floor exercise. However, this work ethic doesn't just pertain to the gymnastics discourse; it carries over to my academic discourses, as well. I learned to demonstrate good sportsmanship and friendliness from my parents, but I saw the importance of it in gymnastics. For example, if my teammate received first place on uneven bars, or learned a new skill before me, I didn't give them the cold shoulder; I congratulated them and supported them in practice. Regardless of who won first place or got a skill first, my teammates and I formed close bonds because we trained side by side twenty hours a week. Through these relationships I found new ways to interact with and read people. Some people needed words of encouragement and support when having a tough day while others like being left alone. I began to understand the language, whether it was body language or attitudes, of each individual teammate.

Another key life skill that gymnastics has taught me is the value of failure. Nine times out of ten I fell off the balance beam when doing a flip, but to use a cliché phrase, I always got back up and tried again. Failure after failure made me think: If you stuck a skill perfectly the first time you ever tried it, did you really learn it? It was probably a fluke because it takes try after try to really learn a skill. All those falls and mistakes helped me critique myself and taught me not to give up and walk away. Learning the value of failure was especially important in the gymnastics discourse.

With any sport you learn the language of it. For example, when my coach Laura said, "Mara, I want you to go work on double fulls into the pit," it was clear to me what she meant. Outsiders of the gymnastics discourse, however, wouldn't

understand what my coach meant since they lack both the ability in skill and the knowledge of the terminology. Also, there is a sort of slang within each gymnastics facility. While my coaches called a release move on bars a "shoot half," another gym may call that same skill a "bail". If that coach said, "Mara, go do a bail," I would have no idea what they want me to do since I don't know some of the language used at that gym. While most people, including friends and strangers, probably identify me as a young Chinese female, my main internal identity was that of a gymnast.

At what point is someone no longer considered a member of a discourse? I cannot state a definitive answer but I do have first-hand experience of the shifting of a discourse. Two years ago, I had to leave gymnastics at my parents' insistence because of their concern about several injuries I had in a short period of time. I still remember the language from "yurchencos" on vault, to "tkatchevs" on bars, but I can't fully relate to the whole new generation of gymnasts who now train at my gym. My relationships with and understanding of my coaches may be different too, as they are acquiring new knowledge and coaching styles, whether it's through new drills or new workouts. Since my departure from the gym, I can start to feel myself becoming less and less knowledgeable in the discourse which means I am becoming less and less of a member.

Can a person be a "pretender" in a discourse and be successful? If you asked Gee, he would argue that you can't be a "pretender" because you lack fluency, and the social group would not accept you and give you "their social goods" (10). I both agree and disagree with Gee's idea. I agree that if you lack the fluency of the discourse and do not try to acquire the skills needed to succeed, you have marked yourself as a pretender. For example, if you blow off a class, it becomes clear to the teacher that you no longer belong in that academic discourse.

However, I would argue that everyone comes into a discourse as a "pretender". I joined the track team my junior year of high school and decided to pursue pole vault. I knew nothing about the sport except that you have a pole, that pole is supposed to fling you into the air, and that you land on a fluffy mat. With the guidance of two very important sponsors, Coach Luckett and Coach Harig, I gradually learned the basics and techniques of pole vault. This allowed me to slowly incorporate myself into the pole vault discourse. I eventually learned what it means to do an ATP, how to hit and hold, and that I jump on a 13'6" 155 pole. I had to go with the flow and adapt to the changes required to pole vault in order to both acquire the skills and new terminology of the sport. My junior year I managed to qualify for the state meet in pole vault and long jump. While I had minor success that year, I still considered myself to be a pretender at that time because I was still learning the mechanics of pole vault.

When the pretender has learned enough knowledge of the discourse and can guide new members, they have transformed into a member of the discourse. I began to shift from a pretender into a member of the pole vault discourse my senior year. I understood what my coaches meant when they said, "do three ATPs before you full vault" and no longer simply went through the motions. With the knowledge I acquired, I could mentor the incoming freshman who were like me last year. This was a big year for me. I identified myself as a pole vaulter, broke my school record by nine inches with a jump of eleven feet, placed 8th at the 2016 Missouri state track meet in pole vault, and was recruited for pole vault and long jump by UMKC. I came into track two years ago with no clue what pole vault was and pretended I belonged by going through the motions, learning the techniques of pole vault as the season moved forward. Once I understood the language and could perform the skills required, I gained a new identity through my membership in the pole vault discourse.

Throughout my life I have had some impactful, valuable sponsors as well as some sponsors who held me back in a discourse. I strongly agree with Gee's point that to teach someone is to "apprentice [them] in a master apprentice relationship in a social practice wherein you scaffold their growing ability to say, do, value, believe, and so forth" (11). The characteristics of a mentor that Gee conveys in his article describes what Brandt classifies as a good sponsor. Brandt describes a sponsor as, "figures who turned up most typically in people's memories of literacy learning" (47). My coaches represent some of the figures I think of when reflecting on who has greatly impacted my athletic discourses. They are the memorable figures because of their guided approach through a scaffolding teaching style. My gymnastics coaches taught with a scaffolding method. The ability of a gymnast to do any big, higher level skills, stems from the basics: handstand, cartwheel, back handspring, etc. My coaches built upon those basics and taught us new bigger skills. Their role was mainly as mentor, rather than safety monitor. By this I mean they verbally demonstrated skills, only spotting when necessary, gave corrections, and words of encouragement when needed. This allowed us to learn the skills through trial and error until we acquired the skills on our own. While having good sponsors is preferred, I did not always have this luxury. I found this in some of my academic discourses. My Spanish teacher, Senora Koeller, who I had for Spanish 3, 4, and AP Spanish, had good intentions of helping me but ended up just giving me the answers on tests. This mostly occurred in AP Spanish. It was nice to have A's on tests, but being given the answer every time diminished my ability to expand my learning. While giving me the answers to the test helped me get the A, in the long run, I learned less and less Spanish. In the end, I learned more about Spanish language, whether it was grammar, reading, or speaking, in my Spanish 4 than I did in AP Spanish. I consider

myself to be a pretender in the Spanish discourse because after five years of studying the language, I still have little confidence about my ability to fluently converse with someone. In an ideal world everyone would have effective sponsors in each discourse they are a member of but that is not always the case.

There are many parallels between Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy" and Gee's "Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics." Brandt's description of ideal sponsors, ones who have made a memorable impact, represents the teachers and mentors that Gee looks for within discourses. Those sponsors can be coaches, parents, teachers, etc. In order to be a member in a discourse, one must have complete fluency in that discourse, meaning they know enough of the language and skills in that discourse to teach new members. To obtain the fluency needed, it is crucial to have valuable sponsors who can guide you and lead you to succeed in the discourse.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. How does the author define discourse? What is this definition based upon?
2. How does the author deviate from others' use of terminology to create her own?
3. What effects of sponsorship did the author see in her own experiences?

Style

1. How does the argument being made develop over the course of the essay? What concepts are built upon or expanded?
2. How does the author include terminology from her own background? What effect does this have on the essay?

Family Is Family

Nealie Niemeier

"I am gay." Three words that kind of take you by shock when coming from someone you love. The news is especially shocking when that loved one is married to your sister and is the father of your six-month-old nephew. I had never had to deal with someone I know being gay, much less a family member. I don't know much about his family now, his new house with his new boyfriend and his new kids. What I do know is that even though they look different than the "model family" on the outside, they are just like any other family on the inside. I know the love he and his boyfriend have for one another and I know the love they have for my nephew and the other kids. Despite the fact that they are different, nothing has changed. They are just two people who love each other and that should be all that matters.

What does the model family look like? When defined, one can usually agree that a model family is one that consists of a mother, a father, and a child or children. The key point here being a mother and a father. Not a mother and a mother, or a father and a father, just a mom and a dad. That is why so many people dislike or disagree with gay marriages. The arrangement is not the norm that they are used to or believe should be apparent in every household, and they don't want to

agree with something that is "different." The fact of the matter is that in today's society there are a lot of nontraditional families that don't necessarily fit the model family criteria. According to a Pew Research Center analysis of recently released American Community Survey (ACS) and Decennial Census data, fewer than half (46%) of U.S. kids younger than 18 years of age are living in a home with two married heterosexual parents in their first marriage (Livingston).

In contrast to the idea that a family consists of a mother, a father, and their children, the *Cambridge Dictionary* defines the model or nuclear family as a social unit of two parents and their children. Two parents. This definition does not say a mother and a father, so who is to say that those two parents can't be two men or two women? There is no valid reason for refusing to call lesbian and gay headed households families. They fall under almost every criterion for identifying families and the concept of a family: "They are groups of coresident kin providing jointly through income-pooling for each other's need of food and shelter. They socialize children, engage in emotional and physical support, and make up part of a larger kin network" ("Gay and Lesbian Parenting"). Despite the fact that he is gay, I know Logan is still trying to be the best dad he can possibly be to Finn. The fact that he likes other men does not hinder in any way his ability to be a great father, or his boyfriend's ability to be a great father to his three kids. They may not be the most ideal family and they may not look to others like the model family does, but they function just like any other family out there. I know that when Finn is with them, he is in good hands.

Although these couples are great parents just like heterosexual couples, their families still face discrimination and people still argue about their rights. Society has to realize that the model family has developed into many different forms in recent years and that the "nuclear family" is not necessarily

the most common form anymore. By the late 1980s and 1990s, a record number of gays and lesbians were becoming parents through networks of donors for surrogacy, artificial insemination, and other fertility services. Gays and lesbians also became more vocal in challenging laws that prevented gay parents from adopting children. These changes led to what has been dubbed the "gay baby boom." During this period gays and lesbians continued to fight against homophobia and discriminatory laws and policies. By the early 2000s, anti-sodomy laws had been declared unconstitutional and the issue of gay marriage had started appearing on ballots around the country (Powroznik). On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the right to same-sex marriage is protected under the U.S. Constitution. By legalizing gay marriage, this historical decision recognizes that the American family is no longer an exclusively heterosexual institution. Studies estimate that between 1 and 9 million children in the United States have at least one parent who is lesbian or gay. There are approximately 594,000 same-sex partner households, according to the 2000 Census, and there are children living in approximately 27 percent of those households (Linville and O'Neil). If a family is defined as two parents and their children, that would mean that there were approximately 160,380 gay families in the United States in the year 2000. 16 years later, that number has probably skyrocketed. While gays and lesbians still face pervasive discrimination, these recent changes bring families with gay or lesbian parents further into the mainstream, and diversify the cultural understanding of American families.

For most of the 20th century, homosexuality was not only illegal, but was also classified as a psychological disorder. Gay fathers and lesbian mothers had to keep their sexual identities secret out of fear of both legal and cultural repercussions. Homosexuality was highly stigmatized. Exposure often meant

loss of employment, alienation from families and friends, violence and hostility from the larger community, and even imprisonment. For homosexual parents, exposure meant that they could—and often did—lose custody of their children as well as visitation rights (Powroznik).

In order to protect their families, gay parents had to challenge the belief that being raised by gay parents was detrimental to children. This is still the case today. Most research studies show that children with two moms or two dads fare just as well as children with heterosexual parents. In fact, one comprehensive study of children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers concluded that children raised by same-sex parents did not differ from other children in terms of emotional functioning, sexual orientation, stigmatization, gender role behavior, behavioral adjustment, gender identity, learning and grade point averages. For example, adolescents with same-sex parents reported feeling more connected at school. Another study reported that children in gay and lesbian households are more likely to talk about emotionally difficult topics, and they are often more resilient, compassionate and tolerant (Linville and O'Neil). According to Abbie Goldberg, a psychologist at Clark University in Massachusetts who researches gay and lesbian parenting:

> Gay parents tend to be more motivated, and more committed than heterosexual parents on average, because they chose to be parents. Gays and lesbians rarely become parents by accident, compared with an almost 50 percent accidental pregnancy rate among heterosexuals. That translates to greater commitment on average and more involvement. And while research indicates that kids of gay parents show few differences in achievement, mental health, social functioning and other measures, these kids may have the advantage of open-mindedness, tolerance

> and role models for equitable relationships, according to some research. (Pappas)

Finn is only one-and-a-half years old but I can already tell that the fact that his dad is gay has no impact on him or his abilities. I feel as though the fact that his parents are divorced has more of an impact on him than the fact that he has a gay father. He is super smart, loves to play, and has a fascination with horses. Finn is just like any other little boy, he is just being raised by more dads than most other children. The only problem that could arise out of his situation is bullies when he gets older. Most kids pick up on things their parents believe and a lot of them believe that gay marriage and/or parenting is wrong. Not only do they pick up on things they believe, but they also pick up on things that they say and sometimes those negative things get repeated. As much as I'd love to shield my nephew from the cruelty in this world, he is bound to get picked on at some point in his life for this. But that is not a problem with Logan and the way he parents, that is a problem with society and people's closed-mindedness.

To others it may seem like everything has completely changed since Logan came out, and I guess in a way those people are kind of right. Things have definitely changed but at the same time nothing has really changed at all. For me and my family, things are definitely different. My two brothers and I lost a brother, my mom and step-dad lost a son, and my sister lost a husband. For Finn, not much has changed. Although his parents are no longer together, he still has a mom and a dad that love him with all of their heart and would do anything for him. He also now has room for two more father figures in his life in addition to Logan. My hope is that he can live in peace in the current arrangement he has and grow up not being ashamed of his family because of what society says is unacceptable. Luckily for Finn, the idea of the model family has changed a little and his family situation is

no longer as stigmatized as it used to be. In the end one thing holds true, they're just like any other family. Two dads and all.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. What conclusions does the author make about the concept of "traditional" family?
2. What statistical evidence does the author use to help make her case?
3. How does the author differentiate between the legal and social aspects of marriage?

Style

1. In what ways does the author balance use of ethos, pathos, and logos in her argument?
2. What effect does the author's personal experiences have on the other parts of her argument?

Pronounced Gay

Blake Summers

No matter how many times one can express that "Words cannot hurt you," the meaning behind those words always can. For the past few years, I have been attempting to ingrain the idea that others' opinions of who I am can never impact who I turn out to be. Ever since that one question, the one question that sent me down what would seem like an eternal self-conscious spiral, I have been distraught. "Are you gay?" she asked. No words could describe how perplexed I was by this question. The amount of confusion that came over me overwhelmed me. The world's ignorant belief in stereotypes sent me through a lifelong emotional struggle. I questioned who I was and who I wanted to become, and I reevaluated the entirety of myself. The superficial ideas that are shown in stereotypes portray how quickly and effortlessly our population can impact others through seemingly harmless words.

I walked into my eighth grade art class expecting another average day of applying my creative thoughts and putting them into a physical form. I sat down at my table and began working on my rendition of the legendary *American Gothic* painting. As I resumed my work from the day before, I began conversing with the girl next to me. The two of us would talk each day, and we

had become decent friends during that semester-long class. This conversation progressed as it usually did; we would talk about the project, what had happened to us that day at school, what we would do when we got home, or any other typical conversation two eighth grade students would have. As casually as she could ask any other question, the words "Are you gay?" poured out of her mouth. On the outside, I calmly and politely told her that I was not, but internally I was breaking down. I was baffled that she had the nerve to ask me that, I was confused as to why my sexuality was unclear to her, and then I became infuriated to think that someone could create a false reality about me based on an ignorant belief in stereotypes. She had concluded that because of the way I acted that I had to be a homosexual. I do, and will forever, support all homosexuals, transgender individuals, and anyone in the LGBTQ community, but I was just simply not a part of it. I felt so out of place when I learned that someone had an idea of me that was simply untrue. That significant day in art class was not the only instance of me being asked about my sexuality; I have been asked countless times since that day. Every single edition of that question was based solely off of a stereotype that I now know more people believe to be true than do not.

One would think that I could simply brush the false assumptions off and resume my life as before. This was true the first time I was asked. Then the second edition of the question came, and then the third. The frequency of the ever so familiar question seemed to increase each week. I almost felt obligated to clarify what my sexuality was whenever I met someone new. As belittling as it is to admit, I became deeply concerned with what image those around me were drawing of who I was. I loathed being asked about my sexuality, and this fear led me to try to avoid that confrontation at all costs. I became hyper-aware of any behavior I had that could come across to anyone as feminine.

I gave myself a mental slap on the wrist if my voice reached too high of a pitch when I spoke, if I sat at a lunch table with more girls than boys, or if I was straying too much from the masculine personality of a typical teenage boy. No matter what method I implemented, the question kept finding its way to me, and all I could wonder was why this ignorant belief in the gay stereotype was so widespread.

I knew why. Society has raised its youth to believe in stereotypes. My presumptions about being too feminine have proven correct as I have grown older, and as Lisa LaMar and Mary Kite state, "Men who are described in stereotypically feminine terms are more likely to be judged homosexual than are men in stereotypically masculine terms" (189). When anyone asks me this question, they have no intention of creating inner distress inside of me, they're just applying the ignorant knowledge that society has bestowed upon them. Today's culture has brought children up to only search skin-deep before a conclusion is made about a particular individual, and therefore I had been deemed gay in every one of their eyes due to my flamboyant outward behavior.

Why the thought that an individual's voice, personality, and fashion choices are determining factors of sexuality is commonplace today baffles me. One of the key factors of concluding sexuality in males, according to the stereotype, is how feminine a male talks or acts. Some gay men are in fact more feminine than one would expect a modern male to act, but there are masculine gay men as well. As journalist David Thorpe notes, "There's no such thing as a fundamentally gay voice. Plenty of men may *sound* gay, but their voices aren't evidence that they *are* gay. What we call the "gay voice" belongs to us all" ("Who Sounds Gay?"). As noted, an individual's voice cannot be used as proof or evidence to determine one's sexuality, but the practice of this method appears every day.

Unfortunately, stereotypes came into our society for a reason. The entire ideology behind the fact that a man with a high voice, flamboyant behavior, or keen fashion sense is a homosexual was created when gay men became known to possess those traits. The stereotypes go awry when the belief that every male with those listed characteristics is gay manifests itself. William Cox, an assistant scientist in the Department of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison wrote about how our internal 'gaydars' are incorrect. Devon Lowe from the University of Wisconsin-Madison addressed Cox's studies in his article, such as when Cox said, "Imagine that 100 percent of gay men wear pink shirts all the time, and 10 percent of straight men wear pink shirts all the time. Even though all gay men wear pink shirts, there would still be twice as many straight men wearing pink shirts. So, even in this extreme example, people who rely on pink shirts as a stereotypic cue to assume men are gay will be wrong two-thirds of the time" ("The Science of Stereotyping"). This example shows how easily the stereotype can be refuted, yet it is still used every day. As I've mentioned before, it is true that some gay men fit the general gay stereotype, but similar statements can be said about every stereotype that exists today. The stereotype proves to be accurate in some circumstances, but the stereotype could not be more false in many other scenarios.

Most of what being a masculine male requires bores me. I couldn't care less about football, taking part in "masculine" activities, such as strength contests, are pointless in my eyes, and the entirety of masculine humor is primitive and crude, and has no place in my personality. Despite the fact that being a "masculine male" is the polar opposite of who I am, I strived to be one. The misconstrued stereotype clouded who I was in my mind, and I can only thank the world for that. Sociologist Michael Kimmel states that, "Our peers are a kind of 'gender police,' always waiting for us to screw up so they can give us a

ticket for crossing the well-drawn boundaries of manhood" (465). I tried to change my inner self to avoid being confronted about my sexuality, and to even avoid the uncertainty regarding about how my sexual orientation may come across to others.

I've now begun my senior year of high school, and the barrage of questions regarding my sexuality seems to be dwindling. I no longer stress about how I compare to the masculine males around me; I've become numb to the thoughts of others. As much inner turmoil, confusion, and annoyance that the innocent girl in my eighth grade art class caused me, she taught me a valuable lesson as well. If she had never asked me that one fateful question, if she had not believed in society's deceptive stereotypes, I may have been a completely different person than I am today. I could have been one of the ignorant individuals who use stereotypes and internal 'gaydars' as factual evidence when determining sexuality, and in turn I could be generating the same turmoil and sadness that I felt in others. Stereotypes will forever remain superficial, but my only desire is that our world can find all the truth in these hollow thoughts, and vanquish them.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. How did the author's personal experiences shape his attitude toward gay stereotyping?
2. What, for the author, were the negative consequences of being "pronounced gay" by others? What, does the author conclude, has been the benefit?
3. In what ways do the autobiographical details of this paper contribute to its ethos?

Style

1. How does the incorporation of the author's voice add weight to this essay? In what ways does the author's voice contribute to the ethos of the piece?
2. How do the sources the author cites contribute to the conversation about assuming sexuality based on external factors (like voice, gesture, or humor)?

Intermediate Category Winner

The Where and How of Knowledge

Sarthak Garg

> "Until we get equality in education, we won't have an equal society."
> Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court

"Equality in education" as a term of art is a concept that is at the intersection of a plethora of determinant factors—racism, classism, colonialism, etc.—that all stem from centuries of social and historical contexts that have to be understood in order to 1) analyze the problems of the status quo, and 2) determine the optimal way to move forward and achieve actual equality in education.

Achieving equality is an arduous process that cannot happen overnight; in fact, it has been happening. Following the landmark 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* case that ruled segregated education unconstitutional, many schools were integrated. In 1957, nine black students were admitted to Little Rock Central High School (LRCH), the first high school to be desegregated. Although this was initially met with public and political backlash from the people of Arkansas and its governor, respectively, the population of African-American students has grown.

I attended LRCH from 2011 to 2015, and during my tenure, the population of the school did show a prima facie integration. The reported racial breakdown was 60% black, 30% white, and 10% "other." Integration, however, means more than just a diverse student body; it means children from different backgrounds should be attending class together, learning, helping each other succeed, and sharing their unique viewpoints. This, however, was not the case at LRCH, from my observations. It seemed to me there were two schools in one, each one dominated by a particular race. One facet, primarily white, would take the academically strenuous classes filled with highly qualified teachers. The other, filled with African Americans, would take the regular classes, staffed by teachers who loathed their days, hated teaching, and were only in the job to get by. However horrid it sounds, the truth was crystal clear. Students had a choice of what classes they could be in, but the trends never lied. Freshman year, when I was taking regular, required classes, there was a good representation of the school's population, but that dwindled to a handful of people of color in my AP English literature class senior year, only two of whom were black. This speaks to a more systemic form of exclusion that goes beyond just race. Since there is already a substantial literature base on racism present, I will focus on two other factors that play a big role in educational prejudice: Eurocentrism, which will answer the question of where our education comes from, and neoliberalism, which will be used to explore another mechanism of exclusion.

An Introduction to Eurocentrism and the Discourse of Development

> "Eurocentric knowledge is the central axis of a discourse that not only naturalizes but renders inevitable the increasingly intense polarization between a privileged minority and the world's excluded."
> Edgardo Lander

Before looking at how exclusion happens in education, I want to focus on education itself. Where does it come from and who produces it? These are questions of epistemology—the study of knowledge. It is said history is written by the victors, but in actuality, it's much more than just history; knowledge, science, literature, and more are all proliferated by the hegemonic sphere or spheres. This is evident in our society—after World War II and with the beginning of the modern era, the hegemons are the countries of the rapidly advancing west, to whom the rest of the world is compared. There are many cultures from the Global South and the east that have existed for thousands of years, but those are all cast aside as irrelevant and illegitimate as they are not western. Everything from literature, science, and even language is centered around the West. Eurocentrism, a branch of epistemology, seeks to explain the modus operandi of how knowledge is produced in this matrix.

Edgardo Lander, a professor at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, writes that Eurocentrism works on four assumptions. First is that western knowledge is based on divisions such as subject and object, masculine and feminine, and hierarchies. Second, is that the European local and regional histories serve as the universal history and provide a frame of reference for other histories as it is the "apex of humanity's progress" from primitive to modern. The next key assumption is the difference between the civilized "us" and the "Other" is converted into "value differences" that posit anything non-European as inferior (246). This is evident in the rhetoric that is and has been used to describe non-Europeans: savage, primitive, backwards, inferior, underdeveloped, barbaric, etc. (Tuathail). The fourth assumption Lander makes is that "scientific knowledge and technological development advance…to usefully transform the environment" (245). This operates on a few of its own assumptions. This conjectures Western scientific knowledge to be true, universal,

and objective: "Eurocentric knowledge is the central axis of a discourse that not only naturalizes but renders inevitable the increasingly intense polarization between a privileged minority and the world's excluded" (245). It also creates a human-nature dualism by which humanity is not seen as a part of nature, but rather as separate from it. Using these can help us understand how and where our knowledge comes from (246).

All of these assumptions show Eurocentrism represents a new form of colonialism. Now dominant forces are not seeking land or resource gains by creating vast military campaigns as they had many years ago, instead, colonialism manifests itself in intellectuals and academia. This is the logic of Eurocentric neocolonialism. Knowledge is not sought for its intrinsic value or for one's genuine interest, but always in relation to how it can be used to better the West. This is prevalent especially in the sciences—people do research on what makes them more money rather than the basic sciences. Applied sciences are always valued because of a quick turnaround time with a huge potential for profit. The problem that lies with this approach is that new ideas and advances in science will come few and far between.

The way knowledge is produced in the status quo requires a lot of initial capital investment and demands an excess of monetary return on the investment. This isn't possible for those marked as "Other" because of the lack of investment, coupled with the perception that they are savages. All this does is serve to eradicate those at the periphery—their knowledge is worth absolutely nothing so they are treated as such. This current mode of knowledge production constructs European history as the universal history where the West represents the apex of progress. Lander writes that, in recent times, this specific superiority ideology has been "the legitimizing basis of the civilizing mission of the colonial/imperial system;" (248). The

West is conceived as the most ethical actor, while the rest of the world has to look up to it as a frame of reference.

Neoliberalism in the Classroom and the World

> *"Universities [are] more directly influenced by corporate interests and values, but they also have absorbed these values, thereby changing the way they approach their own work, from the corporatization of administrators to the marketing of their product [education]."*
> *Andrea Kezar*

Neoliberalism is best defined by Naomi Klein in her book, *The Shock Doctrine*, as an economic and political system that shifts the public commons into the hands of private corporations, "often accompanied by exploding debt, an ever-widening chasm between the dazzling rich and the disposable poor and an aggressive nationalism that justifies bottomless spending on security" (12). Both Klein and Henry Giroux, a culture critic, write that neoliberalism works through a model of control called biopolitics where the government and institutions strive to control populations.

Contemporary biopolitics, according to Giroux, are manufactured in a way such that populations are removed from the influence of democracy and preemptively labeled dead. This is done through the creation of zones of exclusion and by marking populations as disposable. Neoliberalism, like capitalism, is run by the creation of profit. This effectively divides the world into three groups: the elite, the working class, and the disposable underclass. Those that proliferate capital and increase production are those who are favored by the system and given privilege. This manifests itself in a quality education, good healthcare, and an overall better life, compared to the rest of the world. The next class is the working class who do the busy work to generate capital for the elite. The underclass is composed of those that the elite have deemed unworthy, and more than that,

useless as they are not profitable. This reduction of a human's worth to how much money he or she can produce perpetuates modes of subjugation of said underclass. There are far reaching implications that can't be prevented by a democratic state since neoliberalism makes democracy hollow because of the disenfranchisement of the impoverished and consolidation of power within elites.

This brings us to how neoliberalism affects education. It works similar to Eurocentrism in that it creates its own routes of truth: "Neoliberal rationality … functions as a 'politics of truth', producing new forms of knowledge, inventing different notions and concepts that contribute to the 'government' of new domains of regulation and intervention" (Giroux 608). This manifests itself in the academy. Andrea Kezar, in her article "Universities in the Marketplace, and: Academic Capitalism, and: Remaking the American University: Market Smart and Mission Centered" published in *The Journal of Higher Education*, writes that knowledge is not produced for the public good or for the people, but rather as a "commodity that is capitalized on in profit-oriented activities" (474). Kezar highlights a couple of core implications. In the capitalist dominated system of education, teachers tailor their classes to be more desirable to students. Everything about this, even the name—"shopping period"—screams capitalism. It dilutes the value of education. People aren't learning for the sake of learning anymore, but rather choose classes based on what's easiest, which teachers have the best reviews, and what they need to get their degree. This isn't just on the student's end though; teachers are also guilty. Teachers propagate a sort of positive feedback loop. They do things in their class so people will give good reviews, which in turn leads to more students joining said teacher's class the following semester. Increased enrollment numbers, low withdrawals, and high grades are all

things that reflect well on the teacher and are also grounds for bonuses and monetary rewards.

Overall, education and school was once for the purposes of pure education and knowledge. In the present system, it functions for capital gain. It's about what knowledge can be produced to increase profit margins. This has an adverse effect on research and growth. This ties in to the topic discussed above on research in Eurocentrism. In the Eurocentric matrix, scientific research is done to better the West. The key difference between these two is that neoliberalism prioritizes research that is profitable. One really big example is the advent of "pop science" that has been proliferating exponentially. Pop science is gaining popularity because it presents very simplified science concepts, provides entertainment value, and aims to get speedy results for a quick profit turnaround. That diminishes the value of a pure science approach that seeks to discover for the sake of discovering. This pure science, also known as basic research, looks to improve understanding of scientific phenomena and strives to understand how the world works. This is the research that helps explain why things happen and has helped explain the universe, explore chemical pathways in our body, and find cures and mechanisms for diseases. But the problem with this kind of research is that it's very time consuming, doesn't always have an immediate financial reward, and isn't always successful in providing an answer. These all lower any appeal for the subject, causing the public and companies to provide greater funding for "pop science." William Broad explains "the practice of science in the 21st century is becoming shaped less by national priorities or by peer-review groups and more by the particular preferences of individuals with huge amounts of money." The funders of science ignore basic research in favor of popular and trendy fields that put more money in their pockets.

More than this though, it creates zones of exclusion within education—not just in the type of information, but *how* it is taught. There is privilege inherent in the system; education is a commodity that is only really available to the upper class. This is evident in the content of education offered to various classes, the way students are treated, and also the differences in the ways the material is taught. The lower classes in society are concentrated in hard labor, assembly line type, and blue collar jobs that stress following instructions. Schools in the lower class create students that will grow up taught not to question everything around them, but instead to follow instructions by the people above them. They're given no room for creativity and their job prospects become limited to low paying, low skilled labor. On the other hand, those in the middle class schooling could go either way. Some will be successful and others won't. The students are taught how to do things and follow instructions while also being taught why certain things happen. It is quite interesting because each of these schools don't offer the same opportunities to students. This contributes to the lack of social mobility. People in lower social classes can't move to higher class jobs. These jobs all require one to question why or how something works but they were indoctrinated with the ideology that there is a set way to do everything and not to question anything. This institutionalized form of discrimination has to be dismantled if there is to be any hope of a more equal society.

The capitalist system is more than just education for the purpose of knowledge, but rather educating students to work in a way that directly relates to how they are supposed to fit into the machine.

A Plethora of Solutions

> "A deconstructive critique of nationalism that serves to locate such discontinuities and expose the complicity of national interests with

> colonial and capitalist discourses also becomes an imperative (Chatterjee, 1986). Modernity, progress, and development are all hallmarks of the nationalistic project of the postcolonial era and too often serve as continuities of colonial modes of control." – Subhrabrata Banerjee

Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee, a professor of strategic management at the University of South Australia, criticizes knowledge production and epistemology present in the Eurocentric matrix. He approaches the situation of how to deal with Eurocentrism in a case study format by taking a look at the Jabiluka uranium mine that was green lighted by the Australian government which is on Aboriginal territory. His essay works to take a look at studies of how various groups interact, taking an intersectional approach that takes into account racism and education. Banerjee makes a few key points: we have an ethical obligation to interrogate Western power structures and enable peripheral self-determination, allowing indigenous populations the ability and resources to legitimately engage with the same magnitude as the West. Giroux writes:

Opposing neoliberalism [and Eurocentrism], in part, suggests exposing the myths and conditions that sustain the shape of late modern politics as an economic, social, and pedagogical project. This…requires that educators and others develop modes of pedagogical and political interventions that situate human beings as critically engaged social agents capable of addressing the meaning, character, fate, and crisis of democracy. (611)

This interrogation comes in the form of asking oneself questions, conducting research, and actively analyzing multiple sources to determine a root cause. He goes on to make the point that knowledge is not neutral—even if the bare facts are arguably "true," the biased academic context in which they are discussed and measured means that the way we interpret said facts and move forward is skewed. Even if our collection of facts

is accurate we blind ourselves to a breadth of counterexamples and indigenous experiences that would inform better policies and education. Banerjee concludes by saying we can create a space for an autonomous indigenous movement that simultaneously resists Eurocentrism and intrinsically values native paradigms.

Henry A. Giroux offers another solution that functions with Banerjee's methods of rejection. The synthesis of the two ideas seems to be the best form of breaking down the problems present in our system. Giroux focuses on a demand to short circuit the functioning of neoliberalism, not in the form of a revolution but upon the micro-level, in the classroom and the university. Giroux focuses on biopolitics and how that is used to control populations while creating zones of exclusion. Contemporary biopolitics are such that populations are removed from the influence of democracy and preemptively labeled dead. It works to perpetuate modes of subjugation while working in the exertion of sovereign violence. It exists in a diverse set of mechanisms that have to be considered as a whole. He says that the implications are far reaching: neoliberalism makes democracy hollow because of the disenfranchisement of the impoverished and consolidation of power within elites. It evaluates populations based upon their economic worth that devalues any population whom is not economically valuable. Giroux writes:

Disposable populations now include the 60 million people in the United States living one notch above the poverty line, the growing number of families living on bare government subsistence, the 46 million Americans without health insurance, the over 2,000,000 persons incarcerated in prisons, the young people laboring under enormous debt and rightly sensing that the American dream is on life support, the workers who are one paycheck away from the joining the ranks of the disposable and permanently excluded, and the elderly whose fixed incomes and pensions are in danger of disappearing (610).

Only a direct challenge to neoliberalism can save democracy from authoritarianism. This creates a state of bare life in which any atrocity is justified. Populations that can't generate a significant profit margin are marked off as disposable populations, leading to the exacerbation of systemic violence. These populations are also not allowed to be political as they are excluded from the discussion. Operating under the assumption that the university is privileged, only those with privilege are afforded the resources to become politicized. Those who experience poverty spend their time getting by, wondering where their next meal will come from, and whether to spend their money on a certain necessity or another. To be political means to be able to reflect on oneself and surroundings, synthesize flows of information, and make the best decision on a certain topic. Those that can't even receive the education to be able to learn and synthesize information for themselves can never make political decisions. These are the same people that are blindly taught to follow information and not to think for themselves, preventing social mobility.

Dissent

When it comes to the opposite side of this debate, there is a lot of ground covering the benefits of neoliberalism and Eurocentrism and why the both of them are good for the economy, growth, and development of the world. Although there is a broad literature base for this subject, it would simplify this paper into a good versus bad review-style paper. I want to focus more on the dissent related to the efficiency of the possible solutions to resolve the crises of Eurocentrism and neoliberalism. Two main branches of thought tie into this focus on refuting epistemology and the idea that the solution to Eurocentrism simply serves to propagate the problem.

"Prioritisation of ontology and epistemology promotes…a theory-driven rather than problem-driven approach to IR" (Owen

656). Owen makes the point that the theorizing of neoliberalism and Eurocentrism focuses on ontology and epistemology and ends up getting nowhere when it comes to actual solutions. He explains these are simply ivory tower philosophers that spend too much time questioning how and why and never asking the question of what to do. Owen goes on to explain that this form of abstract theory never stops questioning in order to start acting.

Vargas goes on a more nuanced direction of refuting the criticism and solutions of Eurocentrism. He summarizes his qualms with the subject in three main points. First is that it is contradicting for the philosophy of liberation to be written by the West. Having the philosophies of liberation being written in, debated in, and built on in the West implies that the philosophies, scholars, and thinkers of the Global South are insufficient to be used to liberate their own people.

Second is the idea of accessibility. The field of thought surrounding decolonial studies is a very privileged task. As explained above, education itself is inherently privileged and there are zones of exclusion. The problem with Banerjee and Giroux's solution of starting in the classroom is problematic and can't be actualized in the Global South because many can't access the classroom in less privileged nations.

The third point refutes with Owen's point of abstract theorizing. Vargas explains abstract theorizing is symptomatic of Western high theorists like Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. It's not something that creates action or builds on the works of indigenous and existing movements against neoliberalism and Western influence in the south. One may argue that's because those movements aren't successful; however, according to Karen Pinkus and Gabriel Giorgi, two professors at the University of Southern California, there are successful instances. The Zapatistas movement started by Emiliano Zapata in southern Mexico declared war on the Mexican government. This was

created in response to Mexico joining the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Adding Mexico to NAFTA was a simply economic tactic to take over Mexican farming and cheap labor, which resulted in the displacement of indigenous farmers and workers into cheap corporate farms and factories. They're involved in an on-going struggle against the state and NAFTA. Another example is the Piqueteros Movement in Argentina which helped articulate demands from multiple groups that were affected by neoliberal rule. Their method focused on exposing the flaws in the neoliberal system and worked to politically get it out of the public sphere. Vargas indicates a western origin solution to the issue short circuits any momentum of progress from the South.

Conclusion

Education is affected by multiple factors from communities being marginalized with no hope of social mobility to the university excluding certain forms of knowledge based on their origin. This ends up creating infinitely regressive cycles of violence where knowledges and people are excluded. This brings up problems where certain people are rejected in the eyes of society because they have no potential for creating profit. Banerjee and Giroux offer a solution that focuses on small movements and knowledges starting from the classroom. It makes sense—the more the public is educated about these problems that are around us, the easier we can stop being complicit in a system that actively seeks to exclude, marginalize, and hold people down. Although Owen brings up valid points, it's important to remember we can't act without knowing what we're acting on. A prerequisite to having effective action is actively questioning social structures, which we seek to do. Slavoj Zizek, in his book *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, says interrogating the system in academic spaces causes more and more people to ask

questions which functionally makes everyone more aware of the problems around them, making it more likely for more to take action. In the end, many people don't really know about what's going on or have even stopped to think about it. Starting the dialogue is what has to happen before worrying about more concrete solutions so the first step has to start with us in the classroom, and in all of academia.

> *"Look, win or lose, it doesn't matter. What is important is that we fight, that we fight for our beliefs, we fight for the things that are important to us." – Jacqui Katona*

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. What two ideologies does the author consider major factors in the shaping of the "educated" Western individual? What is the author's overall analysis of these ideologies? In what ways are they detrimental?
2. What solution does the author offer as a starting point to addressing the problems in the current education system in the West?
3. How does the author make use of the ideas of social and philosophical thinkers to address the problems with the ways knowledge is imparted in Western societies?

Style

1. How are sources used to substantiate the realities of Eurocentrism and neoliberalism? What role do the sources play in the author's argument?
2. What rhetorical moves does the author use to frame the arguments of the paper and keep the paper's focus?

Racial Health Disparity in the United States and the Physician's Role

Adnan Islam

Health is a fundamental human right. Most people will agree that when it comes to attaining happiness, health is a precursor to eagerly sought material possessions or even social status. With its importance universally established and accepted, the health care system in the United States presents itself as a vital institution to identify and correct systematic inequality, perhaps the greatest instance of which has been racial health inequity. Racial and ethnic minorities have repeatedly been shown to have worse health outcomes than white Americans. Minorities are at greater risk than Whites for obesity, heart disease, cancer, motor vehicle injury, and virtually every other malady (LaVeist and Lydia 20-26). How can this be? Care is seldom optimized for racial and ethnic minorities, isolating them and leaving them lacking the type of attention they need. The greatest way for individual physicians to increase health equity and extend health care availability in the U.S. is to understand the causes of disparities so they can better reach out to these neglected groups.

The sense of isolation minorities face was perfectly articulated in an urgent cry of despair following Hurricane Katrina. Malik Rahim, the former deputy of security for the New Orleans chapter of the Black Panthers party, bemoaned, "Right after the hurricane, we came to the realization that the city wasn't going to provide any services… there was no medical entity even operating in Algiers, and it wasn't operating especially for black folks…" (Nelson 182-183). Black Louisianans were left abandoned in the wake of the tragic storm. Many found themselves injured, starving, and homeless. The effects of the natural disaster were perpetuated by the man-made disaster of inadequate response. The poor black neighborhood of Algiers was left to fend for itself, as crucial resources were focused on more affluent areas. The people who Rahim represented were denied the simplest of human rights. Without equality in this most fundamental area, it is no wonder that racial inequality lingers, despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act over 50 years ago.

Hurricane Katrina was a national emergency that reminded America of a problem it had only pushed to the side. But how does the issue of racial health inequity manifest itself outside of the public eye? A 2013 study published in the journal *BioMed Research International* examined the prevalence and treatment of chronic disease in youths of different racial groups. In the last 50 years, the overall percentage of American children with chronic disease has nearly quadrupled (Price et al 1). Despite progress toward racial equality, though, this increase has affected racial minorities disproportionately, making them 1.5 to 2 times more likely than whites to have most major chronic diseases (Price et al 1).

For physicians to address these inequities, it is imperative that they first understand their underlying causes. Greater affinity for disease and injury is not rooted in some inherent biological difference between racial groups. Rather, societal

factors influence these trends. Many of these factors intersect with race, especially socioeconomic status. For the purpose of illustration, I've analyzed the *Biomed Research International* study's finding in three particular areas of discrepancy: obesity, mental health, and health care access. These categories encompass most ailments, their causes, and the reasons for inequity in prevention and treatment.

Obesity is a chronic problem that has seen unprecedented growth in the last several decades. Being overweight or obese is a huge risk factor for the development of several other chronic diseases like coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and musculoskeletal issues (Price et al 3). There is a stark difference between the prevalence of obesity in white and minority groups. Black and Hispanic youth are 52% more likely to be overweight and 81% more likely to be obese than white youth (Price et al 3). The greatest factor influencing this trend is nutrition, which is in large part shaped by socioeconomic status. Because of the intersection of poverty and race, minority children are more likely to face food-insecurity and have poor nutrition habits. With less time and resources to devote to healthy foods, these kids are more likely to skip breakfast and opt for cheap high-energy fast food (Price et al 3). In addition, the study found that the average white neighborhood was found to have four times the number of grocery stores as the average African American neighborhood. With few healthy options nearby, African American families of low socioeconomic status have less access to fruits and vegetables and find themselves consuming "significantly more empty calories from sugars and fried foods [and feeling] there is nothing they can do to change their dietary situation" (Price et al 3).

Similarly, mental health experts have found trends of greater psychopathology in minorities. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System found that minority American youth

reported extended periods of sadness and hopelessness at a rate 25% higher than did white American youth (Price et al 4). Minority youth also demonstrated a higher rate of suicide attempts (Price et al 4). The study attributes this disparity primarily to the intersection of race and poverty once again. Conditions of poverty are detrimental to mental health, as they make individuals more susceptible to mental disorders and risk- taking behaviors (Price et al 4). Again, racial minorities are disproportionately affected by poverty. Consequently, racial minorities are also less likely to find treatment for their mental health needs. This is primarily due to the lack of health insurance, where a disparity exists even when age, education, and income factors are controlled (Price et al 4).

However, health care access goes beyond just financial access (having health insurance). As noted several times previously, minorities are more likely to have lower paying jobs, putting them at a disadvantage what it comes to the accessibility of health care. Many blue-collar jobs pay by the hour and punish workers monetarily for missing work (Price et al 8). Obviously, this makes patients reluctant to schedule visits with clinicians during work hours. The problem is that most doctors' weekend and evening hours are limited, and this discourages many patients from seeking treatment at all (Price et al 8). Additionally, minority families of lower socioeconomic status typically have to travel further to access medical care. Medical practices are often located in areas of greater socioeconomic status because they perceived as safer and more desirable (Price et al 8). Malik Rahim's complaints about the lack of health care in the poor neighborhood of Algiers in New Orleans are reflective of this phenomenon. Difficulty in finding transportation to a medical facility has a deleterious effect on minorities' care. Another problem among patients of lower socioeconomic status is health literacy: knowing when and where to seek care (Price et al 8).

Finally, not all providers accept new patients with Medicaid or particular types of private insurance. These barriers make health care access more difficult for minorities (Price et al 8).

Despite the major impediments that continue to enforce racial health inequity, recent progress has been made. In 2014, when the first phase of the Affordable Care Act was phased in, the gap between the care of minorities and white Americans narrowed significantly. A study from the journal *Medical Care* noted that coverage and access improved dramatically for minorities, especially African Americans. Even Latinos, who saw a smaller decline in uninsured rates, are receiving more treatment with fewer delays (Chen et al). The researchers concluded that the Affordable Care Act decreased the impact of racial income difference on health care availability. The study was conducted at the beginning of the Affordable Care Act's implementation, and the researchers concluded that the trend toward equity would continue through 2014 and subsequent years as more respondents enrolled for Obamacare's benefits. Although the Trump administration is working to repeal Obamacare, the promise of replacement legislation is hopeful for racial minorities in America.

Clearly, developing changes regarding health care access is a topic of discussion in legal space. But what can an individual practitioner do in the meanwhile to address the issue of racial health inequity? When discussing race and the associated psychosocial factors that are behind health inequity in the United States, it often seems that in order to progress, everything must go "perfectly." A lot of factors are out of individual control. The right politician needs to win and install a plan that increases coverage. Practices need to locate themselves near people in need, and the physicians need to have appointment availability that is conducive to patients' schedules. Patients need to know when to seek treatment and where to go. The inequality of

poverty has its own laundry list of causes to be addressed. True long-lasting solutions must affect multiple parts of the health care system: "For example, increasing breast cancer screening is only useful if patients have timely diagnostic testing after an abnormal mammogram and appropriate treatment for breast cancer" (LaVeist and Lydia 778). With such sweeping issues at hand, it may seem that individual physicians have little ability to put a dent in the large boulder between the status quo and racial health equity.

To determine the physician's role, we must first examine who a physician is. As a first-year medical student, one of the most important lessons I've started to learn is what exactly a health care provider is. Well, that's obvious. A doctor's job is to treat his patients, right? The patient presents with symptoms and the physician diagnoses an illness and prescribes the appropriate treatment. In reality, though, health care professionals bear a far greater responsibility than just this. They are advocates for community health. The nature of medicine is such that it affects everyone in a community. So naturally, physicians cannot conduct their practice in a vacuum. They must take on the roles of educators, politicians, and counselors. Physicians must integrate with their communities to effectively promote health and happiness. Just as a police officer must understand the workings of his community and gain the trust of civilians, physicians must be aware of the social factors influencing patient health. The physician must be aware that the poor patient he's seeing likely does not have ready access to healthy foods or time in the week for follow-up appointments. Only with this deep understanding of his patients' situations can a physician adequately care for them.

The best way to develop this relationship is through is through cultural competence training. Cross-cultural communication has been noted by groups like the American Medical Association as necessary for increasing the quality of medical practice (LaVeist and Lydia

768). These communication skills should ideally go beyond race and ethnicity, also encompassing gender, sexual orientation, religion, and country of origin. But rather than just learning and attributing a set of cultural beliefs and behaviors to a certain group (which leads to stereotyping), physicians need to use interviewing techniques that allow them to understand each individual patient. Beginning with open ended questions and speaking to the patient as a friend and advisor can reveal critical social components related to the patient's care. These techniques can also reveal a patient's understanding of his illness and how it should be treated, telling the physician what his objective should be. Effective communication also makes clear the patient's expectations for treatment and the role of the family in an individual's care. By individualizing health care, physicians can better tailor treatment to their patients. When both physician and patient are more engaged, the result is more effective treatment, increased compliance, and better outcomes in general (LaVeist and Lydia 776-777).

That is all that can be asked of a health care provider. As authoritative as the white coat makes him seem, a multitude of factors are beyond his control. A doctor simply ought to make a genuine effort to understand the patient's unique socioeconomic situation, cultural bias, and objective for treatment. Only through this subjective frame can the objective science implied by *medicine* be utilized effectively for patient care. Of course, to completely fulfill his duty, a physician must advocate for health equity in legislation and educate his community to push forward the slower institutional changes that are at the root of racial health disparity. A grueling process, this type of persistence is the only way forward, and it shows that although health disparity in the United States is a multifaceted issue, physicians can play a role at the individual level and have a legitimate impact on broadening the availability of quality medical care.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. What factors contribute to a lack of minority access to health care?
2. According to the author, how might a physician make minority access to health care more available?
3. How does the author frame health care disparities between minorities and white culture in America? Does the problem seem to exist at the community level, the state level, the government level, or at multiple levels?

Style

1. How do the sources contribute to the logos of the paper?
2. How does the author incorporate a personal voice alongside research in this paper? What is the effect on the overall reading of the paper?

Muslims in American Hip Hop

Adnan Islam

A true child in the lineage of rag-time, blues, jazz, rock and roll, funk, and disco, hip-hop is a revolutionary force. At its 1973 roots in the South Bronx, hip-hop culture was a platform of expression for the marginalized: black and Latino Americans. DJing, breakdancing, and graffiti painting gave a voice to minorities to unite and share the struggles that they faced. By 1979, rapping had developed as a staple feature of hip-hop as well, allowing these issues to be expressed even more directly. In the classic 1983 "The Message," Melle Mel of the Furious Five prefaces his detailed description of the dismal experience of a young black man in his neighborhood with:

> God is smiling on you, but he's frowning too
> Because only God knows what you'll go through.
> You'll grow up in the ghetto living second-rate
> And your eyes will sing a song called deep hate.
> (Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five)

By allowing the expression of this frustration, hip-hop had asserted itself early on against the injustices faced by those at the bottom of racial and social hierarchies in America.

This tradition continues today. Hip-hop has spread and is used by youth in political movements around the world. It's been adopted as a central tool by Ethiopian immigrants facing discrimination in Israel, youth unsatisfied by the corrupt and inadequate government in Tanzania, and Italians disenchanted by poverty and homelessness. (Smith 12). Back in the United States, another group remains united around hip-hop. In light of suspicion following 9/11, Muslims in America are using the medium of rap to stage their own cultural revolution, one focused on solidifying their place in American culture and making the various ways of practicing Islam come to be accepted as viable ways of life in the U.S.

Muslims in the U.S. span a wide range of racial and ideological diversity. When asked to describe a Muslim, many Americans today picture a very conservative Arab in long robes, either a bearded man or a veiled woman. Many Arab Christians and south Asian Hindus are confounded into this stereotypical picture, while black Muslims are often excluded entirely (Masquelier 6). So, who are American Muslims, and where did they come from?

The first American Muslims arrived in the United States as African slaves in the 1600s (Curiel). However, these slaves' Islamic faith had to be kept secret from their Christian masters, who brought over European sentiments that Islam was the antagonist of Christianity (Curiel). Already, Islam was unacceptable in America. Not only that, but the religion was downright invisible. It remained widely unknown through the 1890s and early 20th century, even as many Muslims immigrated to the U.S. from the Middle East seeking economic opportunity (Curiel).

This started to change in the 1930s, when Wallace Fard Muhammad urged black Americans to return to their "original religion", forming the heterodox Nation of Islam, from which

the Five-Percent Nation branched off during the Civil Rights Movement (Curiel). Then, the Hart-Celler Act of 1965 loosened immigration requirements, and many more Muslims from Asia and Africa immigrated to the United States, bringing with them their conservative Sunni Islamic practices (Curiel). In 1975, Warith Deen Muhammad took over the Nation of Islam from his deceased father Elijah Muhammad (Curiel). He abandoned unorthodox teachings and adopted mainstream Sunni Islam, but he maintained that African-American Muslims had a uniquely American culture that contrasted sharply with that of Asian immigrant Muslims (Curiel).

His statement was verified by the hip-hop of the time. Conservative immigrant Muslims were generally uninvolved with pop music, taking the stance that music is a distraction from worshipping God (van Niuewkerk 161). However, most African American Muslims took a more moderate or liberal position, permitting music, especially if it promoted development, productivity, and morality (van Niuwkerk 158). Since many urban youth turned to Islam as an alternative to street gangs and crime, the religion was typically portrayed in a positive way. For example, in Nas's "Life's a Bitch" from his famous 1994 debut album *Illmatic*, AZ and Nas ponder whether there's more to life than chasing material wealth. After the intro, AZ begins the song rapping:

> Visualizin' the realism of life in actuality,
> Fuck who's the baddest, a person's status depends on salary,
> And my mentality is money-orientated.
> I'm destined to live the dream for all my peeps who never made it.
> 'Cause, yeah, we were beginners in the hood as Five-Percenters,

> But somethin' must've got in us 'cause all of us turned to sinners.

Here, AZ proudly proclaims that he is a Muslim. He equates his wicked obsession with wealth as deviation from his Five-Percent Nation teachings. This praise of Islamic teachings is common in hip-hop. Muslims, particularly Five-Percenters like Nas and AZ, have had a tremendous influence on the musical genre. Phrases sprinkled throughout *Illmatic* like "'word is bond,' 'break it down,' 'peace,' 'whassup G...' and 'represent' all come from Five-Percenter ideology," and are now staples in hip-hop slang (Aidi 111).

In another example of Islam's positive portrayal in hip-hop, 2Pac is speaking to his old friend who he used to get into frequent trouble with. After spending some time in a juvenile detention center, this friend has accepted Islam and emerges completely different. 2Pac observes in his 1996 "I Ain't Mad at Cha":

> Oh you a Muslim now? No more dope game.
> Heard you might be comin' home, just got bail,
> Wanna go to the mosque, don't wanna chase tail.
> It seems I lost my little homie, he's a changed man,
> Hit the pen and now no sinnin' is the game plan.

Again, Islam is portrayed in a positive light, as a transformative force that betters the lives of its adherents. Although 2Pac is sad to have grown apart from his dear friend, he finds comfort in knowing that his friend found peace in religion and is making a better life for himself. Like in the above examples, most images portraying Islam in earlier hip-hop were of African American Muslims. This started to change in 2001.

The 9/11 attacks devastated the United States and shined a new spotlight on American Muslims. Suddenly, young American Muslims of Asian and Middle Eastern descent, even those whose families had been in the United States for generations, found themselves under heavy scrutiny by their fellow citizens. Even

as they left behind their parents' conservative teachings in favor of more moderate ones, Muslims were falling victim to more harassment and hate crimes than ever before (Masquelier 5). In response to this pressure, some Muslims abandoned their beliefs entirely. Many others, however, saw an opportunity. With increased exposure, they began to act as spokespeople for their previously insular religion and clarify misconceptions that Islam promotes hatred and violence (Curiel). Muslims expanded interfaith engagement, and Muslim speakers are now more visible at schools and universities than ever before (Curiel).

Among younger Muslims, hip-hop has been adopted as a tool to claim emancipatory identities as Muslim Americans. Additionally, these young Muslims use hip-hop as a channel to navigate between their western youthfulness and their Islamic beliefs. For example, Los Angeles based Pakistani rap duo Aman ties in cultural pride as it asserts its dominance in hip-hop in its 2004 "Arabian Knights":

> We the first Paki rappers to step up onto the scene.
> It's Amaar and Seige.
> Don't rhyme for dollars rhyme for rupees.
> My peeps come from the streets,
> like 40 thieves,
> From the desert sands blazing,
> I'm used to the heat.
> Flow amazing. (Aidi 112)

Amaar and Seige embrace their Islamic background and use it to their advantage. Instead of shying away from themes that may keep them from appealing to an American hip-hop audience, the two embrace and flip common stereotypes. They allude to the well-known oral tale "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," describing themselves through an image of forty (presumably Muslim) thieves. Like the thieves in the desert, Amaar and Seige are unstoppable as emcees. They cannot be outperformed by anyone

because they're "used to the heat" of competition. Through this allusion, the rappers make space for themselves in American hip-hop. They shatter the archetype of the greedy middle eastern thief brandishing a scimitar and show that Muslims can be a part of, and actually flourish in, American society and culture.

The Hammer Brothers demonstrate a different use of hip-hop by Muslims. Based in New York, they express political and social frustrations in their 2001 song "Free Palestine":

> Soldiers versus brother, bullets versus beards,
> Tanks up on our property, it's all because you fear,
> The faith in our hearts, now we must make a start:
> Organize as another one of us departs.

Here, the two Palestinian brothers cry out against the war in their home country. They bring to the listener's attention to how innocent people's lives are destroyed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and they express frustration at the U.S. government's support of Israel. Then, they go on to claim that the only way to help the people whose lives are affected is for Muslims and Jews in America to come together and support one another. Only by putting down arms and ending discrimination can the two groups live together in peace. Like Aman and the Hammer Brothers, many Muslims in hip-hop have these two goals in mind: to express political concerns and to solidify their identities as real Americans.

As described earlier, black American Muslims were affected differently by 9/11. Often left out of the description of Muslims in national discourse, they weren't stereotyped as terrorists or outsiders in the same way as Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims. African American Muslims were already accepted as Americans. However, they still fought the same issues of racial and economic inequality that they had faced for generations, the ones depicted by Melle Mel in "The Message." However, the once distinct groups of African American and immigrant Muslims did start

to increasingly overlap, as they felt a responsibility to unite and fight accusations against their faith. Although they "are divided by class, gender, education, [and] local circumstance," young Muslims in America today are "united by a sense of participation in a common historical experience," (Masquelier 11).

There are many examples of orthodox African American Muslims in hip-hop. In 2006, Lupe Fiasco made a remix of Kanye West's "Jesus Walks" entitled "Muhammad Walks," in which he clarifies misunderstandings held by Americans regarding the teachings of Islam. He raps:

> G's up along with Muhammad and Jesus.
> In the Quran they call him Isa,
> So don't think Osama and Saddam is our leader.
> We pray for peace, but the drama intrigues us.

Like in the previous examples, Lupe Fiasco is a young Muslim using his platform to show the public that being Muslim and being American don't contradict each other. First, he pays respect to both Muhammad and Jesus. Fiasco mentions that Jesus is a figure of tremendous significance in Islam, and even though he has a different name in Arabic, Islamic and Christian ideologies are far from antithetical. Fiasco urges Americans not to confuse these prophets, the true Islamic religious leaders, with war criminals like Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Several other artists like Mos Def and Q-Tip spread similar messages through their music and show the closing divide between different groups of American Muslims.

Another factor that has played a role in the unification of Muslim ethnic groups is conversion. A notable number of African Americans have continued converting to Islam, while Latinos have also recently started looking at the faith. Influenced by Islamic messages in hip-hop, many converts are attracted specifically to the mentorship, protection, and rehabilitation provided by the Five Percent Nation and remaining branches

of the nation of Islam (Aidi 115). Additionally, after 9/11, many young Americans of all races wondered about the religion that had recently entered the public eye. In their effort to understand it, they visited mosques and read the Quran, finding that the religion's teachings resonated with them (Curiel).

Minneapolis-based rapper Brother Ali is a white Muslim convert who frequently uses his music to solidify Islam's place in America. He appears alongside Immortal Technique and Chuck D in the 2011 song "Civil War," where he warns against the danger of discrimination:

> Me, my wife, and babies, we ain't never made jihad.
> We just want to touch our heads to the floor and talk to god.
> Ask him to remove every blemish from our heart.
> The greatest threat of harm doesn't come from any bomb.
> The moment you refuse the human rights for just a few;
> What happens when that few includes you? Civil war.

According to Ali, Muslims just want to pursue peaceful and happy lives like anyone else. Allowing the practice of discrimination against Muslims is hazardous because it makes hatred acceptable. Ali asks the listener to imagine being part of a group facing discrimination. It would be infuriating. With this realization, the listener understands that the greatest harm doesn't come from any weapon because the root cause of violence is division of people through hatred. Brother Ali clearly implies that Americans need to stop being divided. Just as Muslims have come together in the past 16 years, the country must come together in order to prosper.

Of course, not all portrayals of Islam in hip-hop are positive. There are several instances where stereotypes are perpetuated, like when Lil Wayne brags about how many guns and drugs he has, claiming that "niggas in Pakistan ain't packing like [I am]," implying that Muslims, and in particular Pakistanis, all own

many weapons and sell opium (Lil Wayne). Another example of a stereotypical representation is when Eminem, talking about his violent tendencies, threatens to "[Dump] your dead body inside of a fucking trash can with more holes than an Afghan," (Eminem). This line makes it seem like all Afghans are involved in war and violence. Despite some instances of poor representation, Muslims have a significant influence in hip-hop and are overwhelmingly portrayed positively throughout the genre.

Not all American Muslims agree on how music ought to interact with religion or even how best to combine aspects of western culture with traditional Islamic teachings. However, through a cultural revolution involving hip-hop music, very distinct groups of Muslims in America have united under the banner of Islam. Together, they're working to change the national mindset and make being Muslim a valid way of being American. Slowly but surely, efforts like this are teaching Americans to be more tolerant of one another, to overcome and accept ethnic and ideological differences so they can better coexist in a pluralist society.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. How has the contribution of different populations of Muslims to the genre of hip-hop changed over time?
2. According to the author, what changed in the hip-hop world following 9/11?

3. In what ways are Muslim rappers changing stereotypes associated with Islam and Middle Eastern culture?

Style

1. How does the author make use of examples of rap songs to illustrate the contributions of Muslim hip-hop artists to the American music scene?
2. How does the author utilize sources to make the main points of this essay clear? How does the variety of sources contribute to the structure of the paper?

Lemonade: Beyoncé's Anthems to Black Femininity

Kelli Johnson

Lemonade. Until April 23, 2016, it was known as a refreshing summer drink often sold by children on sidewalks. Now, the mentioning of *Lemonade* sparks the schema of an emotionally charged Grammy-winning visual album written and performed by Beyoncé Knowles-Carter. Resembling the Kübler-Ross 5-stage model of grief through lyrics and interludes of poem, this celebration of the black female form and culture is created by pairing the studio album with cinematic effects, creating the visual album. Drawing inspiration from her experiences regarding infidelity, this eleven chapter film is marked with title cards characterizing the concepts intuition, denial, anger, apathy, emptiness, accountability, reformation, forgiveness, resurrection, hope, and redemption. This technique, made famous by German playwright Bertolt Brecht allows the viewers to continue with Beyoncé through this journey while her intention in each piece is explicitly known, allowing for deeper analysis and platform for understanding the content presented. Through the duration of the film, Beyoncé celebrates the diversity of black womanhood by donning many different personas such as

a Southern Belle, a Victorian Gothic, and the Egyptian Queen Nefertiti. By incorporating poetry, historic visual artistry and heavily emotional lyrics, Beyoncé is able to narrate a story of betrayal and redemption along with connecting themes of black femininity.

After a sequence of frames which will later house each chapter in the visual album, we are directed to a kneeling, singing Beyoncé on a stage with a closed velvet red curtain. A possible nod to Satine from the 2001 Baz Luhrman musical *Moulin Rouge!* who Beyonce alludes herself to hers and Satine's tireless commitment to her perfectionism in art and their relationships. After a soft ballad displaying "Intuition" with Beyoncé proclaiming that she prays to catch this man (suspected to be Jay-Z, but is also theorized to be Beyoncé's ex, Lyndall Locke) cheating, the camera cuts to her again, this time on the edge of a building, where she leans just enough to throw herself off of the building. However, the instant before she hits the pavement, her body lands in an expanse of water with the title card reading "Denial". She continues with a poem by Somali-born London poet Warsaw Shire saying:

> I tried to change. Closed my mouth more, tried to be softer, prettier, less awake. Fasted for 60 days, wore white, abstained from mirrors, abstained from sex, slowly did not speak another word. In that time, my hair, I grew past my ankles. I slept on a mat on the floor. I swallowed a sword. I levitated. Went to the basement, confessed my sins, and was baptized in a river. I got on my knees and said "amen" and said "I mean."

Despite all of her efforts to please, the passage ends by inquiring her need to know, "are you cheating on me?" This breathes into the subservient, black woman stereotype, without allowing for this schema to be perceived as mindless. She has full consciousness of her submissive actions, though still in denial. In

the interlude between songs, a group of women all in white with straightjacket like sleeves that are tied with another woman's sleeves at random. The women move peacefully, creating a sense of platonic love women share and if working together, can help one another untangle and comfort each other. A shift in tone is heard when the sampling from

Andy Williams's "Can't Get Used to Losing You" is heard. Resonating a haunted take on Williams' bass line, "Hold Up" begins with Beyoncé swinging open extravagant double doors with a flood of water bursting through with her. This track depicts the denial aspect of infidelity, with an eventual turn toward disbelief.

Following the title card reading "Anger," a heavy synth melody is heard while Beyonce is seen leaning against an SUV, with cornrows and a fur coat, in this piece portraying the angry black woman archetype. This sweary, intense, rock and roll anthem begins with Beyoncé bluntly asking "Who the f--- do you think I am?", addressing her adulterer rhetorically. The disgust and embarrassment of being cheated on has finally been matched with anger, with emotionally- charged lyrics such as this reminding the cheater who he is disrespecting . Beyoncé retaliates by letting him know that he is unnecessary for her to have a successful life as she has her own successful career, and in saying that "when you hurt me, you hurt yourself" she alludes to the fact that their relationship is a team effort, with both parties losing when one hurts the other. The music pauses, and viewers are met with a montage of the faces of African-American women and an excerpt of civil rights leader Malcom X's "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself" speech saying:

> The most disrespected person in America is the black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the black woman. The most neglected person in America is the black woman.

This speech is a call from Malcom X to African Americans, questioning why they aren't proud of their race, and who taught them the shame surrounding it. This excerpt, though clearly expressing anger in this song, was used by Beyoncé to display the pain she feels by being disrespected, unprotected, and neglected. This song isn't the end of Beyoncé's aggression, in the chapter titled "Apathy" she faces the apologetic aspect of the submissive woman, but turns it on its head. This track called "Sorry" is anything but an apology, with the lyrics "I'm not sorry" repeated time after time over the heavy bass and reverb. Beyoncé features herself and one of history's best tennis players Serena Williams showing off a mansion before departing in in a party bus with many other women. Williams herself has been the topic of criticism as she is typically seen as "too masculine," further proving that women could be an empowering figure, even the best in the world in something, yet still be scrutinized by popular media. Lyrically, Beyoncé boasts about her disinterest in her adulterer, by ignoring his phone calls, going partying, and vocalizing her regret for even giving him the time of day. In the last verse of the song, she is seen sitting in an empty frame, with hair and garments clearly inspired by Queen Nefertiti, Egyptian queen to Akhenaten who famously disappeared — just as Beyoncé intended to do after leaving a note saying she'll "be far away." Ending the song, she delivers potentially the most famous line from the album: "He better call Becky with the good hair," suggesting that the cause of this toxic infidelity was the adultery with an average white woman (hence the name "Becky") with what American culture has historically deemed "good," naturally straight hair. Throughout American history, African-American women have been socially compelled to chemically straighten their hair to assume European beauty standards to avoid ridicule or even being fired from their place of employment. In the 1960's, a new wave of pride brought on by the Civil Rights

Movement inspired many African-American men and women to grow and display their hair as a rebellion to combat the notion that it was "bad" hair (Edwards).

Following her theme of rebuilding after betrayal, Beyoncé dedicates the next song, *6 Inch,* to women who build themselves to make it to the tops of their industry. This anthem to the female worker does nothing if not encourages women to hit the grindstone and put misogyny to shame. Towards the end of this chapter of "Emptiness" Beyoncé is seen rounding the corner from a staircase with the baseboards of the walls behind her suddenly catching fire, symbolizing her as a phoenix rising from the ashes of her toxic relationship. She describes the woman in the song as "too smart to crave material things" and how she "works from Monday to Friday / Works from Friday to Sunday" to explain the diligence young African-American women must encapsulate in order to go beyond what society sees as their cap for success—all while wearing 6-inch heels, not sacrificing a bit of their femininity. This femininity is also seen in the track "Daddy Lessons," a country song about "Accountability." Set in historic Fort Macomb in New Orleans, Beyoncé sings of how her father raised her to be strong and independent. This learned strength and independence is typically seen as masculine, which may be why her father taught her these traits— to be able to hold her ground in a "man's world."

Drawing from historical symbolism, the next piece "Love Drought" follows an exhausted, airy tone of singing with women dressed in all white walking single file into the ocean. We can see a menagerie of wooden scraps and chairs along the coastline, and a remarkably calm, if not emotionless Beyoncé. As they walk further into the water, the women eventually stop, hold hands and raise them. This parallels the mass suicide of the Igbo tribe who after their capture and forcible displacement onto a slave ship to America, landed on a small island off of

the coast of Georgia. Thereafter, they marched forward into the ocean, lead by their chief and drowned themselves as they would rather die than submit themselves to slavery (Bracy). In African-American tradition this story is known as "The Myth of the Flying Africans" as African-American oral historian Wallace Quarterman responded (when he had been asked about the story) by saying they "rose up in the sky and turned themselves into buzzards and flew right back to Africa" ("Ebos Landing"). This explains why the title card for this song is called "Reformation," as she reformed beyond the toxic relationship and flew into freedom as the Igbo tribe were said to do the same and fly to *their* land of freedom. Moving from this reformation Beyoncé depicts "Forgiveness" in the song "Sandcastles" where she sings of building sandcastles, a temporary form of entertainment, which is eventually washed away. This power ballad pours love laden with wounds into the piano. Her juxtaposition of the common ideal of "love" with the images following of a broken bowl glued back together, wilted flowers, and the overall faded saturation of color exudes her emotions of dilapidation in the healing relationship.

We are then moved to a short piece depicting the "Resurrection" from injustice and betrayal titled "Forward." Though the shortest piece, "Forward" speaks volumes with the necessities of minority communities. During this, we see the mothers of Trayvon Martin and Mike Brown holding pictures of their sons, both lost to police brutality. Beyoncé uses this to not only call for those affected in any sort emotional or social impediment to persevere with forwardness, but to emphasize that moving forward is the only way to heal. Shifting to a focus on "Hope," "Freedom" samples from Kaleidoscope's "Let Me Try" creating an acidic rock powerhouse demanding the need for civil and emotional freedom in all aspects. This piece shows the delicacy and strength together by showing young

black women dancing pointe ballet to a rock ballad, while one wears a golden crown of thorns. Clad in plantation-eque period clothing, the faces in this segment were hand-picked, with many celebrities involved. Zendaya, Michaela DePrince, Amandla Stenberg, Winnie Harlow, and Quvenzhané Wallis, are just a few young black women who have revolutionized their fields by being unapologetically themselves and advocating for minorities in film, the modeling industry as well as regularly in media. A softer edge is displayed immediately following, producing Beyoncé's journey to redemption, beginning with her grandmother's recipe for lemonade. This recipe was passed down from her grandmother, to her mother to her, and eventually to her daughter, Blue Ivy. Her grandmother, or "the alchemist" as Beyoncé calls her, developed this tradition to hopefully preserve their sense of maternal strength— keeping a bond between mother and daughter. The soft thud of the sampled bass, trumpet and percussion from Oukast's "SpottieOttieDopaliscious" this track invites love back into the relationship with open arms. "All Night" visually presents us with videos of racially and sexuality marginalized couples displaying their love for each other, including home videos of Beyoncé and Jay-Z's wedding and their matching "IV" tattoos.

Ending the visual album, "Formation" presents itself as a black femininity anthem, a callout song for those who dared to treat her as less than an independent woman and a declaration of her pride in her Southern roots. Addressing rumors of skin bleaching, Beyoncé sings "I like my baby heir with baby hair and afros / I like my negro nose with Jackson Five nostrils" saying she finds beauty and strength in hers and Blue Ivy's God-given facial structures—those which throughout history have been the source of scrutiny. Bounce musician Big Freedia interludes after the first refrain in his thick New Orleans accent professing his love for cornbread and collard greens, traditional

southern soul food. The Texas native goes on to sing, "My daddy Alabama, mama Louisiana/You mix that Negro with that Creole, make a Texas bama." not only referring to her parents' racial backgrounds, but of Black Panther Leader Huey Newton's. Newton noted this in his autobiography, "Both of my parents were born in the Deep South, my father in Alabama and my mother in Louisiana," which exemplifies a rich history of black pride from historic Southerners (Newton). The chorus calls for ladies to "get in formation...slay trick or you get eliminated," referencing women's fight for justice, with society essentially trying to eliminate the black female voice from power. Later we see a frame of police officers standing in a row with their hands up. Yet a mother flipping of the script of what is seen to be normal — a black woman commanding respect from officers assuming the "hands up, don't shoot" visual.

Lemonade is an emotional journey that stretches far beyond infidelity. Every aesthetic choice bore historical and social relevance, all reflecting the beauty of black womanhood. In a society which scorns women and deems them unprofessional for embracing their natural hair texture, this album fortifies self-worth among young black women. Beyoncé built her own platform in an industry and society against her, and used it to empower and give young black women the role model she didn't have. Her fearlessness to bring beauty to her identity served as a catalyst, calling the world to re-examine the way we view and address black femininity.

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Questions to Consider

Context

1. What is the author's overall analysis of *Lemonade* as an album? As a social statement?
2. How do the author's descriptions of *Lemonade*'s tracks speak to social, political, and racial realities that black women face today?

3. Watch one of the tracks the author detailed in this piece. How does the compilation of different references, music styles, costumes, and social issues contribute to the track as a work of art? What does the track say about black femininity particularly?

Style

1. How does the author make use of description to create context for *Lemonade* and its expression of black femininity?
2. How does the author make use of sources to provide a wider context for Beyoncé's album?

Fight for the Narrative: How Social Media has Given Oppressed Citizens a Voice

Sarah Kuny

In the dark of a cold February night in 2011, fifteen Syrian boys banded together to paint graffiti on a school wall that read, "Your turn, doctor." The doctor was the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, a trained ophthalmologist, and the warning was a threatening notice provoked by the anti-government protests in Egypt and Tunisia that had recently deposed their leaders. The Syrian schoolboys, all between ten and fifteen years old, were not reprimanded or suspended from school, but rather arrested and brutally tortured. Burned, forced to sleep naked on freezing wet mattresses, electrocuted with metal prods, and their fingernails torn out, the boys' horrific treatment sparked protests throughout Syria, and the unrest would eventually develop into a civil war. Social media was a crucial tool in the spread of information both leading up to the conflict and continuing throughout. Today, Syrians' adoption of social media as a weapon in the war of information remains an important aspect of the opposition movement. Though President Assad

attempts to control the narrative through restrictions on the press and freedom of speech, individuals are fueled by these restrictions and find ways to circumvent the controls through social media.

"Freedom of speech is something that people pursue regardless of the laws," comedian and political commentator Trevor Noah said in a recent interview with the news channel Al-Jazeera (Noah). Noah was raised in South Africa under apartheid and holds a nuanced understanding of individuals' behavior during oppression: "As human beings we want to speak our minds. You know, whether it's whispered in back alleys or whether it's proclaimed from a pulpit. As human beings, we want to tell the truth about what we see."

Totalitarian leaders attempting to censor information is a scenario with which the world is not unfamiliar. What often results from these controls on the press, however, is a defiant retaliation from individuals. As Noah states, humans have an innate desire to share the details of their reality with other humans. This need for connection, and the distribution of information that results from human communication is exceptionally influential in the oppositional movements against despots. Some may remember Sophie Scholl, a twenty-one-year-old university student in Munich who was beheaded by the Nazi regime for simply distributing pamphlets in her city. She did not take up a weapon and attempt to bring down the government with violence—a military coup or assassination attempt—yet she was given the harshest punishment in an attempt by the Nazis to both end the spread of threatening ideology, and to make an example of those who dare to criticize the government. Oppressive rulers *understand* the power of information, and they do not underestimate it.

In 2000, Bashar al-Assad became president of Syria, succeeding his father, Hafez, after his death. Citizens hoped

for reforms at first, but Assad quickly squashed these hopes by upholding the tradition of an "authoritarian, totalitarian, and cliquish regime" (Sterling), and in 2007, with the threat of revolution spreading throughout the Middle East, Assad's regime banned Facebook. However, after the successful Arab Spring protests in 2011, Assad attempted to appease the Syrian population by lifting the ban. Suddenly, citizens had a way of subtly expressing political opinion to the surrounding population. When citizens were disappointed by a presidential speech, for example, they would change their Facebook profile picture to black (Alexander). Though this public expression of opinion was previously limited to secret chats on proxy servers, the government chose this time to pursue a different course than an outright ban on social media. Rather than fight a losing battle against technology, Assad attempted to manipulate the image of his regime *through* interaction with and manipulation of the media. Twenty-three-year-old Amjad Siofy, a college student and social media activist in Syria, even began to suspect Assad preferred this "social media" revolution through Facebook and YouTube: "a young man carrying a laptop or mobile phone can't also be aiming a gun" (Harkin). Whether this was the opinion of Assad or not would not matter in a few months—revolutionaries would be doing both.

What would eventually turn into a civil war with many opposing facets, and a murderous regime committing atrocious human rights abuses, started with an isolated incident in Daraa, a city with a population just under 100,000 (General Census of Population and Housing 2004). Fifteen young schoolboys were tortured and arrested in a small town where information traveled quickly. The stories of the boys' experiences in prison ignited a flame of revolution that had been smoldering for years. Protests erupted in Daraa and young citizens were there with hidden cameras.

Siofy, the young activist previously mentioned, was a university student in his final year at Damascus University. He attended the protests with a hidden camera under his shirt, and later posted his content to YouTube. One video shows his interaction with a member of the state-sanctioned media, Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) in which Siofy is selected as an interviewee because he is pro-government (or at least the reporter is led to believe so), and because he speaks English. The goal of the interview was clearly to show that the people of Syria support the president, and specifically to show the international community this given the desire for an English-speaking respondent. The conversation goes as follows:

> Siofy: What should I say?
>
> Reporter: Just that the opposition have every right to hold a conference, that Syria is a free country, but that you support the president.

Siofy posted this interaction on YouTube, the video went viral, and thus was the emergence of a new trend. Though Assad attempted to control the narrative through international media, the Syrian opposition had "always been way ahead of the government in their access to international media" (Cockburn). Since the start of the conflict in 2011, citizens have produced and distributed a mass amount of photos and journalism, and they've been able to distribute them to a global audience with social media (Storck).

As the war has progressed, the war of information has followed alongside. In December of 2016, Iranian and Russian forces allied with Assad seized the city of Aleppo, which had been under rebel control. Over a few days, citizens in Aleppo used Twitter and Facebook to amass a flurry of international awareness. The graphic videos and pleas for help shared by users prompted passionate and emotional reactions from the international community. Twitter hashtags evolved into United

Nations speeches. There was little Assad could do to control the flame. He did not, however, give up on an effort to wrench back control of the narrative.

In February of 2017, Amnesty International, an independent human rights organization, released a detailed report of abuses in a Syrian prison. The report claimed 13,000 people were killed over five years in secret mass hangings. Every week, 50 people were taken from their cells in the middle of the night to be hanged – an order coming from the highest levels of government according to the report. Prisoners were tortured and deprived of food, water, and medical care (Amnesty International). Assad's response was cunning and calculated: appeal to the international community by sitting for an interview with a Western news outlet and claiming a recent trend in Western culture—fake news. When the journalist describes the abuses committed in the prison, President Assad simply replies: "You can forge anything these days, and we are living in a fake news era, as you know" (al-Assad).

While rebel militias and government forces wage a war on the ground, there is another war taking place online. The complexities of war and international relations require diplomacy and connections and resources, but social media has given the ordinary citizens of Syria a voice in the world. A voice which they continue to employ against Assad, while the international community watches with bated breath. Perhaps never has a global audience had such easy access to the stories of the victims of such heinous crimes against humanity. Syrian citizens hold immense power through social media—the world is able to watch their stories and feel their pain in real time, and perhaps this immediacy of connection will be the deciding factor in the outcome of the war, and the future of Syria.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. What role(s) do traditional news agencies play in providing for public outcry according to the author? How does that compare to the role social media is able to play?
2. How is the government of Syria using various forms of communication to control its country's population?
3. What are some solutions to the issues in Syria that this paper might seem to endorse?

Style

1. What effect does the author's use of a comedian's viewpoint have on the framing of the argument?
2. What central argument is the author making and what is being done throughout the paper to develop and support that argument?

Bombed Narratives: An Investigative Analysis of Banksy's Street Discourse

Jennifer Ngyuen

Following a period of expansion in the 1970s New York scene, graffiti has revolutionized the realm of public discourse and presented a form that borders the line of social acceptance. While it is difficult to measure public attitudes concerning graffiti, one thing is certain: it has made its mark on history. Since the dawning of unsanctioned spray painting on the sides of buildings and structures, graffiti has evolved into a greater area of public discourse termed "street art." According to Nicholas Riggle, street art is defined as a method of art that creates public works by incorporating the street physically and intentionally in the meaning of the work (Chackal 359). Centrally located in an area frequented by travel, street art is unique in the sense that it is accessible by the entire public. In today's society, street art is employed by individuals to showcase political opinion, protest, and self-expression. Whereas typical graffiti writers and street artists are often discounted in their value to the public, Banksy, a London-based street artist, has created a character that goes beyond the barrier of mainstream, socially approved art to serve as an influential voice and symbol of minority communities,

paving a path for developing street artists to incorporate socially outcast art and expression into the mainstream art society.

In the realm of artists that participate in creating street art, Banksy effectively harvests the essence of material and immaterial street art to communicate ideas to the greater public**.** While he is masked to most of his fans by a paper bag, he has proven throughout his career to be a revolutionary figure (Jones 1). In 2010, Banksy made *Time Magazine*'s list of 100 most influential individuals (Jones 1). His works, spanning from locations in Vienna to San Francisco and from Paris to Detroit, gave rise to a gradual fame in both the street culture and mainstream media (Jones 1). His impact on the art world became known as the "Banksy effect" (Jones 2). Although street art is not readily accepted as mainstream artwork, Banksy's work creates an exception, bridging the gap between the two worlds. His stencils, street sculptures, and paintings bring ideas to life, many of which are associated with messages attached to higher order concerns in society. This essay seeks to investigate the making of such an iconic character, the bridging of the gap between diverse socioeconomic communities at Banksy's doing, and the impact that the "Banksy effect" initially has in public discourse.

At the takeoff of Banksy's fame in the late 1990s era, the street artist began to retreat into an anonymity that served as a stepping stone for his iconicity (Jones 1). Not only did the individual responsible for Banksy remain unknown, but the character itself became a symbol of anonymous status. This idea of Banksy potentially being any person—a neighbor, co-worker, friend—contributed greatly to Banksy's ability to become relatable to multiple groups in the public eye. With no strings attached to a certain political party, social class, or racial group, Banksy became a character socially constructed by and for the people. This factor of being kept anonymous contributes to the

authenticity and integrity of Banksy as a character. Authenticity, as noted by Tony Chackal's modified definition of street art, is key in the functioning of effective street art (Chackal 362). Authentic works serve as the cultural capital of the street art world (Chackal 363). Banksy's ability to create works without the attachments of preconceived stigmas and ideas associated with a determined identity allows the character to develop a unique connection with each community a work is created in. Each piece is authentic in the sense that it is untainted by ideas outside of the character's own, due to his faceless identity, and the ideas communicated are left to interpretation by those that encounter his art.

Coupled with his decision to remain anonymous, Banksy's authenticity is accomplished by his choice to partake in unsanctioned art. Unsanctioned art is unrestricted artistic expression that often bleeds into the zone of illegality (Chackal 363). While sanctioned art has become more of a practice in the past decade, it fails to accomplish the same status that unsanctioned art achieves. Sanctioned art is legal, but it restricts artistic space and creativity due to requirements set in place by commissioners (Chackal 363). That being stated, sanctioned art is usually commissioned. Unsanctioned art dispels the limitations of sanctioned art in addition to accomplishing an air of illicit and subversive culture; this, in turn, translates to authenticity. Without partaking in both anonymity and unsanctioned activity, Banksy would not thrive in his ability to promote conversation.

In contrast to Banksy's technique, Graffiti Hurts is a U.S. organization that opposes illegal graffiti and promotes the creation of sanctioned murals (Moreau 109). In 2006, the organization honored a piece placed in a heavily trafficked part of the North Carolina metropolis, titled "Layers of Wilmington" (Moreau 109). The scenes depicted by the mural, strategically placed in a public parking garage, are inauthentic in the sense that they promote a

"normative" use of public space for regulated expression—unlike unsanctioned art, the mural was created with a preconceived agenda (Moreau 109). The simplistic scenes of sea life depicted in the mural fail to challenge or encourage viewers to engage in conversation; alternatively, it discourages subversive thinking that challenges authority. Instead of promoting use of the street for communication, the mural is meant to silence the voices of graffiti artists. This silencing isolates such artists and creates an environment where "public" space is controlled.

Banksy's graffiti "bombing" and art does the opposite, promoting conversation in public spaces instead of disbanding it. His work is illegal and spontaneous; it is not bound to specific time restrictions or art mediums. From origins in the 1990s, Banksy's work has appeared as non-commissioned, and therefore illegal, works on the sides of shop buildings, walls, and telephone booths (Jones 1). One of his most iconic stencils, a piece titled *Slave Labour* (see Figure 1), appeared on the side of a Poundland store in North London in 2012 (Molloy). It depicts a young boy intently focused on a sewing machine, creating Union Jack, the flag of the United Kingdom (Molloy). This image was controversial and subversive in the sense that many individuals interpreted it to be a satire in response to Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, which celebrated her 60 year ascension to the crown (Molloy). The image of the boy referenced a child labor controversy involving Poundland (Smith). In 2010, the Poundland store faced accusations of being associated with an exporting business, much like a sweatshop, exploiting children for 98 hours of work per week (Smith). By creating this piece of art, Banksy voiced an unpopular political opinion that addressed the treatment and condition of workers in a society dominated by consumer culture and propagated by those at the very apex of society. *Slave Labour* prompted individuals to evaluate internal spending habits and further spurred the conversation involving

Fig. 1—Banksy. "Slave Labour."

consumerism. The stencil was removed in 2013 but remains one of Banksy's most iconic pieces (Molloy).

By creating works similar to the critical nature of *Slave Labour*, Banksy contributes to an alternative system of public communication that challenges status quo ideas (Carrington 412). This communication directly challenges forces, such as corporate power, in common and visible spaces. By keeping an anonymous identity, Banksy is able to create a "backstage pass" sort of phenomenon (Islam 248). Just like a public restroom can alternate between spaces of privacy and publicity, an anonymous character can do the same (Islam 248). The backstage pass allows for the open expression of ideas without direct criticism. While individuals may be able to criticize Banksy's character, they are unable to criticize the individual that is responsible for Banksy due to his hidden identity. This is key when using public spaces to shape certain ideas. While the ideas originate from Banksy in the private sense, the interpretation of the ideas gives way to an umbrella of "shared meanings," as stated by Gazi Islam (Islam 247). Although the concept of shared meanings stems from an origin of work, the meanings are not identical for each individual involved in the sharing process. Therefore, Banksy's work is not tied to one meaning or identity. It allows for open interpretation, serving as a source for multiple outlets of alternative discourse.

Fig. 2—Banksy. "Les Miserables."

Banksy's iconicity and influence is further enhanced by his choice to voice marginalized opinions and subculture ideas in his creative works. This connects Banksy's character with minority-group individuals and allows his messages to be easily relatable to those often silenced or in disagreement with the mainstream values of society. Most of Banksy's earliest works appeared in socioeconomically deprived neighborhoods (Hansen 290). Not only does this placement speak to individuals of the community, it also works to address greater problems often pushed to the side by mainstream society, such as those concerning superficial interactions.

Due to the high production value of his works, Banksy bridges the gap between these ideas of the minority culture and mainstream culture by capturing the attention of the media (Carrington 417). His product-placement, so to speak, is perfectly timed. For example, in 2016, following the Syrian refugee crisis, Banksy released a mural resembling *Les Miserables's* Cosette (see Figure 2) on a London wall across the street from Britain's French embassy. The young girl was enveloped in a cloud of tear gas. This image followed accusations of French police using tear gas during raids of the Calais refugee camps. Included below the image was a QR code that directed individuals to a video affirming the accusations (Crocker).

The creation of this work paid attention to detail with respect to location, historical time, and modern day reference, and the use of the QR code helped to further enhance the interactive experience of the mural (Crocker). Banksy released an image that powerfully and clearly challenged an action in the realm of the political world. His immediate response to worldly actions makes his art an "in the moment" exhibition (Crocker). The diffusion of his art through media via newspaper, television, and online discussion links discourse of lower socioeconomic communities with that of its more affluent counterparts by traveling beyond physical boundaries of geographical location.

Due in part to the publicity of his art, Banksy's presence in society and beyond the realm of the art world has been coined by the phrase the "Banksy effect" (Jones 2). This effect has been defined by Luke Dickens as "a comprehensive public dialogue… carefully nurtured alongside his work on the everyday spaces of the street" (Dickens 474). Not only has this dialogue challenged individuals to be more aware of the issues plaguing their homes and society, it has played a part in contributing to a developing post-graffiti movement (Dickens 474). While post-graffiti can still be a form of street art, it often resembles a form that is artistically different from the traditional graffiti tag (Dickens 474). Unlike traditional graffiti, Banksy's art is legible and mobile in the sense that it is communicated beyond the site of its creation (Dickens 476). The Banksy effect fuels communication as Banksy's art reaches viewers through placement in art exhibits, reviews on social media, and word-of-mouth in communities (Dickens 476). While his art is increasingly mobile, shrinking the distance between subculture art and mainstream art, his work remains deeply rooted in ties to communities serving as original sites of creation.

In 2009, in a community in north London, Banksy created an image (see Figure 3) titled *No Ball Games* (Hansen 290).

Fig. 3—Banksy. "No Ball Games."

While the community the image was created in was heavily populated by graffiti tags and inscription, the Banksy image served as a sign of urban regeneration (Hansen 290). In 2013, the image faced public removal in order to be auctioned off to a private owner (Hansen 290). Some members thought the mural removal to be beneficial to the community, but a number of individuals say the loss of the mural was a crime to the community (Hansen 305). Ironically, while the image was the product of an illegal work, the community members saw value in the art and considered it an asset of the community. To remove it was to "steal" a part of the community (Hansen 302). Banksy's art and the accurately termed Banksy effect left that impact on multiple communities. Since the start of his career, Banksy has street bombed locations affected by poverty, war, and political dissatisfaction, highlighting the communities in the public eye (Jones 2).

While individuals tend to critique his work as a call for attention through illegal activity, Banksy's art draws attention to the meanings of the work rather than the artist (Hansen 294). His placement of art in various communities is dependent on the conversations of the communities; the conversation of a working-

class neighborhood in Los Angeles differs from the conversation of a war-torn region in the Middle East. One notable factor of Banksy's art is the fact that it is temporary, not necessarily permanent. If individuals of a community find the art unfitting to their community, they are at liberty to remove it or even modify it (Hanson 297). Unlike institutional art, Banksy's creations face the possibility of modification (Hanson 297). In this way, Banksy contributes to the phenomenon of participatory culture, one that re-imagines the community through not only his eyes, but those of the community members (Dickens 472).

In summary, Banksy's art serves not only as a product of discourse but also as a foundation for public discourse. His art, whether interpreted in a positive or negative light, promotes discussion and debate. It sparks controversy, which is another reason why Banksy's character has persisted until today. His works move individuals to stop and think. By creating an authentic and iconic character throughout his career, contributing to an alternative form of discourse that bridges socioeconomic gaps, and creating works that give way to the Banksy effect, Banksy paves a path from urban, outcast art to the mainstream art community. In his last documented interview through email in 2003, Banksy himself stated, "This is the first time the essentially bourgeois world of art has belonged to people. We need to make it count" (Jones 1).

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. In what ways does Banksy's art contribute to, and change, public discourse in a particular space?
2. How does the location of the artwork, and the hidden identity of Banksy, contribute to the effectiveness of Banksy's art?

3. How does the medium of "street art" affect the messages Banksy communicates through his art? Does its illegality and its nature as grafitti make Banksy's work more subversive? More independent of mainstream ideologies? How so?

Style

1. How does the author's use of images contribute to the arguments made in this paper?
2. How do the sources contribute to the author's analysis of the effects of Banksy's art on communities and individuals?

Animated Movies and Racial Associations

Kayla Wiltfong

Sing is an animated movie following in the tradition of many animated movies released throughout the past few decades. It features mostly or all animal characters who have been personified to the point of being humanoid. By now this style of children's cartoon is not unexpected, since we have been fed ages of these movies by companies like Disney, who made and continue to make the Mickey Mouse cartoons and *The Jungle Book*, and released *Zootopia* as recently as 2016. However, using animals to portray people is a task that can be proven more controversial than first meets the eye. In the modern political and social climate many animated features are preaching messages of inclusivity and acceptance, and they turn to animals to help create their allegory. This is where *Sing* stumbles into dangerous waters. In order to create the character Johnny and his family, the makers of *Sing* have combined two harmful stereotypes of black men: the ape and the criminal. Modern animated movies, such as *Sing*, continue the tradition of using harmful stereotypes of black men in order to create their characters, which consequently extends prejudices for current and future audiences.

Stereotypes present in the media are extremely likely to affect audiences. Priming is "a mental process in which certain aspects of an issue are made more prominent by media and thus more influential in guiding a person's judgment." Through television media, such as the news and fictional shows meant for entertainment purposes, "Americans see an inordinate percentage of blacks portrayed as criminals. This overexposure has the dual effect of causing many whites to conflate violence with being black and increasing the belief that committing crime is a natural tendency for blacks" (Holt). Armed with the awareness that television can affect viewers this way, being cautious of other, similar forms of entertainment media emerges as a good idea. Movies and films do much of the same work that television does, most often in a longer format. Viewers spend a longer and more emotionally significant amount of time with films and their characters than they do with episodes on a television show. If stereotypes are present in movies, and especially if those stereotypes comply with a viewer's existing perceptions of a racial group, they will have an impact on that viewer's perception of the group.

In *Sing,* the character Johnny is the gorilla son of a gorilla father who is an active participant in a criminal gang. Johnny naturally is swept up into his father's criminal activities, although all he really wants is to be a singer (*Sing* 2016). This family of characters is problematic because they are made by the melding of two stereotypes that affect black men: the ape stereotype and the criminal stereotype. If these two stereotypes weren't working so closely to form the bedrock of Johnny's and his father's identities, if Johnny's father was a gorilla but not a gang member or vice versa, there would be no controversy. However, these two aspects together, two things that have been historical stereotypes of black men, provide a different story.

First, the historical and social aspects of the ape stereotype must be explored. The ape stereotype associated with black men and women has existed since white people first traveled to West Africa. Black people were described in the explorers' writings as "primitive" and "more closely related to apes." These scientific misconceptions were maintained long after proven wrong in order to aid the agenda of white superiority ("Not Yet Human"). In a study of modern college students, most of them claimed never to have heard of the association between black people and apes. However, when studies were performed to test whether this association truly existed, it was proven to be present. These studies involved exposing people to faces of white or black people and then showing them different images. The race of the face they were exposed to did not affect the participant's ability to identify non-ape images, but those exposed to black faces detected ape images much quicker than those exposed to white faces first ("Enduring Racial Associations" 450-451). In another study where a white mugshot and a black mugshot were shown in relation to identical crimes, the participants were not more likely to think the white suspect deserved his punishment when exposed to ape related words. However, they were much more likely to believe the black suspect deserved his punishment when exposed to ape related words. The use of these ape related words in conjunction with a belief that the suspect was black made it much more likely that the study participants would think the amount of force the police officers used was justified ("Enduring Racial Associations" 453). The ape stereotype compares black Americans to animals, a tactic that effectively dehumanizes that entire group. Dehumanization leads to a group being "morally excluded," meaning that they "do not count in a moral sense. Consequently, anything that is done to someone who is morally excluded is permissible, no matter how heinous the action" ("Not Yet Human"). Horrible actions against dehumanized people

have no consequences in the perpetrators' minds. Therefore the perpetrators, in this case mostly white racists and supremacists, can justify hate crimes against black people, and historically, slavery, to themselves.

The criminal stereotype was another major factor in the mugshot study mentioned above. This stereotype has probably existed for as long as the ape stereotype, and is likely fueled by a similar belief that black people are less than human. Early, and proven to be inaccurate, research on skull and brain size is thought to be the origin of the stereotype of the aggressive black person. This early research "promoted the idea that Blacks were inferior to Whites and in need of control" (Bond). Essentially, as with the ape stereotype, this was a case of white people trying to prove that they were biologically superior to black people. These conceptions of black people are proven to have consequences in the real world. White people are quicker to detect or think that they see a weapon in the hands of a man with stereotypically black features than they are with a white or black man with less stereotypically black features. As a result, "when police officers are thinking of capturing, arresting, or shooting, they are drawn to the black face" ("Enduring Racial Associations" 441-444). These conceptions have been furthered by the way media has historically portrayed black men. The harmful minstrel shows and blackface roles of the past have focused heavily on portraying black men as dumb but dangerous criminals. This is especially apparent in films like the Ku Klux Klan propaganda film *The Birth of a Nation*, where white men chase a blackface performer because their character has supposedly raped a white woman.

Once given context, or perhaps even before consciously knowing the connection between the ape and criminal images, *Sing*'s blunder becomes obvious. While the movie is populated entirely by animals and race is never mentioned, there is a scientifically likely association that will be made between these

characters and black men. This becomes a common problem in animated movies featuring mostly or all animal speaking parts. The writers feel the need to tie the fantastic animal characters to types of people in the real world, and turn to stereotypes as an easy way to do so. The ape stereotype is thought to be in use in both the 1933 movie *King Kong* and the story closely related to it, of "Beauty and the Beast," which Disney later turned into an animated film featuring all white characters. There is an allegory here: that the Beast, or King Kong, was black and that Belle, or the woman, was white. These tales, especially the one of King Kong, can be seen as a warning against interracial marriages in America ("Not Yet Human"). Another famous animated movie featuring animals who can talk is Disney's *The Jungle Book*. In this movie, the only character played by a black voice actor is King Louie, the ruler of the monkeys. This monkey is manipulative and aggressive, blending together the stereotypes of ape and criminal. *The Jungle Book* is still a popular movie today, having received a live-action remake in 2016. This most likely spurred parents to show their children the original animation before going to see the remake. The choices this movie made in casting and therefore depicting certain kinds of people are being felt even today. The fact that these negative stereotypes are implemented in the movie means that they are affecting new generations of viewers, and *Sing*'s similar use of these stereotypes is sure to hold its own repercussions.

Many readers will likely point out that Johnny and his gang-leader father, Big Daddy, are voiced by white, not black, men. Instead, the black voice actors in the movie play a family of elephants, three generations of which live in the same house and are all, conveniently for their chosen animal, a bit chunky. Aside from the fact that the black voice actors appear to be playing roles involving different harmful stereotypes within this movie, the casting choice seems like a small attempt to distract from

the error of writing a criminal ape character. It's as though the writers realized their mistake of writing these two images into the same character and decided to cast white men with British accents in order to avoid controversy and mask their harmful mistake. Aside from casting, these two stereotypes, as we have seen previously, are strongly linked through their association to the black man, and their resulting association in the film seems cheap. Wouldn't it have been more interesting to have a gang of criminal hedgehogs? Or a family of gorillas who owned a flower shop? Not only does the choice to associate gorillas with crime involve harmful racial associations, it also falls back onto cliché instead of trying to create something original.

An animated film that features a world fully populated by animals but does not fall into the stereotyping trap is Disney's *Zootopia*. This is surprising, since *Zootopia* is clearly an allegory about tensions between identities in the modern world. While trying to preach about acceptance and love between races, wouldn't it be easier to fall on to stereotypes to prove the point? The answer is probably, but Zootopia escapes controversy by creating tensions between identities exclusive to its world. The tension in the movie is between the Predators and the Prey. Neither one is completely disadvantaged within their society, but they are severely stereotyped into societal roles. Each group has a negative opinion of the other as a result of years of tension. This tactic of avoiding existing races all together in order to make a point about racial equality and understanding is clever, because biases between existing, human races are absent from the film. In *Zootopia* "animals experience different treatment based on their size, their specific species or, more broadly, whether they fall into the category of prey or predator. This suggests that the filmmakers are making a conscious attempt to incorporate intersectionality" into the film and its world (Crewe 30). The film explores how prejudice is institutionalized instead

of just preaching acceptance as animated movies in the past may have done. It is honest about discrimination and points out how even the well intentioned can continue to contribute to prejudice and racial inequality (Crewe 27). All of these careful details are evidence of how well *Zootopia*'s creators thought through the process of manufacturing their characters and their story. While *Zootopia* is a much more racial film than *Sing*, the creators of *Zootopia* effectively step around using existing racial stereotypes to create their characters. On the other hand, *Sing* does not need to mention or acknowledge human race at all in their film about singing humanoid animals, but nonetheless does so at many points in the film; aside from their harmful meshing of the criminal and ape stereotypes, they include an insulting portrayal of a pop group made of Japanese, non-English speaking red pandas.

The decisions that animated movies make in regards to creating their characters and casting voice actors do matter, and they have consequences. While it is easier to build personified animal characters off of stereotypes that already exist, especially when the movie is dealing with racial inequality, the characters that are constructed as a result are problematic and extend existing associations between race groups and blanket characteristics. It is unanimous among scholars that stereotypes are a "precursor to prejudice" (Holt). Because of this, movies featuring mostly or all animated characters should stray from creating their characters in the image of a stereotypically related racial group. It doesn't matter if these associations are covered up by the casting of voice actors of a different race or who have a stereotypically unrelated accent, as the connections between the most likely negative stereotypes embodied by the character and the race that they are associated with still exist and can still do harm. Animated movies tend to be timeless creations that are passed down through generations of viewers, and any

stereotypes and negative associations that exist within them are preserving the roots of prejudice for the future. Because the animated movie *Sing* connected the criminal and ape stereotypes, those stereotypes will continue to be associated. Black men will continue to be stereotyped as criminals and continue to be treated as animals whose personal emotions are inconsequential. Given this, the choices made in creating and casting characters now will have repercussions and maintain stereotypes for possibly generations to come. Instead of using existing racial stereotypes within the movie, new ones should instead be made up to fit exclusively into the world of the movie.

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Sing. Directed by Christophe Lourdelet and Garth Jennings, Illumination, 2016.

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

Questions to Consider:

Context

1. According to the author, why are movies like *Sing* harmful to societal perceptions of the African American male?
2. How does a film like *Zootopia* address difference in ways that avoid stereotyping?
3. How has the author utilized sources to discuss the troubling association between African American males and ape/criminal stereotypes? What are the repercussions on society when filmmakers choose to uphold these stereotypes?

Style

1. How does the author make use of examples from films to express the stereotyping that happens in the film industry?

2. How does the author incorporate studies meant to evaluate implicit racial bias into the essay? In what way to they add to her examination of the movies?

Advanced Category Winner

The Myth of the Model Minority: A Novel Solution to a Nuanced Problem

Sarthak Garg

Introduction

Asians have migrated to and have lived in the Americas since the days of our founding fathers. The first to come from the Eastern Hemisphere were a small group of Filipinos in the early 18th century that settled in present day Louisiana. The first major influx of Asian Americans was Chinese Americans, who came in the 1800's to find financial opportunity during the California gold rush. They settled in the Golden State and eventually spread out all over the United States, creating the now-famous Chinatowns that millions of Americans visit every year. There is a continual migration of well-educated South Asians and East Asians for job and education opportunities and their success has formed the basis for the "myth of the model minority" (MMM). This is the idea that all people who are Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are successful both socioeconomically and educationally. This does have a logical basis rooted in statistics—AAPI students are reported to have higher grade point averages, math scores, and overall standardized tests

scores on tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Exam (ACT). Other studies often use a racialized rhetoric comparing Asian Americans to white Americans in terms of education and socioeconomic status,while contrasting them to the so-called "lazy" and "incapable" Hispanic and African Americans.

The term "model minority" was first coined in a 1966 *New York Times* article written by William Petersen entitled "Success story: Japanese American Style" which made the claims that a Japanese cultural focus on family values and hard work allowed them to overcome discrimination and become successful. This article led to a slew of politicians and journalists drawing the conclusion that other minorities who did not achieve success were in their position due to their "poor" family and moral values. While the myth does work to explicitly propagate racism against black and brown bodies, it implicitly harms AAPIs as well. Research has shown there are increased suicide rates, health problems, and educational stresses from those who cannot maintain or "live up" to the standard of the MMM.

The myth also homogenizes AAPI experiences, positing them as a monolithic emblem of success. What the myth fails to recognize is not everyone coming to the Americas from the largest and most populous continent in the world is coming for the same reason, or has the same economic background. Many AAPI ethnic groups, like other ethnic groups from around the world, come to the US fleeing persecution and seeking a safe haven so their families can survive. The myth often results in various agents, such as the government or health care providers overlooking their problems and offering them no assistance, marking them as "exceptions" to the rule of success.

This paper looks at the present state of Asians Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States and the problems they face. Through a review of the existing literature in the

fields of education, healthcare, and wealth, the problems and inconsistencies in data and the methodology of data collection in relation to AAPIs are scrutinized in order to come up with a comprehensive plan of action. This includes both a policy proposal to change the paradigm of research in the field, as well as an individualistic focus that seeks to educate the public in hopes of facilitating a mindset shift that, although gradual, will cascade into approaching other issues of institutionalized subjugation with an open-minded approach.

The Status Quo

Asians are the fastest growing immigrant population in the United States, having outpaced Hispanic immigrants 36% to 31%. However, a larger percentage of Asian immigrants (74%) are not born in the U.S., and 53% of those immigrants say they are not fluent in English (Pew Research Center, 2012). These immigrants coming from the largest and most diverse continent on the planet often have their viewpoints homogenized under the umbrella term "Asian American and Pacific Islander." If the game of statistics is played, very important outliers are not taken into consideration, due to the bolstering success of other groups who have a positive effect on the average. In 2009, President Barack Obama revamped the original Clinton-era White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through an executive order which established an Interagency Working Group for more efficient data collection and also gave the committee access to more funding. The initiative sought to understand the various Asian ethnic communities and their needs through the use of interagency collaboration and on-the-ground community outreach. The three main problem areas highlighted by this study are in wealth, education, and health—the three arenas in which Asian Americans are stereotypically flaunted as leaders.

The pervasive MMM touts AAPIs as being educationally on par with white America, if not surpassing them. The original 1966 *New York Times* piece, "Success Story: Japanese American Style," sings high praises to the academic successes of these "whiz kids" who were starting to outperform their Caucasian peers (Petersen, 1966). This is also used as a means of putting down other minorities who do not perform as well. Esther Yu-Hsi Lee, an immigration reporter for *ThinkProgress*, writes that there is an implicit misconstruction of why AAPIs perform as they do. In the original article, Petersen, along with current proponents of the myth, writes that strong family values and a mindset geared towards education drives the Asians. What he fails to realize, however, is that most AAPIs come to the US as graduate students or established professionals in their fields, so they do not have to struggle with starting from scratch (E. Y.-H. Lee, 2015). They do not face the same forms of institutionalized violence that other black and brown bodies face, which function to keep those respective groups down. The White House study did go on to reveal, however, that this same visage of success was not consistent for all groups. The SEA community was less likely than white Americans to have a high school degree. In fact, 40% of Hmong, 38% of Laotian, and 35% of Cambodian populations did not go on to complete high school (Lim, 2015; White House, 2009). But, most importantly, these forms of discrimination are always overlooked because the Southeast Asian community is often grouped together with the Asian community writ large. The way these groups are generalized goes to undercut the harsh realities that shape the plight of many ethnic groups under the AAPI umbrella.

Besides being the smartest, AAPIs are also viewed as the richest. The numbers correlate with the White House study's finding that 12.6% of Asian Americans are living below the poverty line; a value within one standard deviation of the nation's

12.4% average. A closer look beyond the mean reveals a more nuanced story. In fact, Southeast Asian (SEA) ethnic groups, specifically the Hmong, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian groups, had poverty rates similar to African and Hispanic American populations. Besides just impoverishment, Bernadette Lim, a Fulbright-Nehru Student Research Scholar at the US Department of State and recent Harvard graduate, writes in her recent *New York Times* article that these ethnic groups earn well below the national average (2015). The socioeconomics of their social location in American society impacts their ability to stay and perform well in school, thus severely limiting their career options. However, this side of the experience is never explored and always veiled by the continuous regurgitation of Asian success stories.

According to the Pew Research Center survey, nearly half of all Asian immigrants are not fluent in English and this has an effect on their health, both physically and mentally. Dr. Eliza Noh, a PhD in ethnic studies, writes that suicide is the second leading cause of death among Asian American women, and this group also has the highest female suicide rate across all racial and ethnic groups. These groups also have correspondingly high rates of depression. Dr. Noh writes that "the 'model minority' pressure—[is] socially produced pressure internalized by families of some Asian-American children to be high achievers at school and professionally" (Cruz, 2010). Besides a mental effect created as a result of the MMM, physical issues often go untreated. A National Institutes of Health study in 2008 revealed disparities in cancer rates across ethnic groups—cervical cancer incidence rates are among the highest in the U.S. for Laotian, Vietnamese and Cambodian women. Issues were revealed showing a language barrier had prevented early diagnosis of cancer and precluded an effective treatment plan from following through, leading to late-state complications and mortality (Miller, Chu, Hankey, & Ries, 2008).

While there are countless other issues created and exacerbated by the myth of the model minority, the issues of health, education, and wealth are the focuses of this paper, since these are the biggest issues that have the most impact on the overall well-being of the community. The only current efforts to resolve the implications of the myth are relegated to blog sites and opinion pieces in magazines. There are no concrete policy proposals, legislatures, or large scale calls to action for this problem as it is often overshadowed and co-opted by other movements. Yet this is an issue that has and will continue to affect the largest growing immigrant group in the US.

Review of the Literature

There is an extensive literature base on the subject of the MMM and how it interacts with AAPIs. Since the term "model minority" was coined, many scholars have argued that the term "model minority" itself is invalid and inaccurate. The main arguments of the literature include:

1. The methods of statistical analysis that supports the stereotype are often flawed at their core (De La Cruz-Viesca, 2011; Li, 2005; Maramba, 2011)
2. The myth fails to recognize the increased evidence of Asian underachievement, dropout rates at various levels of the educational spectrum, and socio-economic gaps between groups (Hu-DeHart, 2016; S. Lee, 2009; Maramba, 2011)
3. It overlooks the vast intergroup and intragroup discrimination that occurs (Hu-DeHart, 2016; S. Lee, 2009; White House, 2009; Wu, 2014)

As with almost everything humans experience, heuristics frame how we also view the Asian American narrative. While evaluating research or conducting research, we are predisposed to be receptive to the positive statistics or the narratives of

success, internally refusing to believe or accept anything which is contrary to our dogmas, as evidenced by much of the research.

There is a widely held belief that Asian Americans represent the height of socioeconomic success, but the numbers show a different reality. The White House study along with a study by Professor Robert Teranishi shows that many ethnic AAPI groups have poverty rates that exceed the national 12.4% average: 37.8% of the Hmong, 29.3% of the Cambodians, 18.5 percent of Laotians, and 16.6 percent of the Vietnamese (De La Cruz-Viesca, 2011; Maramba, 2011; Teranishi, 2010; White House, 2009). This disproportionately high level is because the majority of SEA immigrants come to the United States as refugees, and not voluntarily, as do their more successful counterparts. Dina Maramba, a PhD in Higher Education at Claremont Graduate University, highlights three major root causes to the problem: (a) the MMM is very pervasive and plagues all representations of AAPI's; (b) there is a large difficulty in creating an accurate picture of the 48 ethnic groups coming out of the most populated continent in the world; (c) when these groups are lumped together to save time and money, this fails to identify the multiplicities and complexities among the groups. The problem is compounded as there is no status quo basis for disaggregation regarding income, wealth and assets. Two major national surveys, the Survey of Consumer Finance (SCF) and the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics (PSID), that track wealth and produce the most comprehensive wealth and asset reports actually lump AAPI, Native Americans, Eskimo, Aleut and "Other" in one category. Only the American Community Survey (ACS) produces an economic report which reports on financial holdings by ethnic groups; however, the reports are not as detailed (De La Cruz-Viesca, 2011).

The origins of the MMM arose from a focus on the educational prowess of the AAPIs. Petersen's 1966 article was the root cause

of the currently standing belief that Asian Americans do well in school because they are raised in households with good family values, however, according to Evelyn Hu-DeHart (2016), "Asian immigrants stress education because of its 'relative functionalism' for upward mobility." In hostile environments, stress is placed on education to gain some semblance of "acceptance" by the predominant group, in our case white Americans. At the opposite end of "relative functionalism" there is "blocked opportunity" which explains that African-Americans and Hispanic Americans actually do not believe in the upwards mobility model and face constant institutionalized racism which will be discussed further. The problem with education studies on AAPIs is a pervasive lack of research. Maramba (2011) writes that a recent study showed only 1% of research on higher education had a focus on AAPI students. This means any research used to reallocate funds for college aid will not have an accurate picture of Asian students.

Just like in the case of wealth, certain AAPI groups are marginalized by this lack of research. The 2009 White House study and Teranishi both report that a disproportionately small percentage of SEA groups receive bachelor's degrees (7.5% of the Hmong, 7.7% of Laotian, 9.2% of Cambodians, and 19.4% of Vietnamese) compared to the national average of 25.9% (Teranishi, 2010; White House, 2009). Many studies only take a look at the rates of college degrees or high school dropouts among AAPI groups, however, Li notes that the disparity in education is even greater, earlier on in the education chain. He reports that 54.9% of the Hmong, 40.7% Cambodians, and 33.9% Laotians did not complete an elementary school education. Many schools, in fact, do not even monitor dropout rates of Asian Americans, and only recognize the positives (2005). The images promoted by the MMM result in invisibility of very real issues and disguise the social realities of many Asian students who are not successful. A "bimodal" trend in the data is observed, but the

"underperforming" facet is overshadowed and ignored due to the "prosperous" facet. The key impacts, according to the research, are that: (a) a lack of proficiency in literacy is often neglected, (b) a "threat" rhetoric is associated with Asian Americans based on the fear white America will be taken over, which leads to a greater disconnect between students in the university and creates an air of institutional racism, and (c) the university often does not have established connections to support groups for the students within their own communities which eviscerates a model for AAPI students to generate a safe space (S. Lee, 2009; Li, 2005). These images are false representations of many Asian students and have posed as a threat to their educational advancement.

Many stresses are placed on AAPIs to "live up" to this obscure standard of success which needlessly contributes to issues of physical and mental health. Unsurprisingly, these issues are also obscured because of the popular belief that the smart and wealthy AAPIs are at the pinnacle of physical health. Dr. Guofang Li's 2005 work also included a case study on Andy Lou, a fourth grade student in Canada and son of Hong Kong parents who were in well-paying jobs and who were both well-educated. When Andy was performing below the rest of his peers, his parents put him in private tutoring which included a rigorous work schedule at home. Teachers also failed to go out of their way to help Andy and, in fact, adopted a "victim blaming" mentality. They believed Andy simply was not performing to the level of his other AAPI peers because there was a problem on his end which was out of their hands. The case of Andy Lou and the stresses placed on him by society and other members of the AAPI population is the shared experience of many. Dr. Eliza Noh writes that the societal stresses placed on Asian Americans have contributed to the highest rates of depression and suicide among any ethnic group in the United States (Cruz, 2010). Because Asians are stereotyped as successful in terms of their

careers and educational standing, they are believed to likewise have excellent health. The 2011 Tendulkar study shows that there are many health problems that abound amongst the Asian American populations. He highlights three core issues:

1. Aggregate data prevents definitive conclusions. Tendulkar gives the example of some studies showing Asian Americans have the longest life expectancies, while other studies of AAPI populations have "poorer health outcomes when compared to other groups"
2. Absence of accurate data perpetuates the MMM, suggesting all Asians are at the peak of their health, meaning funds for health benefits are often not proportionately budgeted
3. It was also shown the MMM was pervasive in how doctors and nurses viewed AAPIs. They deduced that their Asian patients, due to their supposedly superior economic and educational well-being, would all be in the prime states of their health, so the severity of their problems were heavily undercut and the proper degree of care was not given.

The root of these problems lies at the disaggregation of the data. Once data can be separated by ethnic groups, only then can stereotypes be broken, allowing healthcare professionals to accurately treat their patients, in an unbiased manner. The problem with this study is it only focuses on a small urban town north of Boston, but the problem is not just focused there. Further research has been done and certain AAPI subgroups lead the nation on various diseases, such as Eliza Noh's study about mental illness stated earlier. Beyond that, a National Institutes of Health study in 2010 revealed Japanese women had the highest lung cancer rates, while Japanese men had the highest colorectal cancer rates. Liver cancer rates among multiple ethnic groups (highest among Chinese, Filipino, Kampuchean, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, and Vietnamese men) along with cervical cancer rates (highest in Kampuchean,

Laotian, Samoan, and Vietnamese women) and stomach cancer (highest in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean women) were much higher than rates of those cancers in white Americans. Due to communication barriers, treatment would often not be given to patients or highly preventable cancers progressed to late stage cancers, due a failure in early detection (Miller et al., 2008; Tendulkar et al., 2011).

Asian Americans are used to compare against black and brown bodies. They are not as privileged as the white body, yet not as discriminated against as the black body. Li writes:

> The model minority image places Asians in a precarious position that they do not have any problems and do not need any social services or the system does not need to change for Asians at all. Such silencing often hinders Asian Americans' collective struggle for social justice and disempowers them from actively fighting for their equal rights. The other function is that the representation of Asians as the model minority maintains the existing social order and racial hierarchy. It is argued that the stereotype has been used to support the status quo of white superiority and the ideologies of meritocracy in that other minority groups ought to be able to succeed as well. (Li, 2005)

The rhetoric of the 1966 Petersen piece is continually propagated to this day and used to claim that the social location of African and Hispanic Americans is due to faulty or problematic family values. The myth functioned in nuanced ways to take the focus off of a "black vs white" dichotomy by shifting the focus away from white Americans to AAPIs, in order to justify greater anti-black rhetoric. But the paradigm of the myth has shifted over time. Ellen Wu, in her 2014 book *The Color of Success,* writes of how the myth began regarding Japanese Americans, but overtime the AAPIs continued propagating the MMM. She takes a look at how various political measures, programs, and

the rhetoric of officials shaped the development of the Asian American identity. Cultural ambassadors to Asia promoted a narrative of a successful and discrimination free America to get AAPIS to come. Various Chinese and Japanese programs stressed how Asian Americans were "definitively not black." Some senators in Hawaii and the Midwest were guilty of using rhetoric that reinforced "white racial assumptions about the unruliness of African American communities" in comparison to the docile, successful nature of the Asian American communities (Wu, 2014). Stacey Lee (2009) writes that the AAPI students' self belief of the MMM "informed their attitudes toward other groups of people of color." Their belief in the MMM is based on the idea of African Americans as "the failing minority." These beliefs are being used by educational conservatives in their fight against affirmative action. Hu-DeHart gives the example of Jian Li, a Princeton graduate, who has been instrumental in the fight against affirmative action. This movement has gained traction "goaded by political activists only too happy to have found in rejected Asian American applicants to elite universities the perfect mascots in their relentless march against affirmative action" (2016). Overall, however, this demonstrates a narrow understanding of racism and historical discrimination.

All of the research, including the studies above and this paper, has an end goal of breaking down the rhetoric framing the MMM—a process dubbed a "counter-model-minority myth project" by Dr. OiYan Poon. This paper traces the genealogy surrounding the development of the counter-MMM project, starting from 1977, by analyzing 112 works of research on AAPIs in higher education. Poon, et al. concludes the research conducted over the last thirty years has many drawbacks and has functioned counter-intuitively to the goals of the counter-MMM project. Most of the existing research, including the studies cited in this paper, is mainly concerned with the

"invisibility of AAPIs in higher education" since institutions of higher education, educators, and policy makers tend to "overlook [diversity]…and neglect its educational needs." Poon recognizes four main limitations of the existing research:

1. The existing research base often does not have a background in critical race analysis therefore cannot take issues of overall discrimination into account. The framing of the MMM in these studies simply identifies it as a myth without consideration of how the MMM interacts with issues of anti-black racism. This ignores how the MMM is integral to the project of maintaining dominant-white supremacy. This is evident in both the Miller and Tendulkar studies which fail to incorporate an analysis of the MMM on *other* minority groups in issues of public health, instead favoring a tunnel-vision approach.
2. Much research is a product of "deficit thinking" that compares AAPI groups with other minorities, thus furthering the issue. Asian Americans are posited as the model of a successful minority, which is used then in turn to blame another minority group for its struggles—this is called "deficit thinking." This "valorization" of oversimplified stereotypes bolsters cultural racism by discrediting other group's struggles. This is always used for the comparison to Hispanic Americans or Black Americans—this is evident in the White House study, De La Cruz-Viesca's work, and Maramba's research. These studies all tend to bifurcate AAPIs into two groups: high-achieving and low-achieving. Deficit thinking seeks to obscure a thorough analysis into how whiteness affects AAPI populations and reinforces a comparative mindset that only sets certain groups back, thus compounding the problem.
3. The majority of research on AAPI in higher education often approaches the issue on a surface level overlooking

many of the complexities present in the argument. The research that focuses on the AAPI, even those which include a critical definition of the subject, often puts the AAPI or the MMM at the center of the subject. This tunnel-vision on the MMM obfuscates a humanistic focus on the experience of the individual. Guofang Li's 2005 article circumvents this by focusing on a case study and humanizing the research by focusing on lived experiences, a core component of critical race studies.

4. Many articles seeking to contest the MMM framing often exacerbate the issue. Those articles, which fail to take a critical approach to understanding the MMM, often misinterpret the myth and counter it by presenting the narratives of "failed" Asian Americans, but this only serves to reinforce the myth. Now these "failed" students are inadvertently labeled as those who "could not live up to the standard" of the MMM.

Although there is a wide expanse of literature on the topic, a few points are clear. The lumping of all Asian American ethnic groups under the aggregate "Asian" category masks a high degree of variation among ethnic groups. And the problem cannot just be solved by changing how AAPIs are categorized—the solution has to come from within the community, as well.

A Proposed Solution

One overarching solution to the problems facing the AAPI community is simply not enough. Proposed solutions in the literature base all come from certain fields. For example, statisticians and professors working with the government push for a disaggregation approach (De La Cruz-Viesca, 2011; Maramba, 2011), but the failure to incorporate a critical definition of the MMM results in the propagation of deficit thinking and increased racism (Poon et al., 2016). On the other hand, purely

critical approaches fail to effectuate concrete change that leaves the MMM intact. The only pragmatic, feasible approach is a multi-pronged one which functions at the levels of the political, the institutions of education, and the individual.

Since this problem does manifest itself at the level of the federal government, legislative action is required: requirement for increased federal disaggregation with a focus on better and more qualitative and quantitative comprehensive reporting, according to the recommendations of De La Cruz-Viesca (2011), Maramba (2011), and Tendulkar (2011). The main problem with developing a solution is we do not have an accurate picture of the state of AAPI ethnic groups in the status quo. This is important to allow for better redistribution of federal aid and funding for programs in education such as ESL support and food aid, as aggregating data often renders inequality invisible. However, revamping the entire federal system from scratch will result in rampant bureaucratic delay so the model of the American Community Service should be standardized in terms of how it breaks down racial and ethnic categories. The US Census Bureau lists 48 ethnicities as part of the AAPI category, but accelerating change directly to all ethnic groups will be difficult. For the time being, the shift to the ACS model of 16 larger subgroups will be ideal. The overall change of status quo research beliefs, which are shaped by the MMM, will help provide better health recommendations as well—it will help dispel myths which are pervasive in the healthcare community, allowing AAPIs to receive the fullest extent of healthcare available. Accurate statistics are a fundamental prerequisite to further measures beyond the scope of this paper and its recommendations, such as aggressively increasing investment for better research through funding research grants and the continued creation of various task forces, such as Obama's 2009 initiative, the Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. But research cannot all

say the same thing, the new research needs more comparative and longitudinal studies (Maramba, 2011; Poon, et al., 2016). Research as a whole needs to shift to a focus on the lived experiences of the individual and should seek to look at each person as an individual instead of imposing a certain objective parameter on AAPI populations which essentially dehumanizes them into a statistic. Hopefully, this will snowball into other reforms and internal changes that will work to challenge other nuanced forms of racism, including the lack of differentiation between Africans and African-Americans.

As Dr. Poon (2016) accurately states: "exhibitions of disaggregated data demonstrating educational struggles among AAPIs are not sufficient for uprooting the MMM." More has to be done: the overall institution of education needs to change. Stacey Lee (2009) writes that "school policies, practices, and cultures shape immigrant students' experiences and responses to school and their understandings of where they fit in the broader society." She goes on to explain that institutional settings have motivated students to learn more and fight against the system. They have empowered students with the knowledge to actualize change. If this facet were to be left untouched, AAPI students would be inculcated with an ideology of superiority, creating a mindset that proliferates the MMM, negatively affecting African and Hispanic Americans (Hu-DeHart, 2016). This is evidenced by the Asian Americans who are used by conservatives to promote anti-affirmative action policies, as shown in the example of Jian Li, explained above. An institutional approach, coupled with disaggregation, will help change racial quotas to offer more equal opportunities to more people. Besides just AAPI, education should be more personalized and teachers need to be willing to take a closer look at every student so that he or she is understood in the context of who they are as a person and not as a reflection of his or her race.

As evidenced by the research and the drought of AAPI focused research, this is a problem that is often overlooked or simply not addressed. It often has been overshadowed by movements that are related to anti-black racism, for example Black Lives Matter (BLM). BLM has such a visible media presence. It shows and educates the public on prejudiced violence against black bodies and has caused many to open their eyes. A Pew Research Center survey done in 2015 shows the number of white Americans who consider racism a big issue to have risen from 40% to 53% in the last fifteen years (Lauter & Pearce, 2015). This puts Asian Americans in an interesting situation because we are in a middle ground – we do not face the same oppression as African Americans and Latino Americans, but we are still used by white America to justify racism against other groups. It is important for Asian Americans to not just ignore this like we have been doing for ages, we need to take a stance on this issue and stop letting other groups use us to justify racism against other groups. These issues need to be brought more to light so that people are aware that there is not just the monolithic perception of Asian Americans. We have to be allies with the movement. As it stands, AAPIs are instrumental in continuing discrimination through the MMM. They are continually deployed by anti-affirmative action initiatives and AAPIs comply because they are not aware of the prejudice that the MMM masks. Future research and understanding of the myth should strive to explain the positionality of the Asian American within the overall context of racism—this helps tear down overall ideologies that are pervasive in continuing racism, which we must always strive to counter.

This problem is a unique one in that it cannot be approached from the outside, meaning simple federal and legal change will not be enough. Change has to come from within the community, as evidenced by Wu and Hu-DeHart, who isolate multiple examples of Asians who are responsible for recreating the myth.

Keith Osajima, a professor and Director of the Race and Ethnic Studies Program at the University of Redlands, explains that the awareness of issues surrounding the MMM has to be understood by AAPIs through a process called "conscientization": a process that seeks to name one's world and to understand forces of oppression in that world (2007). It functions in three steps. First, an individual is educated to "name" the world, and then second, he or she has to recognize and understand the impact that societal conditions and oppression has on our lives. And finally, the individual then becomes active in efforts to TRANSFORM the world. More and more young AAPIs are becoming proactive about this issue once they learn about it through the literature on AAPI studies. Personal reflections guided by other AAPIs also played a big part. He explains that "Contact and conversation with other Asian Americans was often the most effective way to help respondents make connections between their lives, the experiences of others, and information on the Asian American experience." Their shared experiences inspired the youth to seek more information and make sense of the world around them (Osajima, 2007).

A combined focus that seeks to ameliorate the issues causing and caused by the MMM is the only effective measure which does not get short-circuited in the long run. An approach that couples federal action with the revamping of schools, intrapersonal education, and increased awareness among the AAPI community, works in a system of checks-and-balances to ensure that all possible drawbacks to any individual solution are accounted for.

Conclusion

The myth of the model minority is one of the most pervasive, yet overlooked, racial phenomena in the United States that has existed since the publication of a 1966 article in the *New York*

Times. Since then, the myth has manifested itself in various arenas, including institutions of higher education, finance, and healthcare. The MMM creates "positive stereotypes" of Asian Americans in these fields. This functions by creating expectations for all AAPI populations which leads to stresses on those who cannot meet the expectations, obfuscates the lived experiences of particularly Southeast Asians who have come to the US fleeing persecution, and presents Asian Americans as implicitly successful, due to better family values compared to the African and Hispanic Americans. This results in a litany of problems, including increased rates of depression and suicide, the overlooking of easily treatable diseases, ignoring disproportionately high dropout and poverty rates of certain ethnic groups, and the entrenching of AAPI groups against other minorities. While these problems are broad and affect multiple groups, the proposed solution does work to dismantle the myth at its roots through its many levels of functioning. A federal approach at restructuring how AAPIs are disaggregated will help better allocate funding and resources and allow for better research. An educational approach will empowers AAPI students and bring the issues of the MMM to light in order to prevent further circulation of the myth. An individualistic approach on two levels, the general public and within the AAPI community, seeks to break down the myth and continued racism against black and brown bodies. By tackling the problem at multiple levels, the risk of this elaborate form of discrimination from manifesting itself elsewhere is greatly reduced.

It is our responsibility, not just as scholars or as students but as people, to prevent the atrocities of racism and prejudice from defining the society in which we live.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. What historical context is provided to understand how the myth of the model minority was promulgated and disseminated in American society?
2. What are the negative effects of the myth of the model minority on Asian Americans, as outlined by the author?
3. How can better research into AAPIs more effectively challenge the stereotypes that Asian Americans face? What research approach does the author recommend?

Style

1. How does the author's use of sources substantiate the claims being made in this paper? What types of sources are being used?

2. How is the argument organized through the essay's structure? What is the effect of the author's review of literature on the subject?

Funding for Early Childhood Education

Christina Bailey

Many predictions can be made about a person's future based on the answer to a single question: did he or she attend preschool? Research from the National Education Association reveals that children who attend preschool are "more likely to graduate from high school, to own homes, and have longer marriages" and "less likely to repeat grades, need special education, or get into future trouble with the law" ("Early"). And although early childhood education has a large role regarding a child's future, it is not easily accessible. An article written by Julie Poppe and Robyn Lipkowitz reports that "an estimated 52 percent of low-income kids and 25 percent of moderate- or high-income kids arrive on the first day of kindergarten unprepared, lacking in many of the skills considered essential to learning" (15). Preschool allows children the opportunity to socialize and develop critical skills, but the high cost prevents many children from being able to attend. In order to better educate our children and provide more access, it is important that we develop and fund a universal preschool system.

A program's success is based on the availability of funding and resources, and contrary to popular belief, funding for preschool has actually grown. A report from *District Administration*

published in 2016 states that the "total state funding for preschool programs rose by $767 million, to a total of nearly $7 billion—a 12 percent increase over the prior year's spending levels" (District 23). And while the majority of states increased their funding, nine states—including Missouri and Kansas—decreased their support for early childhood education programs (A. 23). This is significant because the majority of education funding comes from the state level, rather than the federal government. It also shows that while funding has increased across the country, availability has not. The problem with funding is also shown in Poppe and Lipkowitz's article published by *State Legislatures*. It reports that in 2014, the "average annual cost per preschool student was $4,679" (Poppe & Lipkowitz 16). But this does not reflect the actual costs charged by preschool services. Ethan Wolff-Mann of *Time* magazine investigated the cost of day care and preschool services; he found that preschool programs typically cost more than college. In his article, Wolff-Mann states "in-state public college tuition in 23 states was lower than the cost of full time childcare for a 4-year-old." Wolff-Mann also studied costs across all 50 states. In Missouri, it found that the average cost of childcare per year is $8, 632, and only 32% of families are able to afford this luxury (Wolff-Mann). These costs—$4,679 and $8,632—are extremely conflicting, and pose the question: why are families, especially those of low to middle income, being tricked into paying a "preschool tuition" that is nearly twice as much as the actual cost reported in *State Legislatures*?

These conflicting costs may occur because there are several factors that affect funding. The first factor is education. Based on Karch's article, "the average formal education level of the state population might affect societal attitudes toward preschool and, by extension, the willingness to fund it" (224). This means that states who have a higher graduation rate or college attendance rate may place a higher value on early childhood education than

other states do. The influence of a state's overall education impacts the amount of money each state decides to dedicate to it. This, in turn, will cause states across the country to vary their stance on early childhood education and may dictate the amount of funding the state's Department of Education receives.

The second factor affecting funding is related to political parties. Karch states that "Democrats are usually more enthusiastic about publicly funded preschool education than Republicans are" (225). This is problematic because a new administration comes into the White House every four years, always with a different agenda. So depending on the political party that the current president represents, early childhood education, and education in general, can be placed on the back burner. It also impacts the amount of money the Department of Education receives. Constant changes of power create an inconsistency within the education field, and we need to find a balance between the Democrat and Republican stances to better assist our children's needs.

Low-income communities are particularly vulnerable when it comes to attending preschool. A study published by the *British Educational Research Journal* measured the quality of preschool programs among a range of different socioeconomic communities. It found that "children from the most deprived areas are more likely to access highly trained staff when services are run directly by local authorities" (Gambaro et al 271). This is in regards to government funded programs. But the study goes on:

> It is also plausible that it is genuinely more difficult to deliver outstanding provision in a setting where a higher percentage of children come from lower income homes, given the association of low income with parental stress, depression and perhaps other difficulties which affect children's behavior and concentration. (572)

This study shows that low-income families are at a disadvantage because while they have access to publicly funded programs

with certified teachers, it is not enough. Universal preschool would allow all children to attend, and could diversify preschool classrooms so that a greater number of children are represented.

Problems with funding date back to the mid-1900s when the federal government saw the need for early childhood education. Government involvement in preschool education first began with Franklin D. Roosevelt during World War II. Based on Karch's article, "publicly funded 'emergency' nursery schools were one component of the New Deal, and the national government created a targeted program, providing grants for day care to those areas most affected by the wartime mobilization effort" (219). These government funded nursery schools created a snowball effect, and in the 1960s, another publicly funded program was formed.

After the assassination of John. F. Kennedy, the next step to provide low-income families with early childhood education took place. Sworn into presidency with a platform called "A Great Society," President Lyndon B. Johnson aimed to get rid of poverty and racism. Part of his plan involved the creation of Head Start, a "comprehensive child development program that would help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children" (*Office*). Head Start and Early Head Start focus their efforts on providing services to children from birth to five years of age. The purpose of these programs is to help children's growth and development, provide resources to parents, and advocate for early childhood education. Because Head Start serves all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and more than 150 American Indian/Alaskan Native territories, the program has helped more than 32 million children since its formation in 1964 (*Office*). However, the eligibility requirement is based on income, so families who make too much money are denied access. This is a problem because there is a fine line between making too much and not enough. For example, the income of some families is too high to attend Head Start, but too low to be able to afford a different

preschool. In order to combat the number of children denied access to early childhood programs, the government should use funds to create a universal preschool system.

In recent years, the federal government has taken additional steps regarding early childhood education. During the previous administration, "President Obama's 'Preschool for All' initiative [called] for dramatic increases in the number of 4-year-olds enrolled in public preschool programs and in the quality of these programs nationwide" (Cascio & Schanzenbach 127). Some states have similar programs already in place, but it is important for the rest of the country to follow. Two states, Oklahoma and Georgia, developed a preschool program in the 1990s. Both programs provide universal access and quality instruction (Cascio & Schanzenbach 128). With two successful programs in place, a move towards universal preschool would be easily accomplished because there are already models to follow.

When compared to other developed countries, the United States is far behind. Many countries already provide universal preschool. According to *One Percent for the Kids: New Policies, Brighter Futures for America's Children* by Isabel Sawhill, "countries such as Belgium, France, and Italy provide care to preschool children through education based programs that serve between 95 and 99% of children ages three to six" (132). Services are completely free to parents. This is significant because it proves that it *is* possible to provide all children with an early childhood education, regardless of their income. And of the countries that are not currently providing these services, many are already in the process of developing their own plan to provide universal preschool (Sawhill 132). The United States must jump on board. If we want to be able to compete with other counties rather than fall behind, we need to provide our children with the same educational foundation of those from other countries.

As we have learned, preschool programs are expensive, but the benefits that come from receiving a *quality* early childhood education are valuable to everyone. Before we consider the long-term benefits, it is important to understand what is meant by a quality education. In "The Economics of Education," Jerrold Oppenheim and Theo MacGregor state that in order for a preschool program to be of quality, it must include "good nutrition and protection of children's health… stable, consistent relationships with a limited number of caregivers…a safe, supportive physical environment …[and] support to parents" (7). The benefits that come with early childhood education require preschools to exhibit said characteristics.

The benefits that come from early childhood education impact many different aspects of a community. In an article published by the *Journal of Law and Education*, Wilson Greene asserts that for children, "one of the primary benefits of preschool is the ability to target and educate children at a time when their minds are growing and developing the fastest" (Greene 556). To restate the benefits previously mentioned, children who attend preschool are "more likely to graduate from high school, to own homes, and have longer marriages" and are "less likely to repeat grades, need special education, or get into future trouble with the law" ("Early"). Because increased graduation rates are associated with attending preschool, these individuals also have a higher income and rely less on welfare. One study "found that individuals who were enrolled in a quality preschool program ultimately earned up to $2,000 more per month than those who were not" ("Early"). And within a single school year, students exhibit a significant difference. During an interview with Rachal Young, a preschool teacher who has taught at Calvary Lutheran Early Education Center and La' Petite Academy, she stated, "we do a lot of documentation to keep track of each child's milestones…The transformation of a child from when they first enter my classroom

until they leave is remarkable. Some children mature so much, it is as if they are a new kid." If children can grow this much in a single school year, imagine how far they could excel if they attended several years of early childhood education programs. By utilizing this service, children are put on the fast track to success.

Preschool not only helps the individual, but also society. According to Oppenheim and MacGregor, "it has been estimated that saving one child from a life of crime saves society between $1.7 and $2.3 million" (15). One study from the article states that "those who did not receive the benefit of the preschool program had 70% more arrests for violent crime by age 18 than did program participants" (9). This decrease in crime can be tied to preschool because this is "where children learn the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior at an early age, before negative behavior patterns are established" (9). Reduction in crime will also allow the savings generated by attending preschool to be reinvested into the education system so that preschools can continue to serve children.

Preschool also helps families. It is common for one parent, especially in low and middle income families, to stay home in order to take care of the children, so when there is a service that provides free preschool the parents benefit as well. Instead of having to stay at home with their preschooler, the parent now has the ability to join the workforce. This helps employment rates, and also allows the family to raise their income. Also, with an increasing number of single parents, universal preschool can also be beneficial to single parents because it is one less expense. Wilson Greene states that it would also prove beneficial for middle-income families because it "would provide preschools to children whose families cannot afford private preschool education, yet do not qualify for government programs" (556). These benefits show that preschool services would be valuable to all types of families.

The last benefit of early childhood education is its impact on the economy. The economic impression left by preschool is noteworthy, and the return on investment can help support our communities. The National Education Association reports that the "return on investment [is] at 12 percent, after inflation" ("Early"), while other sources show even greater numbers. A study from Isabel Sawhill's book found that a "preschool program generated a return to society of $47,759 per participant," and the average cost for that preschool was under $7,000 (114). With benefits and revenues this valuable, it is no wonder that other developed countries have already implemented universal preschool programs.

There are several steps necessary to increase the access and funding of early childhood education. First, the United States needs to create a system for universal preschool. This requires that "each individual state must make a serious commitment to expand or maintain their current publicly funded preschool system" (Greene 562). Sawhill also reports that "all children, regardless of income, would then be able to start kindergarten better prepared for school" (113). This would prove to be advantageous because over 50% of children from low-income families are currently under-prepared on the first day of kindergarten. Even with the development of universal preschool, many families may still choose to send their children to private preschools; however, it would be valuable to them, as well. Greene suggests that:

> state and federally funded schools would force private preschools to improve so that they avoid losing students to government funded schools. By demanding quality programs for children ages three to five, extra pressure would be placed on private preschools not only to comply with the standards, but to exceed the standards in order to continue to draw students. (557)

Universal preschool programs would impact children from all different socioeconomic statuses, and give us the opportunity to better compete with other developed countries.

The next step is to control where money is being spent. While we learned that preschool funding has grown, availability has not—this is because funds are being diverted elsewhere (Sawhill 120). When the Department of Education receives money and grants, it does not necessarily state where the funds are supposed to go. A solution to prevent money from going to other places would require the government, at state and federal levels, to explicitly state that these funds must go to early childhood education services rather than being directed elsewhere. In the words of Wilson Greene, "adequate funding does not guarantee educational success, but a lack of funding will undoubtedly stifle any chance of providing an adequate comprehensive preschool system" (563).

The third step requires preschools to focus on providing a quality education. This can be met by meeting the characteristics previously mentioned. Other features include the enforcement of learning standards and limited class size. If preschools developed learning standards, we could measure whether or not children were actually learning content. And a limited class size will allow students to have more one-on-one interaction with teachers and caretakers. It is also important to make sure teachers are certified. Poppe and Lipkowitz report that "only 57 percent of all preschool teachers [are certified], and only 34 percent of assistant teachers are certified" (18). Early childhood education centers must be equipped with these characteristics to provide children with a quality education.

The first five years of a child's life are critical for their growth and development, and early childhood education plays an important role. Until fifty years ago, these programs were not widely available, but in 1964, things improved when President Lyndon B. Johnson and his "Great Society" platform called for a

change. He started a project and social change-based community organization called Head Start, and for the first time, low-income communities had the opportunity to send their children to a free preschool. Preschool programs have an important role such as advocating for early childhood education, promoting healthy behaviors, supporting families, and giving children the skills they need in order to succeed in school and in their future. And as with everything, our current early childhood education system needs to adapt in order to meet our current needs. With today's rising costs of childcare and preschool, it is important that we demand higher funding, so that publicly funded preschool services can expand to include a wider range of children, and so that our children can receive a quality early childhood education. Universal preschool programs are already being used by some states and around the world, so the idea of developing a plan for the United States is realistic and achievable. The significant benefits of an early childhood education justifies its need to be properly funded. Our children deserve to receive these services. Our children deserve the chance of having a successful future.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. In what ways does the overall education levels of individual states impact funding for early childhood education?
2. According to the author, what steps are needed to make early childhood education accessible for all?
3. Besides the fact that the U.S. does not want to fall behind other countries in offering access to early childhood education, what are other reasons for implementing a universal preschool system?

Style

1. How is the argument for universal preschool shaped by the sources the author has chosen?
2. What is the effect of using a problem-solution frame for the argument? How does the author utilize this frame to bring us to the main points of the argument?

Voiceless: Women Characters in an Anti-Woman World

Maggie Barratt

On the evening of January 17, 2015, outside of a Stanford University frat party, guest and student Brock Turner raped a young woman attending the same party. The victim, referred to as Jane Doe in most documentation, had been drinking heavily, and witnesses saw Turner having intercourse with the unconscious woman behind a dumpster. In a letter written for the judge presiding over his case, Turner graphically recounted, "I began to kiss her again and finger her until I thought she was satisfied with the sexual interaction that had taken place" (Stockman). It was a textbook case. Under California law, rape is defined as sexual intercourse under a number of circumstances, including situations wherein "a person is prevented from resisting by any intoxicating or anesthetic substance" (*Penal Code 261-269*). Despite a successful conviction resulting from statements from the victim, witnesses, and the defendant himself, Turner was sentenced to a meager six months of prison time. He was released halfway through this sentence. The light sentencing and subsequent release are a direct reflection of the stance of Judge Aaron Persky, the man who ultimately ruled on Turner's

case. Persky expressed sympathy for Turner following the trial, stating, "I take him at his word that, subjectively, that's his version of events" (Luperon). The sheriff of Santa Clara County, where Turner was being held, expressed a different view, saying of Turner, "He should be in prison right now, but he's not in our custody" (DePaolo).

It is indicative of a deeply flawed society that the response of least resistance to such a heinous crime as sexual assault is sympathy for, and slap-on-the-wrist punishment of, the assaulter. While I am of the firm belief that society's attitude toward rape victims of any gender is reprehensible in its current state, it is evident that the injustices of the Stanford case and others like it stem from the gender makeup of these cases – in particular, their male perpetrators and female victims. But what factors coalesce to create such an actively dangerous gender-politic environment? What images could be surrounding the Brock Turners of the world that would lead them to have sex with unconscious women? What creates the culture that sympathizes not with the victims of violent crime, but with their attackers? And, what's more, what can be done about it?

In beginning my research, I went to the root of the men-versus-women issue: men and women. I typed the word "man" into the search bar. The first result read: "Man … *noun* … an adult human male … a human being of either sex; a person." I typed "woman" into the same search bar, hit enter, refreshed the page: "Woman … *noun* … an adult human female … a female worker or employee … a wife, girlfriend, or lover." How should I have responded when told by an internet search bar that I was not a person? "A woman is not a person," shout the empty pixels between the two definitions. "A woman is a woman. A woman exists relative to a man. A woman serves a function to a man. A woman is an event in a man's life." How could I argue with that? How, having spent my formative high school years surrounding

myself with every Woody Allen film and John Green novel I could get my hands on, could I possibly argue for the three-dimensional personhood of women? The questions I raised about the fostering of a rape-apologetic culture were answered with swift brutality—in the eyes of the men observing them, women are not people, or even characters. Women are plot devices.

While poor treatment of female characters is a staple of many, if not most, works of fiction, an author will sometimes write about women so poorly and with such consistency that it becomes a trademark of their style. John Green, writer of popular teen novels, was launched into mainstream success with the recent film adaptions of two of his novels. The more recent of the two, *Paper Towns*, tells the story of Quentin Jacobsen, a stereotypically uncool high school senior who is deeply and stubbornly in love with his popular and cynical childhood friend Margo Roth Spiegelman. While the two don't get together in the end, Quentin learns an important life lesson and is the better person for it. The story bears a close resemblance to Green's first novel *Looking for Alaska* in both style and narrative. *Looking for Alaska* follows high school junior Miles Halter in his first year at an elite boarding school; here he falls immediately for his vexing classmate Alaska Young. The romance is cut short by Alaska's untimely death. The reader need not fret, however – Miles, in the wake of Alaska's passing, learns how to let go of the things that he cannot control. An especially observant reader may begin to notice a pattern in the way Green's stories treat the women central to their plots. Namely, the women are the plot. Margo's and Alaska's presences within their respective stories have four legs: captivate the main the character, lead the main character into an exciting new lifestyle or grand adventure, teach the main character a valuable life lesson, remove themselves from the main character's life once the lesson has been learned. Despite being, in theory, their stories' secondary leads, there is not a

single word spoken or action taken by these girls that does not ultimately benefit the male main character.

Beyond their appallingly two-dimensional female love interests, novels such as Green's present a second, more threatening archetype: the seemingly benign, dangerously entitled "Nice Guy." The myth of the Nice Guy goes something like this—the Nice Guy is friends with a girl in whom he is romantically interested. The girl does not reciprocate, and is usually unaware of, these feelings. The Nice Guy treats the girl with kindness and compassion to eventually win her affections. If the girl continues to view the Nice Guy platonically, he responds with hurt, confusion, and anger. In an article on the subject for online magazine *Everyday Feminism*, columnist Suzannah Welss aptly defines a Nice Guy as "someone who feels entitled to women for his supposed kindness." While the plots of Green's novels end before we can see their emotional fallout, his main characters are textbook examples of the Nice Guy archetype. While neither Alaska nor Margo verbalizes romantic interest in their respective leading men, both Miles and Quentin doggedly pursue their "dream girls" and cling to the idea of an eventual romance. In the context of fictional stories, this kind of behavior may seem harmless. In life, ardent and unwelcome pursuit of a woman is much more dangerous. Seventy-three percent of all sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows. Of these, over half are committed by a friend or acquaintance.

Brock Turner did not know his victim prior to the evening of her assault. In the brief time the two spoke at a frat party, however, Turner seems to have arrived at the conclusion that he had somehow gotten to know his already inebriated new acquaintance. Evidently, he knew her well enough to know when the young woman "was satisfied with the sexual interaction." The entitlement intrinsic to any interaction with an archetypical Nice Guy was in full effect on Turner's thought process that night.

He had spent a few minutes speaking to the woman. I'm sure, if asked, Turner would recall his civility and politeness – relative to the situation, of course. Naturally, having met the earth-level standard for human decency, Turner had earned a roll in the hay with the Jane Doe. Sure, she was barely capable of keeping her eyes open, much less actively consenting; but he had *earned* it.

Movies, perhaps even more so than books, have a tendency toward portraying women in a less than empowering light; director Wayne Wang's independently produced 2001 film *The Center of the World* is a shining example. The film centers on Richard Longman, a wealthy internet developer who pays Florence, an exotic dancer, to be his companion for a weekend in Las Vegas. Florence agrees, with a strict set of rules regarding physical interaction between the two. On their last night together, Richard, having fallen in love with Florence, breaks her rules and rapes her. Seeming to escape any sort of cinematic justice, Richard ends the film a relatively content multimillionaire. Similar karmic avoidance occurs in a more recent indie romance by directing duo Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris. *Ruby Sparks* tells the story of lonely, has-been author Calvin Weir-Fields, who inexplicably writes his perfect woman – the titular Ruby – into existence by sheer force of will. The movie's climax touches on the inherent issues of their relationship once Ruby discovers the nature of her being. Though he must "set free" his dream girl, Calvin ultimately makes it out unscathed. In the final scene, now-accomplished author Calvin encounters Ruby, who has no memories of their relationship. Apparently free from the burden of the past—or at least Ruby's memory of it—Calvin flirts with his ex-creation.

The premise of a film in which a man creates and controls a woman for his own benefit is made slightly less horrifying by the man's eventual realization that he's doing something wrong. I am more concerned with the details of the relationship before

this realization occurred. What are the ethical implications, for example, of a consummated relationship in which one party is completely without the ability to consent? Ruby, an entity created from a man's subconscious desire for a perfect woman, comes into the world ready and willing. While the film never depicts Calvin "forcing" Ruby into his bed, under the given circumstances, is she really consenting? A similar portrayal of the technicalities of consent is explored more thoroughly in Marvel's *Jessica Jones*, a gritty Netflix series. The show's antagonist is the charmingly nefarious Killgrave, a villain with the power of persuasion. While it could be said that Killgrave never "forces" his victims to do anything they don't want to, his superpower makes them want to do whatever he wants them to do, including engaging in a physical and romantic relationship with him. While *Ruby Sparks* is silent on the issue, *Jessica Jones* treats this disregard of consent as exactly what it is: rape.

While Brock Turner is possibly the most obvious product of a rape-permissive cultural climate in recent headlines, he is certainly not the only one. On October 7th, 2016, television personality and president-elect Donald Trump was caught up in what would be considered a scandal had it involved anyone else. A video of a 2005 conversation between Trump and television host Billy Bush began to circulate. The video, leaked by the *Washington Post*, caught Trump and Bush in an off-air, on-mic conversation on the topic of women as the two sat in an *Access Hollywood* tour bus. Trump first details his aggressive and ultimately unsuccessful pursuit of a married woman, whom he "moved on … like a bitch." Bush and Trump comment on the appearance of a nearby publicist. Trump considers eating some Tic Tacs in the event he kisses said publicist, saying of beautiful women, "I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss, I don't even wait." He continues: "And when you're a star they let you do it. You can do anything … grab them by the

pussy. You can do anything." The two continue observing the bodies of nearby women, occasionally catcalling. When they exit the bus, the men politely greet the publicist they had earlier discussed. In a moment sure to make many women with similar experiences cringe, Bush suggests the publicist give Trump a hug. Trump has, since its release, declared the video "locker room banter" and attempted to minimize its relevance in response to a strong negative reaction from the public. Documentation of the future president objectifying women in such a way is not entirely surprising. The same man is known for making frequent disparaging comments about women, usually targeting their appearance, and in fact stands accused by several women of sexual assault. While the mogul is, of course, innocent until proven guilty, it does not require an excessive stretch of the imagination to consider that a man who so cavalierly discusses grabbing women "by the pussy" might put these thoughts into practice. Despite the outrageous nature of his comments, Donald Trump was declared the president elect on November 8th, just one month after the video's release.

While the vulgarity of Trump's comments may be the most immediately offensive aspect of the leaked video, it is not the most concerning. More dangerous is the observation that "when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything." Trump's ideology stands as the frightening natural extension of the philosophy of the Nice Guy. While "The Donald" may derive his power from wealth and fame rather than established friendship, the result is the same: a sense that he is somehow entitled to women's bodies.

The world at present has entrenched itself in a culture where a woman's body, mind, and actions are not considered her own. I find myself wondering what can be done to not only survive, but ultimately thrive in a culture that actively seeks to deny me my agency and voice. I imagine I am not alone in wondering this.

If the problem is found in the female fantasies of men, perhaps the solution lies in the opposite direction: women's stories told by women.

The first female-written work I came across in my research was by far the most moving. *Manic Depressive Pixie Dream Girl*, a spoken word piece by poet Hana Wolff, explores the perspective of the female love interest, giving an insight to the minds of the Margos, Alaskas, Florences, and Rubys that their own stories don't afford them, even addressing the phenomenon of the Nice Guy: "He offers her a shoulder to cry on, looking sidelong at her cleavage." Exploring the idea of the "modern fairytale," Wolff contrasts the fascinating and enigmatic female love interests of today with the demure and taciturn princesses of old. She sarcastically thanks the male writers and directors for giving women a voice by "turning our pain into performance." At the heart of the poem is the visceral danger of treating women, real or fictional, as satellites orbiting the lives of men. In a world where women's lives are dependent on the men's stories, Wolff observes, "it's love or death … there is no third option."

The elusive third option, it seems, can be found in the voices of woman writers, directors, and producers. While the most obvious among these may be the works centering on the theme of womanhood, equally valuable is media in which female characters are given equal treatment to their male counterparts. J.K. Rowling, author of the world-famous *Harry Potter* book series, is a prime example of a female writer of such acclaim that she is a household name the world over. Rowling's books are awash with as many female characters as there are male; while this kind of ratio is rare enough in and of itself, Rowling goes a step further by writing women—shockingly—as people. The differences between "witches" and "wizards" are purely superficial. The character of Hermione Granger, the titular Harry's friend and confidant, is written with the kind of complexity and attention that I, as a

reader, am thoroughly unaccustomed to seeing in most fictional women. She is intelligent and brave—character traits often coded as predominantly, if not exclusively, masculine. Perhaps even more importantly, she is written with flaws: she is often ruthless, emotionally inexpressive, and lacking in social graces. Again, characteristics literary women are often denied. This balance of virtues and vices, present in virtually all of Rowling's characters regardless of gender, forces the reader to recognize the humanity of these characters. To *empathize*.

Kay Cannon, screenwriter of the 2012 comedy *Pitch Perfect*, follows in Rowling's footsteps—in her subversion of gender expectations, at least. Cannon, whose writing credits also include *Pitch Perfect*'s sequel and the equally female-led comedy *How to Be Single*, creates surprisingly layered characters, especially given the restraints of the inherently two-dimensional medium of comedy blockbusters. *Pitch Perfect*, which follows the exploits of an all-female collegiate show choir, is led by a strong ensemble of funny and subversive female characters. Beca Mitchell, the film's lead, is quiet and headstrong, with an ear for music production. Over the course of the film, she learns to overcome her tendencies of isolation and avoiding commitment through her growing relationships with the other girls. Beca's bane-turned-friend is the singing group's leader, the ambitious and stubborn Aubrey Posen. Though the two initially clash, by the story's end, they are fiercely loyal to and respectful of each other. Even Fat Amy, the film's comic relief and arguably least-developed character, is subversive in her own way. Played by charismatic plus-size actress Rebel Wilson, the self-titled Fat Amy is loud, confident, and unabashed in her sexuality—major taboos for women, fictitious or otherwise. The film's main draw is not, however, the women individually. What makes the story incredibly relatable and truthful to women watching it is the portrayal of the deep friendships that form between the characters. I have found, in

my personal experience, that the calling card of writers with little knowledge of women is the archetype of woman as a catty loner—see the earlier example of *Paper Towns*. Stories such as those written by Kay, even with their comedic bent, present the accurate and incredibly important truth of womankind: women—unique, flawed women—are capable of both individuality and emotionally complex relationships.

While works that depict women as regular people are themselves subversive, I have found that the most valuable works in shifting cultural perspective are those that actively address the world's problems. Better still are works that suggest a solution to those problems. The final phase of my research was a search for works written by women, for women; that is, works that uplifted women and told their stories, including the less-than-pretty details. I found a theme—a common thread present in nearly every story I encountered: a woman's voice, silenced at first, and then eventually reclaimed.

Nine to Five, screenwriter Patricia Resnick's 1980 comedy film, opens with the Dolly Parton song of the same name. In the film, Parton plays Doralee Rhodes, long-time secretary to Franklin Hart. Hart is, in the film's own words, "a sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot," who spends every day sexually harassing Doralee. While Doralee is the main victim of Franklin's unwanted advances, he regularly heaps verbal and emotional abuse on the other female leads, Violet and Judy. In the film's epilogue, Violet is promoted to Franklin's position. Judy and Doralee leave the office and pursue work they enjoy. The story is set contemporary to the film's production, in 1980. *Nine to Five* tackled the very real workplace sexism, and resulting abuse, of its time. The promotion of Violet from office manager, an ostensibly woman-appropriate position, to boss was revolutionary. In many ways, it still is. Resnick, who went on to write and produce for the television series *Mad Men*,

has struggled in recent years to find film work, due to a low demand for female-written screenplays. In a piece she wrote for *The Hollywood Reporter* in January of 2016, Resnick said, "As the sole provider for my two children, I did what I could to take care of us all, which meant going where the work was for me: television movies, then television pilots and then series work." Because of this professional shift, the article continues, Resnick will no longer be a voting member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, a position she has held since the 1980s (Resnick). In a sort of twisted irony, a writer famous for giving her female characters voice and agency has now had a major part of her professional voice taken from her.

A lack of behind-the-scenes female representation in Hollywood is a very real problem. Despite women accounting for roughly half of the world's population, only a small fraction of film writers, directors, and producers are women. According to "Celluloid Ceiling," a recent research study by Dr. Martha M. Lauzen, the executive director for the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, in the most successful films of 2015, only nine percent of directors were women. Twenty-six percent of producers were female, as were eleven percent of writers. This extreme underrepresentation is a likely culprit for the way women's stories are being mishandled, if handled at all, in film.

While Hollywood may still be a boys' club, female creators seem to fare somewhat better in the world of theatre. Once I knew I wanted to take my research in the direction of the advancement of women's voices, I immediately went to my bookshelf and picked up a favorite script of mine: *The Vagina Monologues*. Eve Ensler, a playwright well-known for her feminist message both on and off the page, is likely best recognized for *The Vagina Monologues*, her first published play. Like other episodic plays *The Laramie Project* and *For Colored Girls*, Ensler's play is based on a

series of interviews she conducted centering around a common theme; in the case of *The Vagina Monologues*, this theme was womanhood. The earliest draft of the play, published in 1996, centered on three main themes: sex, menstruation, and rape. Later drafts added new monologues, seeking inclusivity for all women. A monologue about birth and motherhood was added, as was a piece about the unique experiences of transgender women. The monologues began as simply a way to tell women's stories – an important task for which there was and is clearly a need. In its current incarnation, however, *The Vagina Monologues* is tied to a more specific goal—the prevention of violence against women. Every year, universities, theatres, and community centers across the world take part in V-Day, an anti-violence movement. This movement includes an annual performance of the monologues. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, this performance is hosted by the Women's Center and the UMKC Violence Prevention and Response Project. I have personally taken part in the monologues every year that I have been a student at the university. The first year that I was involved, we finished the performance with the piece "My Revolution," which ended with all the women on stage standing and shouting together, "My revolution!" It was a moment of sisterhood and empowerment unlike anything else I have experienced. It made clear, in a very visceral way, the power of letting women's voices be heard, even on a small scale.

A work that illustrates the power of a voice more effectively than most is Alice Walker's classic novel *The Color Purple*. The story is told mostly via letters written by Celie, the book's heroine, to God, detailing the events of Celie's life as a black woman in the 1930s South. Celie is, at a young age, married off to an abusive husband, known only as Mister. The timid Celie eventually finds her own strength, drawing largely from the influence of the strong women she befriends: her sister Nettie,

her daughter-in-law Sofia, and saloon singer Shug Avery. Celie is able to leave the abusive Mister, cursing him in the process, and is finally free to pursue a life that she controls. Like *The Vagina Monologues* and *Nine to Five*, *The Color Purple* explores an important idea—sisterhood as a vehicle for amplifying women's voices. This is incredibly valuable in terms of changing the cultural climate; if women work together, not only does it help to uplift the voices of individual women, but also provides a community to better create large-scale change.

When discussing the importance of women's stories, especially in consideration of the Brock Turner case, it is imperative to look at the words of the one person most often overlooked—the Jane Doe, Turner's victim. During the trial, the victim provided an impact statement detailing her experience and its fallout. She begins by directly addressing Turner: "You don't know me, but you've been inside me." She recounts the events of January 17th to the best of her memory; that is, in so far as the first several drinks. She describes waking up in the hospital, being informed by the staff that she had been raped. The invasive tests are described in brutal detail, as are the victim's few glimpses into her clouded memory of the night before. It is not until much later that she even hears the name Brock Turner. Much of the statement covers the emotional aftermath of an assault of which she had no memory. She recalls: "I tried to push it out of my mind, but it was so heavy I didn't talk, I didn't eat, I didn't sleep, I didn't interact with anyone. After work, I would drive to a secluded place to scream." The physical, emotional, and mental toll are presented in a bleak realism that invokes many women's tales of assault, including those in *The Vagina Monologues* and *The Color Purple*. In contrast with the statement's overall dark tone and content, the Jane Doe chose to close her letter with an uplifting address to any girls reading it:

> And finally, to girls everywhere, I am with you. On nights when you feel alone, I am with you. When people doubt you or dismiss you, I am with you. I fought everyday for you. So never stop fighting, I believe you. Lighthouses don't go running all over an island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining. Although I can't save every boat, I hope that by speaking today, you absorbed a small amount of light, a small knowing that you can't be silenced, a small satisfaction that justice was served, a small assurance that we are getting somewhere, and a big, big knowing that you are important, unquestionably, you are untouchable, you are beautiful, you are to be valued, respected, undeniably, every minute of every day, you are powerful and nobody can take that away from you. To girls everywhere, I am with you. Thank you.

In the face of her own personal tragedy, the Jane Doe chose to use her message, her voice as a victim of sexual assault, as a vehicle for the encouragement of other women.

Women are the greatest allies and resource for the advancement of other women. Men, in the pursuit of allyship, can allow and even aid women's voices being heard. The present cultural climate, in all truth, seeks to actively oppress the voices, ideas, and personhood of women. While the situation may be distressing, it is not hopeless. Buy books written by women. Watch films with female directors and producers. And most importantly: listen. Women's voices are out there—it is our responsibility to hear them.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. How does the author argue that female representation in popular culture is related to the Brock Turner rape case?
2. What are some solutions proposed by the author to help with the inequity problems facing women?
3. What ideas within the movies mentioned does the author argue to be problematic?

Style

1. How does the author build on descriptions of the movies to help make her larger argument?
2. How does the author balance the use of primary sources and secondary sources? What effect does that have on the argument?

"I Can Be Silent, But I Find a Great Pleasure in Putting Down These My Thoughts on Paper": Exclusion, Expression, and a Rhetoric of Silence in Georgiana Craven's Diary

Kara Lewis

When envisioning a nineteenth century Englishwoman, perhaps tropes and caricatures seem most readily available. Modern American audiences may think of Jane Austen's romance obsessed, socially immersed heroines, or the stubborn, glamorous, and vastly historicized Queen Victoria. Opportunities to peer beneath this surface-level understanding and discover the authentic, self-authorized stories of women from this period rarely present themselves. Unlikelier still lies the chance of glimpsing a story like Georgiana Craven's, a noblewoman who both counters societally depicted stereotypes and defies the evidenced trends of her peers. While still unmarried and childless—an unusual independence that persisted throughout her life—Craven began the first volume of her diary, now housed at LaBudde Special

Collections at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, at the age of fifty in 1821. Written across the first five pages in Craven's elegant yet cramped penmanship are quotes from outside texts, such as *The Life of Samuel Johnson* by James Boswell, works by British Romantic poet Bertie Greatherd and bishop Edward Willes, and the letter written by Publius Lentulus to the Roman Senate relaying a physical and personal description of Jesus Christ. Despite their appearance early on in the diary, these quotes encompass one of Georgiana Craven's most prominent rhetorical patterns and a key observation that I will continually return to throughout my analysis: her struggle to find adequate words to express herself and, in turn, a tendency to instead utilize vague language or the diction of outside sources.

Coupled with these wholly quoted sections of text appear less evident areas of the diary where socially accepted paraphrases or messages serve to overshadow Georgiana Craven's personal thoughts, emotions, and motivations. While past works in diary studies have looked most closely at the functions fulfilled and patterns hinted by present language, using diarists' words to suggest broad trends of religion and self-improvement (Steinitz, Lensink, O'Brien, Huff, Hoffman, Bunkers, Johnson, and Koch), fewer scholars have illuminated the powerful role of absent information in crafting a subtler, yet arguably more complex rhetorical persona. Similarly, while noting patterns such as illness and weather in diaries remains a consistent priority in the studies presented by Steinitz, O'Brien, and Huff, leading British diary and journal scholars, they and their peers do not pinpoint the significant function of these ordinary and often expected rhetorical moves. In contrast, I argue that these details act as purposeful indicators of larger, often more controversial or discouraged themes, such as reclusive nature and an animosity towards arbitrary social conventions and traditions.

Georgiana Craven (Un)covered: "The time spent too swiftly reading, playing & working very thankful I enjoy the Blessings I possess"

Georgiana Craven's life spanned sixty-seven years, from October 12, 1777, to August 18, 1839. She spent these years almost exclusively at Hamstead Marshall, an ornamental and intricate mansion surrounded by gardens and located in Berkshire, England. This property provided a testament to Craven's nobility, as the British royal family frequently visited (Parks & Gardens UK).

Though her social and economic status grounded her in regal society, Craven's relationships distinguished her from the majority of her peers. Her mother engaged in various extramarital affairs, eventually separating from her husband and Georgiana's father in 1783. This placed her firmly ahead of and even in opposition to accepted social trends, as England enacted its first divorce laws in 1858 and these policies became adopted on a more widespread scale much later in the 1920s (The National Archives). This broken and atypical marriage was further illuminated with Lord Craven's death in 1791, when Georgiana's mother married Christian Friedrich Karl Alexander, the Margrave of Anspach, who she then revealed she had been living with since the separation. In 1826, Georgiana's mother published a sordid memoir, titled *The Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach*. This memoir more fully exposed the breakdown of a nuclear family in a well-respected and esteemed social circle, resulting in Georgiana and her siblings vowing to never speak to their mother again.

While arguably less scandalous, Georgiana Craven channelled her mother by resisting the established and expected family structure prevalent in eighteenth-century England. More specifically, she never married or had any children. Furthermore, her closest acquaintance seems to have been a woman named Mrs.

Broadhurst, who began living with the Cravens in 1875, when Georgiana reached the age of thirteen. Despite the displacement of Craven's siblings through marriage, the separation of her parents in 1783, and the death of her father in 1791, Craven and Broadhurst's union established a greater permanency. The two women lived together all of their lives, yet the nature of their relationship remains undisclosed. Archivists at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, who compiled Craven's five diaries into a manuscript collection, speculate that Broadhurst did not act as a servant, as evidenced by the fact that she often accompanied Craven at functions, therefore positioning herself as a social equal.

Despite these unique circumstances, archivists at LaBudde Department of Special Collections note that "not much is known of Georgiana's life." This acknowledgement of the diary's limitations reveal only partial effectiveness in truly uncovering a woman still shrouded in silence. Craven earnestly clarifies the partially self-enforced nature of this silence from the beginning of her diary. "I mean to pursue the quiet life," Craven remarks in an early entry dated January 15, 1851, the first that features her own words (7). Throughout the rest of the diary, Craven seems to endow this goal with the gravity and commitment of an oath, gingerly peering out from her pages as a rhetor deeply engaged in silence. Perhaps this withdrawn persona provides an explanation of why, until now, these biographical facts have represented all known aspects of Craven's guarded story.

What is a Rhetoric of Silence?: "My knee a great deal better kept very quiet"

Often, rhetoric comes to be understood and described through articulated arguments. In fact, most definitions emphasize the "effective *use*" (Merriam Webster, Oxford English Dictionary) of spoken or written language. With the publication of *Unspoken:*

A Rhetoric of Silence, Cheryl Glenn became one of the most instrumental scholars in widening this interpretation and navigating silence's duality. Specifically, Glenn differentiates between silencing and silence, establishing the first as a forced and undermining tool of societal oppression, while the latter represents a conscious and at times powerful strategy used by the rhetor themselves (Glenn xix). Throughout this paper, I will continue to distinguish, yet interweave, these terms to assert that Georgiana Craven embodies both silenced rhetorical victim and empowered silent victor at different times throughout her diary. I will also illustrate how this lends complexity, independence, and entirety to both Craven and her text, as rhetorical scholar and author of *The World of Silence* Max Picard boldly declares,"'One cannot imagine a world where there is nothing but language and speech, but one can imagine a world where there is nothing but silence. Silence contains everything in itself. It is not waiting for anything; it is always wholly present in itself and it completely fills out the space in which it appears'" (Glenn 4).

As a woman who found the greatest contentment on an individual level, without the influence of family, friends, suitors, or children, Craven embodies this powerfully self-sufficient function of silence. However, despite Craven's ability to utilize silence effectively and positively, more pervasive societal messages continued to prescribe silence as a method of diminishing female presence. Early threads of esteemed philosophy and scholarship contain roots of a misogyny fueled by silence, as Glenn details when she notes, "Aristotle celebrated the connection between silence and women" (10). These beliefs, dating back to the BC era, grew in influence and widespread acceptance as the Christian religion began to dominate British society. Glenn emphasizes the biblical advocation of feminine silence through inclusion of 1 Tim 2:11-2:12, which reads: "'Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no

woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent'" (Glenn 2). Biblical role models for women also mirror this silent nature. For example, one of the holiest female characters included in the Bible is the Virgin Mary, who the Bible depicts as only speaking five times in her entire life (Glenn 10). As a devoted Christian, as well as private intellectual, these statements within the works of Aristotle and the *Holy Bible* represent ideas that Georgiana Craven would have most likely read and internalized.

In response to deliberate silencing of women and other groups of people, Glenn presents several reactions that may create a change in rhetorical power dynamics. She suggests "marginalized groups (can) organize and speak out, through resistance, demonstrations, alternative aesthetics, defiance, even self-contained silence" (Glenn 9). Though Glenn seems to display self-contained silence as the rarest option, it remains the one most relied upon throughout Georgiana Craven's diary. In a period and culture in which outright female rebellion scarcely occurred, Craven deftly manipulates the expectations of her society. She finds not repression, but refuge in silence, as it allows her to shirk implied social duties and to a limited extent, escape the community that belittled her in the first place. In fact, one of the most telling quotes from Craven's diary reveals her personally recognizing this pattern of silence, as she states, "I can be silent but find a great deal of pleasure in putting down these my thoughts on paper" (63). This dualistic observation of rhetorical ability and rhetorical desire, along with how they intersect and are limited, characterizes Craven's diary as a domain where self-contained silence prevailed and allowed her to express herself with limited and intentional censoring.

Pattern & Routine in Georgiana Craven's Diary: "We lead so Quiet so uniform a life"

Now that Glenn's idea of a rhetoric of silence has been explicated, its pattern and prevalence can be traced throughout Georgiana Craven's first diary. The largest and most evident of these patterns is Craven's reclusive nature, which causes her to silence herself within the social realm. Page seventeen of this diary reveals the first emergence of this pattern, as Craven writes, "Lady Craven has a box at the Opera she asked me to go with them but I could not" (17). In this particular example, both the conscious silence and the forced silencing described by Glenn seem to operate in tandem. Craven has decisively silenced herself by choosing not to go to the opera, yet she carefully adopts language that suggests an inability— "could not"— rather than the unwillingness that would have been conveyed by a phrase like "did not want to." Therefore, she claims exclusion from her society through a means that will be acceptable to the people within it. However, the vagueness and lack of support behind Craven's reasoning underlies the likeliness of her dishonesty.

Furthermore, Georgiana Craven's avoidance of the opera most likely relates to standards of chastity and innocence that applied to women— particularly unmarried women— of the period. According to eighteenth and nineteenth century British literature scholar Dr. Jennifer Frangos, throughout the nineteenth century, the opera represented a public place where various social classes mingled, a shameful concept for the noble group that Craven inhabited. The opera also became known as a setting fraught with sin and sexual promiscuity, as it supplied one of the most abundant arenas of prostitution. Lastly, it implied vanity, because the majority of people who attended the opera did so to assert social relevancy, dominance, and wealth (Frangos). Having to forgo the opera in order to maintain a high level of respect and proper reputation exemplifies how women of

the nineteenth century, Georgiana Craven included, often had their leisure time policed and their social interactions silenced.

Craven's Rhetorical Justifications of her Silence and Exclusion: "They all set off for Paris—the weather was so remarkably hot that I did not"

Similar but more specific than this opera example are Craven's inclusions of justification for her solitude. Physical health issues serve as some of the most common and frequently returned to reasonings. This pattern, first observed on page thirty-nine, takes the form of statements like, "I did not attempt go out as it makes me cough" (39). Forty-one pages and a full four months later, Craven still revisits this rationalization by divulging, "My cough was so very troublesome that I did not attempt to go to Church. It was the Sacrament and only Lady Craven and D'Eden went" (81). Throughout the month of October 1823, this exclusionary device becomes increasingly repetitious. Craven explains her continuous absence with remarks like "My cough was too indifferent to go to Church so Mrs B went with Lady Craven in my Chariot" (83) and "I was extremely unwell with a pain in my side and a cough I could not dine below" (83). This cycle persists even as Craven admits to improvements in her physical health, as she writes, "I did not go out though better far from well" (84) and days later follows with, "We go on very quickly and very happy and content see very few people nor do I wish to see any more I go out very little though much better I am careful" (88). By citing her health as a consistent problem and deterrent from socialization, Craven conforms to social perceptions of women as frail and weak. Likewise, her statement of "I am careful" provides testimony to her innocence and would lead readers to infer that she merely wishes to more vehemently exclude herself from impure public domains. This spectrum of justification indicates that Craven's personal motivations and

social preferences remain overshadowed and silenced by cultural assumptions about women.

Craven also upholds weather as a prominent pretext throughout her diary. She expresses this significant pattern first on page forty-five by stating, "It was so damp I did not move all day" (45). Almost the same phrase can be found only days later when Craven affirms, "I do not intend to move till this dreadful cold weather is over" (54). Towards the end of the diary, Craven reestablishes and concretizes this pattern as a rhetorical device, writing, "It was a rainy day so I did not attempt to move" (86) and even expanding by including, "I have not been out since I have been returned as Mr Sheldon says I had better not the weather being remarkably cold and heavy fogs" (86). By repeatedly using phrases like, "I did not intend to move," Craven reaffirms the societal perception of a lack of female mobility and agency. She firmly grounds herself in the typically feminine, excluded and domestic sphere. Moreover, by citing the recommendations and concerns of Mr. Sheldon, Craven further channels her society's gender politics by attempting to gain acceptance and credibility through reference of male opinions. Once again, Craven delicately balances between silence and forced silencing, prioritizing her own social reluctance but phrasing it through a patriarchal framework.

A Mother's Role, A Mother's Wrongs: "My mother is 72 today Nothing Remarkable"

Silence empowers Craven by allowing her to exercise control and employ an edited, exclusive lens to her rhetoric. Prominent diary scholar Cynthia Huff identifies this rhetorical authority as a common motivation for women keeping a diary, attesting, "The diary allows its creator to sift and mold her existence, and the very act of writing gave nineteenth-century women a sense of control and identity they might have otherwise lacked" (xxvi).

Perhaps the event over which Craven held the least control was the disintegration of her parents' marriage and the compounded shame that her mother's memoir generated. Though her mother commanded attention and rhetorical engagement in Craven's early years, Georgiana's diary serves as a platform to counter this dramatized, objectionable rhetoric into one that works to erase scandal and stigma.

When mentioning her mother, an absence of emotion characterizes Craven's writing. She writes from a curt, factual standpoint in order to keep track of dates, such as when she records, "My mother arrives in England on May 16" (107). While potential readers may expect this statement to be followed by diction infused with the tension and instability that characterized the two women's relationship, Craven rapidly distracts herself, and any future audience, from the forthcoming reunion by listing the week's teatimes and social engagements. By placing her mother's upcoming visit in this list structure, Craven indicates that her mother— however disreputable— plays only a routine role in her life, likening her company to dull routines like "I staid very quiet" (107), which are unlikely to elicit questions or criticism.

Craven also notably silences her agency when writing about her mother. She portrays herself as a passive and uninvolved character who receives information from secondary sources, recounting, "When we got there we were told she was over the way" (107). Through this concise description, Craven subtly signals a lack of direct communication with her mother, as information about her mother's whereabouts seems to have been relayed onto her from an unknown third party. Perhaps the rhetorical function of Craven's passive voice serves to distance her from her mother and understate previous actions between them.

In addition, Craven rhetorically situates her mother as merely another social influence she must tolerate. When relating the events of June 30, 1823, Craven simply enumerates, "We went to see Lady Stanford Amelia Kaye and my Mother and Lady Emily Berkeley" (108). Craven's mother does not receive special mention or consideration, but instead becomes lumped together with Craven's typical social group.

This lack of distinction and sentiment differs widely from other references to mothers in eighteenth-century female diaries. In her book *Centuries of Female Days*, diary scholar Harriet Blodgett devotes an entire chapter to the importance of maternal influence in eighteenth-century Englishwomen's lives. In one of Blodgett's findings, an unnamed diarist fervently expresses,

> How falsely did she [mother] used to say that when I had a Husband and children I should forget my mother! No! No! No! Two husbands, two young sons and ten Daughter's Lives and Deaths have not eras'd her Image from my mind. (223)

Though objectively and offhandedly writing about her mother served to ensure Craven's reputation and protect its tarnishing by future readers, this emotional silence also functions as a method of self-protection. Cheryl Glenn identifies both possible motivations by theorizing, "Stylized silence can function as a face-saving device, a way to maintain one's dignity and individual authority" (41). Although Craven's mother possessed authority in shaping the family name and reputation in early years, while Georgiana was an adolescent, Craven gradually and quietly asserts her own rhetorical control. While Craven infrequently betrays her emotions regarding her mother, these wavering moments of expression occur similarly to in an entry dated December 17, 1823, where Craven inscribes, "My mother was 73 years old. It was a very Bad day & such a storm of Wind

in the Evening" (140). Craven's juxtaposition of her mother with dreary and severe weather could seem accidental to readers, and perhaps reveals a subconscious, rather than intentional, thought process, suggesting that Craven silences her true, internal feelings from even herself.

Spinsterhood as a Dualistic Silencing of Women's Purpose and Societal Expectation: "Evening Samuel & Molly & the children came They looked miserable"

Craven's status as a spinster systematically silences her societal purpose. Feminist scholar Katharine M. Rogers summarizes women's role within this period by stating, "All she has to do in this World, is contained within the Duties of a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother" (7). These roles all serve to undermine Craven's purpose, as she has an estranged relationship with her mother, lives far from her siblings, and never marries or has children. Rogers further emphasizes this lack of purpose and even aligns it with a lack of recognized existence, specifying that "Marriage was more or less forced on women, as their only way to a recognized position in society" (7). This social trend becomes further represented in several more studies, as Rita Kranidis, who focuses her study specifically on spinsters, bluntly states, "Unmarried women were considered social failures in England" (37). In fact, Kranidis's book, *The Victorian Spinster and Colonial Emigration: Contested Subjects* goes on to explore the mass emigration that England forced spinsters to undergo throughout Craven's time period. Where these women went was never specified, but only referred to as "Elsewhere" in government reports (Kranidis 40). This phenomenon, while arguably much more dramatic than the struggles of spinsterhood that Craven faced, illustrates the silenced and overlooked rhetorical spaces in which unmarried women operated. However, some women, including Georgiana

Craven, took advantage of this enforced silence and used it as an empowering tool for privacy and introspection, creating "the spatial equivalent of the diary's lock and key" (Johnson 9).

While silent about her own unmarried state, never directly referencing it in the first volume of her diary, Craven's consciousness of her spinsterhood embeds itself in her text through statements about others in her society. When encapsulating the obituary of a well-respected man in her circle, a task she undertook often with nearly any reported death, Craven notes, "He left three daughters who died unmarried" (20). This frankness underscores Craven's portrayal of unmarried women as a normal societal presence, perhaps suggesting that she strove to counter social perceptions, such as the period's common belief that "Women may write— but they should marry" (Blodgett 16).

In fact, it was often spinsters who worked to actively rewrite the social code pertaining to their purpose and claim a larger, more significant rhetorical space than the one traditionally allotted to them. Many of these unmarried women identified educational and intellectual improvement as their self-defined purpose, which the diary aided in, as well as silently and textually affirmed their independence, as "at the simplest, keeping a diary says, some time each day belongs to me. More complexly it says, what I know matters; I am and I matter" (Blodgett 89). Spinsters could also escape the intellectual and creative inhibitions faced by their married counterparts, whose ambitions remained "stubbornly trapped in the possessive case: sister of, wife of, mother of" (Johnson 15).

Craven's writing about married women in her society exposes this "possessive cage" as a rhetorical entrapment befalling many of her espoused peers. Craven copies the final letter of her acquaintance, Lady Dalrymples, into her diary after the lady's death. This letter reads, "The Kindness of my dear Husband and the charm of a sweet flower Garden are all innocent pleasures

That I fear I feel more pain than I ought in leaving But it is my dear Husband's kindness that has redoubled all my pleasure" (Craven 131). Even upon Lady Dalrymples's reflective death bed, her husband most largely defines her lived experiences. Craven further emphasizes the entanglement of Lady Dalrymples's identity with her longstanding role as a wife, detailing, "She expired in her husband's arms" (132). The relationship between marriage and silencing inversely affects spinsters and wives, as wives were likely to be silenced during their lifetimes by the institution of marriage, but spinsters were more likely to be silenced posthumously, as a result of leaving little immediate family behind.

Economic Silencing: "I am firm in my resolution of never running in debt"

One possible motivation for Craven never marrying could very likely be the economic silencing that women underwent as a consequence of taking a husband. On a fundamental level, the institution of marriage in eighteenth-century Britain often reduced women, and in particular noblewomen, to the monetary figure they represented. Rogers chronicles this largely financial process by describing, "The elaborate contracts negotiated before an upper-class marriage dealt exclusively with such matters as how large a portion of the bride's family was to hand over, what allowance was to be settled on during the marriage, and what maintenance assured to her in case of separation or widowhood" (14).

It is also believed that titled and wealthy women like Craven would have been explicitly warned about the economic threat that marriage could pose. In an essay within *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, Cynthia Huff lends historical legitimacy and evidence to this trend by analyzing the *Ladies' Universal Pocketbook*, a conduct book published in the

early nineteenth-century for upper-class women, in particular. She observes that the book devotes full pages to warning against "fortune-hunters," less economically fortunate men who would marry affluent women, only to abandon them after legally claiming all of their money (Huff).

This would have represented a palpable concern for Craven, who often emphasized her economic caution within the pages of her diary. When reflecting on the lifestyle of her brother, a frequent and increasingly notorious gambler, she prays, "May I humbly enjoy my happiness and continue firm in never surviving in Debt" (59). Later, Craven's lack of debt becomes highlighted as a personal relief and accomplishment, as she celebrates, "I now doubly feel the pleasure of having no great debts and having done what I deem my duty" (93).

It remains important to note that Craven's economically privileged status empowered and enabled her to resist marriage. Many women of her period had no choice but to enter marriages as a fiscal refuge "from poverty, and from despair" (Kranidis 24). With this in mind, marital status imposed a sort of double bind for women, often occurring as a financial necessity— whether desired or not— or sometimes avoided due to its potential, and quite veritable, economic hazard. These monetary implications of marriage silenced factors like emotion and will, diminishing the ardent marital rhetoric current day audiences may expect.

Silencing in Friendships Between Women: "A very nice little library but we keep it always locked"

Craven's unmarried status resulted in her passing a significant amount of time with other women. Therefore, Georgiana Craven's longing for solitude ties into the silencing dynamics at the root of her society, which particularly pervaded female relationships. In *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, Cheryl Glenn insists, "Conversation remains our social glue, the coin

of the realm, the way to win friends and influence people—where silence and speech hang in delicate balance" (3). Indeed, conversation acted as a social glue in Georgiana Craven's time as well, but its restrictions and rules for women were severe. According to feminist scholar Katharine M. Rogers, home visits represented the main means through which women engaged in social interaction. In description of these visits, Rogers writes, "Visits were a formal obligation more than an opportunity for congenial intellectual discourse. Restricted to the conversation of their own sex, most of whom were poorly educated, women could not expand their minds" (31).

Craven depicts this silencing involuntary of intellectual growth and potential in her diary, as well. While reflecting after a bustling day spent with acquaintances in town, Craven announces, "I have made a few determinations I hope to keep—Experience has taught me— First of all— not to let my Tongue utter severe things—And never to talk of Books or those Sorts of things— to anyone as it is very offensive to many" (34). Craven strives to emulate the silence that her culture has encouraged in the form of self-contained silence, concealing her intelligence and self-driven scholarship in response to a society that does not value these traits in women. Yet despite Craven's claim that allusions to books cause offense in social settings, in her book *Feminism in Eighteenth Century England* Rogers chronicles the expansion of female readership and emphasizes private reading as the predominant propellant of women's educations.Therefore, it can be inferred from a more widespread perspective that many of Georgiana Craven's peers similarly masked their full intellectual capacities under the threat of rhetorical silencing.

For British women of the nineteenth century, silence acted as a veil under which they conducted their lives. In Georgiana Craven's specific case, this veil often muffled her true emotions, thoughts, and opinions. In spite of this domineering rhetorical

trend and power imbalance, Craven begins to adapt to the stifled and subdued norms as a method of evading her society altogether. This rhetorical response, reflected mostly through reclusiveness and a refusal to inhabit such rigid and guarded relationships, epitomizes her as a skillful manipulator of silence, rather than the manipulated. As studied by philosopher and advocate for solitude Philip Koch, for many women diaries provided a first opportunity for and introduction into privacy. When Craven writes, "I find a great pleasure in putting these my thoughts on paper" she harnesses this privacy into a rhetorical medium for an audience of one. Here, her silences occur decisively and establish her control and complexity as a woman rhetor.

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Questions to Consider:

Context

1. In what ways was Georgiana Craven affected by society's view of the silent woman? How did she embrace this role? Defy this role?
2. How does the use of a primary source—Craven's diary—shape the organization of the paper? What does the use of this source add to the paper's larger argument?
3. What importance does the author seem to suggest there might be in "silence"? What potential might there be for the absent information in Craven's diary?

Style

1. In what ways do the primary and secondary sources "speak" to each other in this paper? In what ways do the scholarly sources support, and give context to, the diary of Georgiana Craven?
2. How does the organization of this essay draw out the larger points the author makes?

Contributor Notes

Joseph Allen is a freshman and honors student at UMKC majoring in biology and minoring in chemistry. He has a passion for every field of study, whether it be in the sciences, history, philosophy, or English. The majority of his time is spent reading, writing, cooking, or enjoying time with friends. Joseph is currently doing research in the R.D. Mohan Laboratory using CRISPR/Cas9 genome engineering to create in vivo models for discovery of novel neuroprotective mechanisms. He hopes to go to graduate school to pursue an MD/PhD. (Taught by Amir Barati)

Crystal Bailey is a junior at UMKC. Her major is elementary education with an endorsement in middle school mathematics. She enjoys reading, binge-watching shows on Netflix, and exploring Kansas City. After graduation, Christina would like to continue her education by obtaining a Master of Arts in curriculum and instruction. (Taught by Abigail Shaffer Werneke)

Maggie Barratt is a third year undergrad at UMKC, with a focus in acting. She can often be found performing both on campus and at the Fishtank Performance Studio in the Crossroads. Her fascination with complex female characters spans from reading about them to playing them on stage. She plans to someday become a well-known actress and inspire future generations of wild and willful women. (Taught by Ande Davis)

Sarthak Garg (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner) is in his third year at the UMKC six-year BA/MD program and is majoring in liberal arts. He loves writing and works with students from all academic and cultural backgrounds in the Writing Studio to hone their writing skills. He enjoys reading, cooking, and eating. (Taught by Sheila Honig and Steven Melling)

Emily Grace (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner) is a recent graduate of Blue Springs High School. She participated in the school's marching band and wind symphony. She enjoys reading and writing. (Taught by Sara Crump)

Adnan Islam is a sophomore liberal arts major with a minor in chemistry. He loves making hip hop music as well as playing the viola. He also enjoys playing football. Adnan plans to study medicine and become a surgeon after he graduates. (Taught by Ande Davis)

Kelli Johnson is an incoming sophomore studying psychology at UMKC. Kelli loves musical theatre, orchestra, and traveling. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree, Kelli plans to pursue a master's degree in speech pathology. (Taught by Ande Davis)

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Kara Lewis is a senior majoring in Creative Writing and French. Aside from studying, her other campus activities include tutoring at the UMKC Writing Studio, serving as news editor of University News and poetry editor of Number One Magazine and volunteering at the Women's Center. She is also a member of Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority and Sigma Tau Delta, an Honors English society. In her free time, Kara enjoys writing, pleasure reading, shopping and traveling. Also, she might watch an unhealthy amount of *Gilmore Girls*. (Taught by Jane Greer)

Michaela Lopez is a recent graduate of Blue Springs South High School. This past year she was involved in FCA, NHS, Truman Heartland Foundation's Youth Advisory Council, and participated with the swim team. She plans to continue her education and attend medical school to one day become a pediatrician. (Taught by Shawn Schmelzle)

Mara Meneely is a sophomore on the conference champion UMKC track and field team and competes in the pole vault. She is currently a nursing major and hopes to one day further her degree to become a nurse anesthetist or practitioner with an emphasis in pediatrics. (Taught by Annie Liljegren)

Jennifer Nguyen is a freshman majoring in biology at UMKC. She is also pursuing minors in sociology and chemistry. In addition to writing, Jennifer enjoys volunteering and exploring the culture of Kansas City in her spare time. In the future, she hopes to attend a physican's assistant program for her graduate education. (Taught by Crystal Doss)

Nealie Niemeier recently graduated from West Platte High School. She was involved in basketball, volleyball, student council, science club, National Honor Society and choir. She plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University, though she is undecided on her major. (Taught by Leslie Frazer)

Blake Summers recently graduated from Blue Springs High School and played tennis for the school since his freshman year. He plans to major in biology at Truman State University in the fall and attend medical school at the University of Missouri after graduating. (Taught by Sara Crump)

Kayla Wiltfong is a sophomore student majoring in English at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, with an emphasis in creative writing. She has had six poems published in various local literary magazines and websites in the last the last three years. Kayla also recently won a poetry contest held by the Johnson County Library. In her spare time she enjoys reading books, watching television, and hanging out with her dog. (Taught by Ande Davis)