

COMMENTARY

2016



The UNH
Student Journal
of
Communication

Our thanks to...

The Student Activity Fee Committee (SAFC)

Thai Smile

Durham Book Exchange

Kate Schwartz Physical Therapy

Early Childhood School of Georgetown, MA

Special thanks to...

Janet Rattigan Riley for illustrating our cover

Ashlyn Correia for her layout and design expertise

And most of all...

Our advisor — Kevin Healey

Comm-entary 2016

EDITORIAL BOARD

Annie Molinaro	Editor-in-Chief
Ashlyn Daniel-Nuboer	Editing Chair
Carolyn Riley	Design Chair
Mikayla Collins	Marketing/Fundraising Chair
Kevin Healey	Faculty Advisor

Editorial Board

Adam Bennett Lindsey Hall

Joy Cheramie Kylie Marshall

Emelia Cial Emily Masse

Devon Clance Olivia Pelehach

Ashlyn J. Correia Grace Puksta

Emily Figiel Leal Salamone

Sarah Flannery Jacqueline Van Sickle

Emma Giangregorio Jenna Ward

Chris Griesbach

Table of Contents

Make Graffiti, Not War Mikayla Schaefer	4
The Photograph as a Montage Christopher Kuist	15
Washing Away Dirty Marketing Ashley Layton	24
An Ethical Dilemma in Media: “A Rape On Campus” Jenna Ward	42
Networked Movements & Social Change: The Success of #BlackLivesMatter Carolyn Riley	52
Body Cameras and the Problem of Technological Solutionism Sean Fleese	68
Persuasion Techniques in Reconceptualization Science: Rethinking Low-Dose Ionizing Radiation Mikayla Collins	79
Theories for Theories: A Rhetorical Analysis of Nancy Krieger’s Theories for social epidemiology in the 21st century: an ecosocial perspective Dana Gingras	91
The Anxiety of Digital Afterlife Jacqueline Van Sickle	98

Comm-entary 2016

Make Graffiti, Not War

By Mikayla Schaefer

When asked whether or not graffiti is considered art, most people would vehemently say no. Immediately, an image of dark alleys vandalized in lewd sayings sprayed onto the walls by hoodlums comes to mind. Enter Banksy: a notoriously anonymous British graffiti artist who began his career in the early 1990s. He quickly became famous for his signature stencil-style graffiti, which has consistently put a spotlight on political and social issues throughout the world. Since graffiti is illegal, Banksy's real identity is unknown, but it's safe to say from his satirical street art that he is a political activist for those who have been marginalized. The conception of street art has recently started to shift, with the help of works from Banksy, from vandalism to activism, but there are still some who argue that there is no way an illegal action can successfully be labeled as a constructive act. Banksy's graffiti art on the West Bank wall barrier between Israel and Palestine serves as the perfect juxtaposition of the new political activism view of street art and the traditional opinion of the act as vandalism. The question that must be asked then is what are the rhetorical features of street art that make it an effective political protest?

Highlighting the important social aspects and characteristics of street art as described by Carmen Cowick, the preservation and collections care specialist at Amigos Library Services, will help to illuminate the rhetorical elements of street art. With this foundational basis, Banksy's street art can then be analyzed by following the same strategy Dori Moss, from Georgia State University, employs to examine political cartoons. Using the four tropes of Kenneth Burke, a literary theorist, analyzing why the use of street art is effective enables the viewer to understand the political message Banksy aims at the governmental parties of Israel and Palestine. Finally, by explaining the ways in which metaphor, irony, synecdoche, and metonymy work to structure and unearth the true meanings behind a message, the audience will understand why

Comm-entary 2016

street art is effective. Therefore, after acknowledging the premise of street art and appreciating the approach to understanding the political effects of Banksy's graffiti on the West Bank wall, the rhetorical features of street art can be summarized.

Street art, particularly graffiti, has received a poor reputation as consistently being meaninglessly scrawled on public buildings and walls or associated with gangs. Cowick argues that street art has increasingly become an important part of public communication since it is located in public areas for a mass audience. Anyone can walk by graffiti and see it, making street art something that is available to everyone, as opposed to museums or art shows that an individual would have to pay for or be invited to. Cowick elaborates, "Street art almost always has a message, and it is usually a political or social one," (Cowick 30). This idea of street art consistently having a message is the motivating reason behind Banksy's graffiti works. Cowick describes several integral characteristics of street art that make it an effective rhetorical display. Cowick lists remaining anonymous in order stay safe from prosecution, having a pronounced bias to get the idea across without any miscommunication, keep messages direct and simple for the audience, and visibility of the display for the audience as some of the key aspects for influential street art, all of which Banksy has expertly mastered (Cowick).

The nine pieces of street art that Banksy created in 2005 on the West Bank barrier wall, which divides Israel and Palestine, epitomize street art illustrating a political protest. Banksy's art consistently sparks controversy and draws attention to political and social issues on a global level. In his book *Wall and Piece*, Banksy states, "I like to think I have the guts to stand up anonymously in a western democracy and call for things no one else believes in – like peace and justice and freedom" (Banksy). Banksy created the pieces of art on the West Bank wall to exemplify the political conflicts and implications of the wall and draw world-wide attention to the marginalized citizens that live in both countries.

The Israeli government created the West Bank wall as a barrier to protect its citizens from Palestinian terrorist attacks. The wall is highly restrictive to the freedom of the Palestine citizens and was

Comm-entary 2016

built on occupied land that doesn't follow the boundary previously established in 1967(BBC). Banksy declares, "How illegal is it to vandalize a wall if the wall itself has been deemed unlawful by the International Court of Justice? The Israeli government is building a wall surrounding the occupied Palestinian territories. It stands three times the height of the Berlin Wall and will eventually run for over 700km - the distance from London to Zurich. The International Court of Justice last year ruled the wall and its associated regime illegal. It essentially turns Palestine into the world's largest open-air prison" (Parry). Since the wall is affecting Palestine citizens that are not causing any violence, Banksy sees the barrier as infringing on the rights of the people. The use of his nine pieces, five of which will be analyzed further in depth, of street art directly on the West Bank wall serve as a rhetorical political protest against the barrier.

Banksy's graffiti on the West Bank wall depict themes of peace, the idea of escaping to a better place from a prison, and innocence with the use of children. Figure 1 shows a black spray-painted pair of scissors in the action of cutting along a dashed square box, which extends from the wall to include the sidewalk beneath it. Figure 2 depicts a man in the action of throwing a grenade, but instead of a weapon he is holding a bouquet of flowers. The bouquet is the only part of that image in color. Figure 3 features an all black-and-white sketch of a little boy holding a paintbrush at the base of a ladder that descends from the top of the wall. Figure 4 is an all-black image of a young girl holding onto a cluster of balloons and floating up above the wall. Figure 5 shows a hole cracked open in the wall, with an idealistic paradise featured where one would look through the opening, with two toddler boys holding buckets and a small shovel in front. The paradise image and one of the boy's buckets are the only parts of the image in color.

Kenneth Burke conceptualizes his four master tropes, metaphor, irony, synecdoche, and metonymy, as integral models to be used as a "role in the discovery and description of 'the truth'" (Burke 503). Dori Moss uses Burke's tropes as a way to comprehend how political cartoons are effectively persuasive and explain why the cartoons have a successful impact upon their intended audience; the rhetorical street art Banksy created on the West Bank wall can

Comm-entary 2016

be analyzed the same way. The four tropes work to help audiences “grasp the concept of specific persuasive arguments,” and as Moss points out, “logical and succinct argument presentation certainly increases the likelihood of reader comprehension and potential influence” (Moss 241). Street art, like political cartoons, are typically succinct and pointed in order to get the message across to the audience efficiently. Burke stresses that the tropes connect to each other and inevitably intertwine due to the fact that the concepts allude to one another, “Give a man but one of them, tell him to exploit its possibilities, and if he is thorough in doing so, he will come upon the other three” (Burke 503). Thus, when analyzing political cartoons, Moss utilizes all of Burke’s tropes to show how each can work effectively to communicate a message to its viewers, which is the approach that can be used with visual art such as Banksy’s graffiti street art.

Burke explains metaphor as “a device for seeing something in terms of something else. It brings out the thisness of that, or the thatness of this.” (Burke 503). Figure 1 plainly portrays the simple act of scissors cutting a square, but by Banksy placing this work on the West Wall barrier, the image contains a completely different meaning than it would normally have in any other context. Obviously, Banksy is not suggesting that someone try to cut along the concrete wall with a pair of scissors, but rather indicating to the audience of his street art that the Israeli government needs to quite literally cut it out and pursue a different way of eliminating violence and terrorism besides putting up a gigantic barrier that oppresses citizens. Burke describes the relationship of metaphor interchangeably with perspective by saying “to consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a perspective upon A” (Burke 504). Scissors could never actually cut a concrete wall, but the scissors stand in to metaphorically represent the actions the Israel government needs to take in regards to the wall. Where the graffiti square is on the wall should be a hole breaking down the barrier between Israel and Palestine, in relation to political and social issues. Since cutting a piece of paper with scissors is a concept anyone can comprehend, regardless of origin or language, the metaphor successfully communicates Banksy’s protest of

Comm-entary 2016

the government and message to “cut out” violence, terror, and oppression to the masses.

Banksy employs Burke’s trope of irony in Figure 2. Burke states, “Irony arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a development which uses all the terms.” (Burke 512). Although the man shown is in a fighting position where he looks like he is about to throw a grenade, he is instead holding a colorful bouquet of flowers. This ironic display allowed Banksy to convey what was currently happening (violence in black) in order to show what should be (peace in color). By addressing the violence that already exists between Israel and Palestine in his street art, Banksy is able to depict his ultimate message of peace to the audience in a way that cannot be misinterpreted. Cowick states, “While street art also appears in the public space and is made for public consumption, it is almost never commissioned by any government or corporate organization” (Cowick 30). The aspect of street art being illegal and unasked for by any type of political party (hence the reason for anonymity) makes it all the more powerful, and Banksy fully understands and appreciates this in his work. Since a government facilitated the West Bank wall creation, the fact that Banksy used the wall as an outlet to display his disgust of the barrier makes the street art exhibited extremely ironic in multiple ways.

Burke describes the third trope, synecdoche, as being substitutable with the term representation by defining the concept as “part for the whole, whole for the part, container for the contained, sign for the thing signified—cause for effect, effect for cause— All such conversions imply an integral relationship, a relationship of convertibility, between the two terms” (Burke 507-508). Similar to the way Moss’ political cartoons illustrate small portions of a larger concept; Banksy’s graffiti on the wall tries to emphasize the greater political issues at hand. Street art Figures 3 and 4 display children with the ability to escape from where they are located in innocent, non-violent methods, which is an important element Banksy incorporated into all of his graffiti pieces on the West Bank wall. A little boy at the base of a ladder holding a paintbrush (Figure 3) symbolizes the marginalized Palestinian

Comm-entary 2016

citizens as prisoners. The use of the values and qualities children stand for to an audience denotes the position the blameless Palestine people are in, and the commonly understood use of a ladder implies the action that needs to be taken by the people in a simplistic and effective way.

Banksy's use of the children to represent the Palestinian citizens being trapped in the prison that is the West Bank wall is a relationship that a diverse audience can understand. Burke says, "artistic representation is synecdochic, in that certain relations within the medium 'stand for' corresponding relations outside it" (Burke 508). The whimsical notion of a little girl being carried away by a bundle of balloons (Figure 4) is a playful idea, but considering the circumstances where this image has been placed it's quite a cynical statement. This image stands for the feelings of the Palestinian people towards the West Bank wall; the citizens want to be able to get over it as easily as the little girl holding the balloons and floating into the air does. Additionally, Figures 3 and 4 raise significant questions in the minds of the audience; if it were so easy that a child could get over the wall, why wouldn't you try? If children can figure it out, why can't the government? The West Bank barrier represents the issue of terrorism and political unrest between Palestine and Israel, which is drastically put into perspective by Banksy's street art on the wall.

While comparable to synecdoche, the final trope of metonymy is different in the way that it doesn't simply represent a smaller part of a whole, but rather an accompanying aspect of the whole. Burke interchanges the term reduction and metonymy based on the way metonymy is applied to "convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible" (Burke 506). The paradise shown in the cracking hole (Figure 5) is representative of what could be if there was no wall between Israel and Palestine. In a larger sense, the paradise shown is standing in for the idea of peace and an escape. Islands represent the ultimate paradise because when people go there, it is to escape any stresses of their normal lives to relax in a peaceful environment, free of any negative elements. For the Palestinian people, the West Bank wall is the epitome of their persecution and their suffering. Metonymy is

Comm-entary 2016

effective “through the ability to assert a message within a single frame” (Moss 243). By Banksy indicating a crack in the wall as symbolic of paradise and therefore peace, he is making a political statement of what the wall truly stands for. Quite successfully, the street art is able to show how an image that looks extremely out of place on the wall is actually hugely applicable to the political issues between Israel and Palestine in the world.

After analyzing Banksy’s graffiti on the West Bank wall from the insight of Cowick and through the concepts from Burke, it is clear the rhetorical aspects of Banksy’s street art are effective political protests. Professor Sarah Banet-Weiser states, “Banksy’s work is political and arguably subversive. His work challenges hegemonic institutions such as the military and state practices, exposes hypocrisy in advertising and marketing, and questions the fundamental premises of capitalism” (Banet-Weiser 94). Banksy’s decision to travel to Palestine to make a political statement about the West Bank wall, literally on the wall, was an audacious choice that represents the mission of his career. After images of the graffiti spread virally worldwide on social media, the unrest between Israel and Palestine governments was put in the spotlight, along with the terror and violence amid the countries and the marginalization of the wall on the Palestinian people.

The visibility and accessibility of the street art means that anyone can see it, making the displays invaluable to the effective political protest of the West Bank wall. Banksy’s audience is immediately the Palestinian citizens as the individuals that walk by, but since pictures of Banksy’s images were widely circulated on social media, consequently the rest of the world becomes his audience. Professor Sheng Kuan Chung declares, “As a vernacular art form, street art, such as the work of British artist Banksy, deals with activism, reclamation, and subversion and allows artists to reach a broader audience than traditional art forms” (Chung 25). The idea that street art is available for viewing by anyone is important because that means that the message behind the art is also presented to the immeasurable audience. Banksy uses this aspect of street art to show the wide span of Palestinian citizens, Israeli citizens, both of the countries’ governments, activists,

Comm-entary 2016

terrorists, etc., that the West Bank wall is a prison without putting his art in a museum or exhibit in the traditional way. The graffiti would mean less if it wasn't visible to be seen by the people who are experiencing and involved in the everyday oppression, particularly since Banksy's message is on the actual object that is causing the problem.

The location of the street art on the West Bank wall is particularly important to the political protest of Banksy's graffiti because the images wouldn't represent what they do if they were taken out of that context. Fellow graffiti artist Lewis Sanders, states, "the piece of art, the mural or graffiti, is situated by the street artist as a guide to the various representations, the various signifieds embedded in the work" (Sanders 144). The irony of placing the street art on the wall that is repressive to symbolize freedom and peace is a fascinating rhetorical aspect that Banksy is able to use. Also, it is ironic that Banksy uses the very wall that he is protesting as his sketchpad to send the Israel government his political complaint.

Banksy's identity remaining a mystery is a fundamental reason as to why he has been so successful his entire career. The opinions and protests that Banksy illustrates around the world reflect his personal bias towards a situation, and the lack of an identity eliminates the ability for anyone to diminish or disregard his work based on ethnicity, race, religion, or appearance. Since graffiti as a form of street art is a criminal act and not condoned by the government, Banksy's anonymity is important to avoid the legal problems that arise with being a graffiti artist. Being anonymous allows Banksy's political activism to be illustrated by street art and become the voice of the marginalized. Thus, Banksy's graffiti is more authentic and persuasive to the audience because political parties did not pay for his work for their own benefit or advantage. The street art points directly to the issue at hand and is not personally about Banksy's personal ego or success as a graffiti artist.

By using the devices of metaphor, irony, metonymy and synecdoche, Banksy is able to communicate his political protest in ways that are typically simple and direct. By substituting a

Comm-entary 2016

different perspective, a broader audience is able to understand what he is representing without any explanation. On the West Bank Wall, Banksy took an intense political issue and instead of writing something along the lines of “Take down the wall, you are oppressing your citizens,” he used everyday objects and ideas that the majority of his audience would know the meaning of to stand in for the main themes of his protest. Banksy used children to convey the idea of innocence (Palestine citizens) and an island scene to represent what should be (peace and freedom). His use of the man throwing a bouquet of flowers simply asks for the end of violence. Blatantly, the square to be cut by a pair of scissors goes beyond its placement on the wall to the actions of the Israel and Palestine governments. The child standing by a ladder and the little girl floating above the wall depict the wall as a jail. The common associations any individual would make about a ladder, children, paradise, and scissors is what Banksy relies on in order for the audience to understand his street art.

The rhetorical features of street art that make it a successful political protest are displayed brilliantly by Banksy's graffiti on the West Bank wall barrier. Cowick's main characteristics of successful street art being anonymously created, direct and simple, visible and available, and opinionated discern the specific rhetorical features Banksy expertly utilizes so famously. Burke's four tropes of metaphor, irony, metonymy, and synecdoche serve as tools to discovering the persuasive aspects of street art that make the message of the display rather impactful. The rhetorical aspects of street art have been proven to make powerful impacts upon society, specifically in politics, as many of Banksy's graffiti images currently continue to do. A significant part of the street art that Banksy creates is the way he illustrates what the oppressed are experiencing and directs the attention directly to those who are suffering, like the Palestinian citizens in the West Bank barrier wall issue, by showing the relationship to the source of the issue, the government and terrorism, in a creative way. The implications of street art on political and social aspects in today's modern society have the opportunity to be extremely influential. By being an unsolicited, explicit form of art that is conveying or bringing attention

Comm-entary 2016

to important issues, street art, like Banksy's graffiti, has the potential to impact a vast amount of people around the world that traditional forms of art do not because of the specific rhetorical aspects street art consists of that makes it so effective.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

- Banet-Weiser, S.. (2012). Branding Creativity Creative Cities, Street Art, and “Making Your Name Sing”, (pp. 91-124). In *Authentic: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture*. NYU Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfmw0>
- Banksy, . (2006). *Wall and piece*. London: Century.
- BBC. (2005). “Q&A: What is the West Bank Barrier?” Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3111159.stm
- Burke, K.. (1941). Four Master Tropes. *The Kenyon Review*, 3(4), 421–438. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4332286>
- Chung, S. K.. (2009). An Art of Resistance From the Street to the Classroom. *Art Education*, 62(4), (pp. 25–32). Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.unh.edu/stable/20694777>
- Cowick, C., (2015). Preserving Street Art: Uncovering the Challenges and Obstacles. *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, 34(1), (pp. 29-44). Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/680563>
- Moss, D., (2007). The Animated Persuader. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, , pp 241-244. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1049096507070369>
- Parry, N., (2005). “Well-Known UK Graffiti Artist Banksy Hacks the Wall”. *The Electronic Intifada*. Retrieved from <https://electronicintifada.net/content/well-known-uk-graffiti-artist-banksy-hacks-wall/5733>

Comm-entary 2016

Sanders, L.. (2012). Reclaiming the City: Street Art of the Revolution. In S. Mehrez (Ed.), *Translating Egypt's Revolution: The Language of Tahrir* (pp. 143–182). American University in Cairo Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.unh.edu/stable/j.ctt15m7j10.10>

The Photograph as a Montage

By Christopher Kuist

Cameras define reality in the two ways essential to the workings of an advanced industrial society: as a spectacle (for masses) and as an object of surveillance (for rulers). The production of images also furnishes a ruling ideology. Social change is replaced by a change in images.

-Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

Understanding photographs and their production is essential to understanding our reality as well as our place in industrial society. If we can deconstruct the photograph, then we can deconstruct the ruling ideology of which Sontag speaks, and we may be able to accomplish actual social change instead of just a change in images. This is necessary, as John Berger (1974) writes, "If we are to maintain a struggle, a resistance, against the societies and cultures of capitalism" (p. 54).

When we deconstruct the photograph, we must first understand how photographs are constructed: what the rhetoric of the photograph is and where meaning comes from. Group 1 defines rhetoric as, "the regulated transformation of the elements present in a statement in such a way that the receiver will have to dialectically superimpose a conceived level on the perceived level of an element in the statement" (p. 581). This definition of rhetoric becomes complex when applied to the photograph. In an effort to make democratic the understanding of meaning in the photograph and its implications on reality, I will apply and amend existing theory from another field that may simplify our critical efforts.

Montage theory originated from the Soviet cinema. It came just a few years after the 1917 October Revolution, which gave rise to the Soviet Union. Its main proponent, and oft-cited founder, was Soviet theorist and filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein. In his 1929 essay *The Dramaturgy of Film Form (The Dialectical Approach to Film Form)*, Eisenstein defines montage as, "an idea that derives from the collision between two shots that are independent of one

Comm-entary 2016

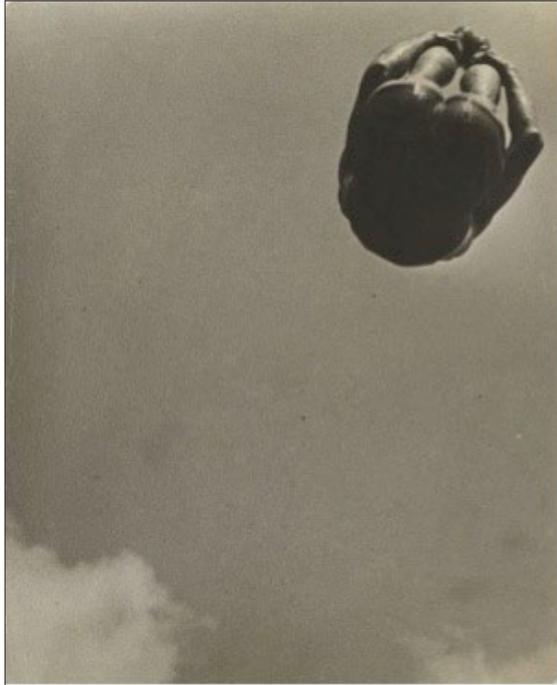
another” (p. 266). He argues that montage is not a consecutive series of shots that produce an image. Rather than building blocks, shots are more like “montage cells” that work together to create a biological montage whole. This is a dialectical approach because independent, conflicting montage cells collide to create new meaning. Eisenstein describes many montage cells, or many forms of conflict, which create montage. It is here, that I make amendments to Eisenstein’s theory so that we may apply montage theory to the photograph: On top of Eisenstein’s graphic conflict, conflict between planes, conflict between volumes, spatial conflict, conflict in lighting, conflict between matter and shot (camera angle), and conflict between matter and its spatiality (camera lens distortion), I add conflict in linguistic message, conflict in studium, and conflict in punctum, where the latter three are understood to be montage cells in conflict with the montage cell of the photograph itself.

The linguistic message is a concept from Roland Barthes’ (1980) *Rhetoric of the Image*. The linguistic message can be anything from text in a photograph, to a title or caption of a photograph, to the words of a photo-essay. What defines the linguistic message as a montage cell separate from that of the photograph itself is best explained by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), who write, “the visual component of a text is an independently organized and structured message – connected with the verbal text, but in no way dependent on it: and similarly the other way around “ (p. 17). Perhaps a better way to understand Barthes’ – and Kress’ and van Leeuwen’s – arguments is to see that meaning comes not just from the text or the image itself, but from the montage derived from the collision of the two. Take, for example, Barthes’ notion of anchorage. He describes anchorage as the type of linguistic message which “anchors” a specific meaning in a polysemic image, and allows the viewer “to choose the correct level of perception” (p. 275). Barthes implies that the meaning already exists in the image and that it must be isolated from other possible meanings via the linguistic message. Couldn’t we argue the same of the text? Are texts not also polysemic, and only take on the “correct” perception when juxtaposed with the image?

Comm-entary 2016

“Dive” (1936) by Aleksandr Rodchenko is an example of a photograph whose meaning comes not just from the image or the text, but from the montage of the two.

Seen on its own, the photograph is very ambiguous and viewers



may find it hard to tell what has been photographed. Likewise, the caption, “Dive,” read without the image, would mean “to plunge headfirst into water.” The person photographed is clearly not plunging headfirst into water. The montage of both image and caption then derives the meaning that the person photographed is at some point mid-dive, likely right out of the jump, spinning before their headfirst descent into the water, which we can assume lies below. Here, we see that meaning comes not from the photograph or its title, but from montage: specifically, the conflict between the photograph and the linguistic message.

Of course, not all photographs require a linguistic message

Comm-entary 2016



to understand them. In fact, Kress and van Leeuwen criticized Barthes for arguing that the meaning of the image “is always related to, and, in a sense, dependent on, verbal text” (p. 16). The above photograph proves that it can be understood even without its caption (which is also “Dive” by Aleksandr Rodchenko). Viewers like ourselves may identify elements present in the internal context such as the numbered lanes, the bathing suit, the diver’s professional form, and the pool below into which he dives. All of which enable understanding of the photograph and point to its meaning: the competitive dive. These elements, and their understanding, are considered to be part of the studium. Barthes (1981) describes the studium as, “a kind of education” (p.28) which allows the viewer to recognize the photographer and, more importantly, their intentions in taking the photograph. The studium may also be understood as the cultural message whose reading and/or understanding depends on the different kinds of knowledge invested in the photograph, whether they are practical, national, cultural, aesthetic, etc. It is here that Group μ ’s definition of rhetoric is most applicable: the

Comm-entary 2016

photograph simply presents the perceived elements, and it has no meaning until we, the viewers, dialectically superimpose the conceived elements – our studium – onto the perceived elements in the photograph. “Dive” would mean nothing, were we not able to superimpose our conceptions of the elements of competitive diving onto the shapes and forms presented to us in the photograph.

Eisenstein says that the shot “is not a montage element – the shot is a montage cell” (p. 269). This means that a photograph alone is not montage. However, he regards “the evolution of new concepts and attitudes in the conflict between normal conceptions and particular representations as a dynamic” (p. 265). This dynamic to which Eisenstein refers is just like Group 1’s rhetoric: particular representations (perceived elements) conflict with normal conceptions (conceived elements) that create new concepts and attitudes (meaning). Now, we understand that the photograph itself is not montage; the meaning of the photograph is the montage derived from the collision of two independent montage cells: the photograph and the studium. The meaning exists not just in the photograph or in our knowledge but in the conflict between the two.

Perhaps the most important montage, due to its implications



Comm-entary 2016



on reality and social change, is that of the conflict between the photograph and the punctum. After several attempts at explaining the punctum, Barthes comes to the definition as, “Time, the lacerating emphasis of the noeme (“that-has-been”), its pure representation” (p. 96). Just as Barthes took several attempts at this definition, I now find it necessary to retrace my steps. Punctum may best be understood not as a montage cell, but as the montage – the idea derived from the collision between the photograph and the noeme, or “that-has-been”. Indeed, the punctum is the montage, the idea that James Agee (1941) tried so hard to stress with his words in *Let us Now Praise Famous Men*, but could only do so in collision with Walker Evans’ photographs, some of which are pictured above – the idea that comes only from the collision of the photograph and “that-has-been”: what is photographed is real, it exists or once existed in reality.

Agee wanted people to understand the reality of the photographs because he wanted people to understand the social condition of the three tenant farm families; he wanted social change. Agee writes, “In a novel, a house or person has his

Comm-entary 2016

meaning, his existence, entirely through the writer—Here, a house or a person has only the most limited of his meaning through me: his true meaning is much huger. It is that he exists, in actual being, as you do and as I do, and as no character of the imagination can possibly exist” (p. 12). The punctum, understood as montage, will help us understand that every photograph collides with the noeme, “that-has-been”, and that every person or thing photographed exists and is real. Until we understand that, we may not understand our own reality; until we understand that, social change will forever be replaced with a change in images.

Dziga Vertov, one of Sergei Eisenstein’s contemporaries, was a Soviet theorist and filmmaker too. In 1923, he wrote *Film Directors: A Revolution*. In this renowned essay, Vertov calls for “the emancipation of the film-camera, which remains wretchedly enslaved, subordinated to the imperfect, undiscerning human eye” (p. 258). He writes of the power of montage to revolutionize film. I too believe montage has the power to lead to revolution. I call for the emancipation of the photograph, which remains wretchedly enslaved by industrial society, subordinated to the practices of spectacle and surveillance. I also call for an alternative photography, which may help us achieve an alternative future. By analyzing the photograph as montage, we may be able to see it, as Berger hoped, in “terms which are simultaneously personal, political, economic, dramatic, everyday and historic” (p. 60). Only then may we accomplish social change.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

- Agee, James and Walker Evans. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1941.
- Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image." *Classic Essays on Photography*. Ed. Alan Trachtenberg. New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980.
- . *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.
- Berger, John. "Understanding a Photograph." *The Look of Things*. New York: Viking, 1974.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. "The Dramaturgy of Film Form (The Dialectical Approach to Film Form)." *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. 262-279.
- Evans, W. 1941. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* [Book]. http://d3gnjjq3mhphne.cloudfront.net/uploads/image/article/001/794/1794/header_story/1794_1794_348a10dfa468c7ab269784ddc04.jpg
<https://sarawastibus.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/ew2.jpg>
- Group μ. "Toward a General Rhetoric of Visual Statements: Interaction between Plastic and Iconic Signs." *Advances in Visual Semiotics: The Semiotic Web*. Ed. Thomas Sebeok. 581-599.
- Kress, Gunther and van Leeuwen, Theo. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. Routledge: New York. 1996.
- Rodchenko, A. (1936). "Dive" [Photograph]. <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/83878?locale=en>
<http://www.moma.org/collection/works/83880?locale=en>

Comm-entary 2016

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977.

Vertov, Dziga. "Film Directors: A Revolution." *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. 257-262.

Washing Away Dirty Marketing

By Ashley Layton

Contemporary Media Issues

Many consumers use online reviews and comments to determine whether they should buy a product or not. A picture of merchandise can only give an idea of what the physical item really looks like. It does not show how it fits, if it works flawlessly or if it is worth the money to buy. Businesses have recently realized how much reviews and what people say about a product affects their revenue. Therefore, companies try to create positive reviews for themselves or pay others to do it for them in secret. This type of action is referred to as astroturfing. Marketing has changed over time from solely trying to inform the public about a product to a necessity that helps a business make more money. Today, there is a wide variety of corporations, making the job field very competitive. Companies are willing to take extreme measures to put their products before another business' items. Consumers have had enough of marketers' tricks, which have led to many individuals asking the government for more regulations. It is time for people to educate themselves against unethical marketing practices, such as astroturfing.

Astroturfing is defined as aiming "to give the appearance of having been produced by amateurs, activists, or grassroots organizations in order to foster, influence, and manipulate a seemingly independent public reaction to an event, product, campaign, or person" (Sørensen, p.92, 2013). This is an unethical practice that tricks individuals into believing something that is not true. The goal of these actions is to influence consumers to support or purchase an item that they originally might not have wanted. "Whether by using misinformation or literally paying people to buy their hamburgers, astroturfing is used to generate publicity and sway public opinion, all while the people orchestrating the movement act like they had nothing to do with it"(Goldschein, 2011). Online grassroots movements consist of reviews, YouTube videos,

Comm-entary 2016

and social media posts. Businesses, politicians, and inventors all use astroturfing in their own unique way. Politicians hire people to post online endorsing him or her. Videos will be made, without listing the creator's name, to discredit an opponent. Similar to companies, inventors will give incentives to others to give positive remarks about their product. These acts are deceitful to consumers.

Astroturfing has become more of an issue as technology progresses over time. The theory of marketing emerged in the 1920's and 1930's. "A period that embraced titanic economic and, subsequently, ravaging economic collapse, the practices of public relations in particular, and of planned propaganda campaigns more generally, grew exponentially" (Ewen, 1996, p. 174). At this time marketing became a field of study and not just an optional part of a business. Surveys began to be administered to groups of people, for scientists to study trends (Ewen, 1996, p. 181). With this data companies were able to know how to directly market to their ideal consumer. Marketing was used in the 1940's during World War II. To motivate people to do their part at home for the war effort, between 1956 and 1965, marketing grew closer to a science (Kumar, 2015, p.2). In 1985, United States Senator, Lloyd Bentsen coined the term 'astroturfing' (Goldschein, 2011). He developed this term when he went through his mail from insurance agencies and stated, "he could tell the difference between grassroots and AstroTurf" (Bentsen qtd. in Walker, 2014). In the years between 1986 and 1995, marketers began to use scholarly techniques. There was an "emergence of conceptual frameworks of marketing phenomena"(Kumar, 2015, p.2). During this time, people began to realize the affects that marketing had. Howard Chase, Public Relations Society of America President, stated, "Business must wrest the mantle of liberalism from government and work to "expand the living standard of American People through competitive production and distribution"(Chase qtd. in Ewen, 1996, p. 361). Chase wanted marketing to better the lives of the American people. He had no intentions of using this field to trick people into buying products from unethical companies. Marketing began to escalate when advanced technology began to develop. Computers were able to hold a vast amount of customer data. This acceleration

Comm-entary 2016

began in the 1990s. Marketers were able to work more directly with customers. Currently, marketing is a very popular field to work in and to study. There are many different aspects to the job. Some people can analyze data and find the best way to interact with consumers. Jobs that focus on primarily social media marketing. Other professionals can use Photoshop to create eye-catching displays for events or online exhibition. Field marketers directly interact with consumers through activities such as fairs or sporting events. Marketing has grown significantly in the past few years and it will continue to advance as time passes.

Producers of astroturfing messages fight for acknowledgement from their audience. They do not rely on mainstream news sources and journalists to reach the public. Instead “they piggyback the viewing figures and broadcast reach that television stations command, and use traditional media to amplify their message” (Sørensen, 2013, p. 103). Astroturfing relies on grassroots movements. This can be using social media platforms, face-to-face interaction or online videos.

Walmart has been under heightened scrutiny in the past couple of years due to workers’ wages. In an effort to stop all negative attacks, the Walmart Corporation secretly funded a blog called “Working Families for Walmart”. Many believe blogs are full of people’s true thoughts and they are written organically. They are used very often in grassroots movements for a specific cause. An unpaid author typically writes blogs, but in this example that is not the case. The Walmart blog supported the company and believes the employees work in a great place. The blog was eventually found to be written by the public relations firm, Edelman. Walmart had hired the PR firm to write these stories for them to gain support from the public. Due to Walmart’s tricks, the company has lost even more supporters. More blogs against Walmart have been started, such as Walmart Watch (Goldschein, 2011).

Unethical marketing is not just a problem in the United States. This is happening around the world. One example of astroturfing, is when McDonald’s first released the Quarter Pounder Burger in Japan. Thousands of people anxiously lined up at the Osaka McDonald’s doors before it opened. It was later confirmed that

Comm-entary 2016

McDonald's paid about a thousand employees to stand outside at midnight and draw attention to the store. Employees were required to wear their everyday clothes and not their uniforms. Each person working for the company received a free meal and eleven dollars an hour for their work (Goldshein, 2011). Consumers not working for the company that stood in line for the new burger were not informed about the undercover workers. McDonald's purposely deceived customers into wanting to be apart of McDonald's release. This situation would have been ethically correct if consumers were told that workers were being paid to be in line at midnight. It is astonishing that a well-established and famous corporation would take part in astroturfing.

A recent grassroots movement that occurred was the Market Basket protests. The grocery store chain has a little less than one hundred stores stretching from Maine to Massachusetts (Kohn, 2014). For the past few years, Arthur T. Demoulas was selected to be president of the chain's board, which consists of many Demoulas family members. This past summer, the roles changed and Arthur S. Demoulas was put in charge. Arthur S. had many changes in plan for the popular grocery store. Prior to the shift in command, employees were well compensated for their work and they were given benefits through retirement. Employees enjoyed going to work for a company where they felt appreciated and respected. When Arthur S. was suddenly put in command, employees immediately voiced their outrage. Employees began striking. The shelves of the store ran dry due to warehouse workers and truck drivers joining in on the strike. Soon customers started standing in front of their local stores with signs. The employee strike was fully supported by the local community. Without the stores executing daily tasks, the company lost about one million dollars a day (Kohn, 2015). Through the efforts of the employees and customers, Arthur T. was eventually reinstated as president. The Market Basket case is an example of an ethical and organic grassroots movement. None of the employees were paid to stand outside the store. Many risked their jobs to stand up for what they believe in. The company did not conduct the strike for a marketing campaign.

Comm-entary 2016

People are beginning to realize the effect astroturfing has on today's economy and they are beginning to fight back against it. The Federal Trade Commission has done its part in defending ethical business practices. This federal agency and everyday consumers can take part in putting bad businesses to shame.

The FTC was established in 1914 to help protect consumers from unfair business practices. The mission statement of this federal organization is "to prevent business practices that are anticompetitive or deceptive or unfair to consumers; to enhance informed consumer choice and public understanding of the competitive process; and to accomplish this without unduly burdening legitimate business activity" (Federal Trade Commission webpage, N.A.). The FTC webpage is full of legal information for business owners to refer to. This helps companies handle their work ethically. The FTC has an entire section on their webpage for advertising and marketing information. The webpage states, "under the law, claims in advertisements must be truthful, cannot be deceptive or unfair, and must be evidence-based"(Federal Trade Commission Webpage, N.A.). This statement shows that astroturfing is illegal in the United States as well as unethical. Section five of the FTC Act is violated by astroturfing. "Material connections between a marketer and an endorser be disclosed when their relationship is not otherwise apparent from the context of the communication that contains the endorsement"(Manatt, 2014). The FTC regularly monitors all advertisements and marketing campaigns for untruthful claims. Key identifying material that typically shows in untruthful posts or campaigns is posted online to teach consumers how to protect themselves. Unfortunately, this agency cannot catch everything. Through the FTC webpage anyone can file a claim against a corporation. The punishment for companies who are caught writing fake reviews or paying others to write positive reviews are fines. These actions don't only violate federal laws, but in many places state laws are infringed upon as well. The FTC has caught some businesses and fined them. A little less than twenty businesses were fined \$350,000 all together in 2013 due to their fake online reviews (Kent, 2014).

Comm-entary 2016

Role Models and Virtue

Being honest with a person about the benefits a product provides is an example of being authentic. Sabine Trept and L. Reinecke best explain the idea of authenticity and consumerism and say that, “Authenticity is usually termed as having two suppositions: firstly that people know their thoughts and emotions, and secondly that they act in accordance with both” (Harter, 2002). When one commits the action of astroturfing they are acting unauthentic. What they actually know to be true is not the idea they are giving off in their written reviews. To be considered authentic, a person would need to actually have interacted with a product, not receive any incentive for writing a positive remark and be completely honest with what they thought of the item.

Seth Godin is an ethical marketing expert. Godin’s authentic thoughts are written in his books and blog. “Being trusted is the single most urgent way to build a business. You don’t get trusted if you’re constantly measuring and tweaking and manipulating so that someone will buy from you”(Godin qtd. in Lazauskas, 2015). The peers of Godin have grown to respect him in the marketing industry. In 2013, Godin was welcomed into the Direct Marketing Hall of Fame (Godin, 2015). He has written many prosperous books and strives to provide companies and individuals with the best ideas for selling their products. He believes in being honest with your consumer. “We’re responsible for what we sell and how we sell it. We’re responsible for the effects (and the side effects) of our actions”(Godin, 2006). Godin believes that companies need to take responsibility for their words and actions. The virtue of authenticity is significant to Godin as well. In Godin’s book, *All Marketers Are Liars*, he dedicates a whole chapter to authenticity. He states that any business owner should encourage his or her employees to interact with their customers. This can be done through face-to-face contact or online in the form of instant messaging or e-mail. “Sometimes the interactions are nasty or rushed or even selfish. But when they’re genuine, they have an impact” (Godin, 2005, p.114). Godin believes if anyone is apprehensive about giving their employees this type of freedom, then the company needs to re-

Comm-entary 2016

think their marketing and service. “If you are not authentic, you will get the benefit of just one sale, not a hundred. The cost of your deception is just too high” (Godin, 2005, p. 115). Lying will only get a company so far. Eventually, consumers will catch on and not support the company anymore. People want to trust whom they do business with and the best way for a company to treat their consumers is with honesty.

To start a movement of honesty from corporations, one company needs to be a role model for others. The Ford car company has gone through many rough patches in their long history, but has managed to continuously come back from their setbacks. Through research, Ford has learned that Millennials spend hours searching for a new car online before actually going to a dealership. “Prospective buyers visit an average of 25 sites in their discovery process, with over half of new car buyers saying the Internet led them to a particular dealership” (Viveiros, 2015). The FordDirect marketing team thought it would be best to reach out to this age group through social media. According to social account manager of Adobe, “FordDirect knew it needed to provide content for fans and followers on Facebook and other social media platforms to help dealerships connect with prospective buyers” (Viveiros, 2015). To help individual dealerships succeed in the social media world, FordDirect created a program. Through this program, managers receive help with social media supervising and keeping a positive online character. Truthful marketing campaigns will help the company grow. Consumers will come back to Ford if they feel the dealership was truthful with them when they bought their first Ford vehicle. Currently, over one thousand dealerships have signed up for this service (Viveiros, 2015). The goal of this program is to help dealerships start a conversation with prospective car buyers (Viveiros, 2015). Once managers can interact with people, there is a higher chance of them making a sale.

In March 2015, Ford Motor Company made the 2015 most ethical companies list by Ethisphere Institute. Ford is the only automobile company that made the list. It is also not the first time Ford has been given this honor. For the past six years, Ford has been named as one of the most ethical companies (Tudose,

Comm-entary 2016

2015). Therefore, it is a role model for other brands in the car industry. “The honor is given based on how you rate in the following 5 categories: ethics and compliance; corporate citizenship and responsibility; culture of ethics, governance and leadership; innovation; and reputation” (Tudose, 2015). Making the right business decisions has helped keep Ford a consumer favorite. “People are leaning towards not doing business with a certain brand if it acquires a negative reputation nowadays”(Tudose, 2015). Other companies should look at Ford as an example. If one conducts business in an ethical manner then they will succeed.

Ford is being authentic in its business practices. The engineers are working to increase the miles per gallon, which will lead to less air contamination. Ford is trying to do what is best for the environment. According to the Ford corporate website the company aims to recycle more and use more lightweight materials in their vehicles. They also want to reduce all waste coming out of their facilities (Ford, 2014). ”In addition to product- and brand-specific market research, we have an office dedicated to tracking shifts in social, technological, economic, environmental and political arenas” (Ford, 2014). Ford looks for what their consumers want and strives to meet these goals, while still being affordable. The company has chosen to research and shift their practices towards the desires of individuals instead of lying to their customers.

Plan of Action

As a consumer, I would like to trust the companies I purchase from. I believe the money I spend supports how that company conducts business. My voting dollars keep that company alive. When I first read about the unethical marketing practice of astroturfing, I was astonished that corporations believe they can honestly feed their consumers lies. I plan to take the information I have learned through my research during this project to educate others and make the best ethical choices as I continue down my career path.

When I discussed the topic of astroturfing with my friends, many of them had never heard of it before. I was surprised to find many

Comm-entary 2016

Communication majors have never come across the term in their academic career. The most important aspect is to educate others. That is how social movements start and spread quickly. When one person learns of an unethical practice they will want to tell others. As more people fight against companies who lie, companies will be forced to change their ways or political leaders will make regulations. Education is the focus of my plan of action

Social media is a way for one to spread their ideas to others on a single platform. Please see appendix A for screenshots of my Facebook posts that advocate against astroturfing. Facebook was my main priority for discussing astroturfing. I chose Facebook because I have the most followers on this website than any other of my social media webpages. I also like the newsfeed aspect of the page. The newsfeed is continuously being updated with posts that include photos, text or videos. I implemented every form of posting for the education piece of my project. I have had a couple of “likes” and one comment on my posts thus far. Even though people are not commenting on my posts directly, I believe they are reading what I have to say. This can lead to more discussion between parties about the topic. Through this initiative, I hoped to give people the tools to protect themselves from false online claims. Acknowledgement of a problem is the first step in preventing it from continuing. By working as a team, people can petition for change.

A second task I executed during this past spring semester has been writing my own online reviews. Please see appendix B for some examples of reviews that I have written since the mid-term report. I have written about physical places, material objects and food. I wanted to reach a wide variety of people with my posts. I chose to regularly post on Amazon because I think that is an online store where reviews are read often. Personally, I read many Amazon comments before committing to a product.

I believe in leading by example. Therefore, I hope by others reading my evaluations that more people will want to write their own organic assessments. Every analysis that I have written was composed with the highest level of honesty. I plan to continue to write online reviews after this project ends.

Comm-entary 2016

Conclusion

Authenticity is a virtue that should be practiced in all fields of work. Being honest and true to oneself and their customers will help their business grow. People would rather work with a company that can be trusted and has proven to work ethically. Author Seth Godin and the Ford Motor Company embody the virtues and ethical ideas that other companies should aspire to follow. Astroturfing is essentially lying to your customers. This practice may help at first, but in the long run it will hurt a company. Through this research, I have learned further about authenticity. I have thought about how I would like to conduct business in the future because I care about what my customers think of me. As I continue down my career path, I hope to be an example and inspire others to work ethically. The Federal Trade Commission is beginning the process of punishing unethical businesses. I hope the FTC will eventually discipline companies who use unethical marketing plans with more than a fine. There should be stronger implications against dirty corporations. By applying tighter rules and regulations astroturfing might become an idea of the past in the future. Being authentic can take a business further than lying to their customers would.

Comm-entary 2016

Appendices

Appendix A: Facebook posts since the mid-term report



Comm-entary 2016



Ashley Layton
Just now · 21 ↓

"Being trusted is the single most urgent way to build a business. You don't get trusted if you're constantly measuring and tweaking and manipulating so that someone will buy from you" - Seth Godin

Astroturfing and manipulating your consumers is not the right way to run a business. Ethical marketer, Seth Godin, is a great role model to look up to. Stop dirty marketing.



Marketing Legend Seth Godin on the Future of Branded Content

We sat down with Seth Godin, the godfather of modern marketing, to get his take on the present and future of content marketing.

CONTENTLY.COM

Like · Comment · Share

Comm-entary 2016

 **Ashley Layton**
Just now ·  

Help take a stand against astroturfing and other unethical business practices.
File a complaint with the FTC if you come across anything suspicious.

THE COMMISSION FOR AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

Submit a Consumer Complaint to the FTC | Federal Trade Commission

Question How can I submit a consumer complaint to the FTC? Answer To report fraud, identity theft, or an unfair business practice, visit ftc.gov/complaint, click on...

FTC.GOV

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)

Comm-entary 2016

Appendix B: Personal Online Reviews

Your Activity

 **Ashley Layton (You)**
★★★★★ reviewed in the last week
This place is a hidden gem.

I had a great experience. The sandwiches are amazing. They even had gluten free bread, so I did not have to get a salad. The workers were very friendly. I will definitely be back.



★★★★★
Perfect.
April 23, 2015

" I was skeptical to order this dress, but the price was right so I went for it and I am sure glad I did. The material feels great and is not as thin ..." [show more](#)

Ashley15
MA

was this review helpful? 

Comm-entary 2016

★★★★☆ **Fun, Informative and Funny**

By [MAL15](#) on April 8, 2015

Format: Paperback | **Verified Purchase**

I usually dread reading a whole book for class, but this one has proven to be an exception. An easy and fun read. The book provided information, while keeping me entertained with a good story. I even found myself laughing out loud at times.

▶ [Comment](#) | Looking for voting buttons? Sorry, we don't let customers vote on their own reviews. Report abuse

★★★★★ **Perfect**

By [MAL15](#) on April 8, 2015

Size Name: 14 Treatments

I won't use another whitening product after this one.

▶ [Comment](#) | Looking for voting buttons? Sorry, we don't let customers vote on their own reviews. Report abuse

★★★★★ **Worth it**

By [MAL15](#) on April 8, 2015

Color Name: Beige | **Verified Purchase**

Protects my phone perfectly. I wanted a case that would show off the gold back of my iPhone, while still providing protection. This does the trick. I get compliments on it all the time.

▶ [Comment](#) | Looking for voting buttons? Sorry, we don't let customers vote on their own reviews. Report abuse

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

- Ewen, Stuart. (1996). *PR! A Social History of Spin*. New York, NY: BasicBooks.
- Godin, Seth. (2015) Bio. Seth Godin Website. Retrieved from <http://www.sethgodin.com/sg/bio.asp>
- Godin, Seth. (2006). Marketing Morality. Seth Godin's Blog. Retrieved from http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2006/08/marketing_moral.html
- Godin, Seth. (2005). Step 5: Marketers With Authenticity Strive. All Marketers are Liars. (p.113- 122). New York, NY: Penguin Group.
- Goldschein, Eric. (2011). 10 Fake Grassroots Movements Started By Corporations To Sway Your Opinion. Business Insider. Retrieved from <http://www.businessinsider.com/astroturfing-grassroots-movements-2011-9?op=1>
- Federal Trade Commission Webpage. (N.A.). Federal Trade Commission: Protecting America's Consumers. Retrieved from <https://www.ftc.gov/>
- Ford. (2014). Sustainability Report 2013/14. Ford. Retrieved from <http://corporate.ford.com/microsites/sustainability-report-2013-14/people-customers-needs.html>
- Kent, Kevin. (2014). The Legal Risks of Writing Positive Fake Reviews: Don't Astroturf Your Online Business Reputation. Review Trackers. Retrieved from <http://www.reviewtrackers.com/legal-risks-writing-positive-fake-astroturf-online-business-reputation/>

Comm-entary 2016

- Kohn, Sally. (2014). How Market Basket Workers are Fighting Greed. CNN. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/01/opinion/kohn-market-basket-protests/>
- Kotler, Philip. (2005). The Role Played by the Broadening of Marketing Movement in the History of Marketing Thought. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*. Vol. 24. No.1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30000565>
- Kumar, V. (2015). Evolution of Marketing as a Discipline: What Has Happened and What to Look Out For. *Journal of Marketing*: January 2015, Vol. 79. No. 1, p. 1-9.
- Lazauskas, Joe. (2015). 'You Need Editors, Not Brand Managers': Marketing Legend Seth Godin on the Future of Branded Content. *Contently*. Retrieved from <http://contently.com/strategist/2015/02/06/you-need-editors-not-brand-managers-marketing-legend-seth-godin-on-the-future-of-branded-content/>
- Manatt. (October 9, 2014). Advertising Law. Newsletters. Retrieved from <https://www.manatt.com/advertising-law/with-operation-full-disclosure.aspx#Article2>
- Trepte, Sabine and Leonard Reinecke. (N.A.). The Social Web as a Shelter for Privacy and Authentic Living. In S. Trepte and L. Reinecke (Eds.), *Privacy Online*. Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg. pp. 61 - 73.
- Tudose, Sergiu. (2015). Ford Is Yet Again, World's Most Ethical Car Company, Claims Study. *Car Scoops*. Retrieved from <http://www.carscoops.com/2015/03/ford-is-yet-again-worlds-most-ethical.html>

Comm-entary 2016

Viveiros, Beth Negus. (2015). Social Drives Millennials To Ford Dealerships. Promotional Marketing. Business Source Complete. Retrieved from <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.libproxy.unh.edu/ehost/detail/detail?sid=9ee60bce-3521-4fe4-909a-50bfeadc5426%40sessionmgr4002&vid=0&hid=41111&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=bth&AN=102141678>

Walker, Edward T. (2014). What's The Difference Between Political Grassroots and Big-Interest Astroturf? UCLA Newsroom. Retrieved from <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/whats-the-difference-between-political-grassroots-and-big-interest-astroturf>

An Ethical Dilemma in Media: "A Rape On Campus"

By Jenna Ward

After learning about ethics in different types of media professions this semester, I chose to focus on one of the largest journalistic errors of 2014. On November 19, 2014, Rolling Stone published the article "A Rape on Campus: A Brutal Assault and Struggle for Justice at UVA," which caused a nationwide uproar in the journalism industry and on college campuses. The article, written by seasoned contributor Sabrina Erdely, followed the narrative of a University of Virginia student going by the pseudonym "Jackie" who was brutally gang raped at a fraternity party her freshman year. Within the article, Jackie tells the story of how a boy she met lifeguarding named "Drew" (another pseudonym) invited her to a date night party at the fraternity Phi Kappa Psi.

At the party on the night of September 28, 2012, Drew took Jackie upstairs where she was led into a dark room with six other men. From there, the article delves into gruesome details of the men physically and sexually assaulting Jackie as part of an initiation ritual. Jackie leaves the party battered and bloodied. She then calls up three of her friends informing them that "something bad had happened." The three friends named "Randall", "Cindy," and "Andy" (the article uses pseudonyms, again) are more concerned with Jackie's social reputation than her well-being. The three friends decide it is best not to call for help and let Jackie go home. Later in the semester, Jackie falls into a deep depression and decides to leave school temporarily. Upon returning to school later in the year, Jackie reports the rape to Nicole Eramo, the head of the UVA Sexual Misconduct Board, who in the article is said to have suppressed Jackie's rape in order to protect the reputation of the school. Overall, the article paints Jackie's friends and UVA as cold and unsympathetic in regard to her sexual assault. The publication of the article led to the suspension of all Greek life activity on UVA

Comm-entary 2016

campus, initiated campus wide protests against both Phi Kappa Psi and UVA, and launched a police investigation of Jackie's rape. As the article became more viral, the story received heavy backlash and criticism for its blatant lack of basic journalistic procedures. The public eventually learns that large portions of the story were fabricated, including how the lifeguard "Drew" was a hoax altogether (Shapiro 2014). Phi Kappa Psi reported that they did not have a social event the night of September 28th, and an initiation ritual would not be possible because there were no Fall pledges. The three friends were never contacted, but were more than willing to cooperate if Rolling Stone had asked them (Hartmann 2015). By April 2015, the article was completely debunked and retracted, with an apology from managing editor Will Dana.

The ethical dilemma pertaining to this piece of journalism begins with the lack of sources. While reporting on the story, Erdely relied solely on Jackie as her main source of information. The people who significantly contributed to the storyline as told by Jackie, included "Drew," the other attackers in Phi Kappa Psi, Randall, Cindy, and Andy. Erdely unfortunately neglected to reach out to any of these people, which raises a huge red flag. Erdely also put complete trust into Jackie for relying on only her memory to recall facts about what happened. A few days after the article was published, Richard Bradley, a former George magazine editor, publicly questioned the validity of the story. He points out Erdely's lack of identification of the men involved in Jackie's attack.

Then there's the fact that Jackie apparently knew two of her rapists, but they are not named, nor does Rubin Erdely contact them, which is basically a cardinal rule of journalism: If someone in your story is accused of something, you'd better do your damndest to give them a chance to respond (Bradley 2014).

After an interview with Slate, Erdely explained that she trusted Jackie as a reliable source and that she did not need to interview the others in the story (Wemple 2014). Erik Wemple of the Washington Post criticized Erdely in response for not reaching out to the people mentioned in the story, stressing the point that because of weight behind this story, she needed to take "every possible step to reach out and interview them." He explained that anything short

Comm-entary 2016

of this was bad journalism (Wemple 2014).

The publication of “A Rape on Campus” also faces an issue with ethics because Erdely failed to accurately fact check. The existence of “Drew” came into question as the story came under more scrutiny. In April 2015, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism wrote up an extensive review on what went wrong in the reporting of this story. The exchanges between Erdely and Jackie are exposed in this account, which reveal that Jackie refused to give the lifeguard’s last name. On one hand, Ederly did not want to traumatize or push too hard on a victim of rape. On the other hand however, they needed to know where to draw the line between advocacy and reporting. Jackie grew flaky and stopped answering Erdely’s calls two weeks before the story was due. In fear of losing cooperation with Jackie, Erdely reached out to her and proposed they would settle on the pseudonym “Drew” (Coronel, Coll, and Kravitz 2015).

Although Jackie refused to give the last name of the lifeguard herself, Erdely still could have found out about him on her own. Erdely also failed to receive any type of confirmation from the fraternity Phi Kappa Psi that they had even held a social event the night of September 28th.

She [Erdely] might have examined Phi Kappa Psi’s social media for members she could interview and for evidence of a party on the night Jackie described. Erdely might have looked for students who worked at the aquatic center and sought out clues about the lifeguard Jackie had described. Any one of these and other similar reporting paths might have led to discoveries that would have caused Rolling Stone to reconsider its plans (Coronel, Coll, and Kravitz 2015).

Not only is Erdely to blame, but her editing staff is also responsible for the journalistic mistakes made along the way. Will Dana and the principle editor, Sean Woods, initially insisted that Erdely get in contact with the three friends of Jackie, and try to verify the existence of Drew. When Erdely asked Jackie about reaching out to her friend Ryan, who was under the pseudonym of “Randall,” Jackie claimed that she already spoke to him and that he wanted no part of the interview. He supposedly said he was

Comm-entary 2016

“loyal to his own fraternity” and that Jackie was running a “shit show” (Coronel, Coll, and Kravitz 2015). Erdely took Jackie’s word and dropped the idea of contacting Ryan. The main issue was that Erdely, Woods, and Dana were too accommodating to Jackie’s requests and put too much trust in her. The overuse of pseudonyms was also an obvious mistake made by the three staff members. The first pseudonym, Jackie, seemed acceptable because she was a victim of rape, but it still put a barrier of trust in front of the audience. From that point on, it seemed excessive to use cover-up names for the lifeguard and the three friends.

Pseudonyms are inherently undesirable in journalism. They introduce fiction and ask readers to trust that this is the only instance in which a publication is inventing details at its discretion. Their use in this case was a crutch – it allowed the magazine to evade coming to terms with reporting gaps. Rolling Stone should consider banning them (Coronel, Coll, and Kravitz 2015).

Potter Box

The use of the Potter Box allows a media professional to weigh the particular details, principles, stakeholders, and values within an ethical dilemma. Stepping back and mapping out the factors of “A Rape on Campus” could significantly assist in the decision making process of the ethical dilemma at hand. Let us go through the relevant facts, stakeholders, values, and principles present in the situation.

Definition (Relevant Facts)

The majority of the paper consists of the important facts that contribute to the decision making process of publishing the story. To summarize, the first important fact is that Jackie does not reveal the lifeguard’s identity. Another important fact is that throughout the process of putting together the article, Jackie becomes distance and hard to get in contact with. When asked about the “bloody dress” she claimed to be wearing after her attack, she said that her mother threw it away. The story in general is also somewhat

Comm-entary 2016

inconsistent. Jackie explains how she was led into a dark room at Phi Kappa Psi, yet she was able to identify Drew and another boy from her anthropology class in the room. The callousness of her friends and other people at the party towards her bloodied and battered physical state is also hard to believe. Lastly, the three friends and the alleged attackers were never interviewed to have the ability to give their side of the story, which is necessary when reporting a crime.

Stakeholders

There are some very important stakeholders in this particular scenario. The first stakeholder includes Jackie, all rape/sexual assault survivors, and maybe even the female population as a whole. Recently, there has been an increased movement against rape and sexual assault on college campuses. For example, initiatives such as the “It’s On Us” campaign by the Obama Administration have acted on this push for women (Somander 2014). With Erdely we see an increased loyalty towards Jackie and the college rape culture rhetoric. Her main goal was to expose sexual assault on college campuses, and Jackie’s story was the most sensational. The story advances Erdely’s agenda regarding rape culture, causing her to put too much faith in Jackie. Publishing a story that depicts a fraternity horrendously raping an innocent college freshman girl starts real conversations about sexual assault and shines light on an issue that previously had been brushed aside. Although the publication could increase awareness of the subject, it could also unfortunately diminish sexual assault awareness if Jackie’s account is not accurate. If Rolling Stone publishes a confession of rape that turns out to be false, this could do a significant disservice to Jackie and other women who have been sexually assaulted. Women who have been raped may feel even more hesitant to report their attack in fear of being tagged as another “Jackie.”

The second stakeholder includes University of Virginia and Phi Kappa Psi. The publication of “A Rape on Campus” clearly shines a very negative light on both the school and the fraternity. Without

Comm-entary 2016

extensive feedback from the university and the fraternity regarding Jackie's attack, there is not a chance for them to share their sides of the story. Defacing the names of both the university and fraternity without proper investigation recklessly tarnishes their reputations.

The third stakeholder is Rolling Stone itself. In the journalism industry, integrity and credibility are key components in writing and publishing. To be a trusted source of information, the publication needs to establish ethos with its audience. By publishing an intense story like Jackie's without the proper citations, fact checks, and reliable sources, Rolling Stone risks ruining their reputation as a trustworthy news source. Conversely, going through and publishing the story starts an important conversation about sexual assault awareness on college campuses, and brings "pleasure" and entertainment to readers with an astonishing story of rape. On the flip side, choosing to not publish the story subtracts the amount of readers that will read that month's issue of Rolling Stone. More importantly, it also saves Rolling Stone an immense amount of trouble and keeps their good reputation in tact.

Lastly, the fourth stakeholder includes Rolling Stone's readers, or the general public. "A Rape on Campus" attained record-breaking attention on the Internet. "The online story ultimately attracted more than 2.7 million views, more than any other feature not about a celebrity that the magazine had ever published" (Coronel, Coll, and Kravitz 2015). Clearly, publishing a story so groundbreaking is going to attract more readers than usual. This is the largest and most important stakeholder in the decision. The general public is who will generally decide who and what they are going to trust. When deceived by such a heartbreaking, gruesome story, they are going to ultimately lose trust in the source. Risking the loss of such a large audience is a pivotal point in the decision-making process.

Values

When making the decision to publish "A Rape on Campus," there are key societal, professional, and personal values present. One societal value is that rape culture is prevalent on college campuses. More specifically, rape culture is very prevalent in

Comm-entary 2016

fraternity houses. It's clear that the article is pushing this societal value onto its readers. Another societal value is that rape survivors must be treated with care and sensitivity. Throughout the writing process, Erdely and her editors are careful to not step on Jackie's toes or to push her too hard. They accommodate her needs and put trust into her story.

The professional values that are necessary in this decision include reporting both sides of the story. It's important to attain information from both the victim and the alleged attackers. A one-sided story lacks credibility and basic fairness in journalism. Another professional value is to remain unbiased while reporting. There seems to be an increased bias against UVA, Phi Kappa Psi, and the alleged attackers while reporting on the story. A reporter must abstain from favoring one side and provide an unbiased account of what happened. Personal values obviously vary, but a more liberal, female reporter may be more inclined to believe and relate to Jackie's story. Her story feeds into biases against frats, men, and colleges in the South (Bradley 2014). As a woman, it could be easy to sympathize with the terrors that encompass being sexually assaulted on a college campus.

Principles

Stepping back and properly analyzing the situation at hand, the most logical ethical principle to follow in order to come to a decision would be prima facie duties. Prima facie duties lay out essential moral truths that can be attained through intuition. Prima facie duties include fidelity, reparation, gratitude, non-injury, harm-prevention, beneficence, self-improvement, and justice. Fidelity is vital when it comes to publishing the article. It's necessary for Rolling Stone to strive to keep promises, be honest, and avoid deceiving its readers. Non-injury is also prevalent in the decision-making process. Rolling Stone should be careful not to cause unjust harm to people, groups, and organizations from the result of the article. Writing negative, inaccurate information about UVA administration and Phi Kappa Psi could cause serious harm to those parties. Harm-prevention also plays out here because Rolling Stone needs to be cautious

Comm-entary 2016

that their article does not cause their readers to harm the parties mentioned in the article. Beneficence is also applicable because as a trusted news source, Rolling Stone wants to improve others' health, wisdom, security, and happiness. If Jackie's account were fully accurate, Rolling Stone would hopefully be doing these things by assisting in the fight against campus sexual assault and granting other victims the bravery to confess and report their attacks. On the contrary, Jackie's account being false would dampen others' health, wisdom, security, and happiness by providing an inaccurate story. Lastly, justice may be the most important part of Rolling Stone using prima facie duties. If justice were a main goal for Rolling Stone, they would be sure to provide all sides of the story in their account. It is unjust to only publish Jackie's side of the story in which she negatively depicts her friends, UVA administration, and Phi Kappa Psi.

When utilizing prima facie duties, moral intuition is very necessary. We use moral intuition to weigh out particular prima facie duties in certain situations. Moreover, moral intuition shows us that non-injury takes precedence over other duties. In this case, it is obvious that ignoring non-injury could cause harm to essentially all of the stakeholders. Publishing the story without proper verification and false information causes harm to Jackie, other rape victims, UVA, Phi Kappa Psi, Rolling Stone, and the general public. I think that when Erdely, Dana, and Woods were on the fence of publication, they took on a utilitarian perspective. They most likely figured that publishing this article would do a lot of good in the sense that it would ignite conversation about rape culture and how school administrations often ignore the issue. They also knew that this was an incredible story which would attract a lot of readers and increase their magazine sales. They probably also figured it would bring justice to Jackie, and help improve the method in which UVA handles sexual misconduct. These things are all great as long as every aspect of the article is backed up with facts and accurate sources. Unfortunately, this was not the case. I think that the Rolling Stone staff had good intentions, but there were just too many errors and roadblocks that led them into the territory of bad journalism.

From my standpoint using prima facie duties, I would have

Comm-entary 2016

decided to not publish the article. The story was powerful and attracted attention, but there were too many loopholes and gaps within the article that tricked the public into believing something that was not entirely true. The use of pseudonyms created too much fiction within the story and did not help to prove that anybody in the story was even real. The lack of verification that “Drew” existed failed to provide validity to the story, and the article should have been put on halt until he was found. The article also should have been put on pause until the three friends were tracked down and interviewed. I think the article should have only been published if all of these procedures were met. Another solution could have been to publish an article that only mentioned Jackie’s experience in a paragraph, but then focused more on other college campus sexual assault experiences that were easier to verify as real. The article based all around Jackie’s interpretation of what happened the night of September 28, 2012 caused more harm than good. Hopefully in the future, Rolling Stone will be extra efficient when it comes to sources, fact checks, and pseudonyms. Unfortunately, the Rolling Stone staff, UVA, and Phi Kappa Psi are all still paying the price for those poor ethical decisions.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

- Bradley, Richard. "Shots in the Dark." Shots in the Dark RSS. ColdBlue, 24 Nov. 2014. Web. 10 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.richardbradley.net/shotsinthedark/2014/11/24/is-the-rolling-stone-story-true/>>.
- Coronel, Sheila, Steve Coll, and Derek Kravitz. "Rolling Stone and UVA: The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Report." Rolling Stone. Jann Wenner, 05 Apr. 2015. Web. 10 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/a-rape-on-campus-what-went-wrong-20150405>>.
- Hartmann, Margaret. "Everything We Know About the UVA Rape Case [Updated]." Daily Intelligencer. New York Magazine, 30 July 2015. Web. 13 Dec. 2015. <<http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/12/everything-we-know-uva-rape-case.html>>.
- Shapiro, Jeffrey Scott. "Friends of U.Va. Rape Accuser Raise Fresh Doubts about Story, Citing Phone Records." Washington Times. The Washington Times, 15 Dec. 2014. Web. 10 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/dec/15/friends-uva-rape-accuser-begin-doubt-story/?page=all#pagebreak>>.
- Somander, Tanya. "President Obama Launches the "It's On Us" Campaign to End Sexual Assault on Campus." The White House. The White House, 19 Sept. 2014. Web. 11 Dec. 2015. <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/09/19/president-obama-launches-its-us-campaign-end-sexual-assault-campus>>.

Comm-entary 2016

Wemple, Erik. "Rolling Stone Whiffs in Reporting on Alleged Rape." Washington Post. The Washington Post, 2 Dec. 2014. Web. 10 Dec. 2015. <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2014/12/02/rolling-stone-whiffs-in-reporting-on-alleged-rape/?hpid=z2>>

Networked Movements & Social Change: The Success of #BlackLivesMatter

By Carolyn Riley

With the emergence and popularization of Web 2.0 technologies like social media and networking platforms, there has been a corresponding rise in mass social and political movements utilizing these new digital resources. What some have described as “participatory culture” has, for better or worse, given a voice to anyone with the access and ability to use digital media. This new techno-cultural shift has led to a newly vigorous period of social and political movements, such as Occupy Wall Street, or more recently, Black Lives Matter. This transition has led us to question the fundamental structures that have enabled these groups to assemble, as well as question our organizational systems that could now be outdated. While most new forms of communication technology are faced initially with skepticism and distrust from critics and commentators, some technology writers and scholars such as Clay Shirky, Henry Jenkins, Stephen Johnson and Manuel Castells have focused more positively on new possibilities, showing us how digitally networked collective action can allow people (or “users”) to bypass outdated, inefficient, and potentially oppressive institutions that have long structured and governed our society. This new potential for networked collective action allows for a more interactive, open, and diverse public discourse. This ultimately reflects a broader set of values, perspectives, and voices. Building on the work of these authors, this paper will examine the rise of networked organizing and communication, and how it enables new forms of collective action.

Within this lens, the opportunities and pitfalls facing groups, organizations, communities, and activists striving for social change will be outlined and explored. Specifically, to understand this techno-social transformation, this paper looks at the communication strategies and practices of nonprofit advocacy groups, contrasted with that of the more fluid, networked and unmanaged communication practices of the “leaderless” Black Lives Matter

Comm-entary 2016

movement.

The Rise of Networked Organizing

In his book, *Here Comes Everybody, the Power of Organizing without Organizations*, Clay Shirky (2008) examines the foundations on which new social movements and audience participation are able to flourish. In the digital age, those with access to the Internet are able to publish and promote all sorts of content, despite their lack of a traditional professional role in that medium. Internet and social media users face a rapidly expanding suite of tools and associated abilities that were once unimaginable. Today's digitally fluent user can perform an innumerable number of new practices - create, distribute, "share", broadcast, curate, comment, "like" or "up-vote", all while part of a social network. This concept is what Tim O'Reilly refers to as the "Architecture of Participation" (Shirky, 2008, p. 17). Due to this, we are no longer a passive audience; rather, we are what Dan Gilmore calls "the former audience" as we now react to, participate in, and alter content as it is unfolding (Shirky, 2008, p. 7).

The critical value that interactive media adds is the depletion of transaction costs, as Shirky notes "the costs incurred by creating a new group or joining an existing one have fallen in recent years, and not just by a little bit. They have collapsed" (2008, 2008, p. 17). Transaction costs are the communications and organizational resources an institution must use if it wants to keep itself viable. Traditional institutions cannot put all their resources into their mission, Shirky notes, because it also takes a great amount of time, energy and money to maintain structure and discipline within the organization. Individuals, groups, and movements no longer have to operate within a traditional organizational hierarchy, which, while founded on the basis of improving communication within an organization, has a limit. Ronald Coase coins this limit as the "Coasian Ceiling", which argues that there is a point in which a company's traditional management hierarchy is no longer scalable, as it begins allocating too many resources simply into managing itself and limits inter-organizational communication to a tiered

Comm-entary 2016

system (Shirky, 2008, p. 44). Tiered systems limit the discussion of new ideas, and drive inequality as the implementation of ideas are limited to the perspective of those in power. This in turn subsequently shapes the motivation of a given action to one of either conscious or subconscious privilege.

The reason we have seen this ceiling - that it has been “exposed” - lies in the comparison of what has often been called “leaderless” movements, or collective actions that are organized and take place mostly online. The pace at which users across borders can contribute to forums, communicate with dispersed people via social networks, publish breaking news on blogs, or create and share content in the digital age can exceed the pace at which a traditional organization could systematically conduct that same development, because the users now have the desire and technological ability to share.

While lowered transaction costs challenge existing institutions by “eroding the institutional monopoly on large-scale coordination” (Shirky, 2008, p. 143), Shirky makes a clear distinction that new communication platforms and capabilities are not creating or driving collective action, but rather providing the means. Social media networks connect people and information regardless of locality, and break down barriers to a group reaction and interaction. He later notes, “The enormous visibility and searchability of social life means that the ability for the like-minded to locate one another, and assemble and cooperate with one another, now exists independently of social approval or disapproval” (2008, p. 207). This action, therefore, relied just as much on the activity of the users as it did the channels of communication. Participation takes place when users see the possibility of achieving something combined with inspired interest, or what Shirky dubs a “plausible promise” (Shirky, 2008, p. 18).

While these new innovations and shifts in user-generated content have brought on a surge of collaboration, there are still ways in which our previous mindsets around social innovation and collective action may hinder the vitality of a digitally driven leaderless movement. In their work, *Spreadable Media, Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*, Henry Jenkins et al.

Comm-entary 2016

suggest the importance of viewing content as “Spreadable” instead of “Viral”, suggesting the viral metaphor, which implies content spreads like a contagious virus, removes the audience agency, which is the key in the distribution of the content. The concept of spreadability, however, does acknowledge the importance of social connections among users. For content to be spreadable, they note, it must be produced in easy-to-share formats, allow audiences to fit and change the context of the material in their lives, value the audience as a means of promotion, circulate through all channels to lead to active engagement, and utilize “grassroots” communities who help shape the flow and advocate for the message (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 1-8).

Along with these critical components in developing spreadable media, collective action is also dependent on the right mindset of the users. In his book, *Future Perfect, the Case for Progress in a Networked Age*, Stephen Johnson (2012) presents a wholly positive outlook on social progress (and its relationship with news media coverage) by suggesting that “we underestimate the amount of steady progress that continues around us, and we misunderstand where that progress comes from” (p. 215), meaning we often attribute progress only to specific markets in the private sector, as well as share a cynical view on the state of our society due to negativity within news channels. Under Johnson’s view however, not only can we alter this mindset by looking at unseen successes (like life expectancy, public safety), we can also increase our use of digitally based peer networks to drive change outside the system. “Peer progressives”, are people who believe that peer-to-peer networks are the most powerful tool to advance social progress (p. 20). Johnson notes, “Living strictly by peer-progressive values means rethinking the fundamental structures of some of the most revered institutions of modern life; it means going back to the drawing board to think about how private companies and democracies are structured” (p. 50). Peer progressives then develop a peer network, full of diversity and a healthy appreciation for free flowing ideas. They often promote the positive, bringing it to mass attention, thus providing an incentive for participation within the network, that in turn transcends typical capitalist and individualist

Comm-entary 2016

motives. As these groups share and build ideas off of one another, they will transition into a stage of cooperation, which Shirky (2006) notes, “is harder than simply sharing, because it involves changing your behavior to synchronize with the people who are changing their behavior to synchronize with you” (p. 49).

How can people increasingly leverage social, digital peer networks to combat inequality? Aside from networking and creating spreadable media, they also have the opportunity to acquire social capital, bypassing systemic control, through their support of one another and other mission-aligned groups (Shirky, 2006, p. 225). By doing so, they are capable of projecting and changing a cultural value and contesting power. Manuel Castells (2012) depicts the importance of power in mass media in his work, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, where he notes, “the fundamental power struggle is the battle for the construction of meaning in the minds of the people” (p. 5). Constructing this meaning has often remained in the hands of mass media to shape our society. That means an interactive culture of mass communication provides a critical opportunity for society to shape and define its own values separate from the state. It reads:

“By engaging in the production of mass media messages, and by developing autonomous networks of horizontal communication, citizens of the Information Age become able to invent new programs for their lives with the materials of their suffering, fears, dreams and hopes. [...] Social movements, throughout history, are the producers of new values and goals around which the institutions of society are transformed to represent these values by creating new norms to organize social life” (2012, p. 9).

This point is critical as Castells highlights the autonomy of communication today. If social norms and values are perpetuated via networked communication, then it can now enable social movements to relate to the society at large and take some of the power. Castells illustrates that all throughout history, social movements have been dependent on whatever relevant media channel or communication method exists, suggesting that the use of mass communication and collective action is the channel we must take advantage of today.

Comm-entary 2016

Today, there are abundant opportunities to drive political and social change through media, but these tools are still very new. If we dedicate time to understanding the language and structure of these new channels and develop spreadable media, we can in turn generate new ideas to be built upon by a diverse, engaged network. The aforementioned authors and many more in our field have highlighted these opportunities, giving us tools to re-conceptualize ideas around organizational structure and function. These ideas and shared learning can ultimately provide a voice to larger communities—especially those communities that have historically been marginalized, or at the mercy of government, corporate, and/or other outside institutions. The hope is this new communication paradigm will help generate a cultural transition into one that promotes critical thinking, examination of systems of power, and ultimately reflects a more egalitarian potential for society.

The Success of Black Lives Matter

In the summer of 2013, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. This was in response to the trial of George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer who shot and killed Trayvon Martin, an unarmed 17 year old African American boy in Sanford, Florida. Zimmerman's trial was met with outrage when he was found not guilty of second-degree murder and acquitted of manslaughter (Day, 2015).

To fully understand how #BlackLivesMatter would lead to a surge of action, it is critical to observe the significance of what's been dubbed "Black Twitter" and the community it built prior to these events. Meredith Clark, a professor at the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas, defines Black Twitter as "a temporally linked group of connectors that share culture, language and interest in specific issues and talking about specific topics with a black frame of reference" (Ramsey, 2015). Black Twitter is known for driving successful hashtag campaigns and strong, critical responses to current events and media, but Clark explains it is more than just these big news events. As Twitter became a dominant social networking tool among black Internet

Comm-entary 2016

users, the community grew, making it a digital third-space of sorts for discussion and networking. Through both hashtags and indexing, Black Twitter users could more easily engage with one another regardless of location. Clark notes that Black Twitter is not just exclusive to the US. Clark also calls out media for presenting Black Twitter with a generic stereotype, ignoring the other areas of diversity such as class, gender/sexual identity, education, and so on (Ramsey, 2015). Twitter became a safe space of sorts, allowing users to express their beliefs, frustrations, question systems, and to feel united. For a marginalized community still facing systemic and social oppression, this is an incredible source of social capital and empowerment, which would lead to the actions taken at the spark of the #blacklivesmatter movement.

When the Zimmerman verdict was announced, Garza took to Facebook, writing what she describes as a love letter to black people, ending it with “Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter.” This sparked Cullors’ response, which incorporated the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, inspiring the three to build platforms on sites such as Twitter and Tumblr, based on the call to action Garza defined; “Making sure we are creating a world where black lives actually do matter” (Day, 2015).

The three women engaged in online networking, encouraging users to share and engage in the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, as well as marches and signage in their local communities. Momentum started building within the Black Twitter community, but the real peak in this movement took place a year later when Michael Brown, another unarmed African American teenage, was killed by a white police officer, Darren Wilson, in Ferguson, Missouri. The women then organized a “Freedom Ride” with a cohort of 500 people to go to Ferguson in peaceful protest. Upon arrival they discovered even more protesters and community members using the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag and phrase in their protests, indicating its rapidly expanding presence in the black community. The Ferguson protests and subsequent rioting made national headlines, and the social justice community took notice. Black Lives Matter (BLM) gained its largest presence yet, and was being incorporated into mainstream media and political activity (Day, 2015).

Comm-entary 2016

What makes BLM stand out is its incredibly wide scope on the digital world. Digital technologies allow everyday citizens to publish videos and pictures that repeatedly exemplify patterns of racial profiling and unjustified police aggression. It serves as a means to respond, engage, and build a fluid cohort striving for justice. BLM offices have popped up all around the country, and the organization has grown to operate as both a civil rights movement, as well as operating with a fiscal sponsor (Chimurenga, 2015). This organic growth, driven by a national momentum, has resulted in BLM's nontraditional organizational structure.

Often regarded as a "leaderless movement", BLM offices and activists carry a great deal of autonomy in their actions (Chimurenga, 2015). In turn, the movement has faced both critiques and praise for its unique structure, which can appear to lack a specific mission, strategy, and measurable impact - all qualities heavily weighed in the social sector. While there may be truth behind some of these questions, there are also many flaws in traditional nonprofit operations that, if followed by BLM, could jeopardize its scope and ability to drive change. The strength BLM has developed through online networked organizing however, affords them the unique opportunity to cherry-pick the best practices of successful social change organizations, while bypassing barriers in the nonprofit sector. Specifically, the areas of traditional management and financing within the nonprofit sector can pose significant threats to advocacy-based organizations. Through examining these traditional structures alongside BLM, with both a communicative and social justice lens, we can identify the key ways in which innovative digital networking provides alternative, more impactful pipelines for change.

Nonprofit Management in Social Change

As BLM came to fruition through collective action, there is no hierarchical structure leading to a key figure, rather, it is relatively decentralized and operates organically. Anyone at any time can claim to be speaking on behalf of the network, and can convene an event or protest in its name. While there are certainly figures

Comm-entary 2016

within the network with larger platforms, levels of engagement, or authoritative voices, there is no single acting leader. The three cofounders, as well as some others, have taken leadership in regards to helping fund the chapters, but they have not incorporated as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, nor do they regulate actions in the traditional chain of command (Chimurenga, 2015). This structure of “leaderlessness” is a key distinction compared to previous civil rights movements. Through observing issues faced by nonprofit leaders today, it is clear a hierarchical management structure would counteract the very objective BLM has set out for.

Traditionally, management teams emphasize their strategic planning in order to pilot their theory of change. It is one thing to have an idea or mission, but the perceived success of social sector businesses lies within their metrics. These evaluations, however, are intrinsically flawed. In their book *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High Impact Nonprofits*, authors Leslie Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant (2008) note that conventional methods of evaluating nonprofits often revolve around low overhead costs, as opposed to actual impact. This leads to many social entrepreneurs focusing so much on their overhead costs, program successes and internal workings of their organization that they neglect the external impact.

Crutchfield and Grant go on to note that many high-impact organizations that have sustained and scaled often did not score as high on these traditional ratings - a fact the authors attribute to impact-focused leadership. In studying twelve high-impact nonprofits, Crutchfield and Grant found that most of the leaders focus equally on “managing external relationships and influencing other groups as they do worrying about building their own organizations” (2008, p. 333). In fact, the crux of *Forces for Good* is that successful social change organizations invest in a strategy of leverage, involving the government, businesses, the public, and other nonprofit forces to deliver greater change.

Social change organizations investing in these outside strategies are however are in the minority. Many entrepreneurs and leaders of nonprofit groups are getting so tangled in their management systems that their attention is diverted from the cause. This tendency is what Michael Brown, co-founder of

Comm-entary 2016

City Year, refers to as the “social entrepreneur’s trap”; when an organization’s attention to its own programs overwhelms its focus on achieving long-term social change. This hyper focus on organizational programs happens “at the expense of not leveraging the organization’s expertise and other capabilities for field-building, policy-making and broader societal change”, Brown concludes (2008, 623). The undeniable fact is that, while these leaders are succeeding in lowering their overhead costs and streamlining management, they are increasing the transactional costs of impact.

BLM runs quite differently. Officially it has nearly 30 official chapters. As BLM is not a legal entity, an official charter must simply promise to “uphold certain principles” (Altman, 2015). While this model would pose definite problems to more traditional organizations attempting to scale programs nationally, it fits well with BLM’s perceived objectives.

Thus far, BLM’s tactics in advocacy have been bold, such as protesting in malls on Black Friday, or interfering with events on the campaign trails of Presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. These high profile events are direct-action tactics aimed at disruption. Their goal is to make people uncomfortable, to force them to face the fact that institutional racism still exists (Hegg, 2015). While this autonomy can risk misrepresentation of the movement, it enables groups to assemble and coordinate as they wish, without seeking permission or approval from higher leadership, and because of this, they have seen success:

The day after the Seattle protest, the Sanders campaign added racial justice and prison reform planks to its platform. His campaign stop in Los Angeles two days later drew huge crowds, and Sanders agreed to have BLM open the rally. [...] the fact is that BLM is now part of the primary presidential campaign discussions (Hegg, 2015).

Further, BLM’s emphasis on members and advocates being equal instead of hierarchical provides empowerment within the community. This brings us back to the practices of successful nonprofit leaders investing in external relations. While BLM is certainly facing a wide variety of reactions and opinions, the inclusion of their movement in politics and social justice is proof that they have successfully branched out, instead of working in a

Comm-entary 2016

silo (Hegg, 2015).

The very reason this works, once again, comes back to communication media, and BLM's loose structure as a social, activist peer network. Their balance of community based autonomy and public presence allows groups to coordinate efforts regionally, with more efficiency. Then, using videos and images taken at events, they are able to draw large attention and amplify their voice. It is potentially more powerful to see these unified images of events such as the Black Friday protests where there was not a ringleader, as instead it symbolizes the strength the black community seeks to achieve for all. Just like BLM is doing on Twitter, they are encouraging a more fluid discourse, amplifying diverse backgrounds, and in turn, diverse leadership.

The Conflicts of Funding and Philanthropy

An inevitable problem facing BLM and other movements is financial sustainability. Since BLM is not filed as a nonprofit, they are not eligible for tax exemption, and many foundations and government grants give exclusively to public charities. They do, however, have a fiscal sponsor enabling them to acquire capital through that organization's exempt status (Chimurenga, 2015). While grants and large donors can be critical to helping a movement sustain itself, they can often come with strings attached and lead to mission drift. For BLM to thrive, they must orient their financial goals toward small private donors, rather than large donations seeking control. To do this, they will need to allocate resources toward communication practices and networking, so they can increase their community engagement.

We have already seen how traditional evaluations of nonprofit organizations conflict with the structure. This problem arises especially in the early stages of acquiring philanthropy. When an organization is young, it cannot directly prove its impact on a social issue, especially if it is an advocacy group. This leads to two problems: 1) the overemphasis on low overhead costs and business models; and 2) the organization shifts its focus to programs rather than advocacy (Crutchfield and Grant, 2008, p. 191). As a result, the

Comm-entary 2016

organization funnels its resources to streamlining its own programs as a reactionary method to a social issue, rather than engaging in the advocacy work needed to drive change.

This, in turn, creates a never-ending cycle. Once organizations secure capital, they are often still under pressure to deliver. Philanthropists, foundations and other large sponsors want to see these programs scale and evolve, so organizations continue to place advocacy work on the back burner. In their piece “Nonprofit Advocacy Definitions and Concepts”, Robert J. Pekkanen and Steven Rathgeb Smith (2014) explain that even when nonprofits sustain advocacy efforts, it is very difficult to determine the exact causality, noting that, “Even if we had a complete record of all advocacy behavior by nonprofits, we would still face some challenges in knowing how and when it met with success” (p. 138). Additionally, many leaders fear that too much advocacy and political engagement could lead to corporate donors backing out to prevent a public political swing (Crutchfield and Grant, 2008).

BLM, thus far, has no intent to enter this tangled web. Co-founder Patrisse Cullors has explicitly stated that what critics refer to as the “Non-profit Industrial Complex” (NPIC) is not going to get BLM to where it wants to be (Chimurenga, 2015). Cullors draws upon Jennifer Ceema Samimi’s (2010) article “Funding America’s Nonprofits: The Nonprofit Industrial Complex’s Hold on Social Justice”, which states that “[The NPCI] forces nonprofits to professionalize, wherein they must focus on maintaining their funding sources rather than fulfilling their mission.” Samimi goes on to highlight how, in the social justice world, this philanthropic control is actually preventing long term change while maintaining current power structures, citing Paul Kivel, a social justice educator, activist, and writer. Kivel suggests that, “the ruling class co-opts leaders from our communities by providing them with jobs in nonprofits and government agencies, consequently realigning their interests with maintaining the system’ (p. 21)” (Samimi, 2010). Under this system, Kivel articulates we have created a society “that prevents community leaders from confronting the root causes of social inequities while struggling to provide services to those who are exploited and oppressed by institutions” (Samimi, 2010). Under this

Comm-entary 2016

structure, we see what Kivel calls “The buffer zone”, a way in which those in power maintain their power in three functions:

To avoid chaos by “taking care” of people at the bottom [of the economic ladder]; to keep hope alive among the poor; and to control those who want to make change. The buffer zone and its functions are a result of an over reliance of nonprofits on government and foundations as funding sources (Samimi, 2010).

BLM is attempting to avoid this trap, but in order to sustain long-term, they must continue growing and investing in community. BLM’s organizational autonomy outside the nonprofit realm is contingent on private donations and social capital. In order to yield these donations, they must continually present a value proposition to potential donors. In a speech at the Skoll World Forum, scholar Joel Podolny said, “Outsiders are much more likely to help a nonprofit achieve its larger goals if they are not just treated as free labor or deep pockets, but as valued members of a community” (Crutchfield and Grant, 2008, p. 1039).

Investing in a growing community not only increases donations, it also provides social capital and power to the movement itself, which is exactly what BLM seeks to do. Crutchfield and Grant highlight the value of community stating,

Individuals, en masse, represent both voters and consumers, with the power to move governments and markets. Whether they engage gage the Hispanic community, religious conservatives, or liberal environmentalists, organizations often have a built-in base they can use to exert pressure on their elected representatives (2008, p. 1072).

With this safety in numbers tactic, groups have the leverage to not only pressure institutions, but to attract media attention. In discussing the objectives of BLM, Cullors emphasizes the need to strengthen the black left with what she describes as “an alternative platform for black people of all generations to show up to this current moment.” In doing this, Cullors expresses this process “can look like building a chapter, or having your own organization and being affiliated to the network, but it’s really about trying to get us stronger as a black left” (Chimurenga, 2015).

This organizational fluidity helps alleviate the pressure to draw

Comm-entary 2016

up constant funding. While there is always a significant need for resources to achieve change, cost effective tools such as social media and the web enable BLM to continue gaining leverage to drive impact and build a community. The space the black community has carved for itself online unifies their voice, and the fact that anyone can speak for it broadens their scope. Instead of adhering to strict content and branding guidelines, BLM's activists speak from their own narratives with authentic voice, which allows for a broader, more diverse coalition as well as deeper member identity.

The Opportunity with Networked Organizing

In today's social sector, the road to systemic change seems to have been oversimplified. The mainstream pathways that nonprofits engage in to drive change are not universally impactful. Organizations are under such pressure to provide internal metrics, that they fail to challenge the roots of a social issue, and instead become a band-aid for a small portion of a long-term problem. Advocacy based organizations like BLM are especially vulnerable to accidentally "selling" their voice, and in turn, their chance for power.

The rise of networked organizing offers voice to BLM and similar movements. The recent shifts we have seen, as outlined and theorized by communication scholars and practiced by grassroots activists and peer networks, help elevate traditionally oppressed and dependent communities, allowing them to unite and communicate despite location, and gain a more significant, and arguably powerful, public presence and voice. These cultural changes in online networking not only provide a platform for social justice, but a new way to challenge the hierarchical costs of social change management and funding. Through this online networking, BLM can continue to grow as a strong community equipped to self-organize, adapt fluidly to changing circumstances and issues, all with the freedom to push back on a system that has continually stood in their way.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

- Altman, Alex. "TIME Person of the Year 2015 Runner-Up: Black Lives Matter." Time. Time, 2015. Web. 19 Dec. 2015. <<http://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2015-runner-up-black-lives-matter/>>.
- Castells, Manuel. 2012. *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity. Print.
- Chimurenga, Thandisizwe. 2015. "Integrity Matters. An Interview with Black Lives Matter Co-founder Patrisse Cullors." Daily Kos. Web. 19 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/11/27/1454572/-Integrity-matters-An-interview-with-Black-Lives-Matter-co-founder-Patrisse-Cullors>>.
- Crutchfield, Leslie R., and Heather McLeod Grant. 2008. *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-impact Nonprofits*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Print.
- Day, Elizabeth. 2015. "#BlackLivesMatter: The Birth of a New Civil Rights Movement." The Guardian. N.p., 19 July 2015. Web. Nov.-Dec. 2015. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/19/blacklivesmatter-birth-civil-rights-movement>>.
- Hegg, Stephen. 2015. "Tactics of Black Lives Matter." KCTS 9. N.p.. Web. 19 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.kcts9.org/programs/in-close/tactics-black-lives-matter>>.
- Jenkins, Henry, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green. 2013. *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*. Print.
- Johnson, Steven. (2012). *Future Perfect: The Case for Progress in a Networked Age*. New York: Riverhead. Print.

Comm-entary 2016

- Pekkanen, Robert, Steven Rathgeb Smith, and Yutaka Tsujinaka. 2014. "Nonprofit Advocacy Definitions and Concepts." Introduction. *Nonprofits and Advocacy: Engaging Community and Government in an Era of Retrenchment*. Print.
- Ramsey, Donovan X. 2015 "The Truth About Black Twitter." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company. Web. 19 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/04/the-truth-about-black-twitter/390120/>>.
- Samimi, Jennifer Ceema. 2010. "Funding America's Nonprofits: The Nonprofit Industrial Complex's Hold on Social Justice." *Columbia Social Work Review* 1 (n.d.): n. pag. Web.
- Shirky, Clay. 2008. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*. New York: Penguin. Print.

Body Cameras and the Problem of Technological Solutionism

By Sean Fleese

Introduction

Police misconduct has been captured on camera for decades now, going all the way back to the Rodney King beatings. With the evolution of cell phones and the Internet evolving to Web 2.0 more and more videos of police can be found online. Most of these videos are captured from civilian cell phone cameras. Some of these videos capture police in the middle of extreme cases and are circulated across mainstream media and news stations, while many others fly under the radar and are left in the Internet archives. The idea behind circulating videos of police brutality is that they will draw enough attention and outrage to warrant disciplinary measures. Instead what happens is that the attention peaks very quickly and the cases that should be receiving attention end up losing momentum and fizz out. It is only the extreme cases in which a person has passed where the case can draw eyes from the nation.

One of the particular cases that I will explain in this essay falls in this category, and it is the Michael Brown shooting. This incident took the remaining public outrage over the Eric Garner case and snowballed into violent riots that called for the President of the United States to take action. President Obama acknowledges that reforms have to be made within law enforcement agencies across the United States, and he is putting a lot of faith into body cameras for police.

Ferguson, MO

On August 9, 2014 around noon, Michael Brown and his friend Dorian Johnson are walking home from Ferguson Market and Liquor when they encounter Officer Darren Wilson (NYTimes). According

Comm-entary 2016

to both sides of the story there was some kind of verbal exchange between the two men and Officer Wilson, wherein Wilson tries to move the men from the street to the sidewalk (NYTimes). At some point during this short exchange, Wilson recognizes Brown as the suspect described from the Ferguson Market and Liquor shoplifting report (NYTimes). Around this point is when the Officer and victim's stories do not exactly match up. It is known that Brown was in a physical altercation with Wilson in the window of Wilson's SUV, where two shots were fired from Wilson's gun (NYTimes). After Brown had been grazed with one of the two shots that were just fired, he started to run east down the street (NYTimes). Wilson began to pursue Brown on foot when Brown stopped, turned around and started moving toward Wilson (NYTimes). Once Brown started moving toward Wilson, the officer fired several more shots fatally injuring Michael Brown. Some eyewitness accounts state that Brown had his hands up and that he did not move toward Wilson (NYTimes). Wilson's account states that he thought that Brown had a projectile in hand, and had started charging him when he pursued Brown on foot (NYTimes).

There were protests in response to Brown's untimely death, which started peaceful and would escalate to violence on a small scale. It was the decision of the Grand Jury in November 2014 to not indict Darren Wilson that sparked the extremely violent showings that made national news (CBS). People were destroying commercial businesses and local businesses, looting, and violently clashing with police who tried to deal with the situation.



Comm-entary 2016

Body Cameras

President Obama requested \$263 million about two weeks after the decision to not indict Darren Wilson was made by the Grand Jury (NBC). The idea behind body cameras is that the footage captured would allow for a recording of the events that transpired from the officer's perspective. Ideally this will create grounds for transparency in terms of the story of events that is given and taking away from "he said/she said." It is also widely believed that body worn cameras would hold police accountable for any form of misconduct. Yet body worn cameras are not a perfect technology, there are some flaws that come along with this program.

The body worn camera is not very large in size and is worn on the front of the officer's uniform. This means that the cameras worn will not capture every visual aspect and may not be able to capture all the audio in the area. Since the cameras are worn on the front of officers, everything in the field of vision behind the officer is omitted. One could argue that if multiple officers are wearing cameras, then the different angles at which footage was captured could provide enough information about the scene as a whole. But that relies on multiple officers all wearing cameras responding to the same scene. Even with multiple cameras recording, depending on the area, noise could interfere with the audio being captured and cause the important audio information to be distorted or unusable.

Another issue with body worn cameras is that officers wearing them are continuously recording as they are going about their shift. This means that the camera is constantly recording everyone that walks in front of this officer. So if this data is continuously being stored in some facility that keeps piling up a stock of video footage from the officer's camera some may perceive this as another type of surveillance on citizens.

Police on Camera Today

As it stands now it is legal to record police in public with cameras. The freedom to do so has sort of called for a witch-hunt

Comm-entary 2016

on police to capture nearly every event they are involved in on tape and upload it to the Internet. In some cases these videos being uploaded are a means to bring national attention to the behavior of these men and women sworn to be officers of the law and to protect and serve the community. This places officers under constant scrutiny online and in public opinion.

Police have been captured on video since the 1970's with the Rodney King incident. So why do people believe that giving police body cameras to record their actions will change how police are reprimanded and held accountable by their actions? There are countless videos online on police misconduct and in many of these cases the officers are either given a slap on the wrist or do not end up being charged with anything at all. For example, in the case of Eric Garner of Staten Island was choked to death by Officer Daniel Pantaleo during an act of force in which Pantaleo had Garner in a chokehold (CNN). This incident sparked national outrage and has even become the subject of a now idiomatic expression "I Can't Breathe." These words that Garner repeated with his dying breaths have come to symbolize protests against excessive force used by officers of the law.

Freddie Gray

The story of what happened to Freddie Gray in Baltimore on April 12, 2015 is still a little vague and unclear but here is what we know so far. According to CBS News Gray's arrest report stated that he was apprehended "without force or incident" and that the arrest itself was illegal (CBS, 2015). Gray had exchanged looks with police and ran from them, during this recorded foot pursuit it can be seen that the officers took him down with a "leg lace" (CBS, 2015). While officers detained Gray he requested an inhaler, which he did not get, and was thrown into the back of the police van unrestrained (violating safety protocols) (CBS, 2015). After throwing Gray into the back of the van the driver made four stops, during which Gray sustained fatal injuries and none of which was to bring medical attention to Gray (CBS, 2015). Gray died from the spinal injuries he received from whatever transpired in the van about a week after

Comm-entary 2016

the initial incident.

This news sparked outrage that echoed the rage from Michael Brown in Ferguson. The city of Baltimore was in complete chaos in the weeks following the Freddie Gray incident. Several videos have surfaced online showing mobs of people roaming the streets of Baltimore destroying buildings, smashing police cars, and lots of looting. Many of these rioters used the outrage over Freddie Gray's death as an excuse for this kind of behavior. Many of the videos related to the Baltimore City Riots are either videos of the sheer destruction coming out of the riots or videos of good Samaritans opposing the criminal behavior.

Baltimore has not been under a State of Emergency since the Civil Rights movement in 1968 (Friedersdorf, 2015). The circumstances are shockingly similar in the sense of the extreme distrust between African American civilians and the members of the police force. The State of Emergency called for a 10pm-5am curfew every night and was recently lifted on May 3, 2015 (NA, 2015). This situation resonates the same ideologies from the civil rights movement combined with the violent clashes between civilians and police as seen in Ferguson.

So far six police officers associated with the arrest of Freddie Gray have been arrested and are facing charges including involuntary manslaughter, assault, false imprisonment and the most serious, murder, is brought against the driver of the van Officer Caesar Goodson (CBS, 2015). Senator Tim Scott argues that if the officers involved in this incident were wearing body cameras then we would have known exactly what had happened to Freddie Gray (Diamond, 2015). The body cameras would have shown the event happening in real time as the officers experienced it and would have shown six different angles on the same situation, providing ample amounts of admissible evidence.

Victims such as Freddie Gray would not be the only benefactors to the body camera program but police departments would also benefit. Had these officers been wearing body cameras and the story of what happened to Gray been made transparent by these cameras could have shown a different outcome for Baltimore. If what happened was known to the public then the riots may have

Comm-entary 2016

never taken place and the officers injured in trying to manage the riots could have avoided injury altogether.

Democracies of Body Cameras

Body cameras have been a growing topic of discussion both on the local and national levels. President Obama has made moves to try to make this program catch on by providing financial incentives for local police departments to start using body cameras. Many arguments have been made for both sides of this issue yet it seems like the majority opinion on this matter is that this is a very positive tool and it will create transparency between the officers and the community as well as being used for accountability. In his book *To Save Everything Click Here*, Morozov (2013) discusses in detail issues with technology and humans and he makes an interesting point on the correlation between technology and morality. Morozov (2013) points at the dependence on technologies intended to solve social problems or even prevent them from occurring by universalizing this technology. This can be evidently seen with the sweeping movement to put body cameras on police. Many celebrants of the body cameras are placing a lot of faith on this technology to resolve the issues of police brutality, racism, and abuse of power but many of these celebrants will be disappointed when they discover that the technology did not solve the problem.

The technology is great in collecting information from the scene and depicting the events that took place in the incident from the point of view from the officer's chest. What it does not capture is the incident that took place before police were called to or arrived at the scene. It also does not completely capture the interactions between officers and civilians; it records the suspect and not both participants. This is important because the cameras do not show everything that happens in these interactions (including facial expressions, body language, gestures). Some would argue that this issue could be resolved by having multiple officers at the scene to record different angles. This still poses the issue of where the officers will be located on a scene and where they will be facing.

Another area that seems problematic is the implementation of

Comm-entary 2016

policy in using body cameras. Currently one of the hot issues that legislators are dealing with is determining how much of the footage should be released to the public (Madhani, 2015). If the body cameras are recording admissible evidence then how much, if any, should the public be allowed to see? In Madhani's article (2015) he quotes a policy analyst at the Cato Institute, Matthew Feeney, who says, "This is another example of technology moving faster than regulation and legislation." This sort of points to Morozov's idea of universalizing technology with body cameras for police with hopes that the unrest and distrust between police and communities across the U.S. would be taken care of by the use of this technology. Instead what we will see are more videos capturing incidents going viral and displays of outrage because the policies are not in place to use this technology appropriately. The technology is already out there in different forms such as cell phones, camcorders, and even some video game consoles are equipped with cameras, so determining whether or not the public should have access to the recordings captured by police cameras is tough because there are going to be videos of police-suspect interactions surfacing regardless.

The last issue I would like to address is the role of race in these cases. There has been a lot of emphasis placed on the race of the peoples involved in these cases. Typically the story that is news breaking is a white police officer shot and killed an African American civilian. The riots, protests, and demonstrations that have been seen all over news media have focused primarily on the racial aspects of these incidents and blame race for the injustices that occurred. Many are not receptive to some of the other factors of the major problem that lies in the American Justice System. For example since 9/11 the number of Americans killed by American police numbers around 5,000 as of 2013, (Agorist, 2013), while the number of casualties in the Iraq War numbered about 3,500 in combat and only about a thousand more since the end of the war. To see that American police have killed more American civilians than American soldiers have been killed in a war is appalling.

Solutions

Comm-entary 2016

I am not an expert in policy making but I have come up with a few potential solutions to some of the issues discussed earlier. First addressing the issue of who can see the videos captured by police body cameras. If this technology is a government funded project intended to protect both the officer(s) and suspect(s) involved by means of transparency then the videos should not be made accessible to the masses. There should be some sort of system implemented in which there can be public access to these videos by some sort of bureaucratic means so that forms may be documented providing a way to keep track of who is viewing and using this content. The forms should be set up like a request wherein the person trying to access the footage must provide information including date, time frame, and reason for the request. That way any and all footage can be accessed by those who need the footage to provide transparency in a court case may be able to use it. This process should be carefully monitored as well, to respect the privacy of the individuals featured in these videos.

Second is to address the issue of the technological process of recording these videos. The cameras should be programmed to be assigned an identification number associated with a particular officer that starts recording at the beginning of the officer's shift and turns off at the end of the shift. The cameras should also be equipped with wireless capabilities that would allow for the camera to live stream the video to a remote computer where it would save all the data. The computer should be located in a safe location, like a courthouse or town hall, and be made accessible by means of the request forms mentioned earlier. The computer should run software that stores all the videos and organizes the videos by the assigned identification number. This software should be made to be a viewing only type of software where you can rewind, play, pause but not be able to edit the content to prevent any sort of corruption.

The last issue to address is the use of force by police. Many cases report that body cameras decrease the use of force and debunk false claims of force being used. Yet as mentioned earlier the number of civilians killed by American police has reached 5,000 since 9/11. I believe the best way to overcome this sense of brawn

Comm-entary 2016

in police is through brain. More education like classes in psychology, foreign languages, and interpersonal communication can provide a greater understanding of the situations that the officer(s) will be involved in.

Conclusion

The events of late have created this fast sweeping movement to put body cameras on police in the name of transparency and accountability. Many are not pausing to look at the potential implications of providing and using these without proper policy and regulation. And too many are placing their faith on this technology to fix the problems within the American police. Body cameras nonetheless are a good idea in providing evidence in court but only if there are proper regulations in place, but they are limited in what information they can provide. This is a technology that will be used in situations that will determine the outcome for people's lives so it must be treated carefully and the content should not be aired to the mass public. This idea could have been a great one if it was implemented sooner instead of in reaction to the riots. That says that the body cameras will fix the problems that every one is rioting about but we cannot depend on this technology to complete a social reform. There has to be involvement from all sides of the issue to successfully reform the relationship between police and civilians.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

- Agorist, M. (2013, 12 12). Number of American... Retrieved 05 04, 2015, from Free Thought Project: <http://thefreethoughtproject.com/americans-killed-cops-outnumber-americans-killed-iraq-war/>
- Buchanan, L. (2014, 11 25). What Happened in Ferguson? Retrieved 05 01, 2015, from New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/ferguson-missouri-town-under-siege-after-police-shooting.html?_r=0
- CBS. (2015, 05 01). Arrest to Death. Retrieved 05 03, 2015, from CBS News: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/arrest-to-death-what-happened-to-freddie-gray/>
- Dann, C. (2014, 12 1). Obama Requests \$263 Million. Retrieved 05 1, 2015, from NBC News: <http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/first-read/obama-requests-263-million-police-body-cameras-training-n259161>
- Diamond, J. (2015, 04 29). Scott. Retrieved 05 01, 2015, from CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/29/politics/tim-scott-body-cameras-baltimore/>
- Friedersdorf, C. (2015, 04 28). Two States of Emergency in Baltimore. Retrieved 05 02, 2015, from The Atlantic: <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/04/what-policing-justice-in-baltimore-requires/391598/>
- Griffis, M. (2015, 04 08). Casualties in Iraq. Retrieved 05 04, 2015, from AntiWar.com: <http://antiwar.com/casualties/>
- Madhani, A. (2015, 05 05). States, civil liberty advocates collide over police body camera policy. Retrieved 05 05, 2015, from USA Today: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/05/05/police-body-camera-legislation-increases/26586739/>

Comm-entary 2016

Morozov, E. (2013). Smart Gadgets, Dumb Humans. In E. Morozov, To Save Everything Click Here (pp. 318-352). New York: PublicAffairs.

NA. (2015, 05 03). Baltimore Rallies. Retrieved 05 05, 2015, from NBC News: <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/baltimore-unrest/baltimore-curfew-lifted-after-five-nights-n352826>

Persuasion Techniques in Reconceptualization Science: Rethinking Low-Dose Ionizing Radiation

By Mikayla Collins

Ionizing radiation is always harmful; there is no safety threshold. While this theory may or may not hold true, it is the hypothesis of the linear no-threshold (LNT) model for radiation. The LNT model is widely accepted, and its believers include both professional scientists and nonscientists alike. According to those who support the opposing theory, radiation hormesis, however, LDR is not only harmless, but it is even beneficial. It is not surprising that this idea is a controversial one; after all, the subject area is cancer, and we are afraid of cancer. There's no foolproof prevention or cure, and millions of people lose their lives to various types every year. We know that radiation can be used in the treatment of cancer, but we also know that it can have devastating side effects, and even be the cause of cancerous tissue that may develop later on.

The fear of cancer is widespread, and it is sort of counter-intuitive that something as destructive as radiation, in low doses, can be beneficial and have absolutely no harmful effects. It seems that people, including scientists and doctors, have been letting this fear stand in the way of possible progress. This is why scientists studying radiation hormesis have had a difficult time bringing the theory to light. It is why they continue to struggle even now, decades after the idea was first suggested. That is not to say that some scientists aren't working to advance research on radiation hormesis, or that they're not making progress.

In fact, it is never more evident that an idea is making its way into the mainstream than when it is included as part of a list of "Science's Genuine Controversies" on a website like RealClearScience. This particular website prides itself in having "everything from small talk fodder to the latest findings from the frontier of discovery," and in being readable "whether you're a curious reader or a professionally trained scientist" ("About

Comm-entary 2016

RealClearScience”). While this website claims to appeal to everyone, the content, of course, has its roots in professional science. In my research, I have found a number of these rigorous articles that popularized science, and have also discovered great variety in the strategies that these professional scientists are using in their attempts to discredit the widely accepted LNT theory.

First of all, it is worthwhile to note that I will be focusing on three articles written by professional scientists that are in support of radiation hormesis, and that all three sets of writers project a keen understanding that the work they are doing is outside of what Thomas Kuhn would call “Normal Science” (Harris, xiii). Instead, these scientists are attempting reconceptualization. They strive to replace one paradigm (the linear no-threshold model) with another (radiation hormesis), which they believe will better explain the way that ionizing radiation affects the human body. As Kuhn says, this can only happen when persuasion is used to effectively show that even widely accepted science is not certain, and that the new idea being proposed is more accurate (Harris xiv-xv). In the case of ionizing radiation, we are familiar with its use in cancer treatment, and we know that it can kill good cells along with the bad ones. As I mentioned previously, it is easy for us to assume that this is always true; that there is never a time when radiation is not harmful to our bodies in one way or another. This is why skillful persuasion is needed in order to convince an audience that ionizing radiation may not always be dangerous. It is an even greater challenge to take the next step, as these scientists do, and teach readers that LDR can actually be beneficial. The authors of these three articles each have their own ways of pushing their audiences to change their minds and accept the reconceptualization of LDR.

I have focused on three scholarly pieces of writing, written by three different professional scientists or groups of scientists. They were all published in scientific journals with professional audiences, and are as follows: “Linear No-Threshold Model Vs. Radiation Hormesis,” written by Mohan Doss and published in *Dose Response* in 2013, “Radiation hormesis – A remedy for fear,” written by Zbigniew Jaworowski and published in *Human and Experimental Toxicology* in 2010, and “Different Responses of Tumor and Normal

Comm-entary 2016

Cells to Low-Dose Radiation,” written by Hongsheng Yu, Ning Liu, Hao Wang, Qingjun Shang, Peng Jiang, and Yuanmei Zhang, and published in *Contemporary Oncology* in 2013.

As a general rule, you can expect to find similar pieces of writing in similar publications. For example, Carol Reeves has discussed the work of Steve Woolgar, who is concerned with the way that formal accounts differ from informal accounts. He says that formal, published accounts “tended to give the impression of a relatively straightforward progression through a series of logical steps... leading to the discovery” (Reeves, 153), and this is a style that the three hormesis articles all have in common. Doss and Jaworowski both include a large amount of context in their articles, guiding readers through the history of radiation hormesis. Doss focuses his paper on hormetic effects observed in atomic bomb survivor data, and the way that “a likely bias” accounts for the way that it was originally interpreted, which pointed to the legitimacy of the LNT model for LDR. The purpose of his paper is to show readers what went wrong, and how the data should be reevaluated. Jaworowski provides readers with a more comprehensive history of radiation therapy; however, his work also revolves around nuclear weapons. He, too, believes that people have been misguided, and he suggests, “it was the leading physicists responsible for inventing the nuclear weapons, having realized how dangerous were their inventions, who instigated the fear of small doses” (Jaworowski, 264).

The article by Yu et al. is the only one that is written by scientists after conducting their own formal experiment. The other two articles involve more personal anecdotes and secondary research, while this one is almost entirely based on primary research. Like Doss, Yu et al. focus their writing around one specific experiment. Unlike Doss and Jaworowski, however, this team doesn't focus on context so much. Yet, holding true to the form of a formal account in a perhaps more traditional way, the writing of Yu et al. suggests that their work follows a smooth timeline, and that there was none of the “uncertainty, error, confusion and surprise” that appears in informal accounts (Reeves, 153).

The remarkable likeness in publication choices is why it is so

Comm-entary 2016

interesting to compare the content and writing styles used by the three sets of authors. Before going into the differences, there is one linguistic technique that these authors all use throughout the length of all three of the papers, which I would like to point out. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* argument, where disproving an argument is a way of proving your opposite argument is true.

Because the LNT model is the currently accepted way of looking at the harmful effects of low-dose ionizing radiation, in order for the opposite model (radiation hormesis) to be true, the LNT theory must be disproven. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that Jaworowski, Doss, and Yu et al. don't only argue in favor of hormetic effects of radiation, but also explicitly state that their findings contradict the LNT hypothesis. Again, the LNT model is widely accepted, but it is reasonable for these authors to say that radiation hormesis exists because LNT does not, and that LNT does not exist because radiation hormesis does.

While these three articles have many of their most fundamental aspects in common, there are several key differences between them. They are all formal accounts published by professional scientists in scholarly journals, but most of the techniques that the authors use for persuasion vary greatly. It is important that the authors have things in common such as type of audience and style of account, because it draws attention to the great significance that lies in their dissimilarities.

One of the most easily noticeable variances between the articles lies in the way that one author in particular uses everyday themes in a way similar to Charles Darwin's use of ideas like "origin" and "selection" (Campbell, 4). That is, Zbigniew Jaworowski, the author of, "Radiation hormesis – A remedy for fear," uses personal anecdotes as the basis for his article, supplementing his scientific ideas with plenty of familiar, relatable context. Jaworowski guides readers through his experiences working with radiation and fighting against supporters of the LNT hypothesis, including descriptions that readers may find familiar.

Even his title includes the phrase "remedy for fear." This suggests a metaphor where fear of radiation is a treatable illness, which is especially relevant, because many of Jaworowski's readers

Comm-entary 2016

are likely to be doctors. Doss uses this same method, and despite the formal language in the paper written by Yu et al, their writing also contains familiar concepts from time to time. The definition of apoptosis, “programmed cell death” (Yu et al, 360), for example, is remarkably easy to comprehend.

These linguistic techniques are important and telling, but one of the most striking variances can be found in the ways in which the authors attempt to construct their ethos. This, I would argue, is also the most important difference, as it gives us insight to the authors’ priorities. Zbigniew Jaworowski seems to agree that the establishment of his character is crucial, and begins doing so in the very first sentence of his abstract: “Personal reflections on radiation hormesis for the past 50 years are presented” (Jaworowski , 263). In this one sentence, Jaworowski presents himself as a practiced, knowledgeable source. It appears that he wants to be seen as someone who can make bold statements; and who can make them without always have to explain that he has the right to do so.

Jaworowski encourages readers to take him seriously from the beginning, and uses of personal anecdotes as evidence throughout the article. Jeanne Fahnestock explains this move in her essay, “Arguing in Different Forums: The Bering Crossover Controversy,” where she points out what she calls an ethical a fortiori argument: “If I can believe it then so should you.” This is in regards to an established archeologist, who is writing about archeology, and appears to believe that this is enough of a reason for what she says to be trusted (Fahnestock, 57). In the same way, Jaworowski seems to assume that his readers will recognize him as an authority on the matter, and believe that the things that he says are well informed and correct. This technique, however, is not only an attempt to construct ethos; it is also a high-level claim suggesting that radiation hormesis absolutely exists, which contradicts the large amount of LNT believers. Jaworowski does not regard radiation hormesis as a theory, model, or hypothesis. Instead, he simply states that he has witnessed the existence of the hormetic phenomenon, and is going to explain to us what he has observed. These moves are important, and, as I will explain, they are analogous to one that Carol Reeves observed in the work of Dr.

Comm-entary 2016

Robert Gallo.

Reeves picks up on the way that Gallo carefully characterizes himself and his lab with positive traits in his writing, including creativity, divergent thinking, patience, and tenacity. He acknowledges the work of his competition, but also frames their work as “inconclusive” and hasty, suggesting that even with all of the information right in front of them, those scientists failed to see any significance. Gallo and his team, on the other hand, put this information to use, and Gallo explains how this tactic makes all the difference. (Reeves, 155-156)

While building himself and his ideas up, Jaworowski also takes care to represent those in opposition as lazy and self-serving. Again, he rejects the terms theory, model, and hypothesis, but this time, in favor of assumption. So, according to Jaworowski, radiation hormesis is so evidently true that it does not warrant a label that questions its existence, and the LNT model is so hasty that it can be best described as an assumption. These moves are subtle, but undoubtedly bold, and if the reader accepts them, Jaworowski has already made substantial progress in gaining his or her trust and respect.

Mohan Doss takes a similar approach in his writing, shaming those of his peers who have not more seriously considered rejection of the LNT model. A proper scientific approach to decide between two competing hypotheses is to perform studies to test the predictions from the two hypotheses. Thus, the study of radiation hormesis should have been initiated in pilot human studies when it was proposed over three decades ago, considering the important beneficial consequences to human health if such studies had demonstrated reduced cancers from the low dose radiation. (Doss, 502) Here, Doss contrasts himself with his peers of the past and present, and rebukes them for failing to investigate this matter fully. By presenting the lack of research as negative, it is assumed that vigorous investigation is portrayed as positive. In this way, Doss has suggested that intellectual rigor and timeliness are critical, and that they are assets that he possesses.

Doss differs slightly from Jaworowski in the way that he attempts to characterize his work as credible. While Jaworowski

Comm-entary 2016

and Doss both incorporate historical context, Jaworowski's writing is filled with personal anecdotes, while Doss builds much of his credibility through citing the work of others. Of the three sets of authors, Doss arguably makes the lowest-level claims. His ethos is built primarily on evidence that he has done his research, and he spends a lot of time showing how his contribution fits into the already existing research supporting radiation hormesis. For example, in his article, Doss says, "It may be very worthwhile to investigate the validity of the radiation hormesis concept in humans as an alternative paradigm, as has been suggested in prior publications" (Doss, 503). This is not to say that Doss hasn't made a new, original contribution, which points to the possibility of hormetic effects of low-dose ionizing radiation because he has. However, he does not seem to care about getting much credit for it. He clearly believes that the work he has done is important, but also seems more than willing to point his readers in the direction of other work if it will convince them better than he can. The way that Doss constructs his ethos makes it especially clear that he is not attempting to make it seem as though he is important, but rather to show that the field he has been studying is imperative. He doesn't want prestige; he desperately wants his peers to take action.

As I mentioned previously, the article written by Yu et al. is about an experiment that they conducted firsthand, which is unlike the articles written by the other authors. This likely accounts for some of the differences in style and ethos, as Yu et al. are concerned primarily with presenting their work in a traditional way that will be respected by the scientific community for its professional style. The key difference here is that Jaworowski and Doss basically only want to persuade; Yu et al. want to find out and explain. While the other two authors are passionate about their work and the way that it fits into the world, Yu et al. have a different mentality. They are more concerned with contributing something new and important, rather than being worried about what will happen if people do not believe them.

The importance of building ethos was addressed in Lawrence J. Prelli's essay, "The Rhetorical Construction of Scientific Ethos." Prelli discusses the set of characteristics defined by Robert K.

Comm-entary 2016

Merton as being “binding institutional norms that constrain the behavior of scientists, and facilitate establishing and extending certified, objective knowledge of the physical world.” (Prelli, 87) Merton praised some characteristics and called these the norms, but later, it was noted that there were contradictory rhetorical tools, regarded as “counter-norms,” that can be used just as effectively in some cases.

In order to explain this, Prelli says that all the collective norms and counter-norms “function like rhetorical topoi for inducing favorable or unfavorable perceptions of scientific ethos. Scientific ethos is not given; it is constructed rhetorically.” (Prelli, 88) Included in this list of rhetorical topoi are interestedness and organized dogmatism, which are both present in the writing of both Jaworowski and Doss. These two topoi happen to be among those that contradict Merton’s norms, and, as Prelli points out, are not able to be relied upon for the purpose of setting a scientist apart from a nonscientist. (Prelli, 98)

Prelli also notes that he has observed the “counter-norm” topoi mostly in the work scientists who have high-level claims, but are lacking when it comes to evidence. Be that as it may, Jaworowski and Doss use these rhetorical devices strategically in order to elicit a strong reaction out of their readers. Some scientists may have personal interests that have led them to see something that cannot be reasonably supported. In the case of Jaworowski, however, his own experiences are what led him to remove the metaphorical blindfold that he believes the fear of radiation has been for many people.

Jaworowski’s dogmatism is warranted in a similar way. There may be scientists who try to compensate for lack of data by not admitting to any doubt in their work, but that does not appear to be the case here. Because so many people take the LNT model for radiation as a fact, Jaworowski seems to hold the belief that it is important for anyone who wishes to take a stand for radiation hormesis to show that they are extremely confident in their work. This also accounts for the high level of metadiscourse in his writing, such as “important” (used 6 times) and “clearly” (used 4 times).

Interestedness and organized dogmatism are also highly

Comm-entary 2016

present in the work of Mohan Doss in his article, “Linear No-Threshold Model VS. Radiation Hormesis.” Although the writing is technical and Doss presents findings interpreted from reliable data, he is far from neutral in his delivery. Throughout the paper, he seems enthusiastic about the way that radiation hormesis will be helpful in the future, and encourages his peers (specifically, readers of Dose Response) to help him advocate for further acceptance of the theory. In fact, Doss verges on pleading with his readers, but in a concise, professional way. He even repeats the same short sentence, “Prompt action is urged” twice, and then makes an insignificant change, using, “Prompt action is needed” to close the paper. While the content of his article is rigorous and convincing, Doss is unable to leave his personal feelings out of his writing. Many scientists speculate as to the ways in which their work can be implemented, but Doss goes to the extreme, not leaving any conclusions undrawn about the importance of his work, and the hormetic effects of low-dose ionizing radiation in general.

Like Jaworowski and Doss, Hongsheng Yu et al. present their work on the hormetic effects of ionizing radiation as important, and seem eager to have it put to use. However, they are unlike the other authors in that they do not seem upset by the fact that more attention has not been given to the theory. They do not seem to even have the slightest emotional investment in their topic of study, and write in a professional, straightforward manner, and with a hint of skepticism. While Jaworowski and Doss are clear in the passion they have for their work, embracing interestedness and organized dogmatism, Yu et al. lie toward the opposite end of the spectrum. The writing style of their article, “Different Responses of Tumor and Normal Cells to Low-Dose Radiation,” is classically formal. Yu and his team appear to believe in abiding by Merton’s Norms for the most part, specifically universalism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism. Like many scientists, Yu et al. write with personal pronouns and suggest that their work may be significant, but they make no attempt at connecting emotionally with readers. They even go so far as to conclude their article with the statement: “The authors declare no conflicts of interest.” Jaworowski and Doss may believe that breaking formal scientific writing conventions is the

Comm-entary 2016

best way to persuade their peers in the case of reconceptualization science, but Yu et al. do not follow suit. They seem to have more faith in their peers to pick up on the importance of the work without so much metadiscourse on their end.

While no rhetorical devices are inherently better than others, there is still always the question of which topoi are most appropriate in each specific case. After all, as Craig Waddell argues, appropriateness is “the measure of the ideal orator” (Waddell, 142). In the particular case that I am looking at, the three articles all present the same general ideas. They make an attempt to remove the LNT theory from its place in the minds of the majority, and replace it with radiation hormesis model. This is certainly a daunting task, but then again, radiation hormesis is not altogether unheard of.

In all three of the articles, the authors make a point to mention that hormetic effects of ionizing radiation have been observed and theorized for years. It is as if they are saying, “I make a compelling case, but even if you disagree with my methods, please don’t reject this theory.” They seem to suggest that if you don’t believe them, you should do more research rather than simply reject the idea, because they all clearly believe that radiation hormesis is important and legitimate. The variance in styles of supporting radiation hormesis shows just how complex the process of debunking a commonly held belief can be. However, despite the differences these articles have in writing styles, it is important to note that all three make bold, high-level claims, and also make sure to remind readers that there has been other evidence supporting these claims for years. They want readers to know that their work is important, and radical in the way that it contradicts the widespread support of the LNT theory of ionizing radiation, but also that they do not stand alone.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

"About RealClearScience." RealClearScience. n.p. n.d. Web. 2 April 2014.

Campbell, John Angus. "Charles Darwin: Rhetorician of Science." Landmark Essays on Rhetoric of Science: Case Studies. Ed. Randy Allen Harris. 11 Vol. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. 3-17. Print.

Doss, Mohan. "Linear No-Threshold Model VS. Radiation Hormesis " Dose-Response 11.4 (2013): 495-512. Web. 23 March 2014.

Fahnestock, Jeanne. "Arguing in Different Forums: The Bering Crossover Controversy." Landmark Essays on Rhetoric of Science: Case Studies. Ed. Randy Allen Harris. 11 Vol. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. 53-67. Print.

Harris, Randy Allen. "Introduction." Landmark Essays on Rhetoric of Science: Case Studies. Ed. Randy Allen Harris. 11 Vol. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. xi- xlv. Print.

Jaworowski, Zbigniew. "Radiation hormesis - A remedy for fear." Human and Experimental Toxicology 29.4 (2010): 263-270. Web. 23 March 2014.

Prelli, Lawrence J. "The Rhetorical Construction of Scientific Ethos." Landmark Essays on Rhetoric of Science: Case Studies. Ed. Randy Allen Harris. 11 Vol. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. 87-104. Print.

Reeves, Carol. "Owning a Virus: The Rhetoric of Scientific Discovery Accounts." Landmark Essays on Rhetoric of Science: Case Studies. Ed. Randy Allen Harris. 11 Vol. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. 151-165. Print.

Comm-entary 2016

“Science’s Genuine Controversies - Are We Wrong About Radiation & Cancer?” RealClearScience. n.p. n.d. Web. 23 March 2014.

Waddell, Craig. “The Role of Pathos in the Decision-Making Process: A Study in the Rhetoric of Science Policy.” Landmark Essays on Rhetoric of Science: Case Studies. Ed. Randy Allen Harris. 11 Vol. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997. 127- 149. Print.

Yu, Hongsheng, et al. “Different Responses of Tumor and Normal Cells to Low-Dose Radiation.” Contemporary Oncology 17.4 (2013): 356-362. Web. 23 March 2014.

Theories for Theories: A Rhetorical Analysis of Nancy Krieger's Theories for social epidemiology in the 21st century: an ecosocial perspective

By Dana Gingras

Before Nancy Krieger's own words appear in her paper *Theories for social epidemiology in the 21st century: an ecosocial perspective*, she includes a quote that both summarizes and mobilizes her argument while simultaneously displaying the connection between rhetoric and science. The quote, by Ludwick Fleck from his 1935 work *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, reads: "Both thinking and facts are interchangeable, if only because changes in thinking manifest themselves in changed facts. Conversely, fundamentally new facts can be discovered only through new thinking." Nancy Krieger is writing within the field of social epidemiology, a field that blends sociology with epidemiology, the study of the spread and sources of diseases. Krieger is a social epidemiologist as well as a theorist, a linguist, an activist, and a rhetorician. In *Theories*, Krieger charges herself with the task of persuading the audience that developed theory, specifically theory rooted in activism and compassion, is required for the field of social epidemiology. She achieves this through a mainly ethos and pathos based argument, relying less on logos.

After the beginning quote by Ludwick Fleck, Krieger narrates the history of social epidemiology. She describes the three theories within the field: psychosocial theory, social production of health theory, and ecosocial theory. Ecosocial is a theory which Krieger herself penned in 1994, 7 years before *Theories*. Psychosocial theory, simply put, acts within a victim-blaming framework, which hypothesizes that those who lead unhealthy lifestyles are more likely to contract potentially life-threatening diseases. There is an "agent" and a "host" and the "agent" attacks the "host." The second theory that Krieger discusses works off of a system-blame

Comm-entary 2016

framework. This theory arose in the 1960s and 70s, perhaps due to the political climate of the era. The theory suggests that, for example, those who come from a lower socioeconomic status and cannot afford foods with high nutritional value are more likely to lead unhealthy lifestyles and therefore contract life-threatening diseases. This theory builds upon psychosocial theory, but takes it one step further in a more progressive direction. The third theory, ecosocial theory, incorporates the individual, the system and the environment in which the host lives, hence the name eco-(ecological) -social (society). Ecosocial theory, again, builds upon the previous theory, stating that class, race, and gender (etc.) affect a person's health, but takes it a step further and says that the environment in which a person lives also affects their health. For example, if a person comes from a low socioeconomic status, and can't afford nutritional food but also lives in an area without proper access to affordable or reliable healthcare networks, they are more likely to contract life-threatening illnesses. This structure allows Krieger to frame ecosocial theory as the logical next step in the field. If each theory is assigned a number 1, 2, and 3, then Krieger stacks her argument 1, 1-2, 1-2-3, where the audience is led to believe that number 3 is the only logical next step. While one might argue that Krieger has a personal stake in the success of this theory, she also does concede that there are two other theories similar to her own ecosocial theory that her colleagues should consider for the betterment of public policy. She does not try to discredit these other two theories, but instead she explains their merits and uses within the field. In his work *The Rhetorical Construction of Scientific Ethos*, Larry Prelli writes about Robert Merton, a man whose work on scientific ethos produced a set of virtues, which he declared every scientist should strive to achieve. These virtues include communalism, universalism, disinterestedness, originality, and organized skepticism. Krieger's communalism and universalism can be seen in the way Krieger presents her ideas. Krieger does give credit where credit is due, but she is not overzealous in her attributions, maintaining the virtue of community. She leaves the ideas up for interpretation and urges the audience to interact with the article and to develop

Comm-entary 2016

additional theory to benefit the field and public as a whole. She published her article as a call to develop theory in the largest forum for other social epidemiologists, the International Journal of Epidemiology, which indicates her dedication to communalism. Her disinterestedness is apparent in her final paragraph when she states, “ultimately, it remains to be seen whether any of the three theoretical frameworks discussed in this article...are best suited for guiding social epidemiological research in the 21st century” (674). She does not try to convince the audience that her theory is paramount, but instead holds the interests of the collective community up as a whole. Krieger’s originality shines through in her own theory for social epidemiology. Additionally Krieger mentions that there is not a copious amount of articles published on social epidemiology and even less on the social epidemiological theory.

Krieger is a prominent social epidemiologist yet she never mentions this fact in her paper. Her citation method does not include last names, so even when she does cite her own prior work, she uses numerical citations instead of nominal citations. Unless the reader flips to the end of Theories to find the fact or idea’s original penner, they will not know that Krieger is citing herself. Instead, she chooses to gain credibility by citing other established authors within the field. The authors she chooses are those whose work really helps to establish the field, such as John Cassel and Ichiro Kawachi. The citation of well-established and accepted authors within the field helps Krieger gain ethos. It additionally speaks to Krieger’s universalism. As Prelli states, “Universalism requires that knowledge claims be subjected to pre-established, impersonal criteria that render them consonant with observation and previously established knowledge” (87). Krieger displays to her audience that she is working well within her established field, to benefit this same field.

Greg Myers, a prominent rhetorical critic, introduced the concept of knowledge claims. Each knowledge claim is classified on a directly proportionate, increasing graph where along the Y-axis is the risk factor (the “risk” being whether or not the paper’s audience will accept the knowledge claim as founded) and along the X-axis is the level of the claim. Thus, highest-level claims are

Comm-entary 2016

considered high risk. Low-level claims are much less risky because the target community will most likely accept them. Restating a fore-published work is a low-claim but also most likely not publishable, since it was already printed and attributed to another scholar. Critics of Krieger might state that *Theories* consists mostly of pre-published work, simply stated in a new form, thus insinuating that it is comprised mostly of low-level claims. However, these critics are clearly not aware of Krieger's most urgent argument in this paper; the field needs and requires more theories or more developed theories. I concede that I have not read every social epidemiological paper written so I do not know if this idea has been already published, but regardless this proves that Krieger's paper is not solely low-level knowledge claims.

Another striking observation about *Theories* for social epidemiology in the 21st century: an ecosocial perspective is the simple and easy-to-follow storybook manner in which it is written. This paper is published in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*. Krieger is fully cognizant that the audience of her paper is aware of the history of Epidemiology, yet the first half of the paper serves as a collective history of the field. Krieger takes the time to explain the three prominent theories within the field. The manner in which Krieger lays out each theory is very palatable. Krieger exercises her prowess as a linguist frequently throughout her paper. For example, when she discusses the issue with calling pathogens "agents," it insinuates that the agent has agency, which would imply that they are cognizant. Krieger is very careful to make this distinction, in fact she points out the irony in the idea of an agent having agency. Krieger is very aware of the ways in which language can influence a group of people. She is also very careful to explain her choice in naming ecosocial theory. She breaks down each part of the word, both eco- and -social and discusses the presumptions of the roots. Krieger's knowledge and attention to linguistics and rhetoric within the field of social epidemiology indicate that she fully understands the ways in which her own argument is crafted linguistically. It is important to note that the journal to which *Theories* is published is a journal specifically for epidemiologists. This indicates that Krieger understood that an easy-to-follow paper

Comm-entary 2016

would be more affective even when addressing a large group of people who share similar lingo and common knowledge. This easy-to-follow language also allows those who do not understand the field to share in this scientific knowledge. Additionally this collective history between Krieger and the audience builds trust in the form of ethos.

Frequently, throughout *Theories*, Krieger mentions the ways in which social epidemiology is an under-researched and under-theorized field. She references database statistics, stating that, “among the slightly over 432,000 articles indexed in Medline by the keyword ‘epidemiology’ between 1966 and 2000, 4% also employ the word ‘social’, and...fewer than 0.1% are additionally index by the term ‘theory,’” (669). She is evoking key rhetorical device here, one that Jeanne Fahnestock discusses in her work *Arguing in Different Forums: The Bering Crossover Controversy: majority-minority rhetoric*. In Fahnestock’s work, each side of the Bering Straight Crossover argument stated that their opinion was the more unpopular one, hoping to gain sympathy against an anti-establishment audience. They hoped that if the audience saw their argument as a deviation from the norm it might seem cutting edge or pitiful, either one would gain them sympathy. However it is true that Krieger is not fighting another side and her statistics do indicate that social epidemiological theory is under-researched, but her stress of this fact helps her gain ethos among the audience.

The most striking example of pathos in *Theories* lies in the final paragraph where Krieger mentions, “the social and biological world in which we live, love, work, play, fight, ail, and die” (674). There is no more basic appeal to the human condition than discussing the very actions that unite everyone on this planet. Every person, no matter what attributes they may or may not possess, can identify with living, loving, working, playing, fighting, ailing and dying. This is the life cycle in which every audience member lives. Krieger’s pathetic appeal helps to unite each audience member in her cause, regardless of whether or not they impact the field of social epidemiology.

In the introduction Krieger states, “the key role of theory, explicit or implicit, in shaping what it is we see—or do not see, what we

Comm-entary 2016

deem knowable—or irrelevant, and what we consider feasible—or insoluble” (668). This in and of itself is a very large indication that Krieger herself is a rhetorician and sees the ways that scientists interact with science. Krieger acknowledges that it is scientific theory that helps to shape the public’s perception of an issue, in this case: social epidemiology. As both a rhetorician and scientist herself, as well as a linguist and an activist it is Krieger’s job to argue her theory effectively, to form a bond with the audience, and to display her competence as a scientist and a theorist. To return back to Ludwick Fleck’s quote that began this paper, the quote acts as both a metaphor for theory, but also as a metaphor for scientific thought. Fleck’s idea that, “fundamentally new facts can be discovered only through new thinking,” offers an explanation to the relativity of scientific thought and rhetoric. Through rhetoric it is possible to reshape an audience’s vision. Both Fleck and Krieger see that there is no scientific thought without rhetoric, and vice versa. However, the purpose of the scientific rhetorician should be to influence people to ameliorate the condition of a macroscopic community, just as Krieger manages to do in *Theories for social epidemiology in the 21 century: an ecosocial perspective*, inciting activist-based, compassionate theory in order to inspire the future of the social epidemiological community.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

Fahnestock, J. "Arguing in Different Forums: The Bering Crossover Controversy." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 14.1 (1989): 26-42. Print.

Krieger, Nancy. "Theories for Social Epidemiology in the 21st Century: An Ecosocial

Perspective." *International Journal of Epidemiology* 30.4 (2001): 668-77. Print.

Myers, Greg. "Texts as Knowledge Claims: The Social Construction of Two Biology

Articles." *Social Studies of Science* 15 (1985): 593-630. Print.

Prelli, Lawrence J. "The rhetorical construction of scientific sethos." *Evolution* 34.5 (1989): U980. Print.

The Anxiety of Digital Afterlife

By Jacqueline Van Sickle

On February 12th, 2015, NPR published an article by Emma Bowman titled, "From Facebook To A Virtual You: Planning Your Digital Afterlife." The article showcased several different online services being provided to give users control of their profiles once they die. Bowman's article identifies a new concern for what happens to an individual's online presence (specifically on Facebook) when he or she passes away. A new feature has been added to Facebook called "legacy contact," which gives an individual of the deceased user's choosing access to his or her account. If given full access, the chosen individual can, "write a post on the memorialized timeline, respond to new friend requests from family members and friends who were not yet connected on Facebook, and update the profile picture and cover photo" (Bowman, 2). "Legacy contact" is not the first effort towards finding a solution to digital afterlife. A start up website called Eterni.me was created to provide a way of using artificial intelligence to create an avatar that will keep one's virtual existence alive long after they have permanently left the offline world (Bowman, 6). Similar to Facebook's "legacy contact" feature, Eterni.me allows a user to choose who would have access to this avatar once they have passed away. The goal of this startup is to make "virtual immortality a reality" (Bowman, 10). This article topic relates closely to the formation of online identities and the emerging possibility of maintaining online identities indefinitely. The rise of these services reveals particular concerns about online identity, memory, and reputation.

One of the first concerns that this digital afterlife exposes is privacy. Privacy can be defined in many ways, and is always changing based on the context of its use. Danah Boyd, a social media scholar, says privacy means, "...the ability to control the social situation by navigating complex contextual cues, technical affordances, and social dynamics. Achieving privacy is an ongoing process because social situations are never static" (Boyd, p. 60).

Comm-entary 2016

Privacy online is a constant battle of wondering how others are able to gain access to an individual's information, who can gain said access, and what kind of information is too private to post online. Simultaneously, privacy also affects the platform of sites like Facebook, which is, as Boyd puts it, "public-by-default, private-through-effort" (Boyd, p. 61). Users must exert extra effort in order to privatize what they post so that only select friends may view it. Facebook's platform has its users posting their content publicly by default; what an individual posts online is public to the entire audience who can join in the conversation at any point. That is, unless the individual specifies otherwise through privacy settings. This gets to the idea that rather than selectively privatizing certain posts, users will simply keep things off Facebook and only make public posts that are considered appropriate (Boyd, p. 63). This means most online interactions are a selective choice made by the user based on how they would like to present themselves online, while still keeping part of their identity private. Several researchers at the University of Melbourne suggested, "Enabling the digital legacy to be disbursed...also reduces the possibility of identity theft and the possibility of reputational damage and distress brought to friends and relatives should privacy be violated upon death" (Bellamy, p. 9). For example, a person may pass away, and one of their Facebook friends posts an embarrassing memory the two shared on the deceased wall. If this now public memory is considered damaging to the reputation of the deceased, the legacy contact can remove the post, protecting their privacy. This new feature could reveal a societal anxiety about online audiences discovering a part of someone's life that was never supposed to be exposed online.

While privacy concerns arise with the digital afterlife, reputation also becomes an area of anxiety. In selecting what gets publicly posted on Facebook, rather than what remains privately unpublished, users' profiles form their online reputation. The users begin to create a persistent identity for themselves online, which is presented to a networked public. A network public is a way of thinking about digital interactions in which information is persistent, replicable, scalable, and searchable with undefined audiences

Comm-entary 2016

or boundaries (Marwick, p. 5). Just as people have different personas offline, they have different personas online as well. A person may seek a certain site online like LinkedIn for one aspect of their identity while also maintaining a Facebook profile to fulfill a different persona. If someone acts out of the ordinary online, the audience notices, and the strange act becomes permanent and replicable. This online outlier takes away from the reputation a user has worked to build. As Marwick writes, "This process of impression management is complicated in Facebook memorial pages, as the person is not present in the social network to censor or monitor what is said about him or her" (Marwick, p. 6). The goal of these start ups is to allow users to continue their profiles forever. If the network public can search and compare what was a typical post of a user while he or she was alive to what these services post in the afterlife, it may alter the reputation a user worked to create and gain.

Not only do many users work online to create the right reputation and maintain their privacy, they also want as much control as possible. Anthony Giddens, a British sociologist, writes about the theory of a risk society, which presents society as increasingly preoccupied with a future and the desire to control it. This new feature of Facebook is a service that seems to be the online solution to Giddens Theory. The feature allows us to take control of our online destiny and remain, while physically no longer present, virtually alive forever. As Mayer-Schönberger, a professor of Internet Governance and Regulation, said, "...with more humans looking for strategies of transcending mortality other than procreating, the human demand for more comprehensive digital memory will continue to rise. The result is a world that is set to remember, and that has little if any incentive to forget" (Mayer-Schönberger, p. 91). We now have a society that is incentivized to remember and services like Facebook's 'legacy contact' shape those memories. Users don't want to be forgotten after they pass away; they hope to be remembered. Technology continues to increase in storage capacity, and remembering those lost is becoming the norm.

With the creation of services and features for Facebook that

Comm-entary 2016

allow users to continue their online presence after they have passed away, some of the anxieties about online identity that are present in society become visible. The services also bring up the importance of reputation online for users and how, in a networked public, those reputations must be monitored. The new features on Facebook also emphasize how, societally, people are no longer forgetting, but rather remembering, which elevates the anxiety many people have about how they will be remembered once they pass. While this paper just briefly touched on a few topics, this is still a very new and progressive part in the creation of online identities. As features like this become more prevalent on Facebook and spread out onto other social networking sites, there are several questions that get raised. Can there be such a thing as virtual immortality? Will a user's reputation online still be considered authentic after he or she has passed? If so, will it be as easy to trust if the audience members of the networked public know? In time perhaps we will have those answers.

Comm-entary 2016

Works Cited

- Bellamy, Craig, Michael Arnold, Martin R. Gibbs, Bjorn Nansen, and Tamara Kohn. "Life beyond the Timeline: Creating and Curating a Digital Legacy." CIRN Prato Community Informatics Conference 2013 (2013): n. pag. Web.
- Bowman, Emma. "From Facebook To A Virtual You: Planning Your Digital Afterlife." NPR. NPR, n.d. Web. 25 Mar. 2015.
- boyd, danah. "Chapter 2." *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2013. 54-76. Print.
- Marwick, Alice, and Nicole B. Ellison. "'There Isn't Wifi In Heaven!' Negotiating Visibility On Facebook Memorial Pages." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (2012): 378-400. *Communication and Mass Media Complete*. Web. 24 Mar. 2015.
- Mayer-Schönberger, Viktor. "Chapter 3." *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009. N. pag. Print.

