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WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

**Celebrating Student Writing
Across the Curriculum**

Prize Winners 2017-2018

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL EDITION

Introduction

Now in its 18th year of publication, Celebrating Student Writing Across the Curriculum features an impressive array of undergraduate student writing from many disciplines. This magazine offers a space to celebrate student achievement in writing and to highlight exemplary written work from across William Paterson University.

On these pages, difference in writing is celebrated. Some entries are thoroughly researched and deftly worded, others provide analytical exploration or make a compelling argument, and still others are imaginatively creative or superbly designed and arranged. Writing is often mistakenly assumed to be merely a skill that, once learned, can be applied formulaically for any situation. But effective writers such as the ones featured here, know that continuous development of one's writing knowledge and practice is the way to becoming better at it. Today's employers report that a key attribute they seek in an employee is the ability to write clearly and effectively, which makes the writing our students engage in increasingly important. Nurtured by our faculty, the student writers featured within this issue have worked hard to understand and develop writing most suited to its occasion.

For this contest, William Paterson faculty nominate student writing from across a wide range of courses. Whether a written work is nominated for its creativity, insights, analysis, or well-crafted prose, each entry has first intrigued a faculty member and earned a nomination. After the submission deadline, a panel of judges from across the William Paterson faculty gathers to discuss and consider each entry, and the winners are selected for publication in Celebrating Student Writing Across the Curriculum.

This year's winners represent a wide range of majors: art history, education, college writing, social science honors, music, and women's and gender studies, among others. Much of the fine writing featured here comes from upper division courses from various disciplines, and there

are many excellent pieces representing lower division courses as well, demonstrating that great writing comes from everywhere and anyone. Regardless of the course for which they were initially written, all of these student essays provide us with insights into their topics and appreciation for the hard work and dedication of their writers.

Celebrating Student Writing would not be possible without the continued support of those who are integral to its success. Thanks to professors Jennifer Owlett (Communication), Rosa Soto (English), and Emily Monroe (Biology) for serving on our faculty jury and devoting the hours necessary to reading and discussing each entry. Thanks to Acting Provost Sandra DeYoung and Associate Provost Sandra Hill for continued support of the Writing Across the Curriculum program, which publishes this magazine, and a special thanks to Kara Rabbitt, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, whose vision and assistance in all initiatives of the Writing Across the Curriculum program are vital. And finally, thanks to the many faculty who support student writing every day in their classrooms and who nominate the best of what they see to this contest, and to the students who are willing to share their work – without your commitment we would be denied this wonderful opportunity to celebrate your writing.

Liane Robertson, Associate Professor of English and Director, Writing Across the Curriculum

For more information about the Celebrating Student Writing contest, refer to the back page of this magazine or visit our web site <http://www.wpunj.edu/cohss/departments/english/writing-across-the-curriculum.dot>

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Note: Student entries are reprinted as submitted, with original content that has been formatted to fit this magazine.

Animals in Art: A Substitute for the Human Form

Khloe Crimando

Course: Art in New York (ARTH 3310)

Professor: Deborah Frizzell, Art

Student: Khloe Crimando

Essay: Animals in Art: A Substitute for the Human Form

Assignment:

Students were instructed to write a researched essay on any aspect of an artist's work, an art movement or a specific theme of modern/postmodern art (1940-2017). Students chose their specific essay topics, with prior approval by the professor, and the essay required

appropriate citation and bibliography. Students also gave an oral presentation with digital images, summarizing the final paper, discussing the importance of the specific topic, and explaining the main points, research, and conclusions in the essay.

The ethical question of the correctness of using animals in works of art is in a constant state of debate. The use of animals throughout various aspects of life, such as in art and science, is highly controversial, without a single standard solution. Across the globe the interpretation of animal usage and practices vary and so do the justifications. However, in the question of whether it is moral to use animal life in a work of art, the responses are much more clear-cut. It appears that viewers generally agree absolutely or deeply oppose the use of animals in art.

Looking back across the timeline of art history, including ancient and pre-modern art eras, a significant percentage of the materials used were derived from animals in some way. Whether this was pelt, bone, shell, or even egg in the case of egg tempera paint, it was never a debate whether these practices were morally or ethically right or wrong, because these

were the materials the artists had to work with during their times. Still today, art created with animal-derived materials from pre-modern years is never brought into argument. In contemporary times the argument for the same practices are brought into discussion, possibly because there are endless inorganic materials to use today or because there is a relatively recent heightened consciousness of animal rights.

Whether it is right or wrong is determined on a situational basis; there is not a standard, all-encompassing answer for this question. When personal views and ideas on this subject are put aside, the truths of why modern and contemporary artists continue to use animals are revealed. Ultimately, it can be seen that artists are often using animals in their work as a stand-in for a human form to represent the human experience. The animal kingdom echoes numerous facets of the human world. "Animal phenomenology

asks us to think of our own fragility”ⁱ, according to sustainability scholar Ron Broglio. Art that deploys animals may create an experience in which viewers are coerced into facing their own reality within the human condition.

“Traditionally, phenomenology is interested in how humans are embedded in their world—a world of material things, cultural meanings, and physiological engagement.”ⁱⁱ Animal phenomenology is often viewed in a different light, as something separate and disconnected from the phenomenology of humans. As Broglio goes on to note, “In the vertiginous exploration of animal phenomenology, we un-moor ourselves from comfortable, habitual dwelling and set out on a stroll in the worlds of animals and humans,”ⁱⁱⁱ not as two disparate forms, but as one in the same.

The sight of an animal in a museum, gallery, or other art setting not only reminds viewers of their existence in the surrounding world, but also mirrors many of the same life conditions with which humans are faced. Empirical explanations and language can be lost in human-animal translation, whereas modern and contemporary art allow for a universal, non-verbal means of expression. “While philosophy delimits itself through language and reason (including the limits of reason), artists can create striking nonlinguistic and asignifying works,”^{iv} writes Broglio. For many artists who use an animal, alive or not, in their art work, they often allude purposefully to the human experience by placing a metaphorical mirror to the face of the viewers.

In 1991, British artist Damien Hirst began his *Natural History* series, as a modern symbol of the *momento mori*. The *Natural History* series is comprised of a selection of animals ranging from mammals, to insects, to sea life, suspended in a solution of formaldehyde.^v “The technique of so-called wet preparation associated with natural science museums founded in the nineteenth century”^{vi}, according to Petra Lange-Berdt, preserves the corpse in almost pristine and exact condition, as if the body were still animated without the

physical appearance of decay.

Context is key. When this sight is experienced in a natural science museum, viewers are prompted to examine the body through an anatomical lens, learning the workings of the form. When the placement of this same image is outside of the scientific setting, it becomes much more deeply symbolic and psychologically rich than just its physical form. “While animals appear to be central to Hirst’s dissection sculptures, they are not the focus of his work; instead, they are the material used to prod viewers into reflection,”^{vii} according to Broglio, and into reflection on the inevitability of death.^{viii}

The onset for the series was Hirst’s notorious *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (1991, Figure 1).



Figure 1- Hirst, Damien. *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*. 1991. Glass, painted steel, silicone, monofilament, shark and formaldehyde solution.

ⁱ Broglio, Ron. 2011. *Surface encounters. [electronic resource]: thinking with animals and art*. n.p.: Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, [2011], 2011. *Cheng Library Catalog*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 27, 2017).

ⁱⁱ Broglio, IV

ⁱⁱⁱ IBID, 32

^{iv} IBID,IV

^v Wilson, Michael. *How to Read Contemporary Art: Experiencing the Art of the 21st Century*. Antwerp [Belgium]: Ludion, 2013.

^{vi} Petra Lange-Berdt, 'Replication and Decay in Damien Hirst's *Natural History*', *Tate Papers*, no.8, Autumn 2007, <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/08/replication-and-decay-in-damien-hirst-natural-history>, accessed 9 November 2017

^{vii} Broglio, 10

^{viii} IBID

This piece consists of a fourteen-foot tiger shark in the formaldehyde suspension. It evokes the fear of the certain outcome of death, and it emphasizes the concept that even the highest level of sovereignty in the physical world will vanish once death arrives. The shark, the ruler of the sea he once haunted, is revoked of its capability and stripped of its existence in both the literal confines of the structure and also the parameters of the body.^{ix}

The shark's situation implies the human condition of being unable to avoid death. It places a murderous animal closer than most people want to get, right in front of the viewer. This confrontation with mortality lodges itself in the mind of the viewer; the live person is now in control of the shark's body in a way that would never exist in the natural world, by depicting the human's need for power and control.^x By leveraging this history of cutting open animals, the artist is plying animal death as an avenue for human knowledge of nature and of ourselves, or, as Hirst says in *The Agony and the Ecstasy* interview, "that whole idea of killing things to look at them," as a senseless killing accepted by Enlightenment culture.^{xi}

These concepts are reinforced within the title itself. *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* encompasses, "[t]he impossibility of really coming to terms with death, as someone who's living. In many ways, the history of art is a coming to terms with the morality of transcending the physical body, of the afterlife,"^{xii} and the human incapability of truly ever understanding it until the time comes for each individual.

Soon after, Hirst created *Alone Yet Together* (1993, Figure 2). This work shows a school of fish all swimming in the same direction yet separated in their own individual glass compartments, representing yet another aspect of the human condition: the fact that no matter how integrated one is into her surroundings she is still very much alone in her own physical compartments, encompassed by the body's skin.

Art historian Michael Wilson concludes that "Hirst's abiding themes – life and death, beauty and horror – are universal"^{xiii}, and translatable across the globe.

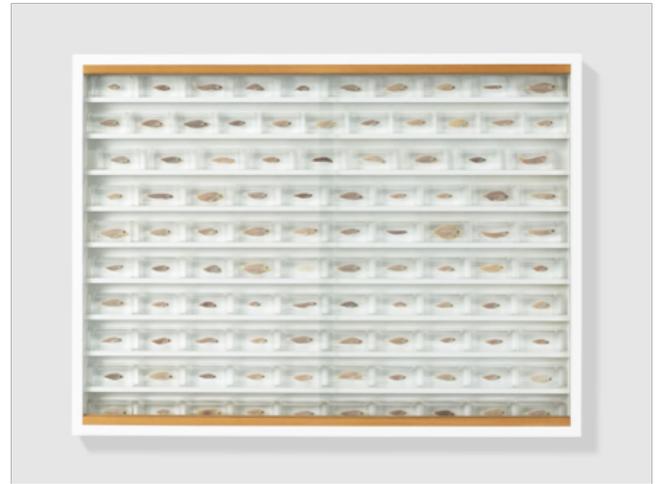


Figure 2- Hirst, Damien. *Alone Yet Together*. 1993. Glass, painted MDF, ramin, acrylic, fish and formaldehyde.

In 1990, Hirst captured the juxtaposition between life and death in his piece, *A Thousand Years* (Figure 3). Contrary to the bulk of his work, *A Thousand Years* used both dead and live animals. This work is composed of a glass aquarium-like tank, with the birth of the insect on one side and an instrument for extermination on the other. The insects are lured into the side of the exterminator with a bloody head

^{ix} Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*. Khan Academy. Accessed November 09, 2017. <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/global-culture/beginners-guide-contemporary-art/1/v/hirst-s-shark-interpreting-contemporary-art>.

^x Broglio, 7.

^{xi} Damien Hirst, *The Agony and the Ecstasy: Selected Works from 1989-2004*, Naples: Electra, Napoli, 2004, 145.

^{xii} "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living."

^{xiii} Wilson, 190



Figure 3 - Hirst, Damien. *A Thousand Years*. 1990. Glass, steel, silicone rubber, painted MDF, Insect-O-Cutor, cow's head, blood, flies, maggots, metal dishes, cotton wool, sugar and water.

of a calf. This compact environment envelops the inevitable occurrence of death by literally depicting the life-cycle.

Marco Evaristti displayed a similar message in a contrary means of exhibition. In his piece *Helena* (2000, Figure 4), he used live animals. According to Rachel Share, the exhibition “featured live goldfish in blenders and gave visitors the opportunity to liquefy the goldfish simply by



Figure 4 - Evaristti, Marco. *Helena*. 2000. Electric blenders, goldfish, and power cord.

pressing a button.”^{xiv}. He claimed that the piece would test the viewers’ sense of right and wrong, that true moral boundaries would be revealed only when tested and presented as a choice.

“Two goldfish died when visitors pressed the button,”^{xv} meaning that twenty percent of the viewers took the position of power; there were ten blenders presented. The majority contemplated their potential actions but did not decide to kill. Overall, the participatory exhibition mirrors the actual relationship humans have with the natural world. It represents the imbalance of power and control imposed upon the animal kingdom and the senseless harm caused against those considered inferior to the human race,^{xvi} and according to Share, the “exploitation of animals in other contexts, such as factory farming or for scientific experimentation”.^{xvii} Further, it represents the imbalance of power some have within human society as a whole, some people obtain complete authority while others are at the mercy of someone else.

However, the message completely changes when the focus is switched from the human to the goldfish in this scenario. Outside this position of control, and out into the real world, humans are subjected to harm, abuse, and violence. The goldfish represent not just animal but also human frailties. “Instead, in what could be a profound, ecological gesture, this question that inscribes within itself its own failure or impossibility allows us to think of human fragility”^{xviii}, according to Broglio, and the lack of control over individual experiences, as well as a paucity of authority over one’s own body.

^{xiv} Share, Rachel M. 2010. “Killing for Art: The Council of Europe and the Need for a Ban on the Slaughter of Animals for Artistic Expression.” *George Washington International Law Review* 42, 407. *LexisNexis Academic: Law Reviews*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 19, 2017)

^{xv} Share, “Killing for Art”

^{xvi} IBID

^{xvii} IBID

^{xviii} Broglio, 22

Artist Wim Delvoye also used the live animal as a stand-in for the human within one of his most iconic works, *Art Farm* (2003-2010, Figure 5). The highly controversial *Art Farm* consists of live farm pigs, that were hand-tattooed by the artists himself, “with Louis Vuitton logos and Russian prison tattoo-inspired designs on Yang Zhen’s *Art Farm* in China, 2011”^{xix}. The tattoo images range from prominent clothing label icons, popular cartoon characters, and common tattoo designs.



Figure 5 - Delvoye, Wim. *Art Farm*. 2003-2010. Live tattooed pigs.

According to Wilson, “*Art Farm*, 2004-2008, saw the artist’s mordant wit, also reflect his serious interest in the disjuncture between natural physicality and its codification according to the rules of society and culture”.^{xx} It examines the modern human condition

in a consumerist, capitalistic society and questions the mass appeal of popular culture and what exactly is represented without thought to the consequences and cultural reckoning of these images. Today, a large portion of clothing is stamped in some way with a brand name or an identifiable brand symbol. These are worn without the complete knowledge of what is being supported: a walking advertisement.

Overall, *Art Farm* magnifies the question of how the capitalistic society identifies itself and the human sense of selfhood or identity. “The two worlds of merchandising and art tend to co-exist happily and apart, each probably enjoying the reflective glow of the other,”^{xxi} as Jani McCutcheon writes. Seen in this light, the material obsession of capitalist culture is illuminated and most undeniable. It is as if Delvoye prompts viewers to see their complete sheep-like position in a world, where the commercial market is the shepherd. The pig is often equated with the symbol for gluttony and over-consumption: calling out viewers for their mercantilist vices of mass-consumption. If these tattoos were placed on a different animal, they most definitely would have been read differently; it is deliberate that the artist employs the body of a stereotypical “unclean” creature.

Ironically, and proving Delavoy’s concept further, the live pigs are sold and bid on for the future obtainment of the dead tattooed body as valued art object. “Once dead, the tattooed pigs stuffed are such of hunting trophies when other skins are presented under framework. Leading to its climax the capitalist mechanism, the *Art Farm* proposes to bid on the living.

^{xix} 10 *Controversial Works of Art Using Live Animals*. Flavorwire. April 18, 2012. Accessed November 14, 2017. <http://flavorwire.com/279255/art-with-live-animals/2>.

^{xx} Wilson, 114

^{xxi} Mccutcheon, Jani. 2015. “Designs, Parody, and Artistic Expression – A Comparative Perspective of Plesner v Louis Vuitton.” *Monash University Law Review* 41, no. 1: 192-217. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 19, 2017).

It mimics the economic process”,^{xxii} write Gilbert Perlein and Rebecca Francois. The message continues: representing the inherent human quality of needing to have and needing to own, even the bodies of another living creature.

However, not all modern and contemporary artists handle the physical body of the animal within their work; others use the animal in a form of collaboration in contrast to jurisdiction. For example, modern artist, Joseph Beuys, performed his piece *I Like America and America Likes Me* (Figure 6) in 1974, where a coyote is an equal participant with Beuys himself. First, it is important to note that Beuys had a long history of employing the body or pieces of deceased animals, where the hare held a prominent role.



Figure 6 - Beuys, Joseph. *I Like America and America Likes Me*. 1974.

These earlier works include *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965); his performance is exactly what the title suggests. Beuys locks viewers out subjecting them to view from the outside in and masks his face in honey and gold leaf and literally carries a dead hare around the Galerie Schmela while whispering explanations to the corpse.^{xxiii} In other works, he uses the bones, blood, pelt, and fat of the hare and other members of the animal kingdom.

Goetz Adriani describes Beuys' performance piece, *I*

Like America and America Likes Me: “For three days Joseph Beuys lived with a coyote in a room of the René Block Gallery in New York. This action as such began when Beuys was packed into felt at Kennedy airport and driven by ambulance to the gallery. In the gallery in a room divided by a grating a coyote was waiting for him.”^{xxiv} Within the cage, copies of the *Wall Street Journal* covered the floor to absorb the coyote’s droppings. Still covered in felt, Beuys, like a modern shaman, carried a wooden cane and occasionally rang a triangle and produced tension-evoking noises.^{xxv}

What began as a tense relationship in the tight quarters ended in a harmonious environment over the three-day span. Adriani writes, “Beuys talked with the coyote, attempting to find an approach to him, to establish a relationship. They lived peacefully with each other in the cage, man and coyote”.^{xxvi} It can be concluded that the coyote represented a pre-Colombian America, where nature lived in coexistence with mankind and the natural world prior to colonization.^{xxvii}

“Beuys remembers that which is lost to us: the natural reference to the world, the obvious intercourse with nature”,^{xxviii} as Adriani writes. He depicts a scene that is directly aimed at the viewers, touching on the separate tension between the human world and the actual natural world that is lived within. His ideas were amplified when the coyote took it upon itself to urinate

^{xxii} Perlein, Gilbert, and Rébecca François. “PIGS, CATHEDRALS AND CRUCIFIX.” 2010. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://wimdelvoye.be/about/publications/>.

^{xxiii} Adriani, Götz, Joseph Beuys, Winfried Konnertz, and Karin Thomas. *Joseph Beuys, Life and Works*. Woodbury, N.Y.: Barron's Educational Series, inc., 1979.

^{xxiv} Adriani, 274

^{xxv} IBID

^{xxvi} IBID, 275

^{xxvii} IBID

^{xxviii} IBID

on the copies of the *Wall Street Journal*, showing its disconnection with the meaning of the paper and mankind's definition and perception of the world.^{xxix}

Adriani suggests that in Beuys' performance, "[t]he coyote stands symbolically for the tension between individuality and society".^{xxx} Beuys enacts personal displacement within society from the perspective of both the coyote and the human form. From the coyote's point of view, the fear derived from the lack of understanding and communication with the human species and his own territorial instincts may represent the power struggle with human society. From the human perspective, the fear of being attacked or harmed by something larger or more powerful than one's own self is intimidated. Either way, both human and coyote attempt to communicate in their mutual displacement.

Prior to the removal of several works from the Guggenheim's current exhibition *Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World*, there were a few particular works which echoed the concepts of using animals as a stand-in for the human condition. *Theater of the World* by Huang Yong Ping (1993, Figure 7) was intended to be shown with "a wood, steel, and mesh structure inhabited by reptiles and insects that will eat each



Figure 7 - Huang Yong Ping. *Theater of the Word*. 1993. Wood, metal, warming lamps, electric cable, insects, lizards, snakes, and toads.

other and die (and occasionally be replenished) over the course of the exhibition",^{xxxi} according to art critic Benjamin Sutton. Following the lead of the title of the piece, *Theater of the World* represents the dynamic of a human society as well.

In the end, there are countless reasons why an artist may choose to employ the body and/or the life of an animal or living creature. However, when viewing these highly controversial works, higher meanings can be found in metaphor or symbolic references within the work. There is no clear-cut answer for whether these practices are moral or correct; these are cultural constructions that will change over time and place. Regardless of the personal implications, these works mirror an aspect of the experiences within the over-all human condition. The animal kingdom reflects human societies around the globe. Through modern and contemporary art this gap may be bridged during art experiences.

^{xxix} IBID

^{xxx} IBID

^{xxxi} Sutton, Benjamin, Hrag Vartanian, Claire Voon, Elisa Wouk Almino, and Allison Meier. "Guggenheim Accused of Supporting Animal Cruelty in New Exhibition." *Hyperallergic*. September 25, 2017. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://hyperallergic.com/401805/guggenheim-accused-of-supporting-animal-cruelty-in-new-exhibition/>.

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Underrepresentation of Marginalized Groups in Research: Review of Concepts, Effects, and Solutions

Muayad E. Salih

Course: Philosophy & Medicine, Advanced Topics (PHIL 3380)

Professor: Elizabeth Victor, Philosophy

Student: Muayad E. Salih

Essay: Underrepresentation of Marginalized Groups in Research: Review of Concepts, Effects, and Solutions

Assignment:

In the final project of this course, students were free to take up any well-argued and well-researched position they found compelling, as it relates to one of the previous short essays from the course. Once the prior essay and topic for expansion was chosen, students conducted research and reflected on the relevant arguments that scholars have published on the topic, integrating these into their essay while also

making their own contribution to the debate. Students were instructed to: a) lay out the issue, b) explain and analyze published philosophical viewpoints on the topic, c) carefully and precisely argue how the problem should be understood or resolved, and d) provide a compelling objection to the student writer's own position.

Undeniably, research is meaningless if it fails to achieve its intended purpose or support its proposed intervention. Additionally, the success of intervention can be associated with the generalizability of its application. Generalizability of interventions refers to how the intervention is adequately available or successful to the masses; it is a concept of measuring availability and success on the spectrums of economics, gender, ethnicity, and age among other variables. An intervention can indeed fail in universal application; but such failure clearly violates the principle of justice mentioned in the Belmont Report, which asserts an

injustice occurs when a rightful entitlement of a group or individual is impeded or unduly denied (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979).

I will attempt to demonstrate that failures of interventions can be traced back to the underrepresentation of marginalized groups in research. I also intend to establish that there is a nexus between underrepresentation and the harms said underrepresentation will likely inflict upon disenfranchised groups. Specifically, I will illustrate that the harms of underrepresentation may be compounded

for those that belong to more than one marginalized group. Toward this end, I will begin with a review of previous and current literature relevant to the underrepresentation of women in medical research. From there, I will expand the analysis to illustrative examples of research relevant to ethnic minorities and people with mental disabilities.

Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in women, yet most of the studies on the correlation between low cholesterol diets and cardiovascular disease have been conducted solely on men (Dresser, 1992). Dresser cites this example in addition to many others, such as male-focused research on the elderly although women comprise the majority of this demographic (Dresser, 1992). She continues to say that while there may be gender-specific incidence of diseases, there are a host of gender-neutral conditions which biologically manifest differently in both sexes, and that these differences are grossly undermined or scarcely investigated. These medical conditions include depression, AIDS, and of course heart disease. Dresser attributes the lack of satisfactory intervention made available to women suffering from heart disease to the lack of medical evidence on how the disease affects women. Furthermore, she alludes that underrepresentation of women and other minority groups in research is a direct result of overrepresentation of white males in research (1992). Overrepresentation of this group could ultimately harm the equipoise sought in clinical research (Weijer & Crouch, 1999).

Potential harms of this type of underrepresentation cannot be ignored; such harms include adverse side effects, ineffective treatment, treatment delay, or even the nonexistence of treatment (Weijer & Crouch, 1999). Dresser, Weijer, and Crouch specifically refer to an era of exclusion of pregnant women from various clinical trials, when the scientific community partially justified this regulation based on an intention to protect the embryo. Regulations were regularly subject

to change, and included an array of propositions that ranged from excluding all pregnant women to excluding all women that are sexually active (Dresser, 1992). However, as Dresser mentions, clinical research poses just as much of a risk to the sperm of a male as it does to the ovum of the female counterpart (1992), which makes these propositions seem highly prejudiced.

Evidence has always been the substance of scientific theory and practice. Surely, rigid principles are needed to reduce bias within evidence itself and the methods of its collection. However, it seems that bias is innate in the application of such evidence if it's applicable only to a certain demographic. The requirement for clean sample data, adds Dresser, is perhaps the most credible justification for such gross overrepresentation. Although, she suggests that a homogenous sample of women in research could serve the same utilitarian purpose (1992). This counter-measure of subject selection can be applied in combating various instances of missing relevant medical data pertinent to other subgroups. Another justification for this gross overrepresentation was an apparent difficulty that medical researchers faced in accessing female subjects. This was refuted by Dresser, citing the sheer number of women working in the medical field at the time (1992).

This same justification, which suggests callousness and inactivity, is applied to the underrepresentation of minorities and other marginalized groups (Dresser, 1992). Nevertheless, though representation of racial groups may mirror population proportions, it does not mirror the gender proportion (Dresser, 1992). I would add here, though, that while Dresser's judgement may have been plausibly accurate at the time, it has been nearly three decades since her publication. Minority populations in the Western world in general, and within the United States in particular, is growing rapidly. Representation of such populations may need to be increased in step with their rate of growth, especially

in regard to ethnic women as they constitute a cross-sectoral demographic. Furthermore, while there may realistically be complications in accessing certain demographics for the purposes of research, widespread use of technology such as the internet is exhibited even in the poorest communities. While internet-based research may not have yet reached a stage that satisfies accompanying ethical concerns, a rudimentary format can be used in at least recruiting subjects from these hard to access demographics.

The concerns about the underrepresentation of women, especially ethnic women, continue. A conceptual model for recruitment of women from this demographic is outlined in a study by Brown, Long, Gould, Weitz, & Milliken (2000). While previous literature has mainly focused on the barriers of recruitment of ethnic women, this model outlined positive motivating factors that proved successful in their recruitment. Awareness of the benefits of research, acceptability of research to the social community, and easy access to research promote the recruitment of ethnic women (Brown et al, 2000). In addition to Dresser's preliminary suggestion of basic inclusion of women in medical research (1992), incorporation of these motivating factors in the recruitment process could increase the overall participation of ethnic women, and perhaps all minority groups in clinical research. Since distrust of the medical and other research fields is exhibited in various marginalized group, more empathic means of engaging these populations would only prove fruitful.

Distrust of clinical research among marginalized groups should be troubling. In their review of the challenges facing minority participation in clinical trials, Fisher & Kalbaugh mention that a deep distrust of clinicians and medical research impedes the participation of minority groups (2011). Lack of minority participation in clinical trials could ultimately magnify their underrepresentation. Minority peoples' distrust of medical research may be due to previous

violations within the field. In my experience, the Tuskegee Syphilis trials are among the first topics taught in many African-American History courses, and it is a topic that may leave African-American students wary of medical research. The participation of minority groups in research, especially within high-risk and low-reward trials, can be promoted by the avoidance of exploitation or undue burdening of these groups (Fisher & Kalbaugh, 2011).

Sadly, the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and its corresponding harms continue to this day. Hiller, Chilton, Zhao, Szymkowiak, Coffman, and Mallya (2012) conducted a study on the locations of tobacco outlets based on their advertising. This study, which inspected nearly 5,000 retail outlets in Philadelphia, found that most stores advertising tobacco products are primarily located in impoverished areas. In fact, the locale of the stores was determined by the correlation between the presence of tobacco advertising and that of government assistance programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and SNAP for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). These findings should be troubling to anyone, remarkably more so when one discovers that tobacco advertising is often found near items targeted to children (Hiller et al, 2012). It is natural that certain difficulties accompany heavy financial burden. Difficulties such as lack of nutrition, disease, and inadequate healthcare can only be exacerbated if they are conjoined with those associated with smoking.

Hiller et al found that tobacco advertising is correlated with tobacco use (2012); in case the investigation of such a correlation is even necessary. Unsurprisingly, further investigation concluded that the rate of tobacco use is strongly associated with lower-income populations (Hiller et al, 2012). The consequences of smoking, some of which prove fatal, have essentially become common knowledge. With our below-satisfactory healthcare system, one that continuously fails low-income populations, it seems nefarious to

market tobacco to a population that would ultimately be unable to mitigate the consequences of its use.

Asthma, emphysema, and lung cancer are only some of the medical conditions exhibited in smokers. Additionally, given the addictive nature of nicotine, tobacco use is highly correlated with the inability to quit smoking (Hiller et al, 2012). Demographics already facing multiple financial and other woes will surely be harmed with the addition of fueling an addiction. As a previous smoker, I can attest to the surprisingly high financial cost of supporting the habit of tobacco use. A pack of “quality” cigarettes can range anywhere from \$8 to as high as \$14, subject to locality. In a more concrete manner of conveyance, smokers with a national mean income of less than \$30,000 a year spend 14 percent of their annual income on cigarettes (Hiller et al, 2012).

While the target for tobacco marketing is troubling, one fact connects this reality with the theme of this paper. Being that the low-income communities and minority demographics encompass most smokers, one would assume they are at the forefront of participation in medical research on the adverse effects of smoking. However, the opposite is true, as research on tobacco use in minorities, low-income, and indigenous peoples is scarce (Passey & Bonevski, 2014). This is in stark contrast, perhaps, with the previously mentioned principle of justice. Meanwhile, although minorities and low-income groups are the prime targets of tobacco advertising, and are thus the demographics that are exposed to tobacco more than other groups, they constitute a minute part of the populace of clinical research into smoking and its adverse effects.

Part of the justification for this system of research is that these groups (especially the homeless) are difficult to recruit for trials (Passey & Bonevski, 2014). While this is seemingly plausible, it seems equally plausible for relevant organizations to cooperate with the numerous homeless shelter facilities and welfare organizations, nationwide, in recruiting research

participants from this demographic. Additionally, it does not excuse the blatant underrepresentation given the ratios of populations that smoke. Moreover, a robust effort in the recruitment of minority and low-income participants in such research may increase their awareness on the complications associated with smoking. Failure to address this method of representation, or lack thereof, would be indicative of the numerous prejudices these groups face systematically.

The implications of underrepresentation affect even the most vehemently protected persons, such as the mentally-ill. Given obvious reasons for ethical concern regarding informed consent, risk assessment, and beneficence, regulations, especially within clinical settings, is highly bureaucratic. Research into suicide or its prevention is permeated with ethical and practical concerns. In a 2017 study, Homs, Podlogar, Stanley, and Joiner analyzed some of these concerns. Their findings concluded that Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), and clinicians in a research setting alike, must reevaluate certain regulatory practices. They call for a reevaluation of the IRB approval process, application of more empirical measures for suicidal risk assessment, and IRB protocols for personnel training in cases of emergencies (Homs et al, 2017). The point that is linked with underrepresentation of interest falls within IRB proceedings and the risk assessment process. There is an occurrence of alienation of roles between clinician and researcher, where purposeful avoidance of risk assessment takes place due to misconceptions within IRB meetings, possible intervention is lacking, and training for emergency situations is yet unperfected (Homs et al, 2017).

Avoidance of risk assessment refers to clinicians neglecting to assess patients that display severe suicidal tendencies, which is due to a fear within IRBs that such investigation could have dangerous consequences (Homs et al, 2017). As a matter of fact, Homs et al argued that suicidal tendency is reportedly

decreased in patients that are asked about their conditions (2017). Furthermore, there exists an untapped potential for administration of immediate intervention following the assessment process, perhaps due to lack of perceived authority, an authority that may naturally be given to the clinician (Homs et al, 2017). I would therefore stress that if the well-being of suicidal patients is indeed held in the utmost regard by IRBs and researchers, these concerns should be further investigated. While the informed consent process and potential risks to this demographic should never be undermined, overreaching regulation, especially when it impedes possible intervention, may not serve the interests of this group.

For ethnic minorities that fall within the mentally-ill population, the implications only grow. As previously stated, the mental health services available to the disenfranchised are inadequate. The organizations that oversee such care may need to pay explicit attention to the interests of ethnic, mentally-ill individuals. A 2017 study into the quality of healthcare provided by programs for underrepresented ethnic populations (UREPs) found that UREP-associated programs lacked the adequate beneficence that is available in programs not associated with UREPs (Gilmer, Henwood, McGovern, Hurst, Burgdof, & Innes-Gomberg). The UREP population examined in this study was comprised of many different ethnicities, yet the implications were similar (Gilmer et al, 2017). The care varied in that individuals utilizing UREP-associated programs often paid more for comparable treatment, often needed additional intervention, and the efficiency of the intervention itself was unclear (Gilmer et al, 2017).

In their study, Gilmer et al suggest that this variation in healthcare could be due to several reasons (2017). They suggested that linguistic competency, the individual's overall insight on what the programs offer, and a lack of trust in these programs may be linked to the healthcare disparities (Homs et al, 2017). Certainly,

language barriers can inhibit the quality of care UREPs receive through these programs, and these barriers may even attribute to the general understanding of the programs. Despite these possibilities, they should be among the first concerns to be addressed given the populations with which these programs are associated. Adequate translation services and a transparent frame of these programs could assist in building the trust between healthcare providers and communities.

In conclusion, underrepresentation is a concept that may overlap with current ethical concerns, such as the protection of vulnerable populations. However, as I have argued, underrepresentation itself and the harms associated with underrepresentation are worthy of further investigation. Underrepresentation affects groups such as women, minorities, the impoverished, and the mentally-ill. The protection of these groups in medical research has been an ongoing source of concern, a concern that can best be addressed through proper representation of these groups and their succeeding interests. The revamping of current research paradigms or standards, the extension or reconfiguration of current protections, and a concrete effort in recruiting individuals from groups that are hard to access are perhaps elementary steps in the right direction.

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Untitled

Rose Thomas

Course: Advanced Creative Writing (ENG 3320)

Professor: Martha Witt, English

Student: Rose Thomas

Essay: Untitled

Assignment:

Having built on many previous assignments in the course, this final assignment asked students to do the following: Write a narrative essay on a turning point in your life.

The only honest mirror in the house is by the entryway, above the light switch, right when you walk in. Natural light streams through the windows, allowing me to see exactly what shade my skin is today. It is too tan, too yellow. It is the color of old books at the library, the ones on the very top floor that no one checks out. This is why I wake up an hour early: So I can dot my face with a foundation labeled “porcelain” and pretend it matches. But I do not feel like porcelain. I blend the foundation in concentric circles with a soft brush, moving from my hairline to my neck. I have followed this routine every day since I started the school year, so I find nothing odd about painting my own face. I only recently realized I am ugly. It hadn’t come as a shock—it was more like I didn’t understand why I hadn’t realized it sooner. I’m ugly inside, so it only made sense that I’d be ugly outside, too. But it’s nothing that I can’t fix with a little makeup, like taking a pill when you’re sick.

When I finish with my skin, I move to my eyes. They are too small, like almonds, so I take care in curling my lashes. YouTube says it makes me look more awake. I wiggle the mascara wand next, because it really is like magic, to coat every lash in black. It takes a half an hour to put on my face. Only then, I look acceptable enough to leave the house.. I have three consecutive free periods every other Friday. There is no study hall in my school, so I sit in the cafeteria with my laptop and a list of essays I have to hand in next week. “I need to finish mine, too,” Kate says. We are best friends, going on eight years, but it’s my fault we lost the yearbook superlative. I am not as outgoing as she is, and I am often confused with other Asian girls in my grade. Kate wouldn’t be mistaken for anyone else. She’s pretty in the girl-next-door kind of way. “Will you check my drafts?” I nod. “For the ones I’m not applying to, sure.”

She squints at me. “Wait, so you won’t check the ones that we’re both applying to?”

“Right.” Whether or not we get the scholarships depends on these essays, but there can only be one winner. Kate went on a mission trip last year. That’s practically a goldmine for essay topics—it involves helping people and pretending you understand other cultures. “Do you have them on you?”

“Hmm? Oh, yeah, here. Thanks so much!” She smiles then, in a way that only Kate can, like the expression had the power to let the light of her soul shine through her fair-freckled skin.

I wonder if she has any darkness in her at all. I suppose I have enough for both of us.

The moment I touch my eyes, I know it’s a mistake. Black streaks smear on my fingers, the combination of mascara and eyeliner mixed with oil that built up after a long day. Layers of foundation and sunscreen pill as I touch my face, making me painfully aware of the crusty coating my skin.

The due date looms closer, but I haven’t finished. There are three more essays to be written and a few thousand dollars on the line. If I don’t do well on these essays, I can’t afford to go to Drew University. And if I don’t go to Drew, my six-year plan to become an editor is ruined. I might as well buy my McDonalds uniform now.

Ugh. I close my laptop and push away from my desk, which is stacked high with textbooks and wires like snakes peeking out from the pages. Books and makeup clutter every other surface in my room, making it difficult to find my phone. When I do, under a copy of *Lolita*, I plug it into the wall to charge. Despite being, as my eighth-grade Earth science teacher once said, “Type-A,” I don’t mind the mess. In a way, the perpetual chaos of my room comforts me.

“Maybe I should message Kate,” I say, turning to Dr. Victor Hamilton, my teddy bear. I like to give all of my stuffed animals (of which I have too many) fancy

names, partially because I think it’s funny. I’m also terrified of evil dolls, so I figure that if I treat my stuffed animals well, they won’t kill me in my sleep. I watch a lot of horror movies, most of which I obviously don’t handle well psychologically. “She doesn’t have her shit together, either.”

Dr. Hamilton doesn’t respond, but I imagine he’s agreeing with me. Either that or he’s plotting to murder me and stuff my corpse inside the mattress.

“Is it horrible of me to...well, feel comforted by the misery of my friends?” I ask, spreading my arms out. “Since I don’t know what I’m doing with my life, I mean.”

“Yeah, you’re kind of a rotten bitch,” Oscar, my transgender stuffed rabbit, replies. In contrast to her harsh (imaginary) words, her mouth is stitched into a smile.

“I know...” But I can’t help wanting the people around me to be just as frustrated as I am. If a lot of people do or feel something, it’s normal. If it’s only me...it’s weird.

Talking to yourself through stuffed animals is really weird too, I think. Or maybe it’s quirky and cute?

“It’s freaky and kind of gross,” Oscar confirmed. “You should probably get a life.”

The following Monday, I hand my guidance counselor the packet of scholarship applications, thicker than an issue of Vogue. She places it on her desk next to a stack of applications just as awkward and bulky as my own. They form a tower, casting a large shadow across her workspace.

“I look forward to reading your essay,” Ms. Zhang says. I’d met with her only a handful of times, but she always reminded me of apple pie. It was the hair, I think. Red as apples. That, and her office was always warm, with the faint scent of cinnamon. “You *did* write about your adoption, right?”

“Yes,” I reply. My own voice, high-pitched and sweet, used only in the presence of authoritarian figures,

annoys me. “I made sure to include that. Thank you so much for the suggestion.”

“Well, I think your story is just so *unique*. Colleges want to hear that sort of thing, you know.” She smiles, like she’s sharing a secret with me. “Being Asian usually counts against you, but your Italian surname gives you an advantage.”

Yes, yes. I have a white name, and a Chinese pancake face. I briefly wonder how, exactly, Ms. Zhang pictures me in her mind. Little orphan Annie?

The financial aid package comes during the first week of March. My mom tells me that she found the remaining three envelopes in the mailbox during lunch. She waits for me to open them, leaning over my shoulder with her lips pursed. By then, she knows—she must.

There isn’t enough money. Not from Drew University, or any of the other seven I applied to.

I don’t understand. I did well in school last year. I raised my GPA by 0.2 points. So why?

I am an admittedly ugly crier: My nose runs, and my eyes redden and swell, to the point where they resemble the fancy almond slices you see from salads at Whole Foods. Cheap makeup streaks my face, my mask ruined by the tears.

I feel like an idiot, having just applied to a bunch of scholarships that aren’t going to make a difference anyway. Even twenty thousand dollars wouldn’t be enough to cover my first year at Drew, not to mention room and board fees.

Now, when anyone asks where I’m going to college, I have to reply with *community college*. Only kids with low GPAs attend community college. Everyone knows that. Even most of the drug addicts are going to four-year colleges.

I hate that I’m poor. I hate that I’m not smarter, that my GPA wasn’t higher. I really, *really* hate myself.

Kate and I carpool after school as we have every day

since we entered high school—my mom drops us off in the mornings, and her dad picks us up. It’s late spring, so we wait outside in the parking lot, watching the train of cars pass.

“Did you write my post?” she asks. Traditionally, the seniors announce their decisions for college through Facebook posts. The posts are always written by close friends, like a congratulatory letter. It sounds less braggadocios that way.

“Yes, I sent you the draft,” I reply. We face similar situations, but her parents agreed to cosign for her student loans. Mine refused. “Make sure you look it over today, so I can post it.”

“Thanks! I will. Are you sure you don’t want me to write one for you?” She nudges my shoulder. “Going to community college is nothing to be embarrassed about. You’re being smart with your money!”

I laugh at her optimism. Though well-intentioned, her words sound belittling, like pity. “No, it’s fine. Anyway, all of my friends know where I’m going. That’s what matters.”

“Are you sure you...are ok with your decision?” Kate asks, lowering her voice. She stares straight into my eyes and I shift away to avoid her gaze.

“Yeah. It is what it is. Maybe I’ll transfer to Drew in two years.”

“In AP Psych, we learned that when a person looks to the right, he or she is probably lying.” She frowns. “You’re not fine with it, are you?”

No. But if I continue to say it’s fine, perhaps I can fool myself into thinking that it is. I try to smile and play it off. “Don’t read too much into that kind of thing.”

“I just...want to help you.”

“It’s fine,” I repeated. *So drop it*. Having known Kate for so long, I could tell that her words weren’t empty. I know that, had our positions been switched, I would have said something similar to her.

I just wouldn't have meant it.

Her father pulls up to the curb, so I don't have to dwell on these thoughts for too long. I save them instead, for a time when I'm alone. It's far better, I've learned, to be a horrible person in private.

The passenger-side door takes two tries to open before Kate can get in. Her little sister is already sitting in the back, so I walk around the car to the driver's side. As I reach for the handle, I can see my reflection in the window.

I've heard of smiles that don't reach one's eyes, but the expression I wear is completely blank. My ill intentions seeped through my makeup: around my mouth, where the lipstick has rubbed off from lunch, and under my eyes, where eyeliner and mascara migrated to create shadows. Instead of a high-school girl, I look like a creature one would summon in the mirror of a darkened bathroom.

It's ironic how fresh makeup enhances your appearance, but when it wears off, so does the magic. You're as ugly, possibly worse-off, than when you started.

"Is the door locked?" I hear Kate's muffled voice from inside the car.

"Sorry," I murmur, mostly to myself as I shuffle inside. "I'm ready now."

The air conditioning in my house breaks every summer. Two years ago, I finally bought a fan for my room and propped it on top of an empty stack of boxes. It doesn't oscillate, so I manually cross the room to turn it towards the vanity.

My hair fills the mirror as I stand before it, curling every which way but down. I always said I was cheated out of good hair—being fully Chinese, where were my straight, silky locks? Today, I don't care enough to straighten it.

It's too hot to put on makeup, or take even one step outside. Instead, I rub serum on my cheeks and look into the mirror. Dust collects on the surface, so I take a tissue and wipe the glass to see myself clearly.

My face is bare and plain—caught halfway between pretty and ugly. It is the first time in a long time that I have truly seen myself in such a state, with nowhere to be and no one to answer to.

I am alone. My friends have left for the summer, and I've come to understand that I probably won't see them again, with school being over.

"Not quite," Oscar comments from the corner of my bed. "You still have work to do, right? Stop staring at yourself. It's vain."

"So?" I walk towards the bed and sit down, opening my laptop. "There's no one else here."

With the exception my stuffed animals, of course, piled up by the foot of my bed. I need them for moral support; I signed up for summer classes to ease myself into college.

Besides, Dr. Victor Hamilton is a scholar—he's the first of my teddy bears to get his PhD.

My first class isn't difficult: general sociology, something I just took in high school. The first reading is from Cooley, about the concept called "the Looking-Glass Self." It has three major components:

1. We imagine how we appear to others.
2. We react to what we feel others' judgment of our appearance must be.
3. We develop ourselves through the perceived judgment of others.

"That's a bit silly," Oscar says. "To develop your own self-image based on other people."

I roll my eyes. "I don't think it's a conscious phenomenon."

"But now that you're learning about it, haven't you become conscious?"

"I don't think it's that simple." I paused. "You're just a bunny, anyway. You wouldn't understand."

"You're right." She stares up at me, smiling as always. "I

don't get it at all."

When I finish the reading response, I decide to get out of the house for a bit. I got my license a few weeks ago, so I've been driving a lot more now that my mother doesn't have to legally be in the car. Thank God.

Walking into the entryway, I stop. My mirror is gone.

"Dad?" I poke my head out the front door. My father stands in the middle of the sidewalk, a pad of paper under his arm. After he got fired, he began spending a few hours outside every day sketching home improvement plans. "What happened to the mirror?"

"What mirror?" He walks up to the front steps, holding a hand over his eyes to block out the sun. "You mean the one in the front?"

"Yeah." It's the only good mirror in the whole house.

My dad laughs. "Now that I've got some time, I'm thinking of redoing the front door."

"And the mirror?"

"Needed to take some measurements. It was in the way," he says, like it's not a big deal. "What? Do you want me to put it back?"

I think for a moment before shrugging. "No, it's fine."

The Big A: Why Abortion is Hollywood's Dirtiest Word

Laura Lee

Course: Capstone Course in Women's Studies (WGS 4100)

Professor: Arlene Holpp Scala, Women's and Gender Studies

Student: Laura Lee

Essay: The Big A: Why Abortion is Hollywood's Dirtiest Word

Assignment:

Students were required to write a scholarly feminist research paper for their capstone assignment, and were encouraged to explore a topic of their own interest. Sources included could range from feminist journals and books to online sources, using appropriate

citation and references. The process for this essay included the development of a theoretical framework, reflection of the writer's interest in the topic, extensive drafting and revision, and an oral presentation in class.

Abstract

"The Big A: Why Abortion is Hollywood's Dirtiest Word" uses several examples of the way television and film presents abortion to its audience. Exploring both overt and subtle examples, the research attempts to show the proliferation of anti-abortion/pro-motherhood messages that span different genres of film and television. The paper begins with a very mainstream example of a pro-life narrative, and then moves on to an overview of the different media examined throughout the paper. In depth explorations of these examples investigate the many ways that on-screen anti abortion messages are conveyed, as well as their impact on the audiences watching them. The research looks at different genres of film, including horror, independent film, and mainstream cinema, as

well as several episodes of popular television series, and dissects each one to expose their anti-abortion/pro-motherhood subtext. Then, with the use of both Feminist and Marxist theory, the research endeavors to show the underlying *intent* of anti-abortion messages prevalent in both film and television. The paper concludes with a few examples of media that have a more open and honest tone regarding abortion, as well as possible ways to make future discourse surrounding abortion in media more supportive of women and less patriarchal overall.

Interest

My interest in this topic is both personal and professional. As a woman who was very much molded by on-screen representations of women while growing up, it always troubled me that so many female charac-

ters shared motherhood as their ultimate life goal. As I got older, I realized that so many popular movies and television series extolled motherhood as a woman's purpose in life. I began to notice how the "joys" of motherhood were celebrated on-screen, while the oppression that stems from it was almost entirely ignored.

Abortion on screen is an even more subversive topic, as it is rarely explored at all. When the subject is broached, it always seems to me that the message is more about shaming women than it is about connecting with them. As a woman who hasn't any interest in being a mother, is pro-choice, and has known friends that have experienced abortion, I think that these types of narratives have a dangerous effect on not just women, but all members of the audience.

My career goal is to be a writer and professor. Over the course of my career, I hope to be able to understand why these anti-abortion/pro-motherhood messages prevail as well as teach my future students that motherhood and womanhood are not synonymous. I also hope to see a public discourse around abortion that is less about myth and more about reality. I have spoken with many women on this topic, women whose lives are not defined by having a child, and they often feel shamed by the media much as I do. I believe there are a large number of women who want more honest representations of females on screen, especially when it comes to abortion and motherhood. I hope my future research will play a small part in achieving these goals.

Discussion

In 2007 Universal Studios released Judd Apatow's *Knocked Up*, a comedy drama about a one-night stand that results in an unplanned pregnancy. The film occasionally skirts the limits of "decency" with its main characters often engaged in marginal, if not illegal activities. With depictions of illegal drug use, unprotected sex, and binge drinking, their behavior knows no bounds. Although when the subject of

abortion is broached, these guys won't even say the word. Judd Apatow wants his audience to know that even they have their limits.

The policing and manipulation of language surrounding abortion reveals itself in many different facets of everyday life. Hollywood, it seems, is one of the top contributors to this dangerous combination of silence and myth. In the scene described above, the guys settle on referring to abortion as "the A word" Between beer and bong hits, one of Ben's friends suggests that he should "take care of it." While Ben remains silent, his other friend Jay looks at him incredulously and asks, "Tell me you don't want him to get an A-word?" (*Knocked Up*, 2007). Whether this scene is meant to be a comment on societies reluctance to talk about abortion or a genuine reflection on the views of the people behind the film, cannot be known for sure. What is known, however, is that popular films that perpetuate the myth that abortion is so morally unconscionable that characters cannot even bring themselves to talk about it further stigmatizes not just the procedure, but women and the choices they make. Why does pop-culture, in the form of film and television, insist on stigmatizing abortion? Why is it that forty-five years after abortion was legalized it continues to be presented as morally ambiguous at best? Who does this narrow view ultimately benefit and what are its effects on women? I believe this biased discourse on abortion is meant to control women's agency and limit their access to resources.

Knocked Up is far from alone in its attack on abortion. There have been many mainstream movies and television shows over the last four decades that have had a decidedly pro-life stance, even though these views might be disguised in subtly. *Dirty Dancing*, *The Suckling*, *Juno*, *Blue Valentine*, *Revolutionary Road* and *Cider House Rules* are just a few movies that vilify abortion in a variety of different ways, while episodes of popular shows like *Sex and the City*, *Girls*, *Friends*,

Beverly Hills 90210, and *The Walking Dead* have also perpetuated many damaging myths that are both directly or indirectly tied to abortion. Even shows that have been lauded for their non-judgmental depiction of abortion such as *Roseanne*, *Mad Men*, and Shonda Rhimes creations *Grey's Anatomy* and *Scandal* can be seen as perpetuating some of the more inconspicuous abortion myths. I will look at several of these examples and the messages they convey to women about pregnancy, abortion, and motherhood.

A 2017 article from the *University of Virginia School of Law Virginia Sports and Entertainment Law Journal* entitled "Burying Abortion in Stigma: The Fundamental Right No One Wants to Discuss. Abortion Portrayal on Film and Television" states that "When viewers have no context for abortion and learn about the issue from the fictional portrayals on film and television, false perceptions become commonplace" (Waynen, 216). The article goes on to mention a study that concluded in-depth, personal news stories about people whom the viewer can identify with that "sway both personal and political priorities. Fictional narratives... demonstrate the same outcome" (Waynen, 230). In other words, fictional characters and the decisions they make, influence the audiences' views on these issues in *real life*. That means that a beloved sitcom character that decides that abortion is wrong might be enough to convince the audience to hold that same belief. This is where the effects of fantasy can become a danger to reality.

As mentioned above, there are many myths about abortion that film and television continue to sustain on screen. While some of these films are downright ridiculous, they still must be noted as an influence surrounding the pop-culture discourse on abortion. Take for example *The Suckling*, a 1990 low budget, B-horror film. To say that this movie is absurd would be high praise. The story of a young couple that is terrorized by their recently aborted fetus is beyond ludicrous, but it should not be ignored (The Suckling,

1990). Abortion used as comedic-horror fodder is evidence of the stigma surrounding it. While the films intended audience might delight in the over the top plot-line and heavy handed gore, the fact that even a film such as this feels it has the right to pass a moral judgment on women who obtain abortions is an issue of great concern. In Steve Jones' article "Torture Born: Representing Pregnancy and Abortion in Contemporary Survival Horror" he emphasizes the importance of not overlooking films in the horror genre regardless of their fantastical overtones. He writes "these movies are easy to dismiss...by those who refuse to engage with their content in detail. Yet if these movies are ignored, we risk failing to apprehend their important contributions...to public discourse" (Jones, 442). The audience that these films primarily target is mostly adolescent males. These young men will one day have a significant role to play in the discourse around abortion. If they see depictions of abortion that are so flagrantly moralistic, how might that shape their personal beliefs when they get older? While it may seem far-fetched that anyone would mold their views around a cinematic masterpiece such as *The Suckling*, when it becomes part of a long litany of anti-abortion rhetoric, the messages begin to grab hold.

Horror films that portray woman's sole role as that of protective mother are not a new phenomenon. Classic movies such as *The Exorcist* and *Rosemary's Baby* are perfect examples of mother as protector. In the former, a mother is fighting for the life of her pre-teen daughter who is under demonic possession, while the latter is the story of a woman willing to do anything to protect her "unborn baby" from a modern day coven of witches.

These themes may not seem directly related to abortion but they are connected by stronger threads than at first visible. The narrative of these films is that a woman must do anything to protect her child, but in *Rosemary's Baby* the term child is extended to the main protagonists fetus. This use of language, as well

as the sole directive of female life to have and protect a child contributes to the myth that a fetus in the womb is equal to a baby at the breast. Any woman who doesn't do everything in her power to protect and nurture that fetus, regardless of the danger presented to her *own* life, is morally bankrupt.

The 2007 French film "Inside" follows a similar storyline. In the first minutes of the film, the audience learns that Sarah and her husband Mattieu were in a car accident. He was killed, but she and her fetus survived. Sarah is now nine months pregnant and the film takes place the night before she is set to go into the hospital for a scheduled caesarian. Sarah doesn't make it to the hospital, however, as a woman comes into the house and tortures Sarah. This woman wants Sarah's baby, and the film culminates with the strange woman ripping Sarah's belly open with a pair of scissors and removing it. The final scene is the woman cradling the baby in a rocking chair with Sarah's dead body at her feet (Inside, 2007).

On first view the idea that this movie is example of abortion myths may not be evident. But abortion myths are not just about the procedure itself. They are also connected to how women are affected by conservative messages relating to their societally prescribed roles. So the audience has to ask *what is the message behind the gore?* Two women fight for the life of an unborn fetus. One woman, the stalker, is willing to risk anything to get that "baby" out of Sarah. This is a reinforcement of the idea that a woman's ultimate goal is to be mother to a child. When woman is defined as reaching the pinnacle of not just success but *purpose* only when she has a child, what does that say about women who choose to abort their pregnancies? It says that women like these are not just evil or morally corrupt, but a threat to both manufactured societal norms, as well as human nature. Films like these also tell the audience who to "root" for and the measure of a heroin's braveness is what lengths she will go to protect *not herself* but her child.

While the use of pregnancy and abortion themes in

horror films is worrisome (*Horror Hotel* is another cringe worthy example of this) many of these movies do not reach as wide an audience as mainstream film and television. Their messages also often take a back seat to extreme gore and violence. But the anti-abortion rhetoric is not reserved for blood soaked horror films. There are countless independent and big-budget films and television shows that continue to show abortion as something taboo. One such entry into the pop-culture discourse on abortion is *Juno*. Released the same year as *Knocked-Up*, this movie is a much more realistic portrayal of a high school girl who experiences an unplanned pregnancy. Juno decides to have an abortion, but when she goes to the clinic she encounters a single pro-life protestor (and fellow classmate) telling her that her baby already has fingernails. Once inside the clinic, Juno is dismissed by the receptionist who barely registers her presence. While sitting in the waiting room, she looks around at the other patients, their fingernails all involved in exaggerated actions (drumming, scratching, biting) and the next scene shows her slamming through the doors and running out into the parking lot, unable to go through with her appointment. Juno decides that even though she is not ready to be a mother, she cannot have an abortion. The film ends with her giving the baby up for adoption (Juno, 2007).

While this ending might be seen as positive to some (a young girl who makes the choice that best suits her) it is also a recreation of one of the most common abortion tropes; the last minute change of heart. What does this say to young girls who are watching this movie and will face or have faced a similar situation? Juno's family and friends are supportive of her choice, but what about all the families who are not? What about the teenagers who are uninsured and cannot afford scheduled visits to their ob-gyn? These are all very real, personal and political factors that many girls face. The dismissal of these factors by the entertainment industry does not facilitate a "happy ending" but rather contributes to the already internalized inferiority that many females in

society today hold. It is as if the filmmakers are saying that yes, Juno may have behaved irresponsibly, but that doesn't make her a bad person as long as she doesn't have the abortion. And this is the more insidious subtext of the last minute change of heart; worthy women don't abort. Is this a level of power that we, as a society, are willing to give to an industry that already revolves around reducing and demonizing the female experience?

This narrative isn't relegated to young female characters. The popular HBO series *Sex and the City*, which revolved around the lives of four New York City women, featured a not too dissimilar story line when Miranda Hobbes (played by Cynthia Nixon) discovered she was pregnant after a "mercy fuck" with her ex-boyfriend. Miranda had long served as the most grounded of the foursome. A partner in her law firm, Miranda was the successful, financially independent, no nonsense female archetype. In a season three episode, Miranda's boyfriend Steve tells her that he wants a baby. She says that they're not ready for one, that she's not ready, and this plays a large role in their eventual breakup later in the show. However a season four plot twist finds Miranda pregnant after she sleeps with Steve. Miranda decides to have an abortion, but while sitting in the clinic with her friend Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker) she turns to her and asks "Carrie, is this my baby?" (*Sex and the City*, 2002). The last scene shows the four women sitting down and Miranda announces that she's keeping the baby, much to the joy of her friends.

Sex and the City was supposed to be a show about independent women who had the freedom to make the choices that best suited their lives. While it may be a bit problematic watching the show from a modern-day standpoint (it's views on bisexuality as well as it's portrayal of trans women of color is deeply troubling), at the time it was a huge leap forward for the onscreen portrayal of women. These women had fulfilling jobs, good friends, and complete control over their sexual

agency. Why then would a show fall back on the last minute change of heart the one and only time it ever dealt with the topic of abortion? Over the course of the episode "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda" the women talk about abortion in a somewhat casual way. Both Carrie and Samantha (Kim Cattrall) admit to having the procedure done, and recognize that it is something that many women have gone through. While researching this paper, I saw a lot of positive feedback on the way the show handled the topic of abortion. Some said that it was "refreshing" to hear women taking about abortion as if it was just another medical procedure, one without shame or regret. And while that is true, the overall message the audience walks away with is troubling. Yes, Carrie and Samantha admitted to having abortions *in the past*. But what about what was happening *at the moment*. As referenced earlier in Miriam Waynen's essay, people tend to form their opinion based on what they are *seeing* on the screen, whose story they are connecting with. A past admission of abortion is nothing compared to the struggle of the main character *in real time*. And when that character decides that against all her better judgment she is going to have a baby, the audience's faith in the morality of their heroine can be reinstated.

In his article "The Effects of Gender Norms in Sitcoms on Support for Access to Abortion and Contraception" Nathaniel Swigger writes, "Once the audience is (on the side of the main character)...they are more likely to adopt the character's view of the issues presented on the show" (Swigger, 120). This is very similar to Waynen's assertions about identification with the fictional and how it translates to opinions in reality. Swigger goes on to say that "Because the audience spends more time watching fiction than nonfiction programming, fictional tropes are often more accessible in the mind of the average viewer" (Swigger, 112).

It is also worth noting, to anyone not familiar with the dynamics of the cast, that both Carrie and Samantha were the "reckless" women of the group. The type of

women that are often thought of as too “selfish” to have a child. While Miranda, on the other hand, was settled and more relatable to viewers; a real woman. And what are “real” women supposed to do? Have children, and most definitely not get abortions.

Another example of the last minute change of heart can be found in the 2010 film “Blue Valentine.” Cindy, a pre-med college student finds out that her boyfriend did not use a condom when they had sex. She is furious with him, and subsequently breaks up with him. Shortly after that, she meets Dean, a young man who works for a moving company. The two fall for each other quickly, but Cindy realizes that she is pregnant. She decides to get an abortion, as she is in school, has no plans to have a child, and is no longer with the father. But at the last minute she changes her mind. She rushes out to see Dean and we see her tell him that she couldn't go through with the procedure. He tells her that he doesn't care if he's not the father and the two get married. As the years progress, however, their marriage which is now filled with anger and contempt for each other, dissolves.

Although it may be clear to some viewers that Cindy's inability to go through with the abortion was in fact the wrong decision, it is important to look at *how* this experience is presented to the audience. When Cindy arrives at the clinic, she is asked a series of questions by a nurse. The nurse warns her that the questions are of a sensitive nature. She asks Cindy how old she was when she first had intercourse. Cindy pauses for a second and then answers in a low voice “thirteen.” The nurse is silent for a moment, and then tells her that “that's not uncommon.” Immediately, the audience reacts to Cindy's admission. By societal standards, 13 is widely perceived as too young to begin sexual relationships. The audience instantly (if not consciously) assumes that Cindy is a “slut.” The next question, how many sexual partners has she had, confirms this assumption when Cindy says in the same low voice “twenty...maybe twenty-five.” A girl in her

early twenties, who lost her virginity at 13 and has had 25 partners in less than ten years is immediately demonized, her unplanned pregnancy being her fault. For a young woman like this, as well as the audience that is watching her struggle, there is only one road to redemption. As Cindy lays down for the procedure and the doctor begins the process, she tells him she can't go through with it. At the last moment, Cindy finds her salvation in saving her “baby.” The audience can breathe a sigh of relief. She may have been irresponsible, she may have been a “slut,” but all that is in the past because she has chosen to keep her “baby.” In realizing that she cannot go through with the abortion, Cindy's wanton behavior has been neutralized, and her destiny of maternal woman has been restored.

Some women on screen are just too transgressive to be portrayed as mothers, their lives or personalities are simply not conducive to motherhood. For this, the last minute miscarriage is a convenient answer to unplanned pregnancy. A recent example of this can be seen in the season one episode of *Girls*. “Vagina Panic” finds one of the shows four female protagonists pregnant. Jessa is the bohemian of the group, sexually free and defined as a “life addict” Jessa is the very definition of the hipster millennial wanderer. After she realizes she's pregnant, she decides to have an abortion. In the first part of the episode, it looks as if “Vagina Panic” will be one of the first shows in a while to deal with abortion in an open, casual, and non-judgmental way. Marnie, Jessa's friend from college, schedules her abortion, and the girls talk about it in a pretty off-handed manner. But when Hannah, Jessa's closet friend, is telling her boyfriend Adam about the abortion, he immediately reacts as if Jessa's abortion is a huge emotional concern. When Hannah tells him that she really doesn't think it's a big deal, he is taken aback and tells her that of course it's a big deal. Hannah is then confronted by Adam, and in this brief exchange, a young woman who had a very relaxed and realistic view on abortion is shamed by a man into realizing the

“inherent” sadness of the situation. When Hannah gets to the abortion clinic, Jessa has still not arrived. The audience sees her at a bar, wasting time, and simultaneously putting off her procedure. She meets a man at the bar, and they go into the bathroom where they mutually initiate sex. The man reaches between Jessa’s legs only to pull his hand away covered with blood. Jessa sees his hand and realizes she is menstruating.

There are two main problems with this depiction of abortion. First is Adam imposing his feelings about the procedure onto Hannah? Not only does he impose, he shames Hannah into believing that her way of thinking about abortion is wrong, and that her lack of sentimentality about it is a negative reflection on her as a person. Why is it in the year 2012 men are still telling women how they need to feel about issues concerning their bodies? Scenes such as these are simply a microcosm of the roles men play in women’s reproductive rights in the real world. Viewers that watch as Adam tells Hannah that abortions are always sad, always fraught, may be more receptive when male politicians not only tell a woman what she should and should not feel in regards to her body, but what she can and cannot do as well.

The second issue in this episode is how Jessa reacts to her pregnancy. On the surface it may seem that she takes it in stride, just as she does everything else in life, but there are many clues that Jessa is anything but comfortable with her decision to have an abortion. For starters, she doesn’t show up to her appointment. While her friends are waiting for her at the clinic, she is sitting in a bar drinking a White Russian. Her sexual encounter with the man at the bar seems less about sexual freedom and more about her refusal to accept the situation. But it is the culmination of the scene, where Jessa gets her period and balance is restored, that is the most worrisome. What message does this send to the audience watching the show? That women who *really* shouldn’t be having children will be spared

naturally? That abortion is unnecessary because the body knows when and if a pregnancy should remain viable? This may sound like strange logic but all one needs to do is remember the words of Todd Akin. Akin, the Republican senator for Montana infamously coined the term “legitimate rape.” Speaking against abortion, he said that a woman’s body (if it’s been raped) “has ways to shut that whole thing down” (Huffpost, 2012). “That whole thing” was referring to pregnancy, the Senator’s line of thinking that a woman’s body knows when to miscarry a problematic pregnancy. While Akin was talking about rape, it is not that much of a reach to think that viewers might follow the same line of thought when watching a fictional character on the screen. Unemployed, sexually promiscuous, and essentially rootless, Jessa was not the right candidate for motherhood. If viewers see her miscarriage and begin to think that somehow her body *knew* all this, that an abortion wasn’t necessary, then how will that impact their feelings on abortion as a whole? It may seem like a leap in logic, but with anti-abortion political messages mirroring similar narratives on the screen, the message to the viewer becomes increasingly clear.

From low budget B-horror flicks like *The Suckling* to indie films like *Juno* or big-budget productions such as *Knocked Up*, there is no shortage of anti-abortion messages unfurling on the screen. And while many of the movies referenced so far in this paper show less overt and more subtle anti-abortion rhetoric, there are films that cross beyond these boundaries, telling their audience that abortion isn’t simply an undesirable option, but a fatal one as well.

The research article “Telling Stories about Abortion: Abortion-Related Plot Lines in American Film and Television” published in the journal *Contraception*, did a study of abortion plot lines in 310 on screen depictions. Of these, almost 16% of women who obtained an abortion died. “16 died as a direct result of the abortion, 6 were murdered, 3 committed suicide...1 died in an accident, and 1 died with no specific cause of

death” (Sisson and Kimport, 2013). While many depictions of pregnancy are riddled with hidden (and not so hidden) abortion myths, the insinuation that abortion is tantamount to death is the most divisive stereotype.

I want to preface my next example by saying that many of these depictions take place during the time of illegal abortion. There are some films that do this purposefully, such as *If These Walls Could Talk*, which shows a young widow getting an illegal “kitchen table abortion” after which she bleeds to death. Movies like this are important to show how important Roe V. Wade was and continues to be, but movies that profit off of the illegal abortion storyline *without* the intention to educate seem to have no other purpose other than to shame their audience (and make a nice profit too). A prime example of this is the 2008 film *Revolutionary Road* based on the novel of the same name by author Richard Yates.

This is a powerhouse of a movie, with spellbinding performances by Kate Winslet, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Michael Shannon. It is such an intense, well-acted film, that it is easy to ignore the larger message of the narrative. The film tells the story of Frank and April Wheeler, a young couple living in 1950’s suburbia. From the outside, they seem to have the perfect life. Two young children, a dream home in a quiet neighborhood, all the trappings that equaled happiness and success in mid-century America. But tension grows between April and Frank as she feels more and more imprisoned by her life as a mother and housewife. They fight, sometimes violently, as April feels increasingly unfulfilled. Then, in a moment of clarity, she tells Frank that she wants to move to Paris. She can work while Frank can take time to do what he has always wanted to do; write. At first Frank is skeptical, but he warms to the idea and eventually is as excited as April. They make arrangements, even get their tickets, but then April finds out she is pregnant. Frank tells her it’s okay, that they can have the baby in Paris, but he worries

about his job. Their plan takes a back seat as Frank receives a promotion at work and starts to become excited about the idea of becoming a father. The fact that the thought of having another child makes April feel literally sick is lost on him. The film ends with April giving herself an abortion, from which she bleeds to death, leaving Frank to raise their children on his own.

Yes, the film takes place in the 1950’s and the only available options for abortions were illegal ones, but what is the significance of telling this story to a 21st century audience? The film itself thrives off patriarchal power. At one point April tells Frank that he is the most beautiful and amazing thing in the world. When he asks what that is, she responds with awe “a man.” Messages like these were common in movies of the 40’s and 50’s, even if they weren’t as overt. But what role does this film play in our modern day society? April, tired, frustrated, dissatisfied, and looking for something new reflects feelings felt by many women, regardless of time and place. However, when she dares to admit that she cannot have another baby, that being a mother isn’t what she wanted with her life, that she isn’t happy, Frank accuses her of being crazy, of being unable to love. Her fate is the ultimate punishment for a woman who cannot please a man, or has the audacity to put her feelings on par with her husband. April is expected to forget her dreams of something more when she discovers she is pregnant with her third child. When she dares to put her needs ahead of those of her unborn fetus, the only penance severe enough is death. In the film, Frank is devastated by the death of his wife, and the audience feels compassion for him as he watches his children playing on the swings with tears in his eyes. It is of note that in Richard Yates’s novel, Frank sends his children away to live with family and gets an apartment in the city. In a sick twist of irony, *he* gets the freedom that April died trying to obtain.

Having established the evidence for both the primary and secondary ways in which film and television put forth a pro-life agenda, the obvious question is why?

Who is benefiting from these depictions and what purpose do they serve? To answer this question, I believe that it is best to do so through a Marxist lens. Much of Feminist Theory has explored the connection between Marxism and Feminism. Man's control of women's sexual agency parallels the control of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, the key to Karl Marx's theoretical framework. To apply this theory to Feminism, as Catherine MacKinnon does in her article "Feminism, Marxism, and the State: An Agenda for Theory" she proposes that "Capitalistic countries value women in terms of their 'merit' by male standards" (MacKinnon, 522). This is similar to how the rich value the merit of the poor by the standards of the wealthy. What merit do the poor have to the rich? In Marxist theory, their merit can be found in servitude. The 1927 Fritz Lang film *Metropolis* is the perfect example of this dynamic. While the rich live lives of opulence and wealth, deep in the heart of the city are the poor, whose only worth is powering the machines of industry. Their work drains them, dehumanizes them, and therefore neutralizes any threat they may present to the social hierarchy. The dynamic between men and women is startlingly similar.

The ultimate goal of the patriarchy is to keep women subordinate to men. One of the greatest weapons in the proliferation of subordination is control. Controlling a woman's agency can take the shape of many forms, but there are none so ancient as that of motherhood. When a woman gives birth to a child, her life is no longer lived for herself, but for her baby. She is mother first, woman second. Her every moment is devoted to the protection, the care, the survival of her child; this is a biological certainty. The patriarchy, therefore has the room to pursue "other" avenues, such as professional success, self-discovery, and personal pleasures all with the security that these benefits will never be usurped by women.

In her 1970 book *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir talks about this control, saying that the key to the

mystery of the subjugation of women can be found in their role as child bearer. She writes "On a biological level a species is maintained only by creating itself anew; but this creation results only in repeating the same life in more individuals...(women's) misfortune is to have been biologically destined for the repetition of life" (de Beauvoir, 59). When de Beauvoir writes that creation leads to the repetition of "the same life" over and over again, I believe she is describing the way that the patriarchy keeps itself strong by keeping its women in the subordinate role of mother.

Think for a moment the transformation from woman to mother. Her entire existence serves a new purpose once she finds herself "with child." Her life is lived for the fetus growing inside her. She can no longer eat, drink, or do what she wants; the safety and protection of her fetus is paramount. From the moment a woman finds out that she is pregnant, her access to societally endorsed pleasures begins to shrink. When she has the child, her access shrinks even more. Now, her entire existence revolves around the care of her child. This decrease in access on the part of the female leads to an increase in access on the part of the male. Her entire life has taught her that the pinnacle of female experience is to have a child. Every message in society has told her that *this* is her ultimate goal. Beyond education, professional success, even personal fulfillment, it is the *child* that will make her a real woman, and that she no longer has anything beyond that for which to strive. This ideology is what makes motherhood the ultimate form of female enslavement.

These messages are more than culturally endorsed, they are culturally demanded. This means that the idea of abortion, the idea of a woman taking control away from a man and making it her own is a threat to the very heart of patriarchy. And in order for that power to not be disrupted, the narrative has to be one of submission, not of reclamation, leaving on-screen anti-abortion messages the freedom to run rampant. When these messages pervade the pop-culture discourse, the

patriarchy has the power to be both judge and jury and create their own definition of what it means to be a woman. Abortion becomes a four-letter word, and even its consideration becomes cause for punishment.

It isn't difficult to find female heroines who suffered simply for *contemplating* abortion. Take *Blue Valentine* for example. Although Cindy chooses to not have the abortion (and retains her place as a "good" woman in the eyes of the audience) she nevertheless finds her life becoming increasingly difficult. Poor, professionally unfulfilled (she had to quiet med school to be a mother after all), and married to a man she no longer loves, her life is a constant downward spiral. There may be those that feel the message of this movie is that she *should* have had the abortion, and that her decision to keep the baby resulted in her lack of fulfillment. That theory is one that bares consideration, but the other view is that this woman is being punished for her past decisions. Yes, she chose to keep the baby and for that she earns the audiences sympathies for her later troubles. But her past cannot be wiped away entirely. Her previous sexual promiscuity and the resulting abortions cannot be ignored. The patriarchy punishes those who do not conform, so while Cindy doesn't suffer a fate such as Richard Yates's April Wheeler, she is subject to judgment nonetheless.

Last minute change of hearts like Cindy's may often warrant existential punishment, but *The Walking Dead's* Laurie Grimes, paid for her momentary indecision with her life. AMC's wildly popular series began eight years ago and centered around the lives of Rick, Laurie, and Carl Grimes, as well as their friend Shane. Upon awakening in a deserted hospital, Rick soon realizes that there has been a zombie apocalypse. Although on paper the scenario may sound trite and overtired, the shows incredible popularity was a result of its character studies and in-depth exportation of the ties that bind. Within a few episodes, the audience realizes that Laurie and Shane have been having an affair, and when Laurie finds out she is pregnant, she is unsure of who the

father is. In a scene that has been crucified by critics, Laurie sends one of the other survivors to get her "the abortion pill" which in reality is Plan-B. This "morning after" form of contraception is only effective up to 120 hours after intercourse. It can in no way induce a miscarriage if taken weeks or months after conception. By calling it an "abortion pill" however, the audience is told that Laurie's morals are in question, and that her only redemption lies in her choice to *not* take the pill. Laurie does, in fact, take the pill. But like all good last-minute tropes she throws it up and realizes that she can't abort. That's right. In a world where the undead are tearing through the flesh of the living, a world with ever dwindling supplies of food and water, she decides that the best decision is to bring a child into it. Laurie's momentary desire to abort her fetus is not forgotten, as she is killed while delivering her daughter Judith. Is this punishment for the attempted abortion? Or perhaps for the affair? Either is a viable explanation, but what is clear is that a woman who doubted the sanctity of her purpose cannot escape unscathed. With all these troubling narratives, is there any hope for strong female characters who do not fall pray to the anti-choice agenda?

In 1972 the CBS sitcom *Maude* premiered it's groundbreaking, two part episode "Maude's Dilemma." In this hour-long episode Maude, a 48-year-old woman, finds out she is pregnant. Maude is beside herself, but her daughter Carol (who is grown and has a child herself) tells her mother that she doesn't have to have the baby. She tells her that they live in a world where women can choose what they want, and make the decision themselves. Although this episode was filmed before Roe Vs. Wade, abortion was already legal in the state of New York where Maude and her family lived. The episode is poignant and clear. The women speak frankly about abortion without any policing or manipulation of language. In the end, there are no last minute changes of heart and Maude and her husband Walter decide that the best decision for them

is for Maude is to have an abortion.

Although this series aired over forty-five years ago, the subject of abortion is handled with humor, emotion, and most of all honesty. Maude has frank conversations about abortion with her best friend, her daughter, and her husband. She is not villainized for her choices, rather she is encouraged to do what is best for her. Many critics have commented that “Maude’s Dilemma” was ahead of its time, and still is to this very day. It is hard to imagine turning on the television in 2018, flipping to CBS and seeing a mother and her daughter discussing abortion on a prime time sitcom. A prime time *comedic* sitcom to boot.

Conclusion

Women’s access to resources is continually limited when the discourse surrounding abortion and motherhood is reduced to a one sided representation. As reviewed in this paper, the onslaught of on-screen narratives depicting abortion are oftentimes troubling, dishonest, and worst of all, shaming. Across different genres, seemingly diverse characters are faced with the same conformist plot lines in regards to abortion and motherhood. These messages perpetuate dangerous stereotypes around abortion as well as mold unfair frameworks for what the female experience should be. While these on-screen messages are troubling, there is evidence that things are beginning to change. The 2014 film *Obvious Child* starring Jenny Slate tells the story of a woman who gets pregnant during a one night stand, has an abortion, and still goes on to have a happy ending. 2015’s *Grandma* shows a young woman getting an abortion with both the support of her mother and grandmother. While there is a great deal of emotional tumult, a minimum of it is devoted to Sage’s decision to abort.

There is still a long road ahead when it comes to representation of abortion and motherhood on screen. The above films are a good first step, but they both depict young-women who aren’t yet “societally approved” for motherhood. Viewers need to see

women of all types involved in pro-choice plotlines, not just teenagers and twenty-something girls. Women shouldn’t be too young, too old, or too *other* in order to have their choice validated and represented on screen. Women should be revered for their individuality, not reduced to their role as mother and chastened when they refuse that role. When the discourse surrounding abortion changes it will directly impact the freedom given to women to be proud of their choices and begin to dismantle the carefully constructed abortion myths that are so prevalent in our culture.

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Hessian Settlement in the United States of America throughout the Revolutionary War

Ryan Hunter

Course: American Ethnic History (HIST 3250)

Professor: Barbara Krasner, History

Students: Ryan Hunter

Essay: Hessian Settlement in the United States of America throughout the Revolutionary War

Assignment:

Students were required to write an extensive researched essay, exploring in further depth a topic from the course, using appropriate citation style and references.

Throughout the American War of Independence, several ethnic populations contributed to both the American and British war efforts. Indeed, the Patriot cause was comprised of several different European backgrounds, and later received large support from France. Meanwhile, the English sought German support as a means to subdue the rebellion in the colonies. While mostly known for their role in the war-altering Battle of Trenton, German troops, commonly referred to as Hessians, played a crucial role throughout the conflict. Moreover, though employed by the British military, Hessian soldiers contributed to an already budding German influence in colonial North America. Through a detailed analysis of historical sources, government statistics, and personal accounts and recollections, it is evident that a substantial Hessian population remained in the United States of America at the war's conclusion, dispersing and settling in various locations and comfortably assimilating to

American society.

Hessian Background and Origin(s)

The Revolutionary War—which began in 1775 at Lexington and Concord and concluded with the Treaty of Paris in 1783—is perhaps the most significant event in American history. However, while much of the focus deservedly goes towards the key events, battles, and figures of the conflict, it is easy to overlook many of the intricacies of the war. As such, German involvement throughout the struggle is often irresponsibly dismissed. While historians often recognize German influence in the war, only those immersed in the subject give it significant attention.¹

¹ Debra Brill, "The Hessians," *American History* 30, no. 5 (Nov./Dec. 1995), accessed November 11, 2017, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxywpunj.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=5cac2749-3093-4775-88c5-9a7a9da7e24a%40sessionmgr101&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=9510250760&db=fth>.

Yet ironically, if it was not for German troops, the American War of Independence may never have occurred. Indeed, there was a shortage of British regulars in the early 1770s. As such, the British Crown, under the leadership of King George III (who descended from German heritage himself), imported much of its military; such a concept was not unique: nearly 10 percent of the British force in the Seven Years' War was foreign-born.² It is important to note that Germany did not become an official nation until 1871, and during the eighteenth century the territory consisted of upwards of 300 separate, Germanic states and principalities. Nonetheless, throughout the 1770s and 1780s, as many as 40,000 Germanic soldiers were employed by England, in which at least 30,000 (one estimate places the figure at 37,000)³ came to the colonies to fight George Washington's Continental Army; 19,000 came in 1776 alone. The remaining 10,000 troops were dispersed globally to protect and serve other British interest, at places such as Gibraltar, India, and South Africa.⁴ According to historical researcher Friederike Baer, "Without these Germans, British efforts to defeat the American rebels would most likely have ended in the war's early stages. In 1778-1779, one-third of the British Army's strength in North America consisted of German auxiliaries; two years later, the proportion reached 37 percent."⁵ As such, the impact of these soldiers was extremely significant and substantially impacted the war. However, despite the belief that the installation of German forces would lead to a quick resolution, they actually elongated the conflict.

Most historical textbooks refer to these German soldiers simply as *Hessians*; however, such a term is not completely accurate. While the majority of troops originated from the principalities of Hesse-Kassel and Hesse-Hanau (from which the name is derived), several other German provinces provided conscripted troops, including (but not limited to) Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Waldeck, Ansbach-

Bayreuth, and Anhalt-Zerbst.⁶ Brunswick-Lunesburg is also believed to have supplied soldiers to the British effort; however, Hesse-Cassel ultimately provided the most—an excess of 16,000 troops.⁷ The hiring of such troops was controversial, both in England and America. In fact, many British officials disagreed with the notion of conscripting soldiers to fight another man's war. Indeed, while Hessians are often deemed as mercenaries in contemporary literature, such a term is a misnomer. Historian Dennis Showalter asserts that "Hessians were not mercenaries in the generally accepted sense of the term—men serving the British as individuals under specified conditions of enlistment."⁸ German soldiers did not voluntarily hire themselves out, but were sold by their ruler—often to the highest bidder—to fight. While they received a salary, it was their prince/principality that received the largest profit from such transactions.

As part of the army, German troops had no choice in fighting: they simply received and followed orders. In essence, many were drafted or forced to fight against their will, both figuratively and literally: thieves and criminals were commonly "...acquiesced as a means of

² Friederike Baer, "The Decision to Hire German Troops in the War of American Independence," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2015), 115, accessed November 12, 2017, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.wpunj.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=f3fa09e1-b36b-4bbc-ae4c-c87e016346ce%40sessionmgr120>.

³ Daniel Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful Enemy: Life for German Prisoners of War during the American Revolution*. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 3.

⁴ Baer, "The Decision to Hire", 111.

⁵ Ibid., 112.

⁶ Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful*, 3.

⁷ Brill, "The Hessians."

⁸ Dennis Showalter, "Hessians: The Best Armies Money Could Buy," *Military History* 24, no. 7 (October 2007), 36, accessed November 11, 2017, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.wpunj.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=5&sid=a2cfa959-1b33-44ca-bfb5-9585324a2287%40sessionmgr102>.

weeding out undesirables...[while] some of the German troops—far from being mercenaries—were kidnap victims, impressed into service.”⁹ Many also joined on their own accord, out of economic deprivation, as a career choice, or for adventure; even so, “...recruiters regularly used pressure, trickery, and even physical violence in their efforts.”¹⁰ Thus, as Charles Pratt, the 1st Earl Camden, remarked to Parliament, “Is there one of your Lordships...who does not perceive most clearly that the whole is a mere mercenary bargain for the hire of troops on one side and the sale for human blood on the other, and that the devoted wretches thus purchased for slaughter are mere mercenaries, in the worst sense of the word?”¹¹ Other British detractors viewed the act as infringing on the rights and freedoms of Loyalists living in America, and that force should be avoided at all costs since they deemed the colonies as British territory.¹² Nonetheless, other high-ranking British officials, including Prime Minister Frederick North strongly supported the conscription of external resources, believing that the combination of the greatest military in the world and German auxiliaries would quell the colonial rebellion, and save countless lives.¹³

Perception of Hessians and Established German Populations in the U.S.

Meanwhile, Americans were initially wary of Hessian soldiers, so much that Thomas Jefferson felt the need to reference them in the Declaration of Independence. Referring to King George III, he states, “He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, fiercely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.” As such, most Americans initially perceived Hessians as ruthless savages, who were out to defile liberty, and oppress the Patriot effort. A myth/ stereotype that Hessians were evil, depraved fiends quickly blossomed. According to one source, “A German

lieutenant colonel reported that Americans believe that his troops ate small children, and another officer wrote that when spectators gathered to see captured German soldiers, they found it hard to accept that these normal-looking men were the ‘monsters’ about whom they heard.”¹⁴ However, American opinion regarding Hessians did change as the war progressed. Much of this was founded in the belief that German soldiers could be easily convinced to desert the British war effort. Some claimed that since the Germans had no stake in the outcome, they would abandon the conflict altogether.¹⁵ Additionally, General Washington sought to gain any advantage against his opponent; thus, Congress offered land grants to deserters,¹⁶ as well as full immunity and freedom:

On the August 1776 day that the first German contingent set foot on American soil, a broadside-translated into German offered to any ‘foreigners who shall leave the armies of his Britannic majesty in America and shall chose to become members of any of these states; that they shall be protected in the free exercise of their respective religions, and be invested with the rights, privileges, and immunities of natives, as established by the laws of these states.’¹⁷

Likewise, Benjamin Franklin was actively involved in the Congressional committee designed to encourage German desertion. It is also widely speculated that he was the author of the infamous forged letter “The Sale

⁹ Brill, “The Hessians.”

¹⁰ Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful*, 39.

¹¹ Brill, “The Hessians.”

¹² Baer, “The Decision to Hire”, 128.

¹³ Brill, “The Hessians.”

¹⁴ Brill, “The Hessians.”

¹⁵ Baer, “The Decision to Hire”, 131.

¹⁶ J. Ransom Clark, *American Covert Operations: A Guide to the Issues* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015), 21.

¹⁷ Brill, “The Hessians.”

of the Hessians,” which slandered high-ranking Germans as conspiring to make a profit based on blood-money at the expense of large quantities of dead Hessian soldiers.

Another reason to suspect desertion was due to the significant German population already living in the colonies: “The opposition warned that the Germans would desert once they realized how happily many of their countrymen lived in North America.”¹⁸ While it is difficult to precisely approximate how many Germans lived in the U.S. prior to the Revolutionary War (the first census data was not compiled until 1790), there is ample evidence suggesting that German influence was meaningful. A conservative estimate places “At least 85,000 Germans...[settling] in British North America during the seven decades leading up to the Revolutionary War”¹⁹; this doesn’t include estimates prior to the 1700s. Another estimation claims that “In total, about 110,100 German immigrants came to North America between 1683 and 1775.”²⁰

Nonetheless, according to 1776 population estimates provided by the U.S. Bureau of Statistics, German ethnicity could be found in every region of the country, although some more than others. For instance, in the New England Colonies, it was very much a minority, as the Dutch, French, German, and Irish populations only comprised a combined 2.9 percent of the entire population (in fact, there was a greater combined total of free and enslaved blacks—about 16,000—in New England at the time). While marginally higher, a meager 3.5 percent of the Southern Colonies’ population was German. However, German ancestry represented a sizeable portion of the population in the Middle Colonies, accounting for 15.2 percent of the populace in 1776.²¹

Ultimately, the “People of German ancestry... represented the second largest ethnic group in America at the wars outset.”²² In particular, Pennsylvania (which belonged to the Middle Colonies) was a known hotbed for Germans, primarily because of its open-

minded culture and tolerance for different religions. Pennsylvania was host to German Quakers, Moravians, Mennonites, and Dunkers, and with nearly 300,000 colonists living in the state around 1776, nearly a third were thought to be of German descent.²³ Moreover, from 1683-1775, around 81,000 Germans immigrated to Pennsylvania.²⁴ Several towns and counties are well-documented as having extensive German roots. In 1732, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*—the first ever German newspaper—was published in the United States. In fact, Philadelphia’s suburbs and surrounding communities, such as Ephrata, became centers for publishing.²⁵ Indeed, Philadelphia hosted several Germans, including the notable Christopher Saur, who printed the first Bible in America in 1742.²⁶ Likewise, German Moravians settled the towns of Bethlehem and Nazareth in 1741, while the appropriately named Germantown, located about six miles northwest of Philadelphia, was established by Dutch and German immigrants in 1683. Germantown remained a haven for Germans for the next century and subsequent decades, and “...became one of the earliest printing

¹⁸ Baer, “The Decision to Hire”, 131.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁰ Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful*, 134.

²¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Part II, Series Z*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976), 20-132.

²² Brill, “The Hessians.”

²³ V. N. Parrillo, “*Diversity in America*,” in *Diversity in America*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 48, accessed November 9, 2017, https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/23122_Chapter_3.pdf.

²⁴ Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful*, 134..

²⁵ European Reading Room, “Chronology: The Germans in America,” (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2014), accessed November 30, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/european/imde/germchro.html>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

and publishing centers in the country.”²⁷ Additionally, it was host to the British Army on multiple occasions throughout the war, and was also the site of an unsuccessful American attack led by Washington.

Furthermore, Lancaster perhaps experienced the greatest amount of German influence across the country. There is ample evidence supporting such a claim:

In 1740, three-quarters of all landowners in Lancaster came from German or Swiss immigrant families. By the second half of the century, between 58 and 68 percent of the county’s white residents were of Germanic origin...Records of neighboring counties present a similar picture. In fact, a “Germanic arc” stretched through Northampton, Berks, and Lancaster Counties, including upper parts of Chester, Philadelphia, and Bucks County. By 1790, three-quarters of the population in Berks County, two-thirds in Northampton County, more than one-half in Montgomery County, and one-half in York County was German.²⁸

Likewise, municipalities and regions bordering Pennsylvania (located along the Shenandoah Valley in Maryland and Virginia) also claimed elevated German populations. For example, in Maryland, “...two-thirds of the white population was ethnically German in Frederick and Shenandoah Counties, one-half in Carroll County, and a little less than one one-half in Harrison County.”²⁹ Thus, German heritage was rampant throughout Pennsylvania and its surrounding provinces. Ultimately, the established German populations in the Middle Colonies—including New Jersey, the crossroads of the American Revolution—made it possible for Hessians to interact with their lineages/ancestors throughout the war.

Prisoners of War, German-American Soldiers, and Indentured Servitude

However, most interactions came as a means of captivity. In 1775, the town of Lancaster was of

particular significance: not only was it centered along the path of several trade routes, its population of over 3,300 citizens made it the biggest inland urban settlement in the colonies. While primarily a farming community, it was home to several other trades/occupations, and was religiously diverse, making it a popular settlement. During the war, it was home to one of the largest prisoner-of-war (POW) camps for captured British soldiers operated by the Continental Army. While intentions were initially to keep prisoners secured and confined, labor shortages forced many prisoners to become laborers to work within the town or produce goods for the Patriot effort. As such, the first Hessians that arrived in Lancaster, those that were captured at the Battle of Trenton in 1776, served in many different capacities geared to help the American cause.

While it’s been established that Lancaster had a German majority, Hessians were not sent there for that reason, although their heritage certainly was useful upon relocation:

When Washington recommended on January 1, 1777, that the Hesse-Kassel captives be sent from Trenton into Pennsylvania’s ‘German counties’, it probably had less to do with the German immigrant population in the region and more with Lancaster’s reputation as a detention site, its distance from the Atlantic coast, its size and rich farmlands, its staunchly revolutionary population, and its relatively long history of housing enemy prisoners of war in conflict. Once the captives

²⁷ Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th ed. “Germantown,” (New York: Columbia University Press), 2017, accessed December 2, 2017, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxywpunj.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=1ba603b2-884c-4ef0-9b39-8015aa0fb882%40pdc-v-sessmgr01&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=39045997&db=lfh>.

²⁸ Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful*, 133.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

arrived, however, the revolutionaries eagerly tried to exploit the situation. They hoped that the Hesse-Kassel prisoners might learn “from their Country Men who came here without a farthing of property and have by care and industry acquired plentiful fortunes.”³¹

In other words, the people of Lancaster hoped that Hessian prisoners would become sympathetic to not only the American cause, but also American ideals, customs, and values. As such, Hessian soldiers worked alongside German-American occupants of the town; some worked in mills and furnaces, others in ironworks, and a significant amount produced guns, canons, and ammunition. In nearby Lebanon, 178 German prisoner-laborers worked in various occupations, over half of which possessed some skill: “Weavers (21 percent), cloth makers (13 percent), and shoemakers (7.5 percent) made up the largest groups. Others worked as wagoners, tailors, carpenters, blacksmiths, butchers, masons, barbers, leatherworkers, painters, gunsmiths, and joiners.”³² After 1777, an additional 125 Lebanon prisoner-laborers worked as farmers or common laborers. Ultimately, Hessian prisoner-laborers proved very resourceful and efficient. Sometimes housed by their employers, they were able to earn money, speak their native tongue (as well as learn English), and form relationships with their German-American neighbors, all while willingly (or unwillingly) aiding the American war effort.

It is important to note that Hessians were not solely confined to Pennsylvania and its outlying areas. In addition to fighting in the Middle Colonies, Hessian forces served prominently in the North and the South, and prisoners were transported and stationed throughout the nation. Hessian soldiers saw notable action at places such as Saratoga, N.Y. and Yorktown, V.A., and prisoners appeared in Cambridge, Bunker Hill, and Medford, M.A., Frederick, M.D., and Winchester and Charlottesville, V.A. There is also evidence of German troops from Waldeck (707 men in total) in the deep

southern portions of North America. Unfortunately, “... the regiment’s campaign on the Gulf Coast and along the Mississippi proved disastrous...55 soldiers...[were] captured near New Orleans...A second, larger group of 210 soldiers...became prisoners in Baton Rouge and several surrounding posts.”³³ Because the Spanish had joined the Patriot war effort by 1778, some of these German prisoners were also interned at Vera Cruz, Mexico, and Havana, Cuba until 1782.³⁴

Additionally, following Washington’s war-securing, three-week siege at Yorktown in October 1781, approximately 5,300 Hessians were taken prisoner. However, this captured German population experienced different circumstances than previous prisoner populations. Come 1781, Congress did not have enough money to support the upkeep of POWs, since “...both sides had been supplying captives on their own, without agents, since 1778, and the British refused to reimburse the revolutionaries for these expenses during the war.”³⁵ Thus, with little funding, Congress mandated the recruitment of Hessian prisoners as part of the Continental Army, and would only release them once they were ransomed by the British. Hessians POWs could purchase their freedom for eighty dollars if they refused to join American ranks, although most could not afford the buyout. If they still were uncooperative, prisoners could sell themselves into a three-year contract of indentured servitude, in which they would eventually become citizens of the United States of America.³⁶ Such was the case of Hesse-Kassel POW Justus Groh, who was initially captured at the Battle of Trenton and became a servant of Emanuel Carpenter in Lancaster for three

³¹ Ibid., 136.

³² Ibid., 154.

³³ Ibid., 218-219.

³⁴ Ibid., 219.

³⁵ Ibid., 225.

³⁶ Ibid., 227

years.³⁷ Nonetheless, during the last few years of the conflict, German POWs became pawns for Congress to help reconcile the ongoing financial crisis the war had caused: “The prisoners of war thus became a human resource for the new nation and its army. Captivity for these German soldiers had become a personal debt—a sum to be repaid with cash, labor, or military service.”³⁸

Release and Settlement in America

At the war’s conclusion, both sides agreed to the full release of POWs. Hessian captivity officially ended in 1783, although many were released after peace had been attained in 1781 once the war’s fate had been determined.³⁹ While an abundance of Hessians returned overseas, a substantial amount remained in the U.S., although little is known about their whereabouts due to inconsistent/inaccurate record keeping. Nevertheless, it is clear that German soldiers were scattered throughout the country during the conflict. Moreover, the fact that a number of POWs became soldiers in the Continental Army or became indentured servants suggests the possibility that some remained in America following the war. In fact, that was one of the intended consequences many prominent revolutionary figures—such as Benjamin Lincoln and Robert Morris—hoped would happen.⁴⁰ Likewise, it is documented that there were thousands of Hessian deserters who dispersed throughout the United States. While numbers vary, conservative estimates place the desertion number in between 2,500 and 3,100, while more than 5,000 were killed. Another 1,300 were wounded, and possibly remained in America.⁴¹ However, the consensus is that “Of the almost 30,000 Germans who fought for the British in the Revolution, approximately 5,000 deserted or were given permission by their sovereigns to remain in America after the war.”⁴² It is reasonable to believe that many deserters made connections, ties, and relationships in regions where German influence was the strongest and already established, such as Pennsylvania. While a broad consensus of where Hessians deserters

settled in America cannot be determined, individual cases exist. For instance, Leonhard Baumgardner, of the Regiment von Seybothen, fled his unit and joined the Continental Army in 1782. After being discharged in 1783, he started a family and contributed to the already budding German-American population in York, Pennsylvania: “He...married a Margaret Dinkel in 1785. Together they had six children...He became a successful blue dyer in town and bought several plots of land after 1796. In 1828, he was rewarded for his military service with a land warrant for 100 acres.”⁴³ Additionally, his friend and comrade Peter Engelmohr married Gertrude Dinkel, a relative of Margaret’s, and settled in York. He lived to be eighty-seven years old, dying in 1844 after a successful and prosperous life.⁴⁴ There is also evidence of ex-Hessians settling in areas outside of Pennsylvania. In and around Frederick, M.D., at least 182 Hessian POWs deserted from 1776-1783 and remained in North America. Some relocated to Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio, while others became permanent residents of the area, such as Johann Peter Rückert, who was still alive in 1850, and lived to be at least ninety-two.⁴⁵ Another was Peter Meyerhofer, who “...married a Catharine Hardt in February 1783, several months before his desertion date was officially recorded as May 13. His first son, Christian, was born in October of the same year. Records from 1792 show him as a mason and the part owner of three lots in Frederick.”⁴⁶ At age seventy-five, he passed away in 1831. Lastly,

³⁷ Ibid., 230.

³⁸ Ibid., 241.

³⁹ Ibid., 266.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 228.

⁴¹ Showalter, “Hessians: The Best Armies”, 41.

⁴² Brill, “The Hessians.”

⁴³ Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful*, 253-254.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 254.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 255.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 255

Johannes Kolb successfully deserted in 1782 (after a failed attempt in 1777); he became a wealthy land owner, possessing hundreds of acres in Maryland. He also married Anna Barbara Engel, and lived a very comfortable life.⁴⁷

There were also numerous Jewish Hessians who settled in America both during and after the conflict. Indeed, some settled south in Richmond, V.A. and Charleston, S.C., while others relocated in the central portions of the U.S. The most prominent Jewish Hessian, Alexander Zuntz, settled in New York; it is here where he "...is credited with preserving Congregational Shearith Israel of New York's synagogue sanctuary during the period when the city was under British military control."⁴⁸ Originally from Westphalia, Germany, Zuntz arrived in New York in 1779 via the Hessian military, and claimed the official title of "...Commissary and Agent to the General Staff."⁴⁹ Like many other Hessians who remained in the U.S., he lived a long and successful life, perishing in 1819 at the age of seventy-seven and a half years old. Shortly after his arrival, he married Rachel Abrahams and had seven children, though none of his sons married due to decrepit health and untimely deaths. Thus, Zuntz's lineage in America died out rather swiftly, although two of his daughters (Grace and Gertrude) married into other families.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, his time in America was meaningful, as he worked as a median between the native Jewish congregation in New York and the British/Hessian city officials throughout the remainder of the war. After the Revolution, he resigned from his position as "parnas" of the Jewish synagogue. However, he was so well-favored amongst the Jewish-American community that he was reelected as a member of the synagogue's board, and remained a prominent leader within the institution/religious community for the rest of his life.⁵¹ Thus, despite initially belonging to the enemy, Zuntz was widely accepted by Americans, allowing him to permanently assimilate and settle in New York, where he explored multiple business and commercial opportunities. As such, the once Jewish-

German stranger became a native of United States of America.

Several other biographies of ex-German soldiers tell similar stories and share common themes. Those who deserted and stayed in the U.S. typically found success and were able to support themselves. They obtained jobs and purchased land, and were generally accepted by their neighbors. They also married American women, whom many Germans admired for their goods looks and beauty.⁵² As such, they established large families and German heritage in the newly found nation. Accordingly, one could argue that life in America was a significant upgrade from the livelihoods most German soldiers experienced back home in their native provinces. Nonetheless, their reasons for staying varied: some simply sought a new life and adventure in America, while others married and yearned to start a family (in some instances, Hessians married in the U.S. despite already being married in their native land). Additionally, "Others settled in North America, in response to tempting offers both from the revolutionaries, who offered them American citizenship and all the attendant liberties, and from the British, who offered them free land in their Canadian territories."⁵³ Lastly, some German principalities believed the cost of supporting and maintaining large quantities of returning troops

⁴⁷ Ibid., 255.

⁴⁸ Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Impact of the American Revolution on American Jews," *Modern Judaism* 1, (1981), 150, accessed December 11, 2017, <https://www.brandeis.edu/hornstein/sarna/americanjewishcultureandscholarship/Archive4/TheImpactoftheAmericanRevolutiononAmericanJews.pdf>

⁴⁹ David De Sola Pool, *Portraits Etched in Stone: Early Jewish Settlers 1882-1831* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1952), 398.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 399.

⁵¹ Ibid., 399.

⁵² Brill, "The Hessians."

⁵³ Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful*, 253-254.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 256-257.

would be too expensive, and either refused to allow certain troops to return home, or encouraged others to stay in America.⁵⁴

Conclusion

As evident over the duration of the Revolutionary War, the Hessians played a vital role as conscripted soldiers in support of the British. However, beyond their efforts on the battlefield, many of these troops also impacted American society. Through their experiences in POW camps in Lancaster and other locations across North America, German soldiers interacted with Americans, and in some instances, worked alongside them. Additionally, others joined the Continental Army or became indentured servants. Ultimately, with the desertion of more than 5,000 Hessians, there was a sizable quantity of German soldiers who remained in the United States of America following the conclusion of the war. As a result, they settled in various locations across the nation, though individual cases show that most settled in areas where German populations were already well-established, such as the Middle Colonies/ States. Nonetheless, the ex-Hessians that built new lives in the U.S. seemingly assimilated to American society/ culture with relative ease, adding ethnic diversity to the country's landscape and contributing to the already flourishing German influence.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 256-257.

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Into the Future – Artist’s Statement

Kathleen Nipal

Course: Computer Paint and 2D Art (ARTS 2800)

Professor: Leslie Nobler, Art

Student: Kathleen Nipal

Essay: Into the Future – Artist’s Statement

Assignment:

Students created a poster illustration and accompanying artist’s statement, based on the theme Generations and specifically based on the generations

of trees referenced at <https://www.westfraser.com/responsibility/stories-responsibility/creating-generations-trees>

I began with two simple ideas that I wanted to connect: “generations” and “trees.” The connection between the two was simple – usually, generations of families and their relationships to one another are visually represented as a “family tree” with each branch connecting to another in a never-ending labyrinth. I wanted to expand on this simple metaphor, so for inspiration, I looked towards artwork of the past. Fragonard’s “The Swing” is an allegorical painting of a woman leaping from her relationship with an older gentleman to an affair with a younger man. In other words, from the old into the new, much like how the nonstop flow of time forces generations to pass their torch downward. Another artist I sought inspiration from was Charles Burchfield, whose paintings worked closely with the concept of trees. His color palettes were mainly muted tones of blacks, grays, and whites, with occasional splashes of yellow, which I borrowed.

I wanted my poster to have a mostly minimalistic approach, which is my personal style. The background I chose was made traditionally with charcoal on newsprint. This contrast of textures expresses that generations of people have different styles and

technologies, from the analog materials of the past to the digital artwork of the present. The frame is reminiscent of family photographs from the past. As for the literal tree in my poster, I looked towards mathematics, or fractals. Fractals and generations have very much in common, as one element spawns multiples of another.



Reacting to The Boss

Kevin Bagar

Course: Rock Music Diversity & Justice (MUSI 3180)

Professor: Stephen Marcone, Music

Student: Kevin Bagar

Essay: Reacting to The Boss

Assignment:

Students were instructed to watch Bruce Springsteen's 2012 Keynote address at the SXSW Conference & Festival, and write a reaction to his speech providing examples of how he describes a) the evolution of

rock n roll, b) diversity in the genres of music, and c) injustices in the acknowledgement of the originators of the music.

Usually when I work on assignments like these I like to have some relevant music playing in the background; a paper on the Renaissance calls for some Monteverdi or Pachelbel. A creative writing assignment pairs well with the likes of Eric Dolphy or Ornette Coleman. So naturally, for this particular essay, I have Bruce Springsteen's YouTube Mix shuffling through the speakers of my computer. I have to confess, I have never been a big fan of Bruce. I've worked enough retail jobs to have heard "Born to Run" and "Born in the U.S.A." enough times on Top 40 Radio to make my ears bleed, so by this time in my life, the mere mention of "The Boss" fills me with resentment. For the purpose of this assignment, however, I was willing to put previous Pavlovian associations and judgments aside – and I'm glad I did. Springsteen's keynote address at the 2012 SXSW Festival was as entertaining as it was enlightening. The ways in which he describes the evolution of Rock and Roll as it mirrors his search for his own musical identity, and the sheer diversity of

subgenres that we enjoy thanks to the unsung heroes and pioneers of the craft, shed light on the century-old tradition of story telling, unbridled expression, and noise that we have come to know as Rock.

A central theme to his speech was the diversity of rock and roll. And rightfully so, being that the South by Southwest Conference and Festival is one of the most diverse displays of art, music, and film in the modern era. He recalls attending the Keyport Matawan Roller Dome witnessing "a doo-wop singing group with full pompadours and matching suits set up next to [his] band playing a garage version of Them's 'Mystic Eyes,' set up next to a full thirteen-piece soul show band." Right off the bat, Springsteen gives a brief overview of the various subgenres that fall under the umbrella term "Rock". Within the first 10 minutes of his speech, he rattles off over sixty (yes, I counted) types of rock music, ranging from death metal to folk. He does this not for laughs, or to make sure everybody feels "included", but to point out the simple fact that even

though there are many different kinds of music, and just as many different ways of making music, they are all intrinsically linked together with the same creative spirit. He says, “So whether you’re making dance music, Americana, rap music, electronica, it’s all about how you are putting what you do together...There is no right way, no pure way, of doing. There’s just doing it.” Not only does he point to the diversity in the music itself, he also illuminates the diversity of the musicians – and their audiences.

Seemingly in one breath Bruce discusses the young, white, teen idols that came with British Invasion, juxtaposed with the black singers of Motown and Soul, saying “It was adult music, it was sung by soul men and women, not teen idols.” He goes on to give duly deserved recognition to the latter group for helping him develop his own sound and style. “And it was here, amongst these great African-American artists, that I learned my craft. You learned how to write. You learned how to arrange. You learned what mattered and what didn’t. You learned what a great production sounds like. You learned how to lead a band. You learned how to front a band.”

From here, he goes on to express his love and appreciation for country and folk music. Specifically, he names Bob Dylan for inspiring to him write music that expressed a deep and meaningful truth. He recalled, “If you were young in the sixties and fifties, everything felt false everywhere you turned. But you didn’t know how to say it. There was no language for it at the time. It just felt fucked up, but you didn’t have the words. Bob came along and gave us those words. He gave us those songs.” This statement resonated with me in particular. I have always loved the music of Bob Dylan. In one moment, very simple – one man with an acoustic guitar and a nasally voice – and in the same moment dropping profound truths and heavy realities into my impressionable teenage consciousness, shaping my worldview. Even today, his poetry is an austere reflection of our society.

Through the entirety of his speech, Springsteen takes us on his own journey through Rock’s evolution as he lists his greatest influences from childhood through adulthood, while giving due credit to the music’s originators. He talks about how every musician has a “genesis moment” – a moment in their life that inspires him or her to begin to play music. For him, that was seeing Elvis on the Ed Sullivan show. For me, it was listening to my sister’s Backstreet Boys CD when I was 8, an embarrassing and closely guarded secret I share only with intimate partners, therapists, and the occasional college professor. But I digress.

Springsteen mentions that although Elvis was his first real inspiration, he can remember hearing the sounds of Doo-Wop, and, more broadly, R&B, which “dripped from radios in the gas stations, factories, streets, and pool halls”. Here, he insinuates that R&B and Doo-Wop took a formative, yet often overlooked role in the development of Rock and Roll. He proceeds to grab a guitar and strum a I-vi-IV-V chord progression – one that is familiar to every American, regardless of their tastes or walks of life. It’s the progression of the Penguin’s “Earth Angel”, Elton John’s “Crocodile Rock” and even part of Bruce’s own “Backstreets”.

Springsteen continues to trace his rock inspiration through the years moving from Elvis to Roy Orbison, whose mastery of “the romantic apocalypse” haunted his teenage years. Songs about rejection, heartbreak, and unrequited love – and the “moments of unworldly bliss that make that tragedy bearable” – a poignant statement about love and life – and pop music. He then continues on to recount hearing Phil Spector. In today’s desensitized age, the music of Phil Spector may, to some, seem kind of light. Corny, even. But when they came out, Bruce recalls that “Phil’s records felt like near chaos, violence covered in sugar and candy, sung by the girls who were sending Roy-o running straight for the anti-depressants. If Roy was opera, Phil was symphonies little three-minute orgasms, followed by oblivion.”

At this point during the speech, I started to get the same feeling I had reading that part of the bible right after Adam and Eve are kicked out of Eden. You know, the “begats”? Adam begat Kane, who begat Abraham, who begat Joseph, who begat Jeff and so on. I started to see Rock’s lineage as a line of succession of one artist influencing the next; Doo-Wop begat Elvis begat Roy begat Phil begat The Beatles...

No account of rock history is complete without bringing up the British Invasion. Springsteen recalls being intimidated by the sheer popularity and coolness of the Beatles, lamenting that he may never achieve such heights, until one day he saw them in a magazine and noticed, they were kids, just like him. “And they had on the leather jackets and the slick-backed pompadours, they had acned faces. I said ‘hey, wait a minute, those are the guys I grew up with, only they were Liverpool wharf rats’. So minus their Nehru jackets and the haircuts – so these guys, they’re kids!” It had dawned on young Bruce the influence rock music had on the younger generation. A music for the youth, by the youth.

The Boss goes on to credit the Animals, showing their influence on him by going so far to show that the melody to Bruce’s “Badlands” is the same as the former’s “Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood”, just with a different chord progression. He continues to trace Rock’s lineage through Punk, Motown, and “the blue collar grit of soul music”. From there, to James Brown and Funk. Then to Bob Dylan and folk, and then to Country. He reflected how much he was drawn to expressive bleakness of Country music. “It was reflective. It was funny. It was soulful. But it was quite fatalistic”. He lists Hank Williams, Jerry Lee Lewis, and finally Woody Guthrie.

The day of Springsteen’s keynote address fell on the centennial celebration of the birth of Woody Guthrie. Guthrie’s early 20th century music – his Folk, his Country, his Blues – inspired so much of the popular music we have come to know in this day and age, but

his influence is often overlooked. Bruce points out: “Why do we continue to talk about Woody so many years on, never had a hit, never went platinum, never played in an arena, never got his picture on the cover of Rolling Stone. But he’s a ghost in the machine – big, big ghost in the machine”. Woody’s legacy is engrained in the heart of American popular music but it seems as though he, like so many others, rarely gets the credit he deserves.

Perhaps the best way for The Boss to sum up rock’s diversity, evolution, and originators was his anecdote recalling a performance with Pete Seeger. The year was 2008, and President Barack Obama had just that day been sworn into office. Bruce and Pete Seeger, along with Seeger’s grandson and a full choir, led the entire National Mall in a rendition of Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land”. I found the video toward the end of Springsteen’s YouTube playlist and gave it a click. It was truly inspiring to see “generations of young and old Americans – all colors, religious beliefs” joined in song, celebrating not only their national heritage, but also their musical heritage. The heritage of Elvis and the Eagles. The heritage of soul, of Steely Dan and Jay Z. Our temporal identity, summed up in a few simple yet fundamental chords.

Colorblind or Blind to Racism?

Theda-Lisa Ackep

Course: College Writing (ENG 1100)

Professor: Tara Moyle, English

Student: Theda-Lisa Ackep

Essay: Colorblind or Blind to Racism?

Assignment:

In this assignment, students were charged with creating a clear argument with a set of supporting claims (further supported by evidence from sources) in response to a driving question. The driving question

this essay responded to was: “Can we all “make it” or “get ahead” in the U.S. today? What does that mean?” within the overall topic of the American Dream and whether it is alive in today’s America.

It is 2018. White Americans in the U.S. whisper the word “black” when referring to a black person. Or better yet go through every physical description possible when describing someone of color in attempt to not have to mention the fact that they are black. A parent scolds her child and forces her to apologize for referring to her black friend as black, “that was rude,” she says. A friend tells me that they often forget that I am black. When asked what they meant, I am informed that I had just been complimented. “It means I see you for you,” they said. Well, despite whatever decent intentions, we do not want or need you forgetting that we are black.

America, with its immense history of discrimination and racism towards other ethnic groups, has attempted to make certain advancements. Some, however, have proven to be counterproductive. By means of certain subtle aggressions, discrimination is still very prevalent in an ordinary, day-to-day setting in this country. Colorblindness is the now preferred terminology for

individuals, often white, who present themselves as non-racist. Behind this rests the assumption that if they cannot even register the skin color differences between people, then they definitely cannot be racist. They see people as people and not defined by the color of their skin. At first glance, this seems to be a rather positive statement and ideology. Certainly, some people who use and live by this statement may not recognize the many flaws within it, nor have any negative intentions by use of it. However, does colorblindness perpetuate racism? Yes, colorblindness perpetuates racism because an individual can still be racist since such ideology is accompanied by ignorance to discrimination, and it sends a detrimental message that there is a problem with seeing race whereas racism, not race, is the problem.

First off, claiming to be colorblind does not eliminate individual cases of racism. The ideology is crucially built on this since the purpose for people claiming to be colorblind is to prove they are nonracist because they

cannot see race, whereas this can easily be disproven. Dr. Osagie Obasogie at the University of California's Hasting College of Law spent ten years researching the relationship between blindness and race. He was curious to know if a blind person could still determine race after watching a biopic where the blind main character seemed acutely aware of race. He found that "even people who have never had sight still use visual representations of people – including a person's perceived racial or ethnic identity – as a major marker for how they interact with them" (Stafford). Blind people can use non-visual clues to determine an individual's race such as accent, hair texture, and other markers. Racism, therefore, truly "is about the social value we assign to people and their actions based on their physical attributes, and neither blind nor colorblind people avoid that acculturation just because they lack the visual cues" (Stafford). This defeats the purpose of the "I'm colorblind" statement if a blind person who can't see, whether be it color or at all, can still determine race and therefore can be racist.

Second, encouraging colorblindness only perpetuates racism because it is a microinvalidation that negates a person's experience, thoughts and feelings. It erases the experiences of blacks especially in this country. Claiming oblivion ignores racism by closing the door for further discussions: "If you can't see it, if you deny its existence, then how can you talk about it? And if you can't talk about it, then the conversations that do happen are the only ones that get heard" (Strauss). A well-intentioned conversation about racism and the undeniable divisions in this country as a result cannot be carried out if people would rather act blind towards race. A solution cannot therefore be derived. Many sociologists are very critical of this ideology, as "they fear that the refusal to take public note of race actually allows people to ignore manifestations of persistent discrimination" (Wingfield). When people claim that they do not see race, "they also can avert their eyes from the ways in which well-meaning people

engage in practices that reproduce neighborhood and school segregation, rely on "soft skills" in ways that disadvantage racial minorities in the job market, and hoard opportunities in ways that reserve access to better jobs for white peers" (Wingfield). Viewing the subject of race as taboo also inhibits progress away from these regularly occurring acts of discrimination. Blindness to race and ethnicities is only interfering with conversations that could lead to reduction of the significant amounts of discrimination in this country.

Furthermore, the colorblind myth allows those with privilege to maintain the status quo and thus avoid examination of their own privileges. In America, whites are the majority, and they therefore enjoy the most benefits since whiteness is normalized in society. A Forbes article reports that middle-income white households own "nearly eight times as much wealth" as middle-income black households. If the trends continue, they predict it will "take 228 years for the average black family to reach the same level of wealth white families have today" (McCarthy). According to the United States prison policy, "Hispanics are incarcerated at nearly double the rate of whites" whereas African-Americans are imprisoned at "nearly six times the rates of whites" (Maeur and King 3). With African-Americans making up 13.3% of the U.S. population and Hispanics 17.8%, the disproportion in these statistics are overwhelming. By these clear indications of disparity, racial minorities growing up in this country realize at a very young age that they will be defined by their racial group, and in return treated in accordance with the stereotypes associated with whatever racial minority they belong to. This is not the case with Caucasians who are easily viewed as individuals in most social interactions. It is no longer socially acceptable for one to identify oneself as racist and instead people purport to not seeing color, which comes at a cost: they then feel exempt from any issues regarding race. When the privileged purport to not seeing color, "they will cling to, rather than critique, the

privileges that whiteness affords, which are jeopardized by a more multiracial society” (Wingfield).

Concerning becoming a more color conscious society as opposed to a colorblind one, research indicates that it can prompt people to work for change by presenting a deeper understanding of our racially diverse society (Wingfield). This is particularly a task for whites in society as opposed to racial minorities. Racial minorities do not have the choice to be colorblind because they are constantly reminded of their race. They also do not reap the benefits that come with being amongst the majority. If the privileged whites drew their attention here as well, perhaps there will be more obligation to participate in tearing down the destructive microaggressions, racial stigmas, and the other seemingly subtle ways in which discrimination and racism continues to thrive in America.

With increasing racial tension in this country, we should rather focus on methods that will lead to discussion and examination in order to fix the problem. The

first step is recognizing and promoting acceptance of people of all races. It is hypocritical to pretend that color or race does not exist because we cannot “see” it when in fact, we all can and do see it. Color consciousness does not equal racism. All people want to be recognized along with being accepted for who they are. How much more racial minorities in America? People, especially millennials in the country, believe racism is a problem today. This means we are headed in the right direction with reducing discrimination significantly. However, it is harder to identify the subtle ways in which racism is still being executed. Will completely dismissing our racial differences help us identify and correct this? No, this cannot be accomplished if a blanket is thrown over our physical racial differences, as is the case with the colorblind argument. Therefore, the colorblindness methodology when it comes to dealing with discrimination is only perpetuating racism and America would be better off without it.

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Karl Marx on Religion

Abigail Urena

Course: Social Sciences Honors Seminar I (SSH 2010)

Professor: Neil Kressel, Psychology, SSH Director

Student: Abigail Urena

Essay: Karl Marx on Religion

Assignment:

Students were instructed to write a brief essay explaining and analyzing one important topic raised by Karl Marx, Thorstein Veblen, or one of the other

sociologists covered in a particular unit within the course.

According to Karl Marx, “Man makes religion, religion does not make man” (Marx, 1970). Religion comes from the intrinsic human desire to transcend the natural world and understand the inaccessible meaning of life. Karl Marx sees this as an escapist distraction from the misery of working under capitalism. Often quoted or referenced in popular literature, Marx notably wrote the line, “Religion [...] is the opium of the people” (Marx, 1970). The metaphor itself is easy to understand. Opium is a drug that reduces pain, distorts reality, and as an artificial source of comfort for sick or injured people. In the same way, religion acts as a temporary and readily accessible ease to the discomfort of earthly life.

However, Marx was sympathetic toward those that needed religion to cope because of the oppressive nature of a capitalist society. Marx did not want to eliminate religion immediately; rather his “opium” comment was designed to make the point that – upon eradicating capitalism and creating communism – religion would gradually disappear on its own since it would no longer serve a purpose. Because religion does

not fix the underlying cause of people’s suffering, a different and more radical solution must be obtained (through revolution). In place of religion, communism would bring forth a form of ‘naturalistic humanism’; Marx states, “This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism” (Marx K. E., 1987). For Marx, humans feel most actualized and satisfied in the field, toiling on their own land and laboring for their own goods. Returning to “nature” seems like the obvious next step once capitalism is removed.

Nevertheless, it proves difficult to remove people from the illusionary comforts of religion. Marx understood this to be true and said, “To call on [the people] to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusion” (Marx K. E., 1987). Seeing as how religion is highly practiced among the poor and disenfranchised, asking them to ‘give up’ their condition of life is a dejecting request as this world seemingly already offers so little in terms of economic and material successes. Marx may be sympathetic

toward the plight of the poor finding solace from religion, but also swiftly condemns them for being weak and manipulated by a higher power into staying subordinate.

He calls religion the “soul of soulless conditions,” meaning that religion offered the only source of hope in an abusive world (Marx K. , 1970). Just as feeling pain and discomfort is necessary to diagnose an injury or illness, human suffering and the expression of religion are the symptoms of the disease of capitalism. From Marx’s point of view, if religion continued to drown out the pain of the working class they would never be aware of the miserable circumstances in which they live in. Religion “reduces [individual] energy and willingness to conform the oppression of capitalism” (Marx K. , 1970).

Coming from a typical Catholicism practicing Hispanic underprivileged family, I have seen firsthand the ‘numbing’ effect of religion. As a child I was often taught that if a problem were to arise in my life, asking God for strength and guidance was the logical problem-solving method. Being hyper active or too desperate for an immediate solution was regarded as being “unaligned with God” because once I got in touch with Him, everything would fall into place. This idea is supposed to provide comfort for those troubled by challenging times but comes across as being too complicit in my own personal distress. For many other people in my extended family though, religion is the only thing that motivates them passionately in life. Giving religion up would mean altering an entire aspect of their identity, something that is almost impossible in a community driven environment.

The several attempts of global communism have not been successful at reaching the ‘naturalistic humanism’ that Marx assumed would take hold. Perhaps these

attempts should not be considered truly Marxist Communist revolutions as they ultimately shifted into totalitarianism or fascism, and nonetheless, religion prevailed as a means of quenching human pain despite capitalisms’ nonexistence. Pressure against organized religion in Communist China caused people to begin to practice more privately in their homes instead of outwardly in the community. Interpretations of the Communist Manifesto have led to the belief of religion as a ‘feudal system,’ outdated and unnecessary. Attempting to eliminate and prosecute religion in contemporary communist countries may have put more fear into people, rather than feelings of liberation.

Despite my own personal disenchantment with religion and mostly agreeing with Marx’s analysis of the role in religion in the lives of people, I find that his political and economic philosophies blemish the true impact of his criticisms of religion. People in distress seek solace, and religion performs the same function as opium does on a sick person, providing consolation to individuals in distress. Yet if a sick person continues to take opium for their illness, rather than finding a cure, they will stay sick forever. Likewise, a miserable person that finds comfort in religion will stay deeply miserable forever, always waiting for the bountiful afterlife.

Separate from Marx’s criticism of capitalism, I agree with his argument that religion performs the same task as an opioid in people’s lives. It keeps them comfortable with living in the very same circumstances that keep them despondent, because the small hope that religion provides is enough to keep them going. Finding a purpose or a meaning in life is possible without religion, and often challenges individuals to tap into aspects of their identities that promotes positive self-growth and awareness outside of the guise of illusionary ‘after-life’ promises.

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Picture Him Happy: *Luka* as a Rebuttal to Postmodern Anti-Heroism

Joshua Van Kampen

Course: Modern Indian Literature (ENG 3530)

Professor: Rajender Kaur, English

Student: Joshua Van Kampen

Essay: Picture Him Happy: *Luka* as a Rebuttal to Postmodern Anti-Heroism

Assignment:

Students were asked to choose one short scene from Rushdie's *Luka* and the *Fire of Life* and write an essay about what this scene illustrates about the character, how it advances the action, and how it explores one of the key themes in the novel. Students were instructed to formulate a clear and sharp thesis, which should

provide an evaluation of the novel either in terms of an analysis of *Luka* as a character or an analysis of the representation of the world of magic and fiction given by Rushdie in the context of the issues of death, old age, time, or the nature of fiction. Students were to support claims with citations from the text.

A good story educates while it entertains. Of course the scholars of future generations will handpick the best of them, or at least those most emblematic of the zeitgeist, and hold them up as heralds of their time; study them in literature classes, write essays critiquing or deconstructing their every nuance. Stories also, however, educate their contemporaries; the heroes epitomize the virtues of a culture, the villains and wrongdoers its vices. Flaws and failures are punished and warned against, successes rewarded.

Denmark has its Sigurðr. He is (despite his infantile depiction in most Wagner productions) brave and ultimately good-hearted, his serpentine opponent both greedy and treacherous. England's Beowulf wins out against the cowardice of the jealous Unferth, and,

later, against the bloodthirst and the innate evil (they being descended from the Christian Cain) of Grendel and his mother, through his courage and his strength of arm. In Greece there are a Hercules and an Achilles, just as in Akkad there was a Gilgamesh.

Men of the Nineteenth Century, enraptured with the auras of their "Great Men," built statues of esteemed admirals, generals, and statesmen. Even superheroes follow in this tradition, triumphing over their villains and sending out a warning for any who would imitate their hubris.

Who, then, are the heroes of the postmodern world? Too cynical are we for figures who win the day through the sheer force of their moral goodness; we know better now than to make all our champions noble, fair,

and strong, and all our villains hand-wringing schemers. We are too self-aware to invent more crusaders in capes and spandex underwear. Even so, as most of these heroes would be unreliable narrators, all their hypothetical good deeds are already undercut, while the all-pervasive nihilism laughs at them for even trying.

If Luka is different it is because he is, by design, obsolete, a relic from a more romantic age. He is the protagonist of his story not through a series of convenient coincidences, but through innate uniqueness, possessed since birth as if kissed by fate. The text is quick to point out, for example, that he is left-handed (9), and that he must take care to avoid the “Left-Hand Path” later in life. Later, when he enters the World of Magic, he does so with a preemptive knowledge of many of its secrets; being the son of the World’s creator, Rashid Khalifa, Luka remembers hearing of its many denizens and landmarks through his father’s bedtime stories. Then, Luka’s personality fits that of a more archaic hero: he is brave, optimistic, and almost recklessly naïve, standing in stark contrast against the dark, brooding, hyperviolent specimens from the late 20th and early 21st Centuries. Although this is for the benefit of his target audience—who are rather young, unfit perhaps for the more realistic and “mature” stories currently in vogue—Luka and the Fire of Life often reads like a declaration of war against the conventions of its contemporaries. Through its unflinching, childish whimsicality it seems to challenge the fashions of “fiction” which attempts to emulate the real world, more often its cruelest and most unpleasant parts. The novel’s eponymous protagonist, then—a hero in the most literal sense—is a direct rebuttal to such jaded Postmodern sentiments, a call to arms against the rationality, “maturity,” and sobriety of adult-oriented fictions.

The novel affirms this idea all throughout its length, but in one particular scene it seems especially blatant: early in Luka’s quest to enter the World of Magic, steal

the Fire of life, and use it to revive his comatose father, he must follow the River of Time, at whose end the Fire is located. An Old Man guards this river against such would-be travelers, attacking them either outright or after they have failed to answer his many riddles.

“Plot armor” is the name given to a device deployed in fiction, wherein a story’s most important characters cannot be killed off because the story needs them in order to progress, or even to happen at all. It is rare for a narrative to acknowledge that its protagonist is wearing “plot armor,” nor, indeed, to even explain where he has acquired the many “lives” through which he escapes overwhelming danger and impossible odds. Nevertheless, when Luka dies to the Old Man’s onslaught a mysterious force immediately pieces him back together. Nobodaddy explains that he would not allow Luka to die until he either completes his quest or is unable to do so, and that he “gave [him] a few courtesy lives to start [him] off” (17). They then proceed to collect even more lives from the Old Man’s tree, numbering in the hundreds before he returns again to stop them. This, in effect, declares the protagonists invincible, but it is the audacity of the act which must give one pause, happening both in plain view of the audience and at the very beginning of Luka’s journey. This not only sets expectations for younger readers who may not be ready to read books in which their favorite characters fail or die (laying the groundwork for a later reveal that, in reality, all things must die), but also teases the laws governing more serious works. While any advanced writer must surely know, for example, that a character’s abilities, those of his opponents, and the “rules” of their world must be established earlier on in order for the audience to accept them when they become pertinent to the driving action, Luka seems to make rules up with the same whimsicality as the children reading it. And although Salman Rushdie surely understands the importance of narrative tension, nonetheless he makes his protagonist nearly unable to fail, as if to say that

the plot is not the point; that worse fates than death await those characters who err.

Indeed, even when Luka seems to have failed in surmounting the insurmountable, another contrivance will enter the scene, scooping him out of trouble. The ancient Greeks called it *deus ex machina*, “god from the machine.” In their plays it was often Zeus, or some other god, delivering the characters from a seemingly inescapable danger, but in *Luka* it takes many forms, from the introduction of new allies to the revelation that a great danger was in fact an illusion all along. At the River of Time, where Luka and its steward the Old Man engage in a duel of riddles, it takes the form of Luka’s innate knowledge of the World of Magic’s inner workings. After all, through countless nights Rashid told these same stories, these same riddles, to his young son; Luka is intimately knowledgeable of his father’s stories, and, therefore, the Old Man’s riddles, as the Old Man can only know what Rashid knows. Because Luka’s father, advancing in years, could never correctly recall the answer to the Sphinx’s riddle, the Old Man in fact did not know the answer to his own riddle (19), yet Luka is able to defeat him through having learned the answer as a piece of trivia, presumably in his history classes at school.

It is true that *Luka* and the *Fire of Life* is, at its heart, a children’s story. Rushdie wrote it for his teenaged son, and, more broadly speaking, for young ones everywhere who have grown up reading mythology, and fallen asleep to bedtime stories recounted in their parents’ voices. But *Luka* is also an invitation, an olive branch extended to members of the more jaded, more “realistic” adult world. It dares them to rethink what they know about storytelling, and to forget the rules hammered into their heads in so many essays, metafiction, and creative writing seminars. Rules, after all, are limitations one places willingly upon his own writing, and creativity withers in this captivity; it dies behind the bars of literary fashions, fears of seeming too silly or derivative, and wariness of voice. Although

Rushdie breaks even the most fundamental rules of storytelling in *Luka*, making up dramatic stakes and killing them off again whenever he pleases, he does so as an exercise, and, perhaps, as a challenge: to forget the rules, to succumb to the whimsy of the inner child, and to see what new literary wonders may result from this newfound freedom.

Social Inequality and Public Education

Melanie Liptak

Course: History of Modern Education (CIED 2400)

Professor: Tom Fallace, Secondary and Middle School Education

Student: Melanie Liptak

Essay: Social Inequality and Public Education

Assignment:

Students were instructed to write an essay answering the essential question of the class: Did the rise of public education contribute to, or did it alleviate social inequality in the modern world? Students were

required to use at least ten primary sources to support their argument and to also address the conflicting evidence, in the writing of this final essay.

Aspects of social control, policing, and submission in public education are not typically acknowledged by the general public. However, educators have delicately woven social control into school curriculums for centuries. For example, Leonard Horner, a factory inspector, once stated in a letter to a colleague that public education would “prevent a multitude of immoral and vicious beings, the offspring of ignorance, from growing up around us, to be a pest and a nuisance to society; it is necessary in order to render the great body of the working class governed by reason.”¹ . Government-run public education has been used as a tool to shape society into what is the perceived norm at the time. While classrooms may be filled with lesson plans in math, reading, history and science, there has always been an underlying motive to shape the thoughts and behaviors of students. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, an 18th century influential

philosopher, recognized these injustices and advocated for an appreciation of Natural impulses and rejection of forced perspectives in classrooms. He stated in his book *Emile*, “The first meaningless phrase, the first thing taken for granted on the authority of one another without the pupil’s seeing its meaning for itself, is the beginning of the ruin of judgement.”² Information is trickled down from a variety of sources before it ever reaches the student. Each step can be easily manipulated in order to achieve a specific aim, whether it be political, social or economic. In many ways, public education has been molded into an oppressive power used to benefit the government, not the student.

Starting in the era of the United States’ Civil War, in-

¹ Leonard Horner, Letter to Colleague, 1877.

² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, 1762. .

equality was blatantly obvious in all parts of society. *According to Forging the Modern World*, by 1860, approximately “12 percent of the US population- four million of the total population of thirty-one million- remained enslaved, and in some southern states slaves comprised nearly half of the total population.”³ The war focused on slavery, but affected much more than just that. Northern states had the privilege of receiving an education, while those in the south, especially slaves, were denied any form of education. Some Southern legislatures enacted laws banning the education of slaves, reinforcing the social hierarchy at the time. In the state of Virginia, it was stated that “if any white person, for pay or compensation, shall assemble with any slaves for the purpose of teaching and shall teach any slave to read or write, such person.... shall for such offense, be fined at the discretion of a jury.”⁴ This was an attempt to prevent rebellions and widen the racial wealth gap. Having the ability to read and write can lead to the spread of ideas, making a revolt much more possible than before. The government intentionally imposed a law neglecting a select group of people in order to sustain economic growth. Without uneducated slaves, field work would not be done, and therefore crops nor plantation owners would not prosper.

As the years went by, public education continued to play a major role during the New Imperialism. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, “imperialism attempted to penetrate more deeply into local society to enforce decisions made in the imperial center.”⁵ As western powers took control over the globe, many indigenous cultures were eradicated in the process. Specifically, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Cuba and the Philippines were among those who were viewed as “savage” countries. Focused mainly on religion, white missionaries were sent to these lands in an attempt to “save their souls,” meaning forcing a western-style education upon their inhabitants. Once again, education was used to exploit students

for the government’s political gain. Rudyard Kipling, an English novelist, perfectly encapsulates the white man’s perspective in his poem, “White Man’s Burden”. He refers to the indigenous people as “fluttered folk and wild- Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half devil and half child”⁶ before mentioning that the white man’s work will, in fact, better their lives as individuals, and society as a whole. Imposing a new culture and religion through mandatory schooling helped set a clear divide between the oppressor and oppressed.

During World War II, education sparked by nationalism became a vicious power. For totalitarian states, schools with a heavy military influence were key components in spreading nationalistic messages. Nazi Germany and fascist Italy used this outlet to their advantage. Benito Mussolini, dictator of Italy, once stated that “it was indispensable to impose a new discipline in education- a discipline to which everyone must submit, the teachers themselves first of all!”⁷ A safe place for children was being bombarded with strict rules of the regime and propaganda promoting the war around every corner. Eugenics and ethnic cleansing were also topics usually incorporated into curriculums in fascist regimes, blatantly sorting and discriminating against other races. The social inequalities that spurred from race and public ranking was amplified in schools during this time. With no place to voice dissent, dictators of these countries fed upon the motto: “individually weak, together strong.” A student of the public education system was simply a playing piece in an international game of chess.

³ James Hugh Carter and Richard A. Warren, *Forging the Modern World: A History*. (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 194.

⁴ United States. General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia. *Law Prohibiting the Education of Slaves*. 1831.

⁵ Carter, 231.

⁶ Rudyard Kipling, “White Man’s Burden”, 1899.

⁷ Benito Mussolini, “Schools of Italy”, 1933.

The next chapter of history includes the effects of the Cold War on public education. This was a time of political hostility between the Soviet Union and United States, culminating in the fall of communism. The United States began federally funding education with the launch of the Russian satellite, *Sputnik*. During this standoff, it was imperative to expand public education. There was a massive push for enrollment, due to rising concerns of intelligent international powers. Once more, public schools acted as a tool to aid in selfish government actions. While funding benefitted from the war, students were left in a constant state of fear. Textbooks centered around anti-communist propaganda and the threat of a nuclear war sat heavily on everyone's shoulders. "Duck and cover" drills were regularly practiced, teaching children to "drop everything, duck under the nearest shelter away from potential flying glass, and cover themselves with whatever was at hand"⁸. Students of all ages were advised that it was their patriotic duty to help win the war against communism.

While the opposing side might argue that the implementation of public schools rids the nation of social inequality, that is not the case. The majority may agree that an education can grant the freedom to pursue any career or path in life. But by adhering to this mindset, the individual feeds into the government's needs. It is essential to foster a diverse skillset to keep the country alive and thriving with businesses. Public education gives the student a false sense of control over their lives. Institutionalized schools are based off of a reward system, typically handing out credentials in the form of diplomas. However, a credential does not equate to knowledge learned. These systems try to document and track the intimate learning growth of an individual, all while actively endorsing the nation's job market. So even in the 21st century, students still encounter countless injustices in the system. Funding, for example, is still also a major issue. There lies a wide margin for state

funding "ranging from \$18,165 per pupil in New York to a low of \$5,838 in Idaho."⁹ Every child in America does not receive an equal education. Even neighboring cities can have vastly different budgets. Frankly, the location of a student's home should not dictate their quality of education.

Government funded public education is used as a vehicle to suppress true individual freedom. With every page that is turned, every lesson learned, the materials have been intentionally set with control and political socialization in mind. Clarence Karier, a professor at the University of Illinois, upheld a critical view on American education. In his study Karier states that "schools throughout the history of American education have been used as instruments to teach norms necessary to adjust the young to changing patterns of the economic system as well as to society's more permanent values."¹⁰ He explores the idea that school systems use basic subjects as a front in order to successfully train children to be contributing members of society. Public education is often described as being Janus-faced, producing conflicting arguments regarding equality. The government-run institutions provides a deceptiveness around liberation, stripping any sense of it away. Thus, creating an environment fostering government mistrust. Nevertheless, the intolerable acts of the government driven by malicious motives have become quite clear. Inequality is still apparent in today's society, making the rise of public education a force contributing to the world's social issues.

⁸ "The Effects of the Cold War on Us Education." WH Magazine. Accessed May 08, 2018. <http://wh-magazine.com/educational-philosophy/the-effects-of-the-cold-war-on-us-education>.

⁹ David G. Sciarra, "Is School Funding Fair? A Roundtable Debate." Education Week. March 02, 2018. Accessed May 08, 2018. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/07/28/is-school-funding-fair-a-roundtable-debate.html>.

¹⁰ Clarence J. Karier, "Business Values and the Educational State," in *Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publ., 1973).

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