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Dear Reader,

Welcome back to *Comm-Entary*! We are proud to present you with the 42nd publication of the Communication Department's research journal at the University of New Hampshire. Over the past year, our team of editors has been collaborating and working hard to bring you this newest edition that features some insightful pieces on media, rhetoric, and interpersonal studies. We are so excited to share it with you.

The annual publication of *Comm-Entary* is a time-honored tradition here in the Communication Department. Our journal is an amazing celebration of all the academic achievements of the young scholars here at UNH. *Comm-Entary* has continued to grow over the past 42 years to provide a platform to share the unique perspectives of UNH's Communication students with a global audience, reaching readers on six continents and in dozens of countries worldwide.

This year was one of many achievements for our team. For the first time ever, *Comm-Entary* implemented our very own social media strategy. This allows us to reach a broader audience and engage virtually with scholars everywhere, and we are looking forward to growing our digital presence in the coming years. Not only did we expand our outreach, but we are proud to have highlighted two panels of authors at the annual Undergraduate Research Conference. The ten young scholars that presented their research at the conference speak to the academic excellence of the students of the Communication Department.

Our Editorial Board and student editors made the publication of the 42nd edition such a success by their true commitment and hard work. This year, our editorial board members often took on multiple roles to ensure the publication came together. And, of course, none of it would have been possible without the guidance and leadership of our incredible faculty advisor, Professor R. Michael Jackson. The hard work, dedication, and passion for academics that our members demonstrate can be clearly seen in the pages that follow. Thank you, team!

Comm-Entary is a true example of scholarship and young minds coming together to contribute something meaningful to the communication field of study. From the *Comm-Entary* team to you, we hope you enjoy and find meaning within the following pages!

Sincerely,

Ellie Humphreys & Katie Dorman

Co-Editor-in-Chiefs

Table of Contents

Is Being a Social Media Influencer a Sustainable Career?
Mya Sanders

 Social media influencers (SMI's) are stereotyped to be Gen Z and Millennial individuals who have no interest in serving society through hard work and skills. All they want to do is post pretty pictures of themselves and make money without having to put on a uniform and serve their community. It would be a false statement to say that people like this do not exist. There are plenty of lazy people who spend all their days on the web. However, those who stereotype SMI's know nothing of what the job really entails. Similar to a career in music production or theatre and acting, becoming a successful SMI is not an easy task; it takes hard work, skill, and being in the right place at the right time. Additionally, SMI's are not useless in society; they help shape the minds of listeners by emotionally connecting with them and being a regular part of their lives. They economically benefit society through advertising and selling their sponsors' products. Additionally, the positive habits that an influencer implements into their daily routine will be adapted by their viewers, thus slowly making people healthier, and more confident in their beliefs and body image. Despite the slander SMI's receive, being a social media influencer is a real career in which the influencer positively impacts their viewers' lives, and it can be a path to success for individuals who captivate an audience's hearts and wallets.

 The work of influencers follows the social cognitive theory, which is discussed by the four professors who conducted a research study on how digital food marketing impacts children. The purpose of the study is to explain that influencers have the power to change people's minds through their own behavior. Thus, the influencer's work is a valuable resource to the economy. When influencers show others how they achieved their goals, their followers will feel inspired by that individual and confident that they can fulfil the same goals (Jans, Steffi De, et al., page 4). The impact that influencers have on their viewers stems from the relationship between the two parties, and this can have either a negative or positive effect on the viewer. This is because when food in low nutritional value is advertised, young people have difficulties

resisting food marketing attempts on sites such as YouTube and Instagram. That being said, the better an influencer can hide the persuasive tactics in their work, the more likely they will profit from their posts.

Influencers are stereotyped as not wanting to put effort into a job that requires a uniform. They are lazy and they post pictures of themselves looking cute in the gym to make money, so they are seen as useless to society in what they do. These stereotypes should not deter people from recognizing the hours of planning, executing, and editing that goes into videos and posts. Not to mention that these videos can be used to help society. Whether the video is instructions on how to do something or stimulating for one's mind, these videos take time and resources to create. Due to the amount of work that it takes to hide persuasive tactics and sell the products of their sponsors, successful influencers cannot be lazy. Not only do they have to hide their persuasiveness in content that is not cliche, but they also have to compete with other influencers who could have a stronger, more loyal fan base. An example of this is how influencers will have advertisements embedded into their selfies because "certain products and services require more work on the part of the influencer" (Abidin, Crystal, page 6). A post such as this could be a picture of their work desk with links to buy any of the products the viewers find visually appealing, and the same goes with makeup or jewelry.

An influencer must be good at what they do in order to be successful. This makes becoming an influencer a bad career choice for those who do not have a special skill that will make them stand out against their competition. This is not the case, take the average influencer who plays video games as an example: influencers who are charismatic but are not good at the game they play can still be successful influencers. The goal of being a successful influencer is to have a large fan base and sponsors, so they have the money to keep making content. Organizations and individuals, the sponsors, usually contact influencers to pass information because these individuals already have followership, so it is often easier for them than it is for the average

news site to reach the public. (Mike, John. "Is Being a Social Media Influencer a Real Career?"). If the gaming influencer is not competing for the championship title of some gaming tournament, then who cares if they are good? The audience expects entertainment, and if watching gaming fails is funny and makes the influencer money, then being a mediocre level gaming influencer is a great job option. People will often choose to make content in addition to another job they do because reaching out to the public with one's interests and getting positive results back can be a rewarding experience for both parties.

The overuse of social media in young adults can often come from a fear of missing out (also known as FOMO), and the role that SMI's play in posting regularly for their followers counters the argument that being an SMI has no purpose to society as a job. SMI related activities help people get out of that fear by talking about recent news, following what's trendy in pop culture, and making connections with viewers by responding to their comments and participating in question-and-answer sessions about themselves. An expression talked about in some Communication courses is the concept of "media friends". These friends can be anyone, but they are more often media celebrities; it is a friendship where the viewer knows the media star, but the media star is not able to know all their followers on a friend-based level. SMIs gratify various psychological needs, including informational needs, social needs, and selfactualization needs.

Similar to motivation from a friend, more interaction with SMI's content increases the motivation to improve oneself, thus having a positive effect on various aspects of life, including health, fashion, and leisure. (Lee, Jung Ah, et al, page 10). An argument to this would be that young people are spending too much time on social media and should make real friends instead of media friends. That is not the current world; media friends are able to give viewers what many real-life friends cannot match. It is perfectly okay for one to have both in person friends

and media friends, and this is because the concept of media friends helps companies make money.

Social media influencers must maintain some professionalism if they are to make money, the same way someone in a marketing or sales position for a company would sell products to clients. It is a job that requires one to be personable with their viewers and persuasive in getting their viewers to make money. Unknowingly, viewers make the influencer and the platform they use money by watching their videos and ads. Initially, a successful influencer does not use many ads because they want to gain their viewers' trust. This is so when they produce ads they can be seen as more credible because they are advertising something they use and enjoy rather than doing an ad for just the money from the sponsor (Lou, Chen, page 3). Additionally, if the SMI becomes increasingly successful, they will sell merchandise with their logo on wares such as sweatshirts and hats, or their viewers will want to copy what decorations and products the influencer has in their home from the sponsors. The money from viewers and sponsors benefits the influencer as much as it does the general economy and platforms such as YouTube and Tik Tok. For example, travel influencers use this money to go to the places where they will document their lives for their viewers (Stoldt, Ryan, page 2). These contractual relationships between SMI's and marketing organizations are what allow influencers to travel who would not have the money otherwise. This makes success in the influencer career much more competitive compared to more run of the mill careers.

The job of being a social media influencer is not only a coveted position in the media's workforce; it benefits the community in ways that other jobs cannot. This is because social media influencers can be an emotional and educational part of their viewers' everyday lives, and thus can change their viewers' minds on topics to improve the mental and physical health in their own lives. They do this with skills in their own hobbies and interests, along with the knowledge of the tools needed to craft exciting, creative content. The job benefits the economy

the same way the average marketing job would: through the credible advertisement of products the influencer uses in their daily life. While one may not be solely a social media influencer for more than a few years, the job leads to many opportunities of what one could do for a future career. If one has a passion for a hobby and a desire to connect with others who enjoy that hobby, then they should consider pursuing being a social media influencer for a job. They just may change someone's life for the better.

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COVID-19 Conversation Analysis

Luca Tosi

In this paper, I present the findings from an empirical project completed for a college-level Communication Analysis class. These findings, while containing scholarly terms and nomenclature, are highly applicable to any day-to-day interactions had between any multitude of participants. It is my goal, throughout this paper, to provide readers with a more in-depth look at the ways in which our words and actions convey our messages in ways we didn't even consciously mean.

To begin, I must provide background information for this recorded empirical data set. This data was transcribed from a video recording I captured as part of an assignment for a University of New Hampshire Communication seminar on Conversation Analysis methods. The video, and subsequent transcription highlight a conversation between three friends: me, my roommate Jake, and my friend Connell. We spend most of the time discussing Covid-19 quarantine as we all had contracted it around the same time. We all entered the University's Covid-19 quarantine dorm (which will be referred to as Adams Tower in the transcription) where Jake and I were lucky enough be paired as roommates. After we got out, we were able to get together in my apartment and chat, as per usual. The following data presents the conversation had during that video recording and highlights many applicable Conversation Analytic ideas and principles that I would like to share.

The conversation data is conveyed using the Jeffersonian Transcription method. This is a writing tool used in the study of conversation analysis to annotate dialogue when analyzing it for certain concepts or theories.

The first pertinent concept I found in my data is that of storytelling. As touched upon in a 2017 reading from University of New Hampshire Professor Danielle Pillet-Shore, participants tend to use their turn at talk to story tell when it is their goal to "make relevant a recipient display of

stance at story completion" (Pillet-Shore 2017 p. 14). What this means is that participants in a

dialogue will use a storytelling sequence to add to the conversation, making sure that their

story is "sequentially implicative" to the recipient. This is typically the most affiliating response,

since it shows that the second storyteller is using the earlier-told, first story "as a source for

triggered or topically coherent subsequent talk" (Pillet-Shore 2017 p.14; Jefferson 1978 p. 228).

Present in my data is an example of storytelling in which Jake sequentially sets up and triggers

his own storytelling sequence in the conversation. A "trigger", in this context, is what Jefferson

refers to as "something said at a particular moment in conversation [that] can remind a

participant (speaker or hearer) of a particular story" (Jefferson, 1978 p. 220).

```
[Excerpt 1]
103 Jak:     Well ↑dude fer- at [first isolation was fo:urteen
104          days and now it's ten
105 Con:                        [they were saying like three
106          months from then-
107 Luc:     Ahiha I know how bout tha poor kids that got stuck
108          [doing fourteen in Bab- in Babcock dude?
109 Jak:     [Yeah! my buddy was in there for fourteen days
110 Con:     ohoheh
111 Luc:     Imagine that?
112 Jak:     J.R. was telling me he got stuck there for twenty
113          one [da:ys. He was there for twenty one [days in-
114 Luc:        [.hhh                                 [how?
115 Con:                                              [no shot
116 Luc:     [How?
117 Jak:     [>Yeah dude< cuz he had to like- something to do
118          with like (1.0) he was around somebody who h:ad
119          [Covid
120 Luc:     [Yeah
121 Jak:     and so he quarantined for fourteen days because of
122          Th:at and then he got Covid like on like the
123          thirteenth day or sumthin like that- dude idon
124          [even
125 Luc:     [s- so he was already in- wait he was [in Babcock?
126 Jak:                                           [so-
127          for twenty ↑one days? Or just [in quarantine?
128 Jak:                                   [He was in >Adam's
129          Tower< [cuz at that point it was over [winter break
130 Luc:           [Oh                             [yeyayeah
131 Jak:     so yeah dude somehow he lived there for like three
132          Weeks
133 Luc:     J.R.?
134 Jak:     Yeah cuz (.) lika dude like I ahah- it din happen to
135          me but >kinda happened to me<. I had been in
136          quarantine since Sunday but since my positive test
137          was on Tuesday, I had my quarantine got extended for
138          three days.
```

In this example, it is clear to see how Jake went about his storytelling sequence. Beginning at line 103, he speaks of people being quarantined for fourteen days. This triggered the memory of a shared experience and invited me and Connell to make remarks about the imagined horrors of spending two weeks in a run down, freshman dorm (Babcock Hall).

This is relevant to this specific conversation, because after receiving an irregular Covid test result, Jake spent one night in Babcock even though Connell and I were already staying in the more well-appointed Adams Tower. Jake's stay in Babcock Hall was not great, with a list of inconveniences that made the experience terrible. This newly gained knowledge of the abysmal state of Babcock Hall led Connell and I to exaggerate the way we felt about hypothetically having to stay there for two weeks, which in turn led to Jake telling a story about a mutual friend of ours.

Jake told us that this friend, J.R., had Covid woes worse than ours and explained them in a good amount of detail. It is clear that Jake knew even before he said it, that his utterance at line 103 would snowball into a conversation between the three of us that was centered on his own storytelling. We were all horrified by the idea of spending fourteen days in lockdown, because we had all just finished ten days of our own, which seemed like eternity. Jake used that common bond to start a storytelling sequence that he knew would result in coherent subsequent talk.

The next concept present in the data is third person reference. Emanuel Schegloff explains that this term is used "to refer to self or addressed recipient (in place of 'I' or 'You')" (Schegloff 1996 p. 447), meaning that it serves as a special indicator in dialogue. He goes one step further to explain that "one regular alternative to 'you' is a *third person reference form,* where the underlying issue may not at all be one of selection among alternative reference forms, but rather the choice of action which the speaker will implement and/or to whom the utterance will be addressed" (Schegloff 1996 pp. 447-448). This second delineation is most closely in line with the data I have recorded.

[Excerpt 2]

```
01  Luc:      ↑Dude, he's >in:verse, he's got (1.0) .hh he's got
02            [two days-
03  Con:      [four day weekend?
04  Luc:      t'yeah no he's got [two days on, five days o:ff
05  Jak:                         [I gat fi:ve days ah-
06  Luc:      [hhh
07  Jak:      [ahaha
08  Con:      [uheh wha the fuck?
09  Jak:      [eyauh
10  Luc:      [he's got he's got Tuesday's=Thurs:day's in class,
11            he's got a fucki:n↓
12            (0.3)
13            Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.hih
14  Con:      Haheh hh aha >doya jus< have fo:ur classes on
15            Tuesday Thursday?
16            (1.0)
17  Jak:      >Dude<, not [e:ven haha like
18  Luc:                  [I was jus thinkin- yeah, three [right?
19  Jak:                                                  [Cuz>one
20            of my< cl:asses is once [a week for three ho:hihurs
```

Much like in the example used by Schegloff in his 1996 reading, I launch the telling of a story by Jake by use of third person reference. I start the transcription data by mentioning that "…**he's** >in:verse …" (lines 01-04). Here, I am referring to Jake as though he is not even in the room. By referring to him as "he", I am able to talk about Jake to Connell and expect to have Connell respond rather than Jake. By referring to Jake in the third person, I am almost subliminally granting myself permission to speak about his personal experience with his own class schedule. Because of the way I am using third person reference in this scenario, Jake knows that he is not the preferred next speaker, and that it is in fact Connell who should be responding to my statements about Jake. In this case, it is almost as if my word choice treats Jake's presence in the room as that of an object rather than that of a person capable of adding to the dialogue. Enfield also mentions that people have two preferences in the way they refer to others. Speakers need to refer to non-present others in a way that is economical, that uses the minimal amount of information to enable their recipient to recognize and pinpoint about whom they are talking. What this mean is that, in terms of minimality, "a speaker should prefer a formulation that consists of one and only one referring unit" (Enfield 2012 p. 6).

When it comes to being recognized, "a speaker should prefer a formulation that will most readily lead to recognition, by the addressee, of the intended reference" (Enfield 2012 p. 6).

What this boils down to is most people are referred to by their first name. It is short and simple, it gets to the point and usually makes it quite obvious who is being addressed (unless, of course, there are multiple people present who share a first name). The data displays a great example of this "first name only" person reference starting at line 148.

```
[Excerpt 3]
148 Con:     Umm so that's=why he got out at the same time as us
149 Luc:     Because he just said- [↑wait so how'd he get wrapped
150          up in it?
151 Con:                            [Because- because Max listed
152          him. Max- he got po- he was positive
153 Luc:     J:ared was?
154 Con:     Yeah. And so Max spread it to  (.) me and [him
155 Luc:                                               [oh
156          >yeyeyeah<
157 Con:     Umm (1.8) and then-
158 Luc:     But he dint know about it till ↑after you guys
159 Jak:     Ion getit
160 Con:     Like he- he- he tested negative an then he tested
161          positive
```

This data excerpt presents multiple examples of person reference to two different people. Here, Connell and I speak of both "Jared" and "Max", two of our friends who were also mixed up in the Covid fiasco. While trying to explain to me how we all got involved in it, Connell uses a specific person reference to talk about Max at lines 151 and 154. It is clear how useful person reference is when you notice the other example of it on line 153. I start to speak of our friend Jared and how he had tested positive. If Connell and I referred to both people simply as "he", the conversation would make no sense. By using specific person references, we are able to trigger a quick recognition of the person we are trying to speak of.

The next concept of significance is that of repair. In this case, the example is one of self-initiated repair. When speaking of this variation of the topic, it is important to note that Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson employ the term "correction" interchangeably with "repair". They explain that "[t]he term 'correction' is commonly understood to refer to the replacement of an 'error' or 'mistake' by what is 'correct'" (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1977 p. 363). When it comes to who does the repair in a sequence, they mention that "we should expect a social-organizational preference for self- over other-correction, a preference exhibited empirically by

the preponderance of self- over other-correction" (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 376). In layman's terms, people would rather correct themselves than have someone else do it for them.

```
[Excerpt 4]
34  Luc:     Yeah ↓well (0.4) hihih dude yajust'ave so much
35           free ↑time
36  Con:     [Dude
37  Jak:     [I know, yeah >definitely, definitely<
38  Luc:     How- was it b:ad in Adam's? (0.5) by yourself?
39  Jak:     Ye::ah dude I- yep
40           (0.8)
41  Luc:     >But dude so y:ou< >never gotta=roommate< though?
42  Jak:     No
43  Luc:     That's [↑incredible
44  Con:            [Really? [That's- that's clutch
45  Luc:                    [That's crazy
46  Jak:                    [Dude because >I don't think they<-
47           I don't think like they'll send in a ↓newbie? In
48           [there with someone who's probably not contagious
49           anymore
```

In this example, I can be seen making a self-initiated repair at line 38. In this scenario, I was about to ask Jake "how bad was it in Adam's?", but I, for some reason, decided to change my utterance to "was it bad in Adam's?". This was interesting to see after the data was recorded because it is sort of inside joke that Jake and I share. Since we started rooming together freshman year, Jake and I always ask each other "how bad?" whenever we face a terrible scenario. It was fascinating that I inadvertently changed my wording in this scenario. I think this may have been because of Connell's presence that I made a self-repair. Maybe subconsciously, I was trying to save Connell from being excluded from an inside joke, and therefore restarted and "repaired" the word "how" with "was" in my utterance.

Next, we turn to look at the concept of epistemics. Heritage defines epistemics as "the conveying of news to an otherwise unknowing recipient" (Heritage 2012: 30) and adds that speakers should not tell their recipients something they might already know (Heritage 2012: 30). Under this umbrella of perceived knowledge, Heritage identifies two subsets. He states that "speakers can position themselves in a relatively unknowing (or K−) position relative to

others concerning the matter at hand, thereby initiating sequences by inviting or eliciting

information from a projectedly [sic] more knowing (or K+) recipient" (Heritage 2012: 33). In

thus data, it will be clear to see that Jake asserts himself as a K+ participant.

```
[Excerpt 5]
51  Luc:      That's >wha um sa<- right? [Yeah.
52  Con:                                 [Yeah
53  Jak:                                 [And then like-
54  Luc:      W:ell ↑thaswhat I's >thinking too<. Could that
55            Mess it up?=Could that prol:ong your [if you-
56  Jak:                                           [Yeah, I dunno
57            because you're really like, (.) >you don't have< to
58            quarantine again but you're really n:ot suppose-
59            you can't really, <°shouldn't° be around people wh:o>
60            (.) ↑are positive bec:ause (0.8) you can still- they
61            don't know if you like >transmit=it< ah again, I
62            duneven know
63  Luc:      >I thought that's tha whole<- I thought we ↑could-
64            ↓well we still gotta wear a ma:sk everywhere [but
65            I mean
66  Jak:                                                  [There's-
67            there's a reason why we don't haftuh test [because
68  Luc:                                                [so we can
69            but we can carry it still, ↑can't we?
70  Luc:          [that's wha I dun understand
71  Jak:      Dude [we [still have=it because it said you-
72            [onl:ine it says-
73  Con:              [.no
74  Luc:      [That's why we're not testing
```

In this case, Jake is presenting that he knows presumably more about Covid and the ensuing

procedures than Connell or I do (which was most definitely the case). Throughout the data set,

Jake displays his knowledge on the subject albeit in a discreetly humble way. Jake is always

doing his own research on many things that may be the center of a conversation and Covid-19

certainly was no exception. Jake had read up on lots of Covid facts since we had been

diagnosed. By the time we got out of quarantine, he was an amateur Covid expert and was

keeping us up to date with current guidelines on what it meant for us, as former Covid

sufferers. Jake asserts himself as a K+ participant on the topic of Covid throughout the

transcript but remains humble as he always resorts to "I duneven know" or "I dunno" to try to

lessen his role as a K+ participant as to not overstep his epistemic bounds. This may have been

done because Jake knows that we all know that he's always digging around for obscure facts

about odd things, and he tried to hide the fact that he knew so much about the current Covid situation.

The final Conversation Analysis concept found in this data is what Schegloff refers to as continuers. In his 1982 reading, he explains the concept as being

> "instances of the class [that] take the form of vocalizations such as 'uh huh', 'mm hmm', 'yeah' and others as well as head gestures such as nods. These, as well as other, bits of talk and behavior produced by other than the 'main speaker' are regularly discarded when discourses … are extracted from the tangle of detail which composed their actual occurrence" (Schegloff 1982: 73-74).

This means that when employing a continuer, the speaker passes up the opportunity to take a more substantial turn-at-talk. This in turn allows another participant to "continue" their own utterance. Many of these 'continuers' are present in my data set, and I will discuss a few examples.

Example 1:

```
[Excerpt 6]
117 Jak:    [>Yeah dude< cuz he had to like- something to do
118         with like (1.0) he was around somebody who h:ad
119         [Covid
120 Luc:    [Yeah
121 Jak:    and so he quarantined for fourteen days because of
122         Th:at and then he got Covid like on like the
123         thirteenth day or sumthin like that- dude idon
124         [even
```

This excerpt shows a perfect example of a continuer at work in a dialogue. At line 120, I utter "yeah" in the middle of Jake's story telling sequence. By doing so, I chose not to respond to Jake's first utterance from likes 117-118, but instead use a continuer to signal that I am listening and allowing him to continue telling the story.

Example 2:

```
[Excerpt 7]
154 Con:    Yeah. And so Max spread it to  (.) me and [him
155 Luc:                                              [oh
```

```
156        >yeyeyeah<
157 Con:   Umm (1.8) and then-
```

Like the example first example, this is a classic instance of a continuer, in which I interject Connell's story only to add "oh >yeyeyeah<" at lines 155-156. I opt out of a fuller turn at talk and, in doing so, Connell is able to continue his sequence of storytelling.

Example 3:

```
[Excerpt 8]
31  Jak:   Say whayawa about my sch:edule thou:gh (1.2) its
32         fire dude like .hh
33  Con:   .hhh
34  Luc:   Yeah ↓well (0.4) hihih dude yajust'ave so much
35         free ↑time
36  Con:   [Dude
37  Jak:   [I know, yeah >definitely, definitely<
38  Luc:   How- was it b:ad in Adam's? (0.5) by yourself?
39  Jak:   Ye::ah dude I- yep
40         (0.8)
41  Luc:   >But dude so y:ou< >never gotta=roommate< though?
42  Jak:   No
43  Luc:   That's [↑incredible
```

This example is one of a continuer *not* discussed by Schegloff. Here, I am assuming that Connell's use of the word "dude" at line 36 is acting in the same way as a more traditional continuer. What I mean by this is that Connell passes up the chance to add more to the conversation, and instead, allows me and Jake to continue our dialogue sequence. Connell uses "dude" as a sort of emphasis tool to show he is astonished at how much free time Jake has with a two-day class schedule. Nobody responds to Connell after this utterance, as we all knew what he was trying to accomplish with it.

To conclude, those are just a few of the analytical concepts I discovered while participating in my Conversation Analysis seminar. There is a lot of material covered and much of it is described in intricate detail by high level scholars. It is my hope that the way in which I analyzed the information in this paper will lead readers to a stronger appreciation for how these everyday interactional phenomena can be observed and experienced in all of our daily conversations.

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How will God and the Church Fit into the Metaverse?

Grace Rose

Everywhere on the news, we see this new form of technology called the metaverse. Entrepreneurs such as Mark Zuckerberg are striving to make this an actual reality. The metaverse can be imagined in a few different ways, which all merge together. Some of the forms the metaverse can take are the following: a "second life" escape from "the real world," a virtual reality, or an augmented reality. Perhaps billionaire space travel and technological solutions to death such as cryogenics and transhumanism are also signs that the universe is becoming a metaverse. As these models of life and technology merge to create a metaverse, the consensus is that in the metaverse, people will still have the ability to work, play, spend money, make money, communicate, form relationships, explore, sightsee, own property, dress up, and trespass … much the same as we already do such things on a day-to-day basis. Further consensus forms around ideas that we will continue to thrive in communities—in the "real world" and in virtual communities. But what about churches? What form will they take? Can the familiar range of American religious congregations survive and thrive in the metaverse? What will the church look like in a future "realized" metaverse? Will the church fail or thrive? Will the metaverse be subject to God's creation as we already know it, or will God be absent in the metaverse? There are many devout religious people, philosophers, theologists, futurists, and citizens today who have begun to argue about this topic with one another. The argument comes down to a contest between those who say that the metaverse will leave God and his congregations in the past and those who say that the metaverse will be an extension of God's creation and support his churches beyond our wildest imaginations.

Those who think the metaverse will put an end to God and the church offer a wide range of reasons to support their thinking. Some believers think the metaverse will be run by a controlling force that will take command of our minds, souls, and bodies. Under this model, we will be like avatars who move through the universe at the pleasure and profit of the engineers and investors who own the metaverse. Thinkers such as Tristan Harris have characterized the

few experts who drive social media networks as a small group of ambitious elites who orchestrate the lives of billions of ordinary people (Chin). In this model of the various metaverse networks, the shapers of the metaverse will act as God—and create God in their own image.

Even if Silicon Valley doesn't replace God, many believers worry that the powerful temptations of the current internet will be even more distracting in the metaverse of the future. On this model, the metaverse will be a perfected arcade or carnival with endless distractions: pornography, adultery, gambling, hedonism, greed, spectacle, cruelty, and disorientation. Populated by avatars, holograms, and robots, the virtual landscapes and architecture of the coming metaverse may take the theological idea of "being lost" to a new level. Even if God remains the same, many believers argue that a new and improved metaverse will present us more intricate spaces to get lost in. In some of their arguments, the metaverse makes the "Highway to Hell" ever more enticing and labyrinthine. And if we are not lost there in sin, in the metaverse we may become more isolated and alienated from authentic, traditional relationships and purposes.

For those who more neutrally argue that the metaverse is at odds with religion, perhaps their strongest arguments develop the idea that God and the metaverse are incompatible. This argument posits that the metaverse will mark the end of human beings' need for God. Futurists such as Google Director of Engineering Ray Kurzweil have raised the possibility that human beings are reaching a new level, beyond the need for a divinity (O'Gieblyn). As computer technology approaches the complexity of the brain (a phenomenon known as the Singularity), many spiritualists and mystics have begun to prepare for a "transhuman" state where we will become "spiritual machines." In our transhuman state, we will be less dependent on our bodies: our minds/spirits will be capable of outliving the body, forever uploaded into machines that can handle our souls. The Black Mirror episode "San Junipero" dramatizes this future. And in the virtual, eternal world of this episode, the "real-life" husband one prominent character is

missing: he opted for a more traditional life and death—opting for the hope of the more orthodox, natural possibilities of an afterlife rather than the virtual heaven of San Junipero. While many argue that argue that "God and Church will be dead" when the metaverse comes, for others the metaverse is further evidence of God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. For them, the metaverse is simply an innovation within God's creation. In Plato's "The Gorgias," Gorgias defends the art of rhetoric as a boxer would defend the art of boxing: Gorgias says that if the orator or the boxer abuses his art, it is not a fault in the art, but rather a fault in the user. Much the same way, the metaverse can be characterized as a neutral tool: we can use the metaverse to glorify God or we can use it in degrading, blasphemous ways. Many theorists have articulated a strong confidence that the metaverse fits easily into God's plan. On this account, the notion that the metaverse takes us into a "post-God" era is simply a metamorphosis of hubris.

Jeff Reed is a Christian leader who has begun to reconcile the metaverse with his faith in the historic, orthodox notion of God. As he works through the challenges that the metaverse presents to the modern-day citizen, Reed draws on one of his old theological sources: *Experiencing God*, by Henry Blackaby. This is a book from the 1970s, pre-metaverse in its theology. But Reed offers an interpretive argument that extends Blackaby's ideas into modern concerns over the metaverse. Most fundamentally, Reed cites Blackaby's principle that "God is always at work around you." Reed asks "Who is to say that God is not working within the metaverse in order to grow the kingdom?" Reed is confident that "the metaverse didn't surprise God" ("Blackaby's"). While the intricacies and temptations of the metaverse may baffle us, God knows every nook and cranny in the metaverse—just as he would know of life on other planets that we can only dream about. The metaverse is no more complex than the universe that we've always thought of as God's creation. Drawing on Blackaby's orthodox theology, Reed argues that the metaverse is no match for God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence.

While God will remain the same in the metaverse, it's easy for believers to imagine and hope that the church will change as we enter a new era—just as it always has adapted to meet the needs of the world around it. Reed, himself, is the director of Digital Church Network. Reed is a pioneer in this inevitable transformation of the church—as he thinks through concepts such as #phygitalchurch, #hybridchurch, #churchonline, and #digitaldiscipleship ("Jeff (JD) Reed"). Reed's pioneering ministry has positioned him to be consultant and content developer for any "Biblical Ecclesiology" church that wants to "find new ways to reach and disciple the world" ("Jeff (JD) Reed"). And the more familiar names in Evangelical Christianity (Graham, Falwell, White, Warren, Osteen) have easily moved online to supplement their traditional ministries. Online endeavors have helped churches welcome shut-ins, take prayer requests, deliver scripture, offer counselling, organize "real-world" action, and even offer virtual time-travel back to the Holy Land and its significant events. Online endeavors allow parishioners to stay connected to their people when they are working, volunteering, roaming, and recovering from illness. Every church will need to go online to carry on the same ministry they have always offered. Perhaps the disruptions and despairs of the Covid-19 pandemic offer the ultimate proof that the metaverse will be "natural" to the ongoing work of the church: the pandemic adaptations made by churches such as Manchester Christian Church have offered proof that the church will be a contender in the post-pandemic world, the next pandemic, and metaverse as well: the world will always need its Creator and his people (Hayward).

While some notions of transhumanism take the form of a materialist, secular physician-attended death of the body with an uploading of the brain into the cloud, some theologians can work with the idea of transhumanism. Florida pastor Christopher Benek thinks of himself as a "techno-theologian, futurist, ethicist, Christian Transhumanist." (qtd. in O'Gieblyn) In Benek's view, the merging of human spirit and machine can be understood as an extension of the more familiar dualities and paradoxes that are natural to both Christianity and physics: mind/body; Jesus as God/Man; the Kingdom of God, particle/wave. According to Benek, from the first century of Christianity, there have persisted questions about whether the Kingdom of God would come to this world or a celestial world somewhere else. Benek is open to the possibility

that the mergers of spirit and machine, the extensions of the natural world, and the transformations of the human experience will ultimately fulfill the prophecies of scripture, the parables of Christ, the purpose of God's creation, and the promise of eternal life (O'Gieblyn).

As the metaverse expands, it spawns some important arguments over its material, ethical, and spiritual implications. Other religions will also have to reconcile their purposes, traditions, orthodoxies, and people with the expansion of the metaverse. But to the extent that all religions share the same physics, their deliberations over the expanding world will be much the same as we have seen among the Evangelical Christians. Those who don't get involved in these arguments (religious or not) will be like frogs boiling in the pot—surfing, streaming, posting, sharing, buying, playing, working, trolling, advocating, and escaping in the "real world"— whether they feel it or not.

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Pragmatics Paper: The Real Housewives of New Jersey

Madeline Graf

Reality television has brought viewers into the lives and homes of many different families across the country. While people question the 'reality' aspect of reality television, the interpersonal conflict amongst families, friends and loved ones is definitely far from scripted. Shows such as *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*, allow viewers to see the patterns of the good, bad, and ugly within the family systems as discussed in the *Pragmatics of Human Communication* by Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson. *The Real Housewives of New Jersey,* one of the many branches of *The Real Housewives* franchise, is specifically interesting because of the familial relationships between the housewives and their husbands. The ideas of Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, such as family homeostasis, symmetrical escalation, and metacommunication, can be seen through the seasons amongst this dynamic family system.

In *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson discuss the "communicational approach to the phenomena of human behavior" and the reliance on "observable manifestations of relationships" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 4). Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson describe interaction as a system and the "General Systems Theory", that define any system, can be applied to human interaction (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 100). The authors use Hall and Fagen's definition of a system, describing it as "a set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between their attributes" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 102). They proceed to explain that in this definition, the "objects are the components or parts of the system, attributes are the properties of the objects, and relationships 'tie the system together'" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 101). The authors point out that objects are defined by their attributes, so if the 'objects' are individual humans, they're identified by their attributes, or their communicative behaviors (Watzlawick et. al., 1967, p. 102). However, interactional systems do not focus on just one individual, there is always a relationship between those in any given interaction. Therefore, interactional systems are "two or more communicants in the process of, or at the level of, defining the nature of their relationship" (Watzlawick et. Al, 1967,

p. 102). Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson explain that to understand a system, one must understand the environment of the system. They produced the definition of its environment as, "the set of all objects a change in whose attributes affect the system and also those objects whose attributes are changed by the behavior of the system" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 102). This raises the question of what the object belongs to: the environment or the system? The authors themselves do not provide a definite answer. They explain that "in a sense, a system together with its environment makes up the universe of all things of interest in a given context" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 103), meaning that "any given system can be further subdivided into subsystems" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 103). This is because organic systems are open, "meaning they exchange materials, energies, or information with their environments" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 103). In rudimentary terms, systems describe the patterns of relationships between individuals in a given context.

In *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*, the system of husband, wife, brother, sister, and sister-in-law is depicted by Teresa Giudice and Joe and Melissa Gorga. Melissa and Joe Gorga have been married for the last fifteen years and have had a tumultuous relationship with Joe's sister, Teresa Giudice. This system can be divided into subsystems, such as the brother-sister dyad between Teresa and Joe, the husband-and-wife dyad between Joe and Melissa, and the sister-in-law dyad between Melissa and Teresa. This system is characterized by stability, meaning that it is stable "with respect to certain of its variables if these variables tend to remain within defined limits" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 110). These "steady state" systems are focused on ongoing relationships. The authors remind readers that in every interaction each participant seeks to determine the nature of their relationship, and in response each participant gives their definition of the relationship (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 111). They go on to explain that "if the process [does] not stabilize, the wide variations and unwieldiness... would lead to runaway and dissolution of the relationship" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 114). Jackson called this relationship stabilization, the "rule" of the relationship (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 114). Jackson furthered this point by characterizing families as "rule-governed systems," and introduced the concept of family homeostasis (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 115). Within a family system, "the behavior of

every individual… is related to and dependent upon the behavior of all the others" and many of the individual qualities of each member are specific to their system (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 116). The stable state of a system depends highly on feedback. Feedback can either be positive, wherein the information "acts as a measure for amplification of the output deviation", or negative, wherein information is used to "decrease the output deviation from a set norm or bias" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, pp. 12-13). In the case of homeostasis, it is characterized by negative feedback, therefore playing "an important role in achieving and maintaining the stability of relationships" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 12). To sum this up, family homeostasis and the stability of a relationship is generally maintained by negative feedback mechanisms.

In the case of the Gorga family, perhaps the most significant relationship pattern is the work versus home life battle between Joe and Melissa. An ongoing argument concerns Melissa's work life. At the beginning of their relationship, Melissa was a stay-at-home mom who devoted her life to her husband and children. With the natural progression of their lives and relationship, their children got older, and Melissa had the desire to go back to work. She, therefore, decided to open her own boutique: Envy. The show has also catapulted her into the public eye, leading her to do more red carpets and appearances. In the show, this is treated as the root of Melissa and Joe's problems. Joe has expressed on numerous occasions that he needs more affection than he is receiving from Melissa. This repeated argument is a homeostatic mechanism in their family system, meaning that it is "operating to bring the disturbed system back into its delicate balance" (Watzlawick et. Al, 1967, p. 115). In this situation, everyone is using negative feedback in response to the other, essentially feeding into the argument. Rather than positive feedback, which would result in a change in behaviors, negative feedback allows for the least deviation from the norm of the system. It is also important to note that through this negative feedback loop, there are signs of the phenomenon "schismogenesis". Schismogenesis, as defined by Gregory Bateson, is "a process of differentiation in the norms of individual behavior resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 48). Bateson explains that "when our discipline is defined in terms of the reactions of an individual to the reactions of other

individuals, it is at once apparent that we must regard the relationship between two individuals as liable to alter from time to time, even without disturbance outside" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 48). He then offers the example that if individual A's patterns of behavior are labeled as assertive, individual B is expected to reply to this with patterns of behavior that could be labeled as submissive (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 49). These patterns constitute a cycle that will further individual A's assertive behavior, followed by more submissive behaviors of individual B. Whether individuals A and B are in the same system or separate individuals, this progressive change will continue (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 49). This pattern can be described as "complimentary schismogenesis", where one's partner's behavior compliments the other (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 49). In the case of *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*, Joe is in the position where he demands Melissa's undivided love and attention while Melissa is in the position where she seeks freedom and success of her own. In this relationship, there is not one individual that can be defined as "good" or "bad". Rather, they each have their own patterns of behavior as a result of their context. In complimentary relationships, one individual does not impose this relationship on the other, but "rather each behaves in a manner which presupposes, while at the same time providing reasons for, the behavior of the other: their definitions of the relationship fit" (Watzlawick et. Al, 1967, p. 50). To illustrate this, transcript 4 shows an argument between Melissa and Joe.

```
26.    MEL: I don't even kno:w what the fuck is hap:pening
27.    JOE: its OKAY this is the <problem> (0.2) we used to just be so
28.         attached and I'm still like that she's just changed
29.         you turned into this different business woman.
30.    MEL: if I have a little success in my own [personal life]
31.    JOE:                                      [who cares    ]
32.    MEL: its not against you↑
33.    MEL: let your wife have [something of her own    ]
34.    JOE:                    [you've definitely changed]
35.    MEL: >it doesn't mean I don't love you↑<
36.    JOE: °maybe we grew apart° ya know its just life
37.    MEL: okay↑ so were growing apart
38.    JOE: MAYBE we are
```

In this excerpt of transcript 4, the escalating fight between the couple is coming to a head. The back-and-forth banter between the two constitutes a continuous negative feedback loop that acts as a homeostatic mechanism in their family system. Joe initiated the fight by

getting upset with Melissa for not waiting for him when leaving a restaurant. In line 27, Joe expresses what he is feeling to Melissa by stating "its okay this is the problem". He then goes on to explain "we used to just be so attached and I'm still like that, she's just changed, you've turned into this different business woman." Melissa then responds by stating "if I have a little success in my own personal life its not against you." By responding with her opinion, Melissa is offering negative feedback that continues the argument rather than halting it. This is negative feedback since it is minimizing the deviation from the norm. This means that the normative behavior within the system is continued arguing. If Melissa had responded with positive feedback, she would have changed the behavioral norm, and changed the direction of behavior. The couple is also displaying the phenomena of complimentary schismogenesis. This means that each individual's behaviors are complimenting the other. Joe's controlling nature is used to compliment Melissa's submissive role as wife and mother. However, due to the change in their relationship, they are having to combat their presumed roles. They are having to learn and adjust their behaviors along with this continuous change.

There are, however, exceptions to this rule of the relationship. While there is consistency with the complimentary, negative feedback loops of their relationship, there are also instances of symmetrical escalation within their family system. This is not just limited to the Melissa and Joe dyad since the whole family system contributes to this competitiveness. Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson explain that it is observable in individuals that "equality seems to be most reassuring if one manages to be just a little 'more equal' than others" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 87). They further this idea by stating that "this tendency accounts for the typical escalating quality symmetrical interaction once its stability is lost and a so-called runaway occurs" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 87). This symmetrical escalation is a game that most closely correlates with an 'everything you can do I can do better' mentality. To fully understand this concept, it is important to discuss the level structure and distinction between content and relationship dimensions of communication. To illustrate this idea, the authors provide the example of a couple in marriage therapy fighting over the husband inviting his friend to stay at their home for the weekend (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 61). The wife was upset because of this, yet in marriage counseling, she expressed that the decision was the most logical and

appropriate thing to do (Watzlawick et al. 1967, p. 61). This interaction shows the two issues within the fight, the invitation to his friend (content) and the act of inviting said friends without discussing it with his wife (relationship). The authors explain that the couple "disagreed on the metacommunicational (relationship) level, but tried to resolve the dispute on the content level, where it did not exist, which led them into pseudodisagreements" (Watzlawick et. Al, 1967, p. 62). These disagreements can happen at either the content or relationship level, and "the two forms are contingent upon each other" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 63). Another important concept to understand when discussing symmetrical escalation is the idea of punctuation in communication. Punctuation "organizes behavioral events and is therefore vital to ongoing interactions" (Watzlawick et. Al, 1967, p. 37). This becomes important when there is a disagreement. The authors explain that "disagreement about how to punctuate the sequence of events is at the root of countless relationship struggles" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 37). This is due to the "'reality distortion' on the part of both parties" (Watzlawick et. Al, 1967, p. 39). For example, the authors provide a situation where a couple has marital problems in which the husband contributes "passive withdrawal" and the wife "nagging criticism" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 37). This fight can be broken down into two messages, "I withdraw because you nag" and "I nag because you withdraw" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 37). Each individual's assertion to the other contributes to their response back, leading to a back-and-forth never-ending cycle of punctuation. In this scenario, each individual believes their actions are a response to, rather than a determination of, the other's behaviors. When discussing these behaviors, individuals are using metacommunication, "to communicate about communication" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 22). In these situations of symmetrical escalation, the authors explain that we can observe that "they are vicious circles that cannot be broken unless and until communication itself becomes the subject of communication" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 87). This idea is crucial to the resolution and calibration of a system.

In *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*, the idea of symmetrical escalation is illustrated in a back-and-forth game of prank-wars between Melissa and Teresa versus Joe. To preface this, Joe Gorga was at a strip club while his wife Melissa was on vacation with Teresa and her friends.

Joe lies about where he was and in response to his deception Melissa, Teresa, and their friends

decide to trick Joe. In transcript 1, the events leading up to the prank phone call are shown.

```
09.    DOL: you should call him and say Melissa's talking to a guy FYI
10.    TRE: [ahhh]
11.    MEL: [yess]
12.    MAR: lets make up a stor::y=
13.    MAR: <dolores thats a good plan_
14.    TRE: >do you think< he'll believe it?
15.    DOL: this is so good↑ we <ha:ve to do this>
16.    TRE: alright I'm gonna text him… (0.2) I just wanted to let you
17.         kno:w last night the owner of the restaurant asked Melissa
18.         for her num:ber (0.3) they've been texting all day (0.2)
19.         >don't tell her I told you< and make sure you delete this
20.         text after you read it
```

In line 9, Melissa and Teresa's friend Dolores came up with the idea. Following this in line 16,
Teresa reads out loud the text that she sent her brother Joe. Immediately after receiving this text
message, Joe calls his sister to discuss the details of what happened.

```
09.    JOE: [I'm sayin how was it?]
10.    TRE: [and this guy was    ] really↑ cute and I kinda wanted to
11.         talk to him but he kept friggen going up to her=
12.    JOE: last night?
13.    TRE: yea she [kept smiling she's like] 'hi look at me↑ I'm
14.         Melissa↑' ((Imitating Melissa))
15.    JOE:         [why was she doin that? ]
16.    TRE: well you know her, she has a few drinks and she gets
17.         all flirty like 'I'm Melissa↑' ((twirling hair))
18.    JOE: ((Speaking Italian)) was she dancing with him in front
19.         of everyone?
20.    TRE: like there was a bar there and he kept goin up to her=
21.    JOE: and sayin what?
22.    TRE: I don't fucking know do you think I was like in their
23.         conversation=
24.         (0.4)
25.    TRE: and then they like kinda took a little walk- and I was like
26.    JOE: no. just the two of them?
27.    TRE: ya just them two,
28.    JOE: holy shit. If they hung out for a while thats an issue
```

In this excerpt, Teresa continues to deceive her brother. This interaction comes to a head when

Teresa pretends that Melissa walked into the room, despite the fact that Melissa was listening

to the entire conversation, and tells Joe that they were pranking him.

```
37.    TRE: wait I think she just- wait wait she just walked in
38.    TRE: hi Meliss↑ Hello.
39.         ((Girls all laughing))
40.    TRE: wait hello Joe↑? Joe↑? You've been punked
41.    JOE: you guys are corny
```

```
42.    MEL: Joe you doubt↑ me?
43.    TRE: I was good right?
43.    JOE: thats great you guys are morons
```

This excerpt from the end of transcript 2 shows the metacommunication between Melissa, Joe, and Teresa. In line 40, Teresa tells Joe, "you've been punked," explaining that the conversation between them was made up. Therefore, Teresa is communicating to Joe about their communication. Following the metacommunication between Teresa and her brother, Melissa calls her husband to discuss the game again. Transcript 3 shows the metacommunication between the husband and wife.

```
01.    JOE: what do you want
02.    MEL: hahahahah
03.    JOE: you're not with your boyfriend?
04.    MEL: you really believed her you were speakin Italian and
05.         everything↑
06.    JOE: well I was speaking Italian because I'm with my children
07.         while yo:u playin (0.2) and I didn't want them to know that
08.         they're mother is a dirty tramp
09.    MEL: hahahahaha oh my god↑ I have to go back to that restaurant
10.         and have myself a drink.
11.    JOE: alright good
```

In this transcript, Melissa and Joe are playfully discussing their game. In line 3, Joe asks "you're not with your boyfriend?" Melissa responds to this question by stating, "you really believed her, you were speaking Italian and everything." In this excerpt, Melissa and Joe are discussing the game that was played and calibrating their system to ensure that the game did not go outside the limitations of their system. The laughter about the prank indicated that closure had been reached and signaled homeostasis within the system. In response to Melissa's prank, however, Joe continues the pattern of symmetrical escalation by pranking her back.

```
44.    MEL: why does your phone keep going off_
45.    JOE: this <realtor> wants some money
46.         ((Phone rings again))
47.    MEL: alright↓ now she's calling five times in a row this is
48.         <fucking weird>
49.    DOL: shi::t hes in trouble
50.    FRA: Melissa↑ what's going on?
51.    MEL: your not punking me just FYI.
52.    FRA: what is she talking about?
53.    MEL: your not punking me, my husbands not cheating on me, and
54.         your all trying to make me believe he is
55.    MAR: I don't know what your <talking about>
56.    JOE: alright↑ alright the cats out of the bag
```

Leading up to this excerpt from transcript 5, Joe's phone was ringing repeatedly, and he was being secretive about who was calling him. Later, we find out that Joe had changed the contact's name of his friend Frank, and had Frank call his phone multiple times in a row in order to retaliate against Melissa for her prank. In line 53, however, Melissa figures out what is happening and states "you're not punking me, my husbands not cheating on me and you're all trying to make me believe he is." Joe replies, "alright alright the cats out of the bag," therefore ending the game and stabilizing the system again. The metacommunication between Joe and Melissa between lines 53 and 56 shows that "their communication about their communication is subject to the rules of their game" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 159). In both excerpts of metacommunication within the system, everyone is expressing their thoughts on the interactions within the game, setting rules and boundaries on what is acceptable and what isn't.

Thinking about the pragmatic theories discussed in *Pragmatics of Human Communication* by Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, invites the question of whether their concepts are purely theoretical or truly applicable in real interactions. Throughout this analysis, this question has been answered. Concepts such as family systems, homeostasis, symmetrical escalation, metacommunication, and more, can all be applied to real interactions(or, in this case, interactions in reality television). As proven in this analysis, the theories introduced by the authors are evident within this given system. As for whether the theories fit specifically for this interaction or are a blanket for all interactions, is still to be determined. However, in the relationships and interactions between Melissa Gorga, Joe Gorga, and Teresa Giudice, pragmatic theory proves useful.

Appendix:

TRANSCRIPT 1:

RHONJ, SEASON 11, EP. 3, 14:50-16:42

```
01.   DOL: I have an idea guys:s
02.   MAR: Dolores has an idea,
03.   DOL: teresa↑ your gonna get your brother back for making him lie
04.        when you guys were out and you hated that
05.   TRE: [ya     ]
06.   MAR: [he was] in a strip club that dur- and he lied
07.        [>to your face<          ]
08.   MEL: [that son of a bitch?  ]
09.   DOL: you should call him and say Melissa's talking to a guy FYI
10.   TRE: [ahhh]
11.   MEL: [yess]
12.   MAR: lets make up a stor::y=
13.   MAR: <dolores thats a good plan_
14.   TRE: >do you think< he'll believe it?
15.   DOL: this is so good↑ we <ha:ve to do this>
16.   TRE: alright I'm gonna text him… (0.2) I just wanted to let you
17.        kno:w last night the owner of the restaurant asked Melissa
18.        for her num:ber (0.3) they've been texting all day (0.2)
19.        >don't tell her I told you< and make sure you delete this
20.        text after you read it
21.   DOL: [nooo]
22.   MEL: [ahhh]
23.   DOL: that sounds re:al=
24.   MEL: why does my heart hurt,
25.   MAR: melissa don't be a puss=
26.   MEL: oh I'm SUCH↑ a pus:sy
27.   DOL: <stop it> ug::hh
28.   TRE: ((gasp)) he's writing back hold on he's writing back=
29.   MEL: I feel↑ <ba:d>
30.   TRE: ((reading the text out loud)) <why is she texting with him>
31.   MEL: oh my go:d↑ this is just mean
```

TRANSCRIPT 2:

RHONJ, SEASON 11, EP. 3, 16:59-19:00
Phone call between Teresa and Joe Gorga

```
01.   JOE: hello?
02.   TRE: hi↑
03.   JOE: what the fuck is going on? I'm in the car with the kids but
04.        how was it last night?
05.   TRE: it was so good, the food was so great, the restaurant was
06.        beautiful
07.   JOE: [ok::ay…]
08.   TRE: [and     ]
```

```
09.   JOE: [I'm saying how was it?]
10.   TRE: [and this guy was     ] really↑ cute and I kinda wanted to
11.        talk to him but he kept friggen going up to her
12.   JOE: last night?
13.   TRE: yea she [kept smiling she's like] 'hi look at me↑ I'm
14.        Melissa↑' ((Imitating Melissa))
15.   JOE:          [why was she doin that? ]
16.   TRE: well you know her, she has a few drinks and she gets
17.        all flirty like 'I'm Melissa↑' ((twirling hair))
18.   JOE: ((Speaking Italian)) was she dancing with him in front
19.        of everyone?
20.   TRE: like there was a bar there and he kept goin up to her
21.   JOE: and sayin what?
22.   TRE: I don't fucking know do you think I was like in their
23.        conversation?
24.        (0.4)
25.   TRE: and then they like kinda took a little walk- and I was like
26.   JOE: no. just the two of them?
27.   TRE: ya just them two,
28.   JOE: holy shit. If they hung out for a while thats an issue
29.   JOE: did you lose sight of em?
30.   TRE: no- I didnt always have my eye on them Joe like what do you
31.        think I'm gonna freaking follow her?
32.   JOE: ((speaking Italian)) keep your eye on her
33.   JOE: I mean you never know, I wanna know you know what I mean
34.   TRE: ya im sorry listen im not tryna cause any problems ya know,
35.        Im just saying like just ya know
36.   JOE: no no no you never know I mean mamma mia you know
37.   TRE: wait I think she just- wait wait she just walked in
38.   TRE: hi Meliss↑ Hello.
39.        ((Girls all laughing))
40.   TRE: wait hello Joe↑? Joe↑? You've been punked
41.   JOE: you guys are corny
42.   MEL: Joe you doubt↑ me?
43.   TRE: I was good right?
43.   JOE: thats great you guys are morons
```

TRANSCRIPT 3:

RHONJ, SEASON 11, EP. 3, 22:10-23:16
Phone call between Melissa and Joe Gorga

```
01.   JOE: what do you want
02.   MEL: hahahahah
03.   JOE: you're not with your boyfriend?
04.   MEL: you really believed her you were speakin Italian and
05.        everything↑
06.   JOE: well I was speaking Italian because I'm with my children
07.        while yo:u playin (0.2) and I didn't want them to know that
08.        they're mother is a dirty tramp
09.   MEL: hahahahaha oh my god↑ I have to go back to that restaurant
```

```
10.         and have myself a drink.
11.    JOE: alright good
12.    MEL: buh-bye love you
13.    JOE: bye
```

TRANSCRIPT 4:

RHONJ, SEASON 11, EP. 8, 11:45-13:54

```
01.    JOE: Melissa are you gonna wait for your husband?
02.    MEL: no↑
03.    JOE: holy shit
04.    MEL: hahahaha
05.    JOE: what happened to you? You don't wait for me?
06.    MEL: why am I waiting for you? you're right here bro chill
07.    JOE: did you have too much to drink?
08.    MEL: [absol::utely not    ]
09.    JOE: [so then slow down   ]
10.    MEL: (           )
11.    MEL: what are you mad about
12.    JOE: I'm not mad about nothin
13.    MEL: did I do something wrong
14.    JOE: nooo
15.    MEL: tell me if I did
16.    JOE: I would just like my wife to wait for me and you just
17.         walk away like you don't even have a husband
18.    MEL: [wait wait wait    ]
19.    JOE: [cause when my wife] [takes off     ]
20.    MEL:                     [so your upset] I took off
21.         like I'm the host thats like crazy
22.    JOE: alright from now on you just go by yourself and ill
23.         just walk in the back
24.    MAR: Joe, she loves you so much. When she got in the car
25.         she didn't even think anything was wrong
26.    MEL: I don't even kno:w what the fuck is hap:pening
27.    JOE: its OKAY this is the <problem> (0.2) we used to just be so
28.         attached and I'm still like that she's just changed
29.         you turned into this different business woman.
30.    MEL: if I have a little success in my own [personal life]
31.    JOE:                                      [who cares     ]
32.    MEL: its not against you↑
33.    MEL: let your wife have [something of her own      ]
34.    JOE:                    [you've definitely changed]
35.    MEL: >it doesn't mean I don't love you↑<
36.    JOE: °maybe we grew apart° ya know its just life
37.    MEL: okay↑ so were growing apart
38.    JOE: MAYBE we are
39.    MEL: [are you fucking kidding me]
40.    JOE: [I think what happened was ] you give someone so much love
41.    MEL: I give you so much love
```

```
42.    JOE: if you loved me you would say what did I do wrong- hold on
43.         [maybe your right maybe I messed up    ]
44.    MEL: [I did! alright ill just kiss your ass] Joe's throwing a
45.         hissy fit everyone let me just kiss his ass
46.    MEL: you are a fucking spoiled fuck
47.    JOE: be careful what you say because ill never talk to you again
48.    MEL: I've kissed your ass for how many fucking years so sit home
49.         while I go to work now
50.    JOE: ALRIGHT
51.    MEL: you are so spoiled
52.    JOE: forget it Melissa look ima do what you do look look look
53.         ima walk away from you
54.    MEL: okay great
```

TRANSCRIPT 5:

RHONJ, SEASON 11, EP. 8, 29:28-32:06

```
01.    MEL: Joe your phones ringing off the hook. Realtor Giselle
02.    JOE: its bout a deal
03.         ((Phone rings again))
04.    MEL: they just called you like four times in a row
05.    JOE: its nothing
06.         ((Phone rings again))
07.    JOE: ill call them back
08.         ((Phone rings again))
09.    MEL: who is that
10.    JOE: this plumber is a pain, let me just handle him
11.    FRA: why does he seem so absent minded, he's like elsewhere
12.         what the heck is goin on with him
13.    MEL: I don't know… we got in a little argument last night
14.    DOL: I heard (0.2) sometimes there's an insecurity right because
15.         he's raised where he has to be the [sole bread winner  ]
16.    MEL:                                    [he's the fucking man]
17.    DOL: not even you can take care of yourself. He wants to be the
18.         only one-
19.    JOE: what
20.    DOL: thats how I feel
21.    JOE: what
22.    MEL: I was tellin her about how we got in a little argument last
23.         night
24.    DOL: you know what Joe I know where your coming from like she's
25.         very successful, not that your not, but like you wanna be
26.         the only one taking care of her even if that means herself
27.         taking care of her
28.    JOE: noo I'm not worried about that we been together sixteen
29.         years for 15 years out marriage has been fucking amazing
30.         But lately she's working more than ever so she's a little
31.         Different
32.    DOL: Joe I wish I could get in your head because this fucking
33.         Girl is so [crazy about you]
```

```
34.    JOE:              [I know        ]
35.    DOL: and you guys are still hot for each other like the first
36.         day you met dont fight with her for this shit don't waste
37.         They best years of your life worrying about stuff that
38.         Doesn't matter
39.    JOE: ((looking at his phone)) this plummer I'm-
40.    DOL: okay?
41.    JOE: yes
42.    DOL: thats it
43.         ((Phone rings again))
44.    MEL: why does your phone keep going off_
45.    JOE: this <realtor> wants some money
46.         ((Phone rings again))
47.    MEL: alright↓ now she's calling five times in a row this is
48.         <fucking weird>
49.    DOL: shi::t hes in trouble
50.    FRA: Melissa↑ what's going on?
51.    MEL: your not punking me just FYI.
52.    FRA: what is she talking about?
53.    MEL: your not punking me, my husbands not cheating on me, and
54.         your all trying to make me believe he is
55.    MAR: I don't know what your <talking about>
56.    JOE: alright↑ alright the cats out of the bag
```

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"Um Mundo Novo[2]" or just More of the Same for Brazil Post-Olympics?

Emily Desormier

Here in America, people may remember the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil as the last Olympics that Michael Phelps competed in, as the summer that put Simone Biles on the international stage, or even as the Games where Ryan Lochte got in trouble for lying about being mugged. In Brazil, however, the people look back on the games as a series of false promises. The government claimed that hosting the Olympics would bring new opportunities and prominence to the country on the international stage, as well as providing chances to enrich the impoverished communities around Brazil. None of that ended up happening, however, now the country is in even worse shape than it was before the Olympics. One of the best ways to see what life is like in Rio before, during, and after the Games is through photographs; pictures have the ability to capture the full impact of what life was like during these three distinct moments in time, in a way that words are unable to. For my project, I plan to use pictures from these three eras (before the Olympics, during the Olympics, and post-Olympics) to argue that Brazil would have been better served using the billions of dollars that went to paying for the Olympics to instead support some of the impoverished communities around the country.

Before analyzing the first image, one must first understand what life was like in Rio de Janeiro prior to the Games. The country of Brazil was established separately from Portugal in 1822, with Rio de Janeiro serving as the country's capital until 1960. Even with that status change, Rio remains the second most populous city in Brazil and certainly one of the most well-known to people who live outside of South America. In the United States, the consensus cultural image of Rio (pre-Olympics) was that it was a fairly metropolitan city full of vibrant culture that was also home to the Christ the Redeemer statue. Brazil is home to some extremely wealthy people, with 259 millionaires residing there, Brazil is the 20th most populous country for millionaires in the world. However, that is an incomplete picture of what life in Rio de Janeiro, or Brazil as a whole, is actually like for everyone. *The Rio Times* reports "that more than fifty million

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[2] "Um Mundo Novo" (A New World) was the official slogan for the 2016 Summer Olympics

Brazilians, nearly 25 percent of the population, live below the poverty line" (Contributing Reporter); many people have monthly family incomes that translates to around $387 a month.

These impoverished members of Brazilian communities typically live in *favelas*. A "favela" is a low-income neighborhood in Brazil that has been historically ignored by the government. In a video from *Vox* titled "Inside Rio's Favelas, the City's Neglected Neighborhoods", some context is given as to how the favelas came to be: they were originally built by recently freed slaves in 1888 who were still denied access to many rights in society. Per Vox, the contemporary favelas credit their massive populations to "migrations from rural Brazilians coming into the city looking for work". Although the reasons for people coming to the favelas may have changed, the government's lack of involvement stays the same; there are no zoning laws, no building codes, and no public services to be found for favelas. Some residents of certain favelas have taken it upon themselves to form makeshift associations to deal with issues within the community and to work on providing resources and public projects to improve the favelas to varying degrees of success, but, of course, their reach and successes are on a much different level than government assistance would be. The Brazilian government is aware of conditions within the favelas but have been uninterested in providing any sort of aid because they are viewed as a "lesser" society compared to the urban cities.

Exhibit 1

Photo Credit: *The Rio Times*

The picture labeled Exhibit 1 was taken from an article in *The Rio Times* titled **"Extreme Poverty in Brazil Higher This January Than at Start of 2011,"** published on February 1, 2021. There is no listed photographer for this image. This picture was taken on the ground in Rocinha, one of the largest favelas in Rio that is home to around 100,000 people. This picture showcases what life in a favela is like: the homes are extremely congested, there is trash and clutter everywhere, and that there is overall extreme poverty. Even though this image is from 2021, this is not a reflection of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; life in favelas has always been this way ever since their inception. The favelas have never been a great place to live, yet the government has never offered any kind of support to make them better, even though hundreds of thousands of people call them home.

In Roland Barthes' piece "Rhetoric of the Image," he talks about how there are three levels of photographic meaning: the linguistic message, the non-coded iconic message, and the coded iconic message. All three of these meanings can be found in Exhibit 1. The linguistic message, which serves to answer basic questions, is that the photo takes place in the Rocinha favela and features residents of the favela. The non-coded iconic message, which features the denoted meaning, is that life in the favelas is unpleasant. Finally, the coded iconic message of this particular image, which is where the connotative meaning of the photograph can be found, is that these people did this to themselves. In other words, that it is their fault their living conditions are so poor. There is often a belief that impoverished people got there by their own doing, that if they just tried harder that their lives would improve. However, knowing about how the Brazilian government completely ignores the favelas, that argument is rendered invalid. People cannot be expected to have thriving lives if the government provides no social or economic structures to them. Without any support, people are often forced to stay in the rut of poverty.

Exhibit 1 is also very good at using pathos. *The Sourcebook on Rhetoric* by James Jasinksi defines pathos as "an appeal to the emotions or passions of an audience" (Jasinski, 421). The main source of pathos in this image comes from the two young children. While some people may believe that adults who live in poverty got there based on their own doing, everyone remains sympathetic to children who live in these conditions. Seeing the two children, who appear to be about toddler-aged, is bound to emit some empathy from viewers. The little girl's dress also goes directly against the coded iconic message of the image; her dress looks somewhat fancy, which serves as a symbol that her parents are clearly trying to give her the best that they can. That reading of the image mixed with the knowledge of how the government treats favelas all goes to show that there is more going on under the surface in the favelas than there may initially appear to be.

Now that a fuller picture of what life in Brazil is like for a large portion of the population has been sketched out, it is time to look at Rio's history with the Olympics. On October 2, 2009, the International Olympics Committee announced that the 2016 Summer Olympic Games were going to take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In winning the hosting privileges, Rio beat out other bids from places such as Chicago, Madrid, and Tokyo. With this, Brazil became the first country in South America to host an Olympics. Brazil had also won the rights to host the FIFA World Cup in 2014, leading to an influx of attention on the country. Brazilian officials were hoping that hosting two of the most prominent international sporting events would help to establish the country as a major player on the world stage. All eyes were on Rio to see if the country could successfully pull it off.

The Summer Olympics in Rio de Janiero occurred from August 5-21, 2016. There were four separate campuses for different sporting events: Barra Park (The main campus where major facilities like the Aquatic Center were), Copacabana Park, Maracanã Park (where the soccer stadium from the 2014 FIFA World Cup already resided), and Deodoro Park. The total cost to build all of the sporting facilities, the Olympic Village, a subway to get spectators to Olympic Park, advertisements, and so on ended up costing around $13.2 billion in U.S. dollars. While that was certainly a hefty bill for the country (host countries are responsible for covering all financial expenses associated with paying for the Games), it also came with the hope that most

of that money would be recouped through tourism. There was also the promise that all of the structures being built for the Olympics would not go to waste once the Games were over; the government said that everything constructed for the Games would be repurposed into buildings that could be reused by the community. For example, the handball arena was going to be turned into four public schools after the games and the canoe slalom course was going to be turned into a community pool. This promise of community development was particularly exciting for the area near Deodoro Park since that campus was specifically built in a poorer community with the hope of lifting up the area during and after the Olympics. However, before any transformations of stadiums into community assets, Rio first had to pull of the spectacle and majesty of a successful Olympics.

Exhibit 2

Photo Credit: *Sporting News*

The picture labeled Exhibit 2 depicts the Opening Ceremony of the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Summer Olympics. This image was taken from an article from *Sporting News* titled "Rio Olympics Failed

to Capture Brazil, Good or Bad". The Opening Ceremony took place at the Maracanã Stadium in Maracanã Park. The Maracanã Stadium was originally constructed to house the 2014 FIFA World Cup, but it was repurposed to serve as the spot for the Opening Ceremony. The surrounding buildings are all hotels and other urban trappings making it an ideal spot for tourists to visit. The picture captures the lavishness and pageantry that Brazil was hoping to showcase during their international debut as Olympic host country.

Using Barthes's levels of photographic meaning as a starting point, it is fairly simple to see what Brazil is trying to communicate with an image like this. The non-coded iconic message of the photo is that the Olympics have started; the whole purpose of the Opening Ceremony as a whole is to signify the start of the Games, so this picture is doing the same thing by extension. The coded iconic message of this picture is much more interesting to consider. With this photo, Brazil is attempting to convey the message that it is a wealthy and powerful enough country to gain prominence as an international power. Knowing that hundreds of thousands of eyes would be on Rio as a result of the Olympics, the country needed to make a bold, flashy statement right off the bat to assert their status. What better way to do that than a giant firework display? The architecture of the arena is also extremely modern, almost resembling a flying saucer or some other highly futuristic device. That stylistic choice was made to show that Brazil is ready to move into the future and leave its more rural past behind. It is also interesting that they chose to do the Opening Ceremony in the much more developed Maracanã Park over the low-income setting of Deodoro Park. One could argue that one location was selected because of the size of the soccer stadium, but there was absolutely also the consideration of the image that it would present. So, Brazilian officials made the decision to have the first image that people see of their country be an urban one in the hopes that viewers will see it and view the country as a metropolitan habitat.

An Opening Ceremony is something that takes months, maybe even years to plan and coordinate, so it is extremely obvious that the image in Exhibit 2 is the exact one that Brazil wanted to covey to the rest of the world. The thing is that, as beautiful as that image is, it is also extremely generic. There certainly was concept art created for the Opening Ceremony, which makes Misha Gordin's article "Conceptual Photography: Idea, Process, Truth" valuable to

look at. In the piece, she writes that conceptual photography is "creating an idea and transforming it into reality" (Gordin, 77), which the Rio 2016 Organizing Committee certainly did. It seems obvious, though, that their conceptual photograph for creating this spectacle was the Opening Ceremony from the London Summer Olympics in 2012. Both ceremonies feature a round, futuristic building with fireworks coming out of them. Also, strangely, Judi Dench read a poem at the Rio Opening Ceremony; she was not at the London Olympics, but she is extremely British, so the influence is clear. The obvious influence of the London Olympics could be just because it was a successful version of the Games that had happened recently. However, it is more likely that Brazil used London as its conceptual inspiration to further their goal of assimilating itself into highly developed countries. The UK is exactly the kind of country that Brazil wanted itself associated with: respected, powerful, and extremely dominant on the world stage. It is clear that Brazil took the "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" approach with the Opening Ceremony as a way to prove their worth to the other countries.
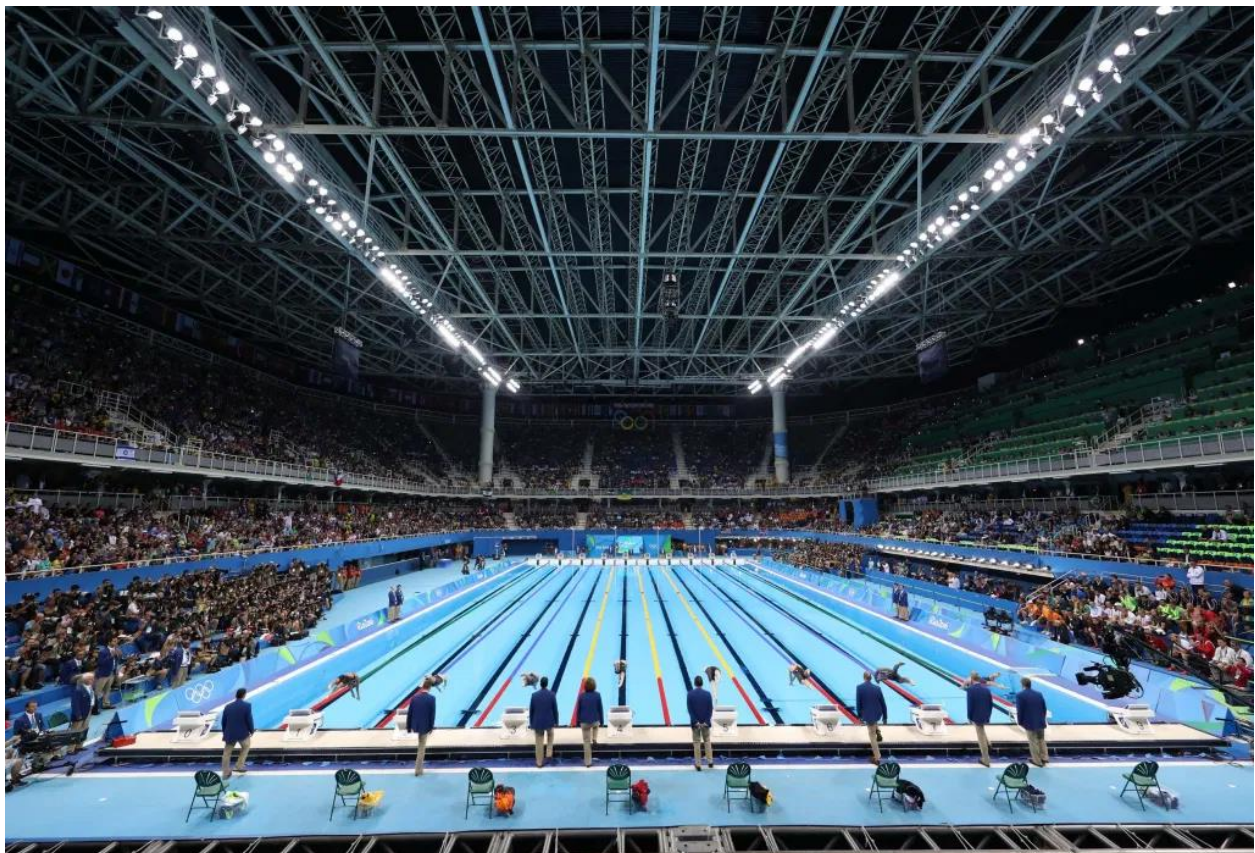
Exhibit 3

Photo Credit: Geoff Burke, *USA Today Sports*

Exhibit 3 is a picture of the inside of the Aquatic Center in Barra Park during the 2016 Rio Olympics. This picture was taken by Geoff Burke for *USA Today Sports* during one of the women's swimming events. Unfortunately, I was unable to verify which specific event this photo was taken at, but it almost does not matter because the energy and what it looks like during an Olympic swimming match is still captured. The picture features swimmers launching off their diving boards while hundreds of cameras and onlookers witness the competition. The image also showcases the beautiful blue pool that was built specifically for the Olympics. It is kind of faint, but up towards the top of the frame in the center, the Olympics rings logo is visible, symbolically looming over the whole event, as if anyone could have forgotten why they were gathered in the Aquatic Center that day.

Once again, it is useful to use Barthes's levels of photographic meaning to examine what message this image is trying to convey. Unlike Exhibit 1 which just conveys a message through its very existence, Exhibits 2 and 3 are extremely designed and are actively trying to communicate a message to viewers, which makes it very interesting to analyze. This image does have some explicit linguistic messaging going, thanks to the Olympic Rings above the pool, on the side of the pool, and the words "Rio" on the side of the pool. All of those linguistic devices are primarily there to brand the event, but it also serves as a way for Brazil to continue to self-promote. By continuously reminding people that the Olympics and all of these beautiful facilities are located in Rio, viewers are subconsciously being fed the message that Brazil is a nice place and that they should take a trip there. One of the main draws for hosting the Olympics is to attract tourism during the Games, but Brazil is hoping that the rebranded image of what foreigners think of Brazil as being will last long after the sporting events are over. The non-coded iconic message of this image is that there is a swimming event taking place and lots of people have gathered to watch it. That may seem self-explanatory, but that is the whole purpose of the non-coded iconic message: it just is it what it is. The coded iconic message of this picture is that this pool is where important swimming competitions take place, therefore,

by extension, Rio is important. Similar to the coded iconic message of Exhibit 2, this is once again an example of Brazil trying to assert itself as a place of importance while it is having its moment in the spotlight.

On its surface, this image seemingly has nothing in common with Exhibit 1, but they both feature a key similarity that no other picture in this piece has: bodies. In James Elkins' book *Pictures of the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis*, he talks about how every photograph has some aspect of the body even if you cannot see the physical form because you can imagine a human interacting with it in some way; for example, even though you cannot see any bodies in Exhibit 2, you know that they are inside the stadium celebrating the Opening Ceremony because of the context clues surrounding the situation. I want to focus on the two pictures that do directly showcase bodies, however, because they are in stark contrast with each other. Exhibit 1 features three bodies very prominently: the man and the two children. These bodies serve the purpose of humanizing the favelas and emphasizing the inherent tragedy around them. In that picture, the bodies are essential is conveying the pathos of the image. On the other hand, Exhibit 3 features what Elkins calls "Bodies that are simply there" (Elkin, 155). The bodies in this photograph all take second place to the majesty that is the pool. Even the swimmers, who should be the stars of a swimming event, take a backseat to the pool in this picture. The pool is what Brazil really wants to highlight in this image because it goes along with their continuous coded iconic message that Brazil deserves to be recognized internationally as a prominent, important place. However, Elkins argues that "when it seems that the body is merely given, that it is irreducibly *there*, it also appears… most suffused with unspoken significance" (Elkins, 155-156). Using that argument, the significance of the bodies in Exhibit 3 is that they create the notion that Brazil is a place that a lot of people want to visit. A large crowd of people always creates curiosity amongst onlookers, so a packed arena leads to people feeling like they are missing out on something. Brazil hopes that this feeling of exclusion encourages more people to plan trips to the country. The fact that the photo emphasizes Brazil's overarching message and does not place much emphasis on the people in the picture serves as a grim foreshadowing of what is to come after the Olympics are over.

When the Olympics wrapped up on August 21, most people agreed that they were a relative success. Even with the threat posed by the Zika virus, the Games went off without any real hitch and Brazil was able to show itself off to the world. Now, it was time for Brazil to make good on the promises that were made to the communities about what would become of the Olympic facilities. Brazilians were eagerly waiting for the government to start repurposing buildings and allocating funds to enriching the communities. Unfortunately, these dreams were almost immediately squashed. Ever since the time that the Rio Olympics were announced in 2009, the Brazilian government has been plagued with scandal, mostly having to do with finances. It's a very complex topic that continues to negatively impact the Brazilian economy to this day. For the purposes of this piece all that you really must know is that members of pretty much every branch of government were implicated in instances of bribery, misuse of funds, money laundering, and/ or using favorable contracts receive to millions of dollars in kickbacks; to get a more in-depth look at these issues and the individuals involved, I highly recommend "After the Flame" by Wayne Drehs and Mariana Lajolo for *ESPN*, which was a key source of information on this topic. Just to showcase how far reaching the corruption was across those who held power in the country, Drehs and Lajolo point out that even "the president of the Aquatic Sports Federation, and two of his directors were arrested and charged with the misuse and misappropriation of $13 million in funds, for their own personal gain and by giving favorable contracts to associates" (Drehs and Lajolo), proving that no aspect of Brazilian government was free from corruption.

So, with a government embattled with multiple scandals and an economy that is in "its worst recession in history" (Drehs and Lajolo), where does that leave the use of Olympic facilities? Unfortunately, plans to transform them into community assets have largely been scrapped and the buildings are being left to slowly decay. Since the Olympics, only 15 out of the 27 venues built for the Games have been used in some capacity, with most of them not being touched since 2017. One building that was initially used was the Maracanã soccer stadium, the location of the Opening Ceremony from Exhibit 2. The stadium was initially opened for tours to bring in revenue, but those were cancelled after six months due to vandalism in the stadium and violent robberies in the area. The stadium has also "had its power shut off completely after amassing a

$950,000 electric bill" (Drehs and Lajolo) that was unable to be paid. Plans for schools, community centers, the community pool, luxury apartments, and other community enrichment methods have all been cancelled due to a lack of funds.

Exhibit 4

Photo Credit: Pilar Olivares, *Reuters*

Exhibit 4 is a picture of the Aquatic Center pool at the Barra campus in 2017, one year after the Olympics. This is the same pool that is pictured in Exhibit 3. This image was taken by Pilar Olivares for *Reuters*. This photo captures the full scope and tragedy of the abandonment of the Olympic facilities. In the picture, there is a bit of standing water where there once was a full pool of chlorinated water. The bleachers are empty, adding to the overall gloominess of the

picture. Since there is none of the Olympic gloss leftover in this image, it is almost impossible to look at this picture without reminiscing about what the pool used to look like in its glory.

Upon first glance, the most notable thing that this picture does is elicit a sense of sadness from the viewer. Even if someone did not know what the Aquatic Center looked like during the 2016 Olympics at the height of its beauty, it is always sad to see abandoned buildings because of all of the wasted potential. If you are familiar with what the pool looked like during the Games and the promise that Brazil made to repurpose it into a community pool, then this image becomes downright tragic. Per Barthes' notion, the non-coded iconic message is that this is an abandoned pool. The non-coded iconic message completely ignores the significance of what this particular pool is and what it symbolized for a whole country of people. The coded iconic message of this image is that the government did not keep the promises that it made to the community way back in 2009 when Rio was announced as the host of the 2016 Olympics. The grayness and the dreariness are perfect symbols for how thousands of Brazilians felt when they realized that they were not going to be getting what was promised to them. The little bit of water in the pool is also a rich symbol of how the country tried a little bit to keep their promises before ultimately failing. The picture in Exhibit 4 would be a little less pathetic if there was no water at all in the pool; similarly, it would be less sad for Brazilians, particularly those who live in the favelas, if the government had never made promises that they knew that they could not keep in the first place.

It is also worth examining Exhibit 4 with the framework laid out by Group μ in their piece "Toward a General Rhetoric of Visual Statement: Interaction between Plastic and Iconic Signs". In their piece, Group μ argue that every picture is made up of plastic and iconic elements. An iconic element in a photograph is something that is instantly recognizable to the audience, while a plastic element is something far less definable. For example, plastic elements are things such as shapes, lighting, and colors; in other words, plastic elements are things that could be found in any picture. Using plastic and iconic elements, I want to compare Exhibits 3 and 4. Exhibit 3 is clearly full of iconic elements: the pool itself, the spectators, the swimmers, and the Olympic Rings, just to name a few. In Exhibit 4, with all of those things stripped away, the image itself becomes full of plastic elements. It is clearly still a pool, but it loses the iconic status of

being an Olympic swimming pool. In Exhibit 4, the bright blue paint has all been scrubbed away, leaving only a drab gray. While the blue was an iconic element because of the life that it brought to the pool, giving it a distinct nature and image, the gray is plastic because it is such a mundane and ordinary color. This gray can be found anywhere from sidewalks to buildings; it is not unique to this pool. Another thing that goes from being iconic to plastic are the bleachers. In Exhibit 3, they create the iconic image of being packed full of fans, whereas in Exhibit 4 they just kind of exist. Again, the bleachers are still technically an iconic element in Exhibit 4 because they are still clearly bleachers, but they are more plastic because they look sort of just like rows of white and silver. It is the people who really illustrate that they are bleachers designed to be used by spectators. The transition of elements from iconic to plastic in the pool support the argument of the coded iconic message. As the promises slowly started to slip away, so did everything that made this pool unique, special, and beautiful.

Exhibit 5

Photo Credit: Pilar Olivares, *Reuters*

The photograph in Exhibit 5 is the outside of the Aquatic Center at Barra Park, which houses the pool from Exhibits 3 and 4. This picture was taken by Pilar Olivares for *Reuters* in 2017, one year after the Olympics. Similar to Exhibit 4, this picture showcases the decay and abandonment that many facilities built for the Rio Olympics have faced in the years since. The tapestries on the wall on the outside of the building that are now falling down were done by Brazilian artist Adriana Varejao. They feature sketches of Brazilian culture and people, which you can see on the far-right panel that is still standing. The practice pool in front is now filled with mud, rainwater, and insects, which gives it that rusty-brown color. Similar to Exhibit 4, this picture perfectly encapsulates the tragedy and disappointment of the broken promises made by the government.

This picture has a lot of the same qualities of Exhibit 4 as far as the coded and non-coded iconic messages. The non-coded iconic message for this picture is that this disheveled building and gross-looking pool have been abandoned and are no longer in use. The state of decay of these locations suggest that they have been out of use for longer than a year, but that only goes to show how poorly and cheaply (since so many of the funds allocated towards constructing them were misused) these buildings were made. The coded iconic message for this image could be read as being the same as Exhibit 4, that the falling apart building is symbolic of the broken promises made by the Brazilian government, but I think that it goes deeper than that. The coded iconic message of this image is that the government has abandoned the well-being of the country's citizens, specifically those who live in favelas. This idea is crystallized through the image of Adriana Varejao's peeling tapestries: both in the tapestries and in real life, Brazilians have been left hanging and the government is nowhere to be found to help them. The condition of the practice pool also supports this message. No effort has been made to clean it up, similar to how no real effort was made to create sustainable, affordable buildings that could be long-lasting and enrich the community.

An interesting aspect to consider when looking at Exhibit 5 is the role that preservation photography plays in it. I looked everywhere to find a picture of what the outside of the

Aquatic Center looked like during the Olympics, but I could only find pictures of what it looks like now, post-Olympics. That means that photographs like Exhibit 5 will eventually become the main image of what the outside of the Aquatic Center looked like since there are no easily accessible pictures of what it looked like in its prime. That is hugely disappointing, since it was almost certainly a beautiful structure when it was first built. In their piece "Editor's Introduction: Photography and Preservation", Iñaki Bergera and Jorge Otero-Pailos touch on the importance, and danger, of using photography to preserve buildings rather than physically preserving them. In the piece, the authors write that "preservation photography does not excavate memory, it helps to construct the sense that buildings assist in recall and to frame certain experiences" (Bergera and Otero-Pailos, iv), indicating the importance that physical structures play in life experiences. That sentiment is certainly true of Olympic buildings. For example, the Aquatic Center in Rio will always be memorable and noteworthy in the sporting world because it is where Michael Phelps, the most decorated Olympian in history, swam his last Games. There does not need to be pictures of the Aquatic Center to remember that event, but pictures will be useful to help people reminisce about it and photographs will certainly be helpful to people in the future studying Phelps. So, it is devastating that the only images that they will be able to find of the outside of the Aquatic Center are ones like Exhibit 5. Having that version of the structure being the one that is preserved is also painful for Brazil, who would much rather be remembered for the glory of the new construction rather than the dilapidated symbol of broken promises that stands now.

Over a year after the Olympics were over, the Rio 2016 Organizing Committee still owed around $40 million to creditors. Unable to pay in cash, "Olympic organizers were attempting to pay creditors with air conditioners, portable energy units and electrical cables" (Drehs and Lajolo), which was not accepted. After realizing that the country was not going to be able to pay the debts by themselves, the Organizing Committee then turned to the International Olympic Committee for help paying its debts, where they were also denied. After reaching that dead end, the city of Rio decided to solicit bids from private companies to run parts of the parks as a way to keep expenses down while they tried to figure out how to pay their debts. There were no bids, leaving Brazil's Ministry of Sport with "maintenance [bills that]…will cost the

government approximately $14 million" (Drehs and Lajolo) a year. The economic conditions in Brazil have not faced any improvement since the end of the 2016 Olympics (they have actually gotten worse due to the COVID-19 pandemic), so all of the facilities erected for the Games continue to deteriorate to this day.

Even with all of the broken promises and crushed dreams about what post-Olympics Brazil would be like, there was still the naïve hope that life in the favelas would improve. Brazil had taken a few steps to highlighting favelas during the Olympics (such as building Deodoro Park and having a "Voices from the Favela" segment during the Opening Ceremony), so some were still optimistic that people from other countries around the world might chip in and help the favelas in some way. Unfortunately, that did not end up happening. After the Games, life in favelas got significantly worse, and not just because of the failure to create schools, community centers, and the rest of it. In their ESPN piece, Drehs and Lajolo write this on life in the favelas now:

> According to Brazil's Institute of Public Safety, street robberies are up 48 percent and deadly assaults by 21 percent, to the highest rates since 2009. In the first three months of 2017, violent crime spiked 26 percent compared with the same period in 2016. The state of Rio is still unable to pay its teachers, hospital workers, police and other public employees on time, if at all. Many favelas still lack running water or proper sewage removal. (Drehs and Lajolo)

One might be wondering how so many foreign people saw the favelas, maybe for the first time, and had no strong reaction to help or call for the Brazilian government to help them in some way. Well, the primary reason why that did not happen is because of the tourist gaze, which Palloma Menezes lays out in her piece "6. Tourist's Photographic Gaze: The Case of Rio de Janeiro Favelas". The version of the favelas that tourists and people watching on television saw was extremely sanitized. There was nothing similar to Exhibit 1 being shown at any official Olympic event. As has already been established, Brazil wanted to use the Olympics to put itself on the international stage and show that they deserve to be there amongst other world superpowers; they were not going to jeopardize that opportunity by showing anything other

than the glossy, modern world that they constructed for the Olympics. Menezes writes that "the choice of which element deserves to be seen or not seen varies according to the cultural filter that is behind the camera" (Menezes, 95), something that applies to both Brazil and tourists from other countries. Brazil put on the filter that the favelas are places to live full of culture and history and obscured the fact that they are also full of poverty and crime. Meanwhile, the tourists completely bought into this idea because it was easy for them. Everyone visiting Rio at this time was there to enjoy the Olympics; they did not want to bother themselves with actually finding out what life was like in the favelas, they wanted to have fun. Plus, from the outside, the favelas actually do look quite beautiful (as seen in Exhibit 6, below), which further allowed tourists to be complicit.

Exhibit 6

Photo Credit: *The Perspective*

Exhibit 6 is an image of Rocinha, Brazil's largest favela. The picture is taken from an article from *The Perspective* titled "Rio's Favelas – Where Beauty Meets Brutality" from 2016. Looking at this picture, you can see why people who inhabit the favelas are called "people of the hill". This image perfectly taps into what Menezes was talking about with the tourist's gaze. Just looking at the exterior of the favela, it is quite beautiful. All of the lush trees and vibrant colors of the homes create a striking image, especially to tourists. Many tourists are likely to exoticize the favelas because they are so different than what can be found in their own countries. There is also just a troubling habit in general to exoticize anything in South America (or Africa) because they are perceived as being "so different". However, if you know anything about favelas, you realize that all of the houses are different colors because they were made with whatever material people could find. People live on the hills with all of the trees because there was nowhere else to go. While favelas are certainly places where beautiful moments and examples of culture can be found, they should not be romanticized. During the Olympics, the Brazilian government wanted spectators to think of favelas only in terms of Exhibit 6, even though Exhibit 1 will give people a better idea of what favelas are actually like.

After seeing what life in the favelas is like, it is logical to say that the Brazilian government should do more to directly support the favelas. Yes, there was the promise of turning the Olympic buildings into facilities for the communities, but the government did not have the financial resources to actually do this. And, due to the corruption of the government during the whole timeline of the Rio Olympics, it is fair to assume that they knew that they could never keep all of those promises. All of that information leads to the argument that Brazil would have been better served using the billions of dollars that went towards paying for the Olympics to instead offer direct economic and social assistance to the favelas. Now, it is obvious that Brazil did not have billions of dollars in the first place (hence the massive debt that they currently find themselves in), but they certainly had some money kicking around that they could have used to improve life in the favelas. For example, instead of turning Olympic stadiums into public schools, they could have just built schools in the first place. At the very least, the government could have worked to give all favelas running water and proper sewage removal. But no, the government thought that it was a better call to host the Olympics in the hopes to assert their

presence in the world. However, after how they handled the buildings post-Olympics, the economic recession that immediately followed the Games[3], and the ongoing quality of life struggles, it would be safe to say that their propagandic efforts failed since the world watched all of this unfold.

On the official Olympics website, under the Rio 2016 page, there are a lot of articles about the legacy of the Games in Brazil. All of these articles boast social and economic progress brought about by the games, which is clearly untrue. The funny thing about these articles is that they were written in 2017, the same year that Exhibits 4 and 5 are from. Even when there was photographic evidence to the contrary, Brazil still felt the need to try and maintain the image that everything is great in the country and that the Olympics have helped the country continue to thrive. As we have seen through photos, however, the country is in the worst shape that it has been in over twenty years. All Brazil wanted to do was become a powerful country, but they missed the very obvious fact that improving life in the favelas would raise their poverty line, thus giving the country the stability and path to power and prominence that it so desperately craves.

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[3] The recession started eleven days after the Olympics came to a close

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SHEIN: How Immaterial Labor Fuels the Capitalist Fast Fashion Industry

Sara Donatello

Introduction

SHEIN is an international fast-fashion clothing retailer that offers clothing for men, women, and children along with other categories such as bags, accessories, and cosmetics. This e-commerce centered company provides consumers worldwide with products at an inexpensive price. The fast fashion industry consists of a feedback loop that would not function without all parties involved: extraction of raw materials, manufacturing and production, distribution, and consumption. Specific to this research, the continued increase in consumption feeds the increased need for the production of goods. When talking about fast fashion, consumerism is not a topic that is usually brought up as most consumers do not want to acknowledge that their role in the industry is of any importance. On the contrary, consumerism and immaterial labor are what fuels the fast fashion industry. Jack Qiu defines immaterial labor as someone who "produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity" (Qiu, 100). Aside from the physical purchasing of a product or commodity, there is much sharing of information that goes on to promote and spread knowledge about brands and products. Today, influencers hold a significant amount of power on social media platforms when it comes to promoting brands through paid partnerships, or even just sharing products they use and love.

Empirical research includes a Google Forms questionnaire created for the purpose of this paper that was sent out to SHEIN consumers. The questionnaire included multiple choice and long answer questions covering the following topics: factors that influence purchases, how the consumer heard of SHEIN, experience and expectations, quality and satisfaction, fashion trends, and an opinion-based question regarding SHEIN as a company. The data collected from the questionnaire will be applied to the theoretical data collected to further explain purchasing patterns and what consumers look for in a product.

Scholarly literature from both academic and outside peer-reviewed sources will be used to provide a theoretical framework to further explore how consumerism and immaterial labor fuel the fast fashion industry. Academic sources will allow insight into immaterial labor, online advertising, and how romantic individualism can be applied to influencers' ability to push consumers to specific goods. Outside literature will help elaborate on three specific categories of consumerism and immaterial labor that will be explored in more depth: the global apparel industry, fashion trends and the effects they have on the fast fashion industry, and consumer activism around the fast fashion industry.

This research is centered around the question of how exactly immaterial labor and consumerism fuel the capitalist fast-fashion industry. With the knowledge gained through literature on the global apparel industry, romantic individualism, advertising, capitalism, fashion trends, and consumer activism, it will be applied to real-life examples of how consumers feel when browsing, purchasing, and wearing SHEIN clothing. In addition, feedback will be collected regarding viewpoints of the company with the recognition of sweatshop labor and labor exploitation.

Immaterial Labor, Advertising, and Romantic Individualism

 "The business celebrity system fosters the illusion that the fruits of corporate manufacture are the product of unique, talented individuals, not the global systems of manufacture" (Streeter, 3109). In the fashion industry, clothing is associated with the name you hear or the face you see wearing it. For designer brands, that could be Christian Dior, Versace, or Steve Madden. On the contrary, fast fashion brands like SHEIN that do not have any name attached to the brand are associated with those who show off the clothes: social media influencers. There is a kind of romantic individualization happening between followers and the influencers who show off their purchases. A popular move among many influencers is to film vlogs showing off their "hauls," which feature items such as clothes, food, or make-up. SHEIN hauls are very common amongst influencers appealing to younger followers who can only afford fast fashion clothes while in

high school or college. Social media influencers are always up to date on the latest trends happening in the fashion world, so followers turn to them for inspiration on which pieces to purchase.

Dan Schiller's article *Power Under Pressure: Digital Capitalism in Crisis* focuses on advertising as one of three private options for launching and financing communications products and services. Using social media and the internet as advertising appeals to the community of buyers more effectively as it provides access to the website without requiring the consumer to physically look up the site. People turn to pop-up ads for clothes and shoes that appeal to them as well as links provided by influencers as they do their "try-on hauls." If products have good ratings from influencers, their followers are likely to click on the link and even purchase the product themselves. Immaterial labor—in this context, social media influencers—weighs heavily on how SHEIN receives advertising in the 21st century. Of the 25 SHEIN consumers who answered the questionnaire, ten people responded that they learned about SHEIN either through social media advertising or influencers on Instagram or YouTube. The majority of others answered that they heard through word-of-mouth advertising from a friend. Not one consumer responded that they found SHEIN through a Google search, which proves that immaterial labor and advertising are vital to the company's rates of exposure.

Global Apparel Industry

The global apparel industry is only successful because each aspect of the industry contributes equally to its overall success. Jill Esbenshade's *Introduction: Workers, Consumers, and the Global Apparel Industry* explores the direct and indirect aspects of the industry, specifically the sweatshops producing the clothing. The direct aspects include the sweatshops and the laborers doing the physical production work. It is interesting to see how consumers feel about the topic of sweatshop labor and how this knowledge affects buying habits. When asked, "does knowing that SHEIN products are made using low-wage sweatshop labor change your mind about purchasing company products? Why or why not?" there was a mix of "yes"

and "no" answers, all for varying reasons. One consumer responded, "I would say it definitely makes me question making purchases. I acknowledge those working conditions are absolutely unacceptable, however they also have some of the cheapest prices and as a broke college student you do what you have to do to get trendy clothes at an affordable price." The indirect aspects include the consumers purchasing the goods. Esbenshade notes that one might think the direct labor is much more important than the indirect, but in reality the indirect aspect holds the key for production. The global apparel industry consists of labor, raw materials, the company, trading, shipping, stores, and consumers. Without consumerism, however, there is no need for the rest of the cycle.

Within the global commodity chain, supply-driven innovations are linked with the ever-changing consumer behavior and demands. "Western retailers have increasingly pushed supply chain rationalization and improved channel integration to force manufacturers to be more responsive to cost, quality and speed of delivery requirements" (Taplin, 245). It was recognized that accelerated production makes it possible to sell inexpensive, fashionable clothing to young consumers in a globalized marketplace. Fast fashion brands like SHEIN, Zara, and H&M have thrived off being able to quickly and efficiently mass produce cheap clothing. Talpin finds that short lead times have proven to be essential to the success of the global fast fashion industry because the constant "newness" of their products encourage consumers to frequently visit the store and websites for new offerings. This results in fast turnover times and low inventory costs, which allows companies like SHEIN to price their clothing extremely low and be a major competitor in the mass-market based on cost. These findings can be backed up with evidence from the questionnaire. When asked, "as a consumer, are there any factors that heavily influence your purchases," all 25 consumers included price as an influential factor in their purchasing decisions. Quality and delivery time were the following two most popular answers. These findings correspond with Talpin's research as fast fashion companies aim to be more responsive to cost, quality, and the speed of delivery.

Fashion Trends and Sustainability

Given that the fast fashion industry is always changing, keeping up with fashion trends has proven to be a hefty task for companies. Being "trendy" is something that many young people, especially high school and college-aged girls, hold in high esteem. There will always be a cuter top, a new hairstyle, or a fashion statement color resurrected from the dead. This puts an immense amount of pressure on companies to be up to date with fashion trends and produce clothes that will be appealing to the public. What we wear matters so much because of the statement that clothes make. Quoting Pierre Bourdieu, "taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier," which means that how we judge others based on what we think is "tasteful" in turn defines ourselves and our own taste. "Clothes are our initial and most basic tool of communication. They convey our social and economic status, our occupation, our ambition, our self-worth" (Thomas, 2). The desire to start every day with trendy clothes shows how we wish to present ourselves to others. It is up to the fashion companies to provide clothing options that are trendy and up to date to align with consumers' fashion sense. Data collected from the questionnaire shows that SHEIN has been able to keep up with fashion trends, as 100% of consumers noted that they were able to find trendy pieces on the site.

Zara, another fast fashion clothing company, found ways of "expediting the design, manufacture and distribution of garments in 2-5 weeks to meet the demand for what is actually selling" (Talpin, 255). This shows just how rapid the turnover must be for companies to stay on top of the latest trends. However, the flip side of constantly producing new items means that the "out of fashion" clothes are not desired by consumers anymore. More often than not, companies over produce clothing items since there is never any indication as to how long trends will stay in style or how quickly they will die out. Fashion trends are described by Joy et al in *Fashion Trends, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands* as "running their course with lightning speed, with today's latest styles swiftly trumping yesterday's, which have already been consigned to the trash bin" (Joy et al, 273). The unsustainability of fast fashion, specifically keeping up with trends, has become a major

problem that many are turning a blind eye to. Fast fashion is unsustainable because "fast fashion is, by its very nature, a fast- response system that encourages disposability" (Joy et al, 275). It may be easier to understand just how unsustainable the fast fashion industry truly is when put in numerical terms. As of 2018, "80 billion pieces of new clothing are purchased each year, translating to $1.2 trillion annually for the global fashion industry" (Bick et al, 2018). Approximately 85% of clothes consumed by Americans, or 3.8 billion pounds of clothing, ends up in landfills. This statistic can be divided up to account to 80 pounds of clothing per American consumer.

When it comes to purchasing fast fashion products, consumers are fixated on getting the best deals and the cheapest prices; many consumers rarely ever think about the sustainability aspect of the industry. Findings from the questionnaire showed that SHEIN consumers understood and acknowledged the negative aspects of the company. However, as most are "broke college students," nothing will change the fact that SHEIN has trendy clothes at a very inexpensive price. To many it is obvious there are issues that result from constantly being up to date on fashion trends, but unfortunately, sustainability is simply not a term that young people associate with fashion.

Consumer Activism

As is the case with many industries, there are people who refute the practices and ethics of companies. Consumer activists are working against the fast fashion industry for numerous reasons, most prominently labor exploitation and disposability of garments due to the high turnover rates of production. As always, there are many positives and negatives that come with any type of activism. With the shift into modern times, which came with many social and economic changes, we see that the "uniquely pervasive quality of contemporary consumerism and transformation of the category of cultural/social resistance are crucial shifts that have transformed social life, cultural consumption, and production" (Mukherjee and Banet-Weiser, 2012).

In the case of the fast fashion industry, most activism is aimed at calling out the low- wage, sweatshop labor. As has been established, there are many other factors that should also be addressed that contribute to the global apparel industry's production process. Andrew Ross's *The Quandaries of Consumer-Based Labor Activism: A low-wage case study* explores anti-sweatshop activism and highlights the mixed results in his findings. "Nothing exposes corporate greed more than highlighting the gulf between the meager wages paid to production workers, toiling under life threatening conditions, and the lavish profits enjoyed by retailers and brand firms" (Ross, 773). Activists aim to target the emotions of all who will listen by highlighting the narrative of the production workers who get paid "meager wages" and work in "life threatening conditions."

Conclusion

Each aspect of this research is directly or indirectly interconnected with one another. The consumer begins and ends the processes of the production cycle as changes in consumer behavior can quickly affect production. The fast fashion industry thrives on being able to have quick turn over times to keep up with the ever-changing fashion trends. Creating a system that can have high production at low costs, which allows for low prices, opens up the doors for a more inclusive consumer base, specifically targeting high school and college aged women. Using the immaterial labor provided by influencers and online advertising has boosted exposure for companies like SHEIN because of Gen Z's inherent need for convenience. Having online ads on Instagram for specific articles of clothing, or direct product links posted by influencers, makes it so easy to reach a specific item. It is unappealing to have to search for a company and aimlessly scroll through thousands of items. It is much more appealing to be given direction as to what is tasteful or in style by an influencer you admire. As mentioned, the success of the industry is based on meeting the demands of the consumers, even if it does mean sacrificing the ethics and values centered around being sustainable and providing safe and healthy working conditions for production line workers. Meanwhile, there is extensive

activism happening around the fast fashion industry. Aside from the fact that there is room for improvement when it comes to acknowledging the role consumers play in the industry, labor activism has raised awareness about the injustices of sweatshops. Based on extensive research and the consumer feedback questionnaire, it can be concluded that immaterial labor and consumerism do in fact drive the capitalist fast fashion industry. Without the promotion from influencers and purchasing habits from consumers, the production industry would function much differently.

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Grace Helbig Will NEVER be a Hollywood Star, but David Dobrik Will Be

Julia Gomes

If you were an avid YouTube watcher within the last ten years, chances are you have heard of Grace Helbig. Helbig is a comedic, vlog style YouTube content creator with over 2 million subscribers. To put it simply, she was an internet sensation. Helbig created her fame from utilizing her hilarious relatability to connect with her audience. She was one of the first female YouTubers of her era to understand how successful parasocial relationships can be between a creator and their audience. However, if I have one thing to say about Grace Helbig, it is that she will never be a Hollywood star, ever. Harsh, I know.

Parasocial relationships are one sided relationships, most commonly relevant on the internet. It is the sensation of hanging out with a person who does not know you exist. You bond with that person by learning about their personalities, their traits, and simply what makes them human. These creators make it feel like they are your friend. This dynamic with her audience is what made her so famous on YouTube in the first place. Josh Meyorwitz describes these parasocial relationships as a connection, "fostered by media that simulate the sights and sounds of real life interactions"(Meyorwitz 2008). Everything from the way she sets up her camera to make it feel as if you are sitting in front of her, to the direct eye contact she makes, to the way she asks her audience questions like a friend would. Helbig never tries to be perfect. She tries to be relatable. Anne Helen Peterson writes, "In a certain corner of the YouTube world (read: the part where people make money), Helbig is ubiquitous with what she documents. She tapes herself as she sits in a bathroom waiting for the train, dying her hair, waking up jet-lagged, and dorking around her hotel room (Peterson 2015). Unlike many other YouTubers on the internet, Helbig does not necessarily care about her appearance. She is a beautiful woman but that is not the reason for her fame. Helbig's funny, quirky, and sometimes awkward personality entices her audience because they can relate to her on a personal and emotional level.

With all of this success, Helbig was offered opportunities to move out of the YouTube space
and into television and movies. This is when Helbig's career begins to hit a standstill and the
reason she is not in television or movies today, and never will be. Of course, Helbig wanted to
move into "the big leagues". At that time (around 2015), the term "YouTuber" was still
struggling to be respected as a profession. Helbig had so much success and she wanted to grow
her career. However, Helbig's YouTube videos do not follow the same rules as television does,
hence the success. Television and movies are scripted, heavily produced, heavily edited, and is
not nearly as relatable as self made videos are. There are so many people behind the scenes of
this world that these connections seem disingenuous and it is difficult for people to form the
same type of personal relationship. Helbig's fame was produced because of the parasocial
relationships she created with her viewers. When she removes that dynamic, the "Helbig
magic" disintegrates. To prove this point I will name examples of Helbig's failed attempts at
television and movies. To start, Helbig starred in her first movie, Camp Takota, with a 67% on
Rotten Tomatoes, then Electra Woman and Dynagirl with 5.4/10 on IMDB, and finally Dirty30
with 5.5/10 on IMDB. She also was given her own talk show, The Grace Helbig Show, which
aired on the E! channel and only lasted one season before it was cut off the air. It is clear there
is a disconnect when Helbig is acting (or at least acting when scripted) that her audience can
not relate to and therefore do not respond well to.

There is a reason that Helbig is only successful on the internet. The parasocial relationships she
is a master at creating are lost in mainstream media. Today, Helbig almost strictly runs her own
podcasts, including *Not Too Deep with Grace Helbig*, and *This Might Get Weird*. She is not seen
on YouTube making edited videos as much because her podcasts are the most successful way
to create parasocial relationships with her audience. You feel as if you are in the room with her
and her guests while you listen. There is no editing, the videos are longer, and she is as candid
as possible. Helbig has not tried to keep up with the currently fast paced new wave of YouTube
because she knows her audience and she is loyal to their relationships with her. She is an
internet celebrity for millennials. The parasocial relationships she builds are with people her
age, which makes a lot of sense. If 36 year old Helbig attempted to create new parasocial

relationships with teens and young adults, she would not be able to relate to them and therefore be unsuccessful. Helbig is incredibly smart, and she understands her audience and herself as a creator. She has stopped trying to be mainstream, and has clung onto authenticity. It has paid off as well considering her podcasts are immensely successful, getting thousands of views every episode.

Along with Helbig's fame, and her failures, I can't help but notice how limiting parasocial relationships were to creators back then. She could not break into mainstream media because the parasocial relationships she made were the reason for her fame in the first place, and she isn't alone. Many vlog style YouTubers in the early 2010's have tried to attempt television and movies and have failed. To list off a few: Shane Dawson, Colleen Ballinger (Miranda Sings), and Lucas Cruikshank (Fred). The lack of authenticity is what restricts these YouTubers' fame. It is unfortunate because that is the goal of many internet celebrities: get off of the internet and into Hollywood. However, in the past 5 years there have been a heavy shift within Youtube moving to become a mainstream form of entertainment and even surpassing cable. With this comes a space for YouTubers to break out into mainstream media and Hollywood unlike any creators like Helbig were able to accomplish.With the internet and social media becoming the main source of entertainment for almost all of Generation-Z, Hollywood began to take notice. People cut the cord on cable and started subscribing to monthly streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, HBOMax, and YouTube. YouTube created its own streaming service called YouTubeTV. Created in 2017, YouTubeTV included original series and other channels. A lot of the time these original series included actors who were YouTubers. This was when mainstream T.V. and social media entertainment tv started to blur lines. YouTubers were becoming actors and actors were starting to make YouTube videos or create social media accounts like TikTok to help their careers. Cable was out, Internet T.V. was in. The internet became the new Hollywood.

An example of this phenomenon is the career of David Dobrik. David Dobrik is a 25 year old YouTuber with 18.3 Million Subscribers. He is infamously known to many as the "King of

YouTube". He started his channel in 2015 coming from Vine. He creates vlog style videos that Rolling Stones describes as "zipping around Los Angeles filming gross-out pranks, stunts, and lavish giveaways, resulting in an aesthetic that's a cross of *Jackass*, *Entourage*, and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*" (Dickson, 2021). His videos are semi-scripted and not necessarily parasocial. David does not talk into the camera, he talks from behind the camera. It is like you are watching a T.V show and his friends are the characters. This is how many of the new aged YouTubers are filming their videos. Because of this, it has become easy for people like Dobrik to transition to TV.

In the earlier years of YouTube, Hollywood wanted nothing to do with creators. There was a bold line between internet entertainment and cable/movies. People like Grace Helbig and old school YouTubers were not treated as serious professionals with their careers. A career on YouTube was very new and brands were not endorsing YouTubers yet. This creators want toattempt to break into mainstream media or Hollywood. Also, the term "influencer" did not exist yet. An influencer is someone who has received their fame from their notoriety on the internet. Some influencers are famous for a specific skill, but many are famous for simply being famous. Influencers make their money from influencer marketing which is "the art and science of engaging people who have influence on the Internet (Influencers) to spread the message of a brand and its target audience in the form of a sponsored content" (Bognar, Puljic,Kadezabek, 2019). The bigger your number is under your follower or subscriber count, the more brands want to work with you. A big portion of internet celebrities are influencers and make their money this way, Dobrik being one of them. David Dobrik is making millions of dollars from independent sponsorships and advertisements, he would never even need to make it to Hollywood to be successful. However, Hollywood feels they need people like Dobrik to stay relevant to the younger generation.

It appears that the Internet and the culture of Generation-Z are always two steps ahead of Hollywood. This is why they seek out people like Dobrik, to help them catch up with the fast paced success of the Internet. Hollywood has hired Dobrik to host T.V shows like *Discovering*

David Dobrik on DiscoveryTV and Talent show *America's Most Musical Family* on Nickelodeon. Not only did he star in these shows, but they were successful. Dobrik starring in these T.V shows work because he is being himself. He is not acting, it is not very scripted, it is David Dobrik playing the same David Dobrik you watch every week on YouTube. It's ironic because, as I discussed earlier, the reason Helbig could not break into Hollywood was because they would let her play herself. I believe people like Helbig were living in the wrong place at the wrong time. During her era, Hollywood would try to turn YouTubers into actors. Now, it is the other way around. The industry understands why YouTubers are so popular. Their fans feel they can create bonds and relationships with them, which creates an attachment. Now, we see famous actors, singers, comedians, etc, making YouTube accounts to reach a bigger audience. If Internet entertainment established faster and Hollywood was caught up with the success of the Internet earlier, people like Helbig would have had a chance the same way Dobrik does. Helbig lived in a time when Hollywood didn't want to be the Internet and they prided themselves on that. Helbig had to try to adapt to Hollywood standards which ripped away her charm and caused her to fail. Now, people want Dobrik to be as himself as possible. They want to recreate the success of Dobrik's YouTube videos on TV.

The main takeaway of this assessment on the Internet is how influential parasocial relationships are. Parasocial relationships have changed the dynamic of the internet forever. It has made the internet a place for human beings to feel connection, to imitate relationships and stimulate emotions that they may be lacking in reality. Creating bonds is all that humans really want at the end of the day and it has been translated onto the Internet. It shows how prevalent the Internet has become in our environment, as real relationships have been imitated. However, you have to ask what parasocial relationships are doing to us, to our social skills, to how we form relationships. Is it broadening our horizons to a new definition of what relationships and communities look like? Or, it is forcing humans to lack real life skills. As we grow into era after era of the internet, the definition of relationships is going to change. It is up to us to use this power to create meaningful connections, to not forget the importance of relationships in real life, living in a digital world.

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Tiger King: A Case Study in Environmental Media Representation and Effects
Ashley White

The relationship between the environmental issue of conservation and the effects of mass media productions is worth exploring. Specifically, the following interrelated questions will be addressed. The first question (Q1) concerns the medium of documentaries. Stylistically speaking, does *Tiger King* perpetuate or disrupt existing models of documentary narrative and cinematography? The second question (Q2), instead, addresses public perceptions. To what extent did *Tiger King* affect the ways in which we view tiger farms, private zoos, and, overall, private ownership of endangered animals? The method which will be used to answer these questions is a critical viewing of the series which attempts to capture relevant narrative and stylistic elements.

Big cats are no strangers to media attention. Whether it is nature documentaries, Hollywood films, or child-friendly commercials, these animals have been in the public spotlight endlessly. Despite this, tiger populations have dramatically fallen over the last century. Over 50% of their species has dropped over the past three generations. Of the over 100,000 recorded tigers at the beginning of the 20th century, a meager 2,500 mature breeding individuals remain. These numbers are stark compared to the 5,000-7,000 recorded in the 1990s. Tigers were originally classified into nine subspecies. Three of these are extinct as of 2003 (the Javan, Caspian, and Bali tigers) while the South-China subspecies is believed to no longer exist in the wild as of 2007 (meaning it is possibly extinct as well). Five subspecies remain (the Bengal, Indochinese, Sumatran, Siberian, and Malayan) and, as of 2007, they are all listed as endangered. The situation for the Malayan and Sumatran is particularly troubling, as they are listed as critically endangered (Williamson, 2008, p. 7). Tigers today remain threatened by elements such as expanding human populations (which causes conflict with the locals), habitat loss and fragmentation, lack of prey, commercial poaching and trade, and, perhaps most importantly, lack of law enforcement (p. 8).

Estimates report that there are approximately 5,000 tigers living in captivity in the United

States. That being said, numbers vary between sources, and, overall, the exact number is impossible to know. One thing is clear, however: there are more tigers living in captivity in the U.S than tigers living free in the wild. Their captive population can be divided into four categories: tigers in AZA-accredited zoos, tigers in animal sanctuaries, tigers held by USDA permit holders, and tigers kept by private collectors (Williamson, 2008, p. 17). Of these 5000 tigers, only about 6% reside in zoos and other accredited facilities. The rest are under private ownership under varying levels of state regulation (creating grounds for illegal activity, trade, and breeding; "More Tigers in American Backyards", 2014, para. 4). Since the endangerment of this species, the US has implemented several legislative acts. Some of these include the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), and the Captive Wildlife Safety Act (CWSA; Williamson and Henry, 2008, p. 11-12). Despite this, the popular docu-series *Tiger King* makes it clear that we are not doing enough.

In March of 2020, Netflix released the true-crime mini docu-series *Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem, and Madness*. The documentary quickly became one of Netflix's most successful series. In its first 10 days, approximately 34.3 million users logged in to view the documentary. It was the platform's most successful series for two weeks straight, scoring 92% on Rotten Tomatoes and holding an 88% audience score (Clark, 2020). The reason for its success is still unknown. This documentary, with its cast of unlikeable characters, is the opposite of a feel-good show. Some believe it benefitted from a "perfect storm". Since it was released when stay-at-home mandates in 2020 were at their prime during the COVID-19 pandemic, many found themselves cocooned at home with a Netflix subscription and not much else to do. According to Dan Fienberg of *The Hollywood Reporter*, "'*Tiger King*' is a series that viewers, especially quarantined viewers who might be feeling a little caged themselves, will tear into" (para. 6).

Tiger King focuses on individuals involved, in some form or capacity, with exotic animals. The series mainly follows the antagonistic relationship between Joseph Maldonado-Passage, who otherwise goes by "Joe Exotic", and animal rights activist Carol Baskin. The show also features other eccentric characters. These include "Doc Antle" (Mahamayavi Bhagavan Antle), the

owner of a private zoo in South Carolina. Throughout the documentary, he provides his perspective on the events that took place between Exotic and Baskin. Kelci "Saff" Saffery, a staff member at Exotic's zoo, is best known for nearly getting her arm ripped off by one of the tigers, an injury that resulted in amputation. While Jeff Lowe is the man who eventually goes on to become Exotic's mentor and take over his zoo (*Tiger King*).

Joe Exotic, in the meantime, is a unique character himself. A gay, polyamorous tiger-loving gun-shooting conservative only partially conveys the essence of the self-proclaimed "Tiger King". He is the former owner of G.W. Zoo, an animal park featuring exotic animals. The main attraction, however, is his tigers. In episode one, he mentions that over the course of 16 years, he had managed to obtain 227 tigers. Carol Baskin, on the other hand, owns an animal sanctuary in Florida and is an extravagant advocate against animal captivity. Her passion for animals started young, and she now wears and decorates her home with anything tiger or leopard print. She criticizes private zoos for their exploitation and harm to animals. Her advocacy became particularly intense against Joe Exotic and his zoo. Thus, a fierce rivalry is born. With the help of her followers, Baskin stages protests and boycotts against events in which the controversial *Tiger King* is involved. Exotic, on the other hand, produces scandalous podcasts and videos depicting himself performing violent acts and threatening Baskin. In one instance, he records a video shooting and blowing up a mannequin he had given her name (*Tiger King*). Viewers are shown their escalating rivalry through the years. The series ultimately ends with Exotic being sentenced to 22 years in prison after a failed murder-for-hire against Baskin (Kacala, 2020). The series is riddled with complicated (and controversial) plot points and side stories including rivalries, suicide, death, and violence, to name a few. Immediately, viewers find that what was meant to be a show about tigers instead seems to push them to the sidelines. Their fate is inconsequential when compared to the shocking set of characters and events. Thus, we must ask ourselves if this was ever meant to be a show about tigers at all.

The production of nature documentaries fits within an industry driven by money. As such, the framing of such films is typically driven by profit and ratings. In other words, there is a

need to "seek to produce the affects perceived to guarantee viewer numbers on commercial networks" (Sullivan, 2016, p. 753). The "Money Shot" is a cinematographic tendency toward extreme imagery with the intention of capturing the audience's attention with the unsettling side effect of de-emphasizing relationships with the very nature they seek to portray (p. 750). It is "the image or sequence of images that will generate the heart-stopping moment… with rarity, sensational behavior, and otherwise un(fore)seen views and activities" (p. 754). In emphasizing this spectacular, "real" nature, however, nature documentaries shift reality elsewhere, to a remote and inaccessible location severing the connections between people and nature. This issue is further worsened by nature documentaries' need to seek viewer approval, resulting in an ever-escalating creation of the "money shot". Arguably, this tendency can be observed in *Tiger King* as well. Throughout the seven-episode-long series, the portrayal of tigers fits the following two "money shot" categories: "Violent Creatures" and "Objects for Entertainment Purposes".

Tigers are portrayed as "violent" throughout the series. This is especially true in the first two episodes when we are becoming acquainted with Joe Exotic and the G.W. Zoo. The self-proclaimed "Tiger King" is often seen interacting with tigers both in and out of their cage. In these instances, the tigers demonstrate an aggressive attitude. This takes place in the form of growling as well as attempting to attack Exotic and his staff. These moments demand that Exotic, representing all men, must exert his dominion over his tigers, who become representative of the natural landscape as a whole. The theme of man dominating nature is common in nature documentaries featuring the "money shot". According to Sullivan, "excitement and arousal [are generated] by "taming" and eroticizing nature, emphasizing power over, rather than mutuality with, natures-beyond-human" (2016, p. 754). Ironically, this taming of nature appears to contradict claims by Joe Exotic in which he expressed that he shared "strong emotional bonds" with his animals.

Beyond this, the representation of captive tigers as aggressive serves to block empathetic connections. This becomes emblematic in episode one when staff member "Saff" is involved in

an incident in which she is attacked by a tiger. After being transported to a hospital, she was informed that she could either face years of reconstructive surgery on the injured arm or amputate it. She chose the latter (*Tiger King*). Despite taking place years prior to the documentary, footage from the incident is presented in the series along with news reports and interviews from the time of the attack. The focus becomes one on how animals, in this case tigers, can switch between a docile demeanor and one of pure chaos. The result becomes one that distances viewers from the animals they are meant to emphasize with in the first place.

Tiger representation within the docu-series can also be categorized as one in which they are "Objects for Entertainment Purposes". This takes place in different forms, including: Tigers as a visual commodity, tigers as sexual creatures, and tigers as boosting status and/or ego. Within *Tiger King*, the portrayal of tigers as objectual commodities can be observed in various ways. First, many of the interviews featured Joe Exotic (or other characters such as Doc Antle and Jeff Lowe), holding tiger cubs or standing in front of a cage (*Tiger King*). In these instances, the captive tigers become objects to simply gaze upon, satisfying viewer desire for visual consumption. Tigers also become objectified in the series' discussion of cub breeding and cub petting. This portrayal becomes problematic as the documentary fails to adequately address these issues. Tigers are also portrayed in a sexualized manner. This is found when viewers are introduced to Doc Antle and his zoo in South Carolina. There, female employees are scantily dressed and paired with the tigers, associating sex with exotic animals. Joe Exotic makes this connection explicit, referring to one of his animals as his "sexy tiger". This eroticizing of wildlife even goes as far as the "Tiger Selfie", a phenomenon explored in the documentary. The "Tiger Selfie" entails a photograph of an individual with a tiger, whether that be a cub one has paid to visit at a private zoo or a poached one from a hunting trip. This style of photography has been observed on dating apps such as Tinder and OkCupid. It is problematic as tiger selfies essentially involve an animal being "caged, dominated, and tied down or drugged" (Bonos, 2017, para. 3). Finally, the possession and utilization of tigers is portrayed as boosting status and/or ego. When the documentary begins, one of the first things that Joe Exotic mentions is the number of tigers he owns. His relationship with these animals is all-encompassing, as tigers

are present in every aspect of his life and social persona. From calling himself the "Tiger King",

to featuring tigers in his charity foundation events and his music videos, Joe Exotic's identity is

intimately tied to wild animals. So is the case for Jeff Lowe. Exotic, a paranoid man by nature,

becomes more at ease with his mentor after learning that Lowe is not only a man with a certain

(supposed) financial influence, but one who uses his power to stage extravagant parties with

tigers. As Baskin herself says, "It's all about 'look at me doing this or doing that with a tiger', it's

all about elevating their status" (*Tiger King*).

Documentaries focusing on nature and wildlife often lack narratives aimed at spurring

positive change. As mentioned above, nature documentaries are often geared toward ratings

and profit (Sullivan, 2016). As such, filmmakers often employ a neutral stance, one devoid of

evaluative judgment or critique for the subject they portray. Major networks, therefore, tend to

avoid 'controversial' topics or those which could turn viewers away. Preference, overall, is

afforded to potential profit over positive environmental messaging. Although this trend is

shifting (Blackfish, which will be discussed below, is an example of this), it appears that *Tiger*

King is not making any radical changes to this framework. The docu-series is initially framed as

if for the benefit of tigers. It opens with news reports and statistics about the number of

captive tigers in the US compared to free ones in the wild. The viewers, to an extent, are led to

believe that they are about to view a series focused on the plight of captive tigers. One which

will address questions such as why there are so many tigers in the U.S. and why this is such a

big deal. Instead, as quickly as tigers are mentioned, they are dismissed in favor of the

outrageous antics of Joe Exotic. From this point onwards, the documentary only makes subtle

inferential judgments about his activities and his ownership of tigers.

One such case in which a neutral stance can be observed is in the series' discussion of

cub breeding and cub petting. Cub breeding is a dangerous activity that many private zoos

partake in. This includes G.W. Zoo, where Joe Exotic reveals that a tiger cub can be sold for over

$2,000. Exotic's first husband, furthermore, reveals that during his time at the zoo, he helped

sell and drive tiger cubs in at least 38 states. When Exotic began facing financial troubles, he

reportedly claimed he would just sell "a bunch of tigers" (Brulliard, 2019, para. 7). Cub petting, on the other hand, is criticized because of its harm to tigers for several reasons. First, as a practice, it is only profitable for a short period of time. Although cub petting is not illegal, the U.S Agriculture Department only allows it for tiger cubs between 4 to 12 weeks (para. 13). Arguably, this incentivizes zoos to continue breeding cubs which, after having outgrown their value, can be sold for as high as $5,000 (para. 15). Furthermore, cub petting itself is a very stressful activity for neonatal tigers. Ripped away from their mothers, the cubs find themselves surrounded by dozens of potential predators while being passed around like objects. Camera flashes, loud noises, and this intense activity frighten the animals. All in the name of entertainment. Cub petting has been known to result in injury to both the tigers and the people who attempt to pet them. Furthermore, the cubs likely receive an inadequate diet and veterinary care (Bender, 2020, para. 16). Joe Exotic and Doc Antle defend this practice by citing its potential educational value. Exotic believes that, by allowing the public to personally interact with tigers, he will be able to capture their attention and direct it towards saving the rainforest. Doc Antle, on the other hand, is more honest about his intentions. By offering close-up experiences, he believes, the public will end up "Opening their hearts and their wallets for us to do our conservation work" (*Tiger King*). The financial motive is clear. Although *Tiger King* certainly does not portray the intentions of Joe Exotic and Doc Antle as trustworthy, it still does little to educate the public about the issue of cub breeding and petting. The only dissenting voice is that of Carol Baskin. However, her portrayal as a potentially murderous woman does little to engage the audience in her activism. According to Bender, "Tiger King missed a clear opportunity to highlight the real tragedy here which is the careless handling and disposal of tiger cubs by the likes of Joe Exotic" (2020, para. 12). Overall, due to the documentary's neutral stance, it lacks a substantial "call to action" that could have been beneficial for tigers.

The framing of the docu-series plays a key role in the documentary's narrative. Framing involves the processes of selection and elevation to salience of some aspects of reality while others are omitted (Entman, 2007, p. 52). Reviewing *Tiger King* allowed the identification of

three primary frames: the humanization of Joe Exotic, the corruption of Carol Baskin, and the hostility of tigers.

The first frame, that of the humanization of Joe Exotic, is particularly intense in the first two episodes of the series. As a frame, it gradually fades away through the series, becoming thinner over episodes 4-5 and almost nonexistent in the last two episodes (*Tiger King*). In what might be considered an attempt to explore the psyche of Joe Exotic, two fundamental moments in his life are explored. First, he addresses his gay identity and his coming out. This moment in his life led to familial disapproval and a failed suicide attempt. After this, he moved to Florida, where a friend worked at a safari park and occasionally brought home lion cubs. This, according to Exotic is when his passion for animals began. The second humanizing story is that of the loss of his brother. After his brother passed away because of a drunk driving incident, Exotic went on to found G.W. Zoo in his honor. In framing Joe Exotic through a humanizing lens, the documentary justifies (or, at least, rationalizes) his actions. What is an otherwise unlikeable character earns, if not temporarily, our sympathy. *Tiger King* elevates these episodes to salience while omitting the full extent of Exotic's abuse towards the animals he claims to care for. This framing becomes somewhat inverted by the end of the series, as Exotic's paranoia takes over and he becomes increasingly erratic. By the end of the series, viewers can not help but scoff when he complains about being locked up in a cage.

The second frame, that of the corruption of Carol Baskin, is revealed in episode three. This episode focuses on the disappearance of Jack Donald Lewis, Baskin's second husband. The series heavily speculates that the animal advocate played a nefarious role in Lewis' disappearance. Exotic and Antle, of course, eagerly echo baseless claims that she fed him to her tigers (*Tiger King*). This side plot serves to discredit Baskin's image and her advocacy work. The latter is particularly important. As the main voice opposing animal exploitation, this framing becomes detrimental not only to Baskin but to the animals she seeks to protect. The fact that, of all characters, the filmmakers decided to dedicate an episode to a conspiracy theory with little relevance to tigers is troubling. For the rest of the series, Baskin is framed as an unreliable

character. Although her intentions may be pure, the looming ideation of this woman as a murderer prevails. The conspiracy is, therefore, elevated to salience while her advocacy work is pushed to the sidelines.

Finally, the hostility of tigers is yet another frame within the documentary. The exotic animal is almost constantly framed as an aggressive beast. Unsurprisingly, the infamous incident involving "Saff" was central in the earlier part of the series. Furthermore, continuous references are made to incidents in which wild animals, particularly tigers, escaped their enclosures and caused havoc. An example of this is the reference to the escape of 50 exotic animals in Zanesville, Ohio. The animals were privately owned by a man who, one day, decided to set them loose. Of the 50 animals, 18 were tigers. The documentary explores the chaos that ensued after the animals escaped, which resulted in the confirmed death of 47 animals and the supposed one of the last three. Although the incident is framed as one of human negligence, it also stresses the danger these animals pose to the public in an unsympathetic tone. To some extent, however, tigers are also given an empathetic frame. Compassion is invoked, for example, when viewers learn that Joe Exotic struggles to feed his animals, resorting to roadkill just to get by (*Tiger King*). This representation as victims, however, is only subtly conveyed. It becomes especially problematic as the plight of the tiger is conveyed as a necessary sacrifice. In this sense, we can speak of a "sacrificial species". Tigers, and especially tiger cubs, must suffer so that people may derive entertainment value, selfies, objectual gratification, and financial gain. Despite this, with no one else to identify with, it seems that the only characters viewers are meant to empathize with are the tigers.

Given the popularity of *Tiger King*, public perception can be investigated to determine whether viewing the series has the potential for a "Tiger King Effect". The "Tiger King Effect" can be defined as "an observable cultural change, in which consumption of the *Tiger King* series leads to shifts in public perception of how captive big cats are to be managed" (Bennett and Johnson, 2021, p. 126). Such a shift has the potential for agencies involved with big cats to "adapt their operations to meet public expectations" and government agencies to change

legislation regarding big cat ownership (p. 126). Given the novelty of the docu-series, a complete "Tiger King Effect" is not yet entirely observable. What can be questioned, however, is public perception, media response, and legislative change.

Public perception shows that viewers had a mostly positive response after viewing the series. Most expressed positive sentiments (31%), some were ambiguous (27%), while others expressed negative opinions (13%). These sentiments, however, often pertain to the shocking and eccentric events displayed on screen (p. 132). Media response, instead, shows that most news articles centered around discussions of the characters (94%). Of these articles, about half (45%) discuss character relationships with the animals portrayed (p. 133). Finally, legislation that has been enacted since the airing of the show includes the Big Cat Safety Act. Introduced in early 2019 to the U.S. House of Representatives, the act only gained traction after the premiere of the infamous docu-series. It eventually passed in December of 2020. The act serves to limit private ownership of big cats in the U.S., such as the tigers portrayed on *Tiger King*. It will also prevent private zoos from being able to allow physical contact between the public and animals, such as cub petting (p. 137). While the passing of this piece of legislation can not be solely attributed to *Tiger King*, it is possible to speculate that this series renewed interest in the bill. Other changes that have been brought about since the airing of the series include the removal of Joe Exotic's tigers from the G.W. Zoo to an animal sanctuary in Colorado (Mitchell, 2021, para. 8).

The extent to which *Tiger King* influenced interest in tiger captivity in the U.S. may be comparable to the documentary *Blackfish*. The 2013 documentary tells the story of Tilikum, a captive orca kept at Florida's SeaWorld Theme Park. In February of 2010, Tilikum dragged animal trainer Dawn Brancheau underwater, resulting in her death. The documentary attempts to explain how such an event might have taken place, sparking intense criticism against SeaWorld for its practices of animal captivity (Brammer, 2015, p. 73*). Blackfish* has become emblematic because of its ability to spur public interest and promote positive environmental change. According to Boissat and Veríssimo, nature documentaries may create emotional

bonds capable of prompting environmentally friendly behaviors and improving knowledgeability. They have also been related to enhancing pro-environmental behavior. (2021, para. 2). *Blackfish*'s framing appears to adopt a cinematographic narrative style opposite to that employed in 2020's *TigerKing*. The first opens with the tragic news report of Dawn Brancheau's death at the hands (or fins) of Tilikum. The orca, therefore, is portrayed as both the "protagonist and antagonist of the documentary, presented as a sympathetic character despite having been involved in three human fatalities" (para. 6). The documentary then transitions to the issue of orca captivity. It portrays the animals, first and foremost Tilikum, as victims of their circumstances and not as chaotic and untamable wildlife. *Tiger King*, on the other hand, opens with a misleading introduction. It begins by showing clips from news reports on the endangerment of tigers and their captivity in the U.S. It then, however, shifts to the main protagonist and antagonist of the documentary, Joe Exotic. From this point onwards, the exotic wildlife that initially captured the viewer's attention is pushed to the side. As Bennett and Johnson claim, "Blackfish strictly focused on the animal welfare issue (i.e., the animal's perspective), while *Tiger King* focused on the human characters" (i.e., followed the human narratives; 2021, p. 126). Therefore although both documentaries prompted considerable social media response, the "*Tiger King* Effect" may not be as powerful as the "Blackfish Effect" because of their differences in framing.

Given the points explored above, it is possible to answer Q1 (Does *Tiger King* perpetuate or disrupt existing models of documentary narrative and cinematography?). The docu-series employs money-shots in the form of violence and objectification. Money-shots have long been a traditional element in films depicting nature. Therefore, *Tiger King* does not disrupt this cinematographic model. Furthermore, the series employs the use of a neutral stance, one with no explicit form of judgment or critique towards any of the human characters or their behaviors. In this, the documentary glosses over the opportunity to shed light on issues prominently displayed on the show. It lacks a significant "call to action". Given the underlying financial motivation, conventional nature documentaries typically stray from providing opinionated perspectives. As such, again *Tiger King* does not appear to be disruptive. Finally,

the docu-series presents frames that depict Joe Exotic in a somewhat positive light, while Carol Baskin and the tigers are given more of a negative characterization. These frames, although conveying inferential judgment, do little to improve the situation of the tigers. In this, again, *Tiger King* does not appear to be making disruptive pushes toward environmental change.

Given the above-mentioned changes and effects in public perception, it also becomes possible to provide an answer to Q2 (To what extent did *Tiger King* affect the ways in which we view tiger farms, private zoos, and, overall, private ownership of endangered animals?). Although it may be too soon to talk about a definite "Tiger King Effect", changes in public perception, media response, and legislation indicate that we may be heading in a positive direction. Of particular interest is the timing of the passing of the Big Cat Safety Act, which is speculated to have gained traction since the airing of the documentary. A "*Tiger King* Effect", however, may be hindered by the set of narrative, cinematographic, and framing tactics employed in the series. Differences between *Tiger King*'s emphasis on human-centered perspectives and *Blackfish*'s animal-centered perspectives provide insight into public response. Overall, this can be summed up by affirming that *Tiger King* has, to an extent, changed the way we understand tiger captivity in the U.S.

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The Bipartisan Media Strategy: How Three Ideologically Different Candidates Found Success

Madeline Graf

I. Introduction

What do Pete Buttigieg, Donald Trump and Barack Obama have in common? At first glance, one would assume the only thread between these three dramatically different candidates is the fact that they were not established political figures before they all ran for president, with only two of them successfully winning the election. However looking closer, the three candidates had strikingly similar media strategies- maximum exposure, a term that arose with the new world of digital technology. In the days of print media, politicians were seen as untouchable, largerthan-life, great leaders, due to the controlled privacy of a non-electronic environment. Since the days of television and social media domination, the relationship between a politician and the public has become substantially more interconnected. Each of these candidates utilized the shift in the political sphere to their advantage. First-time presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, billionaire real-estate mogul Donald Trump and historic first Black candidate to be nominated on a major party ticket Barack Obama, all three had an uphill battle to the finish line. By taking advantage of all of the media platforms at their disposal, each candidate was able to establish themselves in the political world.

II. Theoretical Framework

Using Meyrowitz application of Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* these presidential candidates were able to present both their 'front region 'and 'back region ' behaviors through both social media and televised appearances. Meaning, in 'front region ' behavior the individual "is in the presence of a given audience and he plays out a relatively ideal notion of a social role" (Meyrowitz, 1977, p. 134), whereas in the 'back regions 'the "individual and those who share his performance relax, discuss strategies, and analyze front region occurrences" (Meyrowitz, 1977, p. 134). These combined create a social performance, a "selected display of behavior which cannot go on continuously and which must, to some extent, consciously or unconsciously, be planned and rehearsed" (Meyrowitz, 1977, p. 134). As a result of the high volume of media exposure in todays political age, politicians are now revealing both

traditionally front region and traditionally back region activities to present a 'middle region ' image through television and radio (Meyrowitz, 1977, p. 135). For some politicians, such as Richard Nixon, this 'middle region 'style was their downfall. One of the first presidents to be a victim of 'middle region 'politics, Nixon's performance was questioned during the Watergate scandal and its aftermath. Nixon was not prepared for the age of electronic media and attempted to maintain the old style great leader performance that each president before him had done. As a result of this, the public became aware of the inconsistencies between his front and back region behaviors. Since President Nixon, politicians have learned and adapted to the new political environment and began using it to their advantage.

III. Pete Buttigieg

Pete Buttigieg, a 'political stranger 'in the 2020 Presidential election, had an edge over his opponents due to his newcomer status. He was a mayor of a small town in Indiana, had no national political experience, was the youngest candidate in the race, and the first openly gay presidential candidate. Even though he had very low-name recognition in the election, Buttigieg and his media team the upper hand. He was starting essentially at the bottom, which meant he had no where to go but up. Before his candidacy, Buttigieg and his husband Chasten already had a significant following on Twitter, which only grew after he announced his official presidential bid. Through Buttigieg and his husbands tweets, the public felt as though they knew them.

Tweeting about both the election and his policies as well as his husband, family and personal life, Buttigieg was able to present his 'middle region 'in an effective way (Figure 1). As with other candidates who use social media platforms, "there's something so uniting about a politician engaging in candid, personalized discussions and sharing their unfiltered selves on social media" (Gallucci, 2019). Buttigieg wasn't only presenting himself through social media however, he was also using television appearances to present himself as the personable, charismatic candidate that he is.

Figure 1

Pete Buttigieg 'Middle Region' Style Tweets

Source: Twitter, https://twitter.com/PeteButtigieg

Pete Buttigieg, and his communication strategist Lis Smith, knew that for a low-name

recognition candidate the need for a good story line is of the utmost importance. In today's era,

"politics has become pop culture, and the formerly dull mechanisms of government and the

people who understand them are either basking in odd new categories of fame or grasping to

maintain relevance" (Nouvelage, 2020). In response to this campaigns have "moved from

messaging to content creation" (Nouvelage, 2020). Smith's strategy to combat this change was

by "aggressively saying 'yes 'to media invitations" (Yglesias, 2019) and "not turning [their] noses

up at non-traditional outlets" (Yglesias, 2019). When journalists were unable to book some of

the better-known candidates, they would turn to Buttigieg because "Mayor Pete said yes"

(Yglesias, 2019). Within months, he went from an unknown, small town mayor to a political

figure who was everywhere at once.

With appearances on Preet Bharara's podcast, *The Ezra Klein Show*, Medhi Hasan's podcast *Deconstructed*, John Hardwood's CNBC show, and even the *Late Show* and *The Ellen Show* (Appendix A); if you were following the election, "then everywhere you look, you see Pete Buttigieg" (Yglesias, 2019). For candidates like Buttigieg, who were not receiving as much coverage from mainstream news channels, it was crucial to "schedule appearances on programs not typically associated with national political news" (Iyengar, 2007), and more importantly, make the most out of every opportunity. This strategy could easily backfire, however for Pete it was "obvious that the high level of media exposure [was] central to his rise in the polls" (Yglesias, 2019). In the age of media domination in politics, "interpersonal communication and media-centered campaigns are viewed as complementary channels for information and influence to flow from the elite to the mass public" (Pan, Shen, Paek & Sun, 2006, p. 317). This is exactly what Buttigieg and his media team were trying to control.

The success of political campaigns have become increasingly dependent on media coverage. Political campaigns are "not a steady, uniform stream of equally weighted pieces of information from candidates to voters" (Hardy & Scheufele, 2009, p. 91), and "some pieces of information matter more than others and some news items are presented differently than others" (Hardy & Scheufele, 2009, p. 91). Not all candidates and issues get equal news coverage, which makes the non-traditional outlets crucial for those candidates who need more media exposure. For Buttigieg, through his social media and these informal political interviews through nontraditional channels, Buttigieg was able to control his narrative and present himself as the charismatic, young, fresh-faced candidate, compared to the plethora of traditional baby-boomer candidates he was running against. This strategy is not only reserved for Democratic candidates. Republican nominee Donald Trump also appeared to be 'everywhere at once,' utilizing the same strategy as Buttigieg in a way that benefitted his persona.

IV. Donald Trump

President Donald Trump has always had a love-hate relationship with the media, using both traditional and non-traditional outlets to promote himself. Despite one of the most unpredictable candidates, his media presence remained consistent. Trump is infamous for his

use of Twitter and his tumultuous relationship with CNN. Trump's use of Twitter is unprecedented for a presidential candidate, posting at least 10 tweets per day, with a majority of them being controversial. However despite the content of the tweets, it was his constant presence that was of importance. In the digital age of politics, everyone is "always looking for the freshest piece of news and content, the latest tweet or post that will go viral and get people talking about it" (Jhakal, 2020). By keeping a continuous flow of messages, Trump was able to resonate with his supporters online in an accessible way.

 Like Buttigieg, Trump also was able to present his 'middle region 'through his twitter presence (Figure 2). His tweets, controversy and all, were written by Trump himself, portraying his "real voice behind the message" (Jhakal, 2020), which "plays into his audience who believe he is an authentic addition to the political process" (Jhakal, 2020). Due to the lack of interpersonal connection that comes with any social media platform, "people are looking for the humanity behind digital content" (Jhakal, 2020). Twitter has become a staple in politics, as a prominent digital version of word-of-mouth (WOM) communication.

Figure 2

Donald Trump 'Middle Region' Style Tweets

Source: Twitter, @realDonaldTrump (Note: account since been banned)

Political communication research has shown that "something as seemingly simple as WOM can be more persuasive on people's buying decisions and political actions than expensive advertisements or mass media coverage" (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012, p. 65). For Trump, his Twitter presence had a significant impact on his campaign and "was often at the center of Trump's ability to generate free media" (Francia, 2018). This free media exposure "allowed Trump to remain in the public eye" (Francia, 2018), and "to mitigate many of the disadvantages that pundits had pointed to earlier during the election" (Francia, 2018). This seemly excessive use of Twitter could either help or hinder any campaign, and in Trump's case it went both ways. For his supporters, it gave them an opportunity to interact with him online and he was given a platform to present his authenticity; on the other hand, for his adversaries his overabundance

of tweets added fuel to the fire. Either way, Trump's media presence contributed to his goal- he was being talked about.
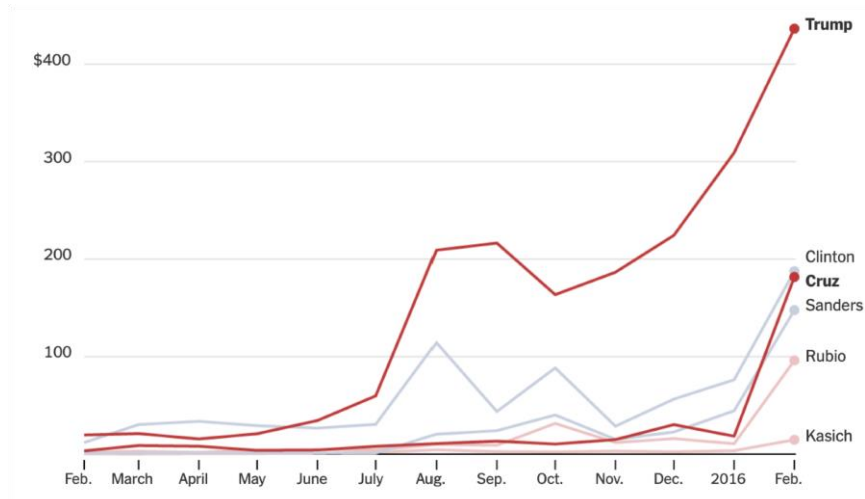
 As a result of his social media use, Donald Trump was able to generate significant news coverage. Throughout Trump's campaign and subsequent presidency, his war against mainstream media- specifically CNN- turned into a campaign platform. Despite his distaste for CNN and quote-on-quote 'fake news '(the quotes are due to the fact that Trump had a different definition of fake news than the rest of the world), Trump still willingly embraced every media platform there was to offer. His Twitter posts "were often deliberately designed to entice journalists with controversial statements intended to provoke conflict with an opponent" (Francia, 2018). By tweeting blatant statements, whether they're about wedge issues, insults towards another candidate, or just Trump's personal thoughts, every post brought him more attention.

This is "a strategy for generating free media that candidates have used in speeches and press releases well before the dawn of social media" (Francia, 2018). This strategy, in combination with the use of Twitter, led to unparalleled amounts of unpaid media (Figure 3). In the 2016 election, Trump "earned close to $2 billion worth of media attention" (Confessore & Yourish, 2016), which is "about twice the all in price of the most expensive presidential campaigns in history" (Confessore & Yourish, 2016). Unlike Buttigieg, who had to resort to untraditional forms of media coverage, Donald Trump received an unprecedented amount of free mainstream media exposure. Yet similarly to Buttigieg, Trump never said no to an opportunity that would increase his public attention.

Figure 3

2016 Election Monthly Earned Media (In Millions)

Source: Confessore, N., & Yourish, K. (2016, March 15). $2 Billion Worth of Free Media for Donald Trump. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/16/upshot/measuringdonald-trumps-mammoth-advantage-in-free-media.html

V. Barack Obama

One of the first candidates to use this strategy of social media and high-volume media exposure in a presidential race was Barack Obama. In 2007, Obama was a low-name recognition senator running against well-established politicians like Democrat Hillary Clinton in the primary and subsequently Republican John McCain in the general election. Obama was the first candidate to utilize social media to his advantage, and his campaigns "proclivity to online advocacy [was] a major reason for his victory" (Aaker & Chang, 2009). He has been referred to as the "first social-media president" (Bogost, 2017), as his was the first presidential administration to use platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram (Bogost, 2017). On his road to the White House, his campaign was "able to garner 5 million supporters on 15 different social networks ranging from Facebook to MySpace" (Aaker & Chang, 2009) and by November 2008, Obama "had approximately 2.5 million (some sources say as much as 3.2 million) Facebook supporters" (Aaker & Chang, 2009). In the 2000's, Twitter was still in its early days so Facebook was the dominant force of social networks.

While Obama was not the only candidate who had access to these tools, he "not only used them more effectively to organize, communicate, and fundraise, but also leveraged the tools to support its bottoms-up grassroots campaign strategy that tapped into the hearts of voters" (Aaker & Chang, 2009). This not only resulted in a historic presidential victory, but also "the legacy of what was widely regarded as one of the most effective Internet marketing plans in history- where social media and technology enabled the individual to activate and participate in a movement" (Aaker & Chang, 2009). For all of the social media use that led Obama to the White House, "the main work it did was to further establish the unquestioned utility and righteousness of digital communications technology in the modern era" (Bogost, 2017). What drew a great deal of supporters to Obama was his relationship with technology and that it "was so much like their own" (Bogost, 2017). While we have seen Buttigieg and Trump present their 'middle region 'style on Twitter, Obama was the catalyst of 'middle region 'politics on social media. From the first @POTUS tweet in history, to the famous hug, to his annual summer playlists (Figure 4), Barack Obama introduced the American presidency to the world of social media. Not only was Obama the "first social media president," he also made history as the first sitting president to

Figure 4

Barack Obama 'Middle Region' Style Tweets

Source: Twitter, https://twitter.com/POTUS44, https://twitter.com/BarackObama

ever appear on a late night talk show. While technically his first talk show appearance was as a presidential candidate in 2007 when he appeared on *The Ellen Show* (Appendix B) and "performed the requisite intro dance to Beyonc'és *Crazy in Love*" (Garcia, 2017), in 2009, he was the first presidential guest on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno. Over the near-decade of his presidency, Obama was "no stranger on the talk show circuit" (Garcia, 2017). With appearances on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, Jimmy Kimmel's *Celebrities Read Mean Tweets* segment, *Saturday Night Live*, Zach Galifinakis 'faux cable broadcast show *Between Two Ferns*, *The Colbert Report,* and countless others (Appendix B), Obama utilized these informal platforms to present his 'middle region 'relatability to the public.

In 2012, the Washington Free Beacon reported that President Obama and First Lady Michelle "have overtaken the Reagans as the most televised presidential couple in history" (Beard, 2012). Since his presidency, talk shows have become more of a staple in American politics, and a politicians "availability for talk shows has the potential to affect a vastly different audience, one that doesn't follow every development in the news with tremendous avidity" (D'Addario, 2016). Obama was a unique president in the way that he was "very gifted at using

the media both to entertain and to carry across his ideas" (D'Addario, 2016). His use of nontraditional media outlets like late night shows and podcasts gave him an edge towards the large mass of the public that doesn't follow traditional media sources.
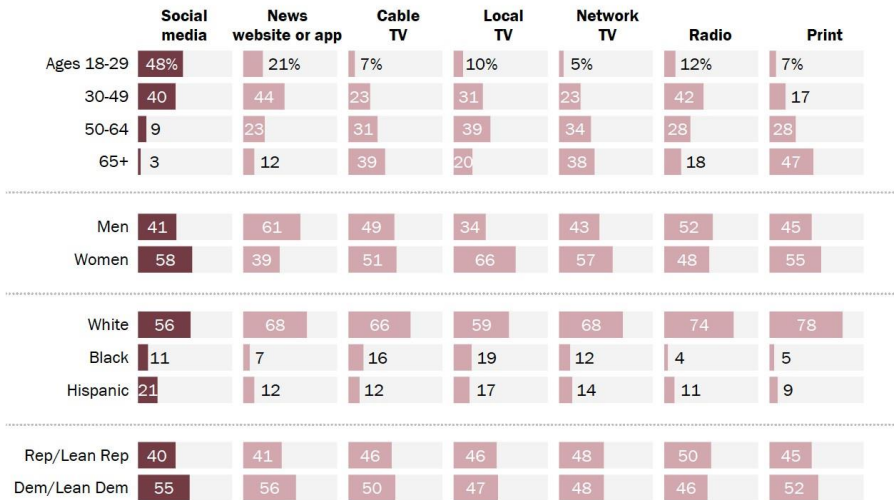
VI. Comparison

A comparable politician to Pete Buttigieg, who has been referred to as "the next Obama;" both candidates were charming, young, and charismatic, which made them the perfect TV personality. While being television worthy is not a presidential requirement, it has huge advantages for today's political environment. A candidates ability to present their 'middle region 'personality on screen can show the public that they are relatable and draw in supporters that may not have been following their campaigns. In contrast to Buttigieg and Obama's use of informal outlets, Donald Trump used mainstream media sources in a similar way. His frequent appearances on conventional news sources such as Fox News, NBC and CNN, created mass media exposure. Each of these three candidates utilized every possible televised media source to the point where they were everywhere at once.

The major thread tying these three very different politicians together was their use of social media. With the exception of a few other candidates, Buttigieg, Trump and Obama are three of the most popular politicians on social media, each with multi-million followers. Social media has become one of the top ways for people to get their political and election news (Figure 5), specifically those of ages 18-29 who account for nearly half of the voters in the United States (Mitchell, 2020). Through a range of social media platforms, Buttigieg, Trump, and Obama were able to control their image and message while interacting with the public. Their 'middle region ' performances on Twitter allowed their audience a sneak peak into their 'back region ' authenticity while also maintaining their 'front region 'behaviors that deem them 'presidential.'

Figure 5

Demographic of Where Americans Get Their Political News

Source; Pew Research Center. Mitchell, A. (2020, August 26). Demographics of Americans who get most of their political news from social media. https://www.journalism.org/2020/07/30/demographics-of-americans-who-get-most-oftheir-political-news-from-social-media/

	Social media	News website or app	Cable TV	Local TV	Network TV	Radio	Print
Ages 18-29	48%	21%	7%	10%	5%	12%	7%
30-49	40	44	23	31	23	42	17
50-64	9	23	31	39	34	28	28
65+	3	12	39	20	38	18	47
Men	41	61	49	34	43	52	45
Women	58	39	51	66	57	48	55
White	56	68	66	59	68	74	78
Black	11	7	16	19	12	4	5
Hispanic	21	12	12	17	14	11	9
Rep/Lean Rep	40	41	46	46	48	50	45
Dem/Lean Dem	55	56	50	47	48	46	52

VII. Conclusion

In the past century, the political environment has become unrecognizable to what it once was. The shift from print media, to early stages of electronic media, to social media, has broken down the barriers between a politician and the public— to the point where the American public has the illusion of a personal connection with these political figures. As a result of the mediacentered political sphere, politicians have had to learn and adapt over time in regards to presenting both their front and back region behaviors in a way that is favorable for them. The use of social media by these political leaders allowed for them to create a more authentic, accessible, and relatable image. For Donald Trump, his use of Twitter also generated unmatched levels of earned media exposure from mainstream news sources. On the other hand, for first-time presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg and two-term president Barack Obama, informal televised media outlets provided the perfect platform for their 'middle region 'style performances. They benefited from this type of media exposure due to the charismatic personalities and relatability of these two candidates.

So, to answer the initial question of what Pete Buttigieg, Donald Trump and Barack Obama have in common? They all used social media platforms to present themselves in the best fashion given their intended audience as well as maximizing their televised media exposure by accepting every opportunity that arose. These techniques contributed to establishing themselves within the political arena.

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media-2020-trump

Appendix A

Pete Buttigieg Appearances on Informal Televised Media Outlets

Figure 1

Pete Buttigieg on The Ellen Show

TheEllenShow. (2020, February 21). Pete Buttigieg on Unifying with Opponents to Defeat the

President. https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw9-foN05Yg&t=27s

Figure 2

Pete Buttigieg on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert

TheLateShow. (2020, February 07). Pete Buttigieg Is The First LGBT Person To Win Delegates In

Any Presidential Contest.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dl64qiGH5oY

Appendix B

Barack Obama Appearances on Informal Televised Media Outlets

Figure 1

Barack Obama on The Ellen Show

TheEllenShow. (2011, July 15). Ellen Meets President Obama.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1newgZ9DgXQ

Figure 2

Barack Obama on Late Night with Jimmy Fallon

Latenight. (2016, June 10). Thank You Notes with President Obama.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymGENUjIdIg

Figure 3

Barack Obama on Jimmy Kimmel Live's Celebrities Read Mean Tweets Segment

JimmyKimmelLive. (2015, March 12). Mean Tweets - President Obama Edition.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?

v=RDocnbkHjhI

Figure 4

Barack Obama on Saturday Night Live

SaturdayNightLive. (2013, October 09). The Clinton's Halloween Party - SNL.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?

v=Njyg0ZzfhyI

Figure 5

Barack Obama on Between Two Ferns with Zach Galifinakis

FunnyorDie. (2014, March 13). President Barack Obama: Between Two Ferns with Zach

Galifianakis. https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnW3xkHxIEQ

Figure 6

Barack Obama on The Colbert Report

ComedyCentral. (2014, December 09). The Colbert Report - President Obama Delivers The

Decree. https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=95KTrtzOY-g

TikTok: A New Source of Labor

Max Oxendine

TikTok is a social media platform that was released in Fall of 2016. This app originated in China under the name Musical.ly until the two merged in 2017 and started to become increasingly popular. An article published by Savic, M. states, "TikTok, formerly known as Musical.ly, rose to prominence as a lip-syncing platform that allowed users to create videos singing over existing popular songs. After its acquisition by Chinese tech giant Byte Dance, in 2017, TikTok cemented its position as a global short-video leader by embedding platform features that enable users to emulate, imitate, replicate, and reuse popular trending videos" (Savic). In 2018 this newly found phenomenon launched worldwide and since then their popularity has continued to skyrocket. TikTok to many is just another social media platform used to occupy time with videos that tend to be entertaining, informative, or in most cases the newest dance trend. However, TikTok is also becoming a new kind of labor. People who use TikTok as their job are becoming more and more "normal" because the typical nine-to-five is uninteresting to today's generation.

When Covid-19 struck the nation, human interaction took a large hit, even bigger than it already has from new technologies. People were restricted from leaving the house, spreading out six inches from someone was demanded, and masks restricted full faces from being shown. Talking to people the way it used to be understood as "normal", came to be non-existent. A new phenomenon, not amazingly popular yet, was just being discovered by many and then hit a breakthrough during the pandemic. TikTok's were originally a singular video that could only be fifteen seconds long. As the app has developed, TikToks may now be up to three minutes long. However, the original fifteen second clip remains the most popular length seen across the app. Fast TikToks have become very powerful and the short, direct clips have many capabilities. The growth of this app has been exponential. In the beginning, the most popular social media influencer on TikTok was Loren Gray who had about 35 million followers accumulated since the start of her newfound fame through TikTok. After a year with a huge spike in popularity, multiple people soared past her in follower count and the current most popular account on

TikTok is Charli D'Amelio. Charli has 135 million followers and is 7.8K followers ahead of the account that is placed second. TikTok is very fond of the D'Amelio family as Charli's sister Dixie D'Amelio has the ninth most popular account with 122.7 million followers. This new trend has given people a voice and the ability to promote themselves on a platform that is easily accessible to others. Besides entertainment purposes, TikTok has been used as advertisements for companies, promoting artists, and even social movements. TikTok is IN as it allows creativity in a variety of ways, individuals to display their talents for so many, or users to laugh all day at content. There are over 600 million people on TikTok as this has become the most popular app on the Apple Store. TikTok is an app that is used worldwide and available in 155 different countries. It is not surprising that more than one billion videos are viewed daily. People of all ages engage in TikTok but Generation Z makes up the majority of users. Generation Z is the first age group to grow up on the internet and social media. This has caused a change in how work can be viewed. Social media has given users a new viewpoint on what they believe work should be. The nine-to-five that has been normalized by our elders are becoming less interesting due to social media and how users have been shown by their peers that there are so many different ways to make a living. Social Media is encouraging this because Generation Z individuals tend to be on their smartphones all day long and are exposed to seeing how other people are making money in such a new, easy way. Now, they are dying to do the same, therefore, everyone's new favorite job has become being a social media influencer. So, this strikes the first research question, how much has new technology influenced this new form of labor?

In an article published on Forbes, Dennis Kirwan defines a social media influencer as "...people who have large audiences of followers on their media accounts, and leverage this to influence or persuade this following to buy certain products or services" (Kirwan 2021). This job as a social media influencer is directly created through new technologies and is the way that influencer's impact carries throughout social media. New opportunities continue to be created through new jobs from an influencer's social media fame, partnerships, or endorsements. In Nick Srnicek's Platform Capitalism he explains, "Capitalism, when a crisis hits, tends to be reconstructed. New technologies, new organizational forms, new modes of exploitation, new

types of jobs, and new markets all emerge to create a new way of accumulating capital"
(Srnicek, Ch. 2-Pg. 1). As smartphones continue to develop the ways people use them continue
to develop. Smartphones have allowed content to be spread significantly faster and also in
various different ways. For instance, social media has allowed a new brand, singer/dancer,
company, or invention, to access a new way of advertising not only for the product itself but
also the individual self to be seen each time someone scrolls down their feed! Other content
may also include comedy skits, social media challenges, tutorials, (cooking, fixing items, outfit of
the day, workouts, etc.) you name it, you may post it, and maybe even become paid!

The basic requirements that qualify someone to be a social media influencer and start earning
money by TikTok are discussed in an INSIDER article published by Amanda Perelli where she
explains, "To earn money directly from TikTok, users must be 18 years or older, meet a baseline
of 10,000 followers, and have accrued at least 100,000 video views in the last 30 days" (Perelli
2021). Depending on the number of followers one has and how popular one becomes, being
paid from TikTok is very achievable. In an article posted by a student at UCLA, it's stated that,
"Estimates suggest that a TikTok content creator with 100k followers can earn on average
between $200 to $1000 per month and a TikTok content creator with 1M+ followers can earn
on average between $1000 to $5000+ per month" (Patel 2021). Sometimes creators' virality is
short lived but then it is those who continue to blossom that become fan favorites. Starting a
TikTok does not mean one will automatically gain intensive popularity and become a paid
TikToker, this does not happen overnight and in most cases, may not happen at all. In an article
D. Bondy Valdovinos explains, "Tiktok is a prime platform to explore accidental virality given the
bite-sized nature of content between 15 to 60 seconds long and the ease with which TikTok
allows users to create new videos based on elements of the video they were just watching
(Kaye, Chen, & Zeng, 2020)" (Valdovinos 2021). This accidental virality can be considered as a
"one-hit-wonder", or possibly this could successfully help one become a paid influencer.
However, most people have the app as a source of entertainment. To understand more about
TikTok, research was completed through interviews with an influencer named Jay Wey, during
this, he explains how his fame on social media was accidental. His intentions were just to

document a road trip he took with his wife. However, as the interview states, "We started recording funny videos, and that same day, or the day after, we saw people viewing them," Wey says. "I was like, 'What's going on? You said people weren't gonna watch this." ... The reception was positive, and Wey decided to keep making funny videos, partially fulfilling a childhood dream of becoming a comedian.

Additionally, three men who are very familiar with TikTok in their own way were interviewed. I asked them questions that were similar to Wey's, and also questions that were different due to how they each use TikTok in their own way. Each of the three who stated that their love for TikTok started as just being a fan, were asked questions about the different stages which range from fans, those who make videos for fun, aspiring influencers, and paid social media influencers. Specifically, one question asked was "how, if possible, one could faster boost followers in any way to be paid quicker?" Interviewees included a fan named Charles Briscoe, an aspiring influencer Randall Harris, and a paid social media influencer Jelani Greene. Also, the research completed on the famous influencer mentioned, Jay Wey, was beneficial. These interviews and research help elaborate on the next research question, can being a paid TikTok social media influencer be a reliable source of income? Is this a source of labor that is dependable? Or is it temporary? The road to this position is not always given or happens overnight, so each influencer and aspiring influencer are at a different point in their career.

Interviewed first was social media influencer Jelani Green. Jelani, also known as AJ, is "TikTok famous" and has 2.1 million followers on TikTok. Green consistently posts content that reaches millions of viewers. During the interview he explained how his first "viral" video was about his story of how he ended up where he is today. AJ explained how he went from an under-recruited high school athlete to a true freshman Division I starter. However, he was then kicked out of school, which led to him going to a junior college. From junior college AJ went on to accept a Division II football scholarship where he excelled and became an NFL draft prospect. AJ's TikTok video was viewed by 10.5 million people, and although the NFL did not work out, this video opened up several doors and he is now using TikTok as not only his job, but a

platform to advertise a product he in partnership with named "SoHoodie". The brand is very popular among football players specifically, from non-profit youth football organization, Pop Warner, to the NFL, one can see these being worn all over the field. AJ has become so popular he has an "AJ GREENE SOHOODIE'' on their website. SoHoodie is advertised in almost all of his TikTok's now and six of his last ten videos have surpassed a million views. He has become a self-made entrepreneur with TikTok as his job. The next question asked was, "what is the coolest thing you've done since becoming an influencer?" His answer was about the time he spent with former NFL star quarterback, Michael Vick. AJ explained how growing up Vick was his favorite player and an idol. Jelani made TikTok's with Vick and in the video, Vick is seen wearing Jelani's SoHoodie product that he advertises.

The next interview conducted was with Randall Harris who is an aspiring influencer that has 12k followers. Randall is a college football player and he explained how his main inspiration for wanting to become an influencer is Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) deals. NIL deals are a new rule by the NCAA which allows college athletes to make money off of their image. He has one-hundred thousand views on multiple clips however these views accumulated over time, so he has not met the qualification for being paid just yet. Although he is not considered a paid influencer, he has struck an NIL endorsement from a popular underwear company named PSG Underwear. This was made possible due to TikTok and he is seen on his page advertising this product as well as his personal brand. Randall's content he posts consists of popular trends. In the interview it was asked, "What things have you done to speed up the process of becoming a social media influencer?" Randall's response was him explaining how he created content with Mikaila Murphy, on TikTok her username is @mikailadancer. Mikaila is a woman who is very popular on social media, and she is an influencer that has 13.4 million followers on TikTok. With millions of views on each clip this was a quick efficient way for Randall to be seen by a big audience with another very popular influencer.

The research question about whether TikTok is a reliable source of income is best answered and elaborated upon thanks to the research on Jay Wey. CNBC's Millennial Money is described

in an article by Yanely Espinal as "...interviews dive deep into conversations about how they make, spend and save their money" (Espinal). Millennials make up most of TikTok users outside of Generation Z. However, both Gen Z and Millennials usage of TikTok are still on the rise. About forty percent of Gen Z is on TikTok and almost forty percent of Millennials. Jay Wey happened to be one Millennial that was interviewed. Jay Wey has 1.7 million followers and in his interview the author, Nicolas Vega, explained how he is benefiting from TikTok by stating, "Wey considers himself an entrepreneur first and foremost, but his social media success pays the bills. He has landed a number of lucrative brand partnerships that earn him and his wife Sharon, who makes cameos in his videos, around $120,000 per year" (Vega 2021). This is around ten thousand dollars a month, something anyone is easily capable of making a living from. Due to this job being as flexible as a six-figure paying job gets, and his wife Sharon being a guest star in mostly every video he posts, this job is fun. Wey is enjoying himself as he "works", in a CNBC article he explained how he views TikTok as just a side hustle which is not that surprising. His most viewed video has 31.4 million views and is still rising. People love his content and as he continues to put similar content out, his audience will continue and support him, and his wife Sharon's videos.

Job security is an area of discussion that has not really been a thought for most of TikTok's lifespan, however on one occasion it has been red flagged for TikTok. In an ABC News article by Libby Cathey, it states, "...Trump said on Monday if Microsoft or another ''secure" and ''very American" company doesn't buy the U.S. leg of the Chinese-owned operation by Sept.15, the wildly-popular video app will cease operating in the U.S" (Cathey 2021). These claims were due to security concerns that ended up being deemed untrue. Although false, the uncertainty of this new source of labor was suddenly put on pause abruptly. This left viewers and content creators in an uproar. A New York Times article titled in bold letters "TikTok Ban? Creators and Fans Are Big Mad - The uncertainty over the future of the widely popular video app has brought chaos to its user community – and to the entertainment and advertising industries as well" (Lorenz 2020), highlighted that being able to make a TikTok any time, any place, was the

intimate factor behind the new, fun source of labor. TikTok users were devastated at just the thought of having that taken from them during the pandemic.

Job flexibility is essential and a huge reason why this job is such a new popular source of labor. The more our peers continue to use their social media profiles as a platform for themselves, the more their audience sees them, and this inspires them. The effect the new technologies, like smartphones, have on this generation is not only addicting, but contagious. As said in Uberland, the author explains, "The sharing economy promised to save the day for a population shaken by the Great Recession: using technology, millions of people across society would now be able to efficiently pool and share their limited resources. The seeds of Uber took root in a climate of profound economic uncertainty. After the recession hit in 2007, shockwaves of the economic downturn rippled across the globe…" (Rosenblat, Pg 3). Just as Uber, new jobs like TikTok have become capable due to smartphones and other new technologies. Uber partners with drivers seeking to earn income and allows anyone who meets the criteria drive their own personal car at their convivence. TikTok is similar because the company partners with content creators and gives them a space where, at their own leisure, they are able to promote themselves and their content for money. By that, it's meant the next dancer, or singer, or anyone who might not have had the confidence before, can find inspiration from an influencer who may be a friend, a role model, or just another person they follow on TikTok. If they can do it, you can do it and the role of a nine-to-five being the "norm" for labor in America will continue and diminish. The influences of new technologies continue to impact people today and specifically, allows stars to be found. New technologies also help people become inspired to participate this new labor that can be merely seen as a hobby. TikTok is a valuable source of labor, this labor is just as dependable as the content creators' produce and have produced that their audience initially fell in love with and made them the influencer they are today.

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A Response to Woodstock 99: Peace, Love, and Rage; Recontextualizing Editorial Biases in NuMetal

Samuel Graff

As western societies have become increasingly socially progressive and broader swaths of the American populace have acknowledged the importance of diversity and anti-racism, there has been a notable amount of performative neoliberal gestures which posit solutions and seek analysis by focusing on certain aspects of progress while ignoring material conditions. Perhaps the most telling example is the characterization of President Obama as "a black president" used somewhat disingenuously by both political parties as either proof that American racism is over oras a deflection from more cogent left-leaning criticism. Much has been written about the musical Hamilton and its colorblind interpretation of history, which reframes discussion around the titular figure based on his racial background while skimming over the less savory activities which he and out other founding fathers engaged in (Gendry). This broader phenomenon of "liberal identity politics" has been heavily memified in both academic and casual circles, leadingto the term "female drone pilots" as a catch-all for an establishment tendency to prioritize diversity over any systemic change (Righi). Another aspect of this interesting development in performative rhetoric is a categoric reframing of past trends and movements along racial lines, one which gives birth to certain narratives which suit the goals of a larger movement. This is not to downplay the importance of critical analysis of past events, as there are often a multitude of legitimate class and race factors which feed into any given movement, but to recognize that certain historical reviews fall prey to the neoliberal tendency. In 2021, one such example is the HBO Documentary *Woodstock 99: Peace, Love, and Rage*, a work which seeks to characterize the festival itself and the broader heavier alternative music trend of the late 90s and early 2000sas a product of outright misogyny and racism.

To properly assess the documentary's claims and provide effective rebukes and analysis, summary of the festival itself, the music behind it, and the arguments which the movie pursues is necessary. First, let us look at the "nu metal" genre for context. Nu metal (often

stylized as nü metal) was an alternative movement which rose to prominence in the mid-90s, reached a culturalpeak in the early 2000s and has since mostly fallen out of style regarding mainstream popularity. The style, which takes its name from a slang term for "not metal" in various Scandinavian languages, is a version of alternative rock with significant influence from metal, hardcore and hiphop. There is considerable debate as to what artists actually ushered in the genre, with groups like **Rage Against the Machine**, **Faith No More** and **the Red Hot Chili Peppers** as usually credited as having influenced it. Most see **Korn**'s self-titled 1994 debut as reifying the movement and establishing the genre tropes which bands like **Limp Bizkit**, **Slipknot** and **LinkinPark** would further in the years to come. During its reign of surprising commercial viability, nu metal's most popular acts would consistently top sales charts, sell out arenas worldwide and evencompete with pop acts like **Britney Spears** for music video airplay on MTV's popular "Total Requests Live" program. In a post-911 era, the notoriously apolitical nu metal movement would give way to the more pointed conservatism of "post grunge" and "butt rock." While elements of the 90s sound and aesthetic manifest in several ways today, and many of the era's popular acts still enjoy immense popularity within heavy music, the genre's heyday is long gone and heavy, guitar-driven music will likely never impact popular music in the way nu metal did. The most notable acts which performed at Woodstock 99 were nu metal groups, hence the genre connection to the event.

The festival Woodstock 99 itself was a notoriously ill-fated homage to the event in the 60s which is generally regarded as a cultural milestone. Promoters of the 90s sought to recapture the magic with healthy commercial incentive and after a successful festival but small event in 94,looked to create the defining event of the new millennium. These aspirations were soon dashed, as immense corner-cutting measures combined with unfortunate timing to create a uniquely awful festival experience. The summer weather, which reached upwards of 100 degrees for all three days of the festival's weekend, paired with questionable hydration and sanitation planning as well as an undertrained and understaffed security force to culminate in mayhem. Several concert attendees died due to heatstroke, the festival grounds themselves were looted and destroyed and the whole event has garnered a reputation in pop culture for

its utter failure. With this notoriety in mind, there have been relatively few definitive media works on Woodstock 99 following its initially press explosion immediately after the fact. This brings us to Garrett Price'sdocumentary *Woodstock 99: Peace, Love and Rage*, the first high profile account of the festival and one which seeks to provide a definitive account of the ill-fated event as well as recontextualize its failures as unique to the 90s and the scene which propelled it.

Price's documentary is rather conflicted thematically and many of its definitive arguments about the broader cultural failings of the late 90s and nu metal specifically are directly contradicted soon after Price's point is made. For the sake of organization, I will present the documentary's arguments straightforwardly as they initially appear and note their supposed contradictions in my own rebuttal of the piece afterwards. I also recognize that the movie was written and produced by a variety of voices with differing opinions and beliefs and that no modern work of cinema is truly the work of one person. For simplicity's sake, I will refer to the author of the piece and its arguments as Price with this in mind.

Price's thesis in the documentary seems to be that nu metal as a genre and cultural movement was inherently misogynistic, racist, and built entirely on consumerism. By extension, the failure of Woodstock 99 as a festival echoes a failure within nu metal to reckon with these impulses. The assumptions about nu metal and "aggressive white male music" are generally echoed in the broader worlds of academia and Price uses music journalists from a variety of backgrounds to voice these points across a helping of footage from the festival itself. In making these arguments, however, Price falls into a number of flawed assumptions in line with neoliberal identity politics. The documentary's points are ultimately flaccid in the face of a morethree-dimensional perspective which accurately weighs the importance of material circumstancesin its assessments.

The first assertion which Price posits has to do with the racism of Woodstock 99 and by extension, nu metal. The film cites the relative lack of black performers at the festival and the anecdotal experience of one of the festival goers. In the journal of an individual who was killed during the mayhem of Woodstock's 2nd day, this is written: "**Wycleaf Jean** were, well ok. It goes back to what my mom always said about not saying anything at all if you have nothing niceto say." This individual's dismissal is used alongside accounts of **Wycleaf Jean** and **DMX**'s performances to justify the festival's racism. **Wycleaf Jean** had bottles thrown on stage during an extended jam session, which Price uses to demonstrate a general animus towards black performers at the event. **DMX**, a commercial juggernaut at the time of the festival who was able to bridge the gap between gangster rap trends and nu metal aggression in his heyday, engaged the crowd in a call-and-response where he encouraged all attendees to shout the n word, to whichmany of them obliged. According to the documentary, these key moments demonstrate the overall callousness and racial insensitivity of the predominantly white audience, and these conclusions can be drawn of Nu metal as well. Additionally, the nature of the genre—a "dumbing down" of the funk and r&b elements of hip-hop while melding rap's more aggressivetendencies with rock—is a form of cultural appropriation. One with historical precedent where white artists use elements of black culture for their own gain while ignoring its roots.

Said conclusions are entirely consistent with the popular academic perceptions of nu metal, which generally see it as a demonstration of white rage of which racism and appropriationare inherent. Authors like Middleton have used sales figures and demographic statistics in combination with American music history to argue this point. For him, the overwhelmingly white nature of its consumers and the deep-red leanings of nu metal's biggest states is enough to draw this conclusion. When coupled with the inarguable musical appropriation of rock and eventually rap (one which nu metal would engage in doubly so) the genre's racism is apparent (Middleton, Beebe). If not as an explicit view held by its audience, then one held through implication.

Much of Woodstock 99's airtime is devoted to showcasing the misogyny of the event andthe underlying biases which allowed sexism to permeate the event. As with the lack of black performers, Price pays much attention to the fact that only 3 female artists played at the festival, one for each day. One journalist says on this topic: "the festival felt like it was for angry white dudes, by angry white dudes." Alongside the lack of representation, the generally sexist media coverage and attitudes from certain performers are cited several times. According to multiple voices in the documentary, the festival had the air of a frat party where camera man seemed moreinterested in capturing scantily clad women than the performers itself. The relative lack of top wear amongst great portions of the female attendees is mentioned time and time again and key performance moments are shown. One shows Rosie Perez appearing on stage to an overwhelming crowd chant of "show your tits" while another shows Dexter Holland of **The Offspring** calling for an end of molestation among female crowd surfers before erupting into "Self Esteem." Elsewhere, **Kid Rock** is shown delivering the misogynist "Monica Lewinsky is awhore and Bill Clinton is a pimp" line during his set. Finally, the rampant sexual assault of Woodstock 99 is covered heavily in the documentary's latter end. It seems the lack of security, amount of public nudity, total dehydration and plentiful drug use paired with the nightmare of having 350,000 people crowded into one place and ushered in an unfortunate amount of rape. Aswith the previous assertion, Price ties the inherent flaws of Woodstock 99 to nu metal once more.Electronic artist **Moby** says this on the matter: "it was all misogyny and homophobia and the rape frat boy culture of Woodstock 99."

Likewise, this assumption is also echoed in plenty of academic writing on nu metal. In "Hypermasculinity and Heavy Metal," Rogers and Deflam write on the hypermasculine performance element of rock through the ages, focusing on \hard rock legends like **Led Zeppelin**, hair metal bands like **Def Leppard** and eventually even **Limp Bizkit**. For these authors, the hypermasculinity represents an artist's need to embody the most extreme

elements of its national identity. In an American context, this means embracing the masculine

bravado and valor which has been long mythologized in reference to our founding fathers as

well as war heroes. In this sense, misogyny or fundamentalist views of sex and gender are

innate to that embodiment. The song "Nookie" by **Limp Bizkit** is used as justification for this in

nu metal. Its lyrics, which are told from the perspective of a spurned Fred Durst freshly out of

a sour relationship, feature nuggets like "my girlie ran away with my pay when fellas came to

play, now she's stuck with my homies that she fucked" and "she put my tender heart in a

blender and even still I surrendered." The song's success during this period and other

misogynistic nu metal hits like **Disturbed**'s "down with the sickness" (a track which features

anextended bridge where vocalist David Draiman repeatedly calls his mother a "whore" and a

"bitch") are thus proof of nu metal's hypermasculine embodiment and clear bigoted streak.

Price's final main argument about nu metal in his documentary is that the festival's ultimate

undoing was its overreliance on commercial interests above all else. This point is once more

extended to the genre of nu metal as a whole. In the context of Woodstock 99, this is a fairly

clear argument to make as nearly all of the festival's largest issues were directly spurned by

the cost-cutting measures partaken in by its organizers. The lack of security, nourishment and

shelter directly bled into the festival's other major downfalls, and all were a result of cutting

corners for maximum profit. On nu metal, though, Price attempts to make clear how cynical

the genre was with its target audience. The documentary spends a decent amount of time

establishing **Nirvana** and their contemporaries as utterly progressive and intent on creating

outsider music for outsiders. The work then juxtaposes this with nu metal which it cites as

existing solely for monetary gain. On this topic, **Moby** asserts "it sounds simple I know, but if

you want to know why nu metal became such a thing, it was purely commercial. The industry

realized they could make more money by marketing to a larger demographic."

As far as academic support on this specific school of thought, there is relatively little. Most

Marxist frames of analysis will recognize that commodities produced in a free-market system

will inherently be created for profit and that artistic value is likely secondary. Scholars like Hesmondhalgh have written extensively about the dissonance this creates in works like *Why Music Matters*. Yet, there does not appear to be a single academic article or journal that focuses specifically on nu metal with this lens in regard to grunge. There is however a large amount of popular journalism on the post-grunge and butt rock movements which were born afterwards. For example, Tom Breihan's article for Stereogum "Meet Austrailian TikTok Emo Rapper The Kid Laroi, The Sad-RapSilverchair" uses the post-grunge movement as a definitive example for when commercial incentives overtake an alternative scene. This sentiment is generally mirrored, yet it does notusually extend to nu metal the way Price does.

Now that Price's arguments against nu metal from *Woodstock 99* are clearly established, an effective rebuttal can now be issued. Generally, Price falls into the trap of "female drone pilots" or at least elicits the same baggage that this distinction comes with. He attempts to craft anarrative informed more so by retroactive identity politics than the commercial and material woes at the heart of festival's failure. Price utterly ignores nu metal's potential for collective flourishing and downplays the sound's ability to manifest the working-class woes of the late 90s,instead focusing solely on one event and one thematic reading of its context. In actuality, nu metal successfully embodied the suburban malaise of its era. Its unfortunate tendencies were products of the time which also manifested in other popular cultural artifacts. To blame or to even insinuate that the downfalls of Woodstock 99 were the fault of this music genre rather than poor planning and cost-cutting measures is asinine and demonstrates an authorial focus on reframing history around identity metrics rather than a more nuanced Marxian-influenced reading.

The first assessment of Woodstock 99's racism is broadly off base. Was the festival racist? Of course, but only so in the same way that all institutions or media events are as they exist in a society which is inherently racist. More diversity is always a good thing, but Price's example of a single audience member finding **Wycleaf Jean** boring is almost laughably trivial and in no

way belies a malicious intent from the hundreds of thousands of audience members. Similarly, the performer having bottles thrown at him during his set is an interesting choice of inclusion, as this happened during nearly every performance of the weekend. The **DMX** exampleis almost as ludicrous. Obviously, a crowd of white people shouting the n word would be considered atrocious by today's standards, but if anything, this belabored point demonstrates a collective rising beyond racial boundaries through the transcendent power of a black performer encouraging unity. In contrast to these points, the cultural appropriation critique of nu metal is entirely valid. It is important to note however that this holds true for certain groups far more thanothers. **Kid Rock**, as a rap-rock act is clearly indebted to black music and should have likely demonstrated an understanding of dynamic at some level. Yet, artists like **Korn**, **Slipknot** and **Linkin Park**, all multi-platinum juggernauts of the era, clearly had their roots firmly planted a metal background and are far more emblematic of the broader swath of popular new metal acts. Even then, vocalists like Corey Taylor of **Slipknot** and Mike Shinoda of **Linkin Park** who do rap on occasion have shown clear reverence to the style's history and spoken at length about a certain level of white appropriation. Price's assertions about racism then seem almost intentionally misleading. A more understandable societal critique is eschewed for an anecdotal narrative that incorrectly characterizes the movement.

The critiques of misogyny which the documentary levies hold far more water yet are once again showcased in a seemingly disingenuous way which ignores the trends in music at the time. Clearly the bookers should have included more female acts amongst the lineup and the overall misogyny of the festival grounds is abhorrent. Yet, the coverage and even actions of the festival goers is unfortunately far from unusual. This was the era of "girls gone wild" where casual sexism was generally accepted. Even concerning the rampant sexual assault at the festival, this was and still is apropos for gigantic gatherings. Woodstock 69 had an untold number of sexual assaults which are often glossed over and even Lollapalooza and the first few Coachella's are infamous for the number of women they subjected to assault. The "frat boy attitude" which surrounded the grounds and certain performers are once again unfortunate, but this was also clearly visible in adjacent events at the time. In regard to nu

metal specifically, it is without doubt that individual songs in the larger canon had a penchant for misogyny. Once more, however, this was far from unique to the genre in the late 90s. Incredibly successful rappers like **Biggie** and **Tupac** had songs which prominently featured misogyny and homophobia and even more traditional rock and pop artists did the same. It is easy to forget that this was culturally acceptable until very recently and singling out nu metal as the embodiment of these sentiments ispeculiar. Broader lyrical examinations of nu metal will find that, more than anything else, the genre is concerned with feelings of self-loathing and inadequacy linked to introspection and has more to do lyrically with Price's prized grunge movement. At times said lyricism could reach points of self-parody but genre staples like **Korn**'s "Blind" or **System of a Down**'s "Chop Suey" are visceral and incredibly personal tunes which stand for the majority rather than the minority.

Finally, Price's assertion that nu metal was a cynical commercial force is simply incorrect. As far as the festival itself is concerned, it is abundantly clear that commercial incentives outweighed everything else, but this does not extend to nu metal as a genre. When **Korn**'s debut record released in 94, the popular rock landscape was utterly preoccupied with post-grunge and more accessible takes on alternative rock. This remained the case until about a 3-year period from 98 to 2001 where nu metal was the most popular rock-based style. Price insists on pushing a narrative where nu metal as a response to grunge sought to mainstream the sound by "embracing the troglodyte elements" but this is ahistorical. The aptly named post-grunge movement was defined by artists like **Weezer** and **Alanis Morrissette** who embraced the irony of grunge but repackaged that notion into straightforward pop rock. In reality, the nu metal boom happened as a result of several artists chasing the commercial heights of **Korn** and was solidified with **Limp Bizkit**'s sophomore album *Significant Other* in 98. This was far from a conscious, label-orchestrated movement as **Korn** ushered in the sound organically after tinkering in the underground for years and there is a clear gap of about 4 years where almost no nu metal bands achieved mainstream popularity. There are plenty of atrocious acts from the genre's heyday where industry forces made blatant cash grabs, but the same can be said for virtually any style ofpopular music.

Where Price's messaging gets particularly confusing, is where he directly contradicts his documentary's prevailing narrative by tapping into legitimate material grievances of the 90s. One interviewee aptly states "there was the underlying fear that nobody knew what was happening. These artists tapped into something very real." Often overshadowed by the utter moral blackness of the early 2000s, the late 90s were a bleak time for the average "working class" American citizen. Despite widespread economic growth, wages had simply stopped rising as a consequence of Reaganite protections. Suddenly, the US was involved in global operations which seemingly had no importance to most Americans. After the one two punch of Iran contra and operation desert storm juxtaposed with a broad anti-war sentiment and the confusion which arose after Soviet Union's collapse, Americans felt as if they had virtually no control over their government or the rest of the world. It is no coincidence that movies like *Happiness* or *AmericanBeauty* or later *Donnie Darko* or a show like *The Sopranos* were born out of this period. People across suburbia were suddenly aware of the utter emptiness of certain existences and the long- term consequences that these could have. People were angry, confused, and saddened and no onehad any idea what to do about any of it and nu metal perfectly captured these feelings of the time. As Fred Durst says during the breakdown of **Limp Bizkit**'s Woodstock 99 performance: "Break stuff, time to reach deep down inside and take all that negative energy and let all that shit out of your fucking system." This catharsis was what nu metal meant to so many people.

Heavy, angsty and immensely personal music suddenly burst onto the mainstream in way which it simply never had and was it any coincidence why so many people related to it and turned it into a global phenomenon? For the first time in modern history, there was a popular art form which acutely distilled the woes of a working class experience into audio form. Nu metal's down-tuned guitars mimicked the methodical engine roars of a workplace commutes, its vocals captured the unspoken anguish of day laborers and for a generation suddenly raised on hip hop asmuch as rock, the genre-bending allowed it an utterly unique appeal across

racial and class lines. That is why Price's insistence on the documentary's positions seems utterly bizarre. At one pointan interviewer even says, "if you look at a lot of the culture and what was going on at the time, it's bigger than nu metal and it's bigger than **Limp Bizkit**." In fact, the final section of the documentary even doubles down and recognizes that material circumstances are really what cause events like this and that festivals have never been idealistic utopias of peace, love and understanding. It quite literally ends by implying Woodstock 69 was also horrendous and the only thing separating the two was late 90s media coverage obsessed with manufacturing fear unrest. As viewers, we are left with discussion of Coachella and modern music festivals andthe stunning line: "if you wanna assert power, you just have to be a very wealthy person."

Realistically, the failures of Woodstock 99 can be attributed to atrocious festival planningand weather aided by a general class resentment. This is a conclusion which Price hints at throughout *Woodstock 99: Peace, Love, and Rage* but is complicated with an insistence on reframing the failures of the event through the pitfalls of nu metal. The whole notion of broader cultural analysis through a singular event or narrative is inherently flawed as history is an ever-evolving mass of nuance informed by cultural and sociopolitical forces. Price and his team havefallen into the trap which Lin Manuel-Miranda did in 2016 and have a created a work which attempts to rewrite history through a neoliberal sense of identity politics. In doing so, they haveutterly ignored the positives of nu metal and have unconsciously crafted a classist narrative which demonizes the most popular style of rock from the late 90s with false accusations of bigotry. The intent of this maneuver is utterly puzzling, and it turns an otherwise thorough documentary into a frustrating web of poor historical readings. Price's work is torn between theconflicting impulse of colorblind class erasure and legitimate material criticisms. This paradoxical duality is scarily similar to the challenging fine line which progressive advocates must navigate in 2021. As broader left-wing positions become more popular and widely recognized, the policy makers and historical accountants must strive for three-dimensional viewings of issues which encompass class in addition to social identity. Too much focus on the latter can promote ahistorical narratives which unintentionally steelman the arguments of the

opposition. Nonetheless, we are stuck in between an impulse to characterize quantities based purely on superficial identities and recognize meaningful imbalances in the systems we perpetuate. In the eternal words of **Korn**'s Jonathan Davis: "stuck in this place where I can't escape, screaming and crawling from deep inside".

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Are Humans an Invasive Species?

How the Development of Our World Has Continuously Encroached on Wildlife

Madeline Graf

Introduction:

When God created man, did he not create animals first?

Through the development of our society mankind has adversely impacted the species that existed long before humans emerged. Humans have effectively become an invasive species, taking over the homes of animals across the world. There are many answers to how human desires negatively effects wildlife such as pollution, deforestation, fossil fuels, excessive waste, and countless others. Another important answer— captive animals. By removing an animal from its habitat to live in an enclosed space for the sole purpose of human entertainment; zoos, aquariums, theme parks, and circuses essentially hold animals prisoner against their own will. What is less obvious to the naked eye however, are the unintentional effects humans have by 'progressing' as a society. Through urbanization, industrial globalization, and tourism, people are leaving a bigger impact than many may even be aware of. These animals, despite living in the wild, are continuously encroached on by humans through our global development and for our own entertainment.

Urbanization:

The persistent urbanization of our world has led to significant environmental impacts, especially when it comes to wildlife. Humans have taken over the homes and resources that animals need to survive. The urban sprawl has both short-term and long-term consequences for countless species of animals, some of whom are currently facing extinction. People continue to expand into new lands and territories to compensate for an ever-growing human population. As a result, animals have either been displaced from their natural habitat or forced to adapt to the invaders in their environment. For almost all species of animals currently facing extinction, the "loss or degradation of habitats is the principal threat to their continued existence" (Ewing & Kostyack, 2005). The conversion of natural land that is home to various animals into cities, with homes, offices, shopping centers, and more, has become one of the most serious threats to the survival

of these species. In the US, "rapid consumption of land could threaten the survival of nearly one out of every three imperiled species" (Ewing & Kostyack, 2005). However, worldwide the everexpanding urban sprawl will "put additional pressure on diminishing wildlife resources and their habitats, and has the potential to drive more animals towards extinction" (Ewing & Kostyack, 2005). The rapidly rising global population only increases the rate of urban development encroaching farther into natural land.

This is a problem many countries are facing, including those clustered in East Africa. While many people think the major threat to wildlife in Africa is poaching, in reality the "biggest problem is the population explosion that is happening" (Hardy, 2019). Photographer, Nick Brandt, captured a photographic series intending to visualize this problem and to show that with it comes "an invasion of humanity and development into what was not so long ago wildlife habitat" (Hardy, 2019). To highlight this threat, Brandt shows various wild animals such as elephants, rhinos, and zebras strolling through areas of human development or habitation (Hardy, 2019). The urbanization of these areas in order to compensate for the increasing number of inhabitants is what's pushing many of these animals to extinction (Hardy, 2019). Through this series, the photographer was able to illustrate the feelings of helplessness that these animals are feeling in the midst of the destruction of their homes.

Hardy, M. (2019, February 5). Photos Show How Wildlife and Humans Collide on a Grand Scale. *Wired*,
Conde Nast. www.wired.com/story/wildlife-human-habitats-collide-photo-gallery/.

This photograph depicts two elephants, what appear to be a parent and a child, roaming through an active construction site where they once called home. The child seems to be nuzzling itself into its parent, as if its looking for safety and protection from this new, strange world. The construction workers continue on working, un-phased by the enormous creatures, almost like they aren't even there. One would assume the men on the ground would be fearful, as the giant animals could crush them in just one step. Yet the men forge on, making the viewer question why they would work in such circumstances. It seems as though these workers are victims themselves, much like the elephants. They could be stuck in this job with no way of improving their economic status and may not morally agree with what they are doing. The worker in the trench specifically, invokes the idea that these men are of a lower social standing than even the elephants; a demoralizing feeling that may be why they carry on with their jobs- as if they are aware of their place in the world. Brandt also labels these men as victims, as the Maasai people and other ordinary Kenyans are not responsible for this large-scale destruction. The aggressors are not featured in the photographs because they are the "developers and politicians who are only interested in short-term economic gain, at the expense of the long-term economic benefit of the community" (Hardy, 2019). The lack of visibility of the construction workers faces reinforces this idea, as if they are the nameless soldiers carrying out the orders of those in charge.

Throughout the cloudy sky, slates of concrete, elephants skin, dirty ground, and construction workers clothing and equipment, the same color is mimicked in every aspect of this photograph. What is typically considered a dull, moody, and sad color, the color gray in this image assigns a different meaning to each feature it inhabits. Elephants cannot change the fact that they have gray skin or the fact that the color gray is associated with feelings of isolation and loneliness. Instead these magnificent, larger-than-life creatures embody the color in another way, representing neutrality, balance, and strength. An animal that is widely seen as symbolizing majesty, wisdom, and nobility, the gray of the elephants skin does not reflect the same emotions as they gray of its current environment. The color of the elephants surroundings, rather than the color of its skin, provokes the feelings of gloominess, loneliness, and isolation. The monochromatic color palette within this image allows its viewers to share the emotions of the

animals. It shows how quickly the gray of our natural world can turn into the gray of our infrastructure in a wold of never-ending urbanization. The gray elephant does not need a gray overpass and it does not find a natural home in the gray, emerging, concrete 'jungle' that is developing around it.

As humans continue expanding their reach, many animals are forced to become accustomed to human life in their natural environments. Zoologists and ecologists have coined a new term for this idea, "synurbization," which "denotes adjustment of wild animal populations to specific conditions of urban environment, in connection with regular existence there in the wild state" (Luniak, 2004). This term is a combination of two other terms used in this field; synanthropization, the idea of animals adapting to human-created conditions; and urbanization, referring to the changes in environment as a result of urban development. While this term is not recognized in the Oxford Dictionary or highly used in daily discourse by lay people, it encapsulates the root of this argument; the process of animals being forced to adapt to human created environments as a result of the urban sprawl. While to humans this may seem like a process that has been occurring slowly overtime, in reality the development of our New World is just a small blip on the timeline of Earth's history. The majority of animal species today have evolved and been shaped into their current state "during the last 1 to 500 million years, while urbanization… has occurred only during the last 100-200 years" (Luniak, 2004). City expansion has accelerated to new heights in recent decades, so much that "by 2050, we could be creating a city the size of London every seven weeks if current trends continue" (Randall, 2018). At this rate, wild animals are going to have no other choice than to adapt to human environment.

Many species that are already adapting to their new surroundings have seen small evolutionary changes, such as the crested anole lizard, native to the forests in Puerto Rico (Miller, 2018). Historically known for their expertise at climbing trees, "these reptiles have evolved to handle smoother surfaces, such as glass windows and painted concrete… [and] their toe pads… are the key to their strong grip" (Miller, 2018). Researchers have found that the "urban anole populations are equipped with bigger toe pads that feature surplus scales" (Miller, 2018). Making small, but

crucial, changes has allowed many species to survive in a new urban environment, however the urban sprawl has not only led to small adaptations but also the evolution of new species. For the blackbird, who "started colonizing cities about two hundred years ago" (Worrall, 2021), urbanization has led to the adaptation to a "new ecological niche" (Worrall, 2021). The urban blackbirds "have shorter beaks; don't migrate anymore; have different stress responses; start breeding much earlier in the year; and sing at a different pitch" (Worrall, 2021). All of these evolutionary changes have prevented the urban blackbird from crossbreeding with forest blackbirds, creating a new species entirely.

Not all species that have been forced to adapt to the urban sprawl are flourishing in their new surroundings. As with the majority of wild animals who's natural habitats have been encroached in on by humans, the mountain lions indigenous to Los Angeles, California, are facing numerous threats to their survival as a result of urban development. Los Angeles is "one of only two megacities in the world that have big cats living within the city limits" ("Lions"). However, the "long-term survival of mountain lions in this region… is threatened by a number of factors, none more significant than the loss and fragmentation of habitat by roads and development" ("Lions"). There are two major consequences of urbanization that could lead to the extinction of LA mountain lions: population isolation and car accidents ("Lions"). These go hand-in-hand, as a cycle that can't seemed to be escaped. With a habitat enclosed by freeways and city-life, vehicle strikes constitute the majority of deaths for these animals, making the species unable to venture to-and-from the area ("Lions"). This results in "first-order inbreeding" becoming increasingly common in the region, with extremely low-levels of genetic diversity being an indicator of possible extinction ("Lions"). For one of these mountain lions roaming Los Angeles, life is more lonely than anything else.

Finding home in Griffith Park, P-22 ("P" standing for "puma") has become the resident mountain lion of LA (Stephenson, 2020). The famous cat reigns over every inch of the "eightsquare-mile urban wilderness of hills and canyons" (Stephenson, 2020). At the highest point in Griffith Park, Cahuenga Peak, he "can look down over the Hollywood sign to the lights of Los Angeles and out

to the pacific ocean; turn to the east and there is Burbank and the Disney campus, birthplace of that other young lion who came to rule a kingdom" (Stephenson, 2020). While having your own kingdom sounds nice in theory, P-22s' is "an island nation, hemmed in on three sides by freeways and on the fourth by the city itself" (Stephenson, 2020). Considering the lonely hunters' social-status provokes the question of how he ended up this way. New technologies allowed humans to be able to track these animals, which is how we know that P-22's parents called the rural Santa Monica Mountains home (Stephenson, 2020). To get to Griffith Park, he miraculously crossed both the Hollywood and San Diego Freeways which explains his unwillingness to make the journey home again (Stephenson, 2020).

Stephenson, S. (2020, November 04). LA's Resident Mountain Lion is a Lonely Hunter. Retrieved from https://lithub.com/las-resident-mountain-lion-is-a-lonely-hunter/

This photograph of P-22 allows its' viewers to emote with the beloved animal and share its feeling of isolation. With the majority of the image clouded by the dark of the night, two main features are well-lit drawing the focus of the viewer: P-22 himself and the famous Hollywood sign. P-22, in the foreground of the photo, seems to have a spotlight on him like if he's the star of the show. The collar on his neck, like shackles handcuffing a prisoner, shows that he is not truly free in his kingdom. Human technologies allowed for scientists to anesthetize this animal and 'brand' him with a tracking collar for the purpose of surveillance. His body language suggests fatigue; sulking down the mountain as if he's exhausted by his lonely existence. There is an "evolutionary continuity between the ways in which humans and animals express emotions"

(Creed, 2015), which means that "animals also experience a range of emotions similar to those experienced by a human animal" (Creed, 2015). For humans, there are specific indicators in body language that express our emotions, such as our posture when moping around. Animals, like P-22, communicate their emotions through body language the same way humans do; which is the only way people can learn to understand their feelings in the absence of verbal communication. Through his sullen posture and brooding eyes, the viewer can feel P-22 conveying his emotions of isolation and loneliness.

Behind him, is the iconic Hollywood sign symbolizing many peoples' dream of fame and stardom, illuminated in the night sky. What most people don't typically associate with the Hollywood sign however, are mountain lions. A city of glamour and fortune, Hollywood is a place for the elite and many have been left with broken dreams in the hopes of 'making it big.' Its fitting that in LA, "the true stars have single name recognition and are skilled at evading the limelight" (Stephenson, 2020), and P-22, "the biggest star in town, should be known merely by a designation and be so reclusive that few civilians will ever manage to catch a glimpse of him" (Stephenson, 2020). P-22, sulking and shackled by technology, juxtaposed with the renowned Hollywood sign in the background of this image, is a reminder that the never-ending human quest for new and profitable ventures has consequences.

Industrial Globalization:

Intertwined with the issue of urbanization is the process of globalization. As our world developed and grew, so did our economies, industries, and technologies. At one time, goods were only able to be purchased locally, and economies were small, localized bubbles. However, throughout history people designed new ideas in response to old problems and industrialized our world, creating a global economy and trade market. Humans are now able to ship millions of products from one country to another, and do it every day. What mankind has turned a blind-eye to throughout this industrial globalization however, is that humans are co-inhabitants on this earth and the disproportionate effect our actions have on marine life.

A significant majority of the purchases people make are on products that have been created and shipped from other countries. Today, "an estimated 90% of the worlds goods are transported by sea" (Nagurney, 2021). Without the standardized container, "the global supply chain that society depends on would not exist" (Nagurney, 2021). Maritime shipping has become necessary to the operation of global supply chains and trade, meaning there are no plans of stopping it. As with wildlife and urban development, "marine habitats and species are also threatened by new and existing trade routes" (Schoeman et. al, 2020). At least 75 different marine species are effected by maritime vessel collisions (Schoeman et. al, 2020), however marine giants such as the great whales and larger sharks are the most vulnerable to shipping hazards (Pirotta et. al, 2018). These marine giants play crucial "ecological roles in a variety of marine ecosystems" (Pirotta et. al, 2018), and for some species global shipping practices are a major limiting factor to their survival.

For one marine giant specifically, ship collisions have been responsible for more than half of the species mortalities in recent decades (Pirotta et. al, 2018). The population of the North Atlantic right whale has diminished to the point that "there are only around 360 right whales left because [of] human threats" (Massive Cargo Ships). The right whale was the "first large whale to be hunted commercially, the first to be protected internationally, and it will be the first to go extinct unless we prevent it" (Haggert, 2020). While the species is now governmentally protected, and "humans aren't killing right whales deliberately anymore, we are killing them inadvertently when they… are struck by ships" (Haggert, 2020). This is the grim fate many of these whales face, one of whom being Punctuation, a right whale mother of eight calves and grandmother of two more (Haggert, 2020). When a fatality of this nature occurs, scientists want the body to perform the animal equivalent of an autopsy (Haggert, 2020). This is what tells them not only how the whale died and how to prevent similar deaths, but it also "tells a story about what the animal went through to survive" (Haggert, 2020). Up close, Punctuation's "inky skin was a roadmap of white scars from her many interactions with sharp blades… [and] there were multiple old propeller scars on her left side, mottled scarring on her left lip, her tail, both flippers and her right side" (Haggert, 2020). The extensive list of Punctuation's injuries is evidence of the human impact on these animals.

This photograph depicts just one step in the process of removing Punctuation's massive, lifeless body from the Atlantic Ocean in order to learn about her journey through life. Five days prior to this image Punctuation's body was found floating with a "vast slash across her black abdomen, the result of a ship strike" (Haggert, 2020). A coast guard vessel towed her body to Grand Étang, where it was maneuvered onto the shore (Haggert, 2020). This operation required a team, with this image capturing just a few of the "several dozen people that had gathered" (Haggert, 2020). The photo shows the rocky shores of Nova Scotia, with an excavator lifting the carcass of Punctuation out of the water. There are three people visible, one of whom wearing a uniform with a linguistic message on the back of his vest, reading "Fishery Officer," with the French translation below. This linguistic message is denotational, helping us "to identify purely and simply the elements of the scene and the scene itself" (Barthes, 1977, p. 274). This message in combination with the man's uniform, tells the viewer he is an officer of the law and is there to help oversee the safe and successful removal process.

Haggert. (2020, October 19). Punctuation's mark: Can we save the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale? Retrieved from

https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/punctuations-mark-can-we-

The gloomy skies provide a backdrop to the unfortunate sight, with the entirety of the image mirroring its cool color tones. The exception to this however, is the faint light of the excavator illuminating the mangled tail of the animal. As a result of prior cultural knowledge, most viewers would be able to tell this enormous, lifeless mass is a whale. However, the well-lit, eye-catching whale tail in the center   of the image acts as a non-coded iconic message instantly indicating to viewers what they are looking at (Barthes, 1977). The lighting in this image both, literally and figuratively, illuminates the gruesome reality for countless right whales (and many other marine species) as a result of global shipping practices. Her death has become a "devastating symbol of just how badly humanity has failed… to protect the North Atlantic right whale from human assaults" (Haggert, 2020). The fatal consequences of the industrial globalization of our world can be seen across the world, yet the practices continue. Unless there are substantial changes made within the core operations of our global supply chain, human development will push not only the right whale but many other marine species to the point of extinction.

Tourism:

People can argue that despite the adverse impact on wildlife, both urbanization and industrial globalization have positively advanced our world. However, wildlife tourism is one practice that is purely for human entertainment and cannot be justified by the terms of human development. While there is economic benefit in the tourism industry, few people would consider its services necessary to the growth of our society. Amplified through social media, the desire to photograph, observe, and interact with wild animals has resulted in animals being encroached on in their own habitat. Humans are drawn to the beauty of wildlife through photography and consequently want to catch a glimpse of it with our own eyes. What people don't see however, are the negative effects our search for the "best picture" have on the subjects, the wild animals.   This is not to say that wildlife photography is a negative thing entirely. When done right it has the power to inspire people with the wonders of nature and hopefully in turn create a desire to protect wildlife and produce real change. Especially with the prevalence of social media, photos can go viral in just minutes bringing attention to wildlife crises around the globe. Unfortunately, this is a type of double-edged sword. Just as images can go viral and produce positive change, their virality can perpetuate the invasive tourism practices. In recent decades, "wildlife tourism has rapidly expanded and is one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry" (Wildlife Tourism). While many people would think going on a safari has no effect on the animals because it's observing the animal rather than interacting with it, in reality wildlife tourism can "have adverse effects on wildlife: by causing changes in their behavior, changing their physiology, or damaging their habitats" (Impact of Tourism). It has become a "serious threat to population maintenance and survival" (Impact of Tourism), which begs the question of why these practices are still allowed? Nevertheless, the wildlife tours continue on, with travelers, bloggers, and influencers sharing photos of their experiences (Janieks, 2020). These images can "influence millions of people around the world" (Janieks, 2020) and a single post has the power "to encourage other travelers to seek out similar experiences, starting a dangerous cycle" (Janieks, 2020). The continuation of this cycle is legitimizing its actions; monetizing wild animals as photo opportunities and selfie props rather than condemning these actions that are negatively effecting numerous species of animals.

Photographer, Karine Aigner, prides herself on following a strict code of ethics when it comes to wildlife photography. However, this photograph she captured calls her reliability into question. Taken on an excursion in Ranthambore National Park, India, Aigner explains the event of this photograph as the "scene on any given day" there, while drivers "aggressively race along the roads, jockeying for space while chasing tigers" (Ranthambore Tiger). While in this image we can only see one direction, with at least four trucks carrying dozens of people, behind Aigner were another ten trucks (Ranthambore Tiger). She makes the argument that people have to start respecting wildlife in its natural home by creating a tourism system does the same; yet the process of capturing this image and subsequently posting it on as large of a platform as the National Geographic, contradicts the points she made. While her defense is the ethical guidelines she follows, what is the line between ethical wildlife photography and wildlife tourism images, if there is one? At some point the ethics of it erodes to the point where they are one and the same, humans encroaching on wild animals habitat.

Ranthambore Tiger [@natgeo]. (2021, September 24). The scene on any given day in Ranthambore National Park, in India [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from

https://www.instagram.com/p/ CUM3qVcMWQ_/.

Front and center in this photograph, is the dangerous, yet graceful, predatory tiger. Restricted between two lines of trucks, the animal runs through the path as if he is putting on the show the

tourists came for. The tiger, a natural predator in the wild, is a magnificent and vicious creature that no (sane) human would approach on their own. However in this photograph, due to the positioning and point of view of the photographer, it seems as though the tiger is smaller and more fragile than it is in reality. It appears that what is usually the predator has become the prey. He has become a prey to human desires, the longing for an up-   close and personal view of the wild. The positioning of this image reiterates the tiger's feeling of entrapment, as if the walls are closing in on both sides. This photo, and ones like it, turn the wild animal into a spectacle- a commodity for more "likes" or "followers" on social media. In the process of doing so, these "photographs cut sympathy [and] distance the emotions" (Sontag, 1977). The animals become nothing more than content for influencers and bloggers, and people lose sight of the fact that they are living-beings and are not purely for our entertainment. At the rate mankind is going, the negative effects wildlife tourism has on the wild animals will become increasingly detrimental. Through humans encroachment of wildlife habitats, even just as spectators, the animals we so desperately want to see are being adversely impacted.

Conclusion:

In comparison to a captive animal, such as those living in a zoo or aquarium, the animals living in the wild seem to have it easy. However despite being "wild," many different species still feel the impact of humanity. Whether it be for our enjoyment and social status or for the development and evolution of our ever-changing society, our actions as humans are negatively affecting animals across the globe. The consequences are evident, with more and more animals becoming endangered species. Urbanization, industrial globalization, and tourism are all responsible for the tragic fate awaiting these animals. Through the progression of society humans have continuously encroached on the homes of wild and marine life, claiming it as our own, without regard for its original occupants.

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A Manufactured Culture: A Look Into How U.S. Imperialism Coerced The Philippine Economy Into A Culture of Migration

Gio Ramos

Part I: Introduction

Emigration from the Philippines has been seen by many as road to economic prosperity. The Philippines is considered a third-world country, so it is no surprise that there are few job opportunities that provide a livable wage. Filipinos have been going through labor brokerages as a mode for employment sending Philippine nationals across the globe. I will be evaluating the driving factors that caused this cultural shift within the Philippines through the question: How has American imperialism steered the Philippines towards a culture of labor emigration? Through this research question, we will be investigating to better understand how the Philippines came to this predicament.

We will also be looking at socioeconomical factors that may have caused a shift into this culture through questions such as: When did emigration start? Did American occupancy and propaganda encourage or manipulate Filipinos to emigrate? Did any internal cultural conflicts cause Filipino emigration? Where do Filipinos emigrate to? From where in the Philippines do they emigrate from? How has labor brokerages affected the economy? We will also look at the demographics of those who emigrate because it gives a crucial perspective on how certain groups may have been treated through a socioeconomic lens. This topic is significant when discussing the Philippines because this culture of labor migration is what helps drive the domestic economy through remittance.

Part II: Definitions

Before discussing the cultural theorists and literature, we must define key terms that will be used in this essay. Cultural imperialism is when a dominant or wealthy nation imposes their ways of life (culturally, economically, politically, and other aspects of their culture) onto a less developed or colonized nation. This term will be brought up multiple times because it is an important aspect of

determining how the US steered the Philippines into a manufactured culture of labor migration. Americanization is another term that is closely related to cultural imperialism. Americanization are "activities that were designed to prepare foreign-born residents of the United States for full participation in citizenship" (*Britannica, 2021*).

Remittance is when a citizen or native is exported for labor and they send money back to their family for financial support. It can also apply to former citizens from said nation who has emigrated to another for work. This money is then flushed back into the native economy. Remittance is a driving factor for many developing nations' economies and especially the Philippines. Remittance is the second highest source of income for the Philippines and accounts for "29.9 billion US dollars" in 2020 from emigrants and OFW's (*Statista, 2021*). In 2011, Filipinos remitted "20.12 billion US dollars" which shows a sizeable increase in just 8 years (*Statista, 2021*). A study from the Philippine Statistics Authority shows that in 2019, there were "2.2 million" Filipinos working abroad at a single time (*Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020*).

Emigration is when someone permanently leaves their native country. This is a term least commonly used. For example, in the US we have immigrants, but a native would refer to another native who immigrated to the US or another country as an emigrant. Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) is a common term used to describe a labor migrant from the Philippines. To be considered an OFW, one must retain their Philippine citizenship. OFW's are commonly found in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia while emigrants commonly reside in the US and Canada.

Part III: Cultural Theories

Chapter 1: Introduction to Cultural Theories

Dorfman and Mattelart's, How *to Read Donald Duck,* analyzes the issues of cultural imperialism that the *Donald Duck* comics convey. The natives are often depicted as "mentally underdeveloped and physically overdeveloped" (*Dorfman and Mattelart 49, 1971*). Though this book aims to criticize how Disney has changed the public's perception of South American natives

and their culture through a mass medium, I will be using the prevalent stereotypes and conflicts in this book and parallel it to US imperialism in the Philippines. These comics are littered with examples that embody the motivations and attitudes of colonizers. For example, "some trinket, the product of technological superiority (European or North American) is exchanged for gold (spices, ivory, tea, etc.)" (*Dorfman and Mattelart 49, 1971*). The natives are no longer able to build any sort of economy of their own because their natural resources are stripped in these one-sided exchanges of goods.

Another example from this book I will be using is the idea of the 'good' and 'bad' foreigners. The 'good' foreigners are described as ""under their ethical cloak, win the native's confidence" (Dorfman & Mattelart, 53). The 'bad' foreigners are "villains: course, vulgar, repulsive, out-and-out thieves" (Dorfman & Mattelart, 53). Dorfman and Mattelart argue that the 'bad' foreigners are expandable pieces used to reveal the 'good' foreigners as "defenders of justice, law, and food for the hungry" (Dorfman & Mattelart, 53). These examples will be used to examine Charles Bartholomew's, *Cartoons of the Spanish-American War (1899).*

Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi's *Many Faces of Cultural Imperialism* discusses multiple aspects of how imperialism affects the 'dominated' countries. I will be focusing on education, language, nation building, and briefly touch on tourism. Tourism is a smaller factor when talking about the culture of emigration, but I will be looking at the 3 S's, "sun, sea, sex" (*Mohammadi 64, 1997*). The Philippines; 1. is a tropical island 2. Manila became the sex capitol of the world at one point. Mohammadi argues that language has the biggest cultural impact because the imperialist imposed their language on these societies. The Philippines is currently ranked fifth highest in number of English speaking-population (*Wikipedia, 2021*), which is attributed to American colonialism. Mohammadi's theories pair well with Lasker's book, which is examined in the next chapter, and the Americanization of the education systems within the Philippines then later the American installation of the first Philippine government.

David Held's *Cultural Politics in a Global Age* explores two views of globalization of culture; a 'clash of civilizations' and the "erosion of values and life ways" (*Held 1, 2007*). Held argues that

culture is a key factor in mobilizing globalization rather than succumbing to it. This ties in really well with my research on labor brokerages because with the formation of a culture of labor migration in the Philippines, it put globalization into hyperdrive seeing that the Philippines is one of the world's largest exporter of labor. Throughout this research, these cultural theories will be revisited due to the impact they have on helping answer the research question.

Part V: Literature Analysis

Chapter 2: US Colonialism

The Spanish-American War was a pivotal point in Philippine history. As of the result of this war, world powers transitioned from Spain to the US along with the colonial jurisdiction of the Philippines. Bruno Lasker's, *Filipino Immigration 1969,* gives great historical context of who, where, when, and why early Filipinos emigrants came to the US. In 1969, there were only around "56,000" Filipino immigrants living in the mainland US, which were heavily concentrated on the Pacific Coast compared to "5,603" in 1920, according to reports from the Bureau of Insular Affairs and the United States Immigration Service in Hawaii (*Lasker 21, 1969*). The composition of these early immigrants was nine-tenths male, which will drastically change over the century. Lasker also looks into the points of origin of these labor immigrants. An overwhelming majority of early Filipino emigrants came from provinces that are more rural, poor, and farther away from the Philippine capitol of Manila.

Early Filipino emigrants first came to Hawaii to work for the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association. Hawaii had a total net gain of "56,591" Filipinos from 1907-1929. (*Lasker 31, 1969*). Before this period, Hawaiian plantation workers were made up of Japanese and Chinese citizens. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 had little effect on labor shortages for the sugar plantations, but a "Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan, in 1907, forced sugar planters … to look for a new supply of labor" (*Lasker 28, 1969)*. Filipinos were convenient because they were considered nationals to the US due to its territorial status at the time.

The Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) is responsible for the early immigrants into Hawaii. The HSPA had now discarded their aggressive recruitment tactics because of a steady flow of Filipino workers, but "it cannot be denied that methods used in the past and now discarded still are effective in the minds of the people" (*Lasker 204, 1969*). These tactics include, exaggerating benefits of coming to the US and going as far as claiming that there was "no unemployment" in the US. (*Lasker 206, 1969*). Lasker also claims that a high government official in the Philippines showed propaganda films, that featured scenes of American businessmen handing out checks, "is entirely responsible for starting the emigration movement. It advertised the glorious adventure and the beautiful opportunities that would be offered" (*Lasker 204, 1969*). Out of all the labor migrants who came to the US and Hawaii, around 45,000 Filipinos returned to the native land. They brought back "new tastes, possessions" and tell all about the "new worlds" (*Lasker 219, 1969*).

Lasker describes the early Filipino school system as "the main channel of Americanizing influences" (*Lasker 221, 1969*). These school systems used American history textbooks, taught patriotism, and were taught by American teachers brought to the islands. English was taught from the first grade on and was considered necessary. Though these early education systems had everlasting effects on many Filipinos, Lasker acknowledges that the current system teaches Philippine folk tales and history. But history is taught the same way Americans teach their history, with a strong sense of patriotism. The press and the moving picture are another crucial source for Americanization. In 1928, a number of Filipino emigrants sadly passed away while aboard the President Cleveland. The *Free Press* news company used this situation to advertise pictures illustrating "the joys of the voyage from Manila to Hawaii" (*Lasker 227, 1969*). This piece was also used as an advertisement for the HSPA. Lasker notes that since the press only reached a minority of Filipinos, Hollywood's lure "led hundreds of emigrants" (*Lasker 229, 1969*). Hollywood didn't have the only influence towards emigrants, the HSPA showed many propaganda and educational films when the emigrants arrived. Lasker's book reveals a large part of American influence within the Philippines. These sections illuminate the capitalist interest that in part steered Filipinos towards emigration.

My next analysis discusses the study of labor brokerages in the Philippines. Labor brokering is the practice of exporting or importing labor where companies contract labor brokers who provide 'casual' or 'temporary' work. A lot of developing nations economies rely on the export for labor because of remittance. Many nations natives' view this as a bandage to high unemployment rates in their respective countries because it doesn't fix the problem but rather delays it. Robyn Rodriguez's, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World,* explores the Philippine labor brokerages that send their citizens across the globe for work due to high unemployment domestically. Rodriguez emphasizes that labor brokerages and the export for labor generates the second largest source of income for the Philippine economy due to remittance. Rodriguez pulls data from the Philippines National Statistics office showing that Filipinos remitted "US $16 billion" in 2008 alone (*Rodriguez xiv, 2010*). This is only one set of data that she uses in her book. Rodriguez gives more statistics showing a trend that remittance has consistently been on the rise since the early 2000's.

When the Philippine president, Gloria Arroyo, visited the US in 2003, she encouraged US businessmen to employ Filipinos to fill their labor needs. Here she claims that the Filipino workforce is a "global enterprise" (*Rodriguez x, 2010*). Many Filipinos are ready to be exported due to high unemployment but in Arroyo's speech it is suggested that employers can save money "because Philippine workers are a temporary workforce ostensibly less able or willing to demand wage increases and better benefits over time" (*Rodriguez x, 2010).*

Rodriquez claims that the labor brokerage system is "in large part a result of the US colonial legacy in the Philippines" because we can track the "institutional precursors of this system" and "US colonialism and neocolonialism has had deep lasting consequences". (*Rodriguez 1, 2010*). She provides key examples of institutional precursors to the labor brokerage system. One example was the introduction of public health in the 1940's where trainees were sent to the US to become nurses. She also mentions labor recruiters associated with the HSPA around 1910-1930. Anti-Filipino sentiment had spread across the US and the "government was forced to curtail the immigration of Filipino workers through the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934" (*Rodriguez 8, 2010*).

This prompted the independence of the Philippine nation which was widely supported by US citizens due to the anti-Filipino sentiment. Filipina's were exempt so that they could study nursing and Filipino men were granted an opportunity to serve in the US military. Rodriguez further claims that the participation of Filipino in the US Navy "beginning in the 1950's in many ways marked the beginning of the globalization of Filipinos" (*Rodriguez 9, 2010*). The Presidential Decree 442 in 1974 started the state's institutionalization of labor migration which Rodriguez attributes to the nursing programs. This book offers the perfect look into answering my research question. Though this is only part of my research we will be looking at some consequences of US occupation in the Philippines in the next chapters.

Chapter 3: US Propaganda in the Philippines

This section will be dedicated to contextualizing three cartoons from Charles Bartholomew's, *Cartoons of the Spanish-American War (1899)*. I say contextualize because I cannot say how these pieces affected the minds of Filipinos, but rather analyze what they are implying.
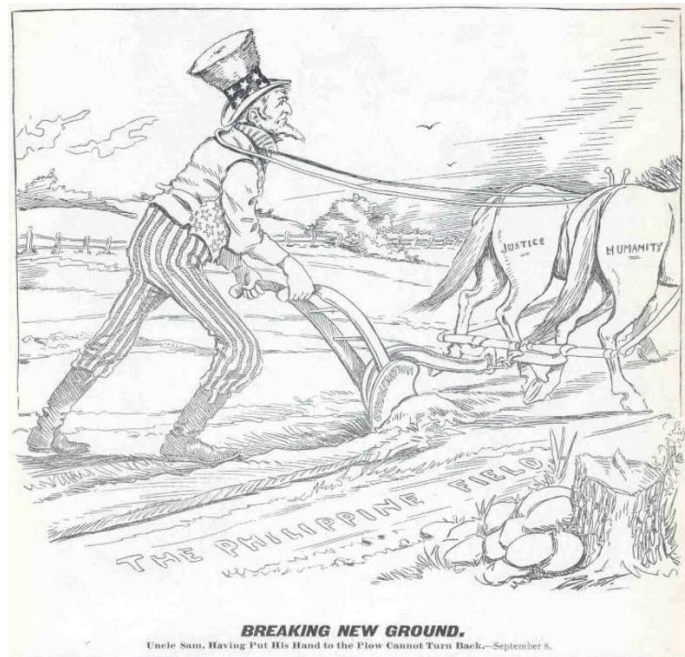

(Cartoons of the Spanish-American War by Charles Bartholomew, 1899)

This first piece depicts a Puerto Rican and a Cuban in 'civilized' clothing standing behind Uncle Sam. The Cuban is holding his national flag with "Independence" printed onto it. The Filipino is dressed in "savage" or "primitive" like clothing. The text at the bottom shows dialogue of Uncle Sam saying, "Well sonny, what is it?" and the Filipino responds "Where do I get in on this?". This piece implies that with the help of the US they can become civilized and independent.
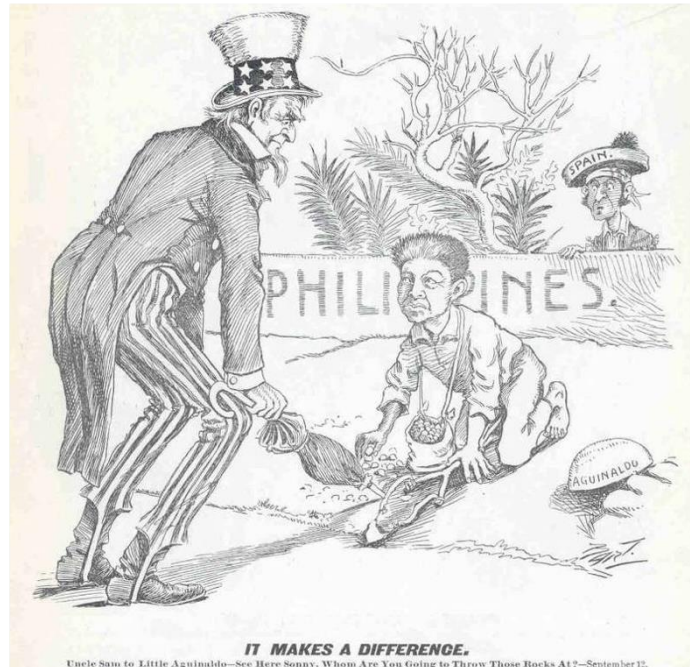
(Cartoons of the Spanish-American War by Charles Bartholomew, 1899)

The second propaganda cartoon I am analyzing shows Uncle Sam standing over a Filipino farmer asking, "Whom are you going to throw those rocks at?", while a man from Spain sits behind the wall of the Philippines. I believe this is referring to the Philippine-American war in 1899, where Uncle Sam is implying to not throw the rocks Americans but rather at the Spanish. This closely relates to Dorfman and Mattelart's idea of the 'good' and 'bad' foreigner. The 'good' foreigners are the Americans who will bring them independence while the 'bad' foreigners are the Spaniards who were there to steal their resources.

(Cartoons of the Spanish-American War by Charles Bartholomew, 1899)

The last cartoon I am contextualizing is the most powerful one of them all. Uncle Sam is depicted to be tilling the Philippine fields with a "Civilization" printed onto the till. It is powered by two horses named Justice and Humanity. This directly implies that the Philippines was an undeveloped, unjust, inhumane, and savage nation who needed someone like the US to develop it. Again, this conceptualizes Dorfman and Mattelart's idea of the 'good' and 'bad' foreigner. The US is there to bring civilization, justice, and humanity but at what expense?

Chapter 4: Internal Conflicts in the Philippines

With a large part of early history of American imperialism out of the way, I will be analyzing the internal relationships in the Philippines. In many parts of the next few literatures, American occupation will be brought up as a source of many problems. That being said, Neferti Tadiars's *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Making of Globalization 2009,* heavily focuses on the feminization of the Philippines and their work, accompanied by other progressive Filipino scholars and artists, towards shaping the social, political, and economic fabrics of the Philippines and understanding globalization. I will not be using majority of this book, but there are key theories and historical implications that I will be connecting to other pieces of literature

to further my research and theory of how American colonialism shaped the Philippines. The chapter I am focusing on occurs within the Ferdinand Marcos era of the Philippines (1965 – 1986). In 1965, the 10th president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, started his corrupt authoritarian regime. Marcos set to urbanize the Philippines by making progressing infrastructure, agriculture, and education but had many troubles with urban guerilla groups in the country. In 1972, Marcos declared martial law due to the violent nature of these guerilla groups which gave him an extraordinary amount of power over the country. He used this time to further benefit his regime by jailing his political opposition and appointing industry members into office.

Tadiar speaks of a "crisis of culture" emphasizing that Philippine culture in itself is "defined by crisis" (*Tadiar 26, 2009*) due to its long history with colonization. During the Marcos era, there were two crises at play. Marcos had a healthy relationship with the United States due to his ideological standing and manufactured the crisis of a communist threat in the Philippines. On the other hand, anti-imperialist nationalists claimed that "Philippine's culture was suffocating under the weight of western powers" brought by the colonial mentality from Marcos and his supporters, all in the expense of the people (*Tadiar 26, 2009*). This crisis of culture led to the downfall of many citizens economically and culturally, which disproportionally affected the women of the Philippines, forcing them into prostitution, later earning Manila the title 'Sex Capitol' of the world. Tadiar quotes a 'bad joke' making rounds during the Marcos era saying "Gas, rice, sugar – everything is going up! The only things coming down are panties!" (*Tadiar 25, 2009*). The sex workers were heavily concentrated around American military bases in droves ranging from "three hundred thousand to five hundred thousand" (*Tadiar 25, 2009*). This links to Mohammadi idea of the 3 S's; "sun, sea, sex" (*Mohammadi 64, 1997*). Mohammadi explores the different ways imperialism affects a culture and, in this case, tourism. Sun, sea, and more importantly sex, are major proponents of bringing tourism to a country. In the 70's, sex became a staple to the Philippines and Tadiar directly links it to American occupation in the archipelago.

Before diving into gender politics and labor exports, I will briefly discuss some problems within the Philippine economy illuminated by Peter Krink's, *The Economy of the Philippines 2002,* which analyzes the economic disparities among Filipinos. Each region had a role in the economy, but the

development across the country has been alarmingly uneven. The farmlands and rural areas produced most of the exports under Spanish rule but when the Americans took jurisdiction, infrastructural development became concentrated in Manila. This connects to Lasker's book and how an overwhelming majority of immigrants came from the rural regions far from the nation's capital. The Philippines was "the first East Asian colony to gain independence peacefully" and became one of the first to industrialize after Japan. (*Krinks 1, 2002*) The economy grew at an exceptional rate until a deep economic stagnation took place in the 1970's. A lot of this is blamed on Ferdinand Marcos's poor policies and corruption. Many problems still persisted after his claim to power due to political problems and "seven attempted military coupes against President Aquino" (*Krinks 2, 2002*).

Foreign investors eventually felt confident enough to start investing again which helped revive economic growth. This helped the Philippines somewhat survive the East Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 which was attributed to "strong competition from China in export markets, growing current account deficits, and increasing use of short-term foreign loans by corporations and banks" (*Krinks 55, 2002*). This caused the devaluation of the Philippine Peso to drop about "25%" of its worth which caused manufacturers and employers to reduce work hours for more than "200,000 employees" and many salaries of the employees were froze (*Krinks 57, 2002*). Changes in the economy from the 1960's and forward stopped the export of a substantial amount of natural resources like timber so it can be used for the nation. This led to labor brokerages and labor exports which have been a pivotal for the Philippines since American imperialism but has been ramped since the 1970's.

Chapter 5: Gendered Politics of Labor in the Philippines

A large part of the internal conflicts in the Philippines are studied in a gendered scope. Tadiar focuses on cultural relationships, but Elizabeth Eviota, *The Political Economy of Gender: Women and the Sexual Division of Labour in the Philippines 1992,* focuses on labor done by women in the Philippines. I will also not be using majority of this book, but a large section is dedicated towards American rule. She explores how Spanish colonizers, then later American colonizers, had the

same goal towards global capitalism, which "stated motives were clothed in altruism" (*Eviota 63, 1992*). Altruism is the practice of moral concern of another person or people. This again closely parallels Dorfman & Mattelart idea of the 'good' and 'bad' foreigners. The 'good' foreigners come to the lands under an 'ethical cloak' and are there for justice and serve food for the hungry but have other motives at play. When the US took over, they geared the Filipino economy to fit their needs for natural resources, labor, and sex work. The US did establish the first Philippine Republic but was short-lived because it "reproduced the same instruments of dominance and control as that of the colonial power" (*Eviota 63, 1992*). In modern history, the Philippines only knew colonization, which is reflected by Tadiar's 'culture of crisis'.

Though the Philippines had female leaders within their ranks, they were often relatives of other male leaders and faced sexual abuse and scrutiny. Women did partake in the economy and labor by working in small scale farms and fished but there was very little opportunity for all and very little diversity in work seeing that the Philippines was infrastructurally underdeveloped as a nation. Eviota uses the 1903 census report showing that "30 percent" of the female population were in "gainful employment" compared to the "58 percent" of males (*Eviota 65, 1992*). Gainful employment means employment that allows self-sufficiency. Eviota suggest that these numbers show that women primarily engage in housekeeping work because at the time, housekeeping was not considered gainful work. Women also engaged in the industrial military reserve, but as American intervention increased, women were "forced to withdraw exclusively to reproductive work" (*Eviota 64, 1992*). Reproductive work is domestic housework that includes caregiving, cooking, cleaning, and anything that is unpaid. This is where Western ideals start to navigate into the Philippines, with the 'traditional household' mindset of a stay at home mother for the purpose of reproductive work while the father is the breadwinner.

In Lasker's, *Filipino Immigration*, men made up about nine-tenths of labor exports. Rhacel Parreñas's, *Servants of Globalization: Migration and Domestic Work 2015,* highlights that the gender disparity has evened out over the century, with females dominating in domestic labor. Parreñas uses data from 2008 that shows women accounted for "57,354" migrant domestic labor exports compared to "2,835 men" (*Parreñas 3, 2015*). Domestic work is work within a household

via nannies, caregivers, and housecleaners. This links to Eviota's book and her claims that women forced into reproductive domestic work early in its history with US colonialism. Labor exports from the Philippines is only increasing by the year. This "is not a historical accident but emerged from the state's promotion of migrant labor exportation" (*Parreñas 4, 2015*). In 2008, there were "60,000 migrant domestic workers", and that number bumped up to "80,000" the following year (*Parreñas 3, 2015*). For clarification, these numbers only account for domestic work and not any other type of work that other men and women engage in. This manifests Held's idea that culture mobilizes globalization. In this case, a manufactured culture of labor migration has set globalization into hyperdrive now that Filipinos and Filipinas have been sent to at least "160 destinations" (*Parreñas 4, 2015*).

Part VI: Conclusion and Findings

I have discussed an abundance of evidence pointing towards the effects that American colonization had on the Philippines. American colonization seems to be the root cause of labor brokerages and a manufactured culture of labor migration. Americanization through education and media also played a massive role into pushing Filipino's into a 'western' mindset. Labor brokerages have been traced all the way back to the early 20th century from the HSPA and eventually the nursing programs that the US offered to Filipinas. Culture was another huge aspect affected. Because of the development of these labor brokerages, Filipino's are sent across the globe for temporary work in order to remit money back into the Philippine economy. Remittance has become the second largest source of income for the nation and has been steadily increasing since the 1970's. The labor brokerage system is only a crutch for the time being until the Philippine government can create new domestic jobs but that doesn't seem to be the case because of the increase in labor exports over the years. This culture of labor migration in the Philippines manifests Held's idea of culture being the driver of globalization. Today, Filipinos and Filipinas are sent to 160 different destinations for work. I wouldn't say that the Philippines is the main driver of globalization, but they are definitely a key part in the voyage towards globalization.

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Rhetorical Analysis of Setting: Boston Children's Hospital

Aimee Rothman

Organizations plan their main headquarters or campuses around their purposes and the publics that they want to attract. Because of this, we can begin to "judge an organization and its publics" by looking closely at their settings. By strategically planning their main headquarters, companies articulate the ethos and character of their organization. The main headquarters becomes a reflection of the company itself, as the exterior matches the "interior" goals of the organization. In their locations and designs, the company is able to acknowledge, construct, and engage their publics. According to the *Atlantic*, "Choosing the right site offers the chance for a business to make a statement about the kind of company it is, the kind of culture it has, and the kind of talent it is looking to hire" ("Why So Many Companies"). A carefully crafted headquarters tells the story behind an organization and informs their publics with critical information about their offerings, their ethos, their relationships, and their brand. Putting this proposition to the test, I analyzed Boston Children's Hospital's main headquarters. Specifically, I will be focusing on what their headquarters conveys about the organization and its publics.

Since its founding in 1869, Boston Children's Hospital has become one of the best of its kind in the nation and the world (Torantore, 2020). Their headquarters is located in the center of Boston, Massachusetts; however, they have several other "campuses" throughout Massachusetts. Their headquarter campus is inviting and easily accessible. Boston is an international city with a strong infrastructure of public transportation, making this location convenient for Massachusetts state residents, as well as out-of-state patients, who may fly directly to Logan airport, which is only a short ride away from the hospital. Boston Children's Hospital is an international crossroads where experts, professionals, patients, families, and the community mingle to face illness, tragedy, heartbreak, and recovery. The hospital is sacred ground where the hopes, dreams, responsibilities, and opportunities of generations blend and persist.

The "main campus" is a prodigious complex in the Longwood Medical and Academic neighborhood of Boston. Situated in this prestigious neighborhood, Children's Hospital Boston is

professional and modern on the exterior. The building and its grounds tell its patients and their families that this hospital is where they need to be: it conveys professionalism and security, with its clean, well-kept and modern appearance. This hospital is large and houses thousands of collaborating health care professionals. This "state of the art" facility not only reassures patients, but it also attracts the broad range of experts and professionals who will be able to offer the wide range of services available from Children's. The exterior of this hospital makes it look equipped to be the place where experts meet and treat patients with the latest techniques and miracles.

While the exterior is monumental and professional, the interior is more nuanced and varied— according to the broad range of functions, services, and activities happening all at once. Inside, there is a place for all members of the Children's public: from patient to professional. The most important spaces inside this building are for the patients. These are soothing and creative designs meant to facilitate healing. There is child-like artwork all over the walls, and a boatload of hidden bursts of playful creativity. For example, the main staircase plays music as you ascend it. In addition, there are fish tanks and mesmerizing television screens that can help sooth children who may be in pain or in distress. The public spaces are designed to soothe and comfort patients and their families. The patients may feel better about their visits because, even though they may hate the reason they are there, the hospital provides plenty of outlets for them to calm down and feel bits of joy. The public spaces for diagnosis and recovery offer opportunities for the patients' families to be present, interact, but not interfere with clinical practices. When a child is diagnosed, parents and families of that child want to help their child in the best way they can.

The interior of the hospital offers not only clinical space: it also houses many additional public facilities such as a gift shop, food court, restaurants, chapels, galleries, and a Starbucks—some of the same institutions and establishments we would find in Boston itself: perhaps the musical stairs offer a nod to the Museum of Science. The familiar shops and institutions in the hospital offer the publics of this facility conveniences and flourishes on short notice. They allow the family members to stay close to their sick children, while bringing them some sort of consolation, variety, and comfort from the city, as needed. Those who come to this hospital expect to feel at home here, but they may also need a break now and then—to run an errand, to purchase a book

of puzzles or a toy, to deliver a surprise on a whim. The various mall shops and institutions in the hospital offer visitors a chance to escape—on their own behalf and on behalf of their loved ones who are being treated.

The interior design of the clinical and treatment spaces of Children's have healing purposes at every possible opportunity: for example, the main floor dining area is equipped with strategic lighting, ample seating, and the comforting aroma of Starbucks coffee. These details add a sense of tranquility, as patients, families and staff can enjoy a treat in a place that is welcoming. The shades of indigo and violet are a detail that shouldn't be overlooked (Kress and van Leeuwen). According to colorpsychology.org, "Indigo is a color related to devotion and helping others. It suggests fairness and impartiality" (van Braam). Additionally, "purple has a calming effect on the mind and body. While it is often uplifting and inspiring, the blue undertones also ensure a soothing effect is felt, lowering blood pressure and heart rate."

Also on the main floor, a fish tank with an array of coral and fish allows patients and families to be mesmerized and transported as they wait: perhaps this aquarium also offers a nod to the famous New England Aquarium on the Central Wharf. According to a study conducted by the University of Exeter Medical School with Plymouth University, "Fish tanks and displays are often associated with attempts at calming patients in doctors' surgeries and dental waiting rooms. This study has, for the first time, provided robust evidence that 'doses' of exposure to underwater settings could actually have a positive impact on people's wellbeing" ("New Study Finds"). This research also suggests that "viewing aquarium displays led to noticeable reductions in blood pressure and heart rate, and that higher numbers of fish helped to hold people's attention for longer and improve their moods."

Under the Department of Spiritual Care, there is a chapel on the first floor of Children's to acknowledge the spiritual aspects of all human endeavors—from science to medicine to grief. The iconography of the chapel is neutrally reverent: a stained glass featuring a nurse with a child, brightly colored surreal landscape paintings, a photo-gallery of various citizens involved in the full range of sacred ceremonies and rituals from around the world. The pews in the chapel include old

pews from the House of the Good Samaritan, a hospital that cared for Boston's poor for one hundred years before it merged with Children's in the 1960s. There is little permanent, orthodox religious iconography in the chapel, but on certain occasions, specific religious iconography can be moved in as necessary. At one time, a clever, comical pulley system was installed so they could change the religious iconography with convenience, depending on who was using the chapel ("Boston's Children's Hospital"). Nowadays, the diverse peoples at Children's generally share the chapel space—fulfilling their own spiritual needs as they coincide and cooperate, coming and going as needed with others from the same or different faiths.

Not every space at Children's Hospital is public and visible: there are many spaces behind closed, restricted doors in hidden, well-equipped suites. For various good reasons (common sense, safety, morality, priority, functionality), non-public and invisible spaces are necessary to this state-of-the art facility. Under the roof and mission of Children's Hospital, there is a broad range of pioneering, ongoing research programs for understanding and treating the old and new afflictions that send us to the hospital. There are on-site laboratories where essential tests are run and applied in the ongoing treatment plans for any and all patients. There are consulting spaces that offer just the right amount of intimacy and privacy. There are offices that house and coordinate the maintenance and cleaning of this beautiful, merciful facility. And, of course, there are offices for the full range of hospital administrators. Such spaces are more tightly regulated: they tend to be functional and generic—in the best sense of those concepts. The publics who occupy these spaces are crucial to the successes and mercies of the hospital, but their roles and their spaces require less interaction with patients and their visitors. The signs of their important contributions are often necessarily invisible.

By choosing Boston Children's Hospital, patients and their families are making a leap of faith—with high expectations: they need diagnosis, treatment, hope, and mercy. The modern and professional exterior of this hospital can help their patients and families feel secure in the care they will receive at the hospital. Under this roof, doctors, researchers, technicians, and clinicians come together as collaborators to achieve both their own professional ambitions and to offer hope and healing to their patients. The grounds and the various designed spaces of Boston

Children's Hospital are obviously sacred ground where we are all bound together—in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, for better or for worse.

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The Resurrection of Yik Yak

Lily Neher

How does a hit social platform disappear completely, only to return just as abruptly without clear explanation? In 2017, popular social platform Yik Yak was shut down after multiple internal and external issues. The app, popular on college campuses for its location-based nature as a vehicle for campus gossip, disappeared from the internet for several years. In August 2021 the second iteration of Yik Yak returned to the app store just in time for the fall semester. Does Yik Yak's return show more promise than its original rendition? Will engagement of the current class of college students propel it forward, or will issues surrounding bullying and abuse of anonymity strike it down again? In exploring the appeal of location-based apps like Yik Yak, one can articulate the significance of online communities in academia and see why Yik Yak is able to highlight aspects of the student experience in unique ways. Through upvotes and downvotes, users are able to self-moderate content depending on the given communities' opinion of what crosses the line. Yik Yak's presence in the digital economy is a thriving part of the digital landscape as the app's nature allows for an interactive message board that mirrors real-life social phenomena.

When Yik Yak first appeared on the app store in 2013, it rose to popularity quickly, earning it a valuation of $400 million around a year later. The structure of the app is rooted in three things: location, anonymity, and user moderation. "Yaks" or 200-character limit messages in one's five-mile radius are displayed without usernames across two tabs, one chronological and the other "hot", featuring yaks that have received a large number of votes within the app's voting system. This voting system allows each user to click an up or down arrow beside each message, allowing the Yak to either gain more visibility with "upvotes", or to be taken down completely at a relatively small cap of 5 "downvotes". Favored on college campuses, it became a free-for-all message board and sense of student life, until more significant issues arose.

Most concerns that led to the demise of the first version of Yik Yak stemmed from cyberbullying and concern over use of the app by younger kids spreading somewhat harmful gossip in middle and high schools. Instances of legitimate threats being made on the app led to debate around whether one should be identified from a Yak, and where to draw the line on the app's anonymity policy. All this turmoil was followed by a series of security breaches from 2015-2017, with the abrupt exit of the CTO, Tom Chernetsky, at the peak of moderation debate and massive user decline. After years of Yik Yak lying in the Appstore graveyard, a zombie-like resurrection came to fruition in mid 2021. Critics ask two questions, one simply, Why? and the other, slightly more involved, What is different about the app now that will prevent the same issues from arising?

One main change is the addition of the Stay Safe resources tab, covering topics including bullying, consent, safe rides, and even COVID-19. There is a separate section addressing mental health concerns, as well as an assurance on the page that the new iteration has a zero-tolerance policy for posts targeting users based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Harmful posts, including hate speech are to be reported for removal as per the Community Guidelines, though many users take a less official approach and downvote off what they don't like.

In a study by Nora Draper on use of use moderation through Yik Yak on the University of New Hampshire Campus, Yik Yak's voting system was described to have "Unique theoretical interest [of] participants' characterization of successful moderation as the result of distributed responses to material that conflicted with community norms." (Draper, 2) The key phrase being "community norms" in that what is considered acceptable can vary depending on the location of the campus that displays the 5-mile radius of Yaks. Certain campuses may have a higher threshold of edgier comments that other campuses would deem unacceptable.

When looking at the user base of Yik Yak, particularly their relationship with the location feature, Jordan Frith and Michael Saker explained that "One participant stopped using the

application…specifically because of racist posts that were not always downvoted. She explained the problem was worse when she was down by her mother's house in City E." (Frith, 4.3) Some of this stems from the prestige of the university or the general economic and political climate of the location. Some colleges are more of a melting pot while others, especially state schools, have more students who likely grew up around the area of their college town. This could create a less worldly or overall ignorant user base. For the most part actual hate speech is reported or downvoted away, but offensive comments still slip through the cracks. This is yet another way that Yik Yak mirrors real life social interaction in a digital space, displaying everything being "said" in one spot making it easy to compare the level and quantity of the inevitable crude posts.

Yik Yak can also serve as an educational opportunity through the comments feature. While there are instances of problematic comment sections, a lot of the time social justice motivated users take advantage of the section to call out people who posted hateful or ignorant things. One student participant in the Draper study is quoted with "I think it's pretty effective [to comment on offensive posts] because even though they don't know who you are, they see on their phone how negatively what they said is being perceived. They can take that and learn from it and maybe not do it again." (Draper, 8) It's an interesting dynamic when users take moderation upon themselves. Yik Yak is personal because of its location services, so when student see their peers as part of the problem, many want to get involved in the solution. This type of user participation can be relatively successful because those making harmful comments may feel more motivated to learn when being called out by their peers within the safety of anonymity.

One cannot navigate user moderation on Yik Yak without consideration of the role that user anonymity plays. The good side of anonymity on Yik Yak is its facilitation of free speech on a platform still loosely identifiable as social media. In Draper's study, there was analysis of the app's structure where every user is visible regardless of follower count unlike other platforms dominated by influencer culture. Success is instead dictated by upvotes and downvotes.

Through this model, quality content is rewarded over user reputation. It's also important to note how Yik Yak's voting system is at its core democratic. Each user has the power to control what they see on their feed. They can vote their favorites to the top and in turn send certain entries off the page entirely. As previously discussed, which campuses participate in moderating any given entry can vary, but this type of participation is akin to community centered journalism in that it's for the people and by the people. Relevant issues that may not get picked up by official school channels live on Yik Yak, and students are able to discuss freely without the restraints of professional public relations strategies. It's harder for large scandals to be pushed aside, and easier for "smaller" events to gain appropriate traction *if* the community democratically decides to give them adequate screen time. People with smaller social circles can put out their ideas without fear of identification or lack of broader social acceptance. If a post falls flat or even gets removed, no one knows the identity of the poster.

While user participation and anonymity are key aspects of the app's success, the most notable positive impact that Yik Yak brings is the campus community it can form. Frith and Saker describe the app as a "digital neighborhood" with, "Participants explained that they had gone to a campus event or new restaurant because they saw people posting about it on Yik Yak. The feed in those cases became a way of discovering new places, of connecting with parts of the city or university life that likely would have remained hidden without the application." (Frith, 4.5) Yik Yak is a positive communication tool when analyzing the college experience in a digital age. Especially in the current climate, many students have been physically isolated from one another due to COVID restrictions, making it difficult to have in-person bonds or form a dorm culture. Having a tool that unites students physically on a given campus is a unique occurrence in media studies, giving us a glimpse into a simultaneously public and private form of communication.

This digital community can also be used to organize change. Students at Syracuse University united through Yik Yak to organize campus wide protests against sexual violence. Students that may not have been members of organizing groups were easily able to see the importance of

the cause through messages on a platform that they are already scrolling through. This made the issues feel more pressing to the whole student body as opposed to just the victims or smaller groups of allies, a powerful tool for any movement. While we've seen unity like this on social media before, Yik Yak is unique once again because of its location-specific feature and because its users can remain anonymous, in this case a condition that helps more survivors feel comfortable coming forward.

Unfortunately, many of the downfalls of the original Yik Yak are still present. An instance at Elon University was reported when a student seeking support with self-harm on the app was told to "finish the job." in the comments. While Yik Yak has received praise in the past as an unlikely outlet for suicide prevention, comments like the one from Elon could send a particularly fragile student over the edge. While it's understandable given the culture of Yik Yak that a struggling student may want to reach out to their peers for help, it can be concerning that those in crisis turn to the platform before calling a hotline or other campus mental health resource.

A downfall due to the app's location-based nature, callouts can be even more anxiety inducing with confirmation that targeted posts actually did come from one's peers. It is such a direct form of cyberbullying, because if a person is called out by name, all they can hope for is enough downvotes for a swift removal as the reporting process is still generally slow. Certain dirty laundry can be paired to an entire community, easily enough to affect the victim's reputation. It is hard to separate the digital space from reality when the lines blur in this way, and this type of paranoia could interfere with real relationships in parents, friends, or teachers. "Unlike a random online comment section or message board, participants who watched a racist post get "upvoted" on Yik Yak were aware that the views being expressed were posted by people nearby, people they may interact with on a daily basis." conclude Frith and Saker. "A racist post on Yik Yak does not have the distance of a random racist remark online, but instead feels more like seeing racist graffiti on campus." (Frith, 4.3) This can be particularly upsetting to a frequent user of the app.

Another negative effect is simply the lack substance in the content of Yik Yak, and questions are raised about if this type of outlet is healthy or productive even if there are rarely consequences. In a Columbia University study, Quiglan Li and Ioana Literat analyzed Yik Yak's design and possible misuse, "In the case of Yik Yak, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, as it is the particular combination of three main features - anonymity, hyper locality and voting aggregation - that can turn the app into fertile ground for vitriol, particularly in the sociocultural context of the college campus." (Li, 1) They concluded that the nature of the app, partnered with the college-aged demographic of its user base was a recipe for misuse *through* misdesign. In discussion of whether virtual spaces like Yik Yak are a blank canvas, or if they promote certain types of negative behavior by design, many would advocate for the latter. This is backed by the idea that the app's user base is relatively unstable, undergoing the sweeping physical and emotional developments of their early adulthood. Arming college-aged students with an anonymous echo chamber may be a recipe for disaster, no matter how unified it may make them feel.

As one can conclude that the dynamic created by Yik Yak can have both positive and negative outcomes, it is also vital to address that near the demise of the first version of Yik Yak, concerns about whether users even *had* true anonymity arose. In 2015, executives were forced to come forward that user's identities were not truly anonymous when it came to warranted authorities. A year later, a New York University cybersecurity research team navigated alternate ways to access users' information on the app. That main pillar of the app's structure crumbling sealed its fate in 2017, and the revival's security policy seems unchanged or at least equally unclear. In media studies it's vital to ask why users crave anonymity online and simultaneously post about every detail on other platforms. This idea of conditional privacy is fueled by platforms like Yik Yak, appealing for those looking to shed their actual identity *and* their social media identity while still feeling a digital connection to their real-life community. This craving for true free speech and protection from identification online will likely never be filled.

While the revival edition of Yik Yak has gained equal if not greater traction on college campuses as it did from 2014-2016, all of the same concerns are still present. We can hope that some of the harmful use will slow with changing times or user moderation, but generally speaking Yik Yak really is a digital version of bathroom graffiti, with the opportunity to be both supportive and destructive. Frith categorizes Yik Yak as a prime example of a hybrid space, or "What happens as the Internet leaves the desktop and moves out into the physical world. [They are] spaces that show how physical place shapes the meaning of the mobile internet." (Frith, 5) Yik Yak is conscious in the way it maps out its users both in and out of the app. Since any given screen only exists in its current five-mile radius, content occurs not only between two physical points but to temporal points as well. *Still*, users are able to have real life conversations about specific activity they are seeing on Yik Yak, and share their opinions in the app digitally, but in real time and space. While the content of Yik Yak itself is rarely that deep, the implications of the hybrid space it creates are. It's important for students to understand the unique position that activity on Yik Yak permits and use that influence carefully. Yik Yak is to local elections as social media is to the presidency. One has a much smaller scale, but arguably a stronger day-to-day influence on those effected. We have found through studying the relationship of the digital landscape to our democracy that community focused efforts are the most influential, and they have the power to be extremely productive or vastly detrimental.

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Equity vs. Equality: How Differing Viewpoints Choose to Portray History

Sara Donatello

Introduction

Addressing historical racism and discrimination in the United States' educational system is being pushed by civil rights activists as it would provide a clearer foundation for our nation's history. The 1619 Project launched in August 2019 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first enslaved Africans arriving in colonial Virginia. The philosophy behind the project aligns closely with the politics of difference, specifically, understanding the complexity of interconnections and accepting the differences and inequalities that exist between human beings. In response to the 1619 Project, 1776 Unites was launched in February 2020 by Robert Woodson. Separately but with similar intentions, in September 2020, the Trump Administration created an advisory group of 18 conservative members, the 1776 Commission, to support what they referred to as "patriotic education". 1776 Unites and the 1776 Commission share similar viewpoints regarding the concept of the politics of universalism, which refers to the removal of difference and emphasizes equal dignity of all and disregards social classes and other demographic and historical contexts. The analysis conducted in this paper is not meant to be judgmental, but to compare and contrast the differing viewpoints. By portraying the research on a timeline, it will be a historical guide to the interconnectedness of the 1619 Project, 1776 Unites and the 1776 Commission, how they affected each other, and how they affected education and society on a larger scale.

The 1619 Project was founded by Nikole Hannah-Jones of the New York Times, looking to conduct a historical analysis using qualified historians to fact-check the content. Specifically, they aimed to "reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States' national narrative" (Crowley and Schuessler, 2021). On the contrary, 1776 Unites aims to highlight the successes of black Americans and gloss over the harsh realities many faced while enslaved. "Contributors to 1776 Unites are open that they see the problem with emphasizing the history of slaves and

racism as promoting a culture of 'victimization'" (Messer-Kruse, 2020). Similarly, the 1776 Commission portrays the narrative that racism and identity politics challenge America's principles.

Throughout this project, I aim to answer the question: exactly how do the two viewpoints differ and what effects does each have on how we portray history? I will be painting an historical timeline to understand the evolution of this discrepancy by looking into each player, the people involved, the history driving the dispute, and the effects it has on education. I am not looking to prove either viewpoint to be correct or incorrect, I am simply looking to lay them next to each other and highlight the key differences, noting how each viewpoint paints a different picture of our nation's history.

Materials, Methods, Approach

The research conducted in this project is based on theoretical evidence from books, peer-reviewed sources, online articles and websites, and academic literature, used to set up a historical timeline from the year 1619 to the present day. The majority of the research is focused on two years: 1619, to set up a background for the viewpoint favored by the 1619 Project and, on the contrary, 1776, taking the opposing viewpoint held by 1776 Unites and the 1776 Commission. The process for collecting literature related to this project was done in a top-down method. I began by researching the players: the 1619 Project, 1776 Unites, and the 1776 Commission, as well as the politics of difference and the politics of universalism as contrasting viewpoints. Finishing my research with literature on how the two opposing viewpoints have affected education, specifically in terms of the portrayal of slavery. By laying out my research in a timeline form, I believe it will be easier for the reader to follow the chronological events taking place, while simultaneously inserting theoretical evidence and key terms to further explain the plotline and its importance.

Background Information and Literature Review

To set up a sufficient background for the coming analysis, it is important to start at the beginning, with the year 1619 and the reasoning behind creating the 1619 Project. To begin with, contributors of the 1619 Project favor equity over equality regarding the question of how to portray historical events centered around racism. Using the official website for the 1619 Project in New York Times, I was able to begin with an understanding of their perspective of history, their values, and their mission as it related to advocating for their viewpoint. Within this interactive website, there was an abundance of content from various contributors to the project on the topic of slavery in the United States, its importance, and the purpose of the 1619 Project as a whole. Additionally, Nikole Hannah-Jones' personal website was able to provide insight on her as the founder of the 1619 Project, her work, and accomplishments, as well as any upcoming events and speaking engagements she is participating in. *Investigating Racial Inequality*, written by Hannah-Jones, also provides further insight into how simply defining and explaining racial inequality is not enough; there must be deeper searches into the actions, the harm, and what can be done about it.

The values and beliefs held by the 1619 Project follows a similar trajectory to the idea of the politics of difference, highlighting the importance of understanding and accepting difference and diversity. To better understand this connection, Gupta and Ferguson's *Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference* explores the idea of shared space and how it connects to identity. They discuss the movement of cultural practices and identities between borders as people relocate to different parts of the globe. The politics of difference refers to the differences that remain in place between cultures as they are intertwined with each other. They argue that these differences need not be critiqued and criticized but accepted and historically understood. The politics of difference mirrors the 1619 project in their efforts to recognize the history of the United States' beginning with slavery in 1619. They push for the understanding and acceptance of slavery in its truest form.

After establishing a basis of knowledge about the 1619 Project, I went on to explore the counter argument provided by 1776 Unites and the 1776 Commission. 1776 Unites was

launched in February 2020 by Robert Woodson in response to the 1619 Project. Woodson is an African American civil rights activist who believed that "the assumptions behind the 1619 Project are actually a form of "white supremacy" as they are predicted on black Americans having no agency and being incapable of overcoming adverse circumstances" (Creitz, 2020). 1776 Unites pushed to counter the 1619 Project's views on the founding of America in a structural and economic sense. The 1776 Unites website will serve as a primary source to aid in the understanding of information about the movement, those involved, the work they have done, content created on the subject, and how to get involved with the movement. Similarly, Wikipedia provided me with a baseline overview of the 1776 Commission, but I was able to gather more information from the 1776 Report created by the Commission. *A Vision of 1776* by Victor Hanson also gave a first-hand account of the 1776 Commission and their viewpoint given that Hanson was a member of the committee that created the report.

Aligning with the views and beliefs of 1776 Unites and the 1776 Commission, *Politics of Recognition*, by Charles Taylor, speaks of recognition and non-recognition and how it relates to identity, specifically, identity as the basis of classifying people. Taylor references the politics of universalism, "emphasizing the equal dignity of all citizens… What is to be avoided at all costs is the existence of "first-class" and "second-class" citizens" (Taylor, 471). The politics of universalism embodies the views of both parties as they push for glossing over historical discrimination and racism.

In regard to slavery at the time, Peter Kolchin's *American slavery: 1619-1877* gives insight into the years 1619 and 1776 and what slavery looked like in the United States during each time period. This book places that evolution in a broad comparative context and focuses on the "essential ingredients" that encompass slavery: power, work, race, sex, cooperation, and conflict just to name a few. The main point of the book is the idea that there is a tension between the ideal of freedom and the reality of unfreedom as a central feature in American history as slavery in America is a very complex and contradictory topic. Kolchin helps to further understand the 1619 Project's stance as it related to the impact of slavery and recognizing how

large of a part it played in our nation's history. On the contrary, slavery was not abolished in the United States until 1865, so Kolchin also helps the reader to understand that during the year 1776, slavery was very much alive and well, and it is inhumane to gloss over the hardships faced by those enslaved.

Since the 1619 Project and 1776 Unites provide contrasting viewpoints, there is an ongoing debate on the subject regarding how, or how not, to include American slavery in educational lesson plans. *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education*, written by Bowen et al, provides insight into many topics associated with the debate over equity versus equality. The core of this piece talks about the ongoing debate as to whether or not those from under-represented racial and ethnic minorities threaten established educational verities and social mores. This book will serve to further establish the racial disparities involved in equity debates, specifically with higher education. Similarly, from Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction & The Aristocracy of Culture,* he explores how there are "... two 'antagonistic castes', those who understand and those who do not" (Bourdieu, 438). I am looking to connect Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital (knowledge, skills, education) to *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education* and the ongoing debate as to whether or not those from under-represented racial and ethnic minorities threaten established educational verities and social mores. I plan on using these sources to explain equity today in terms of real-life experiences and it will aid in setting the framework for what the 1619 Project is pushing towards.

Similarly, NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, is a civil rights organization, founded in 1909, pushing to advance justice for African Americans. The topics discussed are centered around countering the prohibition of critical race theory and anti-racism education in Texas school systems. It discusses the fact that United States public education systems have been reluctant to acknowledge the racial disparities that exist today and grapple with our racial past as a country. I plan to use this piece as a way to emphasize the 1619 project, equity and the politics of difference, as the core argument is recognition and acknowledgement.

Carter and Welner's *Closing the Opportunity Gap* centers their argument around how most attention has been paid to the achievement gap, while little attention has been paid to the opportunity gap. Although connected, they are very different. Not every American will go to college, but every American should be given a fair and equal chance for the preparedness and chance to go to college. This piece focuses on the discrepancies that exist in public schools and how policy decisions and life circumstances have aided in the creation of the opportunity gap in America. I will use this piece to make known the confusion that might arise from the words "equal chance", and to clarify that an equal chance does not equate to equality, and it will be used to show that there are many factors to be taken into consideration to shorten or even recognize the existing opportunity gap.

Overall, gathering information regarding the 1619 Project, 1776 Unites, and the 1776 Commission provided a better understanding of the historical timeline and the viewpoints belonging to each group. The sources helped draw comparisons between the philosophies and their corresponding projects, and to better understand the vision and intentions, politics, education and opportunity, and the understanding of history as it related to slavery and the portrayal of African Americans. I am looking to create a narrative which tells the story of how the topic of slavery in American history came to fruition and how each opposing viewpoint aims to influence that very narrative.

Analysis

Living in a nation divided by politics, there is an ongoing suspicion as to whether or not American students are being taught a skewed version of history. This debate is not just a recent phenomenon, although it can be seen in many recent acts. One example would be Donald Trump threatening to "defund California schools that teach the New York Times' 1619 Project, which reframes the country's origins around the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Virginia" (Waxman, 2020). But why would you oppose the teachings of American history as they happened? The opposing argument is centered around the fact that by presenting students

with the facts that our Founding Fathers enslaved African men and women, it would make the students hate America. Now, there will always be someone playing the devil's advocate, so let's begin with creating a timeline, outlining American history as it pertains to the 1619 Project and working our way to those in favor of the opposition.

The year 1619 brought about a immense change in America that no one could see coming: an English privateer brough the first kidnapped Africans to sell as slaves. There was no documentation found regarding discussions on the morality or ethics of owning slaves, rather the discourse was centered around politics and protecting the rights of masters (Horn, 2019). From this time on, the rise of the political debate centered around racism and racial stereotypes will hold its ground in society till the present day. This debate provides the basis of the opposing viewpoints held by the 1619 Project and its oppositions, 1776 Unites and the 1776 Commission.

Fast forward exactly four hundred years, Nikole Hannah-Jones of the New York Times decided to take steps towards challenging the historical narrative. The 1619 Project launched in August 2019 to commemorate the 400-year anniversary of the first enslaved Africans arriving in America. The project itself aimed to reframe the United States' narrative by placing slavery and its consequences back into the national historical discourse. Not many know the year 1619 to be a notable date in American history, which gave the initial motive to starting the 1619 Project. Not only did 1619 mark the beginning of slavery in America, but "out of slavery grew everything that makes America exceptional: its economic might, its industrial power, its electoral system… its income inequality… its legal system and the endemic racial fears and hatreds that continue to plague it to this day" (Silverstein, 2019). That being said, the goal of the 1619 Project and all who contributed is to change the narrative and understand 1619 as the birth year of America. This means the understanding and acceptance of the gruesome realities of immoral and inhuman treatment faced by black Americans. "By acknowledging this shameful history, by trying hard to understand its powerful influence on the present, perhaps we can prepare ourselves for a more just future. That is the hope of this project" (Silverstein, 2019).

Nikole Hannah-Jones, an American investigative journalist for the New York Times, is best known for her work covering civil rights in the United States. As a black American, she focused her journalism on topics like racial segregation, desegregation, housing discrimination, and racial inequalities which has been particularly influential. As the founder of the 1619 Project, she has created a platform for herself to be an advocate for her beliefs and values around the topic of slavey in American history. *"Our democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true."* is one of her contributing pieces to the 1619 Project, published in the New York Times. She states that "the United States is a nation founded on both an ideal and a lie. The Declaration of Independence, approved on July 4, 1776, proclaims that "all men are created equal" .... But the white men who drafted those words did not believe them to be true for the hundreds of thousands of black people in their midst" (Hannah-Jones, 2019). Nikole Hannah-Jones and all other contributors and supporters of the 1619 Project have beliefs that follow a similar trajectory of the politics of difference.

The politics of difference refers to understanding that while there is an interconnection of human beings when cultures collide, there will still always be a difference that sets us all apart. Gupta and Ferguson speak of the production of cultural difference, referring to Wilmsen and his ideas regarding "the "otherness" of the other, situating the production of cultural difference within the historical process of a socially and spatially interconnected world" (Gupta and Ferguson, 16). They discuss the need for a willingness to investigate the given world as it is divided into "ourselves" and "others", in both a political and historical sense. This viewpoint clearly aligns with the intentions of the 1619 Project as it pertains to interrogating the deeper division of races regarding slavery and American history as a whole. To further connect the idea of the politics of difference with the intentions of the 1619 Project, it is a shared ideal that "difference is taken as a starting point, not as end product" (Gupta and Ferguson, 16). Refocusing the narrative to begin American history with 1619 and slavery, both its impacts and

consequences, is a way to place difference as the starting point. Understanding that difference is the key to understanding the overall picture of American history.

After the launching of the 1619 Project and the new narrative associated with it, there were many who criticized various aspects of the project. However, it is important to note that much of the controversy was over smaller details, not the overall intentions of the project. Historians wrote to the New York Times about specific things they thought were incorrect, like the motives behind the American Revolution, distorted, like black Americans and their freedom struggles, or misleading, like Abraham Lincoln's views on racial equality. To focus on one specific example, historians claimed that "on the American Revolution, pivotal to any account of our history, the project asserts that the founders' declared the colonies independence from Britain "in order to ensure slavery would not continue". That is simply not true" (Bynam et al, 2019). From personal research, in *The American Counterrevolution of 1776,* Charles Post draws on work by Gerald Horne who states that "the defense of slavery – against both slave resistance and the British state – was central to the creation of the independent United States in 1776" (Post, 615). The New York Times Editor-In-Chief, Jake Silverstein, also responded to the historians claims by noting the extensive research and historical corroboration that occurred around events like the American Revolution. Aside from any defense given by the 1619 Project and its contributors, the backlash against the project created a wedge, just large enough to omit an aura of doubt.

Following the backlash, 1776 Unites was launched in February 2020 by Robert Woodson, a civil rights activist, providing a direct counterargument to the 1619 Project. Similar to the 1619 Project, 1776 Unites advocates for their principles through a series of essays published on their website. Their declaration is as follows: "We acknowledge that racial discrimination exists – and work towards diminishing it. But we dissent from contemporary groupthink and rhetoric about race, class, and American history that defames our national heritage, divides our people, and instills helplessness among those who already hold within themselves the grit and resilience to better their lot in life". The stance taken by 1776 Unites, in simple terms, pushed for the

acknowledgement of success and accomplishments by black Americans, specifically. In turn, there is a sense of disregard for the hardships faced because it seemingly creates a divide and instills powerlessness and negativity among those who deserve recognition and praise.

The viewpoint held by 1776 Unites mirrors that of Charles Taylor as he believes "democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition" (Taylor, 466). Holding the beliefs that America, including the implementation of a democratic society, was founded with the signing of the Declaration of Independence, 1776 Unites pushes for the removal of difference between human beings. Charles Taylor's *Politics of Recognition* explores the idea of equal dignity of all, holding everyone in the same esteem. Taylor also talks about recognition as it relates to authenticity and a sense of moral being. "It accords moral importance to a kind of contact with myself, with my own inner nature, which it sees as in danger of being lost, partly through the pressures towards outward conformity" (Taylor, 468). 1776 Unites advocates for the future of black Americans, refuting the narrative that they should have to conform to the history of the past. By celebrating the achievements and accolades, there is the promotion of an "individualized identity" that is not tied to events of the past.

Following a similar viewpoint as 1776 Unites, the 1776 Commission was created in September 2020 by then-President Donald Trump. This 18-member committee was put in place to advocate for what Trump called "patriotic education". Now, the federal government cannot directly regulate educational curriculum, but they can influence decisions through funding. Although the Commission was not created in direct response to the 1619 Project, there was motive behind countering the narrative which places the consequences of slavery at the center of the United States history. The 1776 Report was created by the Commission with the hopes of rediscovering the founding principles and ideals of America. "Americans will never falter in defending the fundamental truths of human liberty proclaimed on July 4, 1776. We will – *we must* – always hold these truths" (1776 Report, 2021). The principles referenced by the Report exclude racism as it is believed that racism challenges what America is founded on. Although the Commission was terminated on January 20, 2021, by President Biden, its message, along

with that of 1776 Unites, provided enough of a counterargument to the 1619 Project that there has been much controversy and divide over which viewpoint best exemplifies our nation's history and what history should be taught to young people.

As one can probably guess, the divide between which viewpoint to "agree with" similarly follows the divide between liberal and conservative. Much of the northern United States has been throwing around the idea of implementing the 1619 Project into the educational curriculum. On the contrary, southern states fall with the viewpoint of 1776 Unites and the 1776 Commission. For example, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP, Legal Defense and Educational Fund issued a news report regarding the Texas school systems decision to exclude the critical race theory and anti-racism education from their school curriculum. NAACP states that this decision "would suppress educational efforts that are critically needed to confront and address racism and discrimination" (NAACP, 2021). The topics of underrepresentation of racial minorities in education, as well as unequal opportunities within educational environments have been circling conversations for a while. There is also an ongoing debate as to whether or not those from under-represented racial and ethnic minorities threaten established educational verities and social mores (Bowen et al, 7). Pierre Bourdieu offers the idea of knowledge, skills, and education being examples of cultural capital, and how there is a sort of caste system that exists which includes two antagonistic castes: those who understand and those who do not. Bourdieu believes that cultural capital plays a role when individuals pursue status and power within society. Now, since there is an evident divide when it comes to educational opportunities, as seen through the supposed "threat" from under-represented minorities, the debate over equity in American education is pointless. There is nothing fair about the debate, which can be connected to another question about equal opportunity. In this sense, equal opportunity does not equate to equality. As the viewpoint held by 1776 Unites pushes for the removal of difference and the encourages equal recognition, but taking into account the entire history of America, including racial inequalities as a consequence of slavery, it can be concluded that equal recognition is simply not attainable unless you understand and accept the differences at hand.

Moving forward, there are projections for the future of education and the future of the 1619 Project as seen through Naomi Shaefer Riley's article *"The 1619 Project" Has Entered the Classrooms*. This piece was published in 2020 and explores intentions of implementing the 1619 Project into lesson plans in cities around the northern United States, including Randomhouse Children's Books planning to publish four 1619 Project books for young readers. Now, as previously mentioned, these discussions only exist in larger northern cities such as New York City and Chicago. "The goal of engaging students in learning about American history and the role slavery and black Americans have played in it is widely justifiable and shared" (Riley, 3). Reactions from students consisted of disbelief that people could treat others in that way, wanting to research and know more, and wishing they had this knowledge sooner. Placing the consequences of slavery into the nation's narrative, including both the hardships and the successes, allows for a more well-rounded understanding of how we got to be the nation we are today. Taking away that knowledge base is unfair to students and, at the end of the day, is keeping them from knowing the historical truth.

Conclusion

In summation, it has been found that while the politics of difference and the politics of universalism provide two equally admissible viewpoints, the question of equity versus equality in real life scenarios breeds controversy. After providing background knowledge on each theoretical viewpoint and how each aligns with the 1619 Project, 1776 Unites, and the 1776 Commission, a historical timeline was able to be constructed to clearly lay out how each player is associated with each other. Now, it was mentioned that this research paper was not meant to prove either viewpoint correct or incorrect, but when it comes to the topic of educational curriculum, it seems that the 1619 Project prevails. Providing students with the necessary background to understand the United States history from origin to present day requires all events and consequences of those events to be clearly elaborated on to gain a complete understanding of the subject.

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