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Sosland Journal
of Student Writing

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2018
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Advanced Level
Ilus W. Davis Competition Winner

Editor's Note

Thank you for picking up a copy of the 2018 edition of *The Sosland Journal*. In these pages, you'll encounter a diversity of voices on a multitude of topics relevant to our current life and times. These writers represent both UMKC and HSCP, and their work speaks to the caliber of the academic writing programs and classes in the Kansas City community.

A commitment to community is a theme that has struck me again and again in reading through these essays. Each of our writers dives into subjects at the forefront of current conversations. In taking time to write about subjects ranging from the problem of increased depression in African American males to combating Islamophobia, from exploration into the poetry of Sylvia Plath to the need for gender equality in the gaming world, these writers represent hope for solutions to these issues. Each of the conversations they begin in their essays is an invitation for others to join a dialogue, to explore other facets of these issues, and most importantly, to grow in understanding of and compassion for others. As editor, I am honored to have read each of these pieces.

As well as a tool for sparking conversation, it is our hope that *The Sosland* might be a tool that can be used in the classroom. For this reason, we've included content and stylistic questions

at the end of each essay. Current and past issues of *The Sosland Journal* can be accessed online at soslandjournal.wordpress.com. We are always open to hearing from you as to how we can make this journal more accessible, so please feel free to send your comments to soslandjournal@gmail.com.

It takes the work of many to produce *The Sosland*, and to them we owe a debt of gratitude. First, we'd like to thank Rheta Sosland-Huwitt and the Sosland family, who continue to support the efforts of this journal, and other programs and awards at UMKC. We'd also like to give a warm thank you to Dr. Mahala, who serves *The Sosland* as faculty advisor and directs Composition at UMKC. Additionally, we so appreciate the work of our judges, John Moessner, Lerie Gabriel, and Milton Gomez, who read through each of the 55+ entries we received this year. I am indebted to Ande Davis, editor of last year's *Sosland Journal*, for his continued support and guidance in the process of assembling the journal. I also want to give my special thanks to the lovely Brynn Fitzsimmons, whose dexterity with InDesign, support, and amazing editorial skills have shaped this journal into its final product. Finally, I want to thank all who submitted to the journal this year. We were privileged to be able to consider your writing. We want to encourage you to continue writing. Not only does your voice matter, but it has the ability to bring dignity and hope to those who are suffering and offers us avenues to be more compassionate people.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Weishar
Editor, *The Sosland Journal*

ESSAYS

Video Games and Gender
Female Discrimination in the Gaming Community

Clayre Barkema

To this day, my mother always questions why I, her teenage daughter, am more interested in first-person shooters, adventure games, and online multiplayer games than I am in makeup, clothes, and romantic comedies. She tells me over and over again, "That stuff is for boys," and I try to tell her girls can like video games too, but she doesn't get it. She doesn't get how much fun I have by actively putting myself in a story by controlling the actions of a character, or by making decisions that you cannot make while watching TV. She does not get why I like to shoot zombies and run around an overgrown cityscape to escape the apocalypse. This misunderstanding is the mindset many people—both in and out of the gaming community—have when they hear about female gamers. They are stuck in the thought that video games are for men to enjoy. This idea is reinforced by the lack of representation of females in games. However, having strong female characters in video games helps break the "damsel-in-distress" stereotypes and promotes equal representation for women gamers, as well as an opportunity for women to be more than just a sex figure.

The treatment of female gamers is largely due to way they are represented in the games they play. For the longest time, the video game industry was dominated by "young white

males who love the form's traditional mix of violence and sexy women" (Weinman 2). These men grew up playing games where it was okay to treat women as objects and assume that they are in constant need of rescue. However, the industry is growing, and women are becoming more and more involved in not only the purchase and playing of games, but the production as well. Amy Hennig is a female writer, formerly with Naughty Dog, and is best known for her work on the "Uncharted" series. Her addition to the series brought on a new form of character, a strong female, Elena Fisher. In a part of "Uncharted 4," Elena pulls the main lead, Nathan Drake, up a ledge and Sean McLoughlin, a long-time player of the series commented, "That is a lot of strength, Elena. You are very impressive." (Jacksepticeye, Uncharted 4 — Part 9). But that does not mean that women are being treated any better. When women join online games, they receive all sorts of derogatory statements: "a girl went into a certain game's online community, asking about its mechanics. . .The first response she got was from a male player, telling her he'd answer if she performed a sex act on him" (Frum). For the most part, women are mistreated in and out of games due to derogatory representation in the games they are trying to enjoy and the communities that are associated with them.

Elena Fisher is not the only female character in the gaming

Figure 1 - Cover for the remastered (2014) edition of The Last of Us.

world, but she is among the minority of strong leads, a select few being Ellie and Tess from "The Last of Us," Jodie Holmes from "Beyond: Two Souls," and Amanda Ripley from "Alien: Isolation." Men are starting to take notice of the strong female leads. As Mark Fischbach played through "The Last of Us," he took notice of the female characters early on in the game, even

before any real action had happened: "[Marlene] seem[s] to be doing pretty well for a girl that was shot, lots of strong female characters in this game" (Markiplier, The Last of Us – Part 3). Even the packaging (Figure 1) for "The Last of Us" shows Ellie being independent and heroic, holding a hunting rifle while the male lead stands behind her, when he would traditionally be the focal point. Sean McLoughlin played through "Uncharted 4: A Thief's End" and also acknowledged the strong female lead: "Elena is my favorite character, I think probably in all of [the series]. She's just such a cool, nice person all the time. I like her, I like her a lot. They made her very relatable. a very down-to-earth, chill girl" (Jacksepticeye, Uncharted 4 – Part 8).

However, these women are so outnumbered by the sheer vastness of "damsel" types plaguing the video

Figure 2 - Promotional ad for Grand Theft Auto V (2013).

game community. Take a look at the advertising for the game "Grand Theft Auto V" (Figure 2) and consumers will immediately take notice of the willingness to include exposed, sexualized females as the main selling point of the game. Phoebe Luckhurst writes, "too often, female characters conform to three limited stereotypes, 'princess in pink', 'prostitute in bikini,' and 'ethereal chick who needs saving.'" Every gamer loves the Mario games dearly, but Princess Peach is always in need of saving from the strong male lead; similarly, Princess Zelda, from the beloved Legend of Zelda series, needs her literal knight to come and save her. These games, and games in general, rarely take the opportunity to allow women to save themselves; it is not a part of their narrative, not what they

think the consumers want. In fact, the exact opposite is true. According to a report produced by the Entertainment Software Association, "45% of all game players, and 46% of the most frequent purchasers of games are female...women make up 31% of the game-playing population" (Frum). That means one-third of consumers are not too interested at looking at a character's breasts and would just like to play games.

Despite the sexualization of their gender, the community still makes it difficult for women to even enjoy simply playing the game. The internet is full of "story after story...[of] female gamers who, once they ventured into gaming circles beyond family and friends, faced mockery, dismissive attitudes and even abuse from their peers" (Frum). Stuck in the stigma that girls do not belong in the video game world and hid behind the anonymity of their usernames, men throw comment after comment and message after message of slander toward their female counterparts and are dismissive of their desire to just feel welcomed in the community. For example, player Lianne Papp noticed this about her teammates: "Not only were the majority of those strangers men, but they didn't really like playing with women" (Teitel). They assaulted her with sexist remarks and insulting comments. This comes back to the women men see in the games they are playing: "If the industry stopped objectifying female characters in games, men might be less inclined to objectify the women playing them" (Teitel). Not only would having men accept that women are here to stay help with animosity, it would help the self-esteem of the many women who just want to feel accepted.

Women are not looking to dramatically change the industry or wanting to have a strong female lead in every single game, they are just asking to be considered in the decision-making process of game production and to be welcomed by the men of the community. In an article entitled, "Nearly half of all video-

gamers are women," Larry Frum concludes his work by saying, "They [women] aren't asking for special treatment, aren't asking for female-only games and, in many cases, don't even like to be differentiated as

Figure 3 - Screenshot from "The Last of Us 2 - Trailer."

'girl gamers.' Instead, they say, they want to be entertained, to be challenged, to have fun —just like the guys." As their voices get heard, women are finally starting to get the representation they are wanting. A promo for a sequel to "The Last of Us," a video game that has proven it believes in strong women, depicts the main lead as a strong woman who is doing her best to survive in the situation she is in (see Figure 3). Having strong characters in games for women to look up to helps encourage women to be strong themselves and to take charge of their own situation.

There is no reason for my mom, or anyone, to ridicule girls for challenging traditional gender roles, especially when it comes to video games, as gender roles are starting to be challenged more and more. Video games tell a story, sometimes feeling more like an interactive feature film than a game, and no one is going to tell a girl she cannot watch a movie. The rating "E for Everyone" should include everyone, because nothing about video games are strictly for men; the only reason they are perceived that way is because of the stigma put on them by society. Even though men may still dominate the online servers, chat rooms, and fan sites, women are slowly working their way into the world of gaming. As female characters are starting to take the stage, female gamers are starting to explore the world of gaming more in depth than they previously did. When women say they want a female

lead, they are looking for a character they can relate to as they play—without having to look past the gap they experience when playing male characters, and without being just a character who is the love interest or the princess in need of rescue.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. In what ways has the gaming industry become friendlier toward women? What barriers still exist?
2. In what ways has the sexualization of women's bodies contributed to the barriers women gamers still face?
3. How has the author made use of multiple forms of media in this essay? How does the use of visual examples and *YouTube* videos supplement the use of news sources?

Style

1. What is the effect of utilizing sources that convey both anecdotal and statistical information?
2. How does the author stake her interest in the argument she is making?

Alternative Facts to Learning
A Literacy Narrative
Abigail Schoenrade

Literacy, as defined by James Gee, is "the mastery of or fluent control over a secondary Discourse" (Gee 9). This Discourse requires exposure to an abundance of representations in functional, practical settings. According to Gee, Discourses consist of a Primary Discourse—acquired early in life and most notably in the home—and Secondary Discourse—acquired through non-home-based social institutions that are within the public sphere. Primary and Secondary Discourses align with social practices and social roles and are considered, "forms of life that integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities," formulating an "identity kit" that aids in effective communication, critical analysis, and reflective skills (Gee 6). The mastering of literacy is a skill that supports social and intellectual mobility and allows for an increase in opportunities and the development of one's knowledge. For me, it was the power of written communication within the message of hip-hop music that served as my outlet for literacy gain and achievement. Hip-hop music is a commanding tool that serves as the connection for a revolutionary, unconventional means to gain intelligence and effectively communicate with the world

around me.

I am a Black American female, and though I was always aware of my racial and ethnic physical characteristics, being Black was not the leading aspect of the foundation for how I made sense of the world and interacted with others—my primary discourse. At the age of two days, I was adopted into a multi-racial family consisting of White American parents who provided my brothers and me a middle-class lifestyle. My mother, a God-fearing, conservative-minded psychology professor, and my father, a Lutheran pastor, instilled traditionally conservative morals and values that aligned with your average middle-class, White American family in the Midwest, with a bit more emphasis on having a relationship with the church and God. Although my parents divorced when I was nine years old, the environment in which I was raised was virtually unchanged when it came to the socioeconomic makeup of our family and the families around us, which consisted of minimal diversity, too.

Growing up in a household with socially and politically conservative White parents functions as the foundation for my primary discourse. The church I grew up in, the schools I attended, the sports teams I played on, and the organizations and activities I was involved in—all predominantly White spaces—aide in the development of my secondary discourse. I attended church and church-sponsored activities weekly, served on leadership boards for middle and high school student council, and played on sports teams all throughout my childhood years—I was fortunate to be living a relatively normal life. Many of the folks I interacted and engaged with on a daily basis lived similar middle-class lives, and the importance of education was made a priority within the families, resulting in reading, writing, and the art of communication being relatively uncomplicated for me

(although, at times, I felt that I was not being challenged intellectually and that I lacked the ability to stay attentive during such times). I found myself surrounded by those who seemed to think, talk, and act like me, resulting in my daily routine and thoughts, including my use of communication and language, being influenced by White American discourse.

As music has an unquestionable way of bringing individuals together, it was music, hip-hop music, that set me apart from those around me in my various spaces occupied within my secondary discourse. Growing up as an early 90s baby, boy bands, girl groups, and other forms of pop music could be heard almost everywhere. My musical selection, without truly giving much thought to my personal likes and dislikes, was reflective of my naïve way of living and thinking, listening, and communicating. I was trapping myself in a corner that did not allow for much diversity of thought or critical thinking abilities. That is, until I decided to explore music by artists who looked like, but according to the media, acted in ways much different than me—hip-hop artists. Upon graduating from high school, I had already begun to fully immerse myself into the lyrical masterminds of the hip-hop community, taking in as much as my brain could process.

In "Learning to Read," Malcom X expresses gratitude for his non-traditional methods of learning, through the use of dictionaries, prison libraries, and hand-written letters. Hip-hop, through its use of dialogue and story-telling based on real representation, enabled me to come full force with non-traditional approaches to learning as well. Hip-hop had become my "textbook" for literacy, gaining an understanding of communities, language, and culture in America. Through the lyrics of different songs came a deep, useful connection to literacy, while also challenging the foundation of my original thought and the basis of my assumed identity. As many folks

rely on school curriculums and academic resources to increase social mobility and cultural capital and develop critical literacy skills, I used the lyrics of hip-hop music to gain insight and knowledge on educational, cultural, political topics.

It was Lupe Fiasco in "B---- Bad" who addresses misogyny by way of derogatory speech and the negative impact and effect on our youth. Fiasco in this song is quoted as saying:

> Now imagine there's a shorty, maybe five, maybe four
> Riding 'round with his mama listening to the radio
> And a song comes on and a not far off from being born
> Doesn't know the difference between right and wrong

He then goes on to note that this impressionable mind quickly learns to associate misogynistic phrases and words with his mother, leading to lifelong misunderstandings of how to treat a woman and furthering the negative impact such words have on children and women. Queen Latifah's "U.N.I.T.Y," through the use of strong language within her lyrics, was used to fight misogyny, and more recently "Flawless" by Beyoncé created opportunities to learn and educate others on the value of women and women's rights. It was in 2012 that I discovered Kendrick Lamar, who empowered me through his lyrical dialogue to be more mindful and socially aware. Highlighted in his song "Institutionalized," it was through the message of these lyrics that I could better understand systematic oppression, which facilitated in conversation and action towards strategies and solutions to improve our communities and society as a whole. Throughout the entire song, Kendrick Lamar creates a vivid picture depicting the irony he finds himself in daily, as he has accumulated much success, but his mind is still trapped in his past, in the ghetto he grew up in, which has resulted in struggles for him. He says "I'm trapped inside the ghetto… I keep runnin' back for a visit" alluding to

the issue of feeling institutionalized. "Dazed and confused / Talented but still under the neighborhood ruse" depicts a story that many people, many young black children, and young black scholars are able to identify with. Kendrick's lyrics center on the power of wealth and focus on just how strong the ways of the ghetto can be, and how, in some cases, having Black skin can leave one being a victim to institutionalization.

Hip-hop music served as a valuable, critical tool in my life when speaking on the mastery of literacy and the ability to understand and communicate with those who occupy the spaces around me. It seems simple to attend school day in and day out or to do a quick internet search in order to fulfill education requirements, gain knowledge, and further enhance one's literacy ability, but I found through the listening and analyzing of hip-hop song lyrics that I was not only learning more, but I was being challenged with each song I listened to. I was asking more questions, involving myself in stimulating discussions and conversation, and connecting culture to education. This genre of music led me to new and transformed observations of politics, religion, the issue of being Black in America, and being a female, too. This newfound Discourse has proven to not only advance my analytical and critical thinking skills, but hip-hop music has also created a path to literacy that has grown to challenge the traditional hypotheses of knowledge attainment in United States schools.

Literacy is a vital, fundamental part of our society and should take into account the multiple modes of literacy achievement. In "What isCritical Literacy?" Ira Shor identifies a component of literacy which hip-hop music can identify with: it "challenges the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development," (Shor 1), allowing for the connecting of society. I was fortunate to be

raised in a family that valued education, learning, effective communication, and the fulfillment of knowledge, but it was hip-hop—though it was not a dominant part of my personal background growing up—that acted, and still acts, as the necessary component to shaping my literacy acquisition, influencing me to be the woman I need to be in order to reach my full potential in all areas of life.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. Who were the author's primary and secondary sponsors of literacy?

2. In what ways has hip-hop shaped the author's literacy?

Style

1. How does the author utilize song lyrics in this essay? What do the songs suggest about the development of her literacy?

2. What do the voices of thinkers like Gee, X, and Shor add to the critical exploration that takes place in this paper?

The Truth, the Press, and Hell
How Social Media, Biased News, and the President are Damaging our Democracy

Addison Graham

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." – John 8:32

Recently, as I sacked groceries at a Price Chopper in Blue Springs, I spoke with a cashier named Betty who was working my lane. Betty is an older woman who has lived in Missouri her entire life and has a particular disgust for what she calls, "the evil socialist society that Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are trying to force on America." Betty began to tell me about an organized coalition protest put on by Black Lives Matter as well as Antifa. The goal of the protest, she said, was to "pack the streets, clog traffic flow, vandalize vehicles, and threaten cops until Donald Trump resigned his presidency." When I asked her where she learned of this protest she said, "Twitter. I read it on Twitter." Aside from being slightly surprised that a woman over seventy even had a Twitter account, I was even more alarmed to hear her so confidently cite her Twitter feed as if it were a valid source for factual news.

According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, about 60% of U.S. adults get news from some type of social media (Anderson and Caumont). Unlike traditional news outlets, however, news on social media is curated by computers rather

than editors. In an article published by *The New York Times*, Ravi Somaiya interviewed Facebook engineer Greg Marra: "'We try explicitly to view ourselves as not editors,' [Marra] said. 'We don't want to have editorial judgement over the content that's in your feed. You've made your friends, you've connected to the pages that you want to connect to and you're the best decider for the things that you care about.'" The problem, however, is that news found on social media is not held to the same standards of truth as the more carefully vetted information found through legitimate news outlets. In other words, not only are you being presented with stories that the computer thinks you would like to read, but oftentimes those stories have not been properly fact-checked. People hearing lies that reinforce their own opinions is a poor mix. Betty clearly had a negative view towards Antifa and Black Lives Matter, and the fake news she saw on Twitter simply provoked her anger and contempt even further. Like Betty, each of us have predisposed opinions as we view news. Social media exacerbates our innate partiality and narrows our scope of perspective.

Social media is not the only form of unreliable information. The constant cycle of biased news on cable television and the internet is misguiding ideology and polarizing America. For instance, when news broke that Paul Manefort had been arrested for money laundering in Russia, headlines varied drastically. MSNBC's homepage read "Manefort's arrest shows us that Mueller is just getting started." Meanwhile, Fox News' most prominent headline read, "Should Trump Fire Mueller?" Days later, when news broke that Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore had been accused of sexual assault, MSNBC's homepage read, "Why Alabama voters continue to support Roy Moore," while Fox News' most prominent headline said, "Moore Outrage: Senate hopeful slams Washington Post's 'Political

Agenda' as he denies pursuing teenage girls." These are just two of the many examples of how slanted news platforms choose to ingrain their biases into stories.

News bias, however, is a much broader problem than Tucker Carlson spewing on about Hillary Clinton's emails while Rachel Maddow spends nearly her entire show talking about Donald Trump's tax returns. Economists Jesse Shapiro and Matthew Gentzkow conducted a study on biased news outlets and found that the slant of a specific news platform can often be detected in key words and phrases. For instance, conservatives often say, "illegal aliens" and "the death tax," whereas liberals prefer the terms "undocumented immigrants" and "the estate tax" (Samuelson). These subtle differences have a major impact on where consumers choose to get their news. Everyone loves hearing what they agree with, which in turn fuels the success of biased news platforms such as *Breitbart News Network* and the *Huffington Post*. Without hearing the multiple perspectives of a story, however, it becomes very difficult to view any opinion but your own as important. When truth is not at the forefront of news, division is amplified in America.

Robert Samuelson of *The Washington Post* worries about the extent to which the media is dividing America. "Cable and the Internet have splintered media audiences," he writes. "The logic is powerful that the commercial imperatives of the new technologies will deepen the country's political divisions. People will stick to their familiar political flavors and disparage those who choose differently." Ironically, an increase in the volume of news and communication abilities has narrowed rather than broadened our perspectives. Perhaps Ted Koppel said it best when he told a defensive Sean Hannity that what he did was bad for America: "You have attracted people who are determined that ideology is more important than facts," Koppel said ("Ted Koppel to Hannity"). It takes a veteran news anchor to tell

America that news with a spin is not really news, and indeed, facts are the foundation of journalism.

Perhaps of greatest detriment to our democracy are the attacks on the press coming from our very own president. Donald Trump has repeatedly gone after legitimate news sources such as *The New York Times*, NBC, ABC, and CBS, calling them an "enemy of the American people," threatening to "challenge" licenses, and accusing them of "DISTORTING DEMOCRACY in our country." In reality, however, Trump has proved to us time and again the importance of such viable news outlets which have each reported the multiple accounts in which the president has spoken lies and tweeted falsehoods. When Trump accused John McCain of "graduating last in his class at Annapolis" (Qiu), made false statements about vote totals and attendance numbers, and accused a former president of "wiretapping" him (Burleigh), it became very clear how important the press is when it comes to maintaining truth and holding elected officials accountable.

The tradition of leaders being held accountable to the public through the press has long been considered to be fundamental to our democracy. Donald Trump has neglected that tradition, however. Trump will be the first to tell you that he would likely not be in the White House were it not for Twitter. Often arguing that the mainstream media gives him an unfair shake, Trump prefers to speak to his base directly while undermining the press through social media. Tamara Keith, a correspondent for NPR's "Morning Edition" makes this clear in a November 2016 conversation with Brendan Nyhan:

> 'Presidents want to get their message out, unfiltered by the press,' said Brendan Nyhan, a professor of government at Dartmouth College who contributes to 'The Upshot' at the *New York Times*. 'In that sense, what Donald Trump is doing

> with social media is not new....[However, t]he extent to which
> he uses social media to attack the media directly could be
> relatively unprecedented.' ("Commander-In-Tweet")

In other words, Trump is not unique in his desire to avoid
the filter of the press; however, the way in which he tries to
undermine the press has never before been seen to this scale.
As Nyhan points out, "FDR was not giving fireside chats about
why the *New York Times* was a failing institution ("Commander-
In-Tweet"), and Harry Truman never gave a Whistlestop stump
speech on fake news. In fact, it became a trademark of Truman's
famous 1948 campaign that as he fired up the crowd from the
back of his train car an audience member would shout, "Give
'em hell Harry." Reflecting on this later Truman remarked, "I
never did give anyone hell. I just told the truth and they thought
it was hell." In Truman's day it was the truth that sounded like
hell, whereas today our hell is defined by the absence of truth.
More than ever before, America's lack of an honest president
is showing us how vital a strong and reliable press is to our
country.

Ultimately, our freedom is rooted in the truth. These attempts
to undermine facts are corrosive to our social structure and
constitutional order. The age of media has introduced an entirely
new and perhaps most dangerous enemy for America. This enemy
is not fought in foreign lands, but is battled from within. This
enemy flies no banner of opposition, for the enemy is us. Driven
by discord and anger and without strong leadership to unite,
this war cuts to the core of American values. Defense requires an
understanding that truth-telling and fact-checking are now more
than acts of moral decency. They are patriotic obligations. What
was applicable to a Judeo-Christian society nearly 2,000 years ago
certainly pertains to our democracy today: in the bondage of lies,
bias, and alternative facts, only the truth can set us free.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. According to the author, why are middle-ground news outlets more truthful than "news" gathered on social media?

2. What examples does the author give of individuals or news outlets that help (or have helped) pursue truth in society. Who or what are non-examples?

3. What are other ways in which bias enters the news cycle?

Style

1. How does the author make use of a personal anecdote to anchor her argument?

2. What counterarguments might be made about the points being used to construct the author's argument?

Urban Sprawl and Revitalization

Richard Blake Schneider

Urban sprawl is the continually growing suburban areas that surround the city core. Urban sprawl is that new shopping center down the street. Urban sprawl is the new subdivision that's just a bit farther out than the last one. Urban sprawl is low-density development that keeps growing but is never replaced. This low-density development can cause many problems within cities that should be addressed, a few being: loss of land, increased pollution and waste, and larger infrastructure (Platt 51). In addition, urban sprawl can cause an unequal provision of public goods and services that cause segregation and "poverty pockets" (Nechyba and Walsh 185). Eighty percent of Americans live in metropolitan regions (Platt 49); therefore, at least as many are affected by urban sprawl. Some solutions to ease the effects of the growing suburban areas include creating green spaces within the city and using regional planning to limit outward growth and focus redevelopment efforts. I propose the use of regional planning with a focus on public transportation, green spaces, and entertainment districts. This effort in combination with some policy changes would further the limitation of urban

sprawl and help redevelop the central city. Such an approach would be more effective than implementations in the past because it would combine short- and long-term plans to deal with environmental issues caused by urban sprawl and lessen the urban footprint on a city.

The increases in city populations and the decreases in city density are what have caused the larger "urban footprints" that we see today (Nechyba and Walsh 180). Our larger city footprints are important because they cause other problems for us. According to Rutherford H. Platt in "Regreening the Metropolis," the problems that low-density expansion causes are: less affordable housing, increased traffic and energy waste, increased air and noise pollution, weakened urban watersheds and groundwater, rising urban flood and earthquake losses, loss of productive agricultural land, loss of natural habitat and biodiversity, and less contact with nature (52). These are not all the problems that have been described either. In David Fox's article, "Halting Urban Sprawl: Smart Growth in Vancouver and Seattle," he describes the costs as both individual and collective. Collectively, we are required to provide and maintain more infrastructure, have more pollution, and have a loss of natural habitat or farmland; on the other hand, individually, there is the expense of commuting, decreased family time, and what he described as "alienation from cultural activities in community centers" (Fox 44). These issues that are effects of urban sprawl are much bigger and have more importance to us as a community. Commuting to work is often dreaded because of the congestion on roads. Furthermore, a major issue that Nechyba and Walsh acknowledge in "Urban Sprawl" is the unequal provision of goods and services in suburban areas causes poverty pockets. This disparity is important because it shows how much growing urban footprints affect us.

But why does urban sprawl occur? There are many factors

that affect urban sprawl, some of which are policies and others of which are social. Policy-wise, the post-WWII mortgage programs as well as mortgage deductibility on federal taxes has increased homeownership and created larger suburban areas (Nechyba and Walsh 182). Fox's article was a comparison between Vancouver and Seattle on how sprawl occurred and how it is being addressed. Specifically, in Canada, providences have regional plans between cities and their surrounding suburban areas, whereas Seattle has only recently implemented such a plan. Another difference that contributed much more to Seattle's increased urban footprint is the number of interstates that are inside the borders of the core city (Fox 49). The interstates divide the city and propagate commuting. In addition, author Marie-Alice L'Heureux in "The Creative Class, Urban Boosters, and Race: Shaping Urban Revitalization in Kansas City, Missouri," includes a section on how the legacy of racial segregation has caused the urban core to have disproportionate redevelopment. She states, "Many historically black neighborhoods are adjacent to urban cores but physically and/or visually removed from them by highways, whose construction also destroyed much of the built fabric needed for revitalization" (L'Heureux 252). Her description of the *de facto* segregation in cities and how that impacted urban revitalization in Kansas City is important because it helps explain why having interstates within Seattle and not within Vancouver contributed to a weakened core city in Seattle. This *de facto* segregation L'Heureux detailed is not only from post-WWII urban sprawl, but it also includes earlier discriminatory housing practices; however, it remains today because of the division the interstate system caused within cities. (L'Heureux 252). These factors together have caused many American cities to continue to grow outward into the surrounding, continuous countryside rather than upward. This is a problem, and many people have suggested and implemented many solutions.

Urban sprawl is a problem that has many more effects that one would think. Because of this, there are many proposed solutions as well as case studies on how cities have reacted. Rutherford Platt's "Regreening the Metropolis" focuses on the size of cities and the loss of natural land. He proposes the use of created green spaces so that they can provide ecological services that a city needs such as: purification of air and water, mitigation of floods and drought, detoxification and decomposition of wastes, generation and renewal of soil, pollination, dispersal of seeds, maintaining biodiversity, protection from UV rays, and partial stabilization of extreme temperatures and wind (Platt 58). These are all important for any ecosystem, and because cities have increasing urban footprints, Platt's argument is that we need to create green spaces within the city because it makes the central city more habitable and has importance in water quality, recharging the ground water, moderation of "heat islands" and protection of biodiversity (Platt 58). However, this proposition does fall short. The creation of green spaces helps repurpose unused land in the central city, but it does not limit the outward growth of cities. Platt's argument for ecological cities is complemented by the difficulty and time it takes for one to leave the city.

Another solution is found in an aforementioned case study on urban revitalization in Kansas City, Missouri. Marie-Alice L'Heureux describes how urban revitalization has happened and why in "The Creative Class, Urban Boosters, and Race: Shaping Urban Revitalization in Kansas City, Missouri." The paper is a response to a documentary, *The Next American Dream*, to which L'Heureux states that the contributions of "urban pioneers," the benefits of slow growth, a judgement on the effectiveness of the top-down approach to revitalization, and the impact of *de facto* segregation are missing. She covers the topics and explains their role in the revitalization of different districts within Kansas

City. She argues the point that bottom-up investment is much
better than large-scale projects at revitalizing areas of interest:

> Roberta Brandes Gratz and Norman Mintz, who studied
> downtown-revitalization projects nationwide in the 1980s
> and 1990s, maintain that small-scale projects that respond
> to the needs and desires of local residents are preferable and
> ultimately create healthily urban areas that attract people
> to live and work in the city. (L'Heureux 249)

This is an important point that she points out because it means
that an urban revitalization plan should not consist of mainly
large-scale projects. In addition to small-scale projects and slow
growth, L'Heureux focuses on the urban pioneers in the Kansas
City area. An example of this was the artist community that
increased the value of the River Market district. Beginning
in the early 1980s, artists would open studios in the district
because it was a more affordable place to live. The community
eventually created something known as "first Fridays": a once-
a-month event of art, music, and food. This example shows the
importance of what has been referred to as "the creative class"
(L'Heureux 247).

Fox's paper, on the other hand, details the differences
between Seattle and Vancouver's land-use planning, or lack
thereof. Because of the history of development of each city,
Fox focuses heavily on why urban sprawl occurred in Seattle,
Washington. In addition, he also describes Vancouver's
urban development that included regional planning, public
transportation, and a focus on mixed-use, dense areas. Seattle
has recently created their own comprehensive plan that focuses
development into high-density, mixed-use areas that create local
communities accessible to pedestrians and connected through
public transportation. This "Smart Growth" is a development
process that tries to balance economic progress, environmental

preservation, and quality of life concerns (Fox 44). Likewise, Vancouver's four main components to their comprehensive plan were: commitment to mass transit over freeways; development in compact regions; the creation of complete communities that includes places one can live, work, shop, and be entertained; and to limit expansion into the "green zone" surrounding the city (Fox 50). Fox uses Vancouver and Seattle as examples for other American cities when he says that they, "…should implement comprehensive planning at the municipal and regional level, backed by a strong state statute, focusing development into already urbanized areas, develop public transportation systems, and create common, binding regional goals like Seattle has done" (Fox 58). However, this plan falls short, according to a review of Seattle's Sustainable Neighborhoods Assessment Project in a piece by Tanvi Misra entitled "Seattle's Fight Against Sprawl, 20 Years On." Misra's analysis found that the growth within the neighborhoods detailed by the plan was not even. The city of Seattle reached its biggest goal of revitalization and the creation of neighborhoods; however, there was a stark difference between which neighborhoods grew and those that did not (Misra). Because some "urban villages" still suffered from poverty and the issues that brings, such as unemployment, poor public health, and less education, it is apparent that not all the designated areas grew the same. The changes in population for the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village was given as 14.6% from 1990 to 2010; however, the Lake City Hub Urban Village saw an 85% change in population in the same period (Misra). Furthermore, in 1990, North Beacon Hill had a population where 80% were people of color, meanwhile Lake City Hub had only 25% (Misra). Misra also found that the plan fell short because 62% of the people who worked in the city still commuted to it. All three proposed solutions have improved the situation, but they still

have shortcomings that can be improved upon.

The best solution is one designed by local groups, as seen in the comparison of large-scale projects and slow growth by L'Heureux. Therefore, I propose a solution that would create local "district" planning boards within a city and metropolitan area to focus on green spaces, public transportation, community events, and mixed-use land development as would be described by a legally binding regional plan. Such an implementation would affect everyone within the metropolitan region. It would positively impact the community for many reasons from a more ecological city to community-building events and development.

The creation of green spaces within city districts and suburban cities has a positive impact on that area as well as the entire city. The goal with created green spaces is to provide a place for the community to gather, to provide ecological services to the city and to repurpose structures and lots. Green spaces within a city can include things such as garden roofs, garden cities, large, designed parks, and "useable outdoors" like fairgrounds, music amphitheaters, and amusement parks. These places attract people and strengthen a sense of community (Platt 54). Furthermore, green spaces also provide ecological services that do not take place in the developed, urban landscape. Of some significant importance is the purification of air and water, recharging ground water, moderation of "heat islands," and the protection of local biodiversity (Platt 58). This is especially important as a response to environmental effects of low-density development. In addition, repurposing old property helps a community evolve and develop. Surrounding property values increase with proximity to open space such as parks and views of nature (Schilling and Logan). While creation of green spaces and public areas will be encouraged, it will be up to the local planning boards to create them.

The local planning boards will be a small group of elected

citizens and city planners that will be responsible for community building efforts and city planning. As such, they would represent their community in planning how the city should look and interact. This includes decisions on where parks, businesses, or housing should go, as well as public transportation within their district. The group would be able to more closely listen to the people in their community so that the local population decides what they would prefer. Furthermore, local districts could plan and host events. Such events could be art gallery crawls, festivals, street performers, or a food truck sampling. These events would draw in "the creative class" and help create a diverse atmosphere necessary for a safe, thriving community. Mixed-use development attracts different people at different times which allows an area to constantly be in use. It also attracts people into the city as there are local communities that are desirable to live in and the communities could then be connected between one another. Such public transportation systems between districts would be created at a regional level.

The regional planning board would be a small group of elected citizens from each district that would coordinate between the districts and work on city planning from a larger level. They would work with city planners to focus development into the central city, connect districts with public transportation, limit development in the surrounding metropolitan areas, give attention to areas of disproportionate growth, and to plan the budget. The creation of a regional planning board would positively impact the city by coordinating the efforts of community-oriented local planning boards within the city districts as well as the surrounding suburban areas and edge cities. It would be able to limit outward expansion and focus development into the city. Furthermore, the regional planning board would be able to connect the city between districts with public transportation systems. In Fox's comparison of Seattle and Vancouver, he notes

that one of Vancouver's main points for its comprehensive plan includes a commitment to mass-transit over freeway (Fox 51). Likewise, it would be useful for the regional planning board to have a similar objective. In addition, limited outward growth of the metropolitan areas would require a legally binding comprehensive plan to be created and backed by a state statute (Fox 58); however, doing so would limit the city's urban footprint and force development to be within the city. While the three points I proposed would work well together, they do still have shortcomings.

There are a few issues that were not addressed by a focus on green spaces with local and regional planning. The first issue has to do with a lack of information on how much demographics affect urban revitalization efforts. This is particularly fascinating with the creative class. As described by L'Heureux, the people who find the affordable areas to live and work in may also end up being priced out of the area. With the artistic community, those who find the affordable area to live in can make the area desirable. Because of this, members of the community can be priced out of the place they created. Research into the best way to prevent this would need to be conducted as well. These gaps in the conversation are important to notice and research as it will help create and modify long-term planning for cities.

Urban sprawl is a problem for many American cities because of the growing metropolitan areas and the problems that they bring from increased risk of flash floods to longer, more congested commutes. As such, urban revitalization is a topic of much research composed of a wide variety of plans and case studies. Both short- and long- term plans are often described; however, some are more specific and focus on environmental factors, demographics, or quality-of-life factors. I described an approach to use a local planning board to build communities within districts of their city in combination with a regional planning board to

limit outward growth and connect the districts. Together the boards would focus on created green spaces, community events, economic growth, and public transportation over auto-based commutes. This would be more effective than other approaches because it would combine short- and long-term planning to deal with environmental issues, economic issues, and shrink the metropolis.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. How do the two main authors cited in this paper (Fox and L'Heureux) differ in their approach to urban revitalization?

2. How does the author draw from the research of others to create his own solution to the problem of urban sprawl?

Style

1. How does the "they say, I say" argument style of this essay allow the author to insert his own voice into the conversations being had about this topic?

2. How does the author make use of terminology used by experts in the field to advance his points? What effect does this have on the tone of the essay?

WHITE AMERICA'S OBSESSION WITH THE BLACK MALE BODY

Conor Schulte

White America has a history of obsession with the black male body. As Ta-Nehisi Coates states in *Between the World and Me*, "'White America' is a syndicate arrayed to protect its exclusive power to dominate and control our bodies" (Coates 41–42). Coates provides great insight into the common perception of the black body and how it necessitates a certain way of life for the black person. When black people were enslaved in America, their bodies were the tools with which the country was built. They were considered property, objectified beings that were purchased and sold for the purpose of carrying out desired actions. Slave owners surely coveted those black bodies that were the strongest, and they enjoyed the fruits of the labored black body for centuries. This history is inescapable for black people in America today, and the white obsession with the black body is far from extinct. In modern American society, things like record labels, sports organizations, and other pop-culture-fueling businesses are owned and operated by white people. This heavily contrasts with the actual performers and athletes that bring money into these companies who are largely black.

This essay will analyze the current state of racial disparity in American culture, mainly using professional sports as a model to examine common perceptions between black and white people in the United States.

The historical foundation on which the United States resides is vicious and ugly. Centuries of conquest and bloodshed are quite simply the precise origin of white people ever staking claim to land in most any part of the western hemisphere. The world today can never escape this unfortunate past, and the residues of imperialism and white supremist ideals covertly thrive. Centuries of slavery comprise the base of black history in America, and as Chong Chon-Smith posits in his analysis of race in sports entitled, "Yellow Bodies, Black Sweat," "Cultural ideologies of masculinity and race persistently tied racialized bodies to colonial discourses that had created racial hierarchies tied to sexuality and the male body" (Chon-Smith 299). The black body was something that could fortify masculinity for a slaveholder, as he felt control over another being and felt no loss of agency in having another human do his work. When slavery ended and the economy became less agrarian during the booming industrial age, there was a new conflict in masculinity. Men no longer worked for their families; they worked for their boss. They did not create things for their home, but rather for a factory that mass distributed its merchandise. The idea of manhood was threatened as men were losing their "economic autonomy, including control over one's labor and ownership of the means of production" (Chon-Smith 295). Sports became extremely popular during this time as a way to masculinize the male body, and popular sport quickly became a cornerstone of American culture. The values of masculinity that were in crisis after the industrial revolution—the individuality, self-sustenance, and competitiveness—were alive and well on the field or court for everyone to see.

Chon-Smith eloquently reasons why many black men turned to sports: "When schools did not educate their minds, when employers refused to give them jobs, and when vigilante mobs lynched their bodies, African-American men wholeheartedly made use of other opportunities wherever they came" (Chon-Smith 297). Black men had an opportunity to play by the same rules as white men in a society in which they were used to systematic oppression and aggression. Even though initially they were racially segregated into different leagues, the achievements of black players were eventually unable to be ignored. As racial integration slowly moved forward with the civil rights movements of the mid-20th century, black athletes began to take over the rosters of professional sports teams. Today, black males make up 74.4% of NBA players ("NBA Demographics") and 68% of NFL players (Sando) while they comprise only 6.1% of the United States population ("U.S. Census Bureau"), an obvious disproportionality. This is a seemingly positive thing for a minority group that is otherwise disadvantaged in America, but the unevenness is no coincidence and it raises questions about racial disparity. Are there truly significant differences in inherent physical ability between races, or is the racial disparity in sports leagues a consequence of social conditions? How does the overrepresentation of black men in popular sports affect a common perception of them when they make up such a small part of the country?

The remnants of something as deep and dark as human enslavement never truly, completely vacate a society. Black people in the United States were originally objectified when they were brought to the Americas, and the dehumanization of black people still sits in the roots of the country. Today, many people still make assumptions about the black body, suppositions that are greatly influenced by its original animalization and objectification. Kelly Hoffman, a social psychology researcher at

Northwestern University, has carried out several experiments to observe the white perception of the black body. Her research has found that white people associate black people with superior physical ability, even to the degree of possessing supernatural powers. In experiments with all white participants, Hoffman found that they were "quicker to respond to super-human words following black faces than white faces" (qtd. in Westervelt). In a different study of hers, participants were shown two faces, one black and one white, and were asked a series of questions. These questions pertained to physical ability in terms of supernatural powers, with questions asking which face was more able to do something such as "running beyond the speed of light or suppressing their hunger and thirst" (Hoffman in Westervelt). The study found that participants selected the black face more frequently than the white one. This idea that the black body can achieve greater physical feats than the white body stems from the animalization of the slavery era.

There are several popular ideas today that black people are natural athletes, having more strength and speed than their non-black counterparts do simply because it is in their genetic code. This idea is a source of white enchantment with the black body. In their essay "White America's Construction of Black Bodies," Boulou Ebanda de B'béri and Peter Hogarth note that "There is a mystified image of the black athlete enacted through a biological obsession with his body" (de B'béri and Hogarth 93). They also mention the "popular myths" regarding the natural ability of the black male who "allegedly is inherently gifted with muscularity, strength, and speed" (de B'béri and Hogarth 93). These are ideas that have been popularized and spread by white people, not by the people who actually live in the bodies in question. The idea here is that White America shapes the perception of the black body, not the black person.

In the world of sports, there are problematic and worrisome ramifications of these perceptions of the black body. This is especially so because, although black men make up a large majority of both the NBA and NFL, both organizations are nearly entirely owned and operated by white people. In the NFL, each team owner of the 32 teams is white, except for one who is Pakistani (Vomiero). In addition, 26 of the 32 head coaches, 23 of the 32 defensive coordinators, and 80 of the 85 offensive coordinators are white (Sando). The commissioner of the NFL is too. These people represent and run a league in which nearly 70% of the players are black. In the NBA, all 30 teams are white-owned except for one that is owned by none other than Michael Jordan. The commissioner, Adam Silver, is white, and the NBA only has seven black head coaches in a league with 75% black players ("NBA Demographics"). While these leagues are largely black, they are almost entirely controlled by white people. Things like this are important to acknowledge, especially in the modern world which is dominated by media that shapes identities through television and the internet. While it might seem that the black community has captured these high-grossing leagues as entities of their own, black people are merely the bodies that perform the sport while white people make the rules, shape the contracts, decide trades, and receive the money. This is another reason that the disparity in race representation in the professional sports world is so problematic, as many people point to sports as a way to assure that the American Dream is alive and well. The media often highlight the stories of black athletes coming from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds and becoming millionaire stars. This is fantastic for the people that achieve it, but it is unrealistic in the grand scheme of things. These types of stories often stress that players had little money, but they stayed focused, avoided a life of crime, and practiced hard to become a professional athlete. This instills a romantic view of

black struggle from the white perspective and allows ignorance of the real discrepancy in the professional sports world. This is part of the "spectatorial relationship" between white viewers and black athletes, which lets white viewers shape the black identity to their satisfaction (de B'béri and Hogarth 91). White people are happy for the black athletes that made it to the big leagues, and they do not ask questions about the people who are in charge of those players—the owners and coaches. Meanwhile, the players live a rich and happy lifestyle, being careful and taking "neutral positions on racial issues so as not to jeopardize their careers in sports" (Wiggins 193). The black athletes must allow the white people to shape the expression of their identities so that they do not lose the job they worked so hard to achieve.

White America has a complex obsession with the black body; the perceived qualities of black people that fascinate and allure white spectators are the same ones that cause fear and aggression in the real world. A white basketball fan may express more love and emotion for LeBron James than he does his own family when James slam-dunks a ball, but he crosses the street to avoid a similar-looking man on his walk to work the next morning. White people feel threatened when they do not have control over the black body. In the NFL, Colin Kaepernick was a Superbowl quarterback star, but when he started a peaceful, silent protest during the national anthem, his jerseys were burned and his name defamed. As Coates states, "however it appears, the power of domination and exclusion is central to the belief in being white" (Coates 42).

White people felt entitled to the black body during its enslavement, and their desire to control it still lingers in society today. The common animalistic perceptions of the black body that suggest superior physicality are the sources of both awe and fear, both fascination and suspicion, in white Americans. These

perceptions originate from the objectification of the black body during slavery, when the main concern for it was to carry out laborious tasks. The world of professional sports often reinforces these false presumptions in the minds of its audiences as many leagues have extremely large amounts of black players, although they only make up a small portion of the population in the United States. In reality, the socioeconomic conditions for black Americans have left them with very few paths to follow, causing an emphasis on sports in the culture of black youth. As Coates says, "If the streets shackled my right leg, the schools shackled my left" (Coates 25). In the socioeconomic climate of urban America today—severely lacking in public school accreditation and burdened with violent crime—it is no surprise that young black men would reach toward professions in fields that require no formal training and are available for practice on any stretch of grass or asphalt.

The ugly roots of racial relations in the United States still hold power in the systems in place today. White America often fails to recognize the real racial disparity in the world of professional sports, especially in leagues like the NBA and the NFL, which are entirely owned and operated by white people while the players are predominantly black. It is up to White America to pay attention to disparity in race representation and to level the playing field for all people. This will assure that those who participate in any popular system may express their viewpoints and expect accurate representation of their identity.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. In what ways does the athletics industry perpetuate harmful racial stereotypes and dynamics?

2. In what ways is white America "obsessed" with the black male body? From where does this obsession stem?

Style

1. How does the author draw the parallels between slavery in America and modern American athletics? What key terms help the reader follow this comparison?

2. How does the author utilize persuasive appeals to advance his argument?

Misogyny in Hip-Hop

Maggie Agee

Sexism has been the plague of humanity for generations, and, despite the progress we have made in the past few decades, inequality still remains as the unspoken rule today. Every day, women must face a world where they are seen as inferior to men, and that struggle extends across every aspect of their lives. Whether it be the wage gap, mockery, gender roles, or abuse, women are consistently being denied basic respect and dignity. This misogyny is rooted into the system, and it is embraced by industries that aim to objectify and dehumanize women and girls. A prime example of this is the hip-hop industry. Within each of its four pillars, hip-hop exhibits both explicit and implied messages that exploit women for the sake of money and reputation.

Hip-hop's relationship with misogyny is an intimate one, and this is especially the case with its performers. Rappers (or MCs) have a history of producing lyrics that depict women as either sex objects or as self-absorbed individuals who only cause them trouble. In terms of sexual objectification, women are often

treated as easily disposable, meaning people can have sex with them and then discard them like garbage. This ultimately is representative of a desire for male dominance. These rappers thrive off of the idea that they are sexually powerful, and the result is that women are reduced to mere conquests. This idea is further supported by the fact that rappers use words like "bitch" and "ho" instead of names when referring to the women they have sex with. The women are anonymous, and they only exist to provide pleasure to the rapper until someone else catches his eye. It is demeaning, and whenever a woman tries to stand her ground, the rapper treats her as if she is selfish. For example, in his song "Suck it or Not" (featuring Little Wayne) the rapper Cam'ron expresses disdain towards a woman who refuses to perform certain sexual acts with him. Furious at this rejection, he exclaims "tell that shit to another sucker, I ain't no sucker mama, come on fuck the drama...you being so drastic" (7–8, 10). The rapper then concludes that the woman is both self-centered and insane because she chooses to follow her instincts rather than his demands. Cam'ron's song, along with many others, criticizes the idea of an independent woman, and the result is that anything that resembles resistance is taken as a sign of untrustworthiness, hatefulness, or betrayal. Such accusations are absurd, and they only serve to reinforce established gender roles. This blatant misogyny raises concerns about the impact of rap music on the attitudes of its audience. According to the article, "The Words Have Changed But the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music," impressionable youth can easily adopt the opinions they hear on the radio and respond accordingly. Likewise, young girls can take what they hear and internalize those beliefs, thus lowering their own self-esteems and putting them at risk for confirming preconceived notions about womanhood. Sexism in rap music can even desensitize adults to the crimes against women and cause them to feel less

empathy toward the victims (Adams and Fuller 952). The ideas that some rappers are advocating are poison to the minds of listeners, and, unless something is done, they are just going to keep profiting at the expense of others.

Unfortunately, the lyrics are not the only concern when dealing with the music industry because the DJs themselves play an important role in the spread of sexist ideology. When a DJ chooses tracks to sample, they are either inadvertently or purposely broadcasting their own values to their audience. Therefore, if a DJ was to exclusively pick songs that were written by people who were guilty of domestic abuse or sexual assault, then it would be reasonable to suspect that they may share some of those negative feelings towards women. The specific phrases they splice together and the editing techniques they use can also showcase these attitudes. Although this may seem too subtle to make a difference, the reality is that the DJ's influence is very strong. Famous disc jockeys hold a unique platform in that they can incorporate their own beliefs into their work without much trouble. While the rapper experiences most of the backlash for misogynistic lyrics, the DJs remain nearly invisible due to their presence behind the scenes. With this advantage, DJs can continue making music under the radar and spreading these ideals to unsuspecting fans.

Music aside, hip-hop further expresses sexism through its visual arts. Unlike the rappers and the DJs, the misogyny in graffiti is not limited to the art itself. While it is possible for artists to exploit women through their work by giving them big lips or exposed cleavage, this is often not the case. According to the article "Is Street Art Sexist?" in *ArtSlant*, most of the inequality in graffiti is related to the amount of respect given to the artist and their craft. For example, many women experience a sense of separation from their male counterparts by being labeled as "female artists" rather than just "artists." This distinction

implies that there is a difference in the quality of the art between men and women, and that those who are female are inferior. The disrespect has even led to harassment of artists by other artists. Allison Torneros, a woman who frequently works at night, has experienced this firsthand. She told *ArtSlant* that one night when she was painting, a group of guys came over and starting making crude comments about what she was wearing. She tried to ignore them, but many persisted by offering to help with the painting just so they could continue to make inappropriate advances towards her. After this episode, she began carrying pepper spray with her when she worked late at night. Torneros' experience is just one of many that highlight the lack of respect given to women in street art, and she claims that this is ridiculous. When asked to elaborate, she replied: "'We get that shit on the daily from random dudes so we don't wanna have to deal with that in the street art world'" (qtd. in Recinos). Such a response raises an interesting point about the purpose of graffiti. When people first started painting on buildings and trains, their goal was to combat injustice, and now it seems as if they are promoting it. The inability for male artists to treat women fairly and their insistence on making them uncomfortable reveals that the art form is not as progressive as it presents itself to be. In fact, it is quite hypocritical, and it prevents many talented artists from receiving proper appreciation for their work.

In addition to material art, hip-hop also exhibits misogyny in its dance culture. Breakdancing, or b-boying, is a complicated dance form that is typically practiced by men because strict gender roles make it difficult for women to make it into the spotlight. According to the article "From Blues Women to B-Girls: Performing Badass Femininity" by Imani Kai Johnson, women are often excluded from dance circles because the choreography is viewed as unladylike. The acrobatics, the rhythmic flow, and the aggressive qualities of breaking are traditionally aligned

with masculinity, so the presence of female dancers appears indecorous to conservative audiences who equate women with gracefulness or fragility (Johnson 15). For those who are fortunate enough to be accepted into the community, life is not much easier. B-girls, as they are called, are either treated as outsiders by their peers or they are hyper-sexualized by their fans. Johnson refers to this sexualization as the "pornification" of b-girls because they are expected to "get low" and "shake it" as if they are only "objects for the male gaze" (17). Such exploitation of women's bodies makes it more challenging for female dancers to be taken seriously because they are being valued for their sex appeal rather than their talent. This generally results in shorter careers and an overall lack of fulfillment for these gifted performers.

In the end, it is clear that hip-hop lives up to his reputation of being misogynistic, however the victims are not completely helpless to its influence. In fact, they hold a powerful weapon that could be the key to reinventing the genre—their voice. Gloria Jean Watkins (more commonly known by her pseudonym, bell hooks) highlights the power of using one's voice to fight injustice in her theory of "talking back" which is explained in her novel *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. According to the theory, a woman's voice is not simply empty words but instead "an act of resistance; a political gesture that challenges politics of domination that would render us nameless" (hooks 8). In other words, speaking out is a proclamation of existence, and it is a way of standing one's ground. As an adamant feminist, hooks' goal is to encourage women to break the silence and be open about the struggles they have faced so that they can promote change. Whether it be through speech, writing, or art, the voice allows for an uncensored look at what it is like to suffer from misogyny. Exposure to the voices of the victims is what makes the problem appear real in the eyes of the ignorant and

that helps to lower the apathy towards women's issues.

Other than being an act of defiance, hooks also notes that speaking out is an important form of emotional validation. When one "talks back," they are making themselves vulnerable, which attracts others who have experienced similar struggles. With the support of other victims, individuals no longer feel alone and that causes an increase in their self-esteem which gives them hope for a better future. In this way, speaking out has become "a gesture that heals [and] makes new life and growth possible" (hooks 8). This is not just growth for the individual, but growth for the group and ultimately society. Together, victims can utilize their collective voice to show others that their pain is real, and that they will not back down until the damage is rectified.

With hooks' theory in mind, what will the future of hip-hop look like? The answer to that question depends on the women involved. Many have already taken the theory of "talking back" to heart and have been using their platforms to spread love and reassurance to other women. For example, Queen Latifah released a hit song in 1993 called "U.N.I.T.Y." In her song, Latifah tells the stories of women who have been abused, who have been sexually harassed, and who have been treated like dirt by the men in their lives. Her lyrics are meant to encourage victims to be strong, to stand up for themselves, and to no longer submit to male domination. She herself declares that she "will bring wrath to those who treat [her] like a dame" which shows her own determination and her willingness to fight (19). Other songs, such as Salt-N-Pepa's "None of Your Business" and more recently Angel Haze's "Cleaning Out My Closet," speak to women who have been victims of rape, who suffer from double standards, and who are struggling to succeed in the midst of discrimination. The work that these singers have put into supporting women's rights has been an inspiration to many, but this is just the beginning. If other artists join the fight, then

their collective voice will be even stronger. However, it is not just the responsibility of the people within hip-hop to fight back. The fans also have an obligation to protect the foundation of the genre they fell in love with. Hip-hop was built on a platform of diversity and acceptance which is why the fight will go on until every woman is treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. Justice is hip-hop's legacy, and we need to preserve that.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. How to DJs influence the levels of misogyny in hip-hop? What other things might they be able to influence?

2. The author stated that fans have an influence on the future of hip-hop as well. What actionable steps could fans take to have an influence in reducing misogyny in hip-hop?

Style

1. What types of evidence does the author use to support the thesis? How are these pieces of evidence connected to the author's argument?

2. How does the author make use of evidence from sources to build her argument? How are ethos, logos, and pathos operating in this piece?

The Healing and Reformative Power of Music
How Music can Cross Cultural and Medical Barriers in Modern Society

Lily Fisher

Music has been a vital part of society for many centuries. From the rhythm of ancient religious and tribal chants to today's commercial marketing, music influences people and can be heard almost everywhere. Whether it be through elevator music, movie soundtracks, or performances; music is everywhere and humans are consuming it in mass quantities. According to a recent psychological review, "Americans spend more on music than they do on prescription drugs" (Huron 51). Although it is still not clear why people are so easily influenced by the power of music, it is clear that music is important in today's society. Typically utilized to create atmosphere and brighten people's lives, music is also beneficial in healing illness, creating comfort, and bringing together people from all walks of life. Music soothes, it challenges, and can change people. It can create identities, generate new skills, and convey emotion. It's a remedy the world has yet to fully realize. In this way, while music is simply a part of everyday life for most people, it has the power to change lives for those who need it. Through listening, therapy, and collaboration,

music can help heal people and form relationships, making the world a better place one song at a time.

Music Listening

Listening to music is a common activity for people around the world. Although society is often bombarded with music through advertising, social media, and other outlets, many still choose to listen to music. However, people rarely consider the reasons why humans are so drawn to music. This question is beginning to plague the world of music psychology. Many studies are only recently trying to discover the reasons for human attraction to music.

Reasons for listening to music. In a study by Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham, researchers state that, "Psychologists have often emphasized the fact that music, in any of its widely different forms and contents, can evoke powerful emotional reactions in people" (175). Although it is still unclear exactly why this occurs, several studies hypothesize reasons for such reactions. One study suggests that people listen to music primarily to "*regulate arousal and mood*, to achieve *self-awareness*, and as an expression of *social relatedness*" (Schäfer et al.). The same article references the idea that, "seemingly, people today hardly listen to music for social reasons, but instead use it principally to relieve boredom, maintain a pleasant mood, and create a comfortable private space" (Schäfer et al.). The study simplifies human needs into three unique categories, that appear straightforward. "[Regulating] arousal and mood" refers to listening to music to get through rough or exciting moments (Schäfer et al.). This can be listening to high-tempo, dance-like pieces to prepare for an exciting evening or listening to calming music to soothe nerves after a long day at work. Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham reflect the same idea in their study as they assert that "individuals use music as a means of regulating

emotions in everyday life" (177). In reference to the idea of "self-awareness," Schäfer et al. express Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham's idea that "music may help individuals to consolidate their sense of identity by establishing in-group preference and exclusivity" (Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham 176). Music can be a badge of identity in a conformity-based society. Through shared music tastes, one can find friends or even solace. Finally, Schäfer et al. speak of "social relatedness." This refers to the idea that music is most often enjoyed in a public setting. Whether it be a function of parties, movies, concerts, or rehearsals, music is frequently created and experienced within a group. Music can make people comfortable and bring people together. For this reason, Rentfrow et al. reaffirm Schäfer et al.'s claim when they assert that "music is multifaceted: it is composed of specific auditory properties, communicates emotions, and has strong social connotations" (Rentfrow et al. 5). This research makes it clear that music is an important aspect of life for many people. Whether realized or not, music makes people feel better, learn about themselves, and feel more connected to the society around them. These are critical benefits, although music has the power to do so much more.

Music Therapy

In recent years, the realm of music therapy has been an exciting world to be a part of. Music is beginning to take its place as a legitimate form of medical intervention. From helping children cope with serious diagnoses, to slowing down the effects of Parkinson's disease and dementia, music therapy is an ever-evolving medicine. A recent article from the *American Psychological Association* notes that music "has long been recognized as an effective form of therapy to provide an outlet for emotions, [and] the notion of using song, sound frequencies and

rhythm to treat physical ailments is a relatively new domain"
(Novotney). Despite its infancy in the medical world, music is
truly making an impact around the globe.

Music in infant health. A study by Loewy et al. proves to
be a clear example of music's benefits. The study collected the
data of 272 premature infants, noting heart rate, feeding habits,
and visual cues of health. After listening to three recordings,
one of a parental lullaby, one of an ocean, and one of womb-
like sounds, the babies' heart rates were significantly lowered
(Loewy et al.). Citing Loewy and colleagues in her own study,
Novotney notes that, "of the three types of noise presented to
the infants, a mother's lullaby was the most effective method of
calming the babies" (Novotney). Not only were the babies calmer,
they also presented more healthy feeding signs and parents also
experienced greater calm (Loewy et al.). An article by Trehub
et al. reflects on this idea, asserting that, "Music is ubiquitous
in caregiving. Carers across cultures sing to infants and have
done so from time immemorial." Loewy et al.'s study is a direct
example of music therapy and its benefits. From infancy, music
is changing and healing lives, and as well as better taking care
of children who may not otherwise survive.

Music in fighting disease. Research shows that music
can have benefits for older patients as well. In this case, the
vibrational qualities of music can be beneficial. Novotney states
that, "Short-term use of vibroacoustic therapy with Parkinson's
disease patients led to improvements in symptoms, including
less rigidity and better walking speed with bigger steps and
reduced tremors." Parkinson's disease, which typically affects
the elderly, can cause cognitive issues, shuffling of the feet,
shaking, and much more. By sending specific vibrations through
the the bodies of patients, these symptoms are eased. In this
way, it is clear that music therapy is a diverse and beneficial aid

in easing suffering. After all, "[a]t its core, music is sound, and sound is rooted in vibration" (Novotney).

Music in Culture

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of music is its social nature. While people may listen to music alone, music is often enjoyed in groups such as at concerts, parties, and performances, and is often created in collaboration. Because of this social nature, music is effective in bringing diverse groups of people together. In relation to this idea, Trehub et al. assert that, "Synchronous arousal, action synchrony and imitative behaviours are among the means by which music facilitates social bonding." This social nature can be effective in creating new relationships as well as improving old ones.

Musical groups. This closeness can be observed in people of every age, reaffirming its universality. Research on young children shows that, "After 4-year-old children engage in cooperative play that includes singing and playing percussion instruments, they exhibit more prosocial behaviour than 4-year-olds who engage in similar cooperative play without music" (Trehub et al.). This demonstrates that music can be used in early education as a tool for good behavior. In turn, this idea can also be transferred to adulthood, producing more cooperative adults. Trehub et al. state, "Three initially unfamiliar individuals who walk in step evaluate one another more favourably than similar threesomes who walk together but not in synchrony." In this way, people who literally move together are more likely to like each other. Music can help facilitate this movement. Music also can also "be particularly potent in bringing about social closeness through the release of endorphins" (Suttie). These endorphins can bring about feelings of pleasure which can encourage kind behavior and a continued desire to listen to or make music. Through

music, people can learn acceptance and kindness, things our world desperately needs.

Conclusion

Through learning about music, healing with music, and interacting with each other through music, the world can become a healthier, happier place. As Trehub et al. assert, "making music together is simultaneously building a community together, which is considered by many to be the most adaptive and evolutionarily significant aspect of musical experience worldwide." Suttie affirms this by stating that, "whether at concerts, social events, or conferences, music can help us connect, cooperate, and care for each other." Music is a powerful force. It has the power to heal people and create new relationships. It can teach growth and identity. Through the understanding, healing, and cooperation that music provides, it has the ability to better the world. While this power is already being harnessed, more can be done to use music to its full capacity. If there is an opportunity to change the world for the better, it should be taken. Music can be that opportunity toward creating a healthier, happier, and safer community.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. What is music therapy, and what are some of the ways in which it is used?
2. Why is music helpful in therapy settings?

Style

1. How did the structure of the article help you follow the main points of the essay?
2. Based on the use of sources and the use of headings and subheadings, what type of genre(s) might best describe this piece of writing?

The Ethicality of Holocaust Imagery in Poems: Sylvia Plath

Enrico Mejia

Sylvia Plath (1932–1963) was an American poet and a prominent figure in American modernist literature. Her poems "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" parallel her marital struggles with her husband, Ted Hughes, and her thoughts of suicide. However, the manner in which she presents these struggles in her poems has been a subject of controversy. They are presented as grim memoirs that come in forms of metaphors and imagery that include elements from the Holocaust and the Nazi regime. Critics of Plath's work argue that the use of Nazi imagery to portray one's suffering does not amount to the pain and suffering of many—specifically Holocaust victims. They argue that it is unethical for Plath to utilize such imagery in her poems if she does not use them to memorialize the genocide. How is Sylvia Plath justified in comparing herself to the Jews with whom she has no connection? George Steiner asks, "Does any writer, other than an actual survivor… have the right to put on this death-rig?" (qtd. in Murdoch 123). Criticisms of Sylvia Plath's work originate from her lack of anecdotal experience as a victim—that in lacking a cultural

relation to the Holocaust, she does not have the right to use the Holocaust as a platform to write evocative poems. For Sylvia Plath to write and be engrossed by an event that occurred 4000 miles away and had nothing to do with her is, in the eyes of her critics, unjust to the victims of the Holocaust. Leon Wieseltier says, "Whatever her father did to her, it could not have been what the Germans did to the Jews" (qtd. in Lodge and Wood 793). The inclusion of Holocaust imagery in Plath's poems, however, goes beyond the notion of simple comparisons between her and the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Through these images, Sylvia Plath is able to break the boundaries of imposed ethical standards without transgression, to communicate a collective idea that anyone can have their own version of the Holocaust in their lives, and to demonstrate that the meaning of an art can be whatever people make it out to be.

If critics confine Sylvia Plath's poems within the boundaries of ethics, then it is only fair to justify the poems in the same manner. There is a certain degree of "personal rights" when it comes to using an element that we closely identify with a certain discourse—for example, the Holocaust being an event that only its victims have the credentials to talk about it. If any outsider were to utilize this discourse, then they are either criticized for trying to be somebody they are not or tarnishing the discourse simply because they are naturally "ignorant" of the subject matter. Irish poet Seamus Heaney believes that Plath's works are limited because "she was not in full possession of herself" (qtd. in Bentley 34). When Sylvia Plath employs the Holocaust to describe her own personal experiences in her poetry, Heaney believes that in doing so, Plath is showing her lack of independence as an author. To her critics, Plath is in the hot seat for using the experiences of Jewish victims in the Holocaust as a substitute for her own. Heaney adds that "...Plath's identification with the Jews in

Auschwitz oversteps the mark of what is proper to the self, or rather, what is proper to a certain notion of selfhood founded on the ideals of autonomy, individuality and freedom" (qtd. in Bentley 28). In other words, Plath bulldozes through the Holocaust discourse and takes what is not hers to use as a means of personal freedom. The Holocaust was its own story with its own characters. Are Plath's poems a bastardization of the Holocaust story, a story written with blood? They are certainly not a tribute, but they are a reflection; they have a similar plot, yet possess different characters. However, Plath's identification with the Jews could also be a way of finding similarities between her and them—a common ground. Although the Jewish experience undoubtedly differed from Plath's, the feeling of *pain* and the experience of *struggle* become the unifying factors.

   Plath's poems contain allusions that parallel the abysmal relationship she had with her husband, Ted Hughes, and her suicide attempts in her adulthood, which culminated in a personal struggle with depression. However, if the poet and her poems have no relation to the events of which they try to be a part, such as the Holocaust or World War II atrocities, "then critics were clearly going to ask whether poets such as Plath were simply equating their own suffering with that of Holocaust victims" (Boswell 36). Sylvia Plath, however, legitimizes the use of the Holocaust imagery and Nazi elements present in "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" by becoming the "Jew" of her experience reflected through the Jewish victims of genocide. The imagery with which Plath paints her poems may be considered a "false" reproduction of the Holocaust, because the imagery is not "unique"; the suffering of the millions of Jews is not equivalent to hers. This criticism disregards the individual struggle, however, replacing it instead with a stereotypical caricature that collectivizes the experiences of the

Holocaust. On the same standard of equivalency, no one in the concentration camps of the Holocaust lived the same experience as Plath. It is true that over five million Jews died during the Holocaust, and that number dwarfs Plath's individual experience, but death and suffering is not a game of numbers. The mass of Jews was comprised of individuals, each of whom had a different experience as a victim. The act of collectivizing the Holocaust experience is the same as bulldozing and ignoring the Jewish individuals' unique history.

Placing ethics and literary analysis into context shows that Plath memorializes and utilizes the Holocaust through reference, not to compare her story to that of the Jews, but by using it as a symbol of unity in pain and suffering. It justifies Plath's idea of relevancy because the connotation of "pain" as a word in a language equals out and applies to many atrocities and terrible events, including Plath's struggle with depression. Professor Whitney Naylor-Smith focuses on the feminist perspective and claims that criticisms based on the "personal" aspect of Plath's poems disregard the individual rights of women (319). Naylor-Smith views the Holocaust on an individual basis and demonstrates that suffering cannot be identified using stereotypes because it disregards the unique experiences of everyone affected. The "fluidity of personal and political" implications, as Naylor-Smith says, must be approached "along with [Plath's] choices of imagery and figurative language as an entity" (326). By incorporating the elements of the Holocaust in her poems, Plath becomes a victim of *pain* and shares the experience with the victims of the Holocaust, regardless of how much pain is quantified. However, even if there is a significant, justified purpose behind Plath's use of Holocaust imagery, to some it is a territory never to be crossed—especially if the imagery is used for other things that are not specific to the Holocaust and its victims.

An underlying issue with the Holocaust imagery in Plath's poems is its purpose. To her critics, the imagery lacks an objective purpose, and only exists for the sake of the poem's aesthetic value. German philosopher Theodor Adorno believes that lyric poetry cannot be made after Auschwitz because words cannot describe nor deliver the horror of the actual experience (Murdoch 123). Adorno is correct in that literary arts, indeed, have a natural limitation of not being able to portray events in precise detail—unlike film. As a result, there is room for interpretation in every line, and it is then the responsibility of the author to minimize this room. The inherent inability of a literary art to recreate the actual experience means that it cannot be subjugated to a set of rules that define what or how the experience should be made. That standard merely becomes a variation of the Holocaust experience in a literary format. It is akin to eating a bowl of soup, having someone make the soup with the same ingredients, and expecting that bowl to be made with the *exact* amount of ingredients to the atomic level as the previous one. In this case, the focus of the Holocaust imagery must be for its victims. A principle in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* regarding Holocaust poetry states that the lyric must be an "*engagé*" lyric, or a lyric "morally committed to a particular aim or cause"—like a testament to the Holocaust and its horrors (Murdoch 124). An *engagé* lyric can be authored by someone who has not experienced the Holocaust but creates a literary art that engages in the concepts of an event so that they convey its experience. It seems that Plath, in the context of Adorno's vision and theory, could not have replicated the pain and suffering of the Holocaust victims through poetry, but only through the *engagé* as someone who has not experienced it. Heaney draws his criticisms of Plath's poetry because the Holocaust images are "entangled in biographical circumstances and [rampage] so permissively in the history of other people's

sorrows…" (qtd. in Boswell 54). To Heaney, Plath's poetry is not *engagé* and because of this, he considers it an intrusion into the Jews' experience of the Holocaust.

"Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" do not contain any lines that specifically pay homage to the victims to whom the speaker compares herself—not in a traditional sense. Murdoch claims Plath's usage of Holocaust imagery is illegitimate because her poems do not meet his requirement of at least being a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust (124). It can be presumed that Murdoch defines "memorial" as something that serves to remember the suffering of Holocaust victims. However, he does not say *how* Plath must memorialize it. Since literary art is bound by its inability to recreate experiences or convey the gravity of a genocide, Plath could very well be giving the Holocaust its due respect in a way that Murdoch does not see. Even if Plath did not have the intent of memorializing the Holocaust in her poems, it is never trivialized even if it is used to solely convey her personal experience. Her use of the Holocaust imagery in her poems is justified because she naturally memorializes the Holocaust by placing it in a historical context and conveys the connotations of pain and suffering that accompany the event. For Plath's work, it is the historical reference that pays tribute to the Holocaust.

To what extent should art and history cross-over? According to Dorothy Rabinowicz, "Auschwitz is the place where metaphor is arrested, were metaphor is brought to a halt. […] the critique of Plath merely underlines the fact that the Holocaust is the historical event which puts under greatest pressure […] the concept of linguistic figuration" (qtd. in Brennan 130). In other words, with regards to the Holocaust and its application to the arts, there is a line between presenting the historical significance of the Holocaust and the aesthetic appeal of the "art." In *Ästhetische Theorie* (*Aesthetic*

Theory), Adorno has a notion that we "abdicate our human part when we identify with outside images" like Plath identifies with the Jewish victims (qtd. in Bentley 32). Adorno does not explain what he means by "human part," but it could very well mean that a person loses their individuality and becomes a bastardized caricature of what they are trying to be. Adorno also adds, "Art possesses expression not when it conveys subjectivity, but when it reverberates with the primal history of subjectivity and ensoulment" (qtd. in Bentley 32). This means that art only evokes expression and significance when it conveys the objective, or what can be said without a doubt, and not the subjective. Sylvia Plath is therefore responsible for preserving the significance of the Holocaust in human history by not downplaying it with subjective elements that come with art. Although some may say that Plath "abused" the negative connotation of the Holocaust to invigorate her personal issues, the same could be said for a poem that was created to meet Adorno's standards for Holocaust poetry that seeks to memorialize the event yet falls short in its attempt to do so.

The significance of the Holocaust in poetry can only exist for those who have prior knowledge of the genocide (as a victim) or indirectly (by learning about it). Jay Ladin asks if it is "difficult to judge the form (good poetry) without also appearing to judge the content (good Holocaust?)" (284). There are many examples of "Holocaust poetry" which are heavily infused with rhetoric, to the point that the reader would not even know it was about the Holocaust unless they had the academic background to comprehend the matter at hand. This brings up a question as to what constitutes Holocaust poetry? One example of what can be considered a standard for Holocaust poetry is Paul Celan's "Todesfuge" ("Fugue of Death"), according to Emery George (par. 3).

Black milk of the morning we drink it evenings

we drink it at noon in the morning we drink it at night

we drink and drink

we are shoveling a grave in the air there you don't lie
      cramped

A man lives in the house he plays with the serpents he
      writes

he writes when dusk falls to Germany your golden hair
      Margarete . . .

. . . death is a master from Germany

your golden hair Margarete

your ashen hair Shulamith (I, 41–42) (par. 4)

Sensitivity to the Holocaust is heavily dependent on how much the viewer of the art knows about it, regardless of whether or not the art is a valid representation of the Holocaust. However, "Todesfuge" does not contain a clear and distinct line about the Holocaust for an average reader to easily associate this poem with the Holocaust, as it contains elements that could be interpreted in other ways. Although "Todesfuge" was written with direct reference to the Holocaust, the Formalist movement of the arts in the 1950s resulted in a shift in how literary works were analyzed in a way that favored "'non-historical,' abstract and formalist approach to cultural productions" (Wischer 98). Omer Bartov notes that "Todesfuge" was taught in German schools "as a good example of a poetic fugue" which detracted from Paul Celan's purpose of recapturing "the unimaginable, industrial annihilation […] of millions" (129). Art gives way to the creation of independent yet subjective perceptions. It is contradictory for Adorno to believe that no art can be made after Auschwitz. The experience can never be truly captured by the lyric, but the story can be told. Even then, like the

historically void, formalist interpretation of "Todesfuge," the poem's words crush their own significance because they are just that—words. Art cannot be subject to ethical standards because of subjectivity. It is an element of art that allows it to be defined or set to a certain standard based on a viewer's perception. There cannot exist a universal presentation for an art for every individual as the objectivity of the author's purpose is still undermined by subjectivity.

As Ann Keniston says, "All lyric poetry is stuck between thing and word: although the lyric impulse may be triggered by experience…poems are made of language" (139). As a poet, Plath could only do so much. Pain as an experience and a universal concept must be forced through the funnel of language, but how far can language go to convey pain and suffering as realistically as possible with respect to the victims of the Holocaust? Therefore, it is only important that Plath does not lose the intrinsic value of the Holocaust imagery in the subjectivity of literary art. The suffering of the Jews may not be equivalent to the pain that Plath had to endure at the time of writing these poems, but in the process of writing she still had to account for the suffering of the Jewish victims if she was to use them as a platform. In short, Plath must retain the value of the Holocaust regardless of how she uses it. If the Holocaust is represented appropriately through accurate reference and the acknowledgement of suffering, its usage can be justified— like a writer paraphrasing or citing another's work. Although Plath includes elements of the Holocaust in her poetry, even if her poem is not classified as Holocaust poetry, she places it into a historically accurate context. Carrie Noland claims that "regardless of who writes the horrors of the Holocaust, to be able to recreate the illogical barbarism of such human tragedy in an art form will render that art just as barbaric"

(235). However, it is through the recreation of this illogical barbarism that Plath can express her darkest emotions while capturing the essence of the Holocaust within the confines of her literary skill and the art itself. Naylor-Smith, in a response to critic Matthew Boswell, says, "It is similarly irresponsible for Boswell to imply that the poem is only capable of one function (speaking out about the Holocaust), as the speaker of "Lady Lazarus" gives voice to Holocaust victims, women, and Plath herself" (324). As shown from an excerpt of "Lady Lazarus" below, Plath makes realistic, historical allusions to the elements of the Holocaust while she intertwines the Jewish struggle in the Holocaust with her personal narrative as a victim of infidelity. As a result, Plath creates a poem about her personal experience that does not try and replace the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. The speaker of the poem and its Jewish victims unite as victims of oppression in a fight against a common enemy.

> And there is a charge, a very large charge
> For a word or a touch
> Or a bit of blood
>
> Or a piece of my hair or my clothes.
> So, so, Herr Doktor.
> So, Herr Enemy.
>
> I am your opus,
> I am your valuable,
> The pure gold baby
>
> That melts to a shriek.
> I turn and burn.
> Do not think I underestimate your great concern.
>
> Ash, ash—

You poke and stir.
Flesh, bone, there is nothing there——

A cake of soap,
A wedding ring,
A gold filling.

Herr God, Herr Lucifer
Beware
Beware.

Out of the ash
I rise with my red hair
And I eat men like air. ("Lady Lazarus" 33–56)

"Lady Lazarus" is a poem written in a historically accurate context in that it depicts the degradation of the Jewish victims as the Nazis stripped them of their possessions. From hair to jewelry, the speaker mentions that there is a charge—an indicator of value that the Nazis are taking from their Jewish victims (Plath 33–36). Historically, the Nazis stripped their victims of their physical possessions by shaving their hair to make cloth or by taking gold fillings from the skulls of burnt corpses ("Forced Labor: An Overview"). Furthermore, lines 42–45 of the poem focuses on the crematoriums that burned the corpses of Holocaust victims. Although Plath does not have the personal experience of being a Holocaust victim, she conveys the themes of the genocide with depth. Her mere attempt in describing the cremation process itself—the connotation, and the imagery that is associated with the Holocaust—make her a sympathizer with those who underwent the process. While Sylvia Plath memorializes the victims of the Holocaust by placing the imagery into a historically accurate context, the poem also conveys the idea of oppression experienced by the victims of the Holocaust and women (like Sylvia Plath) by a

dominant patriarchal figure as represented by the "Herrs" in lines 37–38. The title of the poem, "Lady Lazarus," strongly suggests that the speaker of the poem is a female who rises from the ashes to eat her male oppressors "like air" (Plath 56). Plath most likely wrote this poem as a reflection on her husband who cheated on her. It describes Plath's experience as a victim of her husband's infidelity—a husband who robs her of the love she had for him. The intended message of being oppressed by a dominant male figure such as a traditional husband can be applied towards the dynamic between the Jews and their Nazi captors. Furthermore, this dynamic is broadened beyond the concentration camps of the Holocaust and Sylvia Plath's relationship with her husband. The inclusion of "Herr" in front of "Doktor," "Enemy," "God," and "Lucifer" serves to portray a world that is dominated by the male gender. The industrialized process of genocide is orchestrated by the male figures like "Herr Doktor" and "Herr Enemy" towards Holocaust victims. Meanwhile, the standards of righteousness and evilness are dictated by "Herr God" and "Herr Lucifer." Interestingly, the contrast of the figures conveys the idea of liberation through one's struggle rather than dependency on superior figures. A doctor, who is supposed to help the sick, becomes an instrument of death as he determines who gets burned at the crematoriums and is thus relabeled "Herr Enemy." God, a figure of mercy and salvation, has abandoned the Jews in their suffering. The difference between him and Lucifer is indistinguishable, as if to create neutrality. God is non-existent to the speaker and the Jews.

This segment of poem may seem to convey the speaker and the victims of the Holocaust in a position of submission and weakness. On the contrary, it presents a specific scene of being taken advantage of (such as the speaker having her corpse

robbed) with an air of superiority over the Nazis, who ironically
viewed their Jewish victims as thieves. With a maniacal
tone the poem becomes a twisted comedy that is intended to
laugh at or mock the "superior" Nazi who searches corpses for
valuables like a rat scouring a kitchen for food. The speaker
of the poem talks with a sense of command, post-mortem, to
a Nazi as he searches the ashy remains of a corpse in futility
(Plath 33–47). She tells that Nazi that there is a charge for her
physical remnants—her hair, clothes, or "a bit of blood" (35).
She then proceeds to tease the Nazi to further his search as she
claims that she is "[their] opus" and "[their] pure gold baby"
(Plath 40, 42). However, Nazi concentration camps also served
to fuel Nazi Germany's economy and scientific advancements
by providing resources to German companies that would buy
prisoners to either perform forced labor or be used for extreme
scientific experiments. Despite this degradation of her corpse,
the speaker has neither a tone of condemnation nor fear, as if
the robbery of her ashes is beneath her concern. The last stanza
serves to unite two perspectives: the victims of the Holocaust
and Sylvia Plath—victims of oppression in an act of defiance
against the Nazis and the patriarchy (54–56). The speaker
warns "Herr God" and "Herr Lucifer" of their impending
doom as she rises from the ashes to "eat men like air" (Plath
51, 56). The system of patriarchal dominance of the Nazis
over the Jews and of men over women are then eliminated.
"Lady Lazarus," the speaker, is a symbol of female and Jewish
independence as she overcomes death without the need of
Jesus Christ (a patriarchal, godlike Christian figure). The
poem, in effect, can be considered a symbol of empowerment
from the perspective of the Jew or the contemporary woman
of Plath's time. The speaker of "Lady Lazarus" sympathizes
with the Jews by being a figure of defiance against "pain" and

"evil" as concepts that are shared between the victims of the Holocaust and herself as a victim of her husband's infidelity. As a result, "Lady Lazarus" is a poem that makes Plath an advocate for equality and independence to both the Jews of the Holocaust and women such as herself.

Plath also makes a historical reference in "Daddy." She compares her struggle to victims of the Nazi invasions and conquests, which includes villagers from captured towns and Jewish victims of the Holocaust—not to say that she suffered like them, but to parallelize her experience to the dominant figure of Nazi oppression in the lives of the victims of the Holocaust. "Daddy" is about a female speaker who reflects on how tired she is of "Daddy" and his influence on her life. Interestingly, "Daddy" becomes the poem's representative of oppression in the form of her husband, Ted Hughes, and the Nazi war machine that committed war crimes during their conquest of Europe. Both "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" share the common theme of a victim's struggle against an oppressor, as well as the context of World War II and the Holocaust. "Daddy," the "oppressor" of the poem named after him, is compared to dominant symbols or entities like the Nazi theme of Aryan dominance and Adolf Hitler: "With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo./ And your neat mustache/ And your Aryan eye, bright blue" (Plath 42–44).

Like "Lady Lazarus" with its detailed description of theft and degradation of the dead, "Daddy" separates the speaker's oppression and the oppression of another group of people. In the poem, Plath conveys her oppression by comparing her husband to a "vampire" to convey a parasitic relationship:

> If I've killed one man, I've killed two——
> The vampire who said he was you
> And drank my blood for a year. ("Daddy" 71–73)

Her husband is metaphorized by Plath into the "model" the speaker has made of "Daddy" who is indoctrinated to oppress because of his "Meinkampf look": "I made a model of you / A man in black with a Meinkampf look" (64–65). The "model" is Nazified with "Meinkampf"—which refers to a book written by Adolf Hitler in his rise to power—to create a parallel between Plath's experience with her husband and the experience of Nazi victims. The speaker then kills the model who the speaker describes as a "vampire." The speaker ends up figuratively killing "Daddy" when she kills the model since he is the recreation of "Daddy"—the Nazified representation of the oppressor in the poem (Plath 72–73). Just like how the oppressor in "Lady Lazarus" is reminiscent of Nazis oppressing their Jewish victims through theft, the oppressor in "Daddy" is reminiscent of the Nazis' Blitzkrieg through Poland as an act of oppression. In the poem, the Nazis bulldoze through Poland— "In the German tongue, in the Polish town / scraped flat by the roller / of wars, wars, wars" (Plath 16–18)—and deport Jews to concentration camps in the process: "An engine, an engine / Chuffing me off like a Jew. / A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen" (Plath 31–33).

The oppressor in "Lady Lazarus" also takes many forms (God, Lucifer, Doktor, etc.) similar to how the "model" in "Daddy" is his duplicate to act as the speaker's oppressor. The concept of oppression can be seen as a point of unity in these poems. Therefore, a bridge between Sylvia Plath's experience and the experiences of victims of Nazi terror has been created. Plath's husband is the real-life equivalent to the "oppressor" in both of her poems. The same could be said about the Nazis being a real-life equivalent of the "oppressor" when the poem is analyzed from a historical lens. "Lady Lazarus" also shares

the theme of unity between the speaker and the victims of the Nazis in defeating their oppressors in "Daddy."

> There's a stake in your fat black heart
> And the villagers never liked you.
> They are dancing and stamping on you.
> They always knew it was you.
> Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through. (76–80)

After the speaker kills the "model," the last stanza of the poem turns to the death of "Daddy" by the villagers who "dance" and stomp on him as the speaker concludes with her separation from him (Plath 76–78). Unlike "Lady Lazarus" there is a clearer distinction between the speaker and the real-life victims of the Nazi war machine. The speaker deals with "Daddy" in her own way by killing a "model" of him. The model is not the real representative of the "Daddy" who is based on the Nazis. Meanwhile, the real "Daddy," who committed war crimes on a larger scale, is rightfully brought to justice by the "villagers" who may be Jewish, Polish, Russian, etc. during World War II.

Plath also utilizes poetic devices to create a clear distinction between her experiences of oppression and those of the Nazis' victims. Critics have deemed Plath's poems immoral because her poems seem to closely associate her experience with those of the Jews in the Holocaust, who suffered more than she did. According to Irving Howe, the suffering of the Holocaust can be duplicated, but it is "decidedly unlikely" to happen to Plath in Massachusetts where she lived (qtd. in Boswell 53). Plath, however, is not explicitly presenting her struggles as a replica of the Holocaust. When she uses similes, she does not metaphorize the Jews and thus establishes that her version of her Holocaust and *the* Holocaust are similar, yet different.

An engine, an engine

> Chuffing me off *like* a Jew.
> A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.
> I began to talk *like* a Jew.
> I think I may well be a Jew. ("Daddy" 35–40, emphasis
> added)

The speaker's engagement with the Holocaust imagery and the allusions are much more direct in "Daddy" rather than being more collective with the Jewish experience as they are in "Lady Lazarus." Unlike "Lady Lazarus," the speaker in "Daddy" is not actively participating in the Holocaust imagery such as being cremated. In "Daddy" the speaker has a separate world that she only compares to that of the Jews. The speaker never directly identifies herself as a Jew, and she accomplishes this through the use of similes. The speaker mentions that she is transported to one of the concentration camp locations "like" a Jew (Plath 37). The speaker of "Daddy" "thinks" to compare her life to a Jew which is less intrusive than her stating, "I am a Jew" (Plath 40). The simile becomes a point of parallelism between two completely different experiences. On one hand there is the Jew who suffered in Auschwitz; on the other, an American woman who was cheated on by her husband. Plath never "literally" forces herself upon the Holocaust in "Daddy." On another note, Plath also utilizes metaphors to reduce her connection to the experience of the Jewish victims during the Holocaust whilst still maintaining the idea of "different horrors, same hell" (Goldenberg and Shapiro):

> I have always been scared of *you*,
> With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.
> And your neat mustache
> And your Aryan eye, bright blue.
> Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You—— ("Daddy" 45–49)

Plath's early drafts of "Daddy" had significant use of the words "Hitler" and "Nazi" (Keniston 146). Plath, knowing that these elements are more strongly connected to the Nazi regime and genocide, implements other symbols such as mustache, swastika, and eye to remove them from "fixed *metaphoric significance*" (Keniston 146). "Metaphoric significance" is the use of metaphors which can be alluded to something specific, without leaving much room for subjectivity. By making the poem free from metaphoric significance, Plath shows that her life is not a direct comparison to that of the victims of the Holocaust. She does not use the Holocaust to aggrandize her life story but uses very subtle elements of the Holocaust to prevent the notion that she is trying to compare her experience to that of the Jews.

By not being specific, Plath creates transparency and dissonance, allowing her to relate to the Jews as a victim of oppression without explicitly trying to be them. This can be seen in the inclusion of a specific name such as "Luftwaffe" and vague imagery such as "mustache." The Luftwaffe is not an image that is specifically attributed to the Holocaust. Although it contributed to the deportation of Jews in captured territories like Poland, the Luftwaffe were present in other contexts such as the Battle of Britain which had nothing directly to do with the Holocaust. It is there to represent the destructive power of the figure "Daddy" whom the speaker fears (Plath 45).

At line 46, this fear of "Daddy" is embedded in the speaker's naming of his "neat mustache." Plath's father was of German origin, and if she were to use the word Hitler instead of "mustache" (a physical trait that her father and Hitler shared), the speaker would have been confined to the poem's World War II setting. Furthermore, as previously mentioned in a comparison with "Lady Lazarus," the figure "Daddy"

is replicated through a "model" (Plath 64). With versatile metaphors, Plath can differentiate between her experience of oppression and the victims of Nazi oppression whilst being able to relate her story to theirs.

Plath also demonstrates that literary art is flexible by having the capability to intertwine histories and experiences of people from two different worlds. Even with the risk of creating dissonance by parallelizing different experiences, they are united by a common theme which enables them to avoid conflict with one another. In the process of doing so, Plath does not trivialize the Holocaust and preserves its connotations of pain and suffering. Furthermore, Plath shows that histories and experiences are not intrinsically unique because oppression is oppression; they can be categorized as long as the degree to which the oppression is delivered is recognized. She is able to convey her own Holocaust without transgressing on the experiences of those who actually went through the Jewish Holocaust. No matter how Plath presents the Holocaust imagery in her poems, the reader has the choice of accepting it. Plath's poetry cannot transgress the histories of other unless it is believed to be able to. Her poems can only be validated by their audiences who have the capability to decide how much the art changes them. Words cannot commit sin, and neither can the mouth that speaks them, for it is the ear that judges their quality. Ultimately, art can draw different subjective conclusions from many different perspectives. Nevertheless, Plath was able to break the barrier that separates the objective tragedy of the Holocaust with artistic freedom. Anyone can make assumptions about the poems being "good" or "bad," but it is only Plath who can know the true meaning behind her words.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. Plath used Holocaust imagery to discuss what important struggles in her own life?
2. In what ways to these struggles parallel the Holocaust? In what ways do they not?

Style

1. How did the author introduce and explain quotes?
2. What methods did the author use to integrate lines from Plath's poems into the text in a cohesive fashion?

Parks and Recreation
A Satirical View of Local Government

Charlotte Leske

Although the level of government that most directly affects citizens' lives is their local government, this level is frequently overlooked, and few people take an interest in contacting local elected officials (about 19%), attending town forums (about 24%), or other areas where they might get involved to improve their town ("National Citizen Survey"). The television show *Parks and Recreation* "examine[s] the mundane but necessary ways that people interact with their government, and ask[s] why it's frequently so complicated—as everyone knows from standing in line at the DMV, applying for home construction permits, or trying to get the city to fix a pothole" ("*Parks and Recreation*—the TV Show"). *Parks and Recreation* isn't just a half-hour comedy; it also won a Peabody Award in 2011—an award designated for public service in television and radio— for its engaging way of highlighting issues on the local level for the average American citizen. The creators wrote the show with the intent of educating people on city government's

inner workings and showing how even if the American public tunes in to federal politics, they are disconnected from the politics occurring right under their noses at home. *Parks and Recreation* uses satire to draw attention to this divide between citizens and their local government and encourages people to take a more active interest in improving their communities.

Created by Greg Daniels and Michael Schur, the show is set in the small town of Pawnee, Indiana. Running for seven seasons between 2009 and 2015, *Parks and Recreation* follows the employees of the Parks and Recreation Department of the municipal government in a "mockumentary" style that showcases their struggles at work and in their personal lives as well, making them relatable to viewers. Leslie Knope, played by Amy Poehler, is the main driving force behind the department with her dreams of big government influence, satisfied citizens, and leaving a positive impact on the town she loves. However, the formal head of the department, Ron Swanson (Nick Offerman), is a firm believer that the government should intervene as little as possible and does his best to curtail Leslie's ambitions. Even after compromising with each other, the department must then answer to the citizens of Pawnee, who always find some issue to complain about.

The satirical exaggeration in *Parks and Recreation* is what gives the show such a unique perspective of government, as it allows the creators to use "the power of satire as a tool…to strip the encounter bare and offer the essence of the situation instead" (Jones 4). No real town has fast food restaurants with 512-ounce "Child-Size" sodas ("Soda Tax"), hospitals overrun by raccoons ("Born & Raised"), or a "Ted Party Day" where everyone tosses someone named Ted into the lake in accordance with the old town charter ("Article Two"). However, these reflect significant issues in America, like the effects of fast-food

supersizing on obesity levels and difficulties interpreting laws made hundreds of years ago, like the Constitution, in a way that makes sense in a modern context. Exaggerating problems like obesity or antiquated laws creates a humorous storyline, but on a deeper level, it also reveals how these problems aren't a far cry from the real-life situation.

This use of satire is so essential because, according to a survey conducted by the University of Southern California, 44 percent of adults view television as the most influential force on their view of government (Norman 143). Traditionally, these sources on television have been news shows, but today "entertainment media hosts and writers can operate outside the structural norms and unwritten rules" (Jones 5) that limit formal news channels or political talk shows. Political satire reaches people who might shy away from a formal political debate and offers "viable and at times important alternative forums for political discussion, information, and critique" (Jones 5). Jeffrey Jones, in his book *Entertaining Politics: Satiric Television and Political Engagement*, claims that using satiric television as a new form of political critique "transport[s] the viewer out of the serious context associated with journalism…and recontextualize[s] the encounter through a comedic lens, thereby granting the viewer a different perspective from which to view the event" (Jones 4). *Parks and Recreation*, by using a satiric and humorous television show format to present ideas about government, is an approachable way for politically inexperienced people to get involved in the conversation about politics.

The gap between citizens and their local government still exists, however, no matter how they're receiving their political news. In *Parks and Recreation*, that gap can be seen symbolically in the abandoned construction pit that Ann Perkins (Rashida Jones) asks Leslie Knope to fix at a public

forum ("Pilot"). Ann, like many citizens, is frustrated that the government hasn't taken initiative to address the problem, and she has become cynical of Pawnee's government because of her issues with the pit. Leslie promises to turn the pit into a park, even though she knows it could take years, because she wants to change Ann's attitude of "I don't really care for politics" and spread her own passion for government ("Pilot"). Through this collaboration, Leslie and Ann become close friends, "[giving] us a view into the possibility of a narrower gap between practitioner and citizen" (Norman 145), and Ann even begins working in the city's health department ("The Fight") and later has a baby with City Manager Chris Traeger (Rob Lowe) ("Galentine's Day"). The mockumentary style of the show allows the audience to see multiple aspects of the characters' lives—their families and friends, and their struggles at home and at work—and "far from simple archetypes, they are living, fully developed, complex individuals with whom viewers can empathize" (Norman 144). Through watching Parks and Recreation, viewers can "question their assumptions about [bureaucracy]" (Norman 145) as an oppressive, unsympathetic institution ignorant of the citizens' needs and begin to relate as fellow humans to the people who make up their government.

Parks and Recreation's representation of the possibilities for the corruption of these government employees can be found in Councilman Jeremy Jamm (Jon Glaser). Jamm often lets his personal concerns corrupt his decisions as councilman—in one instance, he attempts to resist a bill to put fluoride in the town's water supply, as his career as an orthodontist would benefit from Pawnee's unhealthy teeth ("Fluoride"). In another, he refuses to let a bill pass to give the recreational swim team more time in the pool until Leslie gives him her office ("How a Bill Becomes a Law"). Jamm represents the issues that arise when work collides with personal life for city government

employees—he makes decisions that will impact the whole town with only his personal objectives in mind. "Preferential policy decisions based on social and business ties" make citizens suspicious about whether changes are going to be in their best interests as well, and will make them automatically opposed to any new, well-meaning suggestions (Catlaw 226). Leslie is the antithesis of a corrupt politician like Jamm—she makes decisions with Pawnee's citizens in mind, and even leaves her boyfriend Ben Wyatt (Adam Scott) when she feels she needs to run for city council to make positive change happen ("I'm Leslie Knope"). Leslie's character restores faith in a well-meaning government.

Small-town governments face other challenges besides proximity to personal life, beginning with the challenge that the populations of small towns are generally seen as older or backwards-thinking. For this reason, "small-town government is one of the least researched arenas of governance" and has been largely ignored as a consequence of seeming ineffectual (Catlaw 225). In a lot of ways, Ron Swanson can be characterized as a little backwards-thinking and set in his ways—he nurses a hatred for government, lives off the grid in a cabin, and could be said to have the demeanor of a frontier settler with his aptitude for manual labor and preference for solitude. Yet as the series progresses, he becomes more tolerant of other people, gains a family, and at the end of the series begins working for a branch of the National Park Service based in Pawnee ("One Last Ride"). His character development over the series demonstrates that even small-town people can change and adapt with the circumstances, should opportunities for change become available. Ron also represents the ability of people who declare themselves "anti-politics" to still connect on some level with their government and shows how even the

citizens of small towns like Pawnee can have an impact on the national level.

Sometimes small-town citizens use their influence in a way that isn't beneficial to the majority of the town. Throughout the seasons, the citizens attending Leslie's public forums usually "represent extreme views," and as a result, "local policies [reflect] the views of the vocal citizen" rather than necessarily the majority's opinion (Trautman 222). When the Parks Department holds a forum to decide what to put in the town time capsule, all those who attend have very personal requests, like adding a pet's ashes or a favorite book, and fights break out when everyone else does not comply with their demands ("Time Capsule"). When Leslie holds a forum on new taxes, one man stands up asking for taxation on racism and women's vaginas, while another argues that not even income should be taxed ("Soda Tax"). Only the people at the far ends of the spectrum speak out, and "the average citizen is not compelled to attend public meetings and hearings, in part because of indifference, lack of time, or information" (Trautman 223). This makes it also the job of government officials to not only hear the complaints they receive, but also to try to moderate them to find the average opinion. Leslie captures this sentiment at her park proposal forum when she says, "There are many people that I spoke to who are passionately in support of this idea. None of them were able to make it tonight, unfortunately, but they totally exist" ("Canvassing").

Although the citizens with extreme views complicate the process, bureaucrats like Leslie Knope with strong passion for democracy know that to connect with citizens, they must give the public a voice and be open about their proceedings and decisions. In the episode "Filibuster," Councilman Jamm tries to subtly pass a bill that would disenfranchise half of Pawnee's citizens for Leslie's recall election. Even though Leslie knows

that if she stops the bill from going through, she will be recalled, she filibusters the session so that all the citizens can have a say in the recall ("Filibuster"). Her actions stem from the belief that, "There must be a willingness to discuss issues in full view of the public" (Trautman 222). When government tries to dictate citizens' lives without considering their input, citizens will become wary and distrustful. It is only when local governments work with citizens to improve their town that both succeed.

To work effectually at joining forces with their citizens, local governments can take several steps, all of which can be found somewhere in *Parks and Recreation*, due to the nature of the government department that the creators chose as the setting. Since "education is the single biggest predictor of [civic] participation," towns can encourage higher education or build scholarship programs (Engbers 51), just as in the show the department helps to support education through providing extra classes when the budgets are cut ("Prom") and helps the students run a model United Nations Conference to support interest in government ("The Treaty"). Towns can also create secondary organizations to build civic skills, like Leslie's citizen action committee, "The Parks Committee of Pawnee" ("Citizen Knope"), which have "a community effect in bringing people together to solve public problems" (Engbers 52). Town governments can try to encourage corporations to build locations inside the town, which benefits the community by "[increasing] the number of nonprofit and civic organizations" (Engbers 52), as well as being a driving force behind the economy; in the episode "Moving Up," Ben brings the corporation Gryzzl into Pawnee to provide the community with technology and boost the economy. Looking toward the long-term, town governments can support youth organizations like

recreational leagues or scouts to increase civic participation when those kids grow up (Engbers 55), similar to how the *Parks and Recreation* characters coach a youth basketball league ("Go Big or Go Home") and create scout troops for boys and girls ("Pawnee Rangers"). Furthermore, by building "public spaces that encourage discourse," like the Pawnee Commons, constructed where the abandoned pit once was ("Pawnee Commons"), they can also foster community connections to build town spirit (Engbers 54). In showing the sector of local government that has the most face-to-face interaction with people of the community, the creators were able to showcase methods for bringing the community together through "mutually beneficial relationships between government organizations and the public" (Trautman 223).

There is, at times, a "fundamental assumption that bureaucrats are not citizens or that citizens are not part of governing bodies" (Norman 145)—but the two are completely and irreversibly intertwined. The characters on *Parks and Recreation* are working for the government, but they are also characterized simply as citizens who want the best for their town. There are people in real American towns who think this way too, but cannot see a way to bridge the gap, or fill in the pit, between themselves and their city government; their government seems like a faceless entity behind closed doors that doesn't understand what life is like outside city hall. These citizens become stereotypically apathetic, but "'apathy' is often attributable to repeated experiences of ineffectual participation," and these citizens just need a way to connect effectively (Catlaw 227). With the aid of satire and humor on television shows like *Parks and Recreation*, the small-town citizens in the audience can humanize government and government employees. The show even lays out ways to create

"more active ways of engaging the public" through recreational activities designed to foster a sense of community (Catlaw 227). Through *Parks and Recreation*'s humorous yet relatable stories, it becomes apparent that to "avoid the abuses of government and to foster a healthy democracy" (Engbers 50), every level of government, especially local, must engage with citizens and work with them to build up community and create meaningful and beneficial change.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. What are some of the prevalent social issues *Parks and Recreation* addresses?

2. What arguments does the show make, according to the author of this article? How does it make these arguments?

Style

1. How does the author manage to write about a broad topic (an entire television show) and still incorporate specific evidence?

2. What does specific evidence look like in this paper? Is it effective? Why or why not?

Marriage and Gender in "The Applicant"

Geneva Tilbury

"The Applicant" is a poem by Sylvia Plath written in October 1962 and published posthumously in 1965 in the book *Ariel*. Satiric and darkly humorous, the poem challenges conventional gender dynamics within marriage. It was written at a time when gender issues were subject to fierce national debate due to the women's liberation movement of the early 1960s. Throughout history, marriage and other conventions of traditional relationships have played a major role in reinforcing socially constructed gender norms as described in "The Applicant." To this day, despite great improvements in women's rights, popular beliefs about love and marriage create gender inequality in western society. In this paper, I will analyze how marriage and traditional heteroromantic relationship rituals are both a cause and an effect of socialized gender and the objectification of women.

In "The Applicant," Plath parodies the way men talk about women in order to make a point about the objectification of women. She uses the interaction of three characters to communicate this in the poem. The first character, the speaker,

is a salesman, and though his gender is not stated outright, it is safe to assume that he is male based on the dehumanizing language he uses to refer to the woman in the poem. The applicant for whom this poem is named is a young man and a customer of the salesman. The product which the speaker is selling is a young woman, who is to be a bride for the applicant. Plath sets up this odd, disturbing scene in order to satirize the way women are often treated as objects in their relationships with men. Early on in "The Applicant," the reader is introduced to the woman and her status as an object when the speaker presents her as a tool to cure the young man's loneliness. This dynamic continues throughout the poem, with the woman being increasingly dehumanized by the salesman's words. He talks about the woman as if she were an inanimate object, referring to her as "it." In this relatively short, forty-line poem, she is called "it" a full fourteen times, a device which Plath uses to unsettle the reader and make truly obvious the objectification the woman faces.

The repetition of the line "Will you marry it?" is also essential to conveying the meaning of this poem. It is repeated several times, generally to refer to the woman. In its first two uses, this line draws a strong parallel between the woman and a suit. The speaker first asks "Will you marry it?" after describing the woman's metaphorical hand for the young man to take (14), then a second time after presenting the suit for the young man to get married in (22). Additionally, the lines "It is guaranteed / To thumb shut your eyes at the end" (15–16) in reference to the woman and "they'll bury you in it" (25) in reference to the suit, describe the man's eventual death and thus place the woman and suit on more or less equal standing as objects to serve the man from marriage to death.

It is important to note that the interaction taking place in the poem is entirely between the two men. The woman

has no agency or voice in this situation. In fact, she is spoken of as if she were not even present because the speaker uses the impersonal pronouns "it" and "that" to refer to her, while an active participant in a conversation would generally be addressed as "you." This man-to-man interaction regarding the future of the woman is paralleled in numerous ways in society. One way which is still generally unquestioned in modern culture is the wedding tradition of fathers walking their daughters down the aisle to pass them to their husbands (Coltrane 20). While this may seem harmless, and even sentimental, it brings to light a pattern of customs throughout history which stifle women's independence by requiring them to have male chaperones in many situations. This reflects both the infantilization and objectification of women, because under these customs, women are denied the ability to be independent, self-sustaining adults, and they are passed between men as though they are objects.

The way the speaker advertises the woman to the other man is indicative of another important societal phenomenon. In the so-called marriage market, women often try to pitch themselves to men in a similar way by performing physical and emotional labor to fulfill men's wants and needs. This includes doing things like cooking and cleaning, but also providing flattery and emotional support (Coltrane 28). This stems from the gendered division of labor, which prevents men from learning to do these things for themselves while teaching women to focus primarily on these tasks.

Marriage and other romantic traditions not only reflect, but to a great extent produce, gender difference (Coltrane 45). From a very early age, children are taught the differences between men's and women's roles in relationships, and they learn to follow the examples they see. This perpetuates gender divisions, and as these children's children will learn

from them, this cycle continues. Particularly instrumental in the social creation of gender is the conflation of brides and young girls. Chrys Ingraham describes many ways in which girls are socialized from a young age to idealize romance and marriage. Toys and media aimed at children treat boys and girls very differently, encouraging boys to be adventurous and individualistic while encouraging girls to be delicate and idealize beauty. One example of this is the My Size Bride Barbie, a popular toy in the 1990s which came with a three-foot tall Barbie doll wearing a wedding dress and included an identical wedding dress costume for little girls to wear (Ingraham 96). Similarly, toys and media aimed at children perpetuate the gendered division of labor, one of the issues central to "The Applicant" (Ingraham 80). Toys intended for boys are often soldiers, superheroes, or other tough, independent characters, while toys meant for girls, like baby dolls, teach girls from early childhood to prepare for motherhood and domestic labor.

The other side of this issue is the infantilization of adult women in relation to men. In "The Applicant," this can be seen in the way the woman is spoken to. She is addressed directly only once, and when the speaker does this he calls her "sweetie," a word commonly used when talking to young children and especially young girls (28). She is also referred to as a "living doll," evoking images of childhood (33). Throughout history, certain childlike qualities have been valued in women. In some ancient cultures, it was common for very young girls to get married to ensure their "innocence and purity" for their husband, and this practice still occurs today in a handful of cultures (Coltrane 41). These traditions do have implications on modern western society, though less dramatic. A certain level of sexual innocence is expected of women which is not generally expected of men (Coltrane 41). Additionally, the ways in which

language is used to describe women tends to diminish them, especially compared to their male counterparts. For instance, it is fairly common for men to refer to grown women as girls while it is more unusual for women to call men boys.

Rituals of marriage and married life "reflect a gender-segregated pattern that serves to create the very differences they are supposed to express" (Coltrane 19). For example, bachelor parties encourage men to express hypermasculinity and recklessness while bridal showers may tend to encourage women to be hyper-feminine and embrace a shift toward domesticity (Ingraham 22). Within married life, women have traditionally been expected to cook and clean while men are the breadwinners, which not only reflects but perpetuates gender division because it makes women financially dependent on their husbands (Coltrane 19). It can also result in women doing an unequal share of labor for little compensation. In "The Applicant," the salesman describes various acts of domestic labor the woman will perform for the young man. However, there is no mention of the man reciprocating any of these actions which his future wife is expected to perform for him. Studies have suggested that even couples who have egalitarian views about how how labor should be divided in relationships tend to follow this gender-stereotyped labor model to a certain degree in reality (Peplau 42). This shows that these traditions are so deeply ingrained in society that they affect how people subconsciously conduct themselves in relationships.

Perhaps the most disturbing line of "The Applicant" is when the speaker says, "We make new stock from the salt" (18). The salt here refers to the woman's tears after she "dissolve[s] of sorrow" (17) from the man's death, and the new stock refers to the next generation of women socialized into fulfilling a similar gender role. This shows how gender is reproduced by the expectations of subordination and femininity put on women.

In "The Applicant," the bride is portrayed as willing and eager to serve her potential husband. This is her only purpose in the poem; the salesman claims she will do whatever the man tells her to and once he dies, she will "dissolve of sorrow" (17). This limits her existence to the service of her husband. It is suggested that she lives only for him and has no personal identity, while he presumably is allowed to carry on with his own individual interests. This dynamic is consistent with research, which suggests that for women, intimacy precedes the development of individual identity (Peplau 32). In Katherine Allen's study of lifelong single women, she found that many women who chose not to marry did so because they saw it as hindering personal achievement or individualism (Allen 104). Thus, when women experience pressures that cause them to marry young, they may actually become fairly dependent on their husbands for a sense of identity and social standing. Additionally, often women who get married at a very young age do so because of negative "push" factors such as the need to escape abuse in their family rather than positive "pull" factors like romantic love (Allen 103).

Scott Coltrane argues that the glamorization of romance in culture and media inadvertently teaches women from a young age that if they love their husband or partner, they will perform free emotional, physical, and sexual labor for him (Coltrane 35). We see this reflected in Frank McCourt's memoir *Angela's Ashes*. Even though Angela's relationship with her husband, Malachy, is quite strained, Angela sacrifices herself completely for their family while Malachy does nearly nothing for them in return. Angela dedicates herself emotionally and physically to supporting her children and even though Malachy only hurts these efforts, she tolerates his actions because that is what was socially expected of her. This was the way things

were for many women in the early- to mid-twentieth century. Allen found that many of the married women she interviewed, who would be from the same generation as Angela, felt deeply unhappy with their family duties at some point during their marriage (Allen 104).

"The Applicant" reveals a great deal about the situation of women in the 1960s. Moreover, some of the issues of objectification and gender division within marriage which the poem addresses still impact society today. The objectification and infantilization of women as part of romantic tradition results in the perpetuation of gender roles and the sexual division of labor. Thus, although women's rights have come a long way since the early 1960s, there is still a long way to go before gender bias is eliminated and relationships between men and women become truly equal.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. In what ways do the gender stereotypes presented in "The Applicant" show up today?

2. The author mentions that even egalitarian couples often follow traditional gender stereotypes. Why does this occur? When is it a bad thing? When might it be fine?

Style

1. How does the author organize their analysis of the poem?

2. How does the author make use of sources to advance their argument?

The Continuous Perpetuation of the Gay-Suicide Stereotype

Krithika Selva Rajoo

The portrayal of socially stigmatized issues, such as homosexuality and suicide, is making progress at the forefront of the American media. This is due to the resistance to old stereotypes and the protesting of these socially stigmatized issues that we practiced as a society in the past, thus causing popular culture, which is represented through the media, to shift and modify to meet the needs and beliefs of many of its consumers. Increasing representation of LGBT+ characters on television shows and movies, such as *Love, Simon*, with LGBT+ characters as main characters are some examples of how the media is slowly adapting to meet the expectations of its target audience. However, this shift might not necessarily be a good thing. This is because the portrayal of these issues is usually one-dimensional, causing audiences to associate certain stereotypes with certain groups. One such stereotype is the gay-suicide stereotype. This stereotype perpetuates the idea that people who identify as homosexual are more likely to end up committing suicide. Like most stereotypes, this stereotype is unhealthy because it plays a pivotal role regarding the reason

why gay people tend to kill themselves. The link between being homosexual and being suicidal is a link that should be talked about due to the effects that it causes. In mainstream literature such as *Confessions of a Mask* by Yukio Mishima, the gay-suicide stereotype is continuously being perpetuated. However, the graphic novel *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel defies this stereotype and discusses social issues such as sexual norms. Logic's music video for "1-800-273-8255" is another medium where the gay-suicide stereotype is defied. These works contrast each other in various ways and contribute to socially stigmatized issues by either injecting stereotypes into people's head or by dissolving the preconceived notions associated with the stereotype.

The heteronormative society we are currently living in adds unnecessary pressure to homosexual individuals as it causes them to feel different from the majority of the population. This is due to the fact that the sexuality they identify with is not considered the norm. The heterosexism which exists in our society "denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (Igartua et al. 16). The impact of heterosexism is further amplified when any individual experiences internalized homophobia, which arises "because of the difference between what a gay individual becomes and what his / her parents and society had expected or even demanded (i.e., heterosexuality)" (Igartua et al. 16). Internalized homophobia affects an individual far more drastically because it causes them to be ashamed of their sexuality, preventing them from accepting themselves for who they are. In fact, K. J. Igartua and colleagues in "Internalized Homophobia: A Factor in Depression, Anxiety, and Suicide in the Gay and Lesbian Population," say, "homosexual and bisexual males were 13.9 times more at risk for a serious suicide attempt" due to "lower self-esteem, psychological distress manifested by depressive and

anxious symptoms, substance abuse and suicidality" (17, 16) being linked to internalized homophobia. Focusing on suicide, the community sub-sample obtained from the experiment conducted revealed that "life-time prevalence of suicide ideation was 65% and of suicide attempts was 14%" (Igartua et al. 23). This data helps to elucidate the relationship between homosexuality and suicide as it shows how homosexuals are more inclined to contemplate committing suicide due to emotional turmoil they go through as they accept their sexuality.

However, suicide is hidden in the underbelly. There are various other factors that come into play before a homosexual individual contemplates committing suicide. These factors, which are psychosocial stressors, include negotiating sexuality, gender, mental health and age norms; being unable to talk about emotions; and coping and self-reliance (McDermott 156). The heteronormativity that exists in our society—and includes the fact that heterosexual couples are able to live together openly and adopt children much more easily—causes homosexual people to have a lower self-esteem and feel foreign and unaccepted for who they are. Some of these heteronormative influences include cultural and religious intolerance towards homosexuality and the lack of gay community centers in society. These influences prevent homosexual persons from having a safe space where they can comfortably express themselves for who they are without any judgment. Family members who are homophobic further add to the emotional turmoil that homosexual individuals go through because it causes them to feel ashamed of who they are due to the lack of support available. It causes them to feel like their sexuality is a battle, and they are charging towards the battle without any armor of protection and love from family members. It is unfair that they may have to experience a roller-coaster of emotions and not have anyone to confide in, because the stigma surrounding homosexuality that currently exists causes

therapists and physicians to not consider the link between sexuality and suicide. Some of these therapists and physicians focus solely on their clients' sexuality and recommend conversion therapy or hormone therapy to correct them instead of asking if they are emotionally okay.

With popular culture slowly appreciating and representing the LGBT+ community, writers have felt more comfortable portraying the issues and struggles that the community faces. This is important because the characters in these works might be the only role models for people who are struggling with their sexuality to identify with. However, mainstream literature continuously perpetuates the gay-suicide stereotype. By encouraging men and women to see themselves as victims of suicide, the gay-suicide stereotype is naturalized. It is a shame that the gay-suicide stereotype is used as a literary device perpetuated by a romantic purpose that deems that suicide is the answer to combat homosexual feelings. In *Confessions of a Mask*, author Yukio Mishima "characterizes the youth of his dreams, all frozen in statuesque postures of smooth, white death" (Heathcote 178). This causes readers to negatively connotate homosexual feelings—because this story, like most stories, ends up with the homosexual person committing suicide. This comparison communicates that one should not have homosexual feelings due to the fact that it is as bad as ending one's life. In the novel, the narrator also confuses "art, myth and sexual desire" (Heathcote 178). This causes readers to think homosexuals are unaware and uncertain of their emotions and are therefore being impulsive and indecisive when they act on their emotions. This portrayal of confusion dampens the seriousness of viewing homosexuality as an issue that should be respected by society. It gives an impression to readers that homosexuality might not be an actual sexuality one should identify with because it might be a phase that arises when one is uncertain of their emotions.

Also, in *Confessions of a Mask*, "mask, coffin, and closet are at the centre" of the main scene in the storyline, sending a message to readers who identify as homosexual that they will have to hide and mask their identity in order to continue living because the narrator of the story ends up dying due to the fact that he acts on his homosexuality instead of hiding it (Heathcote 178). It is clear, then, that the gay-suicide stereotype presented in mainstream literature has a negative effect on the audience regardless of the sexuality they identify with due to the negative connotations with which this stereotype is associated.

However, *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel defies mainstream literature and portrays the gay-suicide stereotype in a different way. It is a graphic novel that pieces together elements of Bechdel's adolescence, her father's life, and her adulthood within each chapter. In "(Not) Lost in the Margins: Gender and Identity in Graphic Texts," Allison Marjorie claims that graphic texts "allow readers to encounter and identify with marginalized themes that deal with sexuality, gender, and nationalism" (Marjorie 74). This is true because *Fun Home* is a graphic novel that, despite Bechdel's depictions of her father "playing into stereotypes and prejudices many readers might have about gay men," she uses to "[counter] the image of a stereotypical gay man with her own struggle to find her way in the world" (Marjorie 91–92). This allows the reader to comprehend the fact that the gay-suicide stereotype is much more complex than a stereotype created solely for the purpose of the plot to enhance the story. Furthermore, Bechdel defies mainstream literature from another angle by claiming "a space for openly sexual female bodies—especially queer bodies that have been marginalized and pathologized" (Dalmaso 566). This helps to fight against the stigma that currently exists around the sexualization of female bodies, helping to play a part by dissolving gender norms in the literature sphere. Regarding *Fun Home*, Dalmaso also mentions

"The tragedy of the closeted gay man and the comedy of the daily lives of a group of lesbians are conflated into narratives that somehow portray a tragedy that is not necessarily tragic" (Dalmaso 563), helping to drive home my point that *Fun Home* defies mainstream literature and portrays the gay-suicide stereotype and other stereotypes regarding homosexuality in a different light instead of the usual cliché storyline that results in death or sacrifice. The format of a graphic novel also allows readers to immerse themselves in the experience and feel more connected to the stories and the emotions Bechdel experienced, helping readers to understand the idea of gender roles to which our society currently expects us to conform. This format also helps readers better understand how Bechdel and her father struggled with this conformation and how they expressed their desires through each other vicariously instead of openly embracing their identity due to the predicament of the heteronormative culture that looks down on their desires and attachments.

In *Fun Home*, Bechdel also explores the effects of sexuality due to the anxiety and self-esteem issues that she faces due to the non-disclosure of her father's sexuality. In "Children of the Closet: A Measurement of the Anxiety and Self-Esteem of Children Raised by a Non-Disclosed Homosexual or Bisexual Parent," the data obtained "proves that children who are raised by a non-disclosed homosexual or bisexual parent are more likely to have anxiety and a lower self-esteem" (Murray and McClintock 77). This explains why the relationship that Bechdel had with her father was not a smooth-sailing one. Also, the compulsive disorders that Bechdel had, which were represented by the way she journaled, and her father's obsessive-compulsive disorder, which was shown by the way he carefully arranged his library and the rest of his house, can be linked to the anxiety and fear surrounding both of their sexualities. For Bechdel specifically, her not wanting to mention she started menstruating, both verbally

to her mother and manually in her journals, conveys a message to readers that she did not like the fact that she was becoming an actual female, as she identified more with male characteristics on the gender spectrum. She mentioned that she "encoded the word menstruating according to the practice . . . of denoting complex or unknown quantities" (Bechdel 169), showing us that the concept of her developing secondary female characteristics and becoming a woman was a perplexing issue she could not wrap her head around and had to allegorize to an unknown. On the other hand, her father's obsession with literature can be linked to the fact that he preferred living vicariously through other characters. This was because fantasy was a far better world for him to identify with as opposed to reality, where he had to hide who he was as a person. He even had to live vicariously through Bechdel by projecting his femininity on her, much to her dismay. This is why we can liken Bechdel and her father as inversions of each other because Bechdel struggles to emphasize her masculinity while her father struggles to prevent her from expressing it.

Looking at various mediums that portray the link between homosexuality and suicide, Logic's "1-800-273-8255" music video is a great example. It is a song titled after the hotline number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) and is directed mainly towards anyone struggling with suicidal thoughts. In today's society, many teenagers feel pressured when it comes to sexuality and/or gender due to the heteronormative nature of today's society, and people who are struggling with these issues feel like they cannot confide in anyone because no one will understand what they are going through. Logic's video tells a poignant story about a teenager struggling to accept his sexuality and reaches an emotional climax when the boy contemplates committing suicide while toying with a gun. However, instead of perpetuating the gay-suicide stereotype by ending the video

with the teenager committing suicide, we see the teenager call someone for help. The video then fast-forwards, and we see the teenager all grown up. He proceeds to marry another man, presumably the same man he'd been with in high school, and raise a child with him. This sends a positive message toward homosexual people that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that they are deserving and worthy of happiness. This video allows suicidal youths who identify as homosexual to feel like their emotions and struggles are valid, but also that if they seek help and confide in someone instead of letting their emotions get to them, they can overcome their emotional obstacles.

In conclusion, homosexuality and suicide are still linked issues surrounded by stigma. This is unhealthy as it prevents people who are battling these issues from openly seeking help. Mainstream literature further amplifies this issue by portraying homosexuals in a one-dimensional lens. One can say that Alison Bechdel's father committed suicide due to the lack of representation of homosexuality in a positive light while he was growing up. Society's view on homosexuality in the 60s most likely impacted Bechdel's father's emotions negatively and the fact that he was a closeted gay man would definitely have caused him to feel like he was not living his authentic life. However, our society has slowly evolved and is continuing to evolve. Bechdel was able to come out in the mid-80s due to the increase of society's acceptance towards homosexuality. As of today, gay marriage is legalized, and homosexuality is being heavily represented in popular culture. Hopefully, more creators will share meaningful and authentic stories that represent various communities by embarking on the path Alison Bechdel and Logic are currently paving, by increasing awareness about important issues such as homosexuality and suicide.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. What are some positive examples of representation of the struggles of the LGBT+ community that the author mentions? Why are they positive?

2. What are negative examples of media that link homosexuality and suicide, and what about them perpetuates the gay-suicide stereotype? Can you think of other examples?

Style

1. How does the author signal transitions between points? How are these points made clear and easy to follow?

2. How does the author make use of pathos and logos within this essay to strengthen her argument?

Not in My Backyard
The Rise of Global Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

Caroline Moriarty

In the 1850s, a new American political party called the "Know Nothings" rose to prominence, albeit for a short time. Also known as the "American Party," the group advocated for strict anti-immigration policies that targeted Catholics, Germans, and Irish immigrants. The members were united in their support for nationalism, religious discrimination, and avoidance of class descriptors, instead drawing contrasts between ethnic groups (Boissoneault). They argued that immigration hurt America economically and at their peak, party members included more than "100 elected congressmen, eight governors, a controlling share of half-a-dozen state legislatures…and thousands of local politicians" (Boissoneault). Before they could implement policies like deporting foreign beggars or eliminating all Catholics from public office, the party was weakened by their failure to take a position on slavery. While the Know Nothings no longer exist in name in America today, the xenophobia and racism they purported in the guise of policy still exists today in American

politicians and politicians around the world. In this paper, refugee and immigration policy in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and France will be described, from its history to its recent movement against immigrants. The world is becoming nativist and anti-immigrant, and it is up to us as readers and advocates to change the tide of public opinion and policy.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a refugee is defined as someone who "is located outside the United States, is of special humanitarian concern to the United States," and "demonstrates that they were persecuted due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group" ("Refugees"). The European definition is similar, defining "a 'genuine' refugee as someone who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (Kyriakides 937). Both complex definitions make the process of settling in a new country more difficult for the immigrants and easy for the host country to reject those who cannot prove their refugee status. Host countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and France all use definitions and arbitrary distinctions to otherize people who do not have the dominant characteristics of the home population or do not follow the social norms. Therefore, in this essay, all policy that is anti-immigrant, no matter the description by governments themselves, will be labeled as "nativist policy." By using nativist policy as an umbrella term for all policy that keeps the "other" in the self / other dichotomy and out of the host country, the scope of anti-immigrant policy will be more evident than limiting the discussion to what politicians describe as immigration policy.

When examining the history of nativist policy, the United States shows its relative youth as a country.The first significant legislation concerning refugees was the Immigration Act of 1924, which was also "the first permanent limit on immigration" ("History of Refugee Resettlement" 2) in the United States. It created a quota system that limited new immigrants to no more than two percent of the current residents from the same country of origin ("History"). By setting these limits by country of origin, Americans were still identifying each other through their ancestry rather than as being American. It's also important to note that many people immigrated to the U.S. before this time, so while this legislation was a big change from the status quo, it was really a reaction to rising immigration in the early 20th century. Throughout the 1900s, the quotas were continuously modified to favor western Europeans ("History") and exclude Asians and Eastern Europeans.

After two world wars left millions of people displaced, the United Nations held a Refugee Convention in 1951 to create an international legal framework outlining the rights of refugees. The international legitimacy enumerated by the protocol is crucial because "by definition, refugees are not protected by their own governments" ("The 1951 Convention") and they deserve rights no matter where they go. The main principle developed in the Convention was termed *non-refoulement*. Under this definition, "a refugee should not be returned to a country where he or she faces serious threats to his or her life or freedom" ("The 1951 Convention"). Other rights given to refugees included the right to work, to practice religion freely, to education, to the court system, and to public relief and assistance ("The 1951 Convention"). However, these rights were limited to European refugees after World War II. In 1967, the European refugee distinction in the definition of "refugee" was eliminated and people around the

world could claim international refugee status. These provisions are still the basis of international law concerning refugees and they affect "not only millions of marginalized people directly but also the policies and practices of virtually every government in the world" ("The 1951 Convention"). The United States is not a signatory to the original 1951 Convention, but it did ratify the 1967 addendum and included many of the provisions of the 1951 Convention in the Refugee Act of 1980. The act also created the Office of Refugee Resettlement and raised the number of refugees to 50,000 per year and total immigrants to 320,000 per year ("History of Refugee Resettlement").

The number of refugees and immigrants to accept in a given year is a very contentious issue in the United States, especially when comparing the rhetoric and policy of the most recent presidents. President Barack Obama (2009–2017) took a progressive stance, accepting the maximum number of refugees in the last four years of his presidency (Connor and Krogstad). In the last quarter of fiscal year 2016, over 30,000 refugees entered the U.S., which was the highest number since 2001 (Connor and Krogstad). As Obama's presidency ended, he attempted to resettle 110,000 refugees in 2017, a significant increase from the previous year's ceiling of 85,000 (Connor and Krogstad). The administration warranted their increases by pointing out that the numbers of refugees were rising due to increased conflict around the world; this rationalization mirrors the post-World War II sentiment that spurred the 1951 Convention. Additionally, President Obama resettled refugees of all ethnicities and religions, accepting more Muslim refugees than Christian ones (46 to 44 percent respectively) and accepting over 20 percent more Syrian refugees than the administration's original estimates (Connor and Krogstad).

In direct contrast to President Obama, President Donald Trump (2017–present) has advocated for "extreme vetting and

an ideological screening test" given based on country of origin (Connor and Krogstad). These policy proposals have formed the basis for the new, nativist approach towards refugees in the United States. The refugee ceiling was lowered to 45,000 refugees per year, Muslim refugees make up less than 10 percent of those entering, and new rules require refugees to provide "10 years of biographical information, rather than five years" (Torbati). The centerpiece of the nativist legislation was a temporary ban on refugees from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (Torbati) that was lifted after the Supreme Court declared parts of it unconstitutional. Opponents of this ban argued that the countries were targeted because of their majority Muslim populations, and lower court judges cited discrimination against Muslims as a reason to block the ban (Martin). They also cited President Trump's tweets, writing that "the tweets reveal a religious bias and hint at the administration's true intentions" (Martin). President Trump seemed undeterred by the setbacks in his legislation, continuing to tweet "anti-Muslim videos from a far-right party in Britain" (Martin). These policies have already resulted in a significantly lower number of refugees entering the United States: "In the five weeks after Trump lifted the ban, just 15 refugees from those countries (affected by the travel ban) were allowed in" (Torbati). President Trump's nativist policy is already evident in the first year of his presidency. Time will tell, but the next three years will likely be filled with nativist rhetoric and presumably more nativist policy.

The United Kingdom and France perceive new immigrants in a different way than the United States does because of their types of government and proximity to countries in conflict. Christopher Kyriakides in *Current Sociology* argues that asylum claimants are "implicitly obliged to prove that they do not pose an economic burden to the member state: that they will not

over-consume public resources such as health and social welfare services" (940). The scapegoat used by European politicians is the asylum claimant who cannot prove their economic independence. They are portrayed as an "economic migrant"—people with a nonturbulent country of origin who traveled to Europe under the guise of asylum seeker to take advantage of social services and commit crimes. Asylum claimants are forced to validate their own existence in a country through proof of persecution and by distinguishing themselves from other immigrants to gain access to public resources (Kyriakides 939). If they successfully prove that they have no economic motive and are not abusing the system, they are given the fixed identity of "victim" and are subject to exclusion based on that signifier (Kyriakides 940). It is through this exclusionary lens that all policy is made regarding refugees and asylum seekers in both the United Kingdom and France.

Similar to the United States, the United Kingdom has also experienced a drastic change to their immigration and refugee policies in recent years. After years of complex and bureaucratic processes, a conference paper titled "Fairer, Faster and Firmer" was presented to the UK Parliament in 1998. It painted a dark picture of the current immigration system, claiming that huge backlogs caused by increases in asylum seekers (the British term for refugees) from 4,000 a year in 1988 to over 32,00 in 1997 leave genuine applicants suffering and abusive claimants profiting (United Kingdom). After taking the recommendations in "Fairer, Faster and Firmer," the UK Parliament passed the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1999. The major parts of the policy included reducing the avenues available for appeal, distributing refugees to all parts of the United Kingdom, minimizing the incentive to migrate for economic benefit, increasing the power of immigration officers, and hiring more officers in airports to reduce illegal

migration (United Kingdom). While UK politicians relied on the idealized "abusive claimant" stereotype, this legislation actually sent refugees to rural areas without support systems and cultural tolerance to help them integrate into British culture. Refugees often leave the outlying areas and go to London, even though it means that they are "removed from the asylum support system" and live in poverty (Burnett and Peel 487). In Angela Burnett and Michael Peel's series of articles about asylum seekers in the U.K., they specifically criticize the economic migrant claim, arguing, "The United Kingdom, notably, has often encouraged and depended on economic migrants to develop many services and industries" and that sending refugees back after a political change in their country doesn't guarantee their safety because "a change in government does not necessarily mean cessation of violence" (Burnett and Peel 486).

Burnett and Peel also studied the claim that asylum seekers take advantage of social services like the National Health Service (NHS), the free national healthcare program in the United Kingdom. They found that despite having the right to use to NHS services without payment, many asylum seekers and refugees "have difficulty obtaining health care" (Burnett and Peel 487). There are multiple barriers working against refugees, including different languages, cultural differences in health practices, access to transportation, and widespread poverty (Burnett and Peel 487). Health workers sometimes cannot obtain an accurate health history, so "some refugees may acquire a collection of drugs, many of them inappropriate" (Burnett and Peel 487). Additionally, the forms needed to get additional coverage are only in English and are 16 pages long, which end many refugees' search for health care (Burnett and Peel 487). Most importantly, the mental health state of many refugees is poor because of the traumatic experiences that they lived in their journey to travel to the U.K. (Burnett and Peel 487). Burnett and Peel's

research not only discredits the claim made by politicians in the 1990s about economic migrants, but it also dismantles the idea of inclusive, national healthcare that the NHS is supposed to provide. More often than not, refugees and asylum seekers are subject to violence and exclusion by their new communities; they are not the "abusive claimants" that continue to drive British policy.

Many people believe that the most important political event in the United Kingdom in recent history was the decision to leave the European Union (dubbed "Brexit"); however, despite its magnitude, the effect on refugee policy is minimal. The U.K. had already opted out of the Schengen Zone, a geographic area where visitors can travel through multiple countries without needing to get their passport stamped. They also have declined to participate in the EU's various refugee resettlement plans and they took full advantage of their geography to prevent excess asylum seekers from entering their borders (Siegfried). Post Brexit, the United Kingdom will likely not be able "to return asylum seekers to the first country where they registered after arriving in Europe," a procedure called the Dublin Regulation (Siegfried). The more important issue concerning refugees in the U.K. and the E.U. is the current political climate. Xenophobic rhetoric is becoming more mainstream throughout the European Union. For example, Nigel Farage, leader of the far-right U.K. Independence Party, "appropriated an October 2015 photograph of hundreds of refugees crossing the Croatia-Slovenia border… emblazoned with the words 'Breaking Point' and, in the included graphic, 'The EU has failed us all'" (Siegfried). In the era of Twitter, Instagram, and other social media, these sorts of images are meant to rile people even if they are not accurate. Popular U.K. tabloids "are widely known for their anti-migrant and refugee headlines and language" (Boccato). Even current Prime Minister Theresa May makes xenophobic statements to try to

and pander to conservative voters. She has advocated to leave the European Convention on Human Rights, an organization that provides rights for refugees (Siegfried). Under her administration, it has also become more difficult to gain asylum status, appeal their decision in court, and get legal aid (Boccato). Unless politicians and citizens change their stereotypical image of an asylum seeker, more nativist policy will be passed and violence against refugees and asylum seekers will escalate.

A country that has already experienced the rise of far-right, xenophobic rhetoric and political parties in their history is France. The National Front (FN), the party "notorious for its xenophobic platform…[was] created by Jean-Marie Le Pen in 1972," and had the goal of unifying right-wing groups that had not previously been able to harness political power (Rogers 7). The FN's main platform claimed that immigration would lead to the destruction of national identity (Carvalho) and Le Pen used xenophobic rhetoric during the campaign season despite immigration not being an important issue in the 1960s and 1970s (Rogers). In the United States, right-wing, third parties like the FN do not usually become nationally relevant because the winner-take-all electoral system only benefits two parties. However, "French voters have not been dissuaded to vote for the FN" (Carvalho) due to the French electoral system. In France, many candidates will run for a seat in the parliament and if one candidate does not receive a majority of votes after the first round of voting, there is a second ballot between the two candidates that received the most votes. This system allows voters to vote for less conventional candidates in the first round and still have their vote contribute to a more mainstream candidate in the second round. When more parties exist, fringe parties (like the FN) can make their discourse heard and affect elected officials without outright winning elections. For example, President Jacques Chirac reformed the asylum system after the 2002 elections to

make the request times shorter and more restrictive, and "the blend of immigration and integration policies seemed to reflect the shockwaves of Le Pen's electoral result" (Carvalho). Under Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, Interior Minister, proposed a quota system in order to "attain a stronger balance between 'labor immigration and rights immigration'" (Carvalho), a dichotomy reminiscent of the "genuine applicants" and "abusive claimants" of the United Kingdom. These characterizations are shallow and homogenizing, and refugees struggle to overcome these beliefs when they arrive in Europe.

Additionally, the French citizens perceive immigrants, especially refugees from the Middle East or who are not Christian, in a different light than their fellow French citizens. The concept of *laïcité*, defined as secularism, contributes more to French national identity than any religious or cultural identities, and guides French attitudes about immigrants (Thompson). An assimilationist policy at its core, *laïcité* "manifests itself in the repression of cultural differences, rather than the diversification and the integration of different backgrounds" (Thompson). For example, French citizenship is not granted until immigration officials determine that the applicant has assimilated enough (Rogers), which incentivizes homogeneity over diversity and causes refugees to get rid of their culture just so they can avoid violence or bad living conditions in their country of origin.

While Madeleine Thompson argues that secularism through *laïcité* determines how refugees are perceived, Sheri Rogers disagrees and points to Catholicism, the most practiced religion in France, as the determining factor in how French citizens perceive refugees. Rogers argues that Catholicism "was the predominant religion in France [so it] is now part of their social identity," even if they don't practice the faith. Those that don't practice Catholicism are actually more likely to be xenophobic towards refugees because they are "less secure in their cultural

identity and threatened by the loss of Catholic supremacy"
(Rogers). This argument is further supported by the fact that
refugees from the Middle East are more likely to be Muslim,
which would threaten the homogenous French social identity.

These perceptions affect French policy much like President
Trump and terrorism or the U.K. and economic migrants. In
a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, "35% of French
citizens see refugees from Iraq and Syria as a major threat"
(Thompson). These citizens went to the ballot box in the 2017
elections and voted for two anti-establishment candidates to run
against each other instead of the centrist party candidates. In
the second round of voting, Emmanuel Macron ran under his
own political party called En Marche! and Marine Le Pen ran
with the National Front political party. Macron won the election,
but Le Pen garnered more votes than expected. Le Pen, the
daughter of Jean-Marie (who founded the FN), used very similar
rhetoric to her father, claiming that "mass immigration is not an
opportunity for France, it's a tragedy for France" (Dearden). She
used recent terrorist attacks to justify her positions, assuring
her supporters that the attacks would not have happened if she
would have won the election (Dearden). Additionally, Le Pen
posted graphic images of ISIS's prisoners on Twitter in 2015, one
of whom was the murdered American journalist James Foley.
She lost her immunity from prosecution as a result, and she was
quoted as saying, "Better to be a jihadist returning [to France]
from Syria than an MP [member of parliament] who denounces
the abasement of Islamic State: one takes fewer judicial risks"
("Marine Le Pen"). Most importantly, Le Pen advocated to follow
in the United Kingdom's footsteps by leaving the European
Union and Schengen area (Dearden), showing that one election
could have had even bigger repercussions than it already has.
Macron has proposed legislation that "criminalises illegal
border crossing" and "double[s] to 90 days the time a person

without papers can be kept in a holding centre" (Chrisafis). This nativist policy makes it much "more difficult for asylum seekers to defend their rights" (Chrisafis) and it contrasts with Macron's own campaign rhetoric of a more humane asylum policy. His change towards more Le Pen-like policy shows how he has found it politically expedient to be anti-immigrant and anti-refugee. If this policy passes through the French parliament, immigrants both already in France and those trying to immigrate to France will see what few protections they have disappear.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and France have different approaches to their policies concerning refugees, but they all have a rising anti-immigrant sentiment in common. From Le Pen to Trump, politicians are finding out that blaming refugees for problems that they did not cause can gain them votes and put them in positions of power. These beliefs make integration between refugees and native citizens more and more difficult, especially when the refugees come from a completely different culture. Understanding other cultures and being tolerant of others is a necessary first step to integrating refugees into their new countries. Only then can people work together as people, not as "us vs. them" or citizen and refugee, to bring peace to places experiencing conflict and help refugees return to their homes.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. What are the various approaches to refugees and asylum-seekers mentioned in the paper, and how do they differ?
2. What types of policies would address the current issues with immigration?

Style

1. How did the author incorporate definitions in an interesting and natural way throughout the paper?
2. How did the author make use of political and historical examples to advance her point? Identify examples of ethos, pathos, and logos in this paper.

AMERICANS AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

Taylor Cline

Muslim-Americans are among the many marginalized groups facing racist and xenophobic discrimination in the highly politicized and polarized climate we live in today. As the United States became increasingly involved in the Middle East in the late twentieth century and increasingly affected by anti-Western opposition that uses terrorism tactics, Islamophobia within the United States also increased. The media profits off the fear of impending terrorist attacks and sensationalizes every negative portrayal of Muslims to capitalize on this fear. This is the responsibility of primarily the right-wing media, like Fox News, but is enabled by the liberal establishment. Islamophobia is a sentiment pervasive in our society and no one can be found innocent of it. To understand Islamophobia, I think it's important to understand where it comes from and how it's perpetuated. To combat it, a large-scale social media campaign may be beneficial in several ways. First, with the number of people who use social media and watch the news, a social media campaign will inform broader audiences of the facts about Islam, Islamic terrorism, and Islamophobia. Second, by reaching more

people, this social media campaign could be used to hold the media and the government accountable. Ultimately, the goal is to change journalistic and political tactics used by newsmakers to influence public opinion.

Like many people my age, the 9/11 attacks were not something I experienced personally, but I have lived my entire life with their consequences. In the immediate aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, hate incidents against Muslims surged substantially (Ser). There are discrepancies in the reporting of hate crimes towards Muslims. For example, many Islamophobic hate incidents don't actually target Muslims, but individuals who are merely perceived to be Muslim. In February 2017, shortly after President Trump's inauguration, Adam Purinton, a Kansas City man, killed one Indian man and wounded the other while yelling, "Get out of my country!" Hours after the shooting, Purinton remarked to a friend that he had "just killed some Iranians." Several weeks before committing the hate crime, upon seeing the men he later assaulted, "…Purinton commented to a regular sitting at the bar, 'Did you see the terrorists on the patio?'" ("Man admits"). Neither of these men were Muslim or Middle Eastern. The issue is that these hate incidents are not taken nearly as seriously as many hate incidents targeting non-Muslims by our government or the media. Along the same lines, Muslim terrorists and non-Muslim terrorists are not treated the same, either. Non-Muslims' acts are attributed to causes like mental illness while the Muslim is demonized. We don't call the Las Vegas shooter, perpetrator in the worst loss of life due to a mass shooting, a terrorist, but we do call the Muslims who mowed down pedestrians in the Westminster and London Bridge attacks (which occurred in the same year as the Las Vegas shooting) terrorists. In 2001, the FBI reported an increase in hate crimes against Muslims to 481 separate incidents (Zapotosky). The

number of incidents reported decreased in the following years, but still exceeded pre-9/11 levels. Reporting of hate crimes increased in 2010, following the "Ground Zero Mosque" incident and an escalation in Islamophobic rhetoric coming from the right (Lean 181), and again before and after the election of Donald Trump. From 2015 to 2016, the number of anti-Muslim hate groups increased from 34 to 101. Hate crimes increased by 67 percent in 2015, the year Trump launched his campaign, and in the first ten days after his election, the Southern Poverty Law Center found 867 bias-related incidents were reported, with 300 that targeted Muslims or immigrants ("Hate groups"). President Trump's inflammatory rhetoric has not only led to increased hate incidents against most marginalized groups but has also been translated into policy. For example, what Trump and his administration has referred to as his travel ban was and still is largely a Muslim Ban. His first attempt at implementation was on March 6, 2017, and banned travel from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen—all majority Muslim countries. These executive orders have been successfully put down by the judicial system, but Trump shows no sign of letting up on his hateful rhetoric. Many have expressed outrage for Trump's policy towards Muslims, but fail to see how they themselves, the media, and the rest of the government are complicit in perpetuating Islamophobia.

In the United States in the last five decades, the word "terrorist" has gradually become synonymous with Islam. When I was younger, before I knew very much about Islam and the Middle East, this was something I noticed. It wasn't until I began to make an effort to educate myself on these issues, that I really saw where Islamophobia came from. I came to learn that Muslims have not always been considered inherently terroristic by the West. Through my love of history, I learned about the centuries of conflict in the Middle East, most of which seemed

to have been a result of Western colonialism, imperialism, and an unquenchable thirst for oil. In the early twentieth century, the United States supported the right of nations to self-determination, while much of the third-world had been or was in the process of being decolonized after years, decades, or centuries of European colonialism. But, as U.S. economic policy extended outside its territory, particularly the oil-rich regions of the Middle East, and our nation feared the surge and spread of "godless Communism," the U.S. turned increasingly towards favoring Islamist forces in the region (Gerges 75). This cooperation was official policy until the onset of the Arab-Israeli war in 1973. President Anwar Sadat, successor of Gamal Abdel Nasser, took a different stance on leadership than his secular nationalist predecessor, shedding secularism and adopting an increasingly Islamist image. The United States' financial support of Israel during the war led to the Arab OPEC nations implementing an oil boycott. The embargo raised oil prices substantially and with automobiles being a staple, industrially and commercially, in 1970s America, this created an economic crisis and began creating a negative image towards Islam in the minds of many Americans. Important to realize is that Americans are a particularly nationalistic people. We support those who support us, but also have no problem crushing them under our boot heels when they don't do what we like. For example, the Iranian Revolution ousted the American-backed Shah of Iran, who was part of a 2,500-year-old monarchical line. The Shah was replaced by Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in an Islamic Republic. Khomeini was supported by both Islamist and leftist groups. The subsequent hostage crisis that lasted 444 days at the American embassy in Tehran, and was an act made in support for that Revolution, traumatized many Americans. This, along with fears of the Islamic Revolution destabilizing the region led to increasingly negative views of

Muslims. An article by Jennifer Williams in *Vox* ruminated on changing attitudes towards Muslims in America:

> As historian Edward E. Curtis IV notes, 'When Iranian students took over the American embassy and kidnapped dozens of embassy personnel, many U.S. citizens also became enraged. Hate crimes against Muslims, Arabs, Iranians, and South Asians rose in the United States.'

Similar to the trends in Islamophobia we see now, many Americans were unable to compartmentalize the actions of these groups from other Muslims, projecting this image of the irrational, extremist terrorist on all 1.6 billion Muslims.

Then, in 1993, a group of terrorists set off a truck bomb in front of the North Tower of the World Trade Center. This terrorist act was, like the oil boycott, in response to the United States' support of Israel against Palestine. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Hollywood studios produced film after film that portrayed the radicalized, gun-toting Arab Muslim, seething with anti-American rage (Love 411). By the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing, this distinction was so cemented that it was automatically assumed that Muslims were responsible for the attack. In the three days after, there were over 200 violent attacks against Muslim Americans (Gerges 80). This notion of Muslim involvement was supported by the media outlets on both the left and the right. After the September 11, 2001 attack on the Twin Towers, these ideas of the Muslim as dangerous and prone to terrorism were deeply cemented into the American psyche. Since 9/11, there have been a substantial number of terrorist attacks that have come to affect the United States and the rest of the Western world. The Investigative Fund, a group that has catalogued terrorism incidents from 2008 and 2016, found that of 201 separate instances of terrorism, only

13 percent of perpetrators were foreign-born. Only one percent of the 201 incidents came from the predominantly Muslim countries that are part of President Trump's March 6 travel ban (Neiwert). Notably, of the attacks examined, more can be attributed to right-wing extremists than to Islamist extremists. Before 9/11, the deadliest terrorist attack in recent memory was the Oklahoma City bombing, perpetrated by two white nationalist, red-blooded Americans. Despite this, the news still perpetuates the lingering anxiety over the possibility of an Islamic extremist terrorist attack. For example, "A *New York Times* commentator asserted that although the Oklahoma massacre was the work of American terrorists, most 'other attacks against Americans came from the Middle East.'" (Gerges 79). As we have seen, this isn't true.

    As I mentioned previously, this irrational fear of Muslims has not always existed in the United States. Even before America's first real involvement with the Middle East, there was a prevailing image of those from areas outside of Europe and Northern America as "other." Orientalism is a long-standing tradition in Western culture. It's a term with old roots, but Edward Said's book *Orientalism*, published in 1978, redefined the term as an ideology that the West uses to justify domination of the rest of the world. Orientalist thought "draws on a civilizational view of history" and divides the world between the Occident and the Orient. The Occident, or Western civilization, poses as superior to the Orient. Orientalism relies on an idea of these two "civilizations" being isolated from each other, and with entirely different values. To an orientalist, the achievements of humanity, such as freedom, rationality and science, among others, are considered the core values of the Occident. The Orient as the antithesis of the West is therefore backward and savage, with its people unable to reason (Kumar 257–258). It's within this framing of Orientalism that Islamophobia gets its

origins. It presents the image of the "Oriental" as incapable
of reason and democracy, as inherently violent. Orientalism's
"clash of civilizations" that are mutually exclusive, provides a
justification for the fear and hate that Muslims face in the post-
9/11 world.

Unfortunately, Muslims are not the only group that
have experienced such xenophobia in the United States. The
xenophobia that affects Muslims doesn't *just* affect Muslims. It's
important to understand and remember that Islamophobia is
not only an instance of xenophobia but also a form of racism. The
Muslim community, comprised of 1.6 billion people, is incredibly
diverse. They come from many different national, ethnic and
cultural backgrounds. Alternatively, by virtue of having certain
skin tones, accents, or wearing a hijab or a turban, individuals
are assumed to be Muslim and become victim to discrimination
and assault. Many people find this way of thinking reasonable,
but these individuals are often deeply prejudiced in other ways
as well. Nevertheless, the reality is, most Muslim Americans are
not Arab and most Arab Americans aren't Muslim (Love 402–
403). Not only this, but according to the United States Census,
people from the broadly defined Middle Eastern region legally
count as racially white (Love 404). While they don't benefit from
white privilege, they also don't benefit from the protections
applied to people with protected racial characteristics, despite
being highly racialized by those around them. Furthermore,
the religion of Islam is actually extremely diverse in itself.
This diversity tends to confuse the data collected on hate
incidents when, meanwhile, many still try to push the image
of a homogenous Muslim community. The perceived notion
that a small group of radical people within the religion is
representative of the entire religious community is patently false
when one looks at the true diversity within.

Despite Islamophobia having been a part of American society for a long time, it has become so normalized in our society that many don't think to second guess it or to do anything to eradicate it. It's supported by our government and it's mostly manufactured by the conservative media while being enabled by the liberal establishment who fails to discredit it. This is why there hasn't been much done to eradicate it. Often, I feel like the only person in my community who seems to be concerned about it, even amongst the liberal members of my friends and family. To truly combat Islamophobia, I think it's important to understand the frames from which Islamophobes perceive Muslims and to understand that this framing is something that permeates very deeply in our society's conscience. Deepa Kumar names five "taken-for-granted" frames through which Americans and the West see Muslims in her article, "Framing Islam." These frames are that, "Islam is a monolithic religion, Islam is a uniquely sexist religion, the 'Muslim mind' is incapable of rationality and science, Islam is inherently violent, [and] the West spreads democracy, while Islam spawns terrorism" (Kumar 254). These are the frames through which many see Muslims. They are developed from a long tradition of Orientalism in the culture of Western Civilization.

By looking at the most blatant Islamophobic rhetoric that is manufactured by far right ideologues, we can understand what it looks like and how to invalidate it. Deepa Kumar in "Mediating Racism" names the group of right-wing ideologues responsible for manufacturing Islamophobia the "new McCarthyites" (9). Much like Joseph McCarthy stirred hysteria during the Red Scare, the right is responsible for stirring hatred towards Muslims and a fear of impending Islamist terrorist attacks. There are many examples of this McCarthyite Islamophobia being manufactured by the media, who sensationalizes terrorist

attacks and uses politically charged terms to describe Muslim or Middle Eastern perpetrators. This creates a sense of anxiety regarding national and personal security and a fear of Muslims. Some of this Islamophobia is inherently malicious. As evidenced earlier in this essay, following emotionally charged events like terrorist attacks where the perpetrator is Muslim—and sometimes when they aren't—hate incidents against the Muslim American community increase. Some may argue that it shouldn't matter how the news projects a terrorist attack to the public, because it *is* terrorism. Unfortunately, a Muslim terrorist is not treated the same by the news as a non-Muslim terrorist. The way they are projected to society by the news impacts the way that people view them and how they view terrorism.

Why is the way the news talks about terrorism and Muslims a problem? The media and public policy are very interrelated. The media is a dominant part of popular culture and has the ability to set the agenda. Politicians and policy makers watch the news, too, and they aren't immune to relying on the news for the appropriate framing of an issue. If a piece of news is being shared through an Islamophobic frame, and few bother to critique or examine it, the message is accepted and has the potential to be made public policy. Media coverage affects how the public learns, understands, or thinks about an issue (Powell 93). There are many notable instances of the way the framing of news concerning Muslims affects the way the public views them. The "Ground Zero Mosque" was meant to be a 13-story community center that would feature a mosque, a few blocks away from the location of the former Twin Towers. The man behind the plan, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, aimed for it to be a space for a peaceful interfaith dialogue, hoping that by bringing in individuals from all faiths, he could help promote a greater understanding of Islam. Response to this project was initially very positive on all parts of the political spectrum, but,

Pamela Geller, author of the blog *Atlas Shrugs* and a far-right, McCarthyite conservative, expressed outrage when the Lower Manhattan Community Board voted overwhelmingly in favor of the community center project. Her extremist rhetoric against Muslims was spread within the far-right internet community and then spread to the primary newsmakers. Not only did it spread to the likes of Fox News, a conservative media outlet, but it was also adopted by liberal outlets as well, like CNN and the *New York Times* (Lean 42). One article falsely claimed that the opening was set for September 11, 2011. Another key fabricator of the conspiracy of the "Ground Zero Mosque" is Robert Spencer, also a blogger and a book author. Despite having no background in Islamic Studies or any related field, he heralds himself as an expert on Islam and the Middle East (Lean 59). His rhetoric has been used by many on the right to justify Islamophobia and for taking the rights of Muslim and Arab-Americans away. This hysteria over the "monster mosque," as Geller called it, then reached mainstream figures like Newt Gingrich and Sarah Palin, further increasing media coverage (Kumar 12). The "Ground Zero Mosque" became the target of a false and misguided rage from the conservative right. Members of this community also peddle the myth that there is a conspiracy by Muslims to overtake the U.S. government, that Islamists have infiltrated all levels of American society and that President Barack Hussein Obama was a secret Muslim, born in Kenya (Kumar 16).

These instances of manufactured Islamophobia by the right are concerning, but they are merely a small part of a much larger scheme. Unfortunately, as long as the United States and the rest of the Western world are dependent on oil, there will be conflict in the Middle East, and those that support American Imperialism will likely continue to support Islamophobia. Addressing the issue of Islamophobia ultimately means

acknowledging the role that the United States has played in
destabilizing the Middle East. They *will* have to acknowledge it
if we make an effort to call out Islamophobia when we see it and
disprove irrational frames of viewing Muslims. In September
2017, I went to a guest lecture at the University of Missouri-
Kansas City called "Dismantling Islamophobia." This lecture
provided the history of Islam, the myths about Islam, and how
to dismantle Islamophobia and address it in interpersonal
connections. Attendants of this lecture were few and largely
faculty. Though this is a touring lecture, it only reached a small
sample of the population—and mostly people who already had
a knowledge of Islam and a desire to combat Islamophobia.
A campaign like my creative solution will reach a broader
audience.

While there hasn't been much done to combat Islamophobia
on a national or international scale, there have been studies
that aim to examine the way the media addresses Islamophobia,
and how Muslims are portrayed. Kimberly Powell, in her article
"Framing Islam," looks at 11 terrorist events and examines
the way labeling a framing differs between Muslim and non-
Muslim perpetrators. Powell points out that terrorists have a
message that they ultimately want to reach broader audiences.
Widespread coverage of terrorist attacks and perpetrators
provides maximum impact in that it creates a "climate of
fear among the population, focusing government attention,
economic resources, and military resources on fighting a 'War
on Terror'" (Powell 92). Not only does the way the news provides
coverage of Muslims negatively impact Muslims, but it also
aids terrorist groups in recruiting individuals who may feel that
their country dehumanizes them and doesn't value them as
citizens. Powell names five different themes in media coverage
of terrorism, both domestic and international. One theme is
labeling the suspect as Muslim before there is certainty of

the suspect's identity or motive. In these 11 cases, a link to Al Qaeda was suggested by news outlets, again before there was certainty of identity or evidence. This constructs terrorism as a problem from outside the United States, from the Middle East. When the suspect is Muslim with no link to Al Qaeda, or non-Muslim, terrorism is viewed as less of a threat. By being a domestic terrorist, terrorism is viewed as less of an existential threat (Powell 95–98). Domestic agents, particularly non-Muslim ones, are personalized; references are made to their family ties, intellect, and mental instability. The focus is on an individual cause as opposed to a larger looming threat of the international agent who may or may not be involved in a terror cell. International and Muslim agents are labeled extremist and are not humanized. Suspects of other religions, particularly Christianity, are not labeled extremist (Powell 99–107). What's important to note about Powell's research is that little attention is paid to what sociopolitical and economic context led to the terrorist attack and when the perpetrator is Muslim they are merely fighting a "War for Islam" (Powell 108).

Another study called, "On-Screen Muslims: Media Priming and Consequences for Public Policy" looked at the effect of negative coverage of Muslims on the views of college students. Some of the studies used as references in this document are 10 to 11 years old, but much of the data recorded there is still useful. College students tend to be more left-leaning these days than those in this study, though these results may have been reliant on the college evaluated. Nonetheless, Andersen et al. found that individuals who scored the lowest on the knowledge scale were most negatively disposed towards Arabs (204). The news sacrifices accuracy and complexity in order to get a story that is going to be entertaining and everyday people don't have the time to seek out information to fact-check (Andersen et al.

205). Additionally, the media reports on "Muslim" terrorists or terrorism but not on "Christian" terrorists or terrorism (Andersen et al. 206). The study looks at the effect different kinds of news coverage, comedy, and entertainment portrayals have on the college students surveyed. It found that negative hard news portrayals of Muslims, versus the positive hard news portrayals, led respondents to be more likely to support identity-based policies and restricting civil liberties. This was the same for negative entertainment portrayals, despite being fictional (Andersen et al. 215–216). While the sample used in the study was small and largely non-representative, it does provide some insight. If people rely on the news for social and political information, then the way that the media portrays Muslims is going to have an effect on whether or not these people will support restrictions to civil liberties on Muslims and other identity-based policies.

The study, "News Exposure Predicts Anti-Muslim Prejudice," also finds that news coverage has an impact on the way people view Muslims. Taking place in New Zealand with a diverse national sample of around 16,000, the study looks at how negative news coverage of Muslims affects measures of anger or warmth towards Muslims, Arabs, or Asians. The Muslim population in New Zealand is 63.1% Asian with 21% being Arab. Notably, depictions of Muslims in the media in New Zealand and the rest of the Western world are "overwhelmingly Arab" (Shaver et al. 1–2). Negative news coverage of Muslims was found to increase anger and decrease warmth towards Muslims and Arabs, with little change towards perceptions of Asians, the majority ethnicity for Muslims in New Zealand. There was a "positive relationship between greater media exposure and greater anger toward Muslims [which] is consistent across the political spectrum," meaning a tolerant ideology doesn't make

people immune to Islamophobia (Shaver et al. 8). If negative news coverage of Muslims and Arabs in the media in New Zealand, considered to be a tolerant society where the majority of Muslims aren't Arab, creates increased anger towards Arabs and Muslims, this study poses some serious considerations for not only my solution, but also other efforts to address the issue. Additionally, Shaver et al. claim that "Islamic extremists are attacking Western targets to maximize the effects of media induced anger," making it even more important to combat Islamophobia in the media in the ongoing "War on Terror" (15).

While very little effort has been made to address the use of Islamophobia by the media, these studies can aid in my campaign against Islamophobia through social media. These studies have found that negative news coverage of Muslims has an impact on the way that people view Muslims and Arabs. Substantial numbers of Americans rely on the news to provide information about politics, society, and any potential threats. Coverage of Muslims is overwhelmingly negative and creates an increased sense of fear towards Muslims in general, not just Islamic extremists. With this in mind, I introduce my creative solution to this issue that plagues American society. I propose a social media campaign that would cross all major platforms: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, respectively. This campaign would be volunteer-based and originate from a website, which would include a mission statement, tips for participants, and access to other reliable resources. These resources would include basic, non-biased information on Islam and Middle Eastern issues, as well as support for participants on how to fact-check and identify Islamophobia. The campaign would have its own accounts on the major social media platforms and would utilize whatever tagging system that is specific to that website. I recommend the hashtag "#AmericansAgainstIslamophobia"

because it calls to the sense of nationalism and patriotism that is pervasive in American society. Virality of content on the internet is a phenomenon of the times we live in today. Participants will aim to make the hashtag and various forms of callout posts viral to reach the greatest number of people.

While the campaign accounts will be responsible for sharing essential information for participants and sharing other resources, it will also be on the frontlines of the campaign effort to call out Islamophobic rhetoric and behavior. It would be recommended that participants include the hashtag or some variant in their profile description, as well as in actual callout posts. The campaign mission statement should emphasize the right to free speech and freedom of the press. Many will likely see this campaign as an attack on both. The campaign should make a point of emphasizing the rights of *participants* (who may or may not be Muslim or Arab-American) and those they are defending—Muslims and Arab-Americans.

Ultimately, the goal of this campaign will be to teach people to recognize Islamophobia, to effectively call it out, and hopefully to reform media practices. Participants would focus primarily on media sources, but also on individuals who use Islamophobic rhetoric and behaviors. Sharing Deepa Kumar's five frames will help people understand the myths through which people identify Muslims. Historical information about the history of the Middle East and Islam will not only inform participants, but will also give them information for when they do confront Islamophobia. Statistical information about hate incidents against Muslims, as well as information on Islamist terrorism, would be provided, with emphasis on the low probability and occurrence of such terrorism in the United States. Likely, many callouts will be perceived as an attack on journalistic integrity. Among the resources on the campaign website, it would be beneficial to have

various analyses and arguments of the purpose of a free press, which is to provide information to the people and act as a check on governmental power. In regard to Islamophobia, the press is not upholding either.

By holding the media accountable, participants will be able to push the discourse about Muslims and Arabs in a more tolerant direction. This will create a dialogue between the constituent and the media about the way that the United States government, society, and individuals view and treat Muslims. Furthermore, the news plays a large role in creating public policy, just as public policy plays a role in what makes the news. Policies like the Patriot Act and other restrictions of Muslim and Arab civil liberties have largely been accepted by the general population. In some ways, President Trump won the 2016 election on a call to ban all Muslims from the United States. Throughout his campaign, Trump called for a "Muslim ban," as in a ban on all Muslims from entering the country. The Democracy Fund Voter Study Group found, "White voters who went from voting for President Barack Obama in 2012 to backing Trump in 2016 were motivated in part by their views on Muslims as well as immigration and blacks" (Scott).

By holding the media accountable, we would also be holding our government and representatives accountable. This could change the tide and create more tolerant public policy towards Muslims, Arabs, and individuals who may be perceived as either. In many ways, this campaign would be a grass-roots campaign, the goal being to influence public policy through the media, which should be the tool of the people, not the establishment government. This will not only benefit individuals who are targeted by Islamophobic hate, but it will also benefit American society. Creating tolerant atmospheres of open dialogue about the things that make us

different, but still uniquely American, will open avenues for the elimination of other prejudices. It wasn't until after the Civil Rights movement that the Civil Rights Act was passed and African Americans were legally allowed to vote. Eliminating excessive negative coverage of Muslims will not only create a more positive perception but may also aid in the fight against extremist Islamist terrorism. Terrorist groups like the Islamic State rely heavily on social media to spread their message and recruit disillusioned individuals. Tolerance towards Muslims will create less disillusioned individuals, and more positive coverage will make it harder for them to spread that message. A grassroots campaign is required to make any real progress, because in the 16 years since the September 11th attacks on the United States, the animosity towards Muslims has remained largely unchanged. Pew Research has found that between 2015 and 2016, hate crimes against Muslims surpassed levels in the aftermath of 9/11 (Kishi). Katayoun Kishi points out that assault is not the only form of hate crime, which can also include intimidation and property damage. It's important to keep in mind that not all hate incidents are reported, meaning the data we do have can't convey the full scope of the problem.

Hate incidents targeting individuals who are Muslim or are perceived as Muslim rose substantially in the days following President Trump's election. Extremist Islamist terrorism continues to target the United States and the Western world. My creative solution will benefit everyone in American society, even people who couldn't care less about the rights of Muslims. By holding the media accountable, this solution would raise awareness of Islamophobia, clear some of the fog that seems to obscure the way to the eradication of terrorism, and hopefully change public policy used by the government. Other attempts to do so have had little actual progress. Lectures like UMKC's

"Dismantling Islamophobia" only reach small audiences of individuals who are already invested in the cause. A solution like mine would be more successful in reaching more people, especially people who are Islamophobic. Through social media, the movement to combat Islamophobia could make a real impact and promote a dialogue through the use of one of humanity's greatest technologies, the internet.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. What are some of the historical roots for Islamophobia in the United States?
2. In what ways do different presidencies, political opinions, and news stories affect the public view of Islam and / or Muslim people?
3. What can individuals do to help eliminate Islamophobia in American culture?

Style

1. How did the author utilize sources in building a claim for the presence of Islamophobia in American society?
2. What is the effect of proposing a problem and offering a solution to the problem, as the author does in this paper? Who might be the intended audience of this paper?

The Price of Mental Illness
A Black and White Issue

Jasmine Salem

Since the 1980s, the suicide rate has increased by 146 percent for African American male youth (Ward and Mengesha). This is truly an alarming statistic, and such a drastic rise in suicides speaks to the multitude of underlying issues of mental health care in the Black male population. While this group of people already faces far more racism and discrimination than the majority of America, the added existence of mental illness increases obstacles. When an individual is a Black man and has a mental illness or disorder, the institutions and mindsets in are even more dangerous. This intersectional identity creates very complex problems. This varies from the way society as a whole views this marginalized group, the way physicians and the health care system view this group, and the way this group views themselves. There is resistance and issues on all these fronts which must be discussed with the prospect of solutions in the future. The historically present negative mindset in place towards Black men fuels many issues for those suffering from mental illness. These problems include the effects of systemic racism, the flaws

in diagnosis of mental illness, and finally the factors in place that lend themselves to a vicious cycle of mental illness for Black African Americans. While the problems seem boundless, change for the better can begin with addressing the systemic roots, using holistic diagnosis, and battling stigma.

Mental illness undeniably affects every ethnicity and gender, and anyone can suffer from the effects of mental illness. While that is widely accepted, the idea that Black men suffer just as much as any other group is not. There are many reasons for this stereotypical stance. For one, this can be traced to the historically racist views that have dehumanized Black men. Mental illness in the African American community has been described as a "silent epidemic" (Lowe). This "epidemic" is caused by many factors, but one reason is the belief that being diagnosed as mentally ill is the same as being labeled a societal threat (Lowe). In acknowledging a mental illness, Black men would be leaving themselves open to more forms of discrimination and racism. Overall, there is the common feeling among African Americans that they cannot acknowledge a mental illness due to the way they will be perceived (Lowe). This is cause for great concern, considering it leaves them less likely to seek treatment.

Furthermore, deep-rooted racism leads to these harmful perceptions. During the era of slavery in the United States, an escaped slave would be diagnosed as insane by physicians; it was so common that they named the so-called condition "drapetomania" (Goodheart). The diagnosing of slaves was not limited to escaped slaves. Those who were perceived as disrespectful or prone to misbehavior were also labeled as mentally ill. The condition for a particularly bold slave was named *dysaesthesia aethiopis* (Lowe). Obviously, this was a way to force submission into this group of people, and this connection leaves the African American population

apprehensive still. It is clear that throughout the United States' history, mental illness was used as a weapon against African Americans. By being claimed mentally ill, slaves could be blamed and reformed in a way that slave owners and society in general saw fit. Author and founder of a Black brotherhood group, Marcus Murray, writes that "race and insanity share a long and troubled past" (Lowe). This long and troubled past most certainly contributes to the way the Black community views mental illness today.

While a historical racism lends itself to the ill effects on Black men today, present and unyielding racism perpetuates this dilemma. Various studies and researchers have linked racism as a contributor to depression in African American men. One form of racism that has a heavy impact on this group is micro-aggressions. Micro-aggressions are subtle and covert ways in which Black men, as well as other minorities, are treated. For example, a woman clutching her purse when she walks by a Black man is considered a micro-aggression. While micro-aggressions are not glaringly obvious, they are constant, and their subtlety leads to a lack of acknowledgement, which can wear down the morale of a person. In a study done by Dr. Chester Pierce, he found micro-aggressions to induce higher stress in African American men due to their nature of being so constant (Hankerson et al.). This study is supported by another, where micro-aggressions can be blamed for "[triggering] a host of emotional and cognitive responses which can heighten risk of psycho-pathology, including onset of depression" (Molina and James). There is a consensus among many professionals that the toll of perpetual micro-aggressions has a link to the onset of depression. Due to the high volume of micro-aggressions experienced by Black men in particular, a link can be established between experiencing micro-aggressions and being at a higher risk for depression.

    The presence of micro-aggressions is part of a much larger problem. Institutional racism permeates society, placing African Americans at a great disadvantage in terms of their socioeconomic status, the education they can receive, and the health care available to them. African Americans, due to the fact that they represent a disproportionate amount of the poor in comparison to the general population, are at higher risks for mental illness (Banks and Kohn-Wood). In a clinical study of African Americans with depression, it was found that the lack of social movement afforded to Black individuals could have a link to an "impaired psychological functioning" (Hankerson et al.). When this demographic must constantly endure a national system of oppression, ill feelings result and can be linked to mental illness (depression in particular). Unfortunately, the racism that affects Black men does not solely come from external sources; internal racism has an alarming effect as well on the mental stability of this group.

    The micro-aggressions previously mentioned can lend themselves to internalized racism amidst the African American population. Internalized racism occurs when a person begins to attribute racist remarks or stereotypes made by others to his or her racial group or even self (Molina and James). In a study conducted on internalized racism, it was found that "everyday discrimination was positively associated with internalized racism" (Molina and James). Internalizing the views of society can have extremely negative effects. This is due to the fact that it enforces the ideals of white supremacy, particularly the idea that Black lives are worth less; this is detrimental to self-esteem and feeling low self-worth. It is clear racism has played a large role in the field of mental health, from dictating what it means to be a Black man with mental illness to being a large predictor of depression in the African American community.

    While racism can contribute to mental illness, it also

influences the treatment that Black men receive. Clinician bias, misdiagnosis of patients, and overuse of medication versus alternative therapies are just some of the ways that this manifests. To begin with, it is not uncommon for a clinician to approach a Black man with bias regarding their intelligence, their legitimacy, or other facets. In one study, it was seen that a portion of clinicians "underestimates the cognitive capacity of African American men," which leads to a misdiagnosis (Hankerson et al.). The same study found that generally negative views of African American men results in an over-diagnosis of schizophrenia in the Black male population, and a low diagnosis rate of depression (Hankerson et al.). Schizophrenia is characterized by hallucinations, a possibility for violence towards oneself or others, and an overall faulty perception of reality. Depression is a disorder with none of these symptoms, except for potential self-harm. If these disorders are so similar, then what is the explanation behind the misdiagnosis? It can be hypothesized that because some clinician bias stereotypes Black men as less intelligent, they are less likely to attribute their complaints to a mood disorder and heavily rely on schizophrenia (Hankerson et al.). In other words, because many clinicians are not practiced in treating people of color, they will be less likely to recognize the cultural and socioeconomic implications that may lead to differing presentation of symptoms. Unfortunately, this occurrence is linked to the lack of exposure and experience from health care providers.

Moreover, the way that the staff treat these patients is also problematic. There have been findings of prejudices from many staff members caring for these patients; some admit to feeling "wary of the Black community…and fearful of young Black men" (Keating and Robertson). The disproportionate diagnosis of schizophrenia in Black men is an issue in and of itself. It is

characterized as a more violent and aggressive illness, and a clinician with a bias about the behavior of Black men tends to rely heavily on this diagnosis (Hankerson et al.). Schizophrenia is also characterized by paranoia; clinicians have falsely interpreted a mistrust from Black male patients as a symptom of an illness, rather than a symptom of a being brought up in a health care system where Black lives are undervalued and underserved (Hankerson et al.). Clearly, the perception of Black men leads to faltering treatment and care.

This problem persists inside prison walls as well. Far too often, Black men are criminalized to the point where outside identities take a backseat to their perceived criminality. When this is the case, it is more important that a "threat to society" is taken out of the equation, rather than receive the mental health treatment that they not only need, but deserve. Currently in the U.S., "both ethnic minorities and persons with mental illness are overrepresented"; despite this, "ethnic minorities are less likely than European Americans to receive mental health treatment" (Ricks et al.). While ethnic minorities are in just as much need, or arguably more so, of mental health treatment, there is a clear disparity seen between those who are white with mental illness and those who are Black with mental illness. By studying the imprisoned populations, other factors that might take effect on treatment in the outside world (like poverty, access to certain resources, etc.,) are no longer influencing treatment. Should everyone imprisoned have access to the same types of medical services? One might think so, but this is not the case. While things like financial status and societal status are no longer a part of the equation, race is still seen as a dividing line for mental health treatment.

When the diagnosis and the doctors making the diagnoses are flawed, it is impossible to get accurate medical treatment. One major flaw with medical treatment for African American

men is that there is far more medication use in comparison to their white counterparts. In a study done by doctors of a mental health center, it was discovered that there is an "overuse of psychotropic medication…[and] the forcible administration of medication and contentious staff-user interactions" (Keating and Robertson). This study exhibits two issues with treatment. One is that there are more drugs used than necessary. It has been proven and supported continuously that a holistic approach to treatment is the most successful form of treatment for mental illness, yet Black men are far less likely to be given alternative therapies and counseling than their white counterparts (Keating and Robertson). The other problem presented is that these interactions between hospital staff and patients are horrible; the lack of trust results in patients who are less likely to seek treatment again in the future. The treatment is glaringly lacking, and room for improvement and progress exists.

All of the factors that contribute to negative experiences for Black men with mental illness create a seemingly endless cycle that feeds into their lives in a detrimental way. In addition to the racism that contributes to this cycle, there is the mindset and the stigma that resides within the African American community as well. There is a lot of negative connotation with mental illness, and this can contribute to the fact that only thirty percent of Black men seek treatment, in comparison to 51 percent of white men who seek treatment (Ward and Mengesha). While the reasons behind this statistic are many, there are studies to shed light on why this may be.

To begin with, the concept of masculinity and what it means to be a "real man" weighs heavy on the African American community. For Black men with depression, it was found that the manifestation of the illness differed from how it manifested in women and white men. In particular, it was seen that Black

men were more prone to behavior that was external and visible. These behaviors included "substance abuse and over-working" (Hankerson et al.). It makes sense that Black men would be more likely to use their mental illness as a way to externalize their masculinity, rather than to admit to their self-perceived weakness and seek treatment. For many in the community, seeking treatment is linked to "weakness and diminished pride" (Ward and Mengesha). This is in part due to Afrocentric values that are central to the lives of the Black community. When people who associated highly with these values were studied, it was found that there was a "greater perceived stigma about counseling and a greater likelihood of withholding sensitive information" (Ward and Mengesha). What can be taken away from this finding is that certain beliefs leave Black men less willing to subject themselves to vulnerability. This is not surprising, considering that, culturally, being masculine and strong is very important to them.

In similar fashion to self-perception, the way that society in general regards mental illness also makes Black men fearful of being diagnosed. When they already feel feared and ostracized, they do not want to increase their chances of social distance, as they believe that "being socially excluded…[has] an adverse effect on their life opportunities" (Keating and Robertson). Keating and Robertson go on to state that Black men are the most feared group in the general public. In a society where being Black is already a disadvantage, why would Black men want to further distance themselves by seeking treatment? One study points out that Black men compose "the social group to which the greatest level of fear seems to be directed" in both the general public and the mental health population as well (Keating and Robertson). This is incredibly dangerous and fuels mental illness in their community for several reasons.

To begin with, not seeking treatment increases the risk of

more mental health issues in the future. There is a pattern in the African American community of repeated hospitalizations, victimizations, and adverse effects of mental illness. This pattern effects Black men more than white men (Policastro et al.). Among the many reasons for the repeated victimization of Black men lies the fact that the treatment they receive is not culturally sensitive, and is ineffective (Policastro et al.) Due to the knowledge that this group of people is at an institutionalized disadvantage means that other factors need to be considered, including the culture and background of the individual. When this approach is not taken (which it often is not), then treatment does not work and this has dire effects. Among these effects is the fact that "Black persons are over-represented within high-need populations such as the homeless and the incarcerated; here is where this cycle can be seen feeding into itself. A mentally ill person is less likely to be able to maintain a stable job, and this results in poverty. Poverty is a huge risk factor for criminal behavior and thus incarceration. Incarcerated mentally ill individuals (particularly Black men) have been proven to receive poor care as previously mentioned. Black men incarcerated at a young age are released to a society that is not very forgiving; gaining employment is difficult and healthcare is poor. This threatens both the physical and psychological health of these young men, and in turn can "increase the odds of re-offense and re-institutionalization," (Perkins et al.). If mental illness is also at play, then a lack of treatment influences this cycle heavily. When there is never any proper treatment, whether that be inside or outside a jail, then the cycle perpetuates. There are seemingly very few solutions. Regardless of whether someone has been imprisoned or not, everyone is deserving of proper care, including mental health care; there is no reason for certain groups in society to receive less than any other group.

This disheartening cycle can often lead to suicide as well. As mentioned, there has been a rise in suicides among young Black men by 146 percent since the 1980s (Calloway). This is a staggering statistic that begs an explanation. In addition, when treatment fails or when it is avoided altogether, this leaves individuals more likely to resort to drug abuse, which again can lead to imprisonment, worsening symptoms of mental illness, and unfortunately even suicide (Calloway). Each risk factor present loops back into the main cause; when mental illness is not addressed, there are many other areas in which Black men suffer. Clearly, the system is not working; mental illness has such a negative impact on the lives of Black men. While all can suffer from mental illness regardless of race or ethnic background, Black men have been found to "have depressive episodes that are more disabling, more persistent, and more resistant to treatment relative to their White counterparts," (Hankerson et al.). Obviously when they are coming from an already disadvantaged background, Black men are going to experience more adverse effects.

From the systemic causes that undermine arguably every Black individual to the flawed medical treatment, clearly there is a need for change. Despite the role played in the history of the United States, today Black men are still punished by not being provided with equal treatment or access to resources. It is well past time to rectify these wrongs. While there are numerous obstacles and a seemingly endless list of areas in need of reform, change must start from somewhere. The best way to approach a solution for the way in which mental illness and the lives of Black men intersect is to begin with addressing and rectifying the system origins that continually plague the Black community. Moving forward from there, treatment must be redefined, from the background of the caregivers to the ways in which Black patient assessment and diagnosis

are conducted. Finally, stigmas must be addressed, as they perpetuate the continued evasion of seeking treatment.

To begin with, systemic racism has been identified as a large proponent of this dilemma. Obviously beginning at the root source of any problem is the best approach; if the source survives then any surface solutions will eventually suffer to the racism that lies in the center of this plight. In one study, it is stated that because the Black community contains a large amount of disadvantaged peoples who rely on the government for treatment, they do not get the best treatment (Policastro et al.). It is stated that limiting the disadvantages in the community will result in more funding allocated towards areas like mental health (Policastro et al.). When the entire community is disadvantaged, it is easy to put mental health at the back of the priority list. By improving the quality of the community first, there no longer needs to be a high demand for limited resources.

In addition to addressing the systemic source of the issue, the health care needs to be reevaluated. Currently, African American patients are treated without an acknowledgment of factors that separate them from white counterparts. It has been proven time and time again that holistic treatment of patients is the most successful (Hankerson et al.). What a holistic treatment means is that a Black patient should be evaluated with consideration for cultural implications, such as stigmas and attitudes towards mental illness, racial victimization, such as micro-aggressions and overt racism, and finally consideration of the implications of living in a racially polarized society. While it is important to treat any patient with consideration to background and experience, it is particularly important in the case of Black men because a lack of proper treatment leads to misdiagnosis and dismissal of the patients who do seek help. Cognitive therapy is also a way that

can improve the quality of mental health care. As previously stated, Black men tend to be over-diagnosed with schizophrenia over mood disorders, and therefore are prescribed heavier doses of medications which is chosen over cognitive therapies. The success of cognitive therapy is evident in all communities, and is even more productive when combined with other treatments. It is a much better option in comparison to relying on drugs alone, especially when these drugs lend themselves to their own risks of substance abuse, which can have a more detrimental effect than no treatment at all. The concept of equal treatment is proven to be ineffective. Black men need to be evaluated with systemic inequities in mind. Due to this unique background, the systems in place should incorporate "mandatory training for health care professionals in ethnic sensitive interventions and practices" (Calloway). Essentially, different demographics need different care, and the same does not always mean equal.

While the treatment and assessment of patients needs to change, so does the quality of the medical care providers. It has been shown that "cultural diversity in health care" will improve the rapport between Black patients and nurses and staff, as well as enhance the treatment (Policastro et al.). A more diverse background of psychiatric care providers would result in a more understanding team and a more engaged patient population. This has the added benefit of improving the likelihood of a patient returning to health care, which aids in preventing the cycle of mental illness to perpetuate in the lives of future generations as well (Keating and Robertson). In addition to a diverse staff, a caring staff is a necessity. In a research study conducted, Black men were less likely to return to treatment or seek treatment again in the future when their doctors made them feel inferior. Some instances of this were being unattended for a long stretch of time, lazy

and uncommunicative body language, degrading treatment, and being addressed as less intelligent (Calloway). Clearly this type of treatment should be unacceptable in any setting, and replacing this type of provider with one who is doing their job of proper health care is a fundamental right. The team of healthcare providers needs to act as a support team for the patient, and not as a superior group that is threatening and demeaning to its patients. In the study mentioned, "all of the Black men…reported unevenness in treatment by White doctors" (Calloway). This should be fixed by incorporating race and culture into the treatment as well as forming a community that "specifically [reaches] out to African American men…through education, economics, health promotion and intervention initiatives that are aimed specifically at this population" (Calloway). This circles back to the need for a health care team that cares about the success of its patients, and recognizes the importance of what it means to be a Black man seeking treatment in the United States.

Finally, the mindsets around mental illness need to change as well. This is of particular importance in the Black community, and specifically in Black men. With mental illness being viewed as weak, Black men are less likely to be open to seeking treatment for an ailment they believe would label them weak as well. There is also the belief in the African community that mental health care returns to racist behavior and subjecting oneself to treatment is equivalent to subjecting oneself to racism (Keating and Robertson). Unfortunately, this rings true in a lot of cases, so it is the goal that better health care will work towards slowly shifting this perception. Also, it will hopefully lead to less fear coming from the Black community towards mental health care. While the Black community fears health care because so much of it has been flawed in their experiences, one way to end this cycle is to

create open communication and connections within these communities. This will bridge the gap between health care providers and the general population, and this personalized effort should result in more ease when seeking treatment in the future (Keating and Robertson). In summary, the way that mental health is thought about within the African American community must change but it will only change if the quality of treatment and its providers improve. These two go hand in hand in a successful future of Black men seeking and receiving sufficient mental health treatment.

To conclude, the reality of what it means to be a Black man with mental illness is incredibly multifaceted and complex. Factors at play range from external sources to internal sources. There is a history that links mental illness in the African American community to racist views that were used to demean and dehumanize Black men. With these horrible connotations to slavery that the African American community still links to mental health treatment, it is not surprising why they would be wary to seek treatment and acknowledge their mental illness. The society they have been brought up in has continuously perpetuated the idea that the white population is more deserving and more entitled to better treatment, better institutions, better health care, and is overall at the top of the social ladder. When this is the way Black men have experienced life, it is clear that it would have a strain on their psychological health and well-being. Not only does this experience contribute to the manifestation of mental illness, it also contributes to the way Black men react. Because there have historically been negative relationships between the African American community and health care providers, it is understandable that they would be wary of seeking treatment. However, it is saddening to note that even the few that do seek treatment are often met with treatment

that is biased and ineffective. All of these factors also play into the way Black men perceive themselves. Constant demotion and obstacles leaves them trying to prove themselves worthy and capable in a society that constantly belittles them and their experiences. Overall, despite the complexity of the issue at hand, one thing is clear. There is a large disparity in the diagnosis and treatment of mentally ill Black men in contrast to the general population, and something must be done about it. The first step is to acknowledge the deep-rooted causes that will continue to negatively affect Black men with mental illness if not addressed and undone. Once those causes have been worked against, then improving the medical model through more holistic assessment as well as better and more empathetic staff will improve the care received. Finally, the stigmas surrounding mental illness need to be undone as well in order to create a less intimidating path towards treatment. Solutions like this take time, continuous investment, and hope for a better reality. Undoubtedly there will be many hindrances that may deter progress forward, but as long as change is occurring (no matter how slowly), then there is a positive outlook for the reform of mental illness in the African American male community. While it may seem that there is a very long road ahead to first acknowledging the issue and then investing resources and research into the well-being of Black American men, it is undoubtedly a worthy cause.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. In what ways, both historically and currently, are African American males discriminated against in society, and what affect does this have on their ability to seek medical attention?

2. What historical and social circumstances have led African American males in particular to be hesitant about seeking help for mental illness?

3. What solutions does the author offer in terms of how systemic racism can be corrected? In the medical community? In society?

Style

1. How does the author draw on history to frame the current problems African American males face in the healthcare system?

2. The author sets up a problem / solution pattern of argument. How does the author utilize sources throughout to strengthen this form of argument?

An Ideological Criticism of *Black Mirror* "Nosedive"

Benjamin Cottrell

Introduction

The Netflix original series *Black Mirror*, created by Charlie Brooker, presents its audience with chilling parables about the nightmares of life in the digital age. The third season of the anthology series begins with an episode titled "Nosedive," directed by Joe Wright and starring Bryce Dallas Howard. Howard plays Lacie Pound, a woman who is obsessed with elevating her social media status. Lacie's narrative takes place in the not-so-distant future where people can "rate" interactions with their peers from one to five stars, forming an aggregate rating for each person. In this universe, a high star rating is widely sought after, as those with a high rating are afforded special privileges, like premium apartments and prestigious jobs.

Expressing disdain over her current living arrangements, Lacie pursues a new apartment in a "lifestyle community," one that requires a 4.5 rating to qualify for the discount she needs to afford the payments. Lacie begins the episode at a 4.2-star rating and seeks a boost from so-called "prime users," or those with a 4.5 rating or above. These users have more influence

in the rating system (Schur & Wright 2016). When Lacie's old friend Naomi, a 4.8, invites her to be the maid of honor at her wedding, Lacie quickly accepts, knowing a heartfelt speech will earn her the rating she needs (Schur & Wright 2016).

Lacie's journey to Naomi's wedding is filled with road bumps, causing her rating to be continuously marked down to a zero, resulting in detainment by the authorities. Despite her low rating and Naomi's retraction of her invitation, Lacie shows up at the wedding to deliver her speech and continues until she is arrested. Once in jail, the technology placed in her eye allowing her to see other people's ratings is removed, finally giving her freedom from her obsession (Schur & Wright 2016).

"Nosedive" is more relevant than ever to today's society, as writers Rashida Jones and Michael Schur cleverly reference the current culture's overdependence on technology and obsession with social media. *Black Mirror* received widespread critical acclaim for all three seasons ("Black Mirror: Season 3" 2017) and "Nosedive" earned Bryce Dallas Howard a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination ("Bryce Dallas Howard: Awards" 2017) for her neurotic and vulnerable performance as Lacie.

Today, social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat play an integral role in society's communication. According to a report by the Pew Research Center in 2016, 86 percent of Americans utilize the internet. Out of those online users, 79 percent use Facebook, 32 percent use Instagram, 24 percent use Twitter, and 24 percent use Snapchat (Greenwood, Perrin, & Duggan 2016). The pervasiveness of technology and social networking can be explained by the theory of technological determinism, which is the main ideology present in "Nosedive." According to Professor Langdon Winner, technological determinism is the theory that technology governs the way that humans act in a social

setting (Hess, 2015). Through the critical method of ideological criticism, technological determinism in "Nosedive" is identified through the disconnect of the characters from the real world, the connection between the characters' happiness and social media, and the adoption of obsessive rating habits.

Analysis

"Nosedive" illustrates how technological determinism has transformed social interactions between the characters by illustrating a disconnect from reality, which leads to constant distraction and awkward face-to-face interactions with peers. The audience first observes the depth of Lacie's preoccupation with technology in the opening scene. She jogs through her neighborhood with her eyes glued to a translucent device resembling a smartphone. A close-up reveals a social media program resembling a Facebook-Instagram hybrid, featuring photo updates from peers with a star ranking system below (Schur & Wright 2016). Lacie scrolls through the posts, rating her peers five stars, ignoring the content of the entries. She jogs past an acquaintance and they both raise up their devices and rate each other five stars (Schur & Wright 2016), simply validating each other's existence, void of a meaningful interaction between friends. Technology is overtly fused with reality when Lacie places an augmented reality lens on her eyes, allowing her to view her peers' ratings. *Black Mirror* writers draw similarities to the younger members of today's society. Generations like millennials are accused by older generations of excessive technology use—Instagram-ing every meal and relying on social media as their primary mode of communication. Through Lacie's obsessive documentation of her daily routines, such as yoga or her afternoon coffee, and her shallow face-to-face interactions with friends, these accusations are seemingly confirmed.

Technology also plays a role in mediating strained interactions between Lacie and her peers. In one scene, Lacie is pictured getting into an elevator with a work acquaintance. Their exchanges are forced and insincere. They both peer down at their phones, perusing the other's social media, in search of a topic of small talk (Schur & Wright, 2016). This dependence on social media for insight into the lives of one's peers is comparable to a phenomenon discussed in the book *How the World Changed Social Media.* In the book, researchers surveyed social media users around the world to gauge how they utilized networking websites (Miller et al. 2016). Researchers used a theory known as the "Goldilocks Strategy" to describe how some social media users interacted with peers:

> [Researchers] found that social media provided a way to keep these people, who fell somewhere between close friend and distant acquaintance, in a position that was neither too 'hot' nor too 'cold'…By remaining connected on social media, users were able to give the appearance of being in touch without having to spend significant time and energy meeting them in person. (Miller et al., 2016)

The Goldilocks Strategy is observable in "Nosedive," mainly through Lacie and Naomi. The two mention several times how they have failed to keep in touch, and throughout the episode, Lacie obsessively browses Naomi's social media account. While the two have not exerted the energy to interact in person, they could surmise the details of the other's life through technology.

Technological determinism is also evident in the role social media plays in the acceptance and happiness of the characters. In the episode, Lacie stands in front of the mirror, testing out a variety of laughs (Schur & Wright, 2016). It is apparent through the blank face she reveals between bouts of laughter that the happiness she exhibits is disingenuous. It is simply

rehearsed to achieve high ratings, and therefore a high social status in the episode's reality. This scene serves as an early indicator of the intensity of Lacie's desire to be accepted by her peers—an obsession so severe that even something as visceral as laughter is rehearsed to please those around her.

Later, Lacie promptly posts a photo of her coffee to her social media, even though the disgusted look on her face after her first sip reveals she does not actually like the taste of it. She soon begins to receive five star ratings on her photo, resembling "likes" on a Facebook or Instagram post. Her mood instantly improves and the expression on her face resembles one of pride, as if posting a photo of her coffee is a noteworthy accomplishment. In the article "Social Media Triggers a Dopamine High," psychology professor Mauricio Delgado states that social media "likes" trigger the reward centers of the brain, initiating an influx of dopamine. Delgado further explains the addictive qualities of social networks:

> If you're getting positive feedback in social media—'likes' and shares and retweets—it's a positive 'reinforcer' of using social media, and one that allows you to, a.) get the positive effects of it, and, b.) return to it seeking out more social reinforcement. (Soat, 2015)

The effects of these "positive reinforcers" are evident in the giddiness Lacie exhibits after she is validated by her peers, even by a superficial social media nod. Technological determinism has allowed humans to receive neurological rewards not merely from exercise or human interaction, but from a digital media audience.

The arbitrary rating system that structures the "Nosedive" universe depicts another way the technological determinism ideology has transformed the current culture: through the phenomenon of rating everything. Popular internet services

like Yelp and Uber allow users to assign quantifiable values to their dining and travel endeavors. Today, like in *Black Mirror*, enterprises and humans alike must live their lives in pursuit of a desirable reputation. Internet ratings have even come to determine the fate of some American businesses. The NPR podcast "All Things Considered" stated that in the San Francisco Bay Area, "Restaurants with low or middling Yelp reviews have become more likely to go out of business. Places with high reviews have been unaffected," (Harnett, 2017). Personal reputation and business also intersect in the transportation industry, as Uber drivers and passengers have a mutual obligation to behave well, due to the star rating they are prompted to appoint each other after the ride (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015). In this scenario, the reputation and the profitability of Uber depends on high internet ratings. The abundance of Yelp reviews and Uber ratings are evidence of the impact technological determinism has had on society's dining and travel habits. One cannot simply enjoy a meal or a car ride, but many feel obligated to register their approval or disapproval online.

Conclusion

Brooker, Jones, and Schur tell a cautionary tale in "Nosedive" regarding society's current social-media obsession—one that is reflected in Lacie. The motif of technological dependence in the episode resembles the ideology of technological determinism in three main ways: through the disconnect of the characters from reality, the dependence on social media for happiness, and the characters' fixation on the rating system.

In this *Black Mirror* universe, a zealous use of technology is the prominent hegemony, one that is regularly reinforced by the rating system. The "Nosedive" society requires one

to subscribe to the rating system by rewarding those with high ratings and punishing those with low ratings. As seen in the episode, Lacie is barred from certain privileges as her rating begins to plummet. After her flight is cancelled, she is prohibited from booking another flight with the "prime flight program" and she is limited in the type of car she can rent because of her subpar rating (Schur & Wright 2016). Near the episode's conclusion, Lacie befriends a truck driver named Susan. She discloses that she used to aspire to a high social status like Lacie, but she now counters the hegemony of the rating system by speaking her mind, regardless of its impact on her rating.

In a technology-dependent society, one may no longer require meaningful conversations and experiences to feel fulfilled; for some, two taps on a screen that require minimal effort has the same effect. One's worth is no longer based on merit or character, but dependent on internet status. In future years, the rating phenomenon will only proliferate. Future research could investigate the psychological impact of institutionalized rating systems on the minds of individuals. While society's preoccupation with technology is not at the level this episode depicts, at the current rate, one must wonder if the shallow world of rating one's peers is closer than it appears.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. In what ways does the author parallel *Black Mirror*'s "Nosedive" episode to actions and ideas present in modern society?

2. In what ways has American society become reliant on technology to support our sense of personal worth?

3. How does the use of popular media allow a variety of readers to enter into the conversation the author has started? Who might be the intended audience(s)?

Style

1. How does the author make use of current sources and examples from "Nosedive" to examine society?

2. With attention to his writing style, how does the author account for the lack of visual information that watching "Nosedive" would give us?

Losing the Digital Cold War
Analyzing the Ineffectiveness of the United States in Responding to Russian Cyber Warfare

Chase Ford

Introduction

In 1991, the United States and the Soviet Union ended a forty-five-year long period of tensions known as the Cold War. The Cold War challenged our patience and heightened our fears; Americans were forced to prepare for nuclear fallout, live through the Red Scare, and watch as our government raced to beat the Soviets to the moon. The legacy of these fears is woven into our political system today, but at the time, our nation hoped to enter a new era of peace with the newly named Russian Federation. In the years following the end of the Cold War, this peace existed, as Russia was primarily focused on restructuring its political system and economy. This peace has been short-lived under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, who has been in political power since 2000. President Putin has been able to crumble the illusion of peace between our two nations by use of cyber technologies. Russia utilizes the Internet and hacking techniques to manipulate information and foreign technology. These techniques have been used in Ukraine, Syria, and, shockingly, the United States. During the 2016 U.S. election cycle, which I will elaborate on further into

my essay, Russia paid hackers to influence our political views by spreading false information online and shutting down social media accounts. Without deploying military action, Russia—a foreign agency and our global rival—was able to manipulate our democratic process, removing faith in our defense systems. This cyber aggression by Russia is challenging the United States' ability to counter these threats, creating a digital Cold War between our nations and a new wave of tensions. The use of cyber tactics is undermining the United States' democratic power, and due to our ineffectiveness in countering these threats, we are losing the cyber war with the Russian Federation. In this essay, I will define and explain the political goals of Russian cyber warfare, examine how cyber tactics were used to influence the 2016 election cycle, and analyze the ineffectiveness of the United States in responding to this external influence.

Defining the Scope of Russian Cyber Technology

The United Nations (UN) defines "cyber" as, "the global system of systems of Internetted computers, communications infrastructures, online conferencing entities, databases and information utilities generally known as the Net" (Andress and Winterfeld 2). Cyber is most commonly used to describe the workings of the Internet but can also be used to describe electronic environments of governmental, military, or other organizations. A group can use cyber to conduct warfare with another party, without the physical and economic cost of actual war. Cyber warfare and technology is a relatively new aspect for conflict and it is evolving. Due to this, the definition of "cyber warfare" is still very broad, as it can encompass multiple aspects of the cyber world. The RAND Corporation, a non-profit think tank, said that cyber warfare "involves the actions

by a nation-state or international organization to attack and attempt to damage another nation's computers or information networks through, for example, computer viruses or denial-of-service attacks" ("Cyber Warfare"). Essentially, organizations or independent hackers can send malware to a technical center to disrupt operations, steal personal and confidential information, and even shut down power grids and devices. Cyber-attacks can also be spreading false information on the Internet to gain influence from an online platform. These large scale and small scale cyber-attacks can work in conjunction with each other, all with the end goal of the hacking party trying to damage an opposing agency in some capacity.

The Russian Federation has conducted both large and small scale cyber-attacks to achieve its political goals. These goals for warfare have been defined by the Russian government. According to the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation of 2010, one of the features of modern military conflicts is "the prior implementation of measures of information warfare in order to achieve political objectives without the utilization of military force and, subsequently, in the interest of shaping a favorable response from the world community to the utilization of military force" (Connell and Vogler). Russian tactics to use information warfare are utilized within and outside of its borders. The Russian government grants freedom of speech, but most of its media platforms are state-owned, and any private media must limit what it reports in fear of governmental intervention (Zakem et al. IV). Due to this, the government has a large influence over what stories and viewpoints are presented to the public, creating a pro-Russian government bias in media outlets. The draw to conducting cyber warfare is that Russia can spread its objectives on a global stage and internally without using military force, avoid backlash from the global community for using military force,

get away with cyber-attacks by denying any actions actually occurred, and cover up any governmental involvement.

The aggression of Russia's cyber-attacks depends on their target. In the past, Russia caused Estonian and Georgian computer systems to go critically offline, after tensions between Russia and these nations arose (MacGibbon). These large-scale attacks are not the focus of this research, but are still crucial to point out, as they show the true aggression and willingness of Russia to ensure political dominance. When initiating cyber warfare with nations like the United States that have significant influence and defense capabilities, Russia performs smaller attacks focused on information warfare. The European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security defines the goals of information warfare as: "[to] cause harm to information systems, processes, resources and other critically important objects; revolutionize political, economic and social systems and organizations; destabilize state and society by psychological processing; constrain a state to make decisions that are favourable to its adversary" (Kari and Kuusisto). Instead of attacking a cyber network directly, Russia can create a new wave of spies, sending them on Internet missions to spread false information, confuse the masses, and diminish political power once the population is corrupted.

Ultimately, the growing threat of cyber warfare puts U.S. information networks and validity at risk. According to Clapper et al., "Russia is a full-scope cyber actor that poses a major threat to U.S. Government, military, diplomatic, commercial, and critical infrastructure and key resource networks because of its highly advanced offensive cyber program and sophisticated tactics, techniques, and procedures" (5). Though most cyber-attacks are done behind the scenes, the growing aggression and complexity of Russia's capabilities undermines the United States' power and creates fear among the American

people. Cyber warfare is the defining feature in this new era of tensions between the United States and Russia.

Russian Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election

Russia channeled their cyber resources to influence the American public during the 2016 election cycle. This election cycle was already a historical and culturally dividing one due to the polarizing campaign platforms of candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, but Russia had a role in this polarization. Russia undertook an information war, primarily on social media platforms, to destabilize our political psychology and how we understand politics, and to revolutionize a new wave of political beliefs in the American public. The extent of this information war and the damage it caused on our election results is still under investigation. What is known is that since at least 2014, Russia hacked private American citizens' and organizations' computers in an attempt to steal information, release information designed to shift political views on the elections, and potentially met with members of exclusively Donald Trump's campaign, to earn political capital and discredit his opponents (Blackwill and Gordon). The Russian government deployed tens of thousands of state-paid hackers and robots to accomplish these tasks.

The power of the Internet is that anyone can use it; what is most troubling is that a foreign power, most notably our superpower rival, learned how to use the Internet against us. One organization, known as the Internet Research Agency, a Russian entity with known ties to the Kremlin, were in charge of hiring hackers against the U.S. (Masters). These hackers would act like "trolls," online users that intentionally send out annoying and incorrect information. They would post angry and abusive comments online discrediting the establishment, and some even showed direct support for Donald Trump. Links

would be published to fake news articles that would spread conspiracy theories about candidates. From my experience, I would find pictures and news articles alluding to incorrect information like "Hillary Clinton wears a wire during debates" (Evon) and "Clinton is a supporter of ISIS" (LaCapria). Also, one of my friend's Instagram accounts was shut down, and an error message popped up showing a Russian email had logged in under her name.

These seemingly random stories were viewed as legitimate by a section of the American public, because we have become accustomed to believing everything we read online. Thirty-nine percent of Americans are "very confident" they can recognize when a news story is fabricated, while forty-five percent of people feel "somewhat confident"; yet an Ipsos poll revealed that seventy-five percent of Americans who recognized a fake news story from the election still viewed the story as accurate (Edkins). Voters were aware of the spreading of false information and still put faith into that information. This is troubling when fake stories are seen by a large mass of people; for example, on Facebook alone, Internet Research Agency hackers' posts reached more than one-hundred-forty-million users (Masters par 10). Russian hackers found this weakness in our culture and exploited it to influence political opinions to an extreme. These were opinions that were already being held by some in the general public but gave them a platform to share these thoughts and convert others to their political beliefs. One of the goals of Russian information warfare was to "revolutionize political, economic and social systems and organizations," and from the use of social media, they were able to gain influence over the political beliefs of the public (Kari and Kuusisto).

On a more advanced level, hackers utilized these fake new stories to hack private servers and computers. The Defense

Department faced foreign infiltration when over ten-thousand Twitter users in the department were sent messages online. These messages would be labeled as stories from the Oscars or recent sporting events; however, when clicked on, it took users to a Russian-controlled server that allowed Moscow hackers to access that device's personal data and even shut it down (Calabresi). Officials in our government were targeted and these cyber-attacks were only detected after the damage was done.

Not only did Russian hackers create fake social media accounts to share false information, they leaked classified information to the American public to shift political beliefs. An article by CNN breaks down the timeline of these cyber-attacks. Most notably, on July 22, 2016, just days before the Democratic National Convention, WikiLeaks published nearly 20,000 emails stolen from the DNC server ("2016 Presidential Campaign"). These emails included notes from DNC chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz insulting Bernie Sanders' staff members and messages that suggest the DNC was favoring the Clinton campaign instead of being neutral; and a 2017 U.S. intelligence report cited high confidence that the GRU, Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate, relayed information acquired from the DNC and Democratic officials to WikiLeaks (Watson). WikiLeaks is an organization that exists to leak classified information to the public, and evidence suggests Russian hackers provided them with this information, with investigations and computer malware being tied back to Russian servers. During October and November an additional fifty-eight-thousand emails from the Clinton campaign were leaked ("2016 Presidential Campaign"). These leaks corresponded with even more leaks from Clinton's private email server, shifting political attention towards her campaign.

   Whether the content of these leaks is true or false, it is clear is that they were initiated by Russian hackers with the intent to spread classified information to the public. This removed trust in the Clinton campaign and bolstered Trump's rally against the government. Interestingly, there were never leaks against the Trump campaign, suggesting the hackers had a political mission. Vladimir Putin, in an interview with Bloomberg, denied U.S. accusations that Russia's government was involved in the leaks, but said that the released emails and documents were a service to the public (Rudnitsky et al.). Increased aggression into our political system while denying its actions—that is the goal of the Russian information war.

   Following the election of Donald Trump, an investigation on Russian interference in our election was opened. In an U.S. Senate Committee Hearing in June 2017, Virginia Senator Mark Warner said: "Much of what the Russians did at this point, I think at least in this room, is—was well known: spreading fake news, flooding social media, hacking personal e-mails and leaking them for maximum political benefit. Without firing a shot and at minimal cost, Russia sowed chaos in our political system and undermined faith in our democratic process" (United States Congress 2). Referring to the political objectives of Russian cyber tactics, they were able to influence the ordinary citizen's views by using the Internet and no military force. Americans ignored Russia's actions during the election cycle while they created fake rabbit holes for the public to focus on, and slowly shifted our views to the ideas they wanted us to believe in. The United States may have not lost any lives in this cyber battle against Russia, but we did suffer two major casualties: the integrity of our democratic system and the ability of our defense systems to detect and stop foreign threats.

United States' Response to Cyber Interference

Response to Russian interference was slow during the election, as the Obama administration did not know the full extent of the cyber network and was reluctant to act before the election was over. The Trump administration has also failed to properly respond to these cyber-attacks, with President Trump calling the allegations against Russia a "hoax" (Blackwill and Gordon). Due to this, Congress has been the primary actor when addressing the situation. In July of 2017, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA) was passed, codifying all prior sanctions against Russia into law, in order to prevent presidential overturn without congressional consent. Sanctions are a foreign policy technique our government uses, and *Cambridge Dictionary* defines them as "an official order, such as the stopping of trade, that is taken against a country in order to make it obey international law" ("sanction"). CAATSA also authorized new sanctions against Russia in direct response to the cyber-attacks, extended Russian energy firm sanctions, and implemented sanctions against any member that assisted in Russia's effort to undermine our democratic system (Blackwill and Gordon). In the case of CAATSA, these official orders were to further limit energy trade with Russian partners and prohibit the immigration of Russian officials.

Sanctions have become more common since the end of the Soviet Union, but they are not always the most effective. The Brookings Institution found in a policy brief that "the widespread use of economic sanctions constitutes one of the paradoxes of contemporary American foreign policy. Sanctions are frequently criticized, even derided. At the same time, economic sanctions are fast becoming the policy tool of choice for the United States in the post-cold war world" (Haass).

Sanctions are criticized because they are an economic solution to a multifaceted problem. There are benefits to sanctions when they are properly authorized, as they can damage a country's economy, but to see the full benefits they need to be implemented with another course of action, which is currently not being done. For example, the European Union, Canada, the United States, and other western allies conducted joint sanctions against Russia after Russia illegally invaded Crimea, a peninsula of Ukraine. These sanctions lowered Russia's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2.2% in the first quarter of 2015, creating, at the time, a major economic strike against Russia (Christie). However, the problem with relying on sanctions is that it does not curtail aggression. Sanctions' success is more likely to happen when the targeted country is economically weak, politically unstable, and foreign policy goals are modest (Dragoi and Balgar). These post-Ukraine sanctions hurt the Russian economy for a time, until the country slowly rebounded to a positive 1.8% GDP growth in 2017 ("Russian Federation"). Though sanctions caused the Russian economy to drop, it is important to note it did not stop Russian aggression in the area.

Time will test the economic and political effectiveness of the CAASTA sanctions, but it is my theory that they will share a similar fate to the Ukraine sanctions: a minor economic strike and no negative change in Russian aggression. The status quo reaction to Russian aggression is to authorize sanctions, but the United States is trying to use an economic measure to achieve political goals. Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó supports this analysis, claiming that neither the political or economic goals of European Union sanctions have been met and that sanctions have hurt their own economies (Reid and Cutmore). Though these sanctions were from

different entities, there is no evidence to show American sanctions now will show a different outcome compared to the sanctions Minister Szijjártó mentioned. The objective we want sanctions to have is to establish dominance over Russia and retaliate for their cyber interference; however, when the only damage that is being done is to their economy, the sanctions fail to achieve their full potential. The challenge then becomes to adopt policies that meet the true political objective. The bottom line is that the United States needs to decide how aggressive it wants to be against Russia. A line can be drawn into the sand; the United States can become more public with all cyber-attacks against the Russian people, and tensions can skyrocket. Or policy makers can stick to the status quo and run the risk of future cyber-attacks. Ultimately, it is clear the current United States response to Russia cyber aggression, primarily with recent CAASTA sanctions, is not doing enough to address the undermining of our democratic systems.

Conclusion

As technology continues to evolve, so does the national security risks they pose. My research has exposed the political goals of the Russian Federation through its use of cyber tactics. Russia has developed a doctrine that allows them to use the realm of cyber to spread false information and disrupt mass networks, without major consequences. I elaborated on this doctrine through the discussion of the 2016 election cycle, as Russian-paid hackers utilized social media to create fake news stories, send malware in hopes of hacking others' devices, and change the political opinions of the American public. Russia's aggression continues to grow, and more cyber-attacks are likely to happen in the future. As a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing pointed out, "cyber threats to U.S. national

and economic security has become increasingly diverse, sophisticated, and dangerous" (Clapper et al. 7). These growing threats challenge our ability to remain a global peacemaker and respond to foreign influence. In this sophisticated cyber war with the Russian Federation, we are failing to maintain both of these abilities. Our democratic process was put into jeopardy because of cyber interference and we currently lack diverse solutions to counter foreign threats. Following the Cold War, Americans hoped to enter a new era of peace with Russia. This era of peace has turned into a new sense of fear as warfare tactics are becoming more digital and dangerous. The United States and the Russian Federation have entered a new, digital Cold War, that is on the verge of becoming violent, and we are on the losing side.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. According to the author, what moves has Russia taken to place itself into a digital Cold War with the United States?

2. This author argues that sanctions are not enough to stop Russian infiltration. What further steps are being discussed in the media today?

Style

1. How does the author make use of a variety of sources, including popular, scholarly, and goverment documents, to build his argument?

2. What is the effect of using section headers in this paper? How does this guide the reader?

King of the Mountain

Hope Mertz

For as long as humans have occupied the earth, we have gazed at the stars. We have wondered what they were, what they meant, and what they could tell us about the world around us. Of course, it was many millennia before those first questions led to the sciences that explore these phenomena and the mathematics that describe them. But human ingenuity knows no bounds, and today we have such a wealth of mathematical knowledge that it isn't even possible to know the name of every person who has contributed to the many fields of mathematics and science. In the field of Trigonometry, for example, many have never heard of Johannes Müller (1436–1476), known posthumously by his pen name, Regiomontanus. Yet it was he who wrote the first book that systematically ordered trigonometric knowledge, making the mathematics of the stars accessible to all (Maor 39).

Trigonometry's roots began with our ancestors' obsession with the stars, and from the roots of astronomy grew the study of spheres, and from there, the study of plane trigonometry (Hughes 5). Before the fifteenth century, Ptolemy had developed the as-yet most accurate table of chords. A chord is a line

segment that connects two points on the circumference of a circle, coterminous with the arc thus formed. When the arc and chord are bisected, the half-chord defines the right sine. Calculations using the rights sines are at the heart of trigonometry, and therefore of astronomy. Of course, Ptolemy's theories placed the Earth incorrectly at the center of the universe, but his mathematics were mostly sound, and his works inspired many around the world to study and contribute to our growing mathematical knowledge. Translations of Ptolemy's work spurred Eastern mathematicians to make many advances as well (Hughes 5).

However, by the fifteenth century, astronomers were finding some errors in Ptolemy's theories. His predictions for locations of the planets and for lunar eclipses were not always accurate, and as explorers began to reach new parts of the world, "They realized Ptolemy's *Geography* [a work on cartography that included an atlas of regional maps] was also in error. The way was prepared for believing that the fundamentals of his astronomy could be wrong" (Katz 441). This is the world that Müller was born into: a world full of questions about the fundamental nature of our universe, and full of doubts about the prevailing theories.

Johannes Müller was born June 6, 1436 near Königsberg in Lower Franconia, Bavaria, Germany. Königsberg means "King's Mountain." The exact location of his birth is unknown; references give various details, but at the time it was customary to identify the largest nearby town as your birthplace. Müller signed some of his works as "Johan von Küngsperg" meaning John of King's Mountain, suggesting that he identified with Königsberg as his hometown. He was not called Regiomontanus, the Latin version of "King's Mountain," until 58 years after his death, by Philipp Melanchthon, a German

philosopher and professor (Zinner 1-5). Four hundred and sixty years after his death, a commemorative plaque was mounted near the entrance to the Regiomontanus Observatory located in Nürnberg, Germany, which reads:

> *In commemoration of the founder of the first German observatory – the mathematician and astronomer Johannes Müller called Regiomontanus born on June 6th, 1436 - died on July 6th, 1476*
>
> *Donated on June 15th, 1936 by the burgomaster (mayor) of the city of Nuremberg* (Volk)

This dedication makes it clear that Johannes Müller's work had a large and lasting impact. He had, after all, spent most of his life attempting to master as much of mathematics and astronomy as he possibly could.

At the young age of 11, Müller was sent to the University of Leipzig for formal education. The first printed calendar was published that year, including planetary positions at 15-day intervals. In his spare time and to satisfy his own curiosity, he performed his own calculations of daily planetary positions, calculations that turned out to be more accurate than those published (Zinner 10). In school, Müller particularly enjoyed studying the theory of spheres, which "led him to the study of astronomy and whatever arithmetic and geometry were necessary for a better understanding of this science" (Hughes 11). After graduating Leipzig at age 14, he went on to study at the University of Vienna in Austria.

In Vienna, Johannes had access to instruments for tracking planetary movements, such as the astrolabe, which measured the altitudes of celestial bodies. With his background in the study of spheres, Johannes was able to study the theories of the movements of planets, bringing him to study Ptolemy's *Al-*

magest, as well as translated works of eastern mathematicians who had been inspired by Ptolemy. He also studied "all the mathematical works written in Latin that he could find…He became familiar with the instruments of Hipparchus and Ptolemy, together with other instruments that would assist him in observing the celestial bodies" (Hughs 11–13). He had made his own observations on celestial bodies such as Mars and the moon, had noted inconsistencies in current calculations and predictions, and was able to make corrections to the *Alphonsine Tables* predictions (then the leading source of astronomical predictions) for three lunar eclipses (Hughes 11–13). George Peurbach also taught at Vienna beginning in 1453, and became Müller's mentor, noting that Johannes was "the one student destined for great things" (Hughs 11). He saw in Johannes' enthusiasm for astronomy "an opportunity to rejuvenate that science," and "promised to omit nothing that would bring the desires of [Müller] to fruition. From this time onward, the one was likened to a father, the other to a son" (Hughes 11). These opportunities to learn helped Johannes develop even further as a mathematician.

In 1460, Cardinal Bessarion, the papal legate and a big supporter of scholarly pursuits, came to Vienna. He asked Peurbach to "make him an 'epitome' of Ptolemy – that is, a brief and understandable translation with clarifying remarks" (Zinner 29). There were only two translations available at the time: one by Gerard of Cremona in 1175, and a more recent translation by George Trebizond of Crete. Peurbach had his own hand-copied text of Gerard of Cremona's translation, so he readily agreed to write the *Epitome*. He did not know Greek himself, so he was attempting to correct Cremona's translation. To aid in the translation, he introduced 24-year-old Johannes Müller to Cardinal Bessarion, so that the cardinal could teach Johannes

Greek. The Cardinal also made many other Greek scientific works available to Johannes to aid in his study of the Greek language, further expanding Müller's mathematical knowledge, and he quickly became proficient (Hughes 13).

Peurbach died when their work on the *Almagest* translation was only half complete, and on his deathbed bid Johannes finish their work. Johannes began to travel and cultivate friendships with any educated person who could further his knowledge of the Greek language. As his translation skills improved, he not only continued with Cremona's translation, he looked too at Trebizond's and "discovered that Trebizond had erred frequently and seriously" in his translation (Hughs 14). In one criticism of Trebizond, Regiomontanus writes "You are the most impudently perverse blabbermouth!" (Hughes 14). Trebizond had been tasked the translation by Pope Nicholas V. His translation "was so objectionable that the pope banned Trebizond from Rome" (Zinner 54).

Johannes' work on the *Epitome* continued. More than just a translation, it would also contain commentary to aid the understanding of the reader and include modern updates to any obsolete information. This turned out to be quite a task, as "the *Almagest* contained many shortcomings. The derivation of the planetary paths was very awkward, and the necessary mathematical formulas were held to be obsolete," since the Law of Sines, derived in the twelfth century, made for easier solutions of spherical triangles than what is shown in the *Almagest* (Hughes 52). In his commentaries, Johannes addresses many of the Ptolemaic calculations with which he takes issue. An example, discussed by Ernst Zinner in his biography of Johannes Müller, is one indicator of Johannes' effect on a soon-to-be famous astronomer:

The end of section 22 contains the crucial remark that it is

wonderful that the moon does not occasionally appear four times its usual size, as the Ptolemaic theory requires. This reference to a flagrant defect in the prevailing theory must have made quite an impression on a youthful Copernicus… (Zinner 53)

In his dedication to the *Epitome*, Müller states his intent to write a book on triangles. He had "realized that there was a need for a compact systematic treatment of the rules governing the relationships of the sides and angles in both plane and spherical triangles that would improve on Ptolemy's seemingly ad hoc approach" (Katz 436). In his introduction to *De Triangulis Omnimodus (On Triangles of Every Kind)*, he passionately addresses his readers:

In five books the author explains all those things necessary for one who wishes to perfect his knowledge of astronomy. Since these matters have never been developed before anywhere, one cannot aspire to learn this science without those ideas…You, who wish to study great and wonderful things, who wonder about the movement of the stars, must read these theorems about triangles. Knowing these ideas will open the door to all of astronomy and to certain geometric problems. (Hughes 27)

He clearly felt that people needed some foundational knowledge before attempting to master Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and he wrote *De Triangulis* to address that need.

In an ongoing effort to make more accurate celestial observations and calculations, Müller had settled in Nürnberg, where "the city had become a center of the practical arts, and their practitioners could manufacture the astronomical instruments he desired" to make such observations (Zinner 53). He had noted in the *Epitome*, book VII, that some of the inaccuracies in Ptolemy and other works could be due to "the inex-

actness of the instruments" (Zinner 53). He had a multitude of instruments constructed so he could make his own precise astronomical observations. These "made it possible for Regiomontanus to make further corrections to the *Alfonsine Tables*" (Hughs 15). Müller had written, "What discrepancy there is between Alphonse and the Heavens. His tables are frivolous" (Hughes 15).

Müller also published his *New Calendar*, which he said, "contains the true conjunctions and oppositions of the stars together with their eclipses, the place of the stars from day to day, descriptions of the equinoctial and seasonal hours, and other useful pieces of information" (Hughes 15). As a result, he was invited to Rome to revise the Julian calendar. He really didn't want to leave Nürnberg, but Cardinal Bessarion strongly insisted. Johannes died in Rome within the year, on July 6, 1476. The cause of his death is of some speculation: some say that due to the strong criticisms he had earlier made of George Trebizond, "he had incurred the vehement hatred of Trebizond's sons and they took the earliest opportunity to poison him" (Hughs 17). Paul Jovius, a physician in Rome at the time, simply says that he died during the plague (Hughes 17). Müller never did publish *De Triangulus*, as he did not quite complete it before his death. Book V of *De Triangulus* "is just a fragment" (Zinner 55). The incomplete work was nevertheless published in 1533 by Nuremburg astronomer and mathematician Johann Schöner (Zinner 55).

Johannes Müller had made it his life's goal to learn and master as much mathematics as he could, and to challenge and refine that growing body of knowledge. However, according to Glen van Brummelen in *The Mathematics of the Heaven and Earth: The Early History of Trigonometry*,

[Johannes] was firstly an astronomer; in addition to his

work in theoretical astronomy he was a creative instru-
ment, table, and calendar builder. It is impressive that,
in such a short life, his interests went beyond astronomy
to encompass all areas of mathematics of his time. (van
Brummelen 252)

Müller wrote and published much, and his works aided the
next generation of mathematicians in making further discov-
eries. His *De Triangulis Omnimodus* encouraged a more thor-
ough and widespread understanding of trigonometry in gener-
al, and of astronomy in particular. In an address "To Readers"
from the preface of *De Triangulis*, Müller expresses his desire
to provide a firm base of trigonometric knowledge to those
wishing to eventually master the much more difficult field of
astronomy:

> Although I wrote this book on triangles after the *Epitome*,
> the art which I have wished to pass on must be studied in
> the reverse order, as this introduction attempts to show.
> For no one can bypass the science of triangles and reach a
> satisfying knowledge of the stars… (Hughes 27)

Müller understood more than most how daunting it could be,
setting out to understand a field of work that had, before *De
Triangulis*, been spread out amongst many sources and in
many languages. He has a note to encourage potential students
embarking on this endeavor:

> Among such an abundance of things to learn, some may
> seem ambiguous or hard to understand. A new student
> should neither be frightened nor despair. Good things are
> worthy of their difficulties. And where a theorem may pres-
> ent some problem, he may always look down to the numeri-
> cal examples for help… (Hughes 27)

The first two books of *De Triangulis Omnimodus* cover plane

triangles. The first begins, much like Euclid, with a list of definitions and axioms. Müller's first 19 theorems deal with calculations of quantities and ratios, and the twentieth defines the right sine. From there he begins to treat his "triangles of every kind." Books III, IV and V deal with spherical triangles.

Here we examine Book II, Theorem 30 in greater detail, for it shows the depth with which Müller was fluent with the mathematics of his time. We see that he is strongly influenced by and well versed in Euclid and Ptolemy's *Almagest*. As is common in Euclid, Müller uses the word "equal" to describe line segments and angles that we would refer to as "congruent." The first picture is that given by Müller in the text; all additional sketches and comments in square brackets are mine. Comments in angle brackets are those of the translator.

Book II Theorem 30

> [Statement of Theorem] If any triangle has two unequal sides from whose point of intersection an angle bisector is drawn which divides the base unequally, and if this bisector is known together with the segments of the divided base, each side may be found.
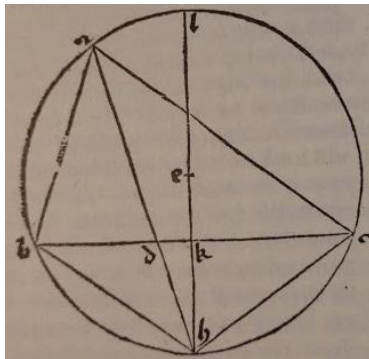

[Restatement of theorem with symbols] If *ABG* [correc-

tion: *ABC*] is such a triangle whose side *AB* is shorter than side *AC* and from whose *A* [∠ *BAC*] a known line [segment] *AD* is drawn, dividing in half and dividing the base into two known portions *AD* [correction: *BD*] and *DC*, then each of the sides *AB* and *AC* may be found.
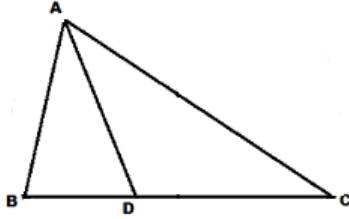

[Construction] Let a circle *ABHC*, having *E* as center, be circumscribed around this triangle [Here we use Euclid IV.5: "About a given triangle [*ABC*] to circumscribe a circle" (Heath 86).], and when <line> *AH* is extended all the way to meet the circumference at *H*, let the two chords *BH* and *CH* be drawn.
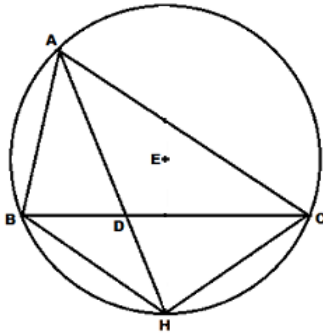

[Proof Begins] It is established that they [chords *BH* and *CH*] are equal because *BAC* is divided equally. [Euclid III.26 tells us "equal angles [*BAD* and *DAC*] stand on equal circumferences [arc *BH* and arc *CH*], whether they stand at the centres or at the circumfer- ences [as here]" (Heath 70). Then Euclid III.29 says that "equal circumferences are subtended by equal straight-

lines [*BH* and *CH*]" (Heath 72).]

Now, let the diameter of the circle, *LH*, be drawn [intersecting chord *BC* at *K*]:
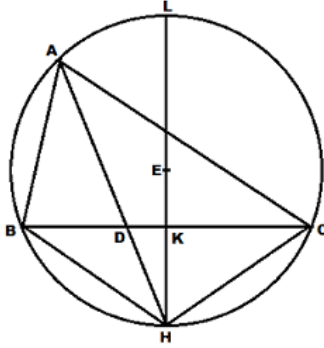

This <diameter>, since it bisects arc *BC* [arc *BC* has been bisected because arc *BH* is congruent to arc *HC*], will bisect its chord *BC* by <Euclid> III. <not given>, [We need to show that *BK* and *KC* are congruent. First, arc *LBH* is congruent to arc *LCH,* because diameter *LH* cuts the circle in half. Second, arc *BH* is congruent to arc *HC*, so if we subtract them from arcs *LBH* and *LCH* respectively, then we have arc *LB* congruent to arc *LC*. Hence, by Euclid III.26 given above, *BHK* is congruent to *CHK*.
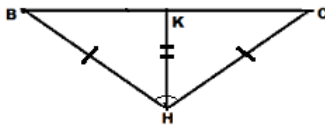
Therefore, by SAS (Euclid I-4 (Heath 5)), *BK* is congruent to *KC,* as desired. So diameter *LH* bisects chord *BC*.] and therefore by <Euclid> III.<not given> it [diameter *LH*] will intersect <chord *BC*> perpendicularly [by Euclid III.3: "If in a circle a straight-line (LH) through the center bisects a straight-line (BC) not through the centre, it also cuts it at right-angles" (Heath 53)].

Moreover, since each of the lines *BD* and *DC* is known, then by <Euclid> III.<not given>, <Euclid> VI.<not given>, and Th. I.<52> above, line *DH* will be known. [Theorem I.52 is Regiomontanus' statement of Euclid's Angle Side Angle theorem. However, Euclid's proposition III.35 allows us to solve for line segment *DH*. It states that "If in a circle two straight-lines [*BC* and *AH*] cut one another, the rectangle contained by the segments [the product of the lengths of the segments] of the one is equal to the rectangle contained by the segments [the product of the lengths of the segments] of the other" (Heath 78).
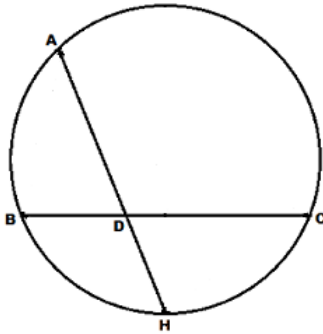
So, here *BD* x *DC* = *AD* x *DH*. Since we are given the other three of these, length *DH* will indeed be known. We have found it without applying his Theorem I.52 or Euclid Book VI.]

Furthermore, *DK* – namely, the difference between half the base [*BK*] and the shorter segment [– is known. Therefore, because *K* is a right angle, line *KH* will be declared known by Th. I.<26> above. [His Theorem I.26 states: "If two sides [*BK* and *BH*] of a right triangle are known, the third [*KH*] is apparent." In the case where the unknown side is not the hypotenuse, Theorem I.26

tells us "when the square of the smaller <side> is sub-tracted from the square of the larger <side>, by the penultimate theorem of <Euclid> I [meaning I-47, half of the Pythagorean theorem], the square of the third side is found" (Hughes 65). This gives us the equation $(DH)^2 - (DK)^2 = (KH)^2$.]


In his theorem 2, Regiomontanus tells us to "take the square root of the number....Then this root will be the side of your square" (Hughes 35). So, now we know KH.] From this and because half the base is known, unless Th. I.<26> above lies [interesting choice of words about his own theorem!], each of the equal chords *BH* and *HC* may be found.

[This time, we know the two sides of our congruent right triangle(s) and need to find the hypotenuse.
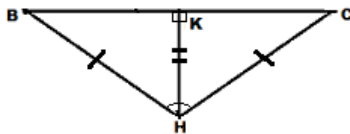
His Theorem 26 tells us, "The sum of these <squares> will also be known...this <sum> being equivalent to the square of *AB* (for us, *BH* or *HC*) by the penultimate the-orem of <Euclid> I. Hence <the square> itself is known, and...its root – namely, side *AB* (again, for us, *BH* or *HC*) – will be found" (Hughes 65). So here, we have the equations $(BK)^2 + (KH)^2 = (BH)^2$ *and* $(CK)^2 + (KH)^2 = (HC)^2$, and we solve for *BH* and *HC* with square roots.]

Therefore quadrangle *ABHC*, inscribed within the circle, will have two known diagonals *AH* and *BC*.
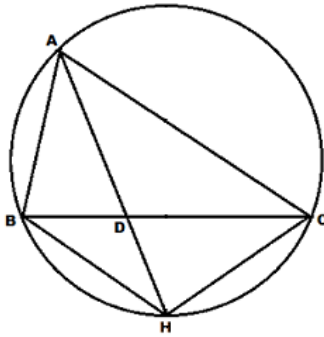
Furthermore, their product [*AH* x *BC*] is equal to two rectangular products, one of which is the product of *BH* and *AC* and the other is the product of *HC* and *AB* [*AH* x *BC* = (*BH* x *AC*) + (*HC* x *AB*).] This has been proven elsewhere [Ptolemy's Theorem, from *The Almagest*, book one, chapter 10. Regiomontanus would certainly be familiar with *The Almagest*.]

Moreover, [the sum of] these two rectangular paral- lelograms [*BH* x *AC* and *HC* x *AB*] are equal to the product of *BH* times the sum of the two sides because of the equality of lines *BH* and *HC*. Therefore the prod- uct of *BH* times the sum of the sides *AB* and *AC* will be known.

[*BH* x *AC* + *HC* x *AB*
= *BH* x *AC* + *BH* x *AB*
= *BH* x (*AC* + *AB*)]

For this reason and because line *BH* is known, then, by the argument of Th. I.<17> above, the sum of the two sides may be found. [Th. I.17: "From any given side [*BH*] of a rectangular parallelogram <of> known <area>, one can determine the other side" (Hughes 53). Here, the known area is *BH* x (*AC* + *AB*), hence *AC* + *AB* is

known.]

Furthermore, the ratio of *BD* to *DC* is as that of *AB* to
AC by <Euclid> VI.3, [which states: "If an angle [*A*] of a
triangle is cut in half, and the straight-line [*AD*] cutting
the angle also cuts the base [*BC*], then the segments of
the base [*BD* and *DC*] will have the same ratio as the re-
maining sides of the triangle," meaning] and by addition
BC to *CD* is as the sum of the two sides to side AC itself.

> [BD/DC= AB/AC
> BD/DC+1= AB/AC + 1
> BD/DC+DC/DC = AB/AC + AC/AC
> BC/DC= (AB+AC)/AC]

And since three of these quantities [*BC*, *DC*, and the
sum *AB* + *AC*] are known, the fourth – namely, line AC
– will be found. [By his Th I.19: "If, of four proportion-
al quantities, any three are given, the fourth one that
remains will become known" (Hughes 57).] Hence the
other side AB cannot be hidden [because (*AB* + *AC*) –
AC = *AB*]. These sides being known, you have prepared
the way toward finding the angles [of triangle *ABC*] if
you adapt Th. <9> above to your attempt (Hughes 137).
If we follow the last line's advice, Theorem II.9 tells us
that "if the ratios of the three sides of a triangle are
given, the three angles may be found" (Hughes 115).
This certainly could be adapted: since we have found
the lengths of all our sides, we can turn those into ratios
and follow Theorem II.9.

Or, we could just use his Theorem I.47: it tells us that we
can find all three angles of a triangle if we know the lengths
of the sides. This theorem would have us drop a perpendicular
from angle BAC, solve for that perpendicular using Theorem
I-26 (Regiomontanus' statement of the Pythagorean theorem),

and then find all the angles using the table of right sines (Hughes 97). Thm II-9 also requires a known perpendicular be dropped from angle BAC, so we would still need to begin, as with Th I.47, by solving for that length. From there, we would proceed through a number of ratio calculations and references to other theorems that are daunting (Hughes 115–6). It would seem that using Theorem I.47 and a table of sine values would be the preferred method of solving for the angles, so let us explore that.

We begin, as stated, by dropping a perpendicular in triangle *ABC* from angle *A. On Triangles* gives us three different ways to solve for this perpendicular since we know the three sides, namely Book I, Theorems 43, 44, and 45. Let's use I-43. We draw a line from angle *A* to intersect base *BC* at *M*, obtaining perpendicular *AM*:
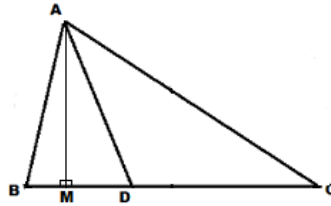
Theorem I-43 gives us the formula. We can then subtract *CM* from base *BC* to obtain *BM*. We now have two right triangles, namely triangle *AMB* and triangle *AMC,* and can solve for all their remaining angles using the table of right sines. Hence, our triangle *ABC* is solved.

The influence of *De Triangulis* was seen far and wide. According to German mathematical historian Braunmuhl,

> his *De Triangulis* had the potential of being developed and completed in many different ways; this potential was realized by numerous scholars at later times, all of whom fol-

lowed his ideas. Thus, the entire subsequent development of
trigonometry in the West showed the influence of his work.
(Zinner 56)

The accuracy of Müller's observations and trigonometric cal-
culations allowed better mapping and astronomical tables.
Explorers, including Christopher Columbus, used Müller's as-
tronomical tables (Hughes 3) and almanacs. Yearly almanacs,
or *Ephemerides,* using his tables were published from 1475 to
1506. These almanacs gave daily data for sun, moon, and plan-
etary positions, and were invaluable for navigation around the
globe (Zinner 117–120).

   As biographer Zinner noted earlier, Nicolaus Copernicus
(1473–1543) was also heavily influenced by Müller's work. Co-
pernicus had a copy of *On Triangles* from one of his instructors
named George Joachim Rhaeticus, "[t]he leading mathematical
astronomer in Germany during the first half of the sixteenth
century" (Zinner 63). In *Trigonometric Delights*, Eli Maor tells
us that Rhaeticus "presented Copernicus with an inscribed
copy of *On Triangles*, which the great master thoroughly stud-
ied; this copy survives and shows numerous marginal notations
in Copernicus's handwriting" (Maor 45–46). Moreover, "there is
some indication that Regiomontanus contributed to the foun-
dation of the heliocentric theory" (Hughes 3). It is debatable
whether or not Johannes was vocal about heliocentric theory,
but certainly the accuracy and preciseness of his observations,
calculations, and predictions paved the way for later scientists
to make important discoveries.

   Another significant historical reference goes to Tycho Brahe
(1546–1601), who, according to Regiomontanus' translator
Hughes, used *On Triangles* as his guidebook in searching for
and establishing the location of a new star in Cassiopeia. Per-
haps he took Müller's words from *De Triangulis* to heart:

this volume…is a foundation for so many excellent things. I do it no injury by calling it the foot of the ladder to the stars…And if your excellence and skill in these studies leads <you> to confirm anything, this work is dedicated to you. (Hughes 29)

Hughes says that "Only a single side reference to Copernicus kept the full credit for the method of locating the position of the new star from going to the *Triangles* of Regiomontanus" (4). In *De nove stella* (1573), Brahe tells his readers:

We have found the longitude and latitude of this new star with the help of the infallible method of the doctrine of triangles…A good part of the propositions [used for calculations] are from the Fourth Book of <the *Triangles* by> Regiomontanus. This work was used because everything is closely tied together geometrically. (Hughes 4)

Johannes Müller was but one man in a long line of brilliant mathematicians, and his name may be one you have not heard before. But we have seen that, not only did he strive to learn from all the masters that came before him, but many masters since have learned from him. We end, then, as Regiomontanus ends his preface—with an exhortation to the reader:

Go on happily, then, as you have begun, O wonder of the world. First to encompass the earthly mass, then to stride through paths of the stars. As the stars have not before disappointed their admirers, so now may you enjoy glory that is both great and immortal. (Hughes 29)

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Context

1. What is the significance of the work of Johannes
   Müller? To his time? To our current day?

2. What makes Müller's work on triangles ground-
   breaking?

Style

1. This author makes use of geometric proofs to
   demonstrate Müller's theories in action. How does
   this type of writing ask readers to read it differently?

2. How does the author utilize sources in this paper?
   How does the biographical information about Müller
   better help readers understand the significance of
   his theories?

Contributor Notes

Maggie Agee is a Pet Hotel Associate at PetSmart (animal lover), and also loves photography and swimming. She loves animals more than anything, and currently has three dogs which are her life. She has been doing photography for nearly three years, and is quite fond of nature photography. She did competitive swimming for eight years, and enjoys going to the gym to swim laps in her free time. She has been writing stories practically her whole life, and has a passion for writing. She used to write adventure and mystery stories to read to friends and family, and now writes short stories about various things when she isn't writing academic work. She graduated from Shawnee Mission East high school, and is currently a sophomore at UMKC. She lives with her parents and sister. (Taught by Lerie Gabriel)

Clayre Barkema (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner: Introductory) is a senior at Winnetonka High School. She plans to attend Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ in the fall to study nursing (Taught by Be Asia McKerracher)

Taylor Cline (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner: Advanced) is a History major at UMKC. Her areas of interest are Colonialism and Imperialism and the way they impact the present and the future of the Third World. She plans on further pursuing a Master's in Social Work. (Taught by Lindsey Weishar)

Benjamin Cottrell is a junior studying Communications and Studio Art, with an emphasis in Photography. In his free time, he enjoys taking photographs, watching films, listening to music, and writing. (Taught by Steven Melling)

Lily Fisher is about to begin her sophomore year at UMKC. She is currently pursuing her BME in vocal music education.

She hopes to be a high school choir director and inspire a love of music in others. She teaches private lessons and spends her free time reading, writing, and learning new instruments. Although a music major, she also loves classics, psychology, and literature. (Taught by Erin Saxon)

Chase Ford is an incoming sophomore studying Political Science and Environmental Studies. Chase enjoys listening to music, learning about mythology, and playing Mario Kart with friends. After his undergraduate studies, Chase wants to pursue law school to practice Environmental Law. (Taught by Henrietta Wood)

Addison Graham is a senior at Blue Springs South High School, editor-in-chief of school literary magazine and Yearbook, and Concert Master of the school orchestra. (Taught by Jason Strait)

Charlotte Leske from Grain Valley, MO, is currently a sophomore at UMKC, working toward a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. She feels that writing this piece has helped her to see the significant impact entertainment media can have on society. Charlotte enjoys reading, traveling, making music, and the television series *Parks and Recreation*. (Taught by Crystal Doss)

Enrico Mejia graduated from Lincoln College Preparatory Academy, class of 2017. He is now a member of a business fraternity called Delta Sigma Pi. His favorite books are *White Fang* by Jack London and *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Wilder. (Taught by Mary Jean Miller)

Hope Mertz is a mathematics major at UMKC, about to enter her last semester as an undergraduate. She plans to next obtain a Master's in Mathematics. She is married and has two grown children, four cats, and a dog. (Taught by Richard Delaware)

Caroline Moriarty is beginning her sophomore year at UMKC studying political science. She is a UMKC Trustees' Scholar and a member of the UMKC Honors College. Her interests include languages, classical music, and comparative politics. After her undergraduate studies, Caroline hopes to pursue a career in law, social policy, or international diplomacy. (Taught by Mary Jean Miller)

Krithika Selva Rajoo is a sophomore at UMKC majoring in Biology and minoring in Chemistry and English Language and Literature. She loves writing and reading about various genres during her free time and occasionally indulges in Netflix binges. (Taught by Cody Shrum)

Jasmine Salem is studying Biology and Psychology at UMKC, and plans to pursue a career in the medical field. In addition to her majors, she enjoys pursuits of social justice, whether that be through advocacy, research, education, or volunteer services. She is involved on campus with various organizations that promote strong leadership and community engagement, and she hopes to carry these themes throughout her life in whatever career she finds herself. (Taught by Rhiannon Dickerson)

Richard Schneider is studying Computer Science and Mathematics and is an Eagle Scout and Missouri Boys State Citizen. (Taught by Lindsey Weishar)

Abigail Schoenrade is a 25 year old, Black American female. She loves writing, and loves writing to explore issues relating to public policy. Although she is a bit older than a traditional college senior, she feels taking extra time to learn has given her the opportunity to learn more about herself and the world around her. (Taught by Lerie Gabriel)

Conor Schulte (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner: Intermediate) is a 21 year-old pre-medical student at UMKC. He is from St. Louis, MO. He loves to play music, learn Spanish, and discuss philosophy with friends. (Taught by Dianne Hradsky)

Geneva Tilbury is a junior majoring in environmental studies at UMKC. After receiving their Bachelor's degree, they hopes to work with organizations promoting environmental justice. (Taught by Ashley Mistretta)