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Letter from the editors

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up a copy of *Inter-Text: An Undergraduate Journal for Social Sciences and Humanities Volume 4*. When we last wrote to you in the introduction to Volume 3, we wrote with concern regarding the turbulence of an oncoming global pandemic and nationwide protests against social injustice. To say that much has changed in the time since then would be something of an understatement. It seems that our world has become increasingly hostile, disparaging, and even downright bizarre in these few years. But despite all that has happened, the Lake Forest College community has persisted with a tireless spirit and returned to something resembling normalcy in the time since the global quarantine, even (dare we say?) flourishing.

Such was shown in the scholarly enthusiasm made clear to us by the sheer number of articles received by the Journal. It was our unenviable task to parse through fifty-one accomplished articles and determine which twelve would ultimately earn a place in the final selection. Through a careful anonymized peer review process, we assessed all submissions according to four crucial criteria: clarity of argument, use of evidence, structure, and language and grammar. Over the course of many weeks, we progressed through the editorial stages of substantive editing, copyediting, and proofreading, before then formatting the Journal itself.

We, more than most, know the sheer ardour involved in the scholarly writing process, and must extend our gratitude to the authors with whom we worked closely during the revisions phase of production. Their amenability and receptivity to earnest feedback eased what would have been an incredibly difficult procedure. Moreover, the efforts of all editors to fashion the end product you now see have been nothing short of monumental. Considerable sacrifices have been made throughout the course of the semester, when many would likely rather be dedicating their time to other pressing schoolwork, extra-curricular commitments, or – quite unthinkably – some well-earned rest and relaxation. Special thanks must be given to all who were able to make these invaluable contributions to the project – we hope that you take pride in what you have achieved and produced as a result.

There has been much ink spilled over the decline – or perhaps, for those of a more dramatic persuasion, the "death" – of the humanities in recent years. The social sciences likewise have also received certain criticisms in an age dominated by a focus on the advances of "hard" sciences and technology. It should not go unstated that any combined effort to uplift and further these fields of scholarship, wherever that may be, is a triumphant contradiction of this unfortunate rhetoric.

Many lament the sharp decline in our capacity to connect and communicate with our fellow people in modernity – with this in mind we believe that the importance of journals such as this goes well beyond the bounds of academia. To write well, and to write with conviction – as all the authors you are about to read have done magnificently – is to make a substantive contribution to the life of an intellectual community, to inspire novel thought in a given area, and to persuade – and be persuaded by – others with whom one has healthy disagreement. And to do that is to makes some small (yet vital) change to our peculiar and momentous time.

We thank you once again for your support, and hope you enjoy reading this Journal as much as we have enjoyed editing and compiling it for you.

Sincerely,

The Editors

[Research Articles]

[Cultural Boundaries]

Culture and the Brain

Comparisons Between the West and East Asia

[Kotryna Andriuškevičiūtė]

For many years, culture and biology were seen as parallels. Things that have been there since the start of time, but never examined together. Culture was seldom studied under the scientific approach due to the lack of quantitative methods. Biology was seen as a scientific discipline obeying the laws of physics and an area that can be examined scientifically. The early studies of biology focused on the connections between the brain and behavior, studying the universal mechanisms and behaviors.[1] Cultural psychology, which emerged in the 1980s, did investigate culture and mental states but did not focus on neurobiology.[2] In recent decades there has been a move to bridge this gap in an emerging field called cultural neuroscience. Cultural neuroscience not only aims to find how culture affects the brain and vice versa, but also addresses the larger problem of human research. That is that 90% of the peer-reviewed neuroimaging research that came out before 2009 was done in western populations; but are western populations accurate representations of the world?[3] Cultural science suggests not and aims to remedy this gap. With emerging technologies and more need for culturally aware research, the cultural neuroscience field has produced many interesting findings. This paper aims to examine some of the cultural differences between Westerners and East Asians as they pertain to language, attention, and social perceptions.

Chapter 1. Language

Language is essential to any culture. It is shaped by culture and in turn shapes the culture. Some experts, like Brown, argue that without language culture

1 Joan Y. Chiao, "Cultural Neuroscience: a Once and Future Discipline," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 287–304, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17821-4.

2 Chiao, "Cultural Neuroscience."

3 Chiao, "Cultural Neuroscience."

would not exist and that the two are interconnected; they cannot be separated without losing their significance.[4] History is often reflected in the language as well as cultural norms.[5] For example, use of honorifics may be more prominent in cultures that place high importance on respect and hierarchical organization. Through language people communicate their thoughts, perceptions, wants, and needs – something that is highly shaped by culture. When discussing culture's influence on the brain it is also essential to discuss language's influence on the brain as the three are interconnected. In this chapter, I present some background on neurolinguistics and connect them to current neuroscientific opinion on brain differences between Chinese and English speakers.

Language is a complex process that involves many parts of the brain. Processing spoken language, reading written texts, speaking, and formulating sentences are all processes requiring activation of different parts of the brain. Neuroscientists are still working to gain a better understanding on how exactly language is produced and interpreted in our brains.[6] In general, the left hemisphere is thought to be dominant in language related functions as it is responsible for more analytic processing.[7] The right hemisphere is more related to holistic processing and is more involved in melodic processing like music.[8] Most auditory language is processed in the auditory cortices in the temporal lobes.[9] One of the more important parts for language processing appears to be Heschl's gyrus in the primary auditory cortex as it is essential to initial processing of spoken language.[10] Other important regions are Broca's area, which plays a role in speech production and language comprehension; Wernicke's area, which is important to comprehension of speech; and parts of middle temporal gyrus, which are important to semantic processing.[11] While there is scientific evidence for the involvement of areas mentioned above, there are many other regions involved in language processing.

One of the most unique features about the brain is its plasticity, that is, the ability for neural networks to change and adapt. Therefore, different languages shape the brain in many unique ways depending on the particular demands of that language. Valaki et al. found that there are significant differences between lateralization (dominance of one hemisphere over the other) of activity in word

4 H Douglas Brown, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 1994).

5 Chuansheng Chen et al., "Cultural Neurolinguistics," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 159–71, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17811-1.

6 Angela D. Friederici, "The Brain Basis of Language Processing: From Structure to Function," *Physiological Reviews* 91, no. 4 (October 2011): 1357–92, https://doi.org/10.1152/physrev.00006.2011.

7 Yue Wang, Allard Jongman, and Joan A. Sereno, "Dichotic Perception of Mandarin Tones by Chinese and American Listeners," *Brain and Language* 78, no. 3 (September 2001): 332–48, https://doi.org/10.1006/brln.2001.2474.

8 Wang, Jongman, and Sereno, "Dichotic Perception of Mandarin Tones."

9 Friederici, "Brain Basis of Language Processing."

10 Chen, "Cultural Neurolinguistics."

11 Friederici, "Brain Basis of Language Processing."

processing tasks between English or Spanish speakers and Mandarin-Chinese speakers.[12] English or Spanish speakers tend to have more asymmetrical processing with left-hemisphere dominance while Chinese speakers seem to have more individual variability.[13] The role of left temporoparietal region in language functions has already been established, therefore it is not surprising to find activation in this region. The right temporoparietal region is not as well researched, however current hypotheses suggest its involvement in perception of pitch changes and variations.[14] This could explain higher activation for Chinese speakers as (opposed to English or Spanish), tones and pitches are an essential part of the language. This study, however, is unable to give us the definitive answer as to why Chinese speakers show this variability in activation. What it does establish is that there is a fundamental organizational difference in the brains of Chinese speakers.[15]

Another study looked specifically into lexical tone perceptions and their lateralization.[16] This study challenges the hypothesis of Valaki et al. about the right hemisphere playing an important part in Chinese speakers' tone perception as it shows that for native Chinese speaker's tone is lateralized to the left hemisphere.[17] This is interesting as the same is not true for English speakers, who do not show a particular side dominance in tone perception, suggesting that lateralization to the left hemisphere might be dependent on tonality of the native language.[18] However, Chinese speakers did show variability consistent with Valaki et al., wherein some Chinese speakers showed lateralization to the right hemisphere or no hemisphere dominance.[19]

Tones are not the only feature of the language that result in brain differences. One study found that when Chinese speakers have to break down characters to identify initial consonants (a task that is usually not done in daily life) the processing of the word is mediated by the left inferior prefrontal cortex.[20] This is no different from English speakers. However, when Chinese speakers were asked to perform a task that required syllabic level processing (something done in day-to-day life) the left middle frontal cortex was activated.[21] These findings suggest that the left middle frontal cortex is involved in syllable processing, however this activation has not been

12 C. E. Valaki et al., "Cortical Organization for Receptive Language Functions in Chinese, English, and Spanish: A Cross-Linguistic MEG Study," *Neuropsychologia* 42, no. 7 (2004): 967–79, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2003.11.019.

13 Valaki et al., "Cortical Organization for Receptive Language."

14 Valaki et al., "Cortical Organization for Receptive Language."

15 Valaki et al., "Cortical Organization for Receptive Language."

16 Wang, Jongman, and Sereno, "Dichotic Perception of Mandarin Tones."

17 Valaki et al., "Cortical Organization for Receptive Language;" Wang, Jongman, and Sereno, "Dichotic Perception of Mandarin Tones."

18 Wang, Jongman, and Sereno, "Dichotic Perception of Mandarin Tones."

19 Valaki et al., "Cortical Organization for Receptive Language;" Wang, Jongman, and Sereno, "Dichotic Perception of Mandarin Tones."

20 Wai Ting Siok et al., "Distinct Brain Regions Associated with Syllable and Phoneme," *Human Brain Mapping* 18, no. 3 (February 21, 2003): 201–7, https://doi.org/10.1002/hbm.10094.

21 Siok et al., "Distinct Brain Regions."

observed in English speakers.[22] Similar studies have found that it is not only simple syllabic tasks that lead to activation in the left middle frontal cortex but also tasks related to word generation, semantic judgement, etc. in Chinese speakers.[23] This study shows that Chinese processing differs from English due to the smallest units of the language (syllables for Chinese and alphabet letters for English).

Lastly, it has been long believed that different linguistic categories (nouns, verbs, etc.) are differently represented in the brain. However, this is complicated by the fact that these representations differ between languages.[24] English and other Indo-European languages seem to follow this trend, but Li et al. found that there is no such differentiation for Chinese speakers.[25] Nouns, verbs, and ambiguous words are processed by a variety of regions (frontal, temporal, parietal, and occipital areas in both hemispheres) with no distinct region for each category.[26] This may be due to unique features of Chinese that lead to brain adaptation, such as many nouns' usage as verbs.[27] Interestingly, lateralization may also be responsible for the differential representation. Similar to Valaki et al. and Siok et al., Li et al. found that there is variability of hemisphere usage in Chinese speakers.[28] English and other Indo-European languages seem to only activate the left-hemisphere, whereas Chinese speakers show both right- and left-hemisphere activation.[29]

Overall, there are still many questions to be answered. Many differences in brain function result from the writing system, tonality, and grammatical differences between the languages of interest. It seems that lateralization of activity between Chinese and Indo-European language speakers is different, however the results are inconclusive as to what extent the lateralization to the right-hemisphere is prevalent and to what function it serves. While I have pointed out many differences, there also seem to be many commonalities among all languages. Bolger et al. showed that some activation of regions is universal among languages.[30] The left superior posterior temporal gyrus, left inferior frontal gyrus, and the left occipitotemporal region are implicated for all writing systems.[31] However, it gets more complicated when it comes to lateralization of activity and in cases of activity in superior temporal gyrus, left anterior dorsal frontal region, and right occipitotemporal cortex.[32]

22 Siok et al., "Distinct Brain Regions."

23 Siok et al., "Distinct Brain Regions."

24 Ping Li, Zhen Jin, and Li Hai Tan, "Neural Representations of Nouns and Verbs in Chinese: An FMRI Study," *NeuroImage* 21, no. 4 (April 2004): 1533–41, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2003.10.044.

25 Li, Jin, and Tan, "Nouns and Verbs in Chinese."

26 Li, Jin, and Tan, "Nouns and Verbs in Chinese."

27 Li, Jin, and Tan, "Nouns and Verbs in Chinese."

28 Valaki et al., "Cortical Organization for Receptive Language;" Siok et al., "Distinct Brain Regions;" Li, Jin, and Tan, "Nouns and Verbs in Chinese."

29 Li, Jin, and Tan, "Nouns and Verbs in Chinese."

30 Donald J Bolger, Charles A Perfetti, and Walter Schneider, "Cross-Cultural Effect on the Brain Revisited: Universal Structures plus Writing System Variation," *Human Brain Mapping* 25, no. 1 (2005): 92–104, https://doi.org/10.1002/hbm.20124.

31 Bolger, Perfetti, and Schneider, "Writing System Variation."

32 Bolger, Perfetti, and Schneider, "Writing System Variation."

Chapter 2. Attention, Perception, and Memory

In Chapter 1, I characterized language as being part of culture. In the following chapters, however, this characterization will be mostly put aside and culture will be looked at as social behaviors among a particular group of people with all its complexities and symbols.[33] In this chapter, I will discuss culture's impact on key cognitive processes: attention, perception, and memory.

Researchers have found that culture does affect the way people perceive the world, that is, how they process information. Two different general models have been identified: holistic processing and analytic processing.[34] The former is characterized by attention to context and focuses on "the big picture" as well as attribution of causality to situational factors.[35] The latter focuses on specific objects and is more likely to attribute causality to objects, persons, and their personal characteristics.[36] Traditionally, holistic processing tends to go hand-in-hand with collectivistic values and interdependent self-construal (view of self as being part of a group and defining oneself based on relationships with others); this is most often associated with East Asian (Japanese, Korean, and Chinese) cultures.[37] Analytic processing, individualistic values, and independent self-construal are associated with Western cultures such as the US, Canada, UK, and others.[38] That is not to say that there is no nuance; each of the categories have their own individual and quite different cultures, but laboratory-based research tends to accept and favor categorizations such as collectivistic and individualistic. These different social value systems affect every part of a person's life; therefore, it shapes our brain and cognition in many ways.

Being socialized in a certain environment might predispose someone to favor certain features over others leading to perceptual and/or attentional biases. Kitayama et al. has examined how perceptions of an object differ between cultures.[39] Japanese and American participants were shown a vertical line in a frame, then shown another frame (of the same or different size).[40] They were then instructed to draw a line that is the same length as the original (this was called an absolute task) or same proportion to the picture they saw (relative task).[41] The absolute task evaluates the participants ability to ignore contextual information, as they need not

33 Juan F. Domínguez D. et al., "The Brain in Culture and Culture in the Brain: A Review of Core Issues in Neuroanthropology," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 43–64, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17804-4.

34 Sarah Ketay, Arthur Aron, and Trey Hedden, "Culture and Attention: Evidence from Brain and Behavior," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 79–92, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17806-8.

35 Ketay, Aron, and Hedden, "Culture and Attention."

36 Ketay, Aron, and Hedden, "Culture and Attention."

37 Ketay, Aron, and Hedden, "Culture and Attention."

38 Ketay, Aron, and Hedden, "Culture and Attention."

39 Shinobu Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object and Its Context in Different Cultures," *Psychological Science* 14, no. 3 (May 2003): 201–6, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.02432.

40 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."

41 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."

pay attention to either of the frames.[42] The relative task tests participants ability to notice contextual information as the frames play an important role.[43] Japanese participants were better at the relative task than Americans, who performed better in the absolute task.[44] That is, Japanese participants performed better when contextual information was needed, and Americans did better when context was not relevant. This finding was replicated in six to thirteen-year-olds tested in the same paradigm which suggests that this pattern develops in early childhood.[45] Interestingly, this pattern of differentiation in performance did not appear in kids younger than six.[46] These findings may suggest that prolonged exposure to culture and socialization in that culture is necessary or that these attention related processes do not fully develop until age six.[47] However, Kitayama et al. notes that immigrants are more likely to show behaviors associated with their host-country culture, suggesting that these perceptual differences can be modulated within a relatively short period of time if exposed as adults.[48]

The findings of Kitayama and the colleagues are not without controversy.[49] They conclude that the differences in framed-line test performance are due to perceptual processes, but this has not been replicated in many studies.[50] A possible way to reframe the findings of Kitayama is to shift focus to attentional biases instead of attributing the results to perceptual processes.[51] This shift is supported by Hedden et al. findings.[52] The fMRI study showed greater activation in frontal and parietal regions of the brain during the culturally non-preferred task.[53] That is, there was greater activation for the absolute task in East Asians and for the relative task in North Americans.[54] Frontal and parietal regions are associated with higher level cognitive functions and cognitive control over working memory and attention. Greater activation in attention related areas seems intuitive, as tasks that are culturally not preferred likely require more concentration.[55] It is important to note that the same network is engaged in East Asians and North Americans but for the opposite tasks. The brain is not wired differently, nor does it perform

42 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."
43 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."
44 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."
45 Sean Duffy et al., "Development of Cultural Strategies of Attention in North American and Japanese Children," *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 102, no. 3 (March 2009): 351–59, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2008.06.006.
46 Duffy et al., "Development of Cultural Strategies."
47 Duffy et al., "Development of Cultural Strategies."
48 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."
49 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."
50 Ketay, Aron, and Hedden, "Culture and Attention."
51 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."
52 Trey Hedden et al., "Cultural Influences on Neural Substrates of Attentional Control," *Psychological Science* 19, no. 1 (January 2008): 12–17, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02038.x.
53 Hedden et al., "Neural Substrates of Attentional Control."
54 Hedden et al., "Neural Substrates of Attentional Control."
55 Hedden et al., "Neural Substrates of Attentional Control."

different functions.[56] Hedden et al. findings also suggest that it is specifically late-stage attentional processing that is affected by culture (as opposed to early-stage perceptual processing).[57]

Chua and the colleagues used a different technique to test attentional biases.[58] They measured eye-movements to determine whether there is a culturally modulated viewing pattern in Chinese and American participants.[59] The research group wanted to find out at what level the previously reported differences between East Asian and Western cultures occur. They hypothesized it could be due to differences in "perception, encoding, consolidation, recall, comparison judgements, or reporting bias."[60] If the study revealed significant results, it would be due to differences in one of the earlier steps (either perception or encoding).[61] The results showed that Americans spent significantly more time looking at the main object in the front and looked at it quicker than Chinese participants who spent more time looking at the background.[62] The study further supports the idea of culture leading to biases in attention. While Chua et al. does not explicitly discuss whether the differences occur during late-stage attentional processing or early-stage perceptual processing, the timing provided in the results section supports the former suggestion.[63]

Another MRI study found that Americans showed greater activation in certain brain regions compared to East Asians when processing images of objects.[64] The study supports the analytical processing preference in Americans. The regions found to have different activation are associated with attention, which provides further evidence for the attentional biases' theory.[65]

Interestingly, Gutchess et al. did not find that the processing differences influenced memory.[66] This is not the case in many other studies.[67] Intuitively,

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56 Hedden et al., "Neural Substrates of Attentional Control."

57 Hedden et al., "Neural Substrates of Attentional Control."

58 Hannah Faye Chua, Julie E. Boland, and Richard E. Nisbett, "Cultural Variation in Eye Movements during Scene Perception," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 102, no. 35 (August 22, 2005): 12629–33, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0506162102.

59 Chua, Boland, and Nisbett, "Cultural Variation in Eye Movement."

60 Chua, Boland, and Nisbett, "Cultural Variation in Eye Movement."

61 Chua, Boland, and Nisbett, "Cultural Variation in Eye Movement."

62 Chua, Boland, and Nisbett, "Cultural Variation in Eye Movement."

63 Chua, Boland, and Nisbett, "Cultural Variation in Eye Movement."

64 Angela H. Gutchess et al., "Cultural Differences in Neural Function Associated with Object Processing," *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience* 6, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 102–9, https://doi.org/10.3758/cabn.6.2.102.

65 Ketay, Aron, and Hedden, "Culture and Attention."

66 Gutchess et al., "Cultural Differences in Neural Function"; Angela H. Gutchess et al., "Categorical Organization in Free Recall across Culture and Age," *Gerontology* 52, no. 5 (2006): 314–23, https://doi.org/10.1159/000094613.

67 Angela H. Gutchess and Allie Indeck, "Cultural Influences on Memory," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 137–50, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17809-3; Takahiko Masuda and Richard E. Nisbett, "Attending Holistically versus Analytically: Comparing the Context Sensitivity of Japanese and Americans.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 5 (2001): 922–34, https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.5.922.

in order to remember something, one needs to notice it first. Therefore, many research groups have found that long-term memory is (just as attention and perception) influenced by culture.[68] In general, people from Eastern cultures may be better equipped to recall context-based information and group-related details compared to Westerner's, who may be more likely to recall self-related and categorical information.[69] This is due to the emphasis each culture puts on those specific details.

Memory is a complex system involving many different regions of the brain. Medial temporal lobes and the hippocampus are two regions that have been heavily implicated in memory.[70] However, medial prefrontal cortex, amygdala, frontal lobe, and sensory regions are involved in aspects of memory such as social information processing and emotional information encoding.[71]

Medial temporal lobes seem to have a crucial role in long-term memory formation and retrieval; therefore, there are no core differences that have been observed between different cultural groups.[72] However, there seem to be differences in memory content. Masuda and Nisbett reported that Japanese participants tended to remember more background details, mention more relationships in the environment, point out behavior, and provide more peripheral information than their American counterparts.[73] Additionally, Japanese participants were less likely to recognize previously seen objects if the background was altered or removed.[74] These results suggest that people from Eastern cultures may be more likely to attach the objects to their backgrounds than Westerners.

Additionally, Ji and the colleagues have reported that culture impacts the way people group things.[75] There are a variety of ways someone may choose to do it. For example, if given the words *seagull-squirrel-tree* a person may group them by taxonomy (*seagull-squirrel*) or theme (*squirrel-tree*).[76] The study found that Chinese participants were more likely to group thematically or based on relationships while white Americans grouped more based on taxonomy or other categories.[77] In older adults, it appears that East Asians are less likely to categorize their memories when recalling compared to their Western counterparts.[78]

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68 Gutchess and Indeck, "Cultural Influences on Memory;" Gutchess et al., "Categorical Organization in Free Recall;" Masuda and Nisbett, "Attending Holistically versus Analytically."

69 Gutchess and Indeck, "Cultural Influences on Memory."

70 Gutchess and Indeck, "Cultural Influences on Memory."

71 Gutchess and Indeck, "Cultural Influences on Memory."

72 Gutchess and Indeck, "Cultural Influences on Memory."

73 Masuda and Nisbett, "Attending Holistically versus Analytically."

74 Masuda and Nisbett, "Attending Holistically versus Analytically."

75 Li-Jun Ji, Zhiyong Zhang, and Richard E. Nisbett, "Is It Culture or Is It Language? Examination of Language Effects in Cross-Cultural Research on Categorization.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87, no. 1 (2004): 57–65, https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.87.1.57.

76 Ji, Zhang, and Nisbett, "Is It Culture or Is It Language?"

77 Ji, Zhang, and Nisbett, "Is It Culture or Is It Language?"

78 Gutchess et al., "Categorical Organization in Free Recall."

Overall, it is clear that culture shapes cognition in several important ways, some of which I have discussed. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are many limitations to current studies. Firstly, there are many limitations regarding testing methods. Some studies suggest that the behavior may be the same but the reasoning or the pathway to that behavior differ depending on cultures, however this is difficult to test. This may explain some conflicting results in purely behavioral studies. Additionally, it is often difficult to pinpoint where in the system the culture exerts its effects. When looking into cognition, many of the processes are closely intertwined and current research methods may limit the ability to separate these processes. For example, many attention or perception studies tend to mix those two concepts together, though they are distinct. They also tend to use memory tasks as the preferred attention testing method, which poses some issues. Emerging studies are trying to remedy this with novel techniques, however there is still a long way to go. Lastly, (as many studies have shown) our brains are extremely malleable, and culture is ever-changing. This makes research difficult as personal background, exposure to other cultures, amount of time spent in native culture, adaptation, and many other things may change the way our brains process information.

Chapter 3. Social Perceptions

Chapter 2 discussed events as they relate to personal perception and memory –that is, internal events. Chapter 3 will mainly focus on how culture shapes cognition that relates to social perceptions, interpretations, and interactions. The perceptual processes described previously will be expanded upon in this chapter and definitions like individualistic and collectivist societies will be mentioned in this chapter as well.

As a species that is irrevocably social, we use our perceptions for social affordances.[79] Social affordances refer to the ability to make distinctions between friend and foe, who we should continue building lasting relationships with, how we should behave in certain situations, etc. Some researchers have decided to take an "ecological perspective" in this area.[80] They view perceptions as needed precursors for actions and the sole reason we perceive in the first place. Every person eventually learns to perceive what are *useful* action possibilities.[81] What is considered useful action is up for debate, as what may be appropriate in one culture may not be in another.[82] Culture largely determines the significance and the value of certain stimuli and possible routes of action.[83] I will discuss the differences

79 Jonathan B. Freeman, Nicholas O. Rule, and Nalini Ambady, "The Cultural Neuroscience of Person Perception," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 191–201, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17813-5.

80 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception."

81 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception."

82 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception."

83 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception."

between cultures in two key components of the social sphere: interpretation of the events themselves and perception of others.

The first major difference is how different cultures tend to interpret social events. Westerners are more likely to focus, categorize, and attribute causality to the main object.[84] They are also more likely to explain certain events by attributing it to individual characteristics or abilities (think back to individualism).[85] For example, if Adam does not get a job after an interview, Westerners are more likely to attribute it to characteristics of Adam (his experience, ability, personality, etc.) rather than outside factors such as the job market. On the other hand, East Asians tend to pay more attention to relationships and changes in the environment; they group objects by their relations with each other and attribute causality with context in mind.[86] Koreans, Japanese and Chinese people are more likely to explain events by referencing environmental and contextual factors.[87] In the example of Adam, they are more likely to consider the harsh job market and surrounding circumstances rather than blaming Adam. This is often referred to as contextualism and goes hand in hand with collectivist values of prioritizing group interests, collaboration, and interdependence.[88] Because of this, East Asians may be less likely to demonstrate correspondence bias.[89] Correspondence bias is the tendency to attribute behaviors to a person's traits and values even when they could be explained by a situation the person is in.[90] An often-used example to test for correspondence bias gives participants an essay on a controversial topic like the death sentence.[91] Some of the participants are told that the writers were free to choose the side which they argue for, and some are told that the sides were assigned.[92] Participants are then asked to what degree they believe that the opinion stated in the essay is that of the writer.[93] People who demonstrate a lot of correspondence bias tend to believe that it is the opinion of the writer even when the writer was assigned the side.[94] It is in fact the case that Korean and Japanese participants are less prone to correspondence bias but only in situations with high salience situational constraints.[95] In situations where the situational constraints have low salience, all,

84 Richard E. Nisbett and Takahiko Masuda, "Culture and Point of View," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 100, no. 19 (September 5, 2003): 11163–70, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1934527100.

85 Nisbett and Masuda, "Culture and Point of View."

86 Nisbett and Masuda, "Culture and Point of View."

87 Nisbett and Masuda, "Culture and Point of View."

88 Incheol Choi, Richard E. Nisbett, and Ara Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures: Variation and Universality.," *Psychological Bulletin* 125, no. 1 (1999): 47–63, https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.1.47.

89 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

90 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

91 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

92 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

93 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

94 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

95 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

American, Japanese, and Korean participants did not differ in their attributions.[96] In a high salience condition, the participants are made aware of the constraints put on the person they are evaluating by making them do the same task. In a low salience condition, no such task is given.

A number of studies show that when a person is making causal attributions there are three types of information they consider: consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus information.[97] Consistency refers to how often a particular thing happens (e.g., Adam always brings lunch to work (high consistency) vs. Adam seldom brings lunch to work (low consistency)). Distinctiveness refers to how specific to a situation a behavior is (e.g., Adam often spills his coffee on his desk (high distinctiveness) vs. Adam often spills his coffee in various places (low distinctiveness)). Consensus information refers to the general agreement between people (e.g., Many people think Adam is clumsy (high consensus) vs. only his wife thinks he is clumsy (low consensus)). However, consensus information is often underused in western societies, perhaps because it gives weight to situational factors instead of individual traits.[98] For example, even if everyone in Adam's class thinks he is highly intelligent and capable, people may still attribute his lack of luck in finding a job to his personal abilities instead of contextual factors. This may not hold true for East Asians, as a study in Korea found participants using significantly more consensus information.[99] Another group found that Koreans are more sensitive to contextual information when making predictions than their American counterparts.[100]

The differences emerge not only in perception of the situations but also in how East Asians and Westerners differentially perceive others' emotions. Lutz and White speculated that the way people feel their own emotions, express them, and (most importantly) recognize the emotions of others are all influenced by culture.[101] Some cultures are better at recognizing certain emotions while they also tend to "mute" the recognition of others.[102] For example, collectivist cultures may pay less attention and discourage display of negative emotions (such as anger) more often than individualistic cultures do. Additionally, a meta-analysis by Elfenbein and Ambady has concluded that people are better equipped to recognize the emotions of their own cultural group relative to other cultural groups.[103] Additionally, an fMRI study by Chiao et al. has shown that response in amygdala is more robust when fear is shown in a face of a person who is a member of the same cultural group as

96 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

97 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

98 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

99 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

100 Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan, "Causal Attribution Across Cultures."

101 Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey M. White, "The Anthropology of Emotions," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15, no. 1 (October 1986): 405–36, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.15.100186.002201.

102 Lutz and White, "The Anthropology of Emotions."

103 Hillary Anger Elfenbein and Nalini Ambady, "Is There an In-Group Advantage in Emotion Recognition?," *Psychological Bulletin* 128, no. 2 (2002): 243–49, https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.2.243.

the participant.[104] This ties into the ecological view that our perceptions occur in order to respond in the way that is most beneficial for our survival. Being sensitive to one's own group and their emotions is ecologically beneficial – fear in a member of your own group may signal danger for them and yourself, therefore people may be better equipped to interpret those signs. Importantly, these responses are not solely race (or nationality) specific and can be attributed to cultural groups, as previous studies have controlled for race and nationality.[105]

Another area that culture may exert its influence on is known as "theory of mind". Theory of mind is the ability of one person to infer another persons' mental states as well as their own.[106] There are some similarities (such as the end goal, and possibly timing) across cultures, but not without controversy. Some research suggests that theory of mind develops around the same age in all children – that is, between ages three and four.[107] Meta-analysis by Liu et al. has found that this is not the case.[108] The developmental trajectories are parallel, but the timing of this development is significantly different between Chinese and Western children.[109] The differences may be as big as two years.[110] Naito and Koyama have further put into question the universality of the timetable by showing that Japanese children tend to lag behind their peers by at least half a year.[111] Both studies are consistent with additional literature suggesting that non-European-American children may have delays in development of theory of mind.[112] However, there are still many studies that do show commonalities between cultures.[113] Interestingly, when theory of mind develops it appears to be comparable between cultures – that is, the delays do not cause long term effects or deficits.[114]

The areas of the brain that have been implicated in theory of mind appear to be similar, though with important distinctions. Medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) are two areas that are believed to be equally

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104 Joan Y. Chiao et al., "Cultural Specificity in Amygdala Response to Fear Faces," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 20, no. 12 (December 2008): 2167–74, https://doi.org/10.1162/jocn.2008.20151.

105 Chiao et al., "Amygdala Response to Fear Faces."

106 Chiyoko Kobayashi Frank and Elise Temple, "Cultural Effects on the Neural Basis of Theory of Mind," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 213–23, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17815-9.

107 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception;" Kobayashi Frank and Temple "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

108 David Liu et al., "Theory of Mind Development in Chinese Children: A Meta-Analysis of False-Belief Understanding across Cultures and Languages.," *Developmental Psychology* 44, no. 2 (2008): 523–31, https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.44.2.523.

109 Liu et al., "Theory of Mind Development."

110 Liu et al., "Theory of Mind Development."

111 Mika Naito and Kayo Koyama, "The Development of False-Belief Understanding in Japanese Children: Delay and Difference?," *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 30, no. 4 (July 2006): 290–304, https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025406063622.

112 Liu et al., "Theory of Mind Development;" Naito and Koyama, "Development of False-Belief Understanding."

113 Kobayashi Frank and Temple, "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

114 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception."

involved across all cultural groups.[115] While it is true that there have been no cultural differences found in activation of these areas, research shows that mPFC and ACC cannot be solely responsible for theory of mind.[116] People with damage to these areas are sometimes still able to reason and pass tests for theory of mind.[117] This makes the case more complicated, as differences in other hypothesized areas have been noted. For example, the temporoparietal junction is one of the more controversial areas implicated in theory of mind.[118] While some studies have shown it to be universally involved, others have found that the activation is much less robust in Japanese adults.[119] It has only been consistently shown to be activated in American and British people in theory of mind studies.[120]

It is important to note that most of the studies examining theory of mind have used what is referred to as a *false belief* task. This task relies on the verbal descriptions, which, crucially, misses a key detail in inference of someone's mental states – facial expressions.[121] An alternative task has been used by some studies (called the "Reading the Mind in the Eyes" (RME) test) to account for this discrepancy.[122] Adams et al. found that Americans performed this task better with white RME while Japanese people performed better with Asian RME.[123] There was more activation in the posterior superior temporal sulcus (pSTS) when trying to decode same cultural group mental states as compared to the other cultural group.[124] This connects back to the emotion recognition differences discussed earlier and the ecological argument as to why this came to be.

While there is a lot of research looking into differential interpretation of social events, social perceptions, and perception of others between cultures, it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions. As I have highlighted throughout this chapter, the findings are often inconsistent or contradictory. Some studies show differences in perception of emotion, some do not, some show differences in theory of mind, some do not. I have highlighted the clear differences and discuss some of the less well-established ones. It is difficult to concretely define the differences in such a dynamic field. Additionally, there are many other variables that may account for the difference in findings in many of these studies (such as socioeconomic status, linguistic influences, testing limits, etc.).

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115 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception;" Kobayashi Frank and Temple, "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

116 Kobayashi Frank and Temple, "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

117 Kobayashi Frank and Temple, "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

118 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception;" Kobayashi Frank and Temple, "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

119 Kobayashi Frank and Temple, "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

120 Kobayashi Frank and Temple, "Neural Basis of Theory of Mind."

121 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception."

122 Freeman, Rule, and Ambady, "Neuroscience of Person Perception."

123 Reginald B. Adams et al., "Cross-Cultural Reading the Mind in the Eyes: An FMRI Investigation," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 97–108, https://doi.org/10.1162/jocn.2009.21187.

124 Adams et al., "Cross-Cultural Reading."

Chapter 4. Implications

Previous chapters examined *how* culture modifies the brain. They investigated past research and examined different evidence for various theories in the field. This chapter examines *why* cultural neuroscience is important and what applications it has in the real world. More specifically, this chapter will examine cultural neuroscience implications for learning and teaching of language, global health, and intercultural communications.

Language and culture are inexplicably tied to each other, so much so that language is often considered part of culture. Both play an important role in shaping one another. Throughout this paper, I have also shown that both culture and language shape the brain. Therefore, knowing how all three connect to each other may provide better insight into how we should teach languages to accommodate the differences. Some features of language such as scripts, tonality, grammar rules, and the more unspoken rules of day-to-day use are often challenging to students when shifting from their first language to a new one. Mechanisms of processing from their mother tongue that students are used to are no longer applicable in the same way. It may be helpful to take into account that there are inherently different mechanisms in processing the target language from those in their native one when teaching languages to non-native speakers. It may take some time for the brain to adjust to the second language by either "rewiring" some processes or in other ways accommodating to achieve the same result that comes naturally to native speakers.

Currently, the dominant theory in language learning is one of assimilation and accommodation.[125] Assimilation implies that the student processes their target language using the same underlying mechanisms as if it was their native one.[126] For example, Chinese students would read English text with the same brain area activation that would be used if they were to read Chinese. Accommodation, on the other hand, would imply that the student learns to process the language in the same or similar way to a native speaker.[127] For example, an English student reading Chinese would show activation in areas that are typically activated in native Chinese speakers. Some languages may lead to assimilative learning while others may demand accommodation. Current research suggests that Chinese students learning English are more likely to use the same regions as they would if they were reading Chinese.[128] However, for English speakers accommodation may be necessary, as they tend to show activation in regions that native Chinese

125 Charles A. Perfetti et al., "Reading in Two Writing Systems: Accommodation and Assimilation of the Brain's Reading Network," *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 10, no. 2 (July 2007): 131–46, https://doi.org/10.1017/s1366728907002891.

126 Perfetti et al., "Reading in Two Writing Systems."

127 Perfetti et al., "Reading in Two Writing Systems."

128 Li Hai Tan et al., "Neural Systems of Second Language Reading Are Shaped by Native Language," *Human Brain Mapping* 18, no. 3 (February 21, 2003): 158–66, https://doi.org/10.1002/hbm.10089.

speakers show.[129] These hypotheses have implications for teaching, as they may point to areas that require more attention (for example, focusing on scripts when teaching Chinese in order to allow the brain to accommodate faster). In general, this may inform teachers of the mechanisms behind acquiring a new language. Additionally, it may also be of comfort to learners to know that their brains are capable of successfully assimilating or accommodating new language even if it takes a while and even if these initial brain differences are present.

Additionally, and perhaps more interestingly, because of the tie between culture and language it may be useful to learn the culture when learning the language. A lot of the changes in the brain may be influenced by things that are of cultural importance and that may affect how the language is formed and processed. Cultural values are embedded into and transmitted by the language.[130] Teaching culture may help students better understand these values. Previous research shows that perceptional and attentional processes may adapt to match those of the host culture in immigrants.[131] If these processes that are largely shaped by culture can be changed by immersion, teaching culture may be useful in language teaching as it may prepare students to better understand why the language is formed a certain way.

Studying cultural neuroscience and psychology may also have global health applications. Before the field emerged, most of the theories and research originated in predominantly Western (and male) populations. This means that our knowledge about diseases and disorders comes from those populations. However, neither physical nor mental illnesses are uniform across cultures. As I have established in this paper, culture (among many other things) affects how we perceive the world, others, ourselves, and what we pay attention to. Therefore, it is only natural that culture may predispose certain populations to certain diseases and mental illnesses, or it may alter their profile of them. Having the cultural knowledge and understanding neuroscientific underpinnings of those specific differences may help in two main ways: prevention and treatment.

Knowing that certain populations are at risk may be helpful in allocating resources. For example, some psychopathological disorders are considered "culture-bound" according to the DSM (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, main guidebook for psychopathological diagnoses).[132] That is, these disorders are thought to only occur within specific cultures. However, a more up-to-date view is more likely to characterize them as different representations or forms of the mental disorders that are already listed in the main part of

129 Ying Liu et al., "Evidence for Neural Accommodation to a Writing System Following Learning," *Human Brain Mapping* 28, no. 11 (2007): 1223–34, https://doi.org/10.1002/hbm.20356.

130 Li Sun, "Culture Teaching in Foreign Language Teaching," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3, no. 2 (February 1, 2013), https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.2.371-375.

131 Kitayama et al., "Perceiving an Object."

132 Suparna Choudhury and Laurence J. Kirmayer, "Cultural Neuroscience and Psychopathology: Prospects for Cultural Psychiatry," *Progress in Brain Research*, 2009, 263–83, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0079-6123(09)17820-2.

the manual.[133] It is unnecessary to put them into their own categories and is more beneficial to recognize the role culture plays in the presentation of various disorders. Many psychopathological disorders affect attachment to other people, attention, perception, language, emotional regulation among other areas that are coincidentally also shaped by culture.[134] Identifying specific areas of interest and tailoring preventative measures to each culture may serve as a better preventative technique than a one-fits-all model.

Secondly, different treatments may work better for folks with different underlying neural mechanisms. Recently, there has been a large shift in psychology to provide culturally sensitive therapy and counseling. For example, imagine that a patient was diagnosed with a generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), a disorder that largely involves perceptual processes, interpretation of events, and attribution of causality. This patient has distorted views of those events, but they may also be influenced by culture. An American without GAD (or successfully treated GAD) will have a different "baseline" than a Chinese person. For example, the attribution of causality to individuals is more of a Western trait, while attributing events to general circumstances is more ascribed to Eastern cultures. When providing therapy and treatment it is important to consider what the baseline is in the culture that the patient comes from in order to avoid imposing values foreign to that culture or provide treatments that do not resonate with the person. The neural underpinnings of the same disorders or the thinking which contributes to those disorders may be slightly different between cultures and taking that into account may provide better treatment. The same thought process follows for many other psychopathological disorders.

With communities around the world becoming more diverse there is an increasing demand for cultural awareness. Policies enacted in these communities require interethnic considerations to be equitable. Cultural neuroscience may provide insight needed to make those decisions. One area where the rising demand of intercultural communication skills is apparent is the workplace. Unfortunately, oftentimes the training programs for such awareness seem to have adverse effects and even promote stereotyping.[135] Neuroscientific evidence may help make those programs more helpful. For example, previous studies (some of which have been discussed in earlier chapters) show that people are more in-tune with and better able to identify emotions of in-group members.[136] This shows that in-group/out-group problems may not be caused by purely conscious biases, but rather have a more complex neural underpinning that requires more complex education

133 Choudhury and Kirmayer, "Cultural Neuroscience and Psychopathology."

134 Choudhury and Kirmayer, "Cultural Neuroscience and Psychopathology."

135 Wei-Wen Chang, "Approaches for Developing Intercultural Competence: An Extended Learning Model with Implications from Cultural Neuroscience," *Human Resource Development Review* 16, no. 2 (May 15, 2017): 158–75, https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484317704292.

136 Chang, "Developing Intercultural Competence;" Elfenbein and Ambady, "Advantage in Emotion Recognition."

rather than just information about other cultures.[137] There are many other areas that trainings try to address in a way that implies that people are aware of their behaviors and can easily modify certain perceptions. Neuroscience tells us that there are more complex underlying neural mechanisms that are not as easily changed. A lot of the things that are perceived as choices occurring at cognitive level are actually behaviors heavily affected by lower level unconscious perceptual, attentional, and other processes[138]. Considering the complex changes in the brain that are caused by culture, training programs should also find more nuanced ways to encourage cultural competence. This also shows that training programs may require longer and more challenging content to actually change the unconscious mechanisms.

In this chapter, I discussed only a few implications that cultural neuroscience may have in the real world. Additional areas that I have not expanded on, but which may be of interest are neuroeconomics, implications for general learning, bioethics, international relations, among others. However, all this information should be analyzed critically. Policy makers, teachers, companies, and other agents should not overly rely on the neuroscientific findings. While they may inform better decisions and approaches, they can also be used to create unnecessary groups, put people into boxes, and create divisions. The science can be used to minimize intercultural division and conflict, but it can just as well be used to worsen it.

Conclusion

Cultural neuroscience is an ever-growing field. There are still many questions that are left unanswered, however there is already evidence for culture's impact on the brain. Cultural neuroscience is a field that merges and integrates information from many existing disciplines such as linguistics, psychiatry, anthropology, and others in order to explain the phenomena at hand. This field may help create more cohesive communities and provide better tools for intercultural communication.

However, while it is without a doubt an important field to research, the current results should be examined cautiously. A lot of the research that has come out has methodological decisions that may impact our ability to draw conclusions. Specific groups that are selected, age, regions, and tasks that people are tested on should all be questioned and critically examined. Technological constraints also limit external validity. fMRI, a technique often used for neuroscientific studies, may not necessarily provide the complete picture. While to many it may seem like irrefutable evidence, this technique is not a magical answer and can often be misinterpreted. The same is true for many other techniques used in the field. This does not necessarily discount the findings of many studies, but because of the relatively new advancements in the field, caution should be exercised before drawing conclusions.

137 Chang, "Developing Intercultural Competence."
138 Chang, "Developing Intercultural Competence."

Additionally, culture is a fluid thing that is not equally experienced by all members of any given group. Many of these studies sort East Asians and Americans (or Westerners) into these large groups, however it doesn't include the variety of experiences of culture within those groups. East Asians are comprised of Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese people – all with their distinct cultures which can be even further broken down into smaller subcategories based on region, ethnic group, or individual experience. The same goes for Americans (or Westerners). Do all of them have the same culture? Is it fair to analyze them as a monolith just because of some collectivist (or individualistic) values? While it may be impossible to account for all individual experiences of culture, cultural neuroscience should aim to make fewer general groups in the future.

Lastly, many people reading these studies may come to accept these findings as the truth. This is dangerous as it can often be used to promote xenophobic or racist rhetoric or further the divide between different cultural groups. It is important to tread carefully so as not to overgeneralize or overstate the studies' findings. As I have said above, culture is an alive and changing thing and people within a certain culture are still individuals who do not act or think as one, and it is important to remember that when examining cultural neuroscience research. Even the human brain is not unmalleable – plasticity is one of the most fascinating features of the human brain that allows for change.

This should not discourage researchers and students from being interested in the field. There is enough research to agree that there are differences, and it is important for a variety of reasons to examine those differences. However, everyone should keep in mind that culture is not a simple definition. It is not frozen in time and therefore should not be reduced or generalized for the sake of simplicity.

The Institutionalization of Anti-Asian Thought

[Nick Katsikas]

Anti-Asian violence in the Covid-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the lives of millions of people around the world and will leave behind varying legacies. In the United States, the legacy COVID-19 will leave on the Asian American community is centered around the vocal xenophobia and racism they experienced from their fellow citizens. It was an instance of Asian Americans being socially excluded from American society and used as the scapegoat for one of the most significant pandemics in history. Central to the rise in anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic is President Trump, who deflected blame on his administration's response to the pandemic used racially charged terms such as "Chinese Flu" and "Chinese virus," which urged "Americans to view the high number of infections, mortality rates, job losses, school closures, heightened anxieties, and other tragedies of the pandemic through a racial lens."[1] Such framing had disastrous consequences on the Asian American community, as Trump's "Chinese virus" tweets correlated to an upsurge in violence against Asian Americans. In the first year of the pandemic alone, 3,800 anti-Asian incidents were reported across all fifty states and the District of Columbia, and a reported two million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders had experienced a hate incident since the COVID-19 pandemic began.[2] However, this was not the first time people from Asia or of Asian descent faced such violence and ostracism in the United States.

Research Question: Between 1875 and 1917, three pieces of immigration legislation were introduced and heavily restricted the ability of those from Asia to immigrate to the United States. The first act was the Page Law, designed to stop

1 Lee Erika. *The Making of Asian America: A History*. (Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2021), page 402.

2 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 402.

Chinese laborers and sex workers from entering the country. The next and even more significant piece of legislation is the Chinese Exclusion Act which "prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers for a period of ten years and barred all Chinese immigrants from naturalized citizenship."[3] The next piece of legislation was the immigration act of 1917, which banned Asian immigration into the U.S. in its entirety. The question I will be pursuing is why the U.S. government clamped down so vigorously on Asian immigration and how that clampdown evolved over forty years of an anti-Asian immigration policy. I will examine this question through historical institutionalism, arguing that the legislation created by the American government reflected racist and xenophobic ideas toward Asian immigrants. Such actions by the United States government caused Asian immigrants and Asian Americans to perpetually be seen as not full residents or citizens of the United States.

The Ideological Struggle in the Exclusion Debate

To understand the institutional racism that Asian Americans faced, there needs to be an understanding of the era in which legislation was implemented and the core political conflict it revolved around. What transpired in this period was the exclusion debate which pitted exclusionists, those who supported an exclusive vision of the United States rooted in white supremacy, against egalitarians, those who supported an inclusive view of the United States. As defined by historian Lon Kurashige, the Egalitarians supported the core claim of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal."[4] Importantly, however, those who identified as egalitarians were not fully righteous or idealistic individuals but "historical actors driven by interests that often perpetuated the racial status quo as well as the domestic and global capitalist order."[5] Importantly though, the existence of these egalitarians demonstrates how the debate over exclusion was incredibly nuanced and that it was not preordained that the exclusionists would win the debate. Over time, however, the exclusionists became two powerful, leading to the egalitarians becoming a minority with little power in determining the course of immigration policy till after World War II. Analyzing the period in which this debate took place reveals how this debate was a battle for the very identity of the United States.

Historical Institutionalist View of U.S. Immigration Policy

Historical Institutionalism is a methodology in political science that addresses big questions and analyzes change over time while paying close attention to the

3 Lee, Erika. "The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 3 (2002): page 36. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27502847.

4 Kurashige, Lon, *Two Faces of Exclusion: The Untold Story of Anti-Asian Racism in the United States* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2016; online edn, North Carolina Scholarship Online, 18 May 2017), page 4. https://doi.org/10.5149/northcarolina/9781469629438.001.0001.

5 Kurashige, page 5.

historical context in which events occur.[6] This approach provides a better understanding of national and public policy and politics. Specifically, I will use historical institutionalist approaches proposed by Desmond King and Paul Frymer. King focuses on how one of the most significant discoveries historical institutionalists have made regarding American politics is how race and racial inequality shape policy and policy outcomes.[7] The American state carries out all the actions that a nation is supposed to do with maintaining public order and creating policy, but race and the politics of race are always critical to the government's calculations. Frymer focuses on racial conflict and how said racial conflict plays out is a crucial aspect in the development of the American state. This racial conflict has played out within government institutions and has been fundamental in America's state formation.[8] All of the sources gathered in this paper have discovered how race is a key aspect in forming each piece of legislation and characterized the national debate over exclusion. They also demonstrate how starting with the passage of the Page Law, the United States was put on the path of creating ever more restrictive immigration laws that cast a net on an ever-growing number of people until America shut its gates entirely.

Kerry Abrams notes that to get the Page Law passed in Congress, the law targeted a group of marginalized people the Chinese government did not find essential and used racist rhetoric to argue that Chinese women were a threat to American values. In her analysis of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Erika Lee argues that the law introduced gatekeeping in American immigration policy. More specifically, she argues that it changed how the U.S. thought of itself as a nation of immigrants, for it legalized and reinforced the idea that "undesirable" immigrants should be excluded from coming to America. Even when Lee focuses on the broader Asian American experience as she does in the Making of Asia America, a massively important theme in her book is how Asian Americans have been discriminated against across American history, even in the present. Lon Kurashige and Wenxian Zhang both analyze the debate over exclusion in America and the shaping of its changing attitude toward Asian immigrants. Many of the arguments in the exclusion debates were racially charged, but those arguments were not met with silence. Advocates for Asian immigrants emerged, and while they did not succeed, they showed how debates over race played out. The Literature gathered has been published over two decades and shows how scholars have found race to be a critical part of the Asian experience in America and in the process of creating legislation that directly targeted Asian immigrants. It also demonstrates the legacy such legislation had on the psyche of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. Even as the American

6 Pierson, Paul, and Theda Skocpol. "Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary *Political Science.*" *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* 3, no 1 (2002). Page 4.

7 King, Desmond, 'The American State and the Enduring Politics of Race,' in Orfeo Fioretos, Tulia G. Falleti, and Adam Sheingate (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*. Page 293.

8 Frymer, Paul, 'Citizenship and Race,' in Orfeo Fioretos, Tulia G. Falleti, and Adam Sheingate (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*. Page 357.

government later attempted to correct the legislation of the past by liberalizing immigration laws and removing negative associations towards the Asian population in the United States. Efforts by the U.S. government in the latter half of the twentieth century have not addressed the institutionalized racism it created and have allowed said racism to persist in the present day.

The Emergence of the Exclusionists and the Page Law

Chinese immigration into the United States began significantly with the discovery of gold in California. In 1851 2,716 Chinese migrants came to California; in 1852, over 20,000 more migrants crossed the Pacific hoping to make their fortune. Very few of these migrants discovered gold in California, but America provided much greater economic opportunities than existed on the mainland, which led to thousands of Chinese immigrating to the United States. By 1870 63,000 Chinese migrants had settled in the United States, the vast majority residing in California.[9] Increased immigration from China did not go unnoticed, and conflicts quickly emerged. During the California Gold Rush, the California state legislature attempted to exclude all Chinese migrants from working in the mines to protect the white miners and laborers in the state. What stopped the Californian legislature from going through with this plan was the revenue Chinses laborers provided to the state through the foreign miners' tax.[10] In the beginning, the federal government of the United States was not hostile to the idea of immigration from China. In 1868 the United States and China signed the Burlingame Treaty, which in it included a provision that recognized the "inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance, and also the mutual advantage of the free migration and emigration of their citizens and subjects, respectively, from the one country to the other, for purposes of curiosity, of trade, or as [a] permanent resident."[11] Americans on the West Coast, however, did not see the influx of Chinese laborers to be voluntary migrants but instead part of a system of slavery known as "coolie labor." This labor took the form of indentured servitude through long-term contracts.[12] This practice did take place, but that was not how the majority of immigrants from China came to the U.S., but politicians primarily in California created the myth that they were to give justification to increasingly anti-Chinese policies in the state.

Though exclusionists wanted to ban all Chinese immigrants from entering China, such efforts were not fruitful primarily because of the egalitarian coalition within the Republican Party, which believed that immigrants from Asia would strengthen the nations' connections in Asia and develop the industry of the west coast.[13] The exclusionist then turned their attention to limiting the number of female immigrants coming into China, especially Chinese prostitutes. Chinese prostitutes

9 Lee, The Making of Asian America, page 59.

10 Kurashige, page 22.

11 Abrams, Kerry. "Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law." *Columbia Law Review* 105, no. 3 (2005). Page 650. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4099447.

12 Abrams, page 651.

13 Kurashige, page 14.

came to the United States either because their families sold their daughters to representatives who claimed to want them as brides or indentured servants only to be put to work as prostitutes. Others came voluntarily to better their situation financially.[14] Many Chinese women did work as Prostitutes, but an equally large number "came not as prostitutes but as laborers and wives."[15] These women were equally frowned upon due to "profound differences between Chinese attitudes toward sexuality and family structure and the more rigid American system." Exclusionists used these cultural differences to argue that Chinese women were all slaves trapped in marriage without their consent, a powerful argument in an America still grappling with the legacy of the Civil War. They also argued that Chinese women were much more likely to stay as permanent residents in the U.S. than men, and due to the 14 Amendment, any child born would become a citizen. Exclusionists saw this as a direct challenge to maintaining white supremacy in the country if the immigration of Chinese women was not curbed.

The Page Law harnessed these anxieties as the anti-Chinese movement grew in its veracity. The California state legislature, on multiple occasions, tried to implement legislation that would deprive or restrict any immigrant who was a coolie or prostitute from entering the state. These attempts were all struck down in federal court because they went against federal law. While this occurred, the egalitarianism that existed in the Republican Party after the Civil War began to fracture. Once isolated to the West Coast, the exclusionist coalition began to spread to the rest of the Republican Party after the Democratic Party's gains in the 1874 midterms. Congressman Horace Page from California was one of those exclusionist Republicans who gained greater influence in the 1870s. Page echoed many of the arguments used in the California legislature, stating that the Civil War had shown the government's commitment to eradicating slavery. Yet Congress was allowing the existence of "an equally and, if possible, a more insidious danger" in the form of coolie's and prostitutes (Abrams 693).[16] For Page, the legislation he proposed was not an effort to strip the Chinese migrants of their rights but to protect the virtues of white Americans from criminals he felt were incapable of understanding the values of equality, purity, and free labor. Page's carefully crafted argument allowed the Page Law to pass Congress, making it illegal for anyone deemed a coolie laborer or prostitute to enter the country. It also required women from China to present a certificate stating they were not coming for immoral purposes.

If the goal of the Page Act was to discourage the growth of the Chinese population in the United States, then the legislation was not a success. Between 1870 and 1880, the number of people who identified as Chinese grew from 63,199 to 105,405.[17] That was not the primary goal of the Page Law, however. Its primary

14 Abrams, page 655.
15 Abrams, page 656.
16 Abrams, page 693.
17 Bureau, US Census. "1880 Census: Volume 1. Statistics of the Population of the United States." Census.gov, December 16, 2021. Page 3. www.census.gov/library/publication/1883/dec/vol-01-population.html.

purpose was to limit the number of female immigrants from China, and in that goal, it succeeded. In the implantation of the Page Law, the State Department, which controlled the distribution of certificates, did not have a particular standard in determining if a woman was a prostitute. If the woman claimed that she was not a prostitute but noted that she was single, she would be denied a certificate shutting down efforts to go to the United States. Women were also interrogated on three separate occasions on why they wanted to come to the United States, and these interrogations were often humiliating affairs meant to further discourage immigration to the United States. Even if a woman passed the line of questioning, port officials still could turn away any women they deemed immoral. Due to these restrictions, between 1876 and 1882, only 136 women were able to enter the United States.[18]

The Chinese Exclusion Act and the "Yellow Peril"

The Page Law represented a massive victory for the exclusionist who wanted to keep America a nation dominated by white supremacy. The exclusionist movement was legitimized as a political force, and the federal government obtained unquestioned authority in dealing with immigration policy. The Page Law did not settle the debate over exclusion it merely nationalized the issue. H. N. Clement perfectly captured the long-term ambition of exclusionists when he argued that America had the right to say to Asian immigrants, "You shall not come at all."[19] Exclusionists like Clement characterized those from China as a horde that would threaten the nation's security, but these arguments were rooted in the belief that non-white people were inferior and did not deserve citizenship rights or be allowed to enter the country altogether. Framed in a modern context, these exclusionists were gatekeepers who racialized Chinese immigrants at every opportunity speaking of the need to contain the threat immigrants posed and, by virtue, protect the American way of life.[20] Although weakened after the Page Law, Egalitarians represented a strong enough constituency that could sabotage the exclusionist's efforts. They maintained their argument for the need of the U.S. to honor its obligations of the Burlingame Treaty and the contributions Chinese laborers had made to the U.S. economy. Egalitarians firmly felt that Chinese immigrants did not threaten American culture but would only enhance it. The exclusion debate was now becoming a key turning point in the path the nation would go down, and it was not clear at the moment who would come out victorious. It was in this political atmosphere that the Chinese Exclusion Act would be debated.

The prelude to the Chinese Exclusion Act was the 1881 Angell Treaty. The treaty was a renegotiated version of the Burlingame Treaty, which gave concessions to the exclusionists and egalitarians. The treaty gave the U.S. the ability to regulate Chinese labor migration, but it could not prohibit said migration. Another key

18 Abrams, pages 699-701.
19 Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example." Page 39.
20 Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example." Page 38.

victory for the egalitarians was that teachers, students, merchants, and household servants could not be stopped from immigrating to the United States.[21] The ability to regulate Chinese labor was something the exclusionist long desired, and a coalition formed on geographical lines to push through Congress a law restricting Chinese laborers from entering the coalition. In Congress, the Exclusionists were made of those from the West Coast and the reinstated southern states, while Egalitarians were primarily from the Northeast. What allowed the exclusionist to get the Chinese Exclusion Act passed in Congress was the break between Republicans in the Midwest and those in the Northeast. The break occurred because of a convergence of wanting to protect white laborers, resurgent nativism, and trying to curb the power of industrialists in the Northeast.[22] The defeat the egalitarians suffered at the hands of the exclusionists displayed how, politically, the exclusionist ideology had no longer become taboo within American politics. The exclusionist platform had become politically expedient within the Democratic and Republican parties. The only solace that the egalitarians were able to achieve from this defeat was that the act was only temporary, lasting for ten years. Every time the act went up for renewal, however, Congress renewed it and made the law permanent in 1904.[23]

The passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act served to embolden exclusionists. Three years after the law was passed, a mob of 500 men fell upon Chinese neighborhoods in Tacoma, Washington, forcing between 800 and 900 residents to leave the city. Some residents caught the fastest train to take them away from Tacoma others walked 100 miles to Portland, Oregon, or British Columbia for refugee.[24] Incidents like that occurred in Tacoma, and the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act did not go unnoticed. Mark Twain remarked how in America, the life and liberty of Chinese migrants were not worth a penny to white men when they needed a scapegoat.[25] Poet Joaquin Miller said that what the exclusionists were aiming to achieve was a great betrayal to the immigrants who came to the United States: "they trusted your word, have built your railroads, and washed your dirty linen, and now you propose to kick them out. It is pitiful to see great minds prostituted to such selfish aims."[26] The biting rhetoric of Twain and Miller fell on deaf ears as the exclusionists marched on in their pursuit to deter all Asian migrants from coming to America. Not satisfied with excluding Chinese migrants, their attention turned to the next largest Asian immigrant group in the United States: Japanese immigrants.

Japanese immigrants represented a distinctly different threat than Chinese immigrants, which reflected the contrast in the standing of their native countries. If the Chinese state under the Qing was a declining power, then Japan was a bur-

21 Kurashige, page 45.
22 Kurashige, page 60.
23 Lee, The Making of Asian America, page 94.
24 Lee, The Making of Asian America, page 94.
25 Zhang, Wenxian. "Standing Up Against Racial Discrimination: Progressive Americans and the Chinese Exclusion Act in the Late Nineteenth Century." *Phylon (1960-) 56*, no. 1 (2019). Pages 17-18). https://www.jstor.org/stable/26743829.
26 Zhang, page 19.

geoning new power with lofty imperial ambitions. Japan's victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War confirmed to the rest of the world, which was now the dominant Asian power. Japanese victory also raised anxieties among European leaders about an invasion from Asia that would see the destruction of the world's great powers. The anxiety leaders in Europe and later America felt about a potential invasion from Asia was termed The Yellow Peril due to a painting commissioned by Kaiser Wilhelm II.[27] The idea of The Yellow Peril found an eager audience in the exclusionists and gained greater momentum after the Russo-Japanese War, in which Japan decisively defeated the Russian military and ended the idea of European invincibility.

To the exclusionists, Japan and the rest of Asia represented a national security threat to the United States, and immigrants from Asia, especially Japanese immigrants, began to be seen in the same light. Japanese migrants also were becoming the dominant Asian group in the United States. At the turn of the twentieth century, 86,000 people identified as Japanese and resided in the United States. This was an exponential increase from 1890, when only 14,000 Japanese people resided in the United States. Comparatively, the number of individuals who identified as Chinese fell from 126,000 in 1890 to 119,000 in 1900.[28] Such trends signaled that Japanese migrants would overcome Chinese migrants as the largest Asian immigrant group in the United States unless changes were made in restricting Japanese immigrants into the country. Cries thus became much louder from the Exclusionists to ban Japanese migrants from entering the United States, particularly Japanese laborers. President Theodore Roosevelt was able to temper exclusionist demands by making a Gentlemen's Agreement with the Japanese government. The agreement was that current Japanese laborers would be allowed to stay in the country, but no new laborers would be able to enter the U.S. in the future.[29] For exclusionists, this was only a stop-gap measure and did not stop them from wanting to achieve their long-term ambitions. Those ambitions were characterized best by the Japanese Korean Exclusion League, whose slogan was "Absolute Exclusion of Asiatics."[30] All the exclusionists needed to execute their plan to stop anyone coming into the country. America's entry into World War I provided them with such an opportunity.

The Immigration Act of 1917

America's entry into World War I was met with extreme nationalism and fear of immigrants or citizens who professed sympathies toward the Central Powers. Those of German descent were particularly distrusted and "faced strong pressures to prove their loyalty to America and disavow allegiance to a homeland whose military was killing neutral American citizens in the Atlantic Ocean and threatening to ally

27 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 123.

28 Bureau, US Census. "1900 Census: Volume I. Population, Part I." Census.gov, October 8, 2021. Page 7. https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1901/dec/vol-01-population.html.

29 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 129.

30 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 125.

with Mexico against the United States."[31] The hysteria reached such a point that the Justice Department arrested 4,000 German immigrants on charges of being spies or saboteurs.[32] Prejudice was disguised by notions of national security and the need to protect the nation's borders. Such an atmosphere gave the national government legitimacy in forbidding anyone to enter the country if they were deemed unsafe. The exclusionists similarly used such tactics to introduce legislation that would effectively stop immigration from Asia to the United States. Rumblings of such legislation in Congress began in 1916 with exclusionists wanting to stop further Japanese immigration and immigration from South Asia, primarily from India.

Of Asian immigrants who came to the United States, those from India were a small piece of a larger whole. In 1910 only 2,545 Indian immigrants resided in the United States and were dwarfed by the tens of thousands and Japanese and Chinese immigrants.[33] Exclusionists viewed them similarly to Chinese immigrants in the 1870s and 1880s. They were a form of cheap labor that would provide unwanted competition to the white laborers.[34] A distinct difference from Chinese immigrants was that exclusionist's considered Indian immigrants radical revolutionaries who would sew disorder in the country. That was because several Indian immigrants who came to America were also nationalists involved in the anti-colonial struggle to free India from British rule.[35] One such group of nationalists was the Ghadar Party which advocated for revolution in India, even one involving violence if necessary, to free India from colonial rule. They also wanted to unite others from South Asia in a shared struggle against colonialism.[36] Such rhetoric frightened exclusionists, who felt that these South Asian immigrants would turn their anger toward the British toward them. This led to exclusionists viewing immigrants from South Asia as a security threat. The introduction of such an argument when WWI had reached its peak was incredibly persuasive within Congress, even among the egalitarians who had increasingly been caught up in the Yellow Peril hysteria. President Woodrow Wilson, however, did not want to sign legislation that openly excluded all people of Asia from entering the country. Wilson feared antagonizing the Japanese government so soon after the Gentleman's Agreement had been negotiated and wanted Japan to be a strategic partner of the United States in maintaining China's stability. Thus, a compromise was brokered between exclusionists and the Wilson administration by creating a barred zone that excluded laborers from the majority of Asia from entering the United States. Non-laborers would undergo intense scrutiny before being allowed entry as well.[37]

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31 Kurashige, page 105.

32 Kurashige, page 105.

33 Bureau, US Census. "1930 Census: Volume 2. Population, General Report, Statistics by Subjects." Census.gov, October 8, 2021. Page 10. https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1933/dec/1930a-vol-02-population.html.

34 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 165.

35 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 151.

36 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 162.

37 Kurashige, pages 106-109.

The effects of the 1917 Immigration Act were immediate. Racism towards Asian immigrants increased dramatically after the act the passage, and it effectively destroyed the egalitarian coalition giving way to the exclusionists having complete freedom in dictating immigration policy. Disillusionment which had already begun to creep in completely took over. The American dream for many immigrants became a nightmare for those inside the country who faced constant discrimination and something unobtainable to those outside the country as the Page Law, Chinese Exclusion Act, and the Immigration Act of 1917 formed a great triumvirate of anti-Asian exclusion legislation. America had become the great gatekeeping nation of the world and, through its legislation, built a powerful machine that could admit, examine, deny, deport, and naturalize immigrants as it saw fit. For Asian immigrants during the exclusion period, the great symbol of this gatekeeping was Angel Island, the chief port Asian immigrants went to for entry into the country.

At Angel Island, Asian Immigrants were treated as criminals. Chinese migrants, for instance, were forced to undergo medical examinations where doctors looked for physical defects and "Oriental diseases," which the doctors could use as grounds for not allowing entry. This process, according to Lee Puey You, was deeply "embarrassing and shameful."[38] Officials at Angel Island also conducted intense interrogations with questions that were impossible to answer, such as: how many steps lead up to your house? Merchants who were theoretically free of exclusion laws still faced intense scrutiny and needed to provide witnesses testimony to confirm their business before being allowed entry. Any discrepancies in the testimony or answers to questions would lead to immigration officials denying access to those seeking entry into the country. An average applicant at Angel Island was often asked 200 questions over two or three days. The intense nature of Angel Island led to many from Asia being refused entry or detained on the island for an extended period. Kong Din Quong served the longest detention on Angel Island, 756 days. After twenty-five months in detention, he was deported back to China.[39]

Exclusionist America

Angel Island represented what America had become to Asian Immigrants beginning with the Page Law and continuing through the decades that followed as exclusionists worked tirelessly to stop immigrants from Asia from entering the United States. This was because the exclusionists viewed Asian immigrants and Asian Americans as inferior to white Americans and Europeans or saw them as a pressing national security threat to the United States. These attitudes were encoded into the legislation they created, whether explicitly or implicitly. The legislation reinforced the idea that Asian Americans and Asian immigrants were distinctly un-American and not deserving to partake in the American experience. It also made them be viewed through an extremely racialized lens that, to this day, they have not been able to escape from, even as the federal government attempted to correct

38 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 96.
39 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 97-98.

the course of its immigration policy. In 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act, which significantly liberalized America's immigration laws giving nations outside the Western Hemisphere fewer restrictions in sending immigrants to America.[40] This law helped lead to an explosion in the Asian population in the United States. From 1960 to 2019, the Asian population grew from 980,000 to 22.4 million; by 2060, it is estimated to number 46 million people.[41] The exponential rise of the Asian population did not stop many Americans from seeing them as the "unassimilable foreigner" part of an immigrant invasion.[42]

The 1982 killing of Vincent Chen showed how the effects of exclusionist legislation were still prevalent in American society. In the 1980s, Japan experienced an incredible economic boom fueled by exporting fuel-efficient cars to the United States. Japan's burgeoning auto industry contrasted with its American counterpart, where Ford and General Motors were forced to lay off many employees. Chen was a Chinese American auto engineer in Detroit at the time for his bachelor party when Ronald Ebens, an automobile plant foreman, called Chen a "Jap" and blamed Chen for the state of the American auto industry. Things continued to escalate when Ebens and his stepson Michael Nitz chased Chen out of a Detroit bar and beat him with a baseball bat. Ebens and Nitz were given only three months' probation and forced to pay a $3,800 fine for the incident that took Chen's life.[43] Chen's death represented a dark irony in the 1980s when the media pushed the narrative that Asian Americans had become the model minority that had perfectly assimilated into the United States. Chen's death demonstrated that the success of the Asian population did not equate to the view that they were equals. They still served as a powerful scapegoat for America's economic woes or as a security threat. These views have become deeply institutionalized in the United States because of legislation passed well over a century ago. The hate incidents that occurred in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic are not a surprise nor a new phenomenon. They represent a legacy within the United States of seeing Asian immigrants or those of Asian descent as threatening outsiders and how the United States government has not grappled with the full impact of its past transgressions. Anti-Asian racism continues to be an enduring problem within the United States, a problem that needs to be solved with increasing urgency if there is to be any hope of undoing the systematic racism that has plagued America for generations.

40 Kurashige, page 208.

41 Budiman, Abby, and Neil G. Ruiz. "Key Facts about Asian Americans, a Diverse and Growing Population." *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, February 16, 2022. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/29/key-facts-about-asian-americans/.

42 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 350.

43 Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, page 381-382.

The Perception of Africa as a Monolith in Western Film

Reflections on the African-American Psyche

[Tiyandza Mngomezulu]

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie describes the danger of a single story in her TED Talk, and expresses that if all she knew about Africa were from popular images, she, too, would think Africa was a place of scenic beauty filled with inarticulate people in need of saving from infectious disease and senseless wars. For decades, we have seen images of Africa that depict a swarm of primitive people living like animals on a perpetual safari. Compared to the initial portrayal of Africa as the dark continent, there has been a more progressive representation of the continent in Western media, specifically in film. However, there is still a retrograde attitude toward Africa in its portrayal as a monolith in films. African American filmmakers often create films that derive their physical setting from Africa, indicating how this retrograde attitude consumes them and influences the narratives they project in these films and hence, the knowledge they disseminate through them. While narratives have evolved from using the continent as a monolithic landscape for white savior stories or scenes of turmoil, I argue that even the progressive depiction of Africa in Western film is still a monolith and that this reflects the African-American psyche regarding the continent. In this essay, I will discuss how the representation of Africa as a monolith in film and the broader African American community's affinity with that imagery reflects their presumptive familiarity with the continent. I will expand on African Americans' view of the continent as an antithesis to the oppressive society in America and will discuss their belief in blackness as an overarching identity. I will discuss how this is because of their need for a black people paradigm, manifested in Blacktopias or allegorical fantasies such as Zamunda and Wakanda.

Firstly, to briefly define key terms employed in the main arguments, a monolith is a group of people who are all the same. For example, Africans are often thought of as being the same, and the continent as a whole is perceived to be one single

entity. Presumptive familiarity is the affinity with an idea based on one's limited engagement. For instance, African Americans are likely to have their own, more complex set of preconceptions about Africa, inferred more from Hollywood films than personal experience.[1]An antithesis is a contrasting or opposing idea. A "black people paradigm" is an archetype or ideal society presented in the concept of a Blacktopia. Subsequently, a Blacktopia is defined as a society outside of the terror of racial oppression where the African identity is welcomed and celebrated. Finally, the African American psyche refers to the beliefs or perceptions upheld by the African American community and signifies how large the gap between "African" and "American" is. [2]

Next, to fully conceptualize how the depiction of Africa as a monolith reflects the African American psyche, one must examine the site of these productions from which the main arguments will be based. *Coming to America* is a 1988 American romantic comedy film written by African American actor and producer Eddie Murphy, who also plays the lead character. In the movie, Akeem Joffer, the prince and heir to the throne of the fictitious African country Zamunda, is discontented with being pampered all his life. The final straw comes when his parents present him with a bride-to-be he has never met before, trained to obey his every command mindlessly. Akeem concocts a plan to travel to America to find a wife he can both love and respect and who accepts him for his personality, not his status. The second film explored in this paper is *Black Panther* which tells the story of T'Challa, the heir to the throne of Wakanda, a fictional African kingdom[3]. T'Challa returns to Wakanda after the passing of his father to assume the throne in his due place. T'Challa's resolve as king and as Black Panther is put to the test when he is lured into a struggle that threatens the future of Wakanda. The young king must gather his supporters and unleash Black Panther's full strength to fight his enemies and ensure the safety of his people when faced with deceit and peril. Together, these two artifacts will be the narratives used to provide evidence of the main contentions in this paper.

To move on to the first argument, Western film's presentation of Africa as a monolith demonstrates how Western stereotypes have influenced African Americans' presumptive familiarity with Africa. To relate this claim to a narrative, along with telling a comedic love story, the film *Coming to America* aimed to dispel preconceived notions about Africans by glamorizing Africa. However, it capitalized on stereotypes of the African continent. The film employed Westernized narratives to create the fictional African Kingdom, Zamunda, that Africans in the diaspora can identify. However, this was achieved through presenting imagery that would gain

1 Steve Rose, "Black Panther: Does the Marvel Epic Solve Hollywood's Africa Problem?," *The Guardian*, February 3, 2018.

2 Rose, "Black Panther".

3 Rose, "Black Panther".

the representational legitimacy of Western audiences.[4] The primitiveness depicted in *Coming to America* is far removed from the reality of modern-day Africa, but is similar to the Western perception of Africa as a wild and exotic wonderland.[5] This demonstrates the duality seen in the imagery as it aims to appeal to the African American community while appeasing Western audiences. African Americans reinforcing the concept of a unitary Africa reflects their Westernized conception of the continent. It has resulted in their presumptive familiarity with Africa and their affinity with the monolithic idea of Africa. However, this is not the true reflection of the continent and its nuances.

To further this discussion, African Americans' presumptive familiarity with the monolithic image of Africa in films reflects the part of their psyche that sees Africa as an antithesis of America. African Americans live in a society where they must conform and emphasize the degradation of the African identity.[6] Hence, Africans have believed that assimilating into American culture entails erasing all traces of Africa and that doing so necessitates accepting discriminatory principles.[7] Still, in their efforts to assimilate and conform, they continue to have a dual experience of being American but have a void of not feeling entirely accepted by American society because of their African identity.[8] Thus, Africa offers a place where African Americans can freely fill that void. This Afro-futuristic Africa was seen in the film *Black Panther*, which depicted an empowered African society as a cultural oasis. Wakanda was construed to stand in for the whole of Africa, as seen in the representation of various cultures, languages, and tribes from different regions of the continent, reinforcing the idea of Africa as a monolith. While this gave Black people the representation they needed and have not found in America, the issue lies in the fact that contrasting the US and Africa means placing them side by side as opposing but equal entities. This is problematic because America is a country, while Africa is a whole continent of 54 countries, each with its own cultural diversity and nuances.

In the same line, films set in Africa rarely portray authentic settings as the narratives are often based on allegorical fantasies such as Wakanda in *Black Panther* or the fictional kingdom of Zamunda in *Coming to America*. An allegory is a narrative that can be interpreted to represent meaning with moral significance. In the case of Zamunda, the glamour of the cultures in the kingdom represent the fascinating culture of the whole continent, lacking discrepancy between different cultural groups. Therefore, generalizing Zamunda's culture and riches to reflect the affluence and heritage of the entire continent perpetuates this monolithic image

4 Samuel K. Bonsu and Delphine Godefroit-Winkel, "Representing Africa in the 'Coming to America' Films," *Markets, Globalization & Development Review* 6, no. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.23860/mgdr-2021-06-01-04, 7.

5 Bonsu and Godefroit-Winkel, "Representing Africa," 3.

6 Adaobi C Iheduru, "Examining the Social Distance Between Africans and African Americans; The Role of Internalized Racism," *Theses and Dissertations* , 2012, 10.

7 Iheduru, "Internalized Racism," 10.

8 Iheduru, "Internalized Racism," 11.

of Africa. In the case of Wakanda, the technological advancements in the kingdom represent the success of African resource utilization and innovation independent of Western exploitation. Although this is a progressive portrayal, its depiction is still unitary, which is not reflective of the reality of the many impoverished African countries that experience neo-colonialism and hence do not have access to the imagery portrayed in the film. African American filmmakers make this depiction hoping to shift the narrative of a destitute Africa. However, it is still reflective of their monolithic perception of Africa.

To develop the aforementioned argument, the antithesis of Africa imagined by African Americans reflects their need for a black people paradigm in the form of a blacktopia. *Black Panther* continues a tradition of constructing blacktopias, societies that thrive beyond the reach of white supremacy.[9] One of the many effects of slavery on the African American people is that it destroyed a substantial part of their African culture.[10]. Hence, the aspiration for home or freedom was central to their folksongs, and Africa symbolized liberation from captivity and slavery.[11]Africa became a place where one could be black and proud and was perceived to be the land of the free.[12] The constructed narrative of an African country consisting of various cultures derived from different African regions (Xhosa language, Sotho Attire, Ugandan architecture, etc.) into a single blacktopia reflects a part of the African American psyche that views Africa as a homogeneous entity of vast culture, and harmony. This is not a negative perception of Africa, as the imagery reflects a developed Africa that represents collective ingenuity and beauty. However, it is still a monolithic representation that negatively influences the presentation of an authentic African to the world, as it has its distinctions.

Lastly, the representation of Africa as a monolith in the Western film reflects the part of the African American psyche that sees Blackness as an overarching identity. Beyonce's *Black Is King* is a film that aims to inspire pride in Blackness and among Black people worldwide. However, it is replete with stereotypes about the African monolith that persists in causing harm to the audience it is intended to inspire.[13] Keita Kadiatou argues that Beyonce's *Black Is King* film correlates Blackness to a Pan-African concept that lacks nuance in its portrayal. African Americans minimize the diverse African cultures to an aesthetic they can employ for rapport within the African American community, reinforcing the idea of Blackness as an all-encompassing culture.[14] The distinctions of the elements such as countries,

9 Gina M. Eckhardt, "Black Panther: Thrills, Postcolonial Discourse, and Blacktopia," *Markets, Globalization & Development Review* 03, no. 02 (2018), https://doi.org/10.23860/mgdr-2018-03-02-06, 6.

10 Imoh Abang Emenyi and Imo Okon, African in African American Psyche - *A Movement from Reality to Text*, Harvests From The Gown, vol. 2 (Lagos: FlyPapers Printing House, 2014), 416.

11 Emenyi and Okon,"African in African American Physique," 417.

12 Emenyi and Okon,"African in African American Physique," 416.

13 Kadiatou Keita, "The Black Monolith: A Critique of Beyonce's Black Is King," DOWN MAGAZINE, October 7, 2022, https://downatyale.com/the-black-monolith-a-critique-of-beyonces-black-is-king/.

14 Keita, "The Black Monolith."

cultures, and traditions that make up the African continent are minimized to aesthetic representations that merge and exploit African cultures. However positive the image of regal African culture shown in the film *Black Is King* is, it is still a monolith of stereotypes such as animal prints perpetuating a primal image and random face or body paint. These images have no cultural meaning other than an aesthetic that African American audiences can appeal to and from which White audiences can be appeased.

In closing, the progressive representation of Africa in Western film is still a monolith, reflective of the African-American psyche regarding the continent. Films in Africa are often set in blacktopias or allegorical fantasies that intend to represent the whole continent, such as those depicted in *Black Panther* and *Coming to America*, reinforcing the unitary perception. While African Americans have aimed to overturn narratives of the continent as a monolithic landscape of discovery or suffering, they have formed a superficial representation of African culture through these Blacktopias. This superficiality reflects African Americans' presumptive familiarity with Africa, their view of the continent as an antithesis to the conformist and oppressive society in America, and their belief in blackness as an overarching identity. Western films have made strides in their narratives based in an African setting. Now the issue here is nuance, as tying Blackness to a Pan-African idea by depicting Africa as a monolith is harmful to the very people it aims to uplift. Some of the implications of my argument is that the monolithic representation of Africa is reflective of the audience that filmmakers actually intend to inspire. The imagery depicted in films such as *Coming to America*, *Black Panther*, and *Black Is King* is made for entertaining the African American community to embrace elements of their African identity more than it is made to represent, let alone empower African audiences. African Americans seem to only engage with the affluent, regal elements of their African identity but not the mundane actuality of everyday life because it is not as entertaining to them. Hence, the African identity has to be constructed to depict prestige or regality to be celebrated and can not be accepted as just another facet of identity. The perceived issue is that this imagery serves an epistemic function in that it forms the basis for which audiences gain knowledge. Western audiences still suffer from ignorance regarding the continent and all too readily assume that fiction and fact coincide. Therefore, it is imperative that narratives based in an African setting fully encompass the distinctive and diverse nature of the continent but also illustrate the normality of the continent and its experiences.

[Cultural and Religious Forms]

Romanticization and Reaction

Jules Breton's *The Song of the Lark*

[Em Allen]

French painter and poet Jules Breton's *The Song of the Lark* is a strikingly serene painting, evoking total stillness. The strong vertical-horizontal axis and stability of line, as well as the muted color palette, ground the calm motionlessness of the image. The earth-toned color palette, the dim, diffuse lighting, and the atmospheric phenomenon of the red rising sun establish the dawn moment of the piece and contribute to a sense of ephemerality, given the transitory nature of such moments of dawn or dusk. These formal elements of line and color convey a sense of tranquility and stability, which contrasts with the thematic elements of dawn and harvest that evoke ideas of change and growth. This juxtaposition suggests the tension between stasis and progression, reflecting a sense of anxiety about the turbulent socioeconomic changes taking place in the artist's lifetime. The carefully constructed sense of quiet peacefulness within the image both conceals and responds to the tumultuous period of Euro-American history in which it was originally created and displayed. Further compounding this historical context, international audiences interpreted the painting through culturally-specific perceptions of agricultural labor and female sexuality. These dimensions of the painting are no longer evident to contemporary viewers.

In *The Song of the Lark*, Breton, like other conservative French landscape artists at the time, romanticizes the vanishing rural landscape and imagines an Edenic life away from urban areas, where traditional social values could be upheld.[1] The well-established visual language which informed Breton's artwork connected to conservative ideals of its audiences at the time of its creation. In France, Breton's work fed into a long history of rural genre paintings that affirmed essentialist class

1 Maureen Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds to Gaul, God, Land and Nature: The Myth of the Rural and Jules Breton's Le Chant de l'alouette," *RACAR Canadian Art Review* 19, no. 1-2 (1992): 79.

The Song of the Lark, Jules Breton,
French, oil on canvas, 1884, 43 ½" x 33 ¾".

hierarchies, and in America it fed into the new-world ideals of self-determination and individual merit. Over a century since its creation, *The Song of the Lark* has become less ideologically laden, now admired for its tranquil atmosphere and aesthetic beauty.

The painting depicts, nearly life-size on the canvas, a young woman standing barefoot in a freshly harvested field at dawn, the red sun rising at shoulder level on her left. The painting is done in a descriptive, naturalistic style with a slightly loose finish. The sun by the woman's shoulder could possibly be understood as setting instead of rising, but the woman is unladen and her clothes are clean, indicating that her work has not yet begun, so dawn is more plausible. The light across the scene is faint and diffuse, brightening above the horizon; the red sun casts little direct light but tinges the sky pink, then yellow, then blue-green at the edge. She is simply dressed, in a modest, off-white buttoned shirt, its sleeves rolled up past her elbows. Her brown underskirt ends at mid-calf, while her blue overskirt, tied at her waist, is bunched up around her hips. A red, patterned bandana holds back her hair. The woman's head is tilted back, eyes gazing out beyond the picture plane, her mouth slightly open and brows furrowed. She stands just right of center in the picture plane, on a narrow footpath running across the bottom right corner of the image, facing left. Behind her, a field of bare, tilled soil, dotted with budding plants, leads into a field of lush green growth and ends in a murky line of trees right at the horizon. A few small, rural houses populate the background to her left. In her right hand, the woman holds a sickle, suggesting the harvesting task she is about to undertake.

The physical sensations conjured by this scene are palpable, from the feel of the air to the way it could sound. The painting captures the dawn so vividly that the viewer is transported into the scene. Looking at *The Song of the Lark*, the viewer can imagine the feeling of the fresh, crisp morning air on their skin; but the air must not be very cold, given the woman's bare feet and exposed arms, neck, and head. As people and animals begin to stir, the hush of predawn is not yet broken, until the titular lark sings clearly into that silence. By promising an imminent eruption of birdsong, the title of the painting informs and expands the viewer's perception of the painting, thereby creating an implied auditory sensation and an explanation for the central figure's behavior: she stands still to appreciate the lark's song.

The time of day is fully conveyed by the muted colors of the painting, contrasted with the intensity of the red rising sun. The diffuse light of the setting results in an overall mid-tone value, characterized by a lack of deep shadows and bright highlights. This color choice also creates an overall unity in the piece through desaturated color. Color also establishes the dawn atmosphere by way of the sky, with its recognizable yellows and pinks and greens, as well as the saturated redness of the rising sun. The dawn is a time of liminality, fleetingness, and change, so the temporary nature of this moment can be read in this sense of the time of day.

The cluster of small, rough buildings and low skyline indicate a rural, agrarian setting. This is reinforced through the woman's simple clothing and the markers

of her role as a physical laborer: the sickle and the overskirt, gathered up to hold the fruits of her labor. The targeted use of vivid green against the sober browns and blues of dirt and tree also contributes to the setting's physical solidity, as the greenery of the field suggests the fecundity of farm life, as well as the beginning of the harvest. The remoteness of the scene is also apparent in the relationship between figures in space, particularly of the woman in relation to the setting. Dominating the foreground of the piece, the woman's larger proportions contrast with the minuteness of the field, houses, and trees arrayed behind her. She is far away from the background, separated by the large empty space of the field, reinforcing the remoteness of the setting and her own isolation. This sense of space also emanates from the disproportionate expanse of the sky, which takes up a third of the picture plane, to the rest of the painting.

The strong horizontal of the tree-line and the straight vertical line of the woman's form, echoed in the straight folds of her skirt, work together to create a sense of stability. This use of straight lines, especially in the woman's clothing, further emphasizes the stillness of the scene; no wind or movement sways her skirt. She stands slightly off-center, but this is balanced by the slight mass of the miniature buildings and the glowing ball of the sun off to her side. The sun, the brightest point of saturated color in the painting, is particularly useful in balancing out the dominant, darker figure of the woman. Together with the unity in palette mentioned above, this compositional balancing act of colors and values, as well as mass, contributes to the painting's sense of groundedness.

Beyond the tranquility and sense of incipient change evoked by the formal elements of the painting, its visual iconography carried its own meanings in the formal tradition of the time, reflecting the culture of its multinational audiences. Critical and public responses to *The Song of the Lark*, first in France and then in the United States, where it traveled to and remains to this day, focused on the idealized sanctuary of rural life and the icon of the peasant woman, but the cultural associations of this imagery were markedly different between the two countries.

Having made his name in rustic landscape painting, particularly peasant woman genre painting,[2] Jules Breton was intimately familiar with the visual iconography and meanings of the tradition of idealized landscape painting. Although he ran in Realist circles—a 1934 Art Institute of Chicago pamphlet describes his work as occupying "a middle ground between French Classic Painting and the poetic realism of Millet."[3] Breton was also a conservative painter and member of the conservative French Academy of Fine Arts, which opposed the avant-garde Realist movement.[4] Official French idealist art, in the words of art historian Stephen Eisenman, "upheld the superiority of the ruling notables, the value of simple

2 Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 40.

3 Art Institute of Chicago, *Have You Seen America's Best Loved Picture 'The Song of the Lark'?* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1934), 2.

4 Stephen Eisenman, *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2019), 271.

peasant virtues, and the need for proletarian subservience."[5] These are all values which *The Song of the Lark* embodied in the context of the French Salon, where it was first displayed in 1885.

In France, the painting's critical reception after its Salon debut, connected it to conservative reactions against the rapid progression of modernity. These reactions revolved around their conceptions of peasants and the landscape as embodiments of static, traditional ways of life. As *The Song of the Lark* illustrates, Breton's paintings framed the peasant lifestyle as timeless and untouched by modernity, aligning with the authority of tradition.[6] French critics identified peasants with the land and nature, reducing them to a primitive "other," unable to appreciate the aesthetic beauty of the landscape they inhabited. They believed this was due to the peasants' perceived close bond to the land, which made them part of it and obscured any capacity for intellectual reflection.[7] This otherization was racialized; there was a prevailing attribution of peasant heritage to the pagan Gauls or Celts, in contrast to the Frankish or Germanic heritage of the upper classes. This separated the peasantry into a racial "other," rightfully subservient after the triumph of the Frankish or Germanic tribes over their own pagan ancestors. Peasants were not just a class "other," they were a racial "other," set apart historically and culturally.[8]

The painting also intersects with late nineteenth-century debates over gender roles and female sexuality. Peasant women were perceived differently from urban women, their socio-economic status altering the terms of their womanhood. Their rurality meant they were "safely distanced from the sphere of problematic class identifications of the city." The sensuality of peasant women was seen as natural and pure compared to the "corruption" of urban working women, who were seen as prostitutes, and were therefore incomparable to higher-class urban women.[9] The woman in *The Song of the Lark* was accordingly sexualized—Nochlin describes Breton's work as "glamorizing and classicizing the erotic charms of the peasant girl"[10]—but in a subtle, earthy way. The identification of peasants with nature meant that peasant women were heavily associated with natural cycles and fecundity. This is echoed in the iconography of dawn and harvest in Breton's painting.[11]

Rural landscapes and the peasants who inhabited them became symbols of a vanishing world and its class hierarchy. Maureen Ryan argues that the cumulative effect of these ideas about the peasant class was "conservatizing," creating an essentialist hierarchy with which to differentiate country peasants from modern urban dwellers.[12] These stereotypes, and the painting which so readily embodied them, helped naturalize this depiction of life, presenting itself as an authoritative

5 Eisenman, *Nineteenth Century Art,* 336.
6 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 81.
7 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 84.
8 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 81-83.
9 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 85.
10 Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, 20.
11 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 90.
12 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 85.

view of the countryside.[13] Considering the turbulent social changes of the nineteenth century, this conservative painting was likely comforting for those disturbed by those changes—artistic recourse to asserting tradition and ideas of cyclic time often occurs in periods when change disrupts society.[14] Breton's own political leanings certainly aligned with the conservative connotations of his painting; he often registered conservative sympathies and believed that in the past an ordered world of class harmony had existed where the peasants were happily subservient. Pointedly, Ryan claims, "Breton's rural idyll thus upheld the authority of tradition and the past on a number of levels."[15]

The French's reception of *The Song of the Lark* was limited to its Salon display, after which it made its way to the United States, where it was seen in a different ideological context, that of new-world self-determination and American exceptionalism. Breton's work was well-loved in American markets, and when *The Song of the Lark* went to the Salon, it was purchased by a dealer and sold to Chicago businessman Henry Fields, where it remained in his collection until his death. When Fields's wife donated his collection to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1894, where it remains to this day, giving it a permanent home among the descendants of European immigrant farmers, who had carved their frontier homesteads out of very similar landscapes.[16]

For the first few decades of its tenure at the Art Institute, *The Song of the Lark* was incredibly popular, drawing crowds of devoted admirers. It became a pillar of the American populist canon, readily recognizable to the masses.[17] In 1934, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt unveiled the painting at a ceremony awarding the title of "Best Loved Picture," hosted by the Art Institute of Chicago and using the results of a national poll run by the Chicago Daily News.[18] A brochure printed by the Art Institute for this event claims that "more reproductions of this picture have been made than any other painting in America," and that audiences repeatedly requested that the museum display the painting whenever it was in storage. The brochure explained that *The Song of the Lark* was so popular "because this peasant girl, walking proudly erect, with a figure made muscular and strong by heavy toil, lifts herself out of her sordid surrounding when she joins her song with the melody of the lark."[19] For its American audience, this idea of a woman rising above her circumstances transcribed itself onto the new-world ideal of individual merit and opportunity.

13 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 81.
14 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 90.
15 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 91.
16 Paul Jones, "Listening to the Song of the Lark." Art Institute of Chicago, accessed October 12, 2022, https://www.artic.edu/articles/980/listening-to-the-song-of-the-lark.
17 Stephen Eskilson, "Contesting the Canon(s): The Song of the Lark and the Art Institute of Chicago," *Journal of the History of Collections* 15, no. 2 (2003): 258.
18 "The Song of the Lark," Art Institute of Chicago, accessed October 12, 2022, https://www.artic.edu/artworks/94841/the-song-of-the-lark.
19 Art Institute of Chicago, *Have You Seen America's Best Loved Picture*, 2.

The sexual connotations of the peasant woman present in the French reception of the painting disappeared entirely in the American context, while its appeal to traditional rural values was exchanged for new-world individualism and the hope for a better life. The "Best Loved Picture" brochure describes the subject as "a stalwart peasant girl who possesses, in the jargon of today, no sex appeal."[20] Where Breton and the French conservatives used the visual language of rural genre painting to elevate a traditional class hierarchy of shared values over individual rights, American audiences saw the allusions of dawn and harvest to renewal and awakening spoke to the idea of a "classless" society of the new world, where individual merit was the sole marker of success and worth. The girl's association with nature and reverent manner identified her with hope, liberating and removing her from peasantry, where in France she and the peasant class were associated to the land and with the preservation of tradition.[21]

While the American audience differed from the French in these significant ways, the two shared a dismissive view of peasants as unintelligent. The painting's widespread popularity rather paradoxically underscored this, since populist culture was regarded by American elites as uncultured, because popular taste was usually influenced by media rather than (largely inaccessible) art historical education. Two novels used it as key elements within their narratives to communicate a dismissal of laborers' capacity for intelligence. Willa Cather's novel *The Song of the Lark* (1915) features a naïve peasant girl who has a revelatory experience seeing the titular painting and identifies strongly with the subject, whom the narrator speaks of disdainfully.[22] Look Homeward, Angel, a 1929 novel by Tom Wolfe, follows a schoolboy whose essay response to the painting, by echoing French critics' ideas about peasants being unable to appreciate aesthetic beauty, leveraged his ascent into the Ivy Leagues and the social elite.[23]

Due to its prominence in popular culture, the painting was not well-liked by everyone, as some thought its popularity would render the masses insensate to quality art. The director of the Art Institute of Chicago, Robert Harshe, was vocally against its display, often moving it to cellar storage until public outcry forced him to return it.[24] Harshe's commitment to resisting popular taste and removals of the painting from the galleries did not stick. Though its popularity waned throughout the twentieth century and it no longer draws crowds of devoted viewers,[25] in 2022, *The Song of the Lark* still hangs in the museum's permanent nineteenth-century exhibition, though now hung in a side gallery. Although it is not nearly as popular or well-visited as it was in the early twentieth century, *The Song of the Lark* is still given a place of relative prominence in public view.

20 Art Institute of Chicago, *Have You Seen America's Best Loved Picture*, 2.

21 Ryan, "The Peasant's Bonds," 90-92.

22 Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915).

23 Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward, Angel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929); Eskilson, "Contesting the Canon(s): *The Song of the Lark* and the Art Institute of Chicago," 259-260.

24 Eskilson, "Contesting the Canon(s)," 261-264.

25 Eskilson, "Contesting the Canon(s)," 261-265.

In a culture so removed from the ideas around peasantry of one hundred years ago, the ideological context of *The Song of the Lark* is far less prominent. It is easier to read the peasant girl as a symbol of past labor revolutions and the working class rather than a reaffirmation of class hierarchy; the sickle in the woman's hand reinforces this reading, harkening simultaneously to agrarian life and, as a potent symbol of labor, the progress and turmoil of nineteenth century labor movements. As a culture changes, the meanings associated with visual forms do as well. Nowadays, admirers of the painting credit its aesthetic appearance and atmosphere as its main appeal. The museum space compounds the effect of the tranquility—the hushed atmosphere within echoing the quiet of the dawn and the stillness of the scene. Paul Jones argued that "Breton had no inkling of how the silence needed to fully appreciate the song would also disappear with the advent of the gas-powered engine."[26] This is true, but the ritualization of museum visitation and its distance from the bustling city outside, as well as the reduced noise pollution of modern cars, have rendered this concern null.

The Song of the Lark uses a well-established visual language of diffuse light, muted color, stable lines, and compositional balance to communicate its rural scene as one of meditative tranquility, stasis, remoteness, and brevity, with hints of incipient change foreshadowed by the visual elements of harvest and dawn—both times of change and liminality. The interpretations of the painting by both its initial, limited French critical audience and its astounding American mass audience stemmed from this visual language and the connotated stereotypes embedded in the cultures of reception. For the French, the painting was a comforting harbor of rural tradition and a reaffirmation of their hierarchized world, where peasants were simple, symbolic staples, and for the Americans, it was an embodiment of self-determination and pulling oneself out of abject conditions. Together, the soothing visuals and reaffirming messages of *The Song of the Lark* contributed to its immense popularity in the decades following its creation, as well as its easy adaptation to conservative values and the comforting idea of stasis, for any audience, aesthetically and socially. The painting provides a potent case study for the malleability of art for various ideological purposes, both in the artist's use of established visual tradition and through the interpretive responses of its contemporaneous and future audiences.

26 Jones, "Listening to the Song of the Lark."

Martin Luther

The Necessity of Priesthood

[Davis Rowe]

In To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, Martin Luther criticizes the Roman clergy's monopoly over spiritual authority by saying, "All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office."[1] This claim insinuates that all Christians, whether pope, priest, or laity, have authority over spiritual matters. The obvious question then arises: if there is no difference between a layman and a priest, is there no need for priests? It is not just in this passage that Luther makes a claim that may seem to lead to that conclusion, but in the end, Luther never claims that pastoral clergy is useless. Why is that so? In this paper, I will explore Martin Luther's theology and beliefs on the role of pastoral clergy, if it is necessary, and if it is, what its role would be, and how it would operate. To do this, I will first explain how Martin Luther criticizes the existing operation of the clergy, then explain why he still thinks a clergy is necessary, then explore what an ideal clergy would look like in Martin Luther's view.

Before delving into this subject, it is crucial to understand the perspective Luther is writing from and the purpose of his writings. The writings I will be looking at are Martin Luther's three treatises that he wrote in 1520. To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation was written in German for a general Christian audience in order to critique the Roman clergy. The Babylonian Captivity of the Church was written in Latin for an educated audience to reassess the sacraments. Finally, The Freedom of a Christian was initially written in Latin and was attached to a letter written to pope Leo X, and then translated by Luther into German for a general audience to discuss the role of freedom, faith, and works in Christendom. The challenge with these works is that Luther is writing with the Roman Church

1 Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," in *Three Treatises*, trans. Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia, 1970), 12.

as his only opponent. As such, he predominantly writes criticizing the operation of the clergy under the Roman Church but not much directly defending the need for clergy. There is still much we can find about his views on the necessity of pastoral clergy through his criticisms and calls for reform.

Martin Luther criticizes the current operation of the clergy based on his belief that we are all priests. What does he mean by this? Luther's reasoning is that Christ was a priest, as he would "pray and intercede" and teach "inwardly through the living instruction of his spirit." And after his sacrifice, Christ shared this role of priesthood "with everyone who believes in him," so Luther argues, "All of us who believe in Christ are priests."[2] Martin Luther takes this to say that there is "no true basic difference between laymen and priests," that is, "except for the sake of office and work."[3] Luther claims that no one has any inherent authority over spiritual matters because of their position in the clergy and anyone with faith can perform all the functions of the priesthood.

It is this belief that we are all priests that Martin Luther uses to critique the operation of pastoral clergy. Luther takes issue with the Roman Church claiming ultimate authority on interpretation of scripture. He does not believe the power to interpret is solely the clergy's, as "if we are all priests," then why shouldn't everyone "have the power to test and judge what is right or wrong in matters of faith."[4] Luther believes the ability to interpret scripture is not exclusive and belongs to all Christians. Another problem he has is with the withholding of the sacraments. In particular when it comes to the Eucharist, he believes the blood and the body of Christ should never be withheld, and that "the sacrament does not belong to the priests, but all men."[5] Luther believes the Eucharist is the right of all Christians. Priests are not entitled to dictate when they should or should not be given. We are all priests!

This belief of universal priesthood stems from his greater idea that it is through faith alone and not works that we achieve salvation. This theology finds its origin in Augustine's view that we cannot win God's favor through actions, or as Luther puts it, works are "inanimate things" that "cannot glorify God."[6] Works are important, but good actions do not make us. Rather, good actions are a consequence of our faith, "good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works."[7] He criticizes the pastoral clergy for placing too great an emphasis on works and is angered that people are "taught by the doctrine of men to seek nothing but merits" and that priests are "never teaching faith."[8] The consequence of this works-

2 Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," in *Three Treatises*, trans. Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia, 1970), 289.

3 Luther, "Christian Nobility," 14.

4 Luther, "Christian Nobility," 21.

5 Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," in *Three Treatises*, trans. Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia, 1970), 142.

6 Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," 288.

7 Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," 297.

8 Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," 305.

emphasized theology, Luther observes, is that people believe they "have committed criminal offenses when they make some petty mistake."[9] As Luther thinks people do not possess the tools to entirely abstain from sin, this overemphasis on works is creating guilt and not working to build faith.

Through this, it almost seems that Martin Luther is taking the leap and saying priests serve no purpose in Christianity. He claims that mass "cannot in any way be a work," as it is "nothing else than the divine promise or testament of Christ"[10] and not necessary for salvation. Attending mass is not a work; it is unnecessary for salvation. What Luther seems to be saying is that one of the primary roles of a priest, giving mass, is not necessary. If the mass is not needed, anyone can interpret the scripture, and everyone is capable of the spiritual abilities of priests, then is there a need for priests? That seems to be where this argument leads, but Luther does not take it there. There is a passage in To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation that gives some clarity on Luther's position.

> "Suppose a group of earnest Christian laymen were taken prisoner and set down in a desert without an episcopal ordained priest among them. And suppose they were to come to a common mind there and then in the desert and elect one of their number, whether he was married or not, and charge him to baptize, sat mass, pronounce absolution, and preach the gospel. Such a man would be as truly a priest."[11]

This passage goes along with his belief that anyone with faith can perform the functions of priesthood; interestingly though, he does not say that any of them could simply baptize or preach gospel, but would instead "elect" someone to perform their functions. This is how Luther still justifies the existence of a pastoral clergy despite his theology that may go against it. Luther acknowledges that priests play an important societal role, even if they are not needed spiritually. So how does Luther justify the continued existence of pastoral clergy if we are all priests?

Luther does not often directly justify the need for pastoral clergy, but through the restraint of his earlier discussed arguments, we find his beliefs. Because Luther is writing with the Roman Catholic Church as his only opponent, he does not turn around and defend the need for clergy, as it is unnecessary. But Luther never claims that pastoral clergy is not needed. At least in the case of pastoral clergy, he is writing with the intent of reform rather than overhaul. He may have claimed that mass is not a work and may not be necessary. He still acknowledges its importance as a time to "meditate upon, and ponder these words, these promises of Christ," and help "nourish, increase, and strengthen our faith." And just after that says that "this should be done by the preachers of the gospel."[12] He also claims anyone can

9 Luther, "Babylonian Captivity," 161.
10 Luther, "Babylonian Captivity," 166.
11 Luther, "Christian Nobility," 13.
12 Luther, "Babylonian Captivity," 159.

interpret scripture, but he is still adamant that education on the gospel is vital. He says young Christians "perish miserably in our midst for want of gospel" and that "we ought to be giving them constant instruction and training."[13] Though Luther may not think that priests have some spiritual quality that differentiates them from the laity, he still recognizes that they play an essential role in community and education. Luther is not calling to end pastoral clergy, simply to reform it.

Martin Luther reimagines the pastoral clergy as a role of leadership and education that teaches scripture and promotes faith. "Ought Christ to be preached to the end that faith in him may be established,"[14] Luther says. Priests' objective should be to help in building faith in Christ. What's interesting is that Luther still thinks priests should set an example and have good works, "not that by them he may strive for righteousness, but that through them he may keep his body under control."[15] This idea goes along with Luther's argument that while good works will not help to achieve salvation, they are a product of good faith. And since priests should set an example of good faith, as a consequence, they should have good works as well. Luther also believes that mass should be simplified and stripped to its essentials. Priests should "put aside whatever has been added to its original simple institution." We must "turn our eyes and hearts simply to the institution of Christ," as that is where lies "the whole substance of mass."[16] Luther believes in stripping away the added ceremonies that do not directly relate to Christ and focusing wholly on the sacrament itself. Lastly, Luther believes pastoral clergy is vital for education in scripture. Luther claims it should not be the works of theologians that are taught. Instead, "the foremost reading for everybody – should be holy scripture."[17] Luther believes that before anything else, it should be the scripture itself that is taught and preached. What Luther envisions is a stripped-down pastoral clergy; not one that has servants, but one that is a servant to God and exists to help guide others toward God through faith, one which is stripped to its necessities and gives education strictly in faith through scripture.

In conclusion, Martin Luther claims that we are all capable of performing the functions of priesthood, such as sacrament and interpretation of scripture. But despite his belief that priests have no spiritual power or laity, he still believes they play a critical role in education and the building of faith. Luther rejects the idea that in Christianity, clergy is needed. Some religions require a clergy, and spiritual practices must be performed by someone of a higher spiritual authority. Other religions do not require a clergy but still, in some sense, need a clergy. Luther's claim is that Christianity does not spiritually require a clergy. Still, Luther acknowledges that pastoral clergy is needed because they play an essential role in Christian society. There is a community aspect to Christianity that Luther recognizes,

13 Luther, "Christian Nobility," 198.
14 Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," 292.
15 Luther, "Freedom of a Christian," 307.
16 Luther, "Babylonian Captivity," 153.
17 Luther, "Christian Nobility," 98.

that gathering for mass and taking the time to build faith is vital to Christianity as a practice. While there may be no difference in spiritual quality between a priest and a layman, Luther believed people still need someone who can lead, teach, and create a community within a Christian society.

[Gender & Sexuality]

Pride Celebrations

Mainstream or Radical? Gay or Queer?

[Evie Deitrich]

"As long as my people don't have their rights across America, there's no reason for celebration." LGBTQ+ rights activist and trans drag artist Marsha P. Johnson may have uttered these words decades ago, but this message remains relevant to the discussion of Pride events today. The history of defiance from which Pride was born, and which Johnson helped propel, obviously contextualizes all Pride celebrations that followed it, but to what extent exactly does the past affect the present? And to what degree do the different modern-day conceptions of Pride denote the existence of different identity groups? Two main approaches to Pride celebrations have emerged, and they each have propelled different messages and have been led with different purposes. One is focused on a family-friendly and celebratory atmosphere, financed by corporate support, and accepted by mainstream society. While the other, based on the spirit of defiance, is defined by protest, kinkiness, and recognition of less accepted LGBTQ+ identities. The first approach consequently undermines the protest origins of Pride and pushes out those members of the community who are still fighting for their rights. These two camps represent different identities under the broader umbrella of Pride-celebrators: gay people being those who belong to the first camp and queer people belonging to the second. They are thus split by their attitudes toward heterosexual social norms, the conceptualization of their own homosexuality, and the question of capitalism which coincide with their respective conceptions of Pride.

While Pride events today vary greatly in structure, content, and intention, in the US they all have roots in the same history. This movement, though years in the making, reached a boiling point in the 1969 raid of the New York gay bar, the Stonewall Inn. Though such raids were common given the illegality of gay relationships in nearly every part of the country at the time, the LGBTQ+ community decided to resist this time and an uprising ensued. While many patrons were being

arrested and searched inside the bar, others were sent outside. When one woman was struck by an officer with a billy club, she called to those waiting on the street "Do something!" and the group jumped into action, headed by the transgender and cross-dressing women of color as well as the homeless gay youth who had been inside the bar.[1] The crowd began throwing pennies at the NYPD officers and, most famously, bottles and bricks too as they chanted "Gay Power! We shall overcome!" These chants and aggression led New York police officers to barricade themselves inside the bar.[2] It was not until protesters naturally dispersed by around 4:00 in the morning that the uprising came to an end.[3]

Though brief, the Stonewall Uprising galvanized LGBTQ+ people unlike anything before it. Thus, on the first anniversary of Stonewall, gay activists led by Craig Rodwell, Fred Sargeant, Ellen Broidy, Linda Rhodes, and Brenda Howard organized the first-ever Pride parade, called the Christopher Street Liberation March, in recognition of the catalyst that was Stonewall.[4] The group met in Greenwich Village, the home of the Stonewall Inn, and began a trip that would span fifty New York city blocks and include several thousand protesters.[5] Fred Segal, the marshal of the parade and a member of the Gay Liberation Front, summarized "The Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day March was as revolutionary and chaotic as everything we did that first year after the Stonewall riots. [It] was a reflection of us: out, loud and proud."[6] The march thus publicly demonstrated wide-scale collective pride for the first time. In that sense, both it and Stonewall created the perfect duet to give rise to a chorus of activism.

This context is not only relevant to current methods but incredibly interesting given the stark contrast between certain Pride camps today. That is to say, although they are all preceded by the same historical narrative, they have used that past to very different ends. In general, LGBTQ+ movements are rooted in the need to resist and subvert the oppression of traditional social and legal structures. However, this spirit of defiance is now much more present in some Pride events than others.

What will be referred to as Camp #1 in this paper is the less explicitly defiant approach to Pride celebrations today. While this style of celebration is more markedly different than the roots of Pride, it has become the most universally recognized. The rainbow, elaborate floats, corporate sponsors, and family-friendly activities define this approach. In that sense, most city Pride celebrations fit this description,

1 Garance Franke-Ruta, "An Amazing 1969 Account of the Stonewall Uprising," *The Atlantic*, January 24, 2013, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/01/an-amazing-1969-account-of-the-stonewall-uprising/272467/.

2 Sarah Pruitt, "What Happened at the Stonewall Riots? A Timeline of the 1969 Uprising," *History*, June 13, 2019, https://www.history.com/news/stonewall-riots-timeline.

3 Pruitt, "What Happened at the Stonewall Riots?"

4 Pruitt, "What Happened at the Stonewall Riots?"

5 Pruitt, "What Happened at the Stonewall Riots?"

6 Pruitt, "What Happened at the Stonewall Riots?"

and the typical attendees, unassuming couples and families headed by same-sex couples, are its face. This approach then, while more divergent from the historical intention of resistance and protest, has many advantages.

The advantages of Camp #1 are baked into its description. For one, it understands the importance of visuals. The rainbow flags denote an innocent desire to display pride and diversity without making any demands of onlookers, and the inclusion of huge corporate sponsors not only provides these celebrations ethos but also reinforces them financially.[7] Further, proponents of business involvement view LGBTBQ+/Pride-related advertisement as a driver of change and a means of exposing larger groups to new terminology and minority identities.[8] This corporate support, coupled with mainstream media coverage, not only makes these parades large-scale and accessible to the masses but also to non-LBTQ+ people who may be interested in showing their allyship, exposing their children to Pride, or just doing something fun outside on a summer day. In other words, this style of Pride event is strategically unintimidating; it is designed to include whoever decides to attend and encourage them to revel in the joyousness of pride.

However, this universality and joyousness, along with the corporate element, are the very reason this style of Pride celebration is criticized. The corporatization of Pride, also known as rainbow capitalism or pinkwashing, is the ever growing practice amongst corporations of rainbow-ing their logos, offering verbal and/or financial support toward LGBTQ+ organizations or Pride events, and oftentimes branding their products to be "pride-y" or rainbow-colored, specifically during the month of June, Pride month. While Camp #1 may find this corporate support to be advantageous, others definitely do not. In fact, many find these gestures of solidarity to be void of any true intention toward inclusiveness, especially because they often coincide with Pride month and disappear right after.[9] Gender and sexuality studies professor and LGBTQ+ activist Karen Tongson explains, "all we hope is for sustained attention and commitment from these corporations, organizations and anybody who expresses allyship beyond the month of June into perpetuity on our behalf."[10] That is to say, while money is helpful it means little if it is accompanied by only a brief, performative commitment to allyship. Further, Tongson points out "gestures of support, nice words, visible images of solidarity aren't always enough. They're often never enough, actually."[11] The big questions

7 Thomas Roth and David Paisley, "Pride for Sale: Corporate Allies," *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/opinions/pride-for-sale/.

8 Roth and Paisley, "Pride for Sale: Corporate Allies."

9 "Rainbow Capitalism Raises Questions about Corporate Commitments and Pride Month's Purpose: Interview of Karen Tongson," interview by Lisa Desjardins, *PBS NewsHour*, June 30, 2021, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/rainbow-capitalism-raises-questions-about-corporate-commitments-and-pride-months-purposel.

10 "Interview of Karen Tongson."

11 "Interview of Karen Tongson."

then, says journalist and consistent Pride attender John Paul Brammer, are "Should it be a protest, or a party? Should we really let a weapons manufacturer slap a rainbow over their logo and march in the parade?"[12]

The disputed sincerity of business involvement directly relates to the fundamental question of what Pride should be. While Camp #1's events are based on joyousness and a party atmosphere with corporate support, some wonder if the protest element has all but disappeared from its intended place in Pride and if so, what effects that has on its legitimacy. That is to say, if what once began as brick-throwing and marching is now carnival games, rainbow cotton candy, and Old Navy sponsorships, has Pride lost its real purpose? Now that resistance is no longer as necessary to the mainstream Pride celebration, the spirit of defiance burns out and, as activist and filmmaker Leo Herrera warns, "As more conservative or traditional factions within the movement achieve their goals (i.e. marriage, military service, etc.) it sometimes can feel the more vulnerable in our community . . . can be left behind."[13]

Camp #1 is therefore further criticized for pushing so hard toward inclusivity and universality that it actually excludes the most vulnerable and fringe members of the LGBTQ+ community. That is to say, all of the aforementioned elements may actually be pushing LGBTQ+ people out of Pride. For one, making an event originally intended for a minority group into a mainstream celebration inevitably discourages those who have yet to see mainstream acceptance—e.g. trans or gender non-conforming people, LGBTQ+ people of color, disabled individuals, crossdressers and drag artists, and other kink and fetish celebrators—from attending. Further, these individuals who remain outside of mainstream society have every reason to continue resisting and protesting for their rights, but Camp #1's approach to Pride does not tend to accommodate that.

Another facet of the issue is that even if Camp #1 did gear itself toward these lesser-known factions of the LGBTQ+ community within its events, they would often remain inaccessible. That is to say, every other issue with Camp #1's conception of Pride is "just the rainbow veneer on the Wells Fargo float" because at their core these events have become so expensive that people are being completely priced out of attendance.[14] John Paul Brammer provides Los Angeles as an example of this price gouging: a city which in 2016 eliminated its free ticket option and instead priced tickets at $35 apiece.[15] In New York City, the parade is still free, at least as of 2021, but the other Pride events require a PrideFest VIP ticket which cost $50 apiece.[16] Prices this exorbitant, whether intentionally or not, dictate who can

12 John Paul Brammer, "Pride for Sale: Priced Out," *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/opinions/pride-for-sale/.

13 Leo Herrera quoted in "Has 'Rainbow Capitalism' Taken Over Pride?," *WWD*, June 25, 2021, https://advance-lexis-com.cacheproxy.lakeforest.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:630M-1801-DXFS-23CF-00000-00&context=1516831.

14 Brammer, "Priced Out."

15 Brammer, "Priced Out."

16 Brammer, "Priced Out."

attend Pride events. So although the events have become mainstream, they actually lack true accessibility for lower-class LGBTQ+ folks. As Brammer points out, the corporations who sponsor these events are focused on profit, "so they center the affluent minority of LGBTQ people, who skew white, gay and male."[17] Thus, this creates a monolithic display of Pride and leaving many people on the other side of the gate, oftentimes those who would most benefit from a chance at inclusion.

There is a clear pattern in this camp's demands though - having been all but achieved as of now - which is that they request rights and treatment that correspond with heterosexual social norms. An obvious example of this pattern is the movement toward gay marriage. Gay marriage, though not directly achieved through Pride, was certainly propelled by it. How could these mainstream PG Pride celebrations advocate for this right though? It was something their business donors and heterosexual onlookers could get behind.[18] Equality in marriage, a socially accepted and markedly innocent contract of love, is something straight people can intuitively understand. It is also always easier to ask someone to alter their rules rather than rewrite them, so when gay people asked to participate in an already codified legal right, they were eventually let in. Now, Camp #1's Pride celebrators revel in the fact that they are able to live and act just as straight people do and view this ability as the mark of acceptance. Their pleas to participate in heterosexual social conventions foster acceptance of their gayness and also further entrench those conventions.

In what can be interpreted simultaneously as an act of recognition of Pride's origins and a response to the problems with Camp #1's approach, Camp #2's conception of Pride is quite distinct. Camp #1's loafer-clad families are replaced with ball gags, leather suits, and most notably, an air of defiance. This style of Pride rejects corporate involvement and the notion that business money is the only means of financing a strong event. In so doing, Camp #2's Pride events rely on grassroots efforts to organize, which is feasible given their completely different notion of what a Pride event should be. In this more radical construction, protest and politics are central. Signs and chants commonly echo similar themes: "Queer liberation not rainbow capitalism!" and "there are no queer friendly cops!"[19] These ideals reflect the values of this camp which, among other things, rejects police presence at or in their marches - marches being the keyword in relation to Camp #2 which doesn't support notions of raucous celebration when there is still so much work to be done - especially in support of the more vulnerable, fringe LGBTQ+ subgroups.[20]

The inclusion of less socially accepted groups is, of course, another defining element of this approach to Pride, and centering these groups is a means of protest in

17 Brammer, "Priced Out."

18 Alex Abad-Santos, "The Perpetual Discourse Over LGBTQ Pride, Explained ," *Vox*, June 2, 2021, https://www.vox.com/the-goods/22463879/kink-at-pride-discourse-lgbtq.

19 Abad-Santos, "The Perpetual Discourse Over LGBTQ Pride, Explained."

20 Abad-Santos, "The Perpetual Discourse Over LGBTQ Pride, Explained."

itself. In fact, these organizers find focusing on optics and respectability politics to inevitably mean compromising their identities for recognition that they don't even desire.[21] Rather, they find queer history to be central to their fight, and because that history is centered on resisting social norms and embracing radicalism that is exactly what they do. This style of Pride event, while principally militant and resistant, also becomes a haven for lesser-known and less widely accepted identities; that is, everyone Camp #1 leaves behind.[22]

Just as Camp #2 rejects the mainstream, they also reject the concept of acceptance. For that reason, Camp #2's members are better defined as queer.[23] LGBTQ+ Philosophy professor Robin Dembroff perfectly describes this idea:

> "Queerness isn't just about who you want to fuck, you know? Being queer is still fundamentally rooted in having a political resistance to hegemonic ideas of how humans ought to be, and it's about whether or not you're an 'acceptable' human."[24]

In summary, just as Camp #2's conception of Pride is inherently political, so too are their identities. They are not concerned with being accepted by mainstream, straight society and indeed, would rather not be. This mindset also clearly applies to their perspective on economics. Camp #2 members see corporate partnerships as selling out and thus see greed, corporatization, and exorbitant wealth outside of Pride as unjust too.[25] Particularly because they are advocating for the most vulnerable in their communities, they are often communist or socialist-allied and view wealth redistribution and societal reconstruction with the goal of economic equality as inherently connected to their fight for queer liberation.[26]

Queer people in Camp #2 also resist heterosexual social norms. They do not want or need their events to foster a spirit of comradery with the straight community; they don't care for corporate partnership, and they are certainly not interested in traditional marriage. As drag queen and musician Trixie Mattel summarizes in one of her YouTube videos, "we get to be these, like, weird, fringe of society, straddling the world of reality and non-reality - no one expects us to get married, no one expects us to have kids, we just get to be creative and laugh and drink."[27] There is a spirit of celebration and freedom, not in being allowed into straight social systems, but in subverting them completely. In sum, queer people consistently pursue liberation because they have no desire to be confined to normalcy.

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21 Abad-Santos, "The Perpetual Discourse Over LGBTQ Pride, Explained."

22 Abad-Santos, "The Perpetual Discourse Over LGBTQ Pride, Explained."

23 Abad-Santos, "The Perpetual Discourse Over LGBTQ Pride, Explained."

24 Robin Dembroff quoted in Alex Abad-Santos, "The Perpetual Discourse Over LGBTQ Pride, Explained."

25 "Has 'Rainbow Capitalism' Taken Over Pride?"

26 "Has 'Rainbow Capitalism' Taken Over Pride?"

27 Trixie Mattel in Sarah Schauer, "Would You Rather feat. Trixie Mattel," February 24, 2021, YouTube video, 16:14, https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=qM8CAdGEAUk&t=271s.

After an exploration of both Camp #1 and Camp #2, it is likely clear what the former's critique of the latter might be. For one, more mainstream Pride celebrators view kinky, defiant marches like Camp #2's as being non-inclusive of heterosexual and more mainstream LGBTQ+ crowds. In fact, they believe such events might reverse the trends toward acceptance that they find themselves contributing to through their family-friendly, digestible celebrations. They argue that socially deviant events mean children are not welcome and are thus not exposed to conceptions of Pride and lose access to a potential learning opportunity, though Camp #2 would argue teaching was never Pride's intended purpose.[28] Mostly though, Camp #1, which believes Pride can be a vehicle for spreading joy, is confused by the other's insistence on often somber defiance.

The approaches of Camp #1 and Camp #2 are clearly indicative of a repeated pattern in history. Indeed, the mainstream faction versus the more radical one is a tale as old as time and defines nearly all notable social movements - the Civil Rights Movement, the fight for women's suffrage, and defunding versus reforming the police, to name a few. So, while ideas about Pride and the questions they stir up about identity are incredibly unique, the pattern of division amongst members is not. That being said, there is a distinctive pattern at play in this case in that conceptions of Pride correspond to different conceptions of gayness and queerness, respectively. That is to say, Pride is the umbrella under which pride-celebrators diverge into different identity groups.

28 "Has 'Rainbow Capitalism' Taken Over Pride?"

What the Heart Wants

How Representation in Media Impacts Asexual Individuals

[Sawyer Kuzma]

"I'm not gay... but I don't think I'm straight either. I don't know what I am. I think I might be nothing." This dialogue comes from the episode "That Went Well" of Bojack Horseman, between an asexual main character and his love interest who, as it turns out, is not much of a love interest after all. Characters coming out as asexual is uncommon in Western media today, and asexuality has a fraction of the representation that other sexual minorities have due to social stigmas that surround the orientation.[1] Asexuality, a lack of sexual attraction in an individual, is a sexual orientation that was relatively unknown by western society until the past twenty years, when online forums allowed the identity to receive more social exposure.[2]Asexuality is largely unrecognized in modern western media and when it is portrayed, it is often in a negative light. While some may argue that asexuality is simply a form of inaction and does not require any special consideration, asexual representation is crucial in increasing the public's knowledge of the sexuality, disproving harmful stereotypes, and supporting asexual-identifying individuals. This essay will analyze societal views of asexuality, how asexuality is viewed in the media, and how these views and representations impact asexual individuals.

Asexual is just one label belonging to a family of similar identities including aromantic, graysexual, demisexual, allosexual, and others. The terms relevant to this research are asexuality, a lack of sexual attraction to other people; aromanticism, a lack of romantic attraction to other people; and allosexuality, sexual attraction to

1 Ellen Carter, "Asexual Romance in an Allosexual World: How Ace-Spectrum Characters (and Authors) Create Space for Romantic Love." *Journal of Popular Romance Stories* 9 (2020): 1-19. www.jprstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ARIAAW.08.2020.pdf.

2 Ana Catarina Carvalho and David L. Rodrigues, "Sexuality, Sexual Behavior, and Relationships of Asexual Individuals: Differences Between Aromantic and Romantic Orientation." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 51, no. 4 (2022): 2159–2168, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-021-02187-2.

other people (this includes heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, etc.). While asexuality exists on a wide spectrum encompassing many identities, it is not well known in the public sphere. According to a national poll analyzed by Carvalho, "53% of British adults were confident they could define asexuality, but 75% were unable to explain what asexuality is." [3] While this study only covered Britain, the fact that many adults do not know how to define asexuality is not limited to the nation.

There are many reasons why asexuality may be an obscure identity, but heteronormativity is the main culprit. Heteronormativity promotes heterosexual monogamous relationships that produce children. As asexual and aromantic individuals often do not fall into this type of relationship, they defy the societal norms forced upon them. Essentially, as Carvalho quotes from Chasin 2015, "Society tends to value romantic above non-romantic relationships and considers sexual behaviors as a fundamental aspect of those relationships."[4] The consequence of this value in media is a lack of asexual and aromantic characters appearing to the public, creating the lack of awareness surrounding the identity seen today.

When asexuality does appear in media, its representation can be lacking, as seen in "Better Half," an episode of House that aired in 2012. In this episode, an asexual woman tells her doctor that she and her husband are both asexual, saying "We kiss and cuddle, but neither one of us is interested in sex."[5] As the episode progresses, multiple doctors provide their theories on the cause of their patients' asexuality, including unbalanced hormone levels, spinal injury, and childhood trauma. Dr. House, determined to find a reason as to why a couple would not desire sex—as he believes "[sex is] the fundamental drive of our species,"[6]—brings the woman's husband into the hospital to take blood samples from him. At the end of the episode, House reveals that the man's asexuality has been caused by a brain tumor that has gone unnoticed in his brain for over a decade. After learning of her husband's tumor, the woman reveals that she faked her asexuality to please her husband. This episode emphasizes the societal view that asexual people have something wrong with them that needs to be fixed in order for them to be "normal". House normalizes the idea that people should question asexual people's sexuality and ask them if something is wrong. This builds disbelief and stigma around the orientation that can lead to great harm to asexual individuals.

Another recent example of asexual representation in western media appears in Bojack Horseman, which aired on Netflix from 2014 to 2020. In this television series, Todd Chavez, a recurring character who appears throughout all six of the

3 Carvalho, Sexuality, Sexual Behavior, and Relationships of Asexual Individuals: Differences Between Aromantic and Romantic Orientation, 2159.

4 Carvalho, 2166.

5 *House*, season 8, episode 9, "Better Half," directed by Greg Yaitanes, written by David Shore and Kath Lingenfelter, aired January 23, 2012, NBCUniversal Television Distribution, 2012.

6 Yaitanes, "Better Half."

show's seasons, is revealed to be asexual in the season three finale of the show.[7] In subsequent episodes, Todd is shown exploring his identity and finding other asexual people to form a community. This example is a much more accurate representation of asexuality in media than that shown in House, as Todd's asexuality is not mocked or questioned by the narrative but rather is treated earnestly and with respect. Todd finds multiple partners and meets many different types of asexual people throughout the show, a significant shift from the asexual representation shown in House which only depicted two asexual characters, one of which was later revealed to not be asexual at all.[8] Bojack Horseman shows the audience how diverse asexuality can be, and in doing so, challenges the idea that heterosexuality is necessary for one to be happy.

One final example of how asexuality is portrayed—or rather, not portrayed—in the media can be seen in Riverdale, a television show adapted from the Archie comics. Among its cast of characters is Jughead Jones, who was first introduced as a character in the Archie comic series in 1941. Since his creation, Jughead has become one of the most prominent asexual characters in western media and acts as a symbol of the asexual community for many—this can be seen in Bojack Horseman where Todd Chavez has a tattoo dedicated to Jughead as an allusion to his asexuality.[9] Throughout the comic series, Jughead is defined by his love for food and repulsion for women. These traits continued into the new Archie comics released beginning in 2014. In Jughead No. 4, a spin-off of the new Archie comics, Jughead was finally announced to be explicitly asexual and aromantic.[10] Although this was a welcome confirmation of what many fans had already suspected,[11] just a few years later Jughead's canonic sexuality changed once again. In 2017, Riverdale was released on the CW and featured the Archie comic characters as teenagers surrounded by mystery and murder. Shortly into the first season, Jughead was revealed to be attracted to women when he entered a sexual relationship with fellow character Betty Cooper.[12] This shift in Jughead's portrayal may seem trivial to some, but has deeper implications. In a culture that prefers heterosexual relationships over others, an asexual character being made heterosexual reveals the belief that romance and sex are inherent parts of life that are necessary for a character to be seen as compelling.

The replacement of asexuality with supposedly more compelling sexual relationships is a problem seen in many forms of media. The root of this lack of representation rests in heteronormativity, as well as in the belief that asexual

7 *Bojack Horseman*, season 3, episode 12, "That Went Well," directed by Amy Winfrey, written by Raphael Bob-Waksberg, aired July 22, 2016, Tornante Television and Netflix, 2020.

8 Bob-Waksberg, *Bojack Horseman*.

9 Bob-Waksberg.

10 Chip Zdarsky and Erica Henderson, "Jughead #4," *Jughead* (Archie, 2016).

11 Abraham Riesman, "Archie Comic Reveals Jughead Is Asexual," *Vulture*, 8 Feb. 2016.

12 *Riverdale*, season 1, episode 6, "Chapter Six: Faster, Pussycats! Kill! Kill!" directed by Lee Toland Krieger, written by Tessa Leigh Williams and Nicholas Zwart, Archie Comics and Warner Bros. Television Studios, 2022.

individuals have something "wrong" with them. Sex is used in media, as Vares quotes, to signify how people can find happiness: "Happy objects, like the happy family, become 'happiness pointers' or a means to happiness – if we follow their lead we will be able to find happiness."[13] This heteronormative portrayal of sex as essential for a satisfying life feeds into stereotypes about asexual individuals that can have real-life impacts. The few characters who are represented as not having sexual attraction are often portrayed as villains, lacking humanity and "broken" as to show how abnormal they are.[14] In the same vein, characters who lack attraction are often not explicitly named as asexual, leading to a further lack of awareness about the identity among audiences. All of these factors contribute to negative beliefs toward asexual people.

Although one could argue that media representation does not have a real-world impact on asexual individuals, the portrayal of this identity in media has the ability to build up preexisting biases against asexual individuals that can lead to emotional damage, social exclusion, and even corrective rape. In a study of fifteen asexual-identifying individuals in New Zealand, Vares found that all of them had negative experiences related to others' perceptions of their identity.[15] One participant described feeling sadness at missing out on the "core experience" of getting married, despite his lack of desire for this type of relationship.[16] Even more common within the group was the experience of wondering what was "wrong" with them when they did not experience sexual attraction.[17] As Vares found, many asexual-identifying individuals do not feel shame about their singleness itself, but rather at other people's perception of their singleness, showing the importance of spreading awareness and acceptance to reduce this stigma. While Vares' research comes from a small sample, this sample is made up of a pool of individuals who only make up about 1% of the human population,[18] making it difficult to conduct an in-depth study involving many respondents.

Alongside the negative emotional impact that heteronormativity has on asexual individuals, a study found that asexuals were "evaluated more negatively, viewed as less human, and less valued as contact partners, relative to heterosexuals and [homosexuals and bisexuals]."[19] This shows how social exclusion can come from inaccurate media representation. Additionally, corrective rape threatens the safety of asexual individuals and is caused by anger directed at their identities, which can lead to a fear of expressing one's identity in public. As Doan-Mihn writes, corrective

13 Ahmed 2010: 26 qtd. in Vares, "Asexuals Negotiate the 'onslaught of the Heteronormative.'"

14 Patricia Kennon, "Asexuality and the Potential of Young Adult Literature for Disrupting Allonormativity," *The International Journal of Young Adult Literature* 2, no. 1, (2021) 1-24, https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.24877/IJYAL.41.

15 Vares, "Asexuals Negotiate the 'onslaught of the Heteronormative.'"

16 Vares.

17 Vares.

18 Aicken et al. 2013: 125 qtd. in Carter, "Asexual Romance in an Allosexual World: How Ace-Spectrum Characters (and Authors) Create Space for Romantic Love,"

19 MacInnis 2012: 725 qtd. in Carter.

rape is an act of punishing an individual for straying from the heterosexual norm of society and a way to force them back into conformity.[20] Although asexual identities are defined by a lack of attraction, they are still at risk of corrective rape, and rapists often argue that they assaulted their victims in order to "fix" them and that it was for the victim's "own good."[21] This defense of rape reveals how media can impact the real world. Asexual representation, such as in House, can create disbelief in asexuality and perpetrate the idea that asexual individuals must have something wrong with them that causes them to not experience attraction. As Kennon describes, the view of asexuals as robotic and lacking humanity is prevalent in western media and dehumanizes asexual individuals to the point where corrective rape is seen as a mercy to them.[22] The impact of asexual representation is very real and has the ability to shape societal views into dangerous misconceptions that threaten the safety of asexual individuals.

Asexual representation, while infrequent in modern western media, can have significant impacts on social beliefs and norms. When asexuality is represented in a way that values the emotions and experiences of asexual individuals – such as the examples found in Bojack Horseman and Jughead – awareness and education can spread to disprove stereotypes and promote acceptance of those who exist outside of heteronormativity. However, many examples of asexual representation – such as that in House – reaffirm stereotypes about asexuality that can lead to harm against asexual individuals including exclusion, feelings of being "broken", and sexual assault. Asexual representation, when done in a manner that considers the full emotions of asexual-identifying individuals, has the power to change societal beliefs about asexuality and break the standard of heteronormativity. By exposing audiences to characters who live full and satisfying lives without the presence of romance or sex in their relationships, the media can rewrite the heteronormative narrative that has persisted in Western media for centuries.

20 Sarah Doan-Minh, "Corrective Rape: An Extreme Manifestation of Discrimination and the State's Complicity in Sexual Violence." *Hastings Women's Law Journal* 30, no. 1, (2019) 167-196, https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/haswo30&i=197.

21 Doan-Minh, "Corrective Rape: An Extreme Manifestation of Discrimination and the State's Complicity in Sexual Violence,"

22 Kennon, "Asexuality and the Potential of Young Adult Literature for Disrupting Allonormativity,"

"SportaRobbie" Slash in The LazyTown Community

Fanfiction's Function to Liberate Queer Individuals

[Claire Pardus]

Upon considering the purpose of fanfiction, whether it be to inform, to entertain, to persuade, a combination of these or otherwise, I would posit that very few individuals would turn to a children's show's fandom in order to find such answers. After all, shows like LazyTown have been off the air since 2014 and have little to no cultural relevance besides inciting nostalgia for people who grew up in the 2000s. However, this television series has taken a different life online through meme compilations to artwork magazines and, arguably the most blossoming iteration, written work and fanfictions. This can be said true for a majority of online fandoms, where artists take the content they are presented with and create vastly diverse settings, scenarios, and character backgrounds that pave the way for marginalized groups such as queer-identifying individuals to be able to flourish and express themselves without the looming threat of the patriarchy. While fanfiction has been previously argued by critics, specifically by Catherine Driscoll and Melissa Gregg[1], to broadly liberate general minorities from the patriarchy, I believe that it has evolved and has shifted towards aiding queer individuals more than women and feminine-identifying individuals. Through a case study of a fanfiction from the LazyTown fandom, I argue that the manifest function of fanfiction has shifted away from the private, domestic sphere of women to function as a sphere for queer individuals. To analyze this claim, I will first explore what has previously been studied in fanfiction as a whole and its influences on liberating queer identities. This will be followed with introducing my methodology, which includes concepts such as escapism, gender as a performance, and radical feminism. Finally, I will delve into a selected text from the LazyTown fanfiction library listed on the website "Archive of Our Own" (AO3) to evaluate and uphold this assertion.

1 Catherine Driscoll and Melissa Gregg, "Convergence Culture and the Legacy of Feminist Cultural Studies," in *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 4-5 (2011): 566-584.

The LazyTown fandom has existed on the platform AO3 since 2006, and has grown exponentially throughout the years as more intricate, elaborate, and detailed fanfictions have been written and published. One of the more sizable stories published on AO3 that falls under the Lazytown fandom is "Definition of Insanity" written by user xByDefault[2]. This lengthy fanfiction, a whopping 170,500 word story, features characters from the television series such as Sportacus, Robbie Rotten, and Stephanie, as well as original characters conceived by the author. The work was first uploaded to AO3 in June of 2020 and was marked "completed" by the author on August 13, 2022. At the time of this article, "Definition of Insanity" boasts a total of 37 chapters, 758 comments left by previous readers, 560 "kudos," (a system in which readers can express their liking to an author's work), and 58 bookmarks from registered users on the AO3 platform.

The fanfiction follows an alternative storyline from what is usually depicted in the television series (that being child-friendly narratives, singing, teachable lessons etc.) and follows Sportacus' perspective as Robbie Rotten, the town's self-proclaimed villain, destroys Sportacus' airship and forces him to become a ground resident of the town. As the fanfiction is lengthy, the story takes many turns and plot twists that engage other characters from the LazyTown universe in ways that the show does not. This change can be primarily seen from Ms. Bessie Busybody acts as a maternal mentor to Sportacus as he resolves his feelings for Robbie Rotten, but is also evident with side characters such as Pixel and Mayor Meanswell. While the former is depicted as more mature and intelligent as opposed to being a stereotypical "tech-wizard child," Mayor Meanswell is swapped from having a clueless personality to having significantly more common sense and situational awareness. This fanfiction diverges from the canonical LazyTown universe through its inclusion of magic. Robbie is part fae or fairy, and his powers are shown through his plethora of disguises that he engages in to help fix his wrongdoings towards Sportacus. The new perspective on the television show's pre-existing narrative, the expression of queer identity through the Sportacus/Robbie relationship, and the inclusion of magic are actively present in this fanfiction as the two are brought together from these forces and, after navigating several hardships, are happily in a relationship.

Critics and scholars of fanfiction have argued its importance in the queer community, especially through creating a heterotopia for queer individuals through remaking cisgender and heterosexual narratives, inclusion of queer and transgender expression, as well as the use of alternative universes. Diana Floegel suggests in a 2020 pilot study that queer creators within the realm of fanfiction reorient cis/heteronormative narratives perpetuated by the entertainment industry and, as a result, design fictional systems and create communities that help fill gaps of "queer

2 xByDefault. "Definition of Insanity." *Archive of Our Own*, June 26, 2020. https://archiveofourown.org/works/24921043.

erasure and misrepresentation"[3]. In a similar fashion, Anna Llewellyn collected survey data from women-loving women and found that one of the more prominent results was that "online fanfictions are places where queer is normalized," offering a sense of community that is otherwise not offered through participant's real worlds[4]. Jonathan A. Rose explores the influence that fanfiction has on those who identify as queer or transgender, specifically the latter within the Sherlock Holmes fandom. "Transfic not only provides an opportunity to add trans to the possible readings and meanings of a text but also becomes a means of 'transing' narratives, strengthening the position of trans readings as valid creative engagements and as a form of trans agency"[5]. Jennifer Duggan adds to this in a 2022 study that repealed the pre-existing notion that the majority of "slash" fanfiction audiences, fanfiction that ships two or more fictional characters together, were adult cisgendered women, exploring genderqueer and transgender adolescents and how they are influenced and supported by fanfiction as it is a "gateway to real-life queer communities."[6] Alternative universes and situations are also employed within fanfiction, and, according to Kavita Mudan Finn and Jessica McCall, "is the beginning of a new kind of criticism" to "preserve the multiplicity and complexity of meaning in the text," which can include queer undertones[7]. All of these critics of fanfiction, as well as many others, generally conclude that fanfiction has undoubtedly had a positive influence on those who identify outside of the cisgender, heteronormative patriarchy that exists today as it liberates them to express their identities and feelings in a virtual community that embraces one another.

To reiterate my claim, I pose that the newfound aim of fanfiction in modern day media is to liberate queer individuals from existing patriarchal oppression. As a critic to the texts that will be analyzed as well as to the fanfiction community in a grander sense, it is important to establish where my credentials and ties with the community lie and, hence, may make themselves present within the analyses that follow. I am not an active fanfiction writer, but rather an avid reader, with much of my focus in years past in the LazyTown community among others. The texts that have been selected for analysis, under my feminist ideology and theoretical approaches, are ones that I had read previously for leisure and have decided to revisit for the sake of shedding light on a community that would otherwise be dismissed as being small and insignificant. As these are texts that I have read previously without the current methodology employed, I acknowledge that there

3 Diana Floegel, "'Write the Story You Want to Read': World-Queering through Slash Fanfiction Creation," in *Journal of Documentation* 76, no. 4 (2020), 797.

4 Anna Llewellyn, "'A Space Where Queer Is Normalized': The Online World and Fanfictions as Heterotopias for WLW," in *Journal of Homosexuality* (2022), 2357, 2358.

5 Jonathan A. Rose, "'My Male Skin': (Self-)Narratives of Transmasculinities in Fanfiction," in *European Journal of English Studies* (2020), 33.

6 Jennifer Duggan, "'Worlds. . .[of] Contingent Possibilities': Genderqueer and Trans Adolescents Reading Fan Fiction," in *Television & New Media* (2022), 715.

7 Kavita Mudan Finn and Jessica McCall, "Exit, Pursued by a Fan: Shakespeare, Fandom, and The Lure of the Alternate Universe," *Critical Survey* 28, no. 2 (January 2016), 29.

are instances where conclusions and assertions that I make are pre-existing and are therefore reinforced by said methodology. It should also be mentioned that I, as an individual, do not identify as queer; I identify as a heterosexual, cisgender woman, and my perspective and arguments made in relationship to the queer community may not, and rightfully so, be deemed credible due to a lack of personal association. As I am taking an outsider's look into the representation of those who identify differently than myself, I understand that I lack the lived experience of those who are represented in the text. Rather, my understanding of the text is rather logical and evaluative. Finally, it should be noted that while these texts reflect the marginalized groups of gender identity and sexuality, the cast of characters is predominantly white or caucasian. My intention is to further research the LazyTown fanfiction community and the fanfiction as a whole to better understand who utilizes it, how it creates ties and relationships between members of their respective communities, and what impacts it has beyond the digital sphere into the real, physical world.

Moving to theoretical approaches to be applied in the analysis, I pose three central scholarly theories that are resonant within fanfiction as a whole. Firstly, Catherine Driscoll and Melissa Gregg pose a concept of escapism within fanfiction texts. As defined by their study, fanfiction "becomes a means of coping with alienating real life pressures," such as but not limited to the pre-existing patriarchy, and provides an "escape from dominant gender expectations"[8]. This concept has been applicable to anyone who is not supported by the patriarchy, including women and people of color, but is arguably most applicable to queer individuals. In a society that has been especially progressive in recent years, such as the United States, a standard for all people to identify a certain way rather than another even when other identities are said to be "accepted" still exists. For those who fall outside the box of being cisgender or straight, fanfiction is argued to provide an outlet for said individuals to not only manage external forces that may degenerate and discredit their identities, but provide a means of self-expression. Escapism exists to aid marginalized groups under a patriarchy through self-expression, and in the context of this analysis its influence on supporting queer identifying persons will be of most interest.

Secondly, Victoria Leto DeFrancisco and Catherine Helen Palczewski suggest theories that can also be applied to fanfiction and its service to supporting queer identities, the most relevant for this discussion being their consideration of gender as a performance. They suggest that "individuals participate in the construction of their personal and group identities through daily enactments, or citations, of gender/sex."[9] Furthermore, therein underlies "the power of seemingly unconscious performances of seemingly unimportant norms" that perpetuates gender identity

8 Catherine Driscoll and Melissa Gregg, "Convergence Culture and the Legacy of Feminist Cultural Studies," 569, 573.

9 Victoria Leto DeFrancisco and Catherine Helen Palczewski, "Alternative Approaches to Understanding Gender/Sex," *Communicating Gender Diversity: A Critical Approach* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 53.

within a culture.[10] Rather than gender being an established identity that an individual carries with them throughout life and society, it is something that continually evolves. While fanfiction is reserved for a more private sphere of interaction that is separate from interpersonal public connection, it certainly reflects the influences of such interactions and can uphold as well as deconstruct such identities. Fanfiction can ultimately serve as a reflection as well as a critique of gender in a society, and by implementing this theory into the analysis of the text we can better understand how queer individuals are better supported and acknowledged through fanfiction.

Thirdly, the use of radical feminism when analyzing fanfiction can aid in understanding where the patriarchy's influences reside and how fanfiction seemingly turns it on its head. According to Deanna D. Sellnow, radical feminism is one of many feminist perspectives that specifically focuses on identifying and responding to the system of patriarchy and how it "creates men and women differently."[11] Radical feminism "reveal[s] how objectifying hegemonic beliefs and behaviors based on sex, gender, or sexual orientation are reinforced or challenged in some way."[12] As the goal of radical feminism is to expose hegemony, or the ideology of the dominant class in a society such as the patriarchy, as well as consciousness raising, this perspective can be applied to fanfiction as it arguably articulates experiences and perspectives that do not fall in line with dominant ideology. Fanfiction can be a platform where ideas, identities, and expressions that are not cisgender or heteronormative can identify, thus giving relevance to radical feminism within fanfiction text. This will be applicable to the analysis as the incorporation of non-dominant ideology sheds light on what is socially acceptable.

One of the primary purposes of xByDefault's fanfiction *Definition of Insanity* is to illustrate the blossoming of Sportacus' and Robbie's friendship and their subsequent romantic relationship. It is worth starting with the concept of escapism from my methodology to illustrate how their relationship comes about and is perceived by others in the fictional text. The undertones of romantic and sexual interest are present in the fanfiction prior to Sportacus directly stating that he identifies as gay. Yet the moment is not discussed in great detail both by the characters nor the author. Sportacus' moment of clarity ends Chapter 19 and Robbie's admission follows near the start of Chapter 20.

> "'But, what about you? You, uhm, you had a pretty strong reaction after I told you.' This was awkward and he was making it so on his own, he knew it. Addressing the elephant in the room always was. 'About me being gay?'
>
> 'Oh, that,' Robbie said. A minute stiffness in his movements, before he waved at

10 Victoria Leto DeFrancisco and Catherine Helen Palczewski, "Alternative Approaches to Understanding Gender/Sex," 53.

11 Deanna D. Sellnow, "Feminist Perspectives," *The Rhetorical Power of Popular Culture: Considering Mediated Texts* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2013), 144.

12 Sellnow, 145.

> Sportacus, laughing brightly. 'No, no, good for you, I guess. Good for me, good for us all…' he trailed off. There was that twitching of his nose and worrying of his lower lip again. … 'You took me by surprise, think nothing more of it. Though, I suppose that I could've handled that a little differently.'
>
> 'I've had worse reactions.' Not quite a lie but a modification to make Robbie more at ease. Sportacus didn't say anything if he didn't feel it [was] safe. Almost as how he kept his ears hidden.
>
> Almost.
>
> 'Oh, yeah,' Robbie replied, 'ditto'"[13].

It should be noted that this revelation sets the stage for their relationship to truly begin blossoming within the text and ultimately culminates into their romantic confessions later in the fanfiction. Neither Sportacus or Robbie Rotten express distaste or hatred for the other for identifying differently than they initially perceive.

A moment that is similar in idea but at a smaller scale, both figuratively and literally, is the narration providing information on how the children of LazyTown perceive their relationship. With the exception of Stephanie, the children in the television series are puppets with humanistic qualities and actions in this text that gives them child-like individuality and human consciousness. A quote that sums their understanding and interpretation of the relationship is found near the end of the fanfiction as Sportacus hosts a housewarming party and spends most of his time at Robbie's side. "Stingy and Ziggy appeared oblivious, but at least Stephanie and Pixel were alright with it as his spoken statement"[14]. The only child out of the LazyTown bunch that seems to be aware and not completely supportive is Trixie, but this can be disregarded as Trixie is known as the trickster and the rebel of the group. Generally speaking for both the television show as well as the fanfiction community, her character is understood to be quite stubborn when learning new things. Thus, we can assume that for the most part, there is a general acceptance of their relationship.

The casualty of how these fictional characters react to Sportacus coming out sheds light on the sense of escapism that the author employs in the fanfiction. The normalcy in which each character, especially Robbie following Sportacus' admission, deviates from the hegemony of the western patriarchy as it reflects a general understanding and gentle acceptance of queer identity that is rarely present in the real world. As the stigmas and pre-existing gender norms pressure individuals to identify a certain way (i.e. cisgender and heterosexual), fanfiction allows readers who identify with these characters an outlet for escapism.

13 xByDefault, "Definition of Insanity," *Archive of Our Own* (2020), Chapter 20.
14 xByDefault, Chapter 36.

While the element of escapism provides an outlet for expression within fanfiction, the role of gender as a performance as procured by DeFrancisco and Palczewski offers similar liberties to those engaging with the text. Enter Mimosa Rochas, one of Robbie Rotten's many magical alternate personas as he works to rectify the inciting incident he had caused and make things right with the town's hero. A real estate worker with a keen eye to interior design, she offers her services to Sportacus while subtly prying at personal and rather intimate details under the guise of flirtatious conversation. The introduction to Mimosa paints a hyper-feminine picture of who this strange woman is all about:

> "Out of the large white van, a tall woman with permed bristly blonde hair in shoulder length had stepped out, somewhat wobbling on the uneven ground with her stiletto heels … [and] sashayed towards him. Her hips moving in a pendulum with each step. She was tall, but the heels made her downright loom over him as she neared.
>
> She had an oblong face that was covered in heavy make-up, her lips seemingly thinner by the deep red lipstick and her long lashed eyes obscured by a pair of cherry cat eye glasses"[15].

As the character of Mimosa Rochas claims to be an interior designer, her assistance with Sportacus' housing situation leads to awkwardly intimate conversations wherein Mimosa/Robbie attempts to "figure out" Sportacus' romantic interests while presenting as an extremely feminine individual. Of course, Robbie Rotten's identity is finally revealed as Mimosa and Sportacus get into a quarrel, but her character briefly serves to contrast the more masculine Robbie.

Robbie Rotten's appearance within the LazyTown television series universe is not the ideal of hereronormative masculinity in comparison to Sportacus' muscled and well-toned physique, a sentiment that is certainly reflected within xByDefault's text. While the story gives a brief description of the characters and setting, there is one instance following Robbie's "coming out" where he directly makes commentary on his own appearance as failing to be "masculine":

> "'Have you seen me?' he gestured to himself waving his hand all over and around his face with a finishing flick. 'I knew that you were ignorant, but for real, where exactly did I go so wrong that I made you think that I'm straight?!'
>
> Sportacus couldn't help but laugh. 'Alright, I'm sorry. I'm not ignorant, I just wanted to be sure.'"[16].

15 xByDefault, "Definition of Insanity," Chapter 19.
16 xByDefault, "Definition of Insanity," Chapter 20.

Robbie's appearance moving into the final chapters of the fanfiction is something to acknowledge as an example of the performativity of gender and its role within fanfiction. As the romantic relationship between Sportacus and Robbie comes to fruition in the final chapter, we witness characters such as Ms. Bessie Busybody commenting on Robbie Rotten's appearance. At a party being hosted at Sportacus' newly-furnished house, Bessie pulls Sportacus to the side and mentions to him her observance of Robbie wearing lipstick, something that her tone suggests was unlike him previously[17]. It should be clear to the reader at this point of the fanfiction's narrative that Robbie Rotten's physical appearance served a function in telling a story in his outward appearance towards others and how it correlates with his self-perception as a gay man.

DeFrancisco and Palczewski suggest that gender is a performance rather than an inherent trait[18], and this is proven to be true through Robbie Rotten's own expression of gender in this particular fanfiction. Under the disguise of Mimosa Rochas, Robbie emanates, or at least attempts to emanate, his understanding and learning of what it means to present oneself as feminine. It should also be noted that the subtle notes of Robbie failing to walk properly in these high heels as well as his constant remarks about his feet hurting suggest that this interpretation of femininity is not comfortable for him. The physical struggle that Robbie endures to accurately represent himself in both suppressed and unsuppressed manners serves as a critique on how the real world makes those who are in Robbie's shoes, those who don't identify within a culture's hegemony of gender expression, are often unable to stand against those influences. The presentation of feminine traits sheds light on how gender is performed within the text, and how it lacks rigid categories to fall under, arguably making the narrative a liberating space for those who fall out of the "approved" gender expressions within a heteronormative society.

The radical feminist perspective is indeed applicable to fanfiction, particularly through the use of magical and folkloric elements and their parallels to sexuality. As this fanfiction takes on the interpretation that Sportacus is a "sports elf," there are stereotypes which suggest that elves are not only accepted as being real, but are also looked down upon. Sportacus shares this part of his identity with Stephanie, a human girl from the television show. Stephanie is characterized as being young and innocent, but demonstrates the quality of a leader and often looks up to Sportacus as a role model. After Sportacus suggests that he should move out of town following the destruction of his airship being destroyed, Stephanie becomes visibly upset and assumes that Sportacus doesn't like LazyTown and, more specifically, doesn't like her and the rest of the kids. What Stephanie does not realize is that Sportacus fears for his own safety as an elf, an identity that is seen as harmful and dangerous in the universe that the fanfiction is constructed in. As she is one of the closest

17 xByDefault, Chapter 37.

18 Victoria Leto DeFrancisco and Catherine Helen Palczewski, "Alternative Approaches to Understanding Gender/Sex," *Communicating Gender Diversity: A Critical Approach*.

children to him in LazyTown, it seems fitting that Sportacus would choose to reveal his elven identity with her to help her understand his desire to leave.

> "'But, I still don't get it'" she said. 'Why do people not like you?'
>
> That was a complex list of reasons, but could be distilled into the most fundamental. Somewhat. 'Old wives' tales and prejudices,' Sportacus said… 'People fear the unknown, it's always been that way"[19].

The parallels between Sportacus being forward with his elven background in the fanfiction's reality and "coming out" to identify as anything other than heterosexual or cisgender in our reality glare through the text. This instance serves as a jumping off point for readers as the narrative uses Sportacus' identity as both an elf and as a gay man to illustrate the difficulties of deviating from societal norms in a fictional text that resonate in real-world situations.

Sportacus' elven identity is not a singular occurrence within the text, as it is also mentioned in his interactions with Robbie. It should be prefaced that the interpretation of elves within the fanfiction's universe is that of having super-human skills and strengths as Sportacus in the television show is shown to be capable of feats that are humanly impossible. In one instance in *Definition of Insanity,* Sportacus performs a gravity-defying trick in front of Robbie, to which Robbie responds by calling him a "crazy" elf. Sportacus' reaction demonstrates the impact that such a term used to identify himself is used with a seemingly negative connotation.

> "Robbie was well aware of what he'd done, Sportacus knew. After all, Robbie had once called him 'the blue elf' with the full intent to upset him. And now used it as a derogatory remark once again.
>
> 'I'm an elf and I take pride in that,' Sportacus said. 'But don't say it like a slur again'"[20].

Considering the use of Sportacus' elf identity in a fanfiction plot, it is clear that the parallels between his magical background and his sexuality ultimately shed light on the hegemony under radical feminism. Rather than to hit it on the nose directly and speak on the misfortunes that Sportacus has had as a gay man, xByDefault makes use of the elven identity to to indirectly speak on his sexuality by a similar yet different means. Sportacus' elven identity, and its parallels to homosexuality, help to repeal the hegemony that not only exists within the fanfiction's narrative but also the real world it is inspired by. The perspective of a group marginalized for their magical background and, by extension, their sexuality,

19 xByDefault, "Definition of Insanity," Chapter 18.
20 xByDefault, "Definition of Insanity," Chapter 25.

gives voice to the queer experience. Through a radical feminist perspective, fanfictions like "Definition of Insanity" draw attention to individuals and circumstances that are arguably ostracized by the heteronormative society.

There is evidence to suggest that fanfiction not only liberates women, but also those who fall under the queer umbrella. As suggested through a methodology that includes the concepts of escapism, gender as a performance, and radical feminism, it is clear that fanfiction is not simply a tool for expressing a writer's thoughts and emotions. Rather, it serves as an instrument of self-expression which elevates voices that are silenced in the heteronormative societies that exist today. Despite being more progressive than decades prior, modern society has yet to reconcile the fact that gender expression and sexuality exist in multiplicity, and are not restricted to only cisgender straight people. Fanfiction is often overlooked and is often dismissed as having little to no impact on the "real world." This is false, as it provides a facet of expression for those who are unable to do so in the public sphere. Through the methodology and analyses conducted in this paper, it can be asserted that fanfiction allows readers and writers to be authentic within the private sphere of fanfiction and the internet culture that may be intertwined with it. Media like LazyTown provides a baseline for those who are looking to explore their own expression and to supply for others a way to see themselves reflected, and as media continues to grow so will the fanfiction content — even if that means writing about sports elves flipping around and cliche villains.

[Politics & Society]

The Social Services of Hezbollah

[Kate Kiameh]

In efforts to categorize the status of the state of Lebanon, the terms of capacity and autonomy are often utilized to help describe the abilities of the state. Autonomy is a description of the country's power to act independently of outside actors such as international bodies or the public of the state.[1] Capacity refers to the ability of a country to provide its citizens with public goods and services.[2] A country is often seen as the provider of public goods as it maintains a kind of legitimacy that allows for citizens to rely on it for resources and support. However, this capacity to provide for citizens is not present in the Lebanese state. Failing geopolitical powers, such as Lebanon, are characterized by weak institutions that have little capacity and autonomy. They lack basic legitimacy and thus lose support from citizens due to their inability to provide public goods necessary for citizen survival.[3] Citizens at this stage may choose to transfer allegiance to informal groups that can provide resources where the government is unable. The capacity of Hezbollah to provide social services to the community has encouraged the terrorist hold over the vacuum of power in Lebanon. In support of this argument, I will first review the causes of the vacuum of power in Lebanon and describe the ideology and political goals of Hezbollah. Following this discussion, I will examine the strong Shiite support base for Hezbollah's resource provisions. I then will cite the specific resources provided by Hezbollah and discuss the scope of Hezbollah's capacity in opposition to the Lebanese government. In conclusion, I will discuss the implications of Hezbollah maintaining a hold over the vacuum of power in Lebanon.

Looking at the circumstances of Lebanon, the vacuum of power can be traced back to the Lebanese Civil War, the sectarian government, and economic severities. Lebanon dealt with foreign occupation of Syrian and Israeli troops for twenty-five

1 Patrick H. O'Neil, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, 7th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021), 49.

2 O'Neil, Comparative Politics, 49.

3 Boaz Atzili, "State Weakness and 'Vacuum of Power' in Lebanon," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 8 (July 13, 2010): 758, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2010.494172.

years causing an incapability to maintain a monopoly of force over the region.[4] Though Hezbollah's rise to power originated after the end of the Lebanese Civil War, the government struggled to return to a place of high autonomy as outside militias and Syria retained large influence in Lebanon.[5] The presence of non-state forces eliminated the capability of the Lebanese government to maintain sole power in the region which led to Hezbollah's rise to power. The government of Lebanon, too, was divided into religious sects that vied for economic and political power.[6] The principle of this form of government was established in the hopes of providing a share of power among the different sects; however, it proved to escalate the divides among the various religious communities.[7] The lack of consensus among the ruling groups created tension that eliminated the ability for strong government performance. The economy of Lebanon furthered the burdens of the state in that it could not develop a clear system of taxation to provide funding for military and civilian services.[8] Furthermore, corruption was commonplace in the economy as most of the power was focused into a small group of elites, and goods were used to prompt loyalty.[9] Thus, Lebanon lacked a strong power structure which aided the terrorist group Hezbollah in seizing power.

Though it may seem counterintuitive that a terrorist organization also provides social services for people in need, Hezbollah is classified by the United States as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). In order for a group to be classified by the Secretary of State as an FTO, it must meet the criteria of being a foreign organization engaging or intending to engage in acts of terrorism.[10] In addition, these acts of terrorism must threaten the security of the United States or citizens of the United States.[11] This designation as an FTO holds ramifications for these groups as it limits the United States' ability to aid financially and stigmatizes the group on a larger world scale.[12] Furthermore, by taking a stance in classifying the organization as an FTO, the United States illustrates to other countries the heightened need to lessen the power of these groups in promoting terrorism.[13] Hezbollah received its designation as an FTO on October 8, 1997, and remains on this list currently.[14]

The basis of the terrorist group of Hezbollah centered on its aim to end Israeli occupation and form an Islamic Republic within the state of Lebanon.[15] Hezbollah

4 Bryan R. Early, "'Larger than a Party, yet Smaller than a State': Locating Hezbollah's Place within Lebanon's State and Society," *World Affairs* 168, no. 3 (2006), 115.

5 Atzili, "State Weakness," 770.

6 Atzili, "State Weakness," 761.

7 Atzili, "State Weakness," 763.

8 Atzili, "State Weakness," 761.

9 Atzili, "State Weakness," 762.

10 "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," U.S. Department of State, https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/.

11 "Foreign Terrorist," U.S. Department of State.

12 "Foreign Terrorist," U.S. Department of State.

13 "Foreign Terrorist," U.S. Department of State.

14 "Foreign Terrorist," U.S. Department of State.

15 Early, "Larger than a Party," 120-121.

claimed to be influenced by the religion of Islam and aimed to assert its ideology in various parts of society.[16] The religious ties to Islam mandated certain obligations for Muslims to participate in forms of charity.[17] For example, Zakat, one of the five pillars of Islam, requires that individuals contribute part of their income to others in need.[18] Furthermore, Muslims were encouraged to participate in good behavior as a means of convincing non-Muslims to join Islam through the practice called Da'wa.[19] Religion provides Hezbollah with the justification and motivation for its emphasis on providing resources in support of the community. As an anti-Israel terrorist organization, Hezbollah used this stance to create a Lebanese support base that reached beyond the Shiite population.[20] The military strength of Hezbollah allowed the group to resist the Israeli occupation in the strongholds of southern Lebanon, while the Lebanese military was unable to provide this support. This part of Hezbollah's ideology was justified not only by the forced removal of Shiites from Israel but also by Israeli occupation in the southern region of Lebanon.[21] The Israeli occupation of the now majority Shiite population of southern Lebanon confirmed the tensions created in the forced removal of the Shiite community from Israel. At its fundamental level, however, Hezbollah asserts that the identity of its members can be streamlined to their position as soldiers.[22] As a terrorist organization Hezbollah would resort to violence as a means of swaying politics in favor of the group.[23] Ultimately the goal of Hezbollah is to rid Lebanon of the Israeli presence and create a state united under Islam through means of social welfare and violence if needed.

The Shiite communities living in the disadvantaged areas of Lebanon are specifically aided by the services of Hezbollah in the absence of government support. The Shiite population is consolidated into primarily three regions of Lebanon that include Southern Lebanon, Beqaa Valley, and Beirut.[24] As a community, the Shiites have been forced onto land that has proven to be less apt for production while other religious groups are given the more advantageous areas of Lebanon.[25] By the 1960s, Shiite occupied areas of Lebanon showed significant deficits in resources and illustrated an immense gap in the progression of infrastructure projects.[26]

16 Eyal Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses of Hamas, Hizballah, and Other Activist Islamic Organizations," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 21, no. 1 (March 2012): 136, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1949-3606.2012.00130.x.

17 Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses," 129.

18 Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses," 129.

19 Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses," 129.

20 Early, "Larger than a Party," 123.

21 Early, "Larger than a Party," 119.

22 Eitan Azani, "The Hybrid Terrorist Organization: Hezbollah as a Case Study," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 36, no. 11 (October 11, 2013): 902, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2013.832113.

23 Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses," 135.

24 Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses," 130.

25 James, Love, *Hezbollah: Social Services as a Source of Power*. (Hurlburt Field: Joint Special Operations Agency, 2010), 5.

26 Love, Hezbollah, 8.

These findings emphasize the strong geographical disadvantage of the Shiites that causes the community to lean more heavily on the resources provided by Hezbollah. The vacuum created by the absence of government support would create the conditions for individual constituents to look elsewhere for necessary services.[27] In the case of Hezbollah, its ability to meet the needs of the community while avoiding corruption proves to stimulate loyalty from the Shiite community.[28]

Hezbollah provides public goods to the citizens of Lebanon through three branches of social welfare called the Islamic Health Unit, the Educational Unit, and the Social Unit. The Islamic Health Unit operates three hospitals, fire departments, and dental and health clinics within the Lebanese state that offer free or subsidized treatment.[29] The services Hezbollah provides also encompasses mobile units for receiving treatment and facilities for blood donations.[30] The medical services provided by Hezbollah fill a gap of unaffordable or unavailable health care under the Lebanese government. The Educational Unit places its focus on ensuring the students of Lebanon receive proper education and learn the values of Islam. Between the years of 1996 and 2001, Hezbollah has dedicated fourteen million dollars towards scholarships for furthering students' education.[31] Hezbollah's services even provide for meals during the day and compensate for the logistics of transportation to schools.[32] As a result, more children within Lebanon have access to the resources and funds that allow them to continue prioritizing their education. Under the Social Unit, the Jihad Construction Foundation focuses on efforts to create construction and agricultural projects, especially those in Shiite populated areas.[33] This foundation provides funding for those who have suffered infrastructure damage because of bombings from Israel.[34] Also under the Social Unit, the Hezbollah Martyrs Foundation and the Foundation for the Wounded provides monetary support, services, and medical care to those who have been hurt or killed in the battle against Israeli forces.[35] Overall, the Social Unit of Hezbollah centers on improving the infrastructure of Lebanon and providing aid to those affected by the fight against Israel.

Hezbollah secures services for the Shiite community that outstrip the minimal support of the Lebanese government. Following an Israeli bombing in 2006, Hezbollah put forth 281 million dollars towards reconstruction and aid while the Lebanese government only contributed twenty-one million dollars towards rehabilitative

27 Shawn Teresa Flanigan, "Nonprofit Service Provision by Insurgent Organizations: The Cases of Hizballah and the Tamil Tigers," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (June 13, 2008): 503, https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100802065103.

28 Flanigan, "Nonprofit," 504-505.

29 Flanigan, "Nonprofit," 510.

30 Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses," 130-131.

31 Love, *Hezbollah: Social Services*, 26.

32 Azani, "The Hybrid," 905.

33 Pascovich, "Social-Civilian Apparatuses," 131.

34 Early, "Larger than a Party," 123.

35 Flanigan, "Nonprofit," 507.

efforts.[36] This evidence suggests that Hezbollah has a greater capacity than the Lebanese government to provide for its citizens, which leads the Lebanese people to showcase greater loyalty towards Hezbollah. However, the autonomy of Hezbollah to provide these services is somewhat limited as the source of much of their funding is from Syria and Iran. Hezbollah must balance relations between one of the historically stronger forces within Lebanon, Syria, while also maintaining a good stance with their additional financial supporter, Iran.[37] Due to potential conflict between funding nations, the nature of Hezbollah's monetary support can prove to be conditional. At the same time, Hezbollah's status as a non-governmental organization allows it to receive funding from the Lebanese government according to the annual budget that is set aside for non-profit organizations.[38] In addition, the title of a non-governmental organization allows for Hezbollah to partner with other NGOs without being rejected by the prejudices attached to the terrorist organization's name.[39] Though the United States has limited funding to Hezbollah in response to its classification as an FTO, Hezbollah does retain some amount of funding from the Lebanese government that helps perpetuate Hezbollah's existence.

Currently, citizens of Lebanon are dealing with severe electrical shortages that leave many without power or dependent upon generators.[40] Hezbollah has seized this shortage as an opportunity to publicize its capacity to provide fuel and generators for the people of Lebanon, even going so far as to showcase this display amid a parliament blackout.[41] Whether for the purposes of expanding Islam or resisting Israeli occupants, Hezbollah has utilized the vacuum of power in Lebanon as a pathway to provide for citizens, especially the marginalized Shiite population. Using its health, education, and social units, Hezbollah has been successful in exceeding the scope and quantity of resources provided by the Lebanese government. Though Hezbollah has gained a large support base due to its service provisions, Lebanon is facing a significant number of citizens fleeing the country, almost 3,100 people daily.[42] These numbers signify a large population of citizens that have lost faith in the potential of Lebanon to recover from its position as a failing state.[43] Ultimately, the question remains whether Hezbollah's hold over the vacuum of power is enough to provoke sufficient confidence to keep future generations from fleeing Lebanon.

36 Flanigan, "Nonprofit," 520.

37 Early, "Larger than a Party," 115.

38 Flanigan, "Nonprofit," 510.

39 Flanigan, "Nonprofit," 510.

40 Nader Durgham, Suzan Haidamous, and Liz Sly, "Hezbollah Flexes Its Muscles in Lebanon and Provides Free Iranian Fuel," *The Washington Post*, September 24, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/lebanon-hezbollah-fuel-crisis-us-sanctions/2021/09/23/2b87da8a-1c79-11ec-bea8-308ea134594f_story.html.

41 Durgham, Haidamous, and Sly, "Hezbollah Flexes."

42 Scott Simon, "Lebanese Flee Their Own Country amid Economic Crisis," September 26, 2020, in *Weekend Edition Saturday*, podcast, audio, https://www.npr.org/2020/09/26/917185909/lebanese-flee-their-own-country-amid-economic-crisis.

43 Simon, "Lebanese Flee."

Presidential or Parliamentary Government

The Democratic Future of Turkey

[Kyle Hush]

Democratically aligned states often fall into two subcategories of political representation; however, scholarly analysis of presidential executive governments suggests "presidentialism is inferior to parliamentarianism" in maintaining the fundamentally liberal values that support the continuation of free government.[1] Examining the role of presidential systems broadly and in the context of Turkey is significant. Doing so will offer insights into the strength of democratic institutions in a post-parliamentarian system. Turkey is a crucial military ally of the West and traditionally represents a generally stable democratic partner, projecting secular, liberal values in the near East. A Turkish transition from a Western-backed liberal democracy could signal a geopolitical shift threatening Western access to resources, shipping, and military interests throughout the region. Turkey straddles a fine geographic and ideological line between East and West. Considering how domestic political transformations in Turkey may lead to geopolitical re-arrangement around central Asia and the Middle East is essential. Turkey's 2017 referendum granted significant authority to President Erdogan, marking a historic transition away from secularist parliamentarian rule. Erdogan's newly fortified position provides a "unique democratic legitimacy" reserved for those leaders embodying both a "national identity" and legislative authority.[2] This essay will assert that Turkey's transition toward a pure-presidential system will degrade liberal democratic institutions and increase the likelihood of the emergence of an authoritarian government. First, this essay will examine pure-presidentialist and pure-parliamentarian democracies theoretically, offering consolidated parameters and the potential externalities of each. Both systems of democratic representation have, in a purely hypothetical scenario,

1 Juan J. Linz, and Arturo Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 103.

2 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 103.

costs and benefits. After describing the merits and demerits of each design, this essay will describe the political transitions occurring in contemporary Turkish politics through a presidentialist or parliamentarian paradigm to resolve debates surrounding the sanctity of the country's democracy. Understanding Turkey's democratic evolution from parliamentarianism to presidentialism will communicate potential remedies for maintaining liberal democracy in Turkish politics as it enters a new phase of domestic leadership under the Erdogan regime.

It is crucial to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the sources that support this analysis. Much of this essay's research builds upon Juan Linz's book *The Failure of Presidential Democracy.* The source contributes to scholarly discussions regarding the most beneficial and long-lasting democratic institutions. However, the overt position of Linz's research suggests that presidentialist systems are more likely to result in adverse outcomes for democratic states. Despite Iinz's analysis and practical failures amongst presidential systems, it would be a misrepresentation of a complex political issue to deny pro-presidential arguments a place in this essay.

Additionally, articles from Henry J. Barkey published by *Council on Foreign Relations* and Ekim and Kirişci's work for the *Brookings Institute* provide essential context into the story and political agenda of president Erdogan and his domestic allies. Sources dedicated to explaining the presidentialist aspirations of Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party are often critical of the Turkish regime. That alone does not delegitimize the work of Ekim, Kirişci, Bakery, and others, but it is essential to note the clear anti-Erdogan, anti-presidential undertones of their analysis. However, this essay operates under the assumption that the democratic track record of presidentialist systems is substantially less stable than the parliamentarian government, and legitimate democracies require liberal, pluralist institutions to represent the constituency's interests accurately. A systematic critique of presidentialism and a thorough investigation of Turkish democracy will reveal the emergence of anti-democratic practices inherent in the political structure.

It is essential to establish working definitions for parliamentarianism and presidentialism. These operational definitions are not in-depth descriptions of specific types of either design, but general descriptions derived from their most consistent elements. In a theoretical context, limiting either to a particular subcategory of the overarching structure is unnecessarily constraining. In its broadest terms, parliamentarianism describes a system in which the government is responsible to the parliament, meaning that the parliament can dissolve the leading coalition through a vote of nonconfidence.[3] Essentially, the head of government is the head of the legislature and remains subject to the will of elected peers. Unlike a presidential system, the government's leader is a Prime Minister and "is not

3 Alan Siaroff, "Varieties of Parliamentarianism in the Advanced Industrial Democracies," *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 24, no. 4, (2003): 445-446.

directly elected by voters, but instead is selected by the legislature.[4] The democratic legitimacy of a parliamentary leader is derived from the broader constituency but through the indirect appointment of locally elected parliamentarians. The general voting population may question the Prime Ministers' legitimacy because they are not subject to a popular election but reign as the head of a legislative coalition. A Prime Minister's democratic authority does not emerge fifty-plus-one majority; therefore, they must represent a pluralist set of issues presented by government members– leading to more significant equity of representation in the legislature. Generally, the obligation to establish collective or collegial backing in the legislature limits the disenfranchisement of competing parties occurring in presidential regimes that win by a slim majority.[5] A Prime Minister's required legislative majority and the threat of non-confidence votes without a set term in office means that parliamentary systems "offer both better accountability and greater flexibility to a presidential one."[6] Although parliamentarian leaders do not necessarily represent a direct majority of the voting population, they are stable in a democratic legitimacy contingent on the majority of directly elected officials.

By contrast, Preseidentialist democracies express popular will through voting mechanisms. The executive's role is separate from the legislature. Hence, the executive is not subject to removal by non-confidence and avoids any obligation to maintain bipartisan representation in their office. An executive possesses considerable powers in the constitution, generally in complete control of the composition of his cabinet and the administration.[7] Presidential executives can appoint members of their party to significant roles in the government and purge those who represent a political opposition. Without an obligation to the legislature to maintain plural recognition, the executive can operate a government singularly representing their party– consolidating political authority on an agenda that need only express a slim majority of voters. The set period of a presidential regime is not dependent on the formal vote of confidence by the democratically elected representatives in parliament.[8] Fixed terms, barring exceptional circumstances, insulate the popularly elected executive from the legislature. Therefore, they can oppose the equally legitimate congress without facing a significant threat to their office. The president is not only the holder of executive power but the symbolic head of state and cannot be dismissed except in exceptional cases of impeachment.[9] The tension between the lawmaking body and a singular executive is ubiquitous in presidential democracies.

The prominent feature of presidential democracies is: a complete claim to democratic legitimacy, often with plebiscitary components, that supersedes the

4 Siaroff, "Varieties of Parliamentarianism," 445-446.
5 Siaroff, "Varieties of Parliamentarianism," 445-446.
6 Siaroff, "Varieties of Parliamentarianism," 445-446.
7 Juan J. Linz, *Democracy: Presidential or Parliamentary, Does It Make a Difference?* (1988), 3.
8 Linz, Democracy: *Presidential or Parliamentary*, 3.
9 Linz, *Democracy: Presidential or Parliamentary*, 3.

perceived legitimacy of parliamentarian leaders.[10] The meager fifty-plus-one requirement to attain "popular" presidential rule enables the executive to assert themselves as representing the will of the people and the state. By contrast, the legislature's democratic legitimacy derives from a localized constituency and does not maintain additional claims to a broad national identity beyond legislative authority.

This electoral mechanism undermines the democratic governance of the legislature– granting rule-making and profound social influence to the executive. The tension created by the dual legitimacy (i.e., formal legislative capacity and head of state) enforces a minimalist interpretation of democracy characterized by an "institutional arrangement … in which individuals acquire the power to describe by means of a competitive struggle," not pluralist inter-legislative coalitions.[11] Through direct election, presidents claim multilateral influence without being subject to a strong, equally legitimate legislature or court. Therefore, presidential systems are a minimalist expression of democracy that does not require liberal attitudes to function. Instead, Presidentialism necessitates only competition between political elites. Parliamentarianism, by contrast, requires the consensus of a robust and informed legislative body.

The presidential system is rife with structural issues that threaten the sanctity of liberal democratic government. These problems occur in several practical scenarios. However, it is essential to identify the broader negative trends associated with presidentialism before demonstrating its effects on Turkish democracy. The presidential duality encompassing the responsibilities of a head of state and government creates a unique self-image with different widespread expectations among the voting population.[12] The socio-political ascendance developed in a prominent singular executive transfers their political identity to the political identity of the whole state- coalescing a representative's beliefs with the state's ideological character. The profound relationship between a president and the state's identity makes it "difficult to relinquish power and to be excluded from the prospect of regaining it in the case of failure of the successor."[13] Attaching a singular political representative or ideology to the state wrongfully attributes the incumbent's decisions to the people's will or, more accurately, the "majority" of a pre-determined constituency.

Additionally, the president's position as a popular candidate necessitates a consolidated voting base. The general election implies that a candidate must incorporate as many political opinions into the executive agenda. Maintaining a majority means entertaining the possibility that extremists (in a bipartisan voting block) might demand the executive acquiesces to minority political demands to maintain a tenuous majority.[14] Parliamentary leaders must appeal to a diverse set of representatives, resulting in the mediation of disparate opinions. Presidential

10 Linz, *Democracy: Presidential or Parliamentary*, 3.
11 Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, (1976), 269.
12 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 6.
13 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 17-18.
14 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 4.

candidates must consolidate a broad base of opposition, including divisive elements, to compete in a winner takes all election. Therefore, they must be sensitive to the demands of extremists within their supporters. The structure of presidential elections legitimates extreme political opinions in political discourse that threaten the liberal values sustaining democracy.

Exploring the democratic future of Turkish presidentialism requires exploring the rise of President Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The AKP's party originates in the conservative Islamic nationalist movements that opposed secular parliamentarian rule throughout the twentieth century.[15] However, since its 2002 ascendency, the AKP has shifted away from "traditional Islamist predecessors under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan."[16] Recent public opinion research suggests that support for the AKP does not fundamentally equate to Islamist political rhetoric.[17] The goals of the contemporary AKP appear to focus on economic policy performance far more than religious and ideological appeals and instead focus on financial and populist appeals to attract voters.[18] The transition indicates that despite Islamist roots, the AKP, and by extension Erdogan, are more focused on maintaining a secular government in Turkey. However, this secular identity of the AKP does not indicate a reassurance of liberal democratic values centered on political pluralism. The rejection of Islamism only eases trepidation regarding Turkish alignment with the West.

Since the 2017 referendum transitioning toward pure-presidentialism, the AKP has failed to eliminate concerns about the democratic standards of the new state. Liberals across Turkey initially hailed Erdogan's ascent as a sign of progress but are quickly finding his policies contradict the liberal democratic values.[19] Since acquiring significant presidential authority, Erdogan's "government has jailed tens of thousands … conducted a sweeping purge of the army and the state bureaucracy, shut down media outlets, and suspended thousands of academics," suggesting that the Turkish state fears negative discord in civil society.[20] Significantly, Erdogan's military reformation signals massive consolidation of political influence. The Turkish military often served a unique internal role, deposing political leaders who threatened the parliamentarian rule if they failed to transfer power peaceably. Erdogan's new role as a singular executive enabled him to gut the military hierarchy and replace them with AKP sympathizers- securing his position from military interference.

Under Erdogan's new constitution, Turkey's political order must fall into line based on the AKP's decisions. Essentially, Erdogan successfully removed the checks

15 Ihsan Dagi, "Islamist Parties and Democracy: Turkey's AKP in Power," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 3 (July 2008): 25-30.

16 Dagi, "Islamist Parties and Democracy," 25-30.

17 Dagi, "Islamist Parties and Democracy," 25-30.

18 Dagi, "Islamist Parties and Democracy," 25-30.

19 Halil Karaveli "Erdogan's Journey: Conservatism and Authoritarianism in Turkey," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 6 (2016): 121.

20 Karaveli, "Erdogan's Journey," 121.

and balances of a federal presidential system and eliminated the power of a legislature to exercise a vote of non-confidence. Turkey's transition to presidentialism in the contested 2017 referendum replaced the parliamentary system with a presidential one, centralizing all powers in the executive office.[21] These powers include the right to establish and abolish ministries, appoint ministers, and other senior officials—all of whom would operate without any legislative or judicial review.[22] Additionally, the AKP and Erdoğan will likely continue to win the popular vote. The parties reforms would further institutionalize a populist, one-person system that jeopardizes legislative and judicial independence.[23] Here in lays the paradox of presidential majoritarian democracy. Regardless of the AKP's democratic legitimacy, the organization's position enables them to degrade democratic practices while claiming to represent the people's will. Securing Erdogan's presidentialist regime has transformed a complex but functional pluralist political arrangement into a one-party state.

Turkey's failure to maintain a parliamentarian government appears to have left the state as a democracy in name alone. Regardless of popular election, Erdogan and the AKP look to have become electoral authoritarians, legitimizing one-party rule by dismantling an opposition candidacy. Political opposition from the Gelecek (Future) party exists in Turkey's authoritarian electoral system, but they have failed to win the majority of votes following the consolidation of Erdogan's influence.[24] Opposition parties mainly serve to legitimize AKP dominance. The elections are not 'competitive' in any real sense because laws curtail political freedoms and civic discord in Turkey. Other parties exist only to maintain the illusion of free election. As Turkey maintains an electoral structure, it will self-identify as a democratic state. However, Erdogan's presidential rule highlights the fallibility of concentrated authority in democratic systems and their tendency to manipulate democratic legitimacy to erode the institutions upholding representative government.

Erdogan and the AKP maintain control by manipulating influential members of Turkish society in the public and private realms. Turkey's presidential regime relies on neo-patrimonial relationships driven by the exchange of services between the state and private interest groups. In exchange for patronizing the AKP, Turkish elites receive protection and preferential treatment from the state.[25] The under-hand exchange of public services concentrates political and financial power around

21 Henry J. Barkey, "How Erdogan Muscled Turkey to the Center of the World Stage," *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 30, 2020, https://www.cfr.org/article/how-erdogan-muscled-turkey-center-world-stage.

22 Sinan Ekim, Kemal Kirişci, "The Turkish Constitutional Referendum, Explained," *Brookings*, March 9, 2022, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/13/the-turkish-constitutional-referendum-explained/.

23 Ekim and Kirişci, "Constitutional Referendum."

24 Ihsan Yilmaz, Galib Bashirov, "The AKP after 15 Years: Emergence of Erdoganism in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly* 39, no. 9, (2018): 1812–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2018.1447371.

25 Yilmaz, Bashirov, "The AKP after 15 Years," 1812-30.

maintaining AKP control. It is a system in which executive power does not emerge from the popular expression of the constituency– instead, Erdogan relies on appeasing the interests of non-state actors. In the diffuse and malleable hierarchy of parliamentary government, there is no clear and lasting hierarchy to establish neo-patrimonial structures.

To fully conceptualize how Erdogan has seized unprecedented authority, one must consider the majoritarian tendencies of Turkey's presidential system in the broader social context of the country. The AKP's populist rhetoric centers on the significant financial disparity and hyperinflation crippling domestic development in Turkey.[26] However, neo-patrimonialism is a fundamental part of the Turkish economic structure, contradicting populist economic rhetoric. The socio-economic situation makes one question how the AKP has maintained national support after eliminating long-standing parliamentarian institutions. Historical political trends indicate that dominant presidential systems succeed in many "countries where, because a natural consensus is lacking, a consensual instead of majoritarian form of democracy is needed."[27] The diverse socio-political opinions across Turkey resulted in a dysfunctional parliamentary system- many people felt it was ineffective compared to the direct authority of the presidential system. Constituencies who willingly hand over power to a dominant popular leader are "those with deep ethnic, racial, and religious cleavages but also those with intense political differences… huge socio-economic inequalities, and so on."[28] This paradigm encapsulates the deep demographic divides at the heart of Turkish politics. Turkish scholarly investigations suggest significant "prejudice against Kurdish ethnicity [among] lowly-educated and economically dissatisfied individuals."[29] The presence of ethnic division and an inflation rate of nearly ninety percent parallels general observations about states who are likely to endure "democratic backsliding" at the hands of a populist executive.[30] Turkish social and economic realities reflect a proven path toward authoritarianism at the hands of a democratically appointed executive. The trend indicates that the move toward pure-presidentialism fits the domestic political context of Turkey but suggests that democratic institutions will only continue to erode under the Turkish executive.

There is substantial evidence asserting the destabilization effect of influential executives in a democratic government; however, there are benefits to presidentialism. There would be far fewer examples within the global community without rational justification for presidential governments. Singular presidential

26 Dagi, "Islamist Parties and Democracy," 25-30.

27 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 91-92.

28 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 91-92.

29 S. E. Aytaç, Ali Çarkoğlu, "Ethnicity and religiosity-based prejudice in Turkey: Evidence from a survey experiment," International Political Science Review, (2017), https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512117696333

30 "Turkey Inflation Rate November 2022 Data - 1965-2021 Historical - December Forecast." Turkey Inflation Rate - November 2022 Data - 1965-2021 Historical - December Forecast. Accessed December 10, 2022. https://tradingeconomics.com/turkey/inflation-cpi.

executives, separate from a state legislature, present a unique "accountability to the voters for performance."[31] The accountability of the incumbent is enhanced because the president is directly responsible for the actions of their office. If the people of Turkey were profoundly disappointed with the government's policies, there is a line of direct attribution to the executive. A single person is clearly "identified as governing for the entire period of a mandate," and they cannot diffuse responsibility for negative externalities.[32] However, this fails to note the structural problems of concentrated power within representative government; people may remove a poor-performing executive at the end of their term, but the systematic issues of the office remain. In the eyes of the voting population, "presidential elections have the advantage of allowing the people to choose who will govern."[33] Still, they fail to account for the relative permanence of presidential rule and the overt tension of equally legitimated government officials operating in the legislature. Unsurprisingly, the Turkish people opted for a dominant presidential authority during political and economic duress. Reframing the Turkish political order around a centralized executive may even alleviate some of the economic, ethnic, and geopolitical issues facing the nation. However, the purpose of this essay is not to consider the potential benefits of Erdogan's preeminent position but to demonstrate that the emergence of pure-presidentialism threatens Turkish democracy. These are two related but different questions. Regardless of the new government's relative success or popularity, there are clear indicators to suggest a decline in democratic practices.

Pure-presidentialism in Turkey symbolizes an ideological break from their Western allies. Most stable European democracies are parliamentary regimes.[34] If Turkey is to remain a Western-aligned state, it will undoubtedly face harsh criticism from European parliamentarians. Introducing authoritarian-leaning presidentialism into the contemporary Western international community could threaten crucial opportunities for aid and development from the West. Turkey may have to look elsewhere to develop trade and exchange resources. Perhaps aligning with emergent Turkic nations in central Asia would present adequate growth opportunities for Turkey; however, these states often maintain extractive authoritarian political and economic systems.

As mentioned, Turkey is a demographically diverse state with a fractious history of sectarian inter-communal violence. Even in the modern age, the region descends into an ethnocentric political competition that often results in armed conflict. Recent years have seen the continuation of anti-Kurdish rhetoric from the Turkish majority. The Kurdish involvement in the Syrian civil war presents severe dangers for Turkey's political goals in the Middle East. Traditionally, "presidentalism has prevailed in societies that are relatively integrated ethnically," which does not

31 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 12.
32 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 12.
33 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 20.
34 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 4.

characterize the secular divides within the Turkish polity.[35] Successful European democracies, which Turkey aligns themselves with, maintain an ethnically and ideologically diverse population through equitable parliamentary representation. Perhaps, a parliamentary government would better serve the ethnic plurality in Turkey. The emergence of opposing ethnic and political groups would create a bipolar choice in popular elections and would produce considerable polarization.[36] A proportional parliament could support the presence of minority groups without having to promote nationalist rhetoric to secure a majority in a presidential election. However, Erdogan's position as president means he is free to receive his opponents or not and has no obligation to establish collegial relations with non-AKP-aligned groups. Prime ministers, unlike presidents, are members of a larger body and are "forced to interact to some extent as an equal with other politicians and leaders of other parties" to maintain legitimacy.[37]

Having established the context and the methods used to bring about presidentialism in Turkey, it is essential to note the most apparent problems it presents to democracy compared to its former parliamentary system. Pure-parliamentarianism requires mutual dependence, presidentialism is a system of mutual independence, and Erdogan is above the liberal institutional backbone of legislature and judiciary that counteracts authoritarianism.[38] Crucially, in a parliamentary system, the rate of ministers who serve more than once in their careers is "almost three times higher" than in presidential democracies.[39] Unlike presidentialist systems, the executive party in parliamentary democracies enjoyed a legislative majority in most cases.[40] The Prime Minister's success depends on representing the most interest at a given time. Erdogan's decisions are atomistic and not reflective of the legislature's desires. Locally elected officials cannot contribute significantly to Turkey's new order because of the executive's dominance. Most significantly, pure-presidential democracies are twenty-two percent more susceptible to military coups and have a twenty percent democratic survivability rate compared to parliamentary governments, which enjoy a sixty-one percent survival rate.[41] Considering the AKP removal of the dissenting military hierarchy, it is not outside the bounds of Erdogan's executive reach to use Turkey's armed forces for domestic political gain, a clear infraction of any democratic system.

The emergence of pure-presidentialism in Turkey after the 2017 referendum is a significant transformation in the political order of historically parliamentary democracy. Erdogan and the AKP's rise to power have altered the democratic framework of the nation and demonstrates that presidential democracy is not likely

35 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 44.
36 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 20.
37 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 25.
38 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 120.
39 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 127.
40 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 129.
41 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 124-125.

to propagate consistent and fair representative government in the foreseeable future. Many potential domestic and geopolitical externalities result from Turkey's shift to majoritarian populist presidentialism that could redefine the country's position in the global order. The signs of authoritarianism have already begun to express themselves under the consolidated rule of the AKP and are in line with theoretical arguments disputing the democratic fortitude of presidentialism. Managing the complex ethnic, socio-economic, and regional issues of the Turkish state is best left to a proportionally representative legislature– a legislature with the right to hold political leaders accountable. Presidential democracies carry an inherent "majoritarian implication" that will lead to the disenfranchisement of Turkish voters and increased polarization along established ethnic and social lines.[42] Despite enjoying high levels of domestic support, Erdogan's ability to "neutralize any opposition by appealing to Turkish voters' nationalist predisposition" has negatively affected free political discourse.[43] Turkey's presidentialist system enables the denigration of inter-governmental checks and the oppression of civil liberties to maintain authority. Fundamentally, the methods in which Erdogan and the AKP operate in the presidentialist context obstruct the liberal values required for a functioning democracy. The research indicates that Turkey's transformation from parliamentary to presidential rule is a step towards authoritarianism. If Turkey desires to reaffirm the nation's democratic tradition, the parliamentarian government must re-emerge in its original form.

42 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 69.
43 Linz and Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy*, 69.

Racial Disparities in Capital Punishment Sentencing within the United States

A Literature Review

[Serenah Quiroga]

Capital punishment has been a dividing and controversial topic in the United States, in large part due to its subjective convicting criteria. Historically, there has been little consistency and the sentencing factors have been highly skewed against people of color. In 1972, the Supreme Court ruled during Furman v. Georgia that the application of capital sentencing in the United States was categorized as "cruel and unusual punishment" which disproportionately affected the poor, people of color and minority groups, and it was deemed unconstitutional after a 5-4 split ruling.[1] This outcome temporarily abolished the death penalty for four years until further research and guidance could be given to ameliorate racial biases and sentencing disparities. Four years later, modifications and stricter regulations for capital cases were implemented to clarify what factors can be fairly considered.[2]

Gregg v. Georgia (1976) reinstated the death penalty in the United States but specified that it cannot be given automatically and cannot be applied in an "arbitrary or capricious" manner.[3] A new practice of using mitigating and aggravating factors as the only considerations for capital decisions was implemented, with the aim to eradicate racial bias and the use of other extra-legal influences.[4] Mitigating factors are positive characteristics often used by the defense, while aggravating factors

1 R. L. Young, "Guilty Until Proven Innocent: Conviction Orientation, Racial Attitudes, and Support for Capital Punishment," *Deviant Behavior* 25, no. 3 (2004): 151–167. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639620490266916.

2 Young, "Guilty Until Proven," 156.

3 T. J. Keil et al. "Race and the Death Penalty in Kentucky Murder Trials: 1976–1991," *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 20, no. 1 (1995): 17-36, https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02886116.

4 S. Bomboy, "On This Day, Supreme Court Temporarily Finds Death Penalty Unconstitutional," *National Constitution Center*, June 29, 2021, https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/on-this-day-supreme-court-temporarily-finds-death-penalty-unconstitutional.

are negative qualities surrounding the crime context often used by prosecutors. Now, aggravating factors like repeat offenses, high victim vulnerability, prominent role in the crime, use of a weapon, the execution of a hate crime, and mandatory minimum sentencing could not be used to justify a harsher punishment, unless found to be "true beyond a reasonable doubt."[5] The United States legal system continues to use these sentencing criteria.

Following Gregg, capital cases are required to feature three phases: charging, sentencing and appeal. During the charging phase, the jury deliberates and unanimously decides whether the defendant will be found innocent or guilty. During sentencing, a penalty is decided through the careful consideration of all mitigating and aggravating circumstances presented by the defense and prosecution.[6] Originally, judges determined the penalty; however, the Supreme Court decision in Ring v Arizona (2002) extended the jury's responsibility to impose the death penalty. The jury must unanimously decide whether the offender is sentenced to death or life in prison without the possibility of parole. The appeal phase requires the automatic appeal of all death sentences to the state Supreme Court to be reviewed for any potential errors or abuses by the trial court.[7]

A major caveat within capital cases is the strict involvement of a death-qualified jury. The Supreme Court determined in Lockhart v McCree (1986) that states can remove any jurors whose performance of duties will be impaired by their strong personal opposition to the death penalty.[8] Only individuals who are willing to consider the death penalty as a prospective sentencing option are eligible to serve on a capital jury. Unfortunately, even after modifications following Gregg were made in courts to address and decrease the existing disparities, there was still evidence that legally impermissible factors may still play a role in sentencing decisions. The Supreme Court ruled in McCleskley v Kemp (1987) that the contribution of racial discrimination towards capital punishment decisions is unconstitutional.[9] Although this case defines equal treatment under the law for all groups, racial disparities persist, having a detrimental impact on Black and other minority populations. Many researchers continue to investigate this within the justice system and the varying factors that may contribute. There is a diverse array of studies adhering to this general topic that differ methodologically. For this literary review, I analyze the existing racial disparities between Black and White defendants in death penalty sentencing. I aim to identify whether Black defendants receive the death penalty/capital punishment more often than White defendants for comparable offenses.

5 "Stages of a Criminal Case," *Justia*, October 15, 2022, https://www.justia.com/criminal/procedure/stages-criminal-case/.

6 Keil et al., "Race and the Death Penalty," 19.

7 N. Shaked-Schroer et al., "Reducing Racial Bias in the Penalty Phase of Capital Trials," *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 26, no. 5 (2008): 603-617, https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.829.

8 Young, "Guilty Until Proven."

9 R. Paternoster et al. "Reassessing Race Disparities in Maryland Capital Cases," *Criminology* 46, no. 4 (2008): 971-1008, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2008.00132.x.

Exclusion Criteria

My research strategy focused on the specific differences between capital punishment outcomes for Black versus White defendants. For this, I used the search terms "(capital punishment or death penalty) AND (black or African American)" and included a variety of limiters to exclude dissertations, literature reviews, mathematical models, metanalysis, metasynthesis and all non-English articles. I was interested in finding articles that adhered to the specific differences between Black versus White defendants in capital punishment decisions but also look for different factors that may contribute to these disparities. My initial search yielded sixty-one potential resources of which I immediately excluded three because they were not empirical journal articles. From this list, I excluded thirty-four more articles: fifteen because they focused primarily on the factors that influence differences in death penalty support and attitudes; two because of their focus on racial jury composition or victim race, and seventeen because they lacked relevancy or did not highlight key components like capital punishment discussions or racial differences. From the remaining twenty-four articles, I further excluded six due to their exclusive focus on the effects of victim/juror race and capital punishment, other verdict possibilities outside of capital punishment, or generally did not contain enough supporting evidence for my topic. I then added three additional articles from the citations of articles under review and individual external literature searches. My search strategy left me with twenty-one total articles relevant to my research topic for this literature review.

Literature Review

Racial discrimination within the court system today is a multifaceted systemic issue, not the result of a few individual cases. Studies that have examined this topic have generally found similar trends: Black defendants are more likely than White defendants to receive the death penalty, especially when the victim is White. This review will analyze a variety of controlled factors that influence capital punishment decisions, specifically variables that contribute to the disproportionate racial differences in death penalty sentencing. Most of the pertinent studies report that the race of the defendant has a remarkable impact on the sentencing outcomes, and the victim's race also has similar effects. Most significantly, the interaction between defendant-victim racial dyads is the most common factor discussed among research in the field. Other contributing factors that seem to influence outcomes like jury, organizational factors and data collection factors will be discussed in less detail. The literature analyzed in this review spans over 25 years, dating back to 1993 and the most recent in 2018. There is also an array of methodologies used within the studies such as post-trial interviews, archival research analyzing government cases, and true experimental research and surveys.

Defendant Racial Factors

Most research finds the race of the defendant to be the main factor affecting capital sentencing outcomes. Because there seem to be some inconsistencies in the past two decades of research, varying results will be discussed.

A study by Applegate et al. yielded significant differences in sentencing for Black vs. White offenders. Participants were given one of two vignettes' scenarios in which the only differential feature was the race of the offender. Respondents were significantly more likely to support capital punishment for Black offenders than White offenders.

Other studies have delivered similar results of racial differences but presented caveats, highlighting the complexity of the issue. Sorenson et al. aimed to identify racial disparities in capital punishment through an archival examination of all death-qualifying cases in the state of Missouri from 1977 to 1991. He found that White offenders are more likely than Black offenders to be charged and convicted with capital murder, but less likely to receive a death sentence. Conversely, Black offenders are more likely than White offenders to be charged but less likely to be convicted; if a case does lead to conviction, a Black offender is more likely to receive a death sentence. These results are explained by the perceived severity of the crime. A crime is perceived to be more aggravated for Black offender vs. a White offender, and therefore the severity of the punishment follows that perception. This effect is magnified if the victim is White.

While the majority of studies have found strong evidence to support racial inequalities unfavorable to Black offenders, others fail to yield statistically significant racial differences in the application of the death penalty. Mannes et al. examined how the defendant's race affected capital case decisions. Participants were instructed to read materials from a modified trial transcript of the H*arvard v. Mississippi* case in order that normal court proceedings would follow. They were provided with a picture of either an African American or Caucasian defendant; based on their review of the case, they were asked to determine whether the given defendant was guilty or not guilty on the charges of murder and sexual assault. If guilty, participants had to recommend a sentence of death penalty or life without parole. The outcome did not find statistically significant results to show racial biases in sentencing and the results failed to support their hypothesis. Thus, while race was not deemed a significant predictor, there may be underlying factors that affects the results such as aversive racism. Aversive racism indicates that stereotypes of Black people are internally present in White participants, but White participants are likely to change their behavior when race is made salient in a case to avoid appearing prejudiced.[10] Because Mannes' results differed from the consensus

10 J. F. Dovidio et al., "Racial Attitudes and the Death Penalty," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 27, no. 16, (1997): 1468-87. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1997.tb01609.x.

of other relevant studies, it is possible that other experimental confounds had an influence. The sample population lacked diversity, and although an orderly process of court readings was followed, deliberation among participants was not allowed which does not make for a realistic court setting, potentially skewing results. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether the defendant's race alone is sufficient to be deemed as the causative variable for racial disparities in capital sentencing.

Victim Factors

A victim's gender and race also have a major influence in sentencing outcomes. Many studies interested in the impacts of the victim's race on capital punishment decisions recount similar hypotheses: cases involving White victims are more likely to result in capital punishment compared to those with victims of other racial backgrounds, regardless of the defendant's race. Indeed, when capital murder cases tried in North Carolina between 1977 and 2009 were compared, a common "white victim effect" was established.[11] Defendants of all races were more likely to receive capital punishment when the victim was white. Alternatively, Sorenson & Wallace hypothesized a similar effect but did not find consistent results. Rather, cases with white victims were more likely to result in a charge or convictions but not significantly more likely to warrant the death penalty.

These factors in combination can have substantial implications for capital sentencing in court. Based on studies that have established that Black defendants are sentenced to death at disproportionately higher rates compared to White defendants, and also that cases involving White victims are more likely to result in the death penalty, it is then plausible to predict that the interaction between Black defendants and White victims will show amplified results for capital sentencing. Thus, we expect Black male defendants associated with white female victims to have a higher likelihood of receiving the death penalty compared to other racial and gender combinations. These differences and the ways in which these factors interact are important aspects of capital cases to consider.

To understand how race impacts capital sentencing, research must aim at pinpointing all factors that influence jury decisions. Achieving this implies controlling all possible variables. The essential component of researching the impacts of race on capital sentencing decisions is to consider all potential factors that may contribute to the way a juror decides, and control as many variables as possible. Therefore, an accurate way to analyze the data is to compare capital punishment decisions for specific defendant-victim racial combinations and the way these dyads impact jury deliberation.

11 W. G. Jennings et al., "A Critical Examination of the 'White Victim Effect' and Death Penalty Decision-Making from a Propensity Score Matching Approach: The North Carolina Experience," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 42, no. 5 (2014): 384-398, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2014.05.004.

Defendant-Victim Dyad Factors

This section will examine the comprehensive evidence surrounding varying defendant-victim dyads as well as how these specific racial combinations influence the way juries interpret case factors.

Sentencing Outcomes for defendant-victim racial combinations

Many studies seem to recognize the most pronounced racial disparities in cases involving Black defendants and White victims.

As aforementioned, Jennings et al. established the presence of a "White-victim effect" regardless of the defendant's race but found a more pronounced effect when defendants were Black. This may suggest a 'case effect' rather than a 'race effect' because the issue may be more nuanced than they were able to test within the limitations of their study.

Consistent results were found within the previously mentioned Sorenson archival analysis of death-qualified homicide cases in Missouri between 1977 and 1991. Black offender-White victim dyads were most likely to be convicted and receive a death sentence while white offender-white victim dyads were also susceptible to similar convictions. On the other hand, both black offender-black victim dyads and white offender-black victim dyads were much less likely to result in a conviction.[12] One way to interpret these results is from the juror's perception of the crime. Minority or Black offenders may be stereotypically viewed as more dangerous and their crimes more heinous, therefore justifying a harsher punishment. When the victim is a minority, jurors tend lessen the severity of the crime and impose a less harsh sentence compared to a white victim, implying that the lives of a minority victim may be perceived as less valuable. This theory is supported by an array of studies such as Keil and Vito,[13] Paternoster,[14] and Eberhardt with the same outcomes. Considering that minorities make up a much smaller percentage of the population, their overrepresentation on death row depicts signs of racial bias.

Case Severity and Defendant Stereotypicality

The perception of the severity of the crime is directly tied to jury's perception and implied stereotype. As previously discussed, Black or minority offenders are perceived as more violent, their crimes more severe, and therefore receive a harsher sentence.

In less severe cases, more pronounced racial bias was found for black defendant-white victim cases than other racial combinations. This suggests that racial disparities in capital sentencing may be due to biases brought into a court setting from the

12 J. R. Sorensen et al. "Capital Punishment in Missouri: Examining the Issue of Racial Disparity," *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 13, no. 1 (1995): 61-80, https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2370130105.

13 Keil et al., "Race and the Death Penalty."

14 Paternoster et al., "Reassessing Race Disparities."

real world as opposed to organizational factors.[15] The liberation hypothesis, the notion that extra-legal factors play a big role in less severe crimes or when the evidence is weak or contradictory, further supports this theory.[16] Due to the lack of concise criteria for sentencing and punishment, it allows for more arbitrary decisions based on personal bias by the jurors. A thorough examination of capital cases in North Carolina between 1977 and 2009 by Bjerregaard expected to find similar results to those in Applegate's study. He looked at different victim race-defender race dyads and their interactions with case severity, hypothesizing that the liberation hypothesis would be further supported. Surprisingly, the end results were contradictory; case severity positively influences death sentence probability. Black defendant-White victim cases were more likely to receive the death penalty in high severity cases, but less likely in low severity cases. Victim-offender dyads did not have a significant impact on sentencing outcomes for cases of average severity.

On the other hand, results were like past studies regarding sentencing outcomes for different victim-defendant racial dyads. Cases involving a Black defendant and White victim were more likely to receive a death sentence compared to white defendant-Black victim cases overall. Racial bias seems to play a bigger role in high severity cases and contradicts the liberation hypothesis. A feasible explanation lies on the fact that the death penalty is not a justified punishment for low severity cases. As prosecutors are more likely to seek the death penalty for more severe offenses, it is possible that jurors weigh aggravating factors more heavily than mitigating factors for Black offenders, thus more easily rendering a guilty verdict. Ultimately, regardless of case severity, racial disparities in capital punishment for Black versus White defendants committing the same crimes still prevail.

Weight of Mitigating/Aggravating Factors by a Jury

This section presents the evidence to support the hypothesis that Jurors place more emphasis on aggravating evidence than mitigating evidence when the defendant is Black. Despite the court instruction to jurors to exclusively weigh mitigating and aggravating factors presented, jurors are still humans with their own biases and prejudices.[17] Other studies further analyzed how the race of the defendant, juror, and victim influences a jury's receptivity to mitigating evidence. In capital cases where a black defendant kills a white victim, Black jurors were more receptive to mitigation than White jurors.[18]

15 B. K. Applegate et al., "Victim-Offender Race and Support for Capital Punishment: A Factorial Design Approach," *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 18, no. 1 (1994): 95-115, https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02887641.

16 B. E. Bjerregaard et al., "A Further Examination of the Liberation Hypothesis in Capital Murder Trials," *Crime & Delinquency* 63, no. 8 (September 2015): 1017-38, https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128715574454.

17 V.Y. Womack, (2022). Social Cognition [powerpoint slides]. Lake Forest College Psych 255: Social Cognition.

18 T. W. Brewer, "Race and Jurors' Receptivity to Mitigation in Capital Cases: The Effect of Jurors', Defendants', and Victims' Race in Combination," *Law and Human Behavior* 28, no. 5 (2004): 529-545, https://doi.org/10.1023/b:lahu.0000046432.41928.2b.

An archival study by Bjerregaard[19] showed, through a quantitative measure of aggravating and mitigating factors, that aggravating factors were weighed more heavily for Black defendants involved with White victims. Keil and Vito concluded that if more than one aggravating circumstance is found, the defendant is far more likely to receive a capital charge and death penalty. Harmon found that defendants with prior felonies yielded significantly higher rates of conviction and execution. Consequently, jurors are likely to consider recidivism as an extra factor in their decisions disregarding court instructions to only weigh circumstances pertinent to the present case.

As Black offenders are likely to experience racial bias in first offense cases, the snowballing effect deems a black offender more prone to be found guilty due to the recidivist argument previously discussed, and any subsequent crimes are perceived as more severe. This amplified racial bias renders Black defendants to be found guilty more easily and frequently.[20]

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2010, 52% of convicted homicides are committed by black offenders, and an assumption that black people commit more crimes than white people may be made from this. However, this statistic does not consider the discussions that make black offenders more readily "prosecutable" compared to offenders of other races. In other words, the "blackness" of an offender makes him a better target for prosecution than defendants of other racial profile.[21]

Jury Factors

The constitutional right to a jury trial is an aspect of the criminal justice system unique to American democracy, and jury trials also offer a voice to the people by allowing them to participate in the government process.[22] Members of a jury hold their individual beliefs, biases and prejudices, which may ultimately decide on the fate of a defendant either positively or negatively. This section will analyze jury factors that contribute to differential sentencing outcomes including jury racial composition, instruction comprehension and education and how jury attitudes differ based on geographical location.

Racial Composition of a Jury

The racial composition of a jury has been shown to correlate with specific attitudes that promote prejudice. In a between-participants quasi experiment, Shaked-Schroer et al. analyzed how a diverse jury can introduce the possibility of reducing racial bias in capital sentencing. Racially diverse set of 58 white and 62

19 Bjerregaard et al., "Liberation Hypothesis."

20 Owens et al., "Examining Racial Disparities," 1-2.

21 E. Owens et al., "Examining Racial Disparities in Criminal Case Outcomes among Indigent Defendants in San Francisco," *Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice* (2017): 1-2 https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/6791-examining-racial-disparities-may-2017combinedpdf.

22 "Why Jury Trials Are Important to a Democratic Society - Judges," accessed April 28, 2022, https://www.judges.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Why-Jury-Trials-are-Important-to-a-Democratic-Society.pdf.

non-white participants were recruited to read a trial transcript and decide on a penalty for either a Black or White defendant. When only White mock jurors were assessed, Black defendants were significantly more likely to receive the death penalty while White defendants were more likely to receive a life sentence. In racially diverse mock juror groups, the race of the defendant did not have any significant effect on decisions to grant the death penalty or life without parole. Ultimately, diversity in a jury decreased racial bias against black defendants.

Racial diversity within a jury impacts sentencing outcome. An extensive study conducted by Dovidio and Smith[23] examined the impacts that overt and subtle racism, as categorized by high versus low prejudice scores, from white participants have on capital sentencing recommendations for Black and White murder convicts. Participants with high prejudice scores recommended the death penalty more for black offenders than white offenders, exemplifying trends of traditional racism.

While highly prejudiced participants seem to display traditional forms of prejudice, the racial composition of the jury serves as a rationalizing factor for low-prejudice participants to show prejudice in a more subtle and indirect way. Dovidio describes this as aversive racism. When people experience high racial ambivalence, they tend to make decisions that are more favorable towards Blacks in order to avoid appearing prejudiced. However, when discriminatory decisions can be rationalized, they tend to unconsciously allow their racial bias to have an influence in subtle ways.[24] Aversive racism creates significant disadvantages for Blacks in society, especially towards capital sentencing outcomes, but its manifestations go more easily unnoticed due to its discrete nature.

Attitudes common to death-qualified jurors

Jurors that meet the death qualifications to serve for a capital case are commonly associated with a specific personality type that renders them prone to hold prejudices toward people of color.

Young conducted an archival study assessing how the death penalty may be disproportionately applied to African Americans due to the selection process of jurors. He aimed to determine the attitudes and beliefs that connect racial prejudice to capital punishment support and predisposition to conviction. Through an examination of general social surveys taken in 1990 and 1996, he found that individuals with high prejudice are more likely to support the death penalty. It can then be suggested that death-qualified jurors hold prejudice against Black defendants and thus, are more likely to vote for a conviction and death penalty sentence, even when the evidence is not strongly compelling. Furthermore, when presented with less than strong evidence, white respondents showed a preference for convicting innocent defendants over acquitting guilty defendants.[25] It is considered

23 J. F. Dovidio et al., "Racial Attitudes and the Death Penalty." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 27, no. 16 (1997): 1468-87. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1997.tb01609.x.

24 Dovidio, "Racial Attitudes," 1475.

25 Young, "Guilty Until Proven," 165.

a more severe mistake to let a guilty defendant free than convicting an innocent one. This is rooted from a rigid obedience of the law, negative views and distrust in human nature, and racial prejudice, in particular towards Black defendants. These characteristics and attitudes tend to favor subjects who believe more strongly in capital punishment and therefore make them "death-qualified" jurors; and subjects meeting these criteria appeal to the prosecution. Above all, Black defendants experience a predisposition to conviction and an increased likelihood to receive a death sentence due to the nature of capital cases and the process of selecting a death-qualified jury.

Instruction Comprehension and Education of the Jurors

Studies have established that many jurors have poor comprehension of procedural and court instructions overall. When instructions are not clearly understood, jurors more heavily consider the aggravating evidence and have a higher misunderstanding of mitigating evidence. Moreover, poor instructional comprehension yields a higher rate of death verdicts for black defendants than white defendants compared to jurors with high instructional comprehension. For high comprehension jurors, the race of the victim and defendant do not have any effect on sentencing decisions.[26]

Young suggests that less educated jurors tend to support the death penalty more than educated jurors, and the level of education of the juror directly correlates with instructional comprehension. Therefore, when faced with a lack of instructional understanding, a juror is more likely to consider extralegal factors and prejudices on their verdict.

A way to mitigate this problem is to further simplify the jury instructions in order to promote higher comprehension. Studies have tested this solution by comparing the comprehension of participants who receive standard or simplified instructions. Shaked-Schroer conducted a study where participants were asked to provide definitions for mitigating and aggravating factors and appropriately indicate the sentence that would be given for the respective prevalence of each factor. A calculation of instruction comprehension was taken from this. Only one participant that had received the standard instructions was able to correctly define mitigating and aggravating factors after reading the instructions which shows how minimally people are able to comprehend jury instructions.[27]

A decade later, another study by Mannes, Foster, and Maier further supported these findings. Simplified instructions decreased death penalty decisions for Black defendants but not White defendants, and Black defendants were not found guilty more than White defendants.[28] Racial bias in the capital sentencing process is

26 M. Lynch et al., "Discrimination and instructional comprehension: Guided discretion, racial bias and the death penalty," *Law and Human Behavior* 24, no. 3 (2000): 337-58, https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005588221761.

27 Shaked-Schroer, "Reducing Racial Bias," 610.

28 S. Mannes et al., "Jury instructions: How timing, type, and defendant race impact capital sentencing decisions." *Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice* 14, no. 2 (2018): 154-70.

reduced by the modification of jury instructions because comprehension of the instructions is increased.

Juries have a crucial role in capital cases and the fate of defendants on trial is determined by their sentencing decisions. However, evidence indicates that the varying attitudes held by different jurors and the lack of instructional comprehension has a detrimental effect on black defendants in capital cases. Substantial changes and reform need to take place to ameliorate these issues. Past and ongoing research continues to offer solutions that can create the necessary ground for reform.

Organizational Factors

Thus far, we have considered how factors relating to the main characters of a capital trial affect sentencing verdicts for black and white defendants. Organizational factors also shape the inordinate ways that defendants of certain races are treated and penalized. The negative effects of these factors come about inadvertently because of the fixed structure of the justice system and the way in which it is organized. In this section, we will analyze the evidence concerning organizational factors that encompass the inequitable treatment towards Black people in capital verdicts. Examples highlighted in the current research literature include the punishment options, phase of the case, and exoneration.

Severity of Punishment Options and Racial Bias in Each Stage of a Capital Case

Prosecutors can decide whether a case is going to be punished capitally. When a death notice is passed during the prosecutorial stage and the potential for a capital charge is claimed, the jury must undergo deliberation in the sentencing stage to decide on a death sentence or give life without parole.[29] Studies have shown that the severity of the maximum punishment option can alter the way jurors decide to sentence a defendant.

Glaser et al. questioned whether the possibility of the death penalty interacts with the defendant's race to influence verdicts. Participants involved in this experiment were given a mock triple-murder trial summary; the defendant's race (Black/White), and maximum sentence (life without parole/death penalty) were manipulated for different conditions. They then were asked to make a decision to either acquit or convict the defendant. The results showed that Black defendants were convicted more than White defendants when death penalty was a possibility, but not when life without parole was the maximum sentence option.[30]

Other studies have looked at 'truth-in-sentencing' (TIS) murder cases to see if race is still a factor. TIS cases essentially follow the same proceedings as death penalty cases, but the maximum possible punishment is life without parole. When

29 "Stages in a Capital Case," High School Curriculum on the Death Penalty, accessed April 29, 2022, https://deathpenaltycurriculum.org/node/3.

30 J. Glaser et al., "Possibility of death sentence has divergent effect on verdicts for Black and White defendants," *Law and Human Behavior* 39, no. 6 (2015): 539-46. https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000146.

death sentencing is not a possibility of consideration, the jury may not feel as heavily pressured, which may change their decision-making tactics. These cases allow us to directly compare outcomes to those of capital sentencing processes; controlling the severity of the sentence can help to more clearly articulate the role race has on verdicts. TIS can serve as a solution to reducing bias in the legal system. Non-discriminatory application of TIS allows for it to be a better alternative to capital punishment.[31]

A significant difference between juror racial bias and prosecutor racial bias is that the latter holds much more power and can keep information confidential. The prosecution commonly has self and political interests to win a case and may use their power to manipulate factors in their favor. For example, the prosecution is likely aware of the statistics in favor of conviction and thus will favor the selection of a jury that that will render them their wanted outcome. Furthermore, prosecutors recognize that minorities or Black defendants have a higher chance of prosecution, therefore seeking capital punishment more in Blacks or minorities than White defendants. For this reason, there are more existing cases involving Black offenders that can result in a conviction.

During deliberation, the jury gets together to consider all aggravating and mitigating factors of a case in order to produce a unanimous verdict.[32] As previously discussed, research evidence shows a better outcome for Black defendants by reducing racial bias; improving instructional comprehension and properly weighing aggravating and mitigating evidence.[33]

The appeal process occurs after a defendant is found guilty and the innocence presumption is revoked. During this short period, the defense can admit new evidence or delineate any mistakes made throughout the conviction process that would acquit them of the designated sentence. Some researchers argue that race shapes the speed and outcomes of post-sentence processes including the appeal stage. In a study by Petrie et al., Texas death sentence cases involving Black or Hispanic male offenders were assessed for their death row outcomes of either execution or sentence relief. Petrie expected Black offenders to experience lower rates of sentence relief and faster execution; however, the opposite effect was determined. Minority defendants had a lower hazard of execution than white defendants but also did not have a greater hazard of sentence relief. This may be caused by a dragged-out appeals process that takes longer to be resolved when minorities are involved in a case. It is reiterated, however, that a race effect was not found to influence sentence relief decisions; neither the defendant nor victim race had a significant impact on increasing or decreasing the hazard of execution or sentence relief. A longer appeals process is not necessarily indicative of an increased chance of sentence relief, but rather a result of inadequate legal representation,

31 Keil et al., "Race and the death penalty."
32 "Stages in a Capital Case."
33 Lynch, "Discrimination," 350.

which is known to speed up the pace and urgency of the appeals.[34] So, Black defendants spend more time on death row overall but do not experience execution at greater rates or have a higher chance of being released. These occurrences may be indirectly due to racial prejudice but are directly a result of organizational factors that create disparate outcomes in sentencing.

Exoneration after sentencing might be the only instance of the trial/post-trial process statistically favoring non-White or Black defendants. Talia Harmon and her colleagues examined exoneration rates in the United States to determine if race contributes to erroneous capital convictions. Results yield that non-white defendant/white victims' dyads are more likely to be exonerated compared to other racial combos.[35] These results were due mainly to allegations of perjury and police misconduct that increased chances of exoneration.[36] However, this paradox does not directly reflect redemption of a wrong conviction, but rather a broken system that seems to push for harsher punishments of minorities.

Ultimately, the trial process has shown to cultivate racial bias in nearly all aspects of the system making black defendants far more represented on death row and in the penal system as a whole. The "conviction-prone" orientation commonly possessed by death-qualified jurors favor conviction over acquittal when a case cannot be proven beyond reasonable doubt.

Conclusions

This comprehensive literature review covered a wide range of studies and identified a myriad of factors that contribute to the way jurors decipher information and determine verdicts in capital cases.

The victim and defendant race predominantly impacts sentencing outcomes but the reliability of these outcomes is best shown with the combination of these dyads. Thus, defendant-victim racial dyads are significant predictors of verdict decisions. Unequivocally, the main conclusion is that Black defendants who kill White victims are more likely to receive capital punishment at disproportionate rates than other racial combinations. The severity of the crime modifies these findings slightly; more severe cases increase the probability of the death penalty for Black defendants. A case is likely to be perceived as more severe when the Black Defendant-White victim racial combination is present.

The racial composition of the jury and their ability to comprehend instructions has a main effect on how deliberation unfolds. An equal representation of different races on a jury is most effective in reducing the pervasiveness of racial bias. Nonetheless

34 M. A. Petrie et al., "Who lives and dies on death row? Race, ethnicity, and post-sentence outcomes in Texas," *Social Problems*, 57, no. 4 (2010): 630-52. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2010.57.4.630.

35 T. R. Harmon, "Race for Your Life: An Analysis of the Role of Race in Erroneous Capital Convictions," *Criminal Justice Review* 29, no. 1 (2004): 76-96. https://doi.org/10.1177/073401680402900106.

36 T.R. Harmon and W. S. Lofquist, "Too Late for Luck: A Comparison of Post-Furman Exonerations and Executions of the Innocent," *Crime & Delinquency* 51, no. 4 (2005): 498-520. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128705275977.

this is difficult to enact due to the required death-qualification for capital jurors. Additionally, it is found that most capital jurors have a low comprehension of the instructions given, leading to the use of extralegal factors in decision making. This problem is found to be reduced by simplifying instructions.

The structure of the justice system itself has created gaps that allow for racial disparities to seep in. The severity of the maximum punishment option has skewed the way a jury deliberates; the mere consideration of the death penalty makes it more likely to be applied disproportionately to people of color. In addition, most phases of a capital case display biases; however, research has not had the ability to sufficiently examine bias in early stages because of the limited data recorded and available to the public. Although certain aspects of a capital trial, such as the deliberation process, are intended to reduce the likelihood that discriminatory beliefs will control outcomes, ultimately, they have not shown to be effective in their merit. As a result, minorities and Black people are incarcerated and given the death penalty at higher rates than White people for the same or similar offenses. Exoneration was examined by many researchers because of suspicion that these disparate trends were due to higher rates of false conviction. Ultimately, Black defendants were exonerated more than White defendants supporting this false conviction ideology.

Limitations

It is important to recognize that the studies reviewed contained major limitations and weaknesses. The topic of capital punishment can only be studied empirically utilizing archival data or experimental models. Consequently, it is impossible to control every variable in these studies due to high numbers of confounding variables that may influence the case. Many archival studies lack information necessary to measure all of the contributing components, mostly in the prosecutorial stages. Moreover, despite the efforts to simulate real life scenarios in all the experimental studies, the real-life stresses and pressures that jurors may experience during an actual trial can be very difficult to replicate in a research study. Participants understand that the decisions will not have any real impact on human life since it is strictly for research methods. In fact, many studies did not include a deliberation process of participants which is a crucial aspect of a real capital case trial. It was also quite difficult to find studies that examine capital punishment sentencing for Black female defendants compared to Black male defendants. This is an area of research that needs to be expanded on.

Some studies appeared to tilt their research and findings in a way to favor an outcome and to counter the findings of similar studies in the field. This confirmation bias alters the way they structure their study, the type of analysis they use and the way they interpret their results, proposing misleading conclusions to the audience.

Improvements for Future Studies and Real-World Implications

For future research, it may be important to measure the effects of racial bias in the early stages of a trial that may be imposed by prosecutors and judges. This requires courts to keep better records of case details in all stages of a capital proceeding and to make these records more publicly accessible. Finding ways to more accurately replicate the jury process and to include a mock deliberation process may help find more accurate results and data.

Cumulatively, these studies presented predictable but tragic results, nonetheless. The existence of racial bias in the legal system is a representation of the systemic racism that occurs in our society and translated to all its aspects including incarceration and capital punishment. The objective of many of these studies is to propose potential solutions to these systemic problems. We must continue to evaluate these sources to understand how we can eliminate these racially targeted consequences by effectively applying solutions that aim to eradicate biases. A high scrutiny of Prosecutors and Judges allowing racial prejudices and biases needs to be ensued. Finally, the very definition of "death-qualified" jury is in and of itself a self-fulfilling prophecy. A major reform in the choosing of jurors needs to take place to warrant a fair outcome for the accused.

The Sandwich Generation Experience

A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Stress, Perfectionism, and What it Means to be a Sandwich Generation Caregiver

[Belle Tseitlin]

Members of the Sandwich Generation (SGMs) simultaneously care for and support their children and elderly relatives.1 Although several studies have identified stress and perfectionism in the Sandwich Generation (SG), no studies have investigated the relationship between these constructs. Overall, the SG has not been studied deeply so more research is needed to identify themes that are relevant to the SG experience. This study investigates the relationship between stress and perfectionism and explores other relevant topics in the SG. SGMs may provide many types of support to elders and children, including physical support (e.g., helping with activities of daily living, assisting with housework and tasks), driving, emotional support, financial support, and more.[2]

1 Ann O'Sullivan, "Pulled From All Sides: The Sandwich Generation at Work," *Work* 50, no. 3 (2015): 491-494; Allison M. Steiner and Paula C. Fletcher, "Sandwich Generation Caregiving: A Complex and Dynamic Role," *Journal of Adult Development* 24 (2017): 133-143; Kiah L. Evans et al., "Working Sandwich Generation Women Utilize Strategies Within and Between Roles to Achieve Role Balance," *PloS one* 11, no. 6 (2016): e0157469; Alana M. Boyczuk and Paula C. Fletcher, "The Ebbs and Flows: Stresses of Sandwich Generation Caregivers," *Journal of Adult Development* 23 (2016): 51-61; Sanaz Aazami, Khadijah Shamsuddin, and Syaqirah Akmal, "Assessment of Work-family Conflict Among Women of the Sandwich Generation," *Journal of Adult Development* 25 (2018): 135-140.

2 Steiner and Fletcher, 133-143; Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61; Evans et al., e0157469; Esther Friedman, Sung S. Park, and Emily E. Wiemers, "New Estimates of the Sandwich Generation in the 2013 Panel Study of Income Dynamics," *The Gerontologist* 57, no. 2 (2017): 191-196.

Although some SGMs describe the dual caregiving experience as fulfilling, simultaneously acting as a caregiver to both children and elders is often a stressful experience.[3] Common stressors include putting pressure on oneself, pressure from others, a lack of support and/or resources, shifts in caregiving demands, and not having enough time to get everything done.[4] These stressors often lead to a multitude of other challenges for SGMs, including burnout, marital problems, negative emotions and feelings of overwhelm, and not having time for oneself.[5] The coping methods that SGMs use to manage such stressors include prioritizing important tasks, engaging in self-care, scheduling tasks and practicing time management, and asking for assistance and/or resources.[6]

Perfectionism also plays a role in the SG experience.[7] This may be problematic because perfectionism in general is related to many psychological problems, including depression, low self-esteem, relationship challenges, and even suicidal ideation.[8] Perfectionism exists in many forms and is linked to self-image as well as public expression.[9] *Self-oriented perfectionism* involves setting high expectations for oneself, whereas *other-oriented perfectionism* involves setting high expectations for other people.[10]

Much of the psychological research on SGMs examines the stress that SGMs experience, and some work also explores perfectionism in SGMs.[11] Some SGMs work to repress their perfectionistic tendencies to reduce stress, while others openly discuss the pressures SGMs place on themselves.[12]

However, none of the aforementioned work has directly focused on the correlation between stress and perfectionism, and it is important to understand these constructs as they relate to each other in the SGM experience. Additionally, because the existing research about SGMs, stress, and other psychological constructs

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3 Steiner and Fletcher, 133-143; Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61, Evans et al., e0157469; O'Sullivan, 491-494; Michelle T. Jesse et al., "Transplant Surgeon Burnout and Marital Distress in the Sandwich Generation: The Call for Organizational Support in Family Life," *Transplantation Proceedings* 50, no. 10 (2018): 2899-2904.

4 Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61; Aazami et al., 135-140; O'Sullivan 491-494; Evans et al., e0157469; Jesse et al., 2899-2904; Steiner and Fletcher, 133-143.

5 Jesse et al., 2899-2904; Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61; Steiner and Fletcher, 133-143; O'Sullivan 491-494; Evans et al., e0157469.

6 Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61; Aazami et al., 135-140; Evans et al., e0157469; Steiner and Fletcher, 133-143; O'Sullivan 491-494.

7 Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61; Aazami et al., 135-140; Evans et al., e0157469.

8 Paul L. Hewitt et al., "The Interpersonal Expression of Perfection: Perfectionistic Self-presentation and Psychological Distress," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 6 (2003: 1303-1325.

9 Hewitt et al., 1303-1325.

10 Hewitt et al., 1303-1325.

11 Steiner and Fletcher, 133-143; Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61; O'Sullivan 491-494; Jesse et al., 2899-2904; Aazami et al., 135-140; Evans et al., e0157469.

12 Boyczuk and Fletcher, 51-61; Aazami et al., 135-140; Evans et al., e0157469

is limited, it is necessary to identify additional relevant topics in the SG experience. Further research will allow us to improve available therapeutic interventions for SGMs and inform how institutions (e.g., the workplace) can support their SGMs.

Within my study I address limitations of the prior research on SGM stressors. I surveyed an SGM sample with stress and perfectionism scales, and I interviewed my participants to dig deeper into their SG experience. This research is exploratory in nature, so while some predictions were made, the principal aim of this work is to broaden our understanding of the SG, which in turn will inspire hypothesis-driven work in the future. The following research questions were examined:

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between stress and perfectionism in the Sandwich Generation? I predicted that higher levels of perfectionism correspond to higher levels of stress because perfectionists pressure themselves to uphold unrealistic expectations.

Research Question 2: What themes are common to the Sandwich Generation experience? It is important to note that previous researchers have defined the Sandwich Generation in various ways.[13] In this study, the SG will be defined as *the individuals who simultaneously provide support to the children and elders in their lives*. This definition closely aligns with previous work, but it allows for slightly more nuance than preexisting definitions. The goal of this study is to develop a comprehensive view of the SG, so any participant who identified as an SGM was included within the study.

Method

Participants were 27 members of the Sandwich Generation. The participants consisted of individuals in my personal network, as well as others who were referred to my study (e.g., spouses or coworkers of participants). To qualify for the study participants needed to provide care simultaneously to their children and older adults in their lives. It is important to note that my study consisted of both present and past SGMs (some participants reflected upon their time in the SG before their parents had passed; these participants were not in the SG at the time of my study but still participated).

Table 1 includes demographic information about the participants. Participants were informed that their data would be kept confidential and that they would not be receiving any compensation for their participation.

13 Jesse et al., 2899-2904; Friedman et al., 191-196; Michael J. Urick, "The Aging of the Sandwich Generation," *Generations* 41, no. 3 (2017): 72-76.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Demographic	Categories	Number	Percentage
Gender:	Woman	18	66.67
	Man	9	33.33
	Other	0	0
Education:	High school diploma	1	3.7
	Undergraduate degree	7	25.92
	Master's degree	9	33.33
	Doctoral degree	7	25.92
Annual Household Income:	Less than $60,000	2	7.41
	$60-80,000	1	3.7
	$80-100,000	2	7.41
	$100-120,000	4	14.81
	$120-150,000	2	7.41
	Over $150,000	10	37.03
Age:	Age range 37-72 years; Average age 52.08, SD = 7.77	x	x

Materials and Procedure

I collected data in the fall of 2020 and conducted my analysis in the spring of 2021. After electing to participate in the study participants were emailed a link to a Qualtrics survey (see appendices A-C). The survey first asked the participants to provide informed consent. Participants then provided basic demographic information for themselves and for the individuals they were/are caring for and completed scales that measure stress and perfectionism. *The Perceived Stress Scale—Revised* measures general stress.[14] Responses were answered on a Likert scale from 1-4 (*never to very often*), and a sample item is, "How often have you been able to control the irritations in your life?"[15] *The Parental Stress Scale* measures stressors related to parenting and raising children.[16] Responses were answered on a Likert scale from 1-5 (*strongly disagree to strongly agree*), and a sample item is, "It is

14 K.A.S. Wickrama et al., "Perceived Stress Scale—Revised," *PsycTESTS* (2013).

15 Wickrama et al.

16 Judy O. Berry and Warren H. Jones, "The Parental Stress Scale: Initial Psychometric Evidence," *Jouranl of Social and Personal Relationships* 12, no. 3 (1995): 463-472.

difficult to balance different responsibilities because of my children."[17] Finally, the *Big Three Perfectionism Scale* measures three facets of perfectionism: self-critical perfectionism, rigid perfectionism, and narcissistic perfectionism.[18] Responses were answered on a Likert scale from 1-5 (*strongly disagree to strongly agree*) and a sample item is, "I judge myself harshly when I don't do something perfectly."[19] Self-critical perfectionism refers to negative self-talk and holding oneself to unrealistic standards; rigid perfectionism refers to a tendency to strive for complete perfection and a tendency to be inflexible; and narcissistic perfectionism refers to a view of the self as perfect, along with a strict expectation for others to be perfect as well.[20]

Upon completion of the survey participants were emailed an invitation to participate in an interview. The interview focused on stress and perfectionism and also asked participants to describe their caregiving experiences in more detail. The participants who agreed to interview (n = 23) signed an informed consent document, and we agreed upon a one-hour meeting via video call. Upon completing the interview, participants confirmed their willingness to be included in data analysis and indicated the extent to which their interview data could be used (e.g., if we could quote them directly or if they preferred that we paraphrased). Four participants declined to be interviewed, so only their survey data are included in the analyses.

The interviews were conducted over Zoom, an online video conferencing tool. Interview questions were designed to glean more detail about the participants' experiences in the Sandwich Generation and to add depth to their survey responses. Participants described their day-to-day caregiving tasks, how they felt about being SGMs, and how caregiving affected different areas of their lives. Participants also answered questions about stressors and coping mechanisms, along with questions about perfectionistic tendencies and expectations they set for themselves. Probes were prepared to go along with each question in case the participant needed clarification, but probes were only used on an as-needed basis. Interviews were semi-structured, so there were prepared questions, but I would also ask follow-up questions based on responses that needed clarification or detail. Answering interview questions was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they were free to not answer questions without penalty. All interview questions and probes are included in Appendix D. All participants confirmed whether I could record and transcribe their interviews (n = 21 allowed me to record and transcribe; n = 3 only allowed me to take notes during the interview). All procedures were approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee at Lake Forest College.

17 Berry and Jones, 463-472.

18 Martin M. Smith and Donald H. Saklofske, "The Big Three Perfectionism Scale: A New Measure of Perfectionism," *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment* 34 (2016): 670-687.

19 Smith and Saklofske, 670-687.

20 Smith and Saklofske, 670-687.

Data Analysis Strategy

The survey data was used to examine Research Question 1 using the International Business Machine Corporation's Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 26. Specifically, two Multiple Regression analyses were performed to examine the relationship between perfectionism and stress in SGMs. Multiple regression is a statistical technique in which several predictor variables are evaluated for their relation to one outcome variable. In the first regression model, *general stress* was the predicted (i.e., dependent) variable, and gender, age, income, marital status, education, and perfectionism were predictors (i.e., independent variables). In the second regression model, *parental stress* was the predicted variable and gender, age, income, marital status, education, and perfectionism were predictors.

The interview data was used to examine Research Question 2. Interviews were manually transcribed to create readable transcripts, and thematic analysis was conducted to identify major themes of the Sandwich Generation experience. Thematic analysis is a method of organizing data and identifying emerging patterns of meaning across a dataset, and it allows for flexibility in how a researcher chooses to code (i.e., classify) qualitative data.[21] I chose to follow a "bottom up" approach in which the interview data guided my coding decisions (rather than having codes pre-determined).[22] The codes were extracted from the data, and definitions were developed based on the themes that participants discussed. Analysis began in December 2020 and concluded in March 2021.

Results

Quantitative Analysis

Results of the first multiple linear regression indicated that there was a collective significant effect between the predictors (gender, age, income, marital status, education, and perfectionism) and the dependent variable, general stress, ($F(8, 11) = 11.44$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R2 = .82$). The individual predictors were examined further and indicated that education, marital status, and gender predicted general stress. Narcissistic perfectionism negatively predicted general stress (i.e., higher levels of narcissistic perfectionism were related to lower levels of general stress). Narcissistic perfectionism exists when pressure to be perfect is placed upon others and the self is deemed to be perfect.[23] In this type of perfectionism, individuals are more concerned with others' performance than their own and have a very positive self-image.[24]

Results of the second multiple linear regression indicated that there was not a collective significant effect between the predictors (gender, age, income, marital status, education, and perfectionism) and the dependent variable, parental stress, ($F(8, 11) = 1.87$, $p = .18$, adjusted $R2 = .25$).

21 Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Thematic Analysis," *APA Handbook of Research Methods* in *Psychology* 2, (2012); 57-71.

22 Braun and Clarke, 57-71.

23 Smith and Saklofske, 670-687.

24 Smith and Saklofske, 670-687.

*See Appendices E and F for multiple regression tables and general descriptive statistics.

Thematic Analysis

Nine major themes of the SG experience were identified. Table 2 shows all themes and associated subthemes.

Table 2: Themes and Subthemes from Thematic Analysis

Theme	Sub-theme
Perfectionism	Guilt Rigidity
Non-perfectionism	Fluidity Non-dichotomous view of achievement
Stress	Acknowledgement of stress Sleep Emotion and temper management Lack of time Self-care
Support from other caregivers	High support Lack of support
Conceptualization of caregiving	Honor Duty Burden
Level of need	High Low Financial
Quality of relationships with care recipients	Positive Negative
Overlapping of worlds/multitasking	N/A
Distance from care recipient	N/A

Perfectionism

Perfectionism was expressed through participants' feelings of guilt and their strict rigidity with scheduling. Overall, perfectionism was understood as setting high expectations for oneself, and mood and self-image are largely dependent upon whether those expectations are met.

Guilt: Many participants discussed feelings of guilt with regard to their SG role. SGMs felt guilty about not keeping promises or letting care recipients down. One participant described a time when she could not spend enough time with her child because she had to take care of her mother-in-law, "you just feel bad... you kind of have guilt because you feel like... you don't want to let people down."

Rigidity: A second aspect of perfectionism identified from the interviews was rigidity with planning and scheduling. Some SGMs were very strict with themselves, setting time-bound expectations and plans, and were only satisfied when things went accordingly. These SGMs were resistant to adjustment and were self-critical when they felt like they could not keep up. One participant shared, "I'm a planner, and when things don't quite work out...I get upset...my stress level [goes] up."

Non-perfectionism

In contrast to perfectionism, many participants were intentionally non-perfectionist. They were relaxed and accepting of mistakes, and they did not judge themselves by as strict standards as the perfectionists.

Fluidity: Whereas SGMs who were highly rigid kept strict schedules and were uncomfortable with readjustment, SGMs who were more fluid were accepting of plans changing and adjusting expectations. One participant explained, "It was more or less focusing on that day...we just played it by ear...so not as structured as maybe some other people."

Non-dichotomous View of Achievement: A major component of non-perfectionism was being accepting of mistakes and allowing for imperfection. Whereas the more perfectionist SGMs judged themselves harshly when goals were not achieved, non-perfectionists did not base their self-evaluation on specific standards, rather, they were satisfied if they put in effort and felt that they did their best. When asked if they had any advice for future SGMs, one participant shared, "Prioritize what really has to be done and don't beat yourself up for what you can't get done...you can't do it all." These SGMs did not view success as all-or-nothing. Instead, they gave themselves credit for putting forth effort and were tolerant of mishaps.

Stress

Unsurprisingly, stress played a large role in the SG experience. Several sub-themes of stress have been identified upon close inspection of the interviews.

Explicit Acknowledgement of Stress: The most apparent indicator of stress was when SGMs acknowledged it directly. One participant, for example, was raising children while her mother struggled with dementia. The participant recalled often feeling fearful and shared, "It was a nightmare, it was just a nightmare...it was a very stressful time. I don't remember it [in detail]; I feel like I blacked out through it."

Sleep: SGMs mentioned that their sleep was affected by their caregiving role. They were either kept up at night by caregiving activities (e.g., waking up to care for an infant), and/or were affected by the stress of balancing caregiving with daily life and could not enjoy restful sleep. As one participant shared, "It's exhaustion…

[I was] up all night trying to get this baby to sleep...[and] you just want to sleep." It is unsurprising that sleep is so connected to how SGMs feel and their stress levels; sleep is a biological imperative for functioning and self-regulation.[25]

Emotional and Temper Management: Another component of stress is easily losing one's temper or overreacting, often due to exhaustion. One participant explained, "Without days off, your tolerance goes... and then that echoes within the family…[if someone made a mess], instead of just picking it up [like I usually would], I would just lose it." Many participants explained that stress was the reason they had a shorter temper, but the negative impact did not stop there. SGMs who acted out toward their family members described feeling guilty and even more stressed afterward; there seems to be a vicious cycle of stress leading to short temper, and short temper reactions leading to guilt and increased stress.

Lack of Time: Many participants felt that they often did not have enough time in their everyday lives to accomplish everything they needed to, leading to feelings of stress. One participant shared, "I feel the most pressure [in] trying to balance spending time with [elder] and spending time with my daughter, there's not enough time in the day." Other participants shared that the first elements to be dismissed from their lives were their own interests, desires, and hobbies because they did not have time to themselves. The stress is bi-faceted; there is not enough time to accomplish necessary tasks, and there is no time to unwind from the busyness of the SG lifestyle.

Self-care: In attempts to combat or manage stress, many participants discussed making time for self-care activities. Others commented on the lack of time or energy for self-care activities, but voiced interest in them. One participant who engaged in self-care said, "I have to go take a walk; walking is my friend. If time permits, go to the gym, do a little cardio, have some peace somewhere." Another participant shared the sentiment, "the caregiver themselves needs care." Engaging in self-care seemed related to lower stress levels, while a notable lack of self-care seemed to exacerbate stress.

Support from Other Caretakers

An important distinction that arose from the interviews was whether the SGMs were solely responsible for caregiving or whether they had help from other caregivers (e.g., spouse, older children, babysitters, etc.). For simplicity, the coding system was dichotomous; if SGMs had at least one other caregiver helping them, it was coded as "strong support," and if they did not have another caregiver helping them with tasks, it was coded as "no support." It should be noted that some SGMs had support for some care recipients, but not for others (e.g., spouse helps with childcare, but there are no siblings to help assist elderly parents).

Strong Support: SGMs who had at least one other caregiver helping them seemed to experience less stress overall. One participant who had a supportive

25 Terrence J. Sejnowski and Alain Destexhe, "Why Do We Sleep?" *Brain Research* 886, no. 1-2 (2000): 208-223.

spouse shared, "I had a partner that I could rely on for help...it made things easier."

Lack of Support: Some SGMs acted as the sole support for at least one of their care recipients. Generally, this was a more stressful situation because all caregiving responsibilities fell to a single individual. One participant who acted as a sole caregiver stated, "I am really her only relative that lives within a close enough geographical radius...I know that [her care] is going to fall to me." This situation creates stress because not only does the caregiver inherit more responsibilities, but the caregiver is also acutely aware that if they are unable to provide support, then the care recipient will not have their needs met.

Conceptualization of Caregiving

It was interesting to observe the ways in which participants conceptualized the experience of caregiving. Some felt that it was an honor and a privilege to be able to care for their families, while others felt that it was a duty that need not be questioned. Others felt burdened by the responsibility. It should be noted that some SGMs conceptualized caregiving one way for one care recipient (e.g., caring for my child is an honor) but a different way for another (e.g., taking care of my mom is a burden).

Honor/Enjoyable: Some SGMs described caregiving as a privilege and something they enjoyed doing. One participant smiled as she shared, "I feel so blessed as a mom, it's my greatest gift." Another said, "I would go back to it in a second if they [my parents] were back...I would do it all day, every day, for the rest of my life." SGMs who understood their caregiving role as an honor seemed to have an overall more positive outlook on their duties and relationships.

Duty: Another common way to describe the SG role was as a duty. Many participants simply accepted that it was their responsibility to take care of their children and elders in their families and did so without question. One participant with this perspective explained, "I had something that I had to do, it was something that I needed to take care of...you just do it because you know it has to be done."

Burden/Unenjoyable: A less common but still prevalent way of conceptualizing caregiving was as a burden. Some participants did not want the responsibility of caretaking, but they felt that they had no other choice. One participant who felt this way shared, "I did not want the responsibility at all…so very reluctant on my part, which makes it difficult…I want to put them out of my mind, and I can't."

Level of Need

Unsurprisingly, the level of need that care recipients required influenced the SG experience. For simplicity, I code time and energy needs as "high" or "low." If care needs were solely financial, I coded accordingly. It should be noted that some SGMs had some care recipients who were high-demand, others who were low-demand, and others who only had financial needs (e.g., a very ill parent, a healthy young child, and an independent adult child living out of the house).

High: Some SGMs had care recipients who needed more intensive care. These more demanding situations included, but were not limited to, parents with serious health conditions and children with very busy schedules. One participant in such a situation shared, "She [mother] was a diabetic and... had issues walking and [other] difficulties...I would do her shopping [and] do her laundry." Another participant who had a young child during her time in the Sandwich Generation said, "It is dusk till dawn with her...constant cooking, you know, meal prep...and just caring for my daughter."

Low: Some SGMs had care recipients who required less time and energy from their caregivers. These SGMs were responsible for tasks such as checking in with parents or spending time with children or grandchildren. One participant with adult children explained, "My son and his wife just purchased a new house [and] we've spent some time out there painting and doing things...it's those little things that you offer support for."

Financial: Some SGMs provided financial assistance, including, but not limited to, paying college tuition, or assisting with medical bills or groceries. One participant in this situation said, "We are funding my son in college, and will do [that] for the younger one, she'll be heading off next year."

Quality of Relationship with Care Recipient

The quality of SGMs' relationship with their care recipients colored their SG experience. It should be noted that some SGMs had some care recipients with whom they had a positive relationship and others with whom they had negative relationships (e.g., close to a child, but distant from a parent).

Positive: Many SGMs had positive relationships with their care recipients, which seemed to improve the SG experience. One participant reflected, "My in-laws were the greatest people ever...I would do anything just to have 15 minutes again with any of them because I had great relationships with all of them." Another participant who was particularly close with his child, shared, "My son and I are very close, he's my little nerd friend...his first thing is he wants to play with me [and] spend time together."

Negative: Some SGMs had strained relationships with their care recipients, which seemed to make their SG experience more challenging. One participant who had a negative relationship with his care recipient shared, "I don't have a good relationship with my brother [care recipient]. He's really hard to deal with, we don't really get along."

Overlapping of Worlds/Multitasking

Several SGMs described feeling that their roles were overlapping and frequently found themselves multitasking to get everything done. Different aspects of their lives did not stand alone and SGMs would often play multiple roles simultaneously, as illustrated in the examples below. This everywhere-at-once mindset seemed to characterize the experience for many SGMs. One participant shared, "Wednesdays, [my son] has music class...I've taken to using that time, I sit in my car [and] do Zoom

calls." Another participant recalled, "I remember being in the hospital room with my mom, and I was working on [a professional] speech."

Distance from Care Recipient

Many SGMs described the ways that distance from their care recipients influenced the role they played. Distance had a differential effect depending on the situation. For some families, having the care recipients close by was easier because there was not as much travel time involved. This seemed especially helpful with elderly care recipients, who sometimes doubled as caregivers for young children in the family. In other families, further distance was not problematic. For example, some parents had adult children who lived far from home, but they did not need ongoing and frequent care. Taken together, it seemed that having care recipients closer often made caregiving easier, but in some situations the distance was not a challenge for the type of caregiving SGMs were responsible for. One participant whose elderly mother was both a care recipient and assisted with childcare in the home shared, "I live with my wife, my son, my daughter, and my [elderly] mother... she's lived with us for the past two or three years, which is very helpful."

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between stress and perfectionism and revealed several themes that are relevant to the SG experience. The results of the multiple regression analyses will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of the thematic analysis. I will conclude by considering the limitations of the present study and will suggest directions for future research. All findings should be contextualized by the higher-level events occurring at the time of this study. Data were collected in fall 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This should be considered with each finding, especially along with discussions of stress and overwhelm; it is likely that these feelings were exacerbated because of the pandemic, and perhaps the experiences of future SGMs, post COVID-19, will differ from those found in the present study.

Based on the multiple regression analyses, the relationship between stress and perfectionism appears to be weaker than predicted. In the first model, narcissistic perfectionism emerged as the only significant perfectionism-related predictor of general stress, and the relationship was opposite to what was predicted (higher levels of narcissistic perfectionism were correlated with lower levels of general stress). This finding is likely due to the nature of narcissistic perfectionism, in which individuals are more concerned with others' performance than their own, while maintaining a very positive view of the self.[26]

The non-significant relationships between self-critical perfectionism and rigid perfectionism with general stress were surprising, but with consideration of the interview findings, it is theorized that some level of perfectionism may not

26 Smith and Saklofske, 670-687.

be as problematic as predicted. Rather, it seems that those with perfectionistic tendencies are satisfied with their mindset and reach their goals, and those with less perfectionistic tendencies are also satisfied and find success. Therefore, perfectionism itself may not be the issue; individuals need to find a mindset and goal achievement system that works for them.

In the second model, no perfectionism-related predictors significantly predicted parental stress. Overall, this model is theorized not to be predictive because of the specific nature of parental stress. It is possible that aspects of perfectionism are related to general stress, but not specifically related to the challenges of parenting. In other words, a perfectionistic mindset is broad and applies to many facets of one's life; it does not seem to be specific to parenting and caregiving.

Other findings from the multiple regression analyses are worth noting. The negative correlation between being married and stress (i.e., being married was correlated with having lower stress) is likely due to the increased support of having a spouse while caregiving for children and elders (it is also notable that although the second multiple regression model was not significant overall, marital status again emerged as significantly negatively related to parental stress). Results also indicated that women were more stressed, and this is likely due to the generally larger role that women played in active caregiving and to the higher number of women in the sample.

Explorative Findings

Of the themes identified in the interviews, *support from other caretakers, conceptualization of caregiving, quality of relationship with care recipient, and distance from care recipient* seem to play the largest role in the SGMs' experiences.

Support from other caretakers was immensely helpful for SGMs who had partner caregivers (e.g., spouses, siblings) because they were able to tag-team and delegate tasks to each other. Also, they were able to provide each other with emotional support and understanding. An emotionally supportive role was also sometimes served by spouses, friends, and online communities, even if they were not directly involved in assisting with caregiving activities. In contrast, SGMs who were solely responsible for caregiving duties were more stressed and had more pressure to take on responsibilities. For these caregivers, it would be important to identify and utilize sources of support in their communities to lessen their load and allow time to de-stress.

SGM's conceptualizations of caregiving also played an important role in shaping their experience. Those who considered the role an honor and enjoyed caregiving were less stressed and more fulfilled, and those who considered it their duty to provide care were also fulfilled to know that they were doing the "right thing." However, those who expressed feeling burdened by caregiving seemed more worn-down, stressed, and generally unhappy. They discussed what they wished they could be doing instead, and some even expressed some resentment toward other

family members who were not taking such an active role. For these SGMs, it would be important to implement some cognitive strategies to change their mindset about caregiving and to improve their relationships with their care recipients.

The quality of SGM's relationships with their care recipients influenced the experience they had, and this seemed to go hand-in-hand with their conceptualization of caregiving. SGMs who had more positive relationships with their care recipients conceptualized the experience as more positive and seemed to feel fulfilled by it, whereas SGMs who had more negative relationships with their care recipients conceptualized the experience as more negative and seemed to feel burdened by it. This leads to questions about conflict resolution, cooperative problem-solving techniques, and mindset. It seems that if SGMs are able to cultivate positive relationships with their care recipients, their experience in the SG is more fulfilling and positive overall.

Distance from care recipients played an important role in the SG experience for many SGMs. Some participants had to carve out extensive time just for commutes, and this was not only a challenge on a day-to-day basis, but it was also a stressor because SGMs worried about being able to get to their care recipients in an emergency situation. For others, distance did not play as significant of a role, especially if their care recipients were low-demand or only required financial assistance. However, for all SGMs, distance was at least a partial factor in how often they interacted with their care recipients in-person and how easy it was to get together.

Overall, the relationship between stress and perfectionism did not appear to be as strong as predicted. Rather (in line with quantitative findings), the interviews revealed that those who were more perfectionist were comfortable and achieved their goals with this approach, and those who were less perfectionist were comfortable and achieved their goals with that approach. It does seem that having a non-dichotomous view of achievement allowed for fewer feelings of guilt and kinder evaluations of oneself, but this did not appear to have a major influence in the SG experience overall.

Limitations and Future Research

Although it had many strengths, this study had important limitations, the identification of which can inspire future research that expands our knowledge of the SG. A key limitation was that although the number of participants was relatively high for an interview-based explorative study, because of the nature of the participant recruitment technique (convenience and snowball sampling), it lacked in diversity. As aforementioned, my sample was made up of well-educated, middle-to-high-earners, and it is likely that SGMs with a different socioeconomic status (SES) face different stresses and challenges. Another limitation of this study is the possibility of the exclusion of SGMs in certain circumstances. For example, it is unlikely that someone facing a family crisis (e.g., drastic change in elders' health condition) would be available and interested in participating in this study. Therefore, it is likely that this study did not sufficiently explore the SG experience in

times of crisis or challenge because of these SGMs' lack of availability or interest. A more comprehensive understanding of how SGMs handle particularly challenging times would be beneficial.

This study provides many avenues for future research. A diverse sample would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the SG. A larger range of SES, along with a focus on differences in culture, religion, and attitudes would help to understand the SG overall, and it could help to explain some variability in the SG experience. Further, each theme and subtheme could be explored in greater detail. For example, in my study, participants described the ways that distance influenced the experience they had with caregiving, and rather than just answering questions about help from other caretakers, participants explained the ways they felt supported or isolated. Individual studies about these themes would allow us to understand how they influence the SG experience and to identify the steps that SGMs can take to be more fulfilled during their time in the SG. Notably, some participants pointed out the lack of support in our society, including the inflexibility of many workplaces (e.g., little time off, short maternity leaves) and the limited, often expensive choices for childcare and eldercare. Future research should explore ways to address these problems and support SGMs. Finally, research about how SGMs handle acute challenges could inform how our society supports SGMs and what can be done to ensure the best outcomes for both SGMs and their care recipients. As more research is done about the SG, the gaps in our knowledge about the experience will become apparent, and we will be able to identify solutions that will improve the SG experience as a whole.

The Sandwich Generation is an under-studied population that is becoming more and more prominent in our society as elders are living longer and children and their parents maintain close bonds into adulthood. Stress and perfectionism are both prevalent components of the SG experience, but their relationship is not as strong as had been predicted. Nevertheless, many important themes of the SG experience have been identified, providing numerous avenues for further research. It is my hope that the scientific community continues to learn more about the Sandwich Generation so that we can support them and the essential role they play in our society.

[Editor Feature Reviews]

Baldwin on Gide in The Male Prison

A Christian Response

[S. J. Bickersteth]

I cannot help, being a Christian, but wince each time Baldwin makes mention of Protestantism in *The Male Prison*. Not, of course, because he is misrepresenting it, but because he is quite so painfully accurate in his appraisal. I have no intention of defending the beliefs that engendered the guilt which so hung over the head of André Gide throughout his life, whose tortures were borne clear on every page of autobiography, fiction, and epistle. There is something to be said – especially to this generation, whose sentiments toward Christianity are often those of resentment from past trauma – for the quite obviously malignant nature of certain popular teachings, of which Protestantism seems to have garnered a unfortunate number. The most reprehensible of them all, and most woefully influential, is the wretched Augustinian theologoumenon of original sin, whose prevalence across the annals of western theological history has brought more pain and compunction to believers than arguably any other doctrine. The notion that any individual could be, from the moment of their birth, culpable for a sin committed by some distant historical forebear is – aside from being patently logically impossible – morally repugnant, and almost certainly psichologically injurious

Perhaps our Anglo-American imaginations prevent us from grasping the sheer contingency of the doctrine, and how clearly possible it is to set forth the Christian narrative without it such as seen in the select theologies of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Yet, despite any doleful lamentations, we cannot change its incorrigibly widespread influence – so widespread in fact that in the twentieth century, Christianity and original sin are inherited by both Baldwin and Gide as one quite indivisible idea. The effects are omnipresent in the writing of both authors, primarily visible in the guilt conveyed through their characters, testimonies, and essays. This work of Baldwin's sees an encounter between this guilt and the

foremost social issues of modernity, with gender and sexuality serving as theaters hosting an internal struggle between self-acceptance and self-alienation.

However, I must insist that though gender and sexuality are undoubtedly important, they do not reach to the heart of this wound, and thus cannot serve as a thorough medicament. We cannot, after all, fool ourselves into believing that the identity of any human person can be exhaustively reduced to the cultural or epochal (or, more generally, factical) conditions of their existence. We may consider them vital aspects of our identities, yet we find ourselves repelled by any who would look to reduce our identity to them alone. To neglect them would be erasure, certainly, yet to prioritize them would be objectification. There always remains an "ever-more" to any discussion of what the self is; a declaration that no specific condition or characteristic of the individual could ever totally capture what it is *to be them*. The nature of the problem of guilt thus demands a solution which attends to this very excess.

With this in mind I might venture to declare that, for Gide, the question is not solely one of masculinity as Baldwin seems to portray it, but must always expand beyond the horizons of gender. The true, broader question at hand is thus: what does it mean to truly be oneself? It may certainly be formulated – and Gide has done precisely this – through the nomenclature of gender and sexuality, but ultimately these remain outward vestments cloaking a foundational conflict between the real and the ideal – that is, between the reality of what one presently is and the ideality of what one desires or feels obliged to become. Gide's true aims were loftier, and his passions deeper than such concepts, I contend. One must advocate for his display of naturality *as such*, denuded of any conceptual content. Here is the native land of his brilliance, and why his lifelong project may be best understood not merely as a study of extrinsic attributes and characteristics, but, more broadly – in a manner truer to human nature – a hermeneutics of the soul.

Hence why I must disagree with Baldwin when he opines that "How to be natural does not seem to me to be a problem."[1] At least, that is, I must disagree with his division of the natural and the "higher… state"[2] at which we must arrive. To treat the notion of becoming "a man" – that term which Baldwin uses when he speaks of the ideal – as though it would somehow redeem us, rather than recognizing the inherence of this redemption within, is dangerous. Baldwin here feeds into the tendency to exalt particular extrinsic aspects of being above oneself, identifying what one does not have and asserting that one is fundamentally incomplete without their possession. If only, we suppose, we should happen to acquire this or that particular thing, whether that be wealth, status, acceptance, a relationship, a legacy, *then* we shall be happy. Practically all great wisdom traditions warn against this very manner of thinking – the acquisition of any desideratum always coincides with the revelation of its insufficiency to appease the yearnings of the soul.

1 James Baldwin, "The Male Prison," in *Collected Essays* ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Library of America, 1998), 232.

2 Baldwin, "Prison," 232.

All the same, Baldwin identifies masculinity as Gide's *ignis fatuus*, his perennially irretrievable Grail, and thereby accepts and ennobles the great drama of his failed pursuit. But this threaten misery: it ensures that Gide's natural selfhood is forever a stain which he hopes to wash; an original sin which can be cleansed only by some unattainable baptismal water. He is thus condemned to an insoluble self-alienation. In the reduction of an ontological self and to a set of factial attributes, he makes himself precisely that of which he hopes to rid himself. One becomes judged according to worldly features (and thus, in the Pauline language, the Law) rather than being saved and defined by the Spirit which in a sense *precedes* all particular conditions of one's being-in-the-world. That is not to say that the self is essential, of course, only that – to persist in the Heideggerian idiom – it should concern itself with the "ontological" rather than the "ontic," the "existential" rather than the "existentiell;"[3] by which we are to mean with "Being" not in any particular manifestation (say, as a gender, sexuality, or the like) but in its unconditioned and universal mode. Failing to note this distinction, and forgetting "Being" by mistaking it for "a being," we indeed render the latter – those particular facets of identity, such as Gide's masculinity – a "prison."[4]

In the light of this forgetfulness does Gide see his wife, Madeleine. She, by his self-persecution, becomes collateral damage, a bystander who suffers under the slings and arrows of his irresoluble anguish. Baldwin quotes Gide as writing that "the spiritual force of my love [for Madeleine] inhibited all carnal desire" and himself remarks on how "he had entrusted, as it were, to her his purity."[5] For Gide, womanhood was entirely foreign: it was wholly other, *tout autre*, utterly removed from his sense of self and desire, and for this very reason became sacred, and Madeleine – as the icon of all womanhood – likewise. Thus (in the form of the love letters he gave to her), he handed over all that was best of his identity, in some desperate hope to rid himself of himself, to finally become a man through the redemption of woman.

This is precisely because of the religious misunderstanding set upon western thought by original sin. To fail to have oneself *exceed* one's sexual proclivity, gender, or the like, and instead to limit one's identity to that alone, is to give oneself over to the belief of gracelessness-as-natural –something which can surely never be accepted by the good Christian, even in a fallen world. It is a belief, I maintain, which derives its source from any theology (with which I must accuse Baldwin of being complicit) which bifurcates grace and nature, and thereby tears asunder any hope of a natural goodness in humankind. The implication here is disastrous: what is natural cannot be what is good. Under this pretense, of course Madeleine becomes an image of what Gide should have loved in his entirety, and thus the ideal of which he fell damnably short due to his homosexuality.

3 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), 32-5.

4 Baldwin, "Prison," 235.

5 Baldwin, "Prison," 233.

Baldwin's insistence on Madeleine's sanctity is thus incorrigibly problematic. He writes:

> Madeleine kept open for [Gide] a kind of door of hope, of possibility, the possibility of entering into communion with another sex. This door, which is the door to life and air and freedom from the tyranny of one's own personality, *must* be kept open, and none feel this more keenly than those on whom the door is perpetually threatening or has already seemed to close.[6]

We must surely oppose this rhetoric. If goodness only ever arrives from elsewhere (from the sacred feminine, from the extrinsic Madeleine) we shall be forever awaiting it. And if it ever were to make its presence known, we would be forced to respond to its call by eschewing not our sin, but our *very selves*. This we cannot do. We may be redeemed, transfigured, saved, but never may we be other than what we are. Only when one's truest interiority corresponds to one's utmost exteriority can the two at any point converge; only when what one naturally is *is* the very process of assuming one's higher state can Gide's sorrow finally conclude.

Thus, it cannot – it must not – be the case that Madeleine truly is the angelic ideal which the authors make her out to be. As Baldwin avers, for Gide, Madeleine and her womanhood were, more or less, Divine. It is precisely this exaltation which bears so heavily upon him, and thus it is an exaltation (better, an idolatry) which must undergo an iconoclasm for the sake of salvation. For she is no image of perfection. She, as Baldwin notes, shares in his compunction, and in her desperation ultimately rejects his pleas for forgiveness: the burning of his love letters is surely the most blatant repudiation of her role as messiah. The flames which consumed those letters should also have laid triumphant waste to the world of self-contempt and struggle in which Gide pictured so much of his life. Madeleine abdicates the throne of the ideal, and in so doing causes the dissolution of the tyrannical kingdom – but Gide seemed not to know what life there was to find in the ashes.

To be clear on a delicate point: the doctrinal struggle between homosexuality and Protestantism (and Christianity at large) is here not my concern. What I am arguing is that that debate is in fact animated by a more primordial sense of guilt associated with selfhood, as inflicted by original sin – a doctrine which does not pertain to any *particular* sin, but rather sinfulness as such, associated with the very self that always exceeds its attributes. As stated above, whether one thinks homosexuality sinful or not is a question preceded by a something far more insidious, a kind of psychological puppetry of which the language of "sin" and "healing" are only convenient veneers, concealing a certain *ressentiment* and lust for violence: a clear maliciousness on the part of the vindictive, and a consequent woundedness on the part of the victimized, both being emotional states antecedent to the actual terminology of the debate. It is to this that the modern Christian must most hastily attend, and within which guilt should have no place whatsoever.

6 Baldwin, "Prison," 235.

Gide himself never realized this, of course. The tortured spectacle of his marriage and inner life continued unto death, and now remains immortalized. But I believe that there is something here which was left unsaid, and remains pertinent for us who reflect on Gide's legacy. Baldwin's fear is that, with the burning of the letters, the collapse of Madeleine-as-divine, we do indeed risk the possibility of a genuine nihilism. The presence of God – the feminine *shekinah* – departs from the tabernacle, thus abandoning Israel to exile and ruin. If Gide no longer loves Madeleine as "Emanuele, God-with-us," then he would be "compelled to love her as a woman,"[7] a woman for whom his homosexuality held no passion. To avoid this, Gide sought the honor of resignation to the quest after an ideal which he may never attain, but which may forever ensure nobility in pursuit. Baldwin certainly seems to celebrate this impossible perfection, as he heralds Gide for having "endured this prison with such dignity."[8] Like Lancelot after the Grail, he insists we must fall short of something which perpetually allures and denies us, as unending penance for our past sins.

But I must counter with a more radically optimistic – that is, characteristically Christian – reading of the whole affair. Truthfully, the Gospel does not condemn us to a lofty ideal, but preaches the gracious condescension of the Ideal to our lowly reality. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. This is the union of the natural and the supernatural, what we are and what we should become. We need not glorify Baldwin's interminable incarceration, only acknowledge the crucifixion which shook and collapsed its cage, which tore the tabernacle curtain asunder, thus eternally reopening the path of humanity's return to its primeval nature. Given by and returning to the Divine, the question of how we are to be authentic to God is fundamentally one and the same with the question of how we are to be authentic to ourselves.

In the eyes of many Church Fathers, God became human such that humanity might become godlike. In Christ, the paragons of divinity and humanity converge, and thus what one authentically is perfectly aligns with what one must forever strive to be. This is no longer a struggle of anguish, guilt, and sorrow, but a pilgrimage of delight, love, and peace. Baldwin's "great problem," having priorly instilled in us fear and trembling, now entices us, beckoning us forth to a quest of simultaneous self-discovery and praise. But I might suggest a slight adjustment to Baldwin's phrasing. In each moment of our being, we venture to respond to the question which has no final answer, but which through Christ has been opened to us forever: "How to be – in the best sense of that kaleidoscopic word"[9] – not a man, but a *self*.

7 Baldwin, "Prison," 233.
8 Baldwin, "Prison," 235.
9 Baldwin, "Prison," 232.

If At First You Don't Succeed

[Aaron Brand]

There is no shortage of aphorisms about the virtues of repetition. "Practice makes perfect" is familiar to anyone who has had the joy of being inexperienced, the phrase itself being a sort of stand-in for actual progress. Rarer are meditations on failure, or the impossibility of perfection itself. *The Rehearsal*, a show by Nathan Fielder, stands as a counterweight to these platitudes. The show's premise is simple enough: What if you could rehearse awkward or difficult situations until you were ready for all possible outcomes? Fielder, the director, writer, and arguable main character, offers this possibility to the show's other participants, volunteers who'd like to practice various life events before experiencing them in reality. As Fielder states, he wanted to convey to his clientele that "if you plan for every variable," happiness doesn't have to be subject to chance.[1] This is the show's promise and failure; that a good life can be predicted, and that a bad one can be avoided through meticulous planning. *The Rehearsal* captures and refracts the frustration of modern life's promise – that success is a matter of planning – through the lenses of family, career, and religion. After a brief discussion of two other contemporary analyses of the show, I will analyze its portrayal of failure through repetition in modern life.

It is perhaps unsurprising that a show as odd as Fielder's has left people confused and divided. Two articles in The New Yorker, one highly critical of the show, one more sympathetic, offer insight into what so divides the viewer. In the former, Richard Brody argues that Fielder's "gaze" is predicated on a sort of contempt for the participants.[2] He outlines the efforts of a man who "is pulling the strings," and thus cannot extricate himself from a power dynamic on the show, one

1 *The Rehearsal*, season 1, episode 1, "Orange Juice, No Pulp," directed by Nathan Fielder, written by Nathan Fielder, aired July 15, 2022, HBO, 2022, HBO Max.

2 Richard Brody, "The Cruel and Arrogant Gaze of Nathan Fielder's '*The Rehearsal*,'" The New Yorker, October 9, 2022, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-front-row/the-cruel-and-arrogant-gaze-of-nathan-fielders-the-rehearsal.

in which Fielder ultimately rules.[3] Thus, Brody concludes that the show cannot capture its own object, the genuine experience of its subject. For him, the show is plagued by "the failure to find a dramatic form," for its content and its implications.[4] At the other end of the spectrum is Naomi Fry's analysis, which finds "something intensely comical," in the show's extreme efforts to duplicate experiences for its subjects.[5] For her, the show exists as a kind of Rube Goldberg machine built to solve problems in life that do not need such extreme solutions.[6] Ultimately though, Fry still views *The Rehearsal* as a desperate attempt to reach beyond Fielder's "relentless solipsism."[7] What neither of these analyses entertain is the possibility that *The Rehearsal*, rather than being the cruel take on reality tv and control that it appears to be, is a work about the difficulty of truly accomplishing kindness. That Fielder, and the show, fail to be kind is perhaps the one thing in the show that is not a product of design.

Fielder strives to practice having a family but only becomes further removed from the feelings of closeness that are the ideal of family life. The majority of the show follows a rehearsal designed for Angela, a 44-year-old woman who wants to practice raising a child (dubbed Adam). On its face, this is the ideal test case for the show's premise. As Fielder states, "most people don't have the resources," to properly create a simulation of parenthood.[8] (Un)Predictably, this whole production unravels, failing to prepare Angela for parenthood in even the loosest sense. Notably, after it becomes obvious that Angela will potentially be rehearsing raising a child alone, (an impossibility for her due to her adamance about raising a child in a two-parent, Christian household) Fielder steps in to raise the practice child with her. He intimates his hope/belief that he "could be a good dad," and the audience hopes and prays with him.[9] That this is doomed, of course, does not enter into either co-parent's mind; their mutual participation in this project is an assertion of their belief that practice works. In the midst of this, Fielder introduces another participant, Patrick, whose portion of his grandfather's estate is being withheld from him by his brother.[10] Patrick solicits Fielder's help to practice convincing his brother to give Patrick his portion of the will. Through a series of bizarre circumstances designed by Fielder, Patrick has a truly cathartic conversation with his proxy brother and vanishes from the show. Fielder states that he never heard from him again, but

3 "The Cruel and Arrogant Gaze."

4 "The Cruel and Arrogant Gaze."

5 Naomi Fry, "Don't Worry, Nathan Fielder Also Hates Himself," The New Yorker, October 9, 2022, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/08/15/dont-worry-nathan-fielder-also-hates-himself.

6 "Don't Worry."

7 "Don't Worry."

8 *The Rehearsal*, season 1, episode 2, "Scion," directed by Nathan Fielder, written by Nathan Fielder, Carrie Kemper, Eric Notarnicola, aired July 22, 2022, HBO, 2022, HBO Max.

9 "Scion."

10 *The Rehearsal*, season 1, episode 3, "Gold Digger," directed by Nathan Fielder, written by Nathan Fielder, Carrie Kemper, Eric Notarnicola, aired July 29, 2022, HBO, 2022, HBO Max.

muses that "maybe for some, the rehearsal itself is enough."[11] Critically, Patrick never reaches catharsis with his actual brother, in just the way that Angela, and Fielder, do not achieve the feeling of parenthood. The child actor who was hired to portray the teenage version of Adam, because of Fielder's imagined negligence as a father, develops a fake drug addiction, ultimately resulting in a fake overdose.[12] Just before the conclusion of his arc, the actor (as Adam) yells "You're not a dad!" at Fielder, and the fact that this is only a rehearsal is merely an afterthought.[13] The failure, of being a good father and of the method, is real.

The Rehearsal demonstrates that success in one's career, far from being a result of planning, is a matter of pure luck. In another diversion from the main arc of the show, Fielder creates an acting school aimed at producing actors capable of working on rehearsals. Dubbed 'The Fielder Method,' the style is aimed at hyper-realism because, as Fielder admonishes his students in class, a bad performance can "ruin someone's life."[14] As the only real expert in this method, Fielder should stand out as being the most skilled of all the actors in achieving this goal, but is instead plagued with insecurity that his students will see through his inexperience. He tells us, in voiceover, that he is often "intimidated by actors," and their assuredness.[15] On the one hand, the audience's experience with Fielder at this point in the show renders this statement inherently plausible: Fielder is a human meme of insecurity, often standing somewhat apart from the participants in the rehearsals with a laptop attached to his chest with a papoose-like device in order to walk and type simultaneously. However, that Fielder, the recipient of a seemingly unlimited budget from HBO, should be intimidated by a bunch of jobless acting school students is patently absurd. The show explores this dynamic of power and uncertainty in excruciating detail, with Fielder eventually engaging in his own rehearsal of his class, conducted by his own actor doppelganger, with him acting in the role of one of his acting students. After embodying the student, listening to his own lessons through the mouth of his lookalike, Fielder asks, with a sense of horror, "wait, what is this show?"[16] Against the grain of the show's conceit, practice has inexplicably caused Fielder to lose certainty in his project.

The certainty of faith in *The Rehearsal* serves as stand-in for knowledge of the world. The show's main participant, Angela, is a born-again Christian, and spends much of her time in *The Rehearsal* speaking about her faith and how much of a mess her life was before she came to Christianity. In a scene from one of her dates (looking for a co-parent for her rehearsal) she talks at length about how certain Christians don't read the Bible, and how without it, "people start going by their

11 "Gold Digger."

12 *The Rehearsal*, season 1, episode 4, "The Fielder Method," directed by Nathan Fielder, written by Nathan Fielder, Carrie Kemper, Eric Notarnicola, aired August 5, 2022, HBO, 2022, HBO Max.

13 "The Fielder Method."

14 "The Fielder Method."

15 "The Fielder Method."

16 "The Fielder Method."

opinions."[17] For her, this is the greatest error one can make. In another scene, we overhear her praying that the show's production, with its attempts at control, be directed by God because only God, "holds the world together on its axis."[18] After Fielder moves in with Angela to co-parent Adam, a new difficulty arises in the form of Fielder's being Jewish. Fielder states that he "still [does] all the holidays and stuff," and inevitably tries to incorporate this into Adam's life.[19] However, Angela firmly believes that this is no way to raise a child, stating that she can't participate in Judaism because it "denies that Christ came and died for us."[20] The tension of how to raise Adam ultimately becomes a breaking point for Angela's participation in the show, and Fielder is left to raise a young Adam (the show reset the timeline to before the neglect that caused the older Adam's OD) alone, as a Jew. Tellingly, the show does not end here, resolved as to the 'correct' religion to raise a child with. Instead, Adam's Judaism tutor is shown admonishing Fielder for not using his platform to advance Israel's cause. "You have a platform," she cajoles Fielder, "you should support Israel."[21] Even religious practice thus dissolves into uncertainty and failure, and the credits of the episode roll with Fielder resolutely not taking a stance on the State of Israel. Importantly though, no one's opinions or beliefs change throughout the episode or show, and each participant leaves the show believing what they believed when they joined. Only the audience is aware of how much their beliefs have failed to prepare them for reality.

The Rehearsal is a singular artifact in our time. Emerging from the wreckage of Covid-19 and the larger alienation of our era, it asks, simply, how we can hope to understand other people. We the audience watch as what seems a simple goal – making life a little easier – spirals out of control. That, at base, "understanding someone is always just a guess," is both deeply unsatisfying and honest.[22] The show insists that it would be nicer to "pretend that everything is ok," whilst also refusing to pretend that anything really is.[23] Maybe this is what provokes people to wonder whether everyone on the show is an actor, whether the whole production is itself staged. But in the end, *The Rehearsal* insists that maybe that doesn't matter, that "life can be more than one thing."[24] Maybe we can't really know other people, and instead, kindness is just a process where people "gather only what they need to know," to keep themselves safe, to feel secure.[25] Because really, if we could try it all again, would we do it any better? I'm not sure.

17 "Scion."
18 "Scion."
19 *The Rehearsal*, season 1, episode 5, "Apocalypto," directed by Nathan Fielder, written by Nathan Fielder, Carrie Kemper, Eric Notarnicola, aired August 12, 2022, HBO, 2022, HBO Max.
20 "Apocalypto."
21 "Apocalypto."
22 "The Fielder Method."
23 "The Fielder Method."
24 "Apocalypto."
25 "Gold Digger."

The Destruction of American Democracy

A Review of How Democracies Die

[Alex Gascoigne]

Few days in the year are notoriously associated with a single catastrophic event - January 6th being one of them. It is on this day that Americans saw the very stability of their nation hang in the balance, posing a threat to democracy itself. The observance of such constitutional decay has been the impassioned life-long pursuit of Harvard political science professors Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, who paid heed to the direction taken within American politics. Through their research, spanning widespread geographical landscapes and time periods, they articulate the fundamental principles that facilitate authoritarian regimes. "We should worry when a politician 1) rejects, in words or action, the democratic rules of the game, 2) denies the legitimacy of opponents, 3) tolerates or encourages violence, or 4) indicates a willingness to curtail the civil liberties of opponents, including the media."[1] Upon outlining the rudimentary characteristics of such individuals, they found a remarkable resemblance to those of the forty-fifth president of the United States. Therefore, this report aims to support this very notion by relaying the events of January 6th - as it is on this day, Donald Trump fulfilled all the criteria of an autocratic leader.

Adding on to the philosophies of esteemed political scientist Juan Linz, Levitsky and Ziblatt outline the cardinal indications of potential authoritarian leadership. In doing so, they suggest that the events of January 6th show Trump satisfying the third requirement - tolerating or encouraging violence. While considerable debate can be made as to whether Trump encouraged violence, he certainly displayed tolerance. At a time of substantial influence, he displayed little impetus to lessen

1 Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2018), 21-22.

the tensions brewing in Washington D. C. "For more than 187 deadly minutes, Trump watched his armed mob take over the Capitol and did nothing about it."[2] When an observable threat was posed to both his political opponents and fellow GOP members (including that of his running-mate), he utterly failed to protect their civil liberties. It is this obnoxious protection of self-pride that not only humiliates the legitimacy of a nation but endangers its own citizens. One's worries extend far beyond Trump's general disregard for democratic happenings to the wellbeing of those he leads.

As this was all in the pursuit of denying the results of the 2020 presidential election, Trump (rather effectively) further executes the two preliminary requirements of an authoritarian. By denying the validity of the country's electoral system, Donald Trump rejected the democratic norms and denied the legitimacy of his opposing political opponent to office. This incitement of widespread distrust for governmental processes was previously discernible in the 2016 presidential election: "A Politico/Morning Consult poll carried out in mid-October (2016) found that 41 percent of Americans, and 73 percent of Republicans, believed that the election could be stolen from Trump. In other words, three out of four Republicans were no longer certain that they were living under a democratic system with free elections.''[3] This notion is particularly monumental, as the United States was founded on the grounds that underlie a basic respect for individual belief. Those Republicans who feared the loss of these basic democratic principles understandably felt inclined to take action - leading historian Douglas Rinkle to state: "No major presidential candidate had cast such doubt on the democratic system since 1860. Only in the run up to the Civil War did we see major politicians 'delegitimizing the federal government."[4] It is this very delegitimization that was blatantly displayed on this infamous January day - beckoning one to contemplate the very stability of this "free" nation.

Most soberingly, it is this very concern of "freedom" that has run rampant in the hearts and minds of modern Americans. "All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical-left Democrats, which is what they're doing. And stolen by the fake news media. That's what they've done and what they're doing. We will never give up, we will never concede."[5] It is in this video, provided by PBS NewsHour, that Trump displays the final basic attribute of a totalitarian leader - the willingness to undermine the constitutional rights of his opponents (including that of the media). In his January 6th speech, he villainises the "radical" left and poses in a position of victimhood suffered at the

2 Center for American Progress, "January 6 Hearing Day 8: 187 Minutes of Trump's Inaction," YouTube, August 10, 2022, 0:04 to 0:15, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGT-MCLxecA.

3 Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 61-62.

4 Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies* Die, 61.

5 PBSNewsHour, "Watch Live: Trump Speaks as Congress Prepared to Count Electoral College Votes in Biden Win," YoutTube, January 6, 2021, 43:26 to 43:42, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pa9sT4efsqY.

hands of journalists. Whilst this combative disposition did not directly summon an insurrection, one must contextualise this address in unity with the assembly of people who listened on this day. "Many Republicans latched on to the saying that whereas Trump's critics took him literally but not seriously, his supporters took him seriously but not literally. His campaign rhetoric, in this view, was 'mere words.'"[6] It is this exact belief that brings danger to a figurehead, such as the forty-fifth president of the United States. Authoritarianism alone is not powerful enough for destruction - however, with an abiding following, it must be feared.

Therefore, the events of January 6th provide substantial evidence to validate the philosophies proposed by professors Levistky and Ziblatt. In modern times, we have been presented with an individual that poses a threat to the very internal security of the nation. Whilst these Harvard academics give warning of the creation of such a societal agitator - the danger is now clear. Though humorous to observe an extravagant businessman turn himself into a political agitator - that is where amusement abruptly ends. The ideological divide of the United States has only grown more gaping, to the point of violence and distrust. To a point where epistemic bubbles have evolved into epistemic chambers - where opposing views are greatly undermined. Thus, one must not purely assess the principles discussed, but take action to prevent its further growth. As it was on this day, that the American people saw the greatest danger to democracy in the twenty-first century…their own president.

6 Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies* Die, 60.

The Reality of the Supernatural

Literary Theory in the World of "Lucy Gray"

[Nicole Nagel]

Within his magnum opus *The Republic*, Plato decrees that poets have no place in society because "all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful strains not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed." Naturally, such a damning allegation has long since been treated as an affront to the livelihood of poets, playwrights, and authors everywhere. In the centuries that followed, writers across Europe published responses to Plato's doctrine, including the likes of the experimental naturalist Émile Zola (1840-1902), and the gentleman playwright Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). The contemporaries in question reignited popular debate over Plato's teachings in the nineteenth century. As an experimentalist, Zola maintained that creative writers should apply their craft to probing the mysteries of human nature. Wilde insisted upon the contrary: that the highest grade of art has no utility whatsoever. But despite their contrasting theories, they enter into reluctant agreement that imitation of the natural world, or mimesis, is a necessary evil in the creation of art. After defining Zola and Wilde's impressions of art, this article will go on to apply their methods to a poem composed by their predecessor, William Wordsworth. As a folk ballad from 1799, the world of "Lucy Gray" reflects both Zola's emergent naturalism and Wilde's school of aestheticism.

As a disciple of Claude Bernard, Émile Zola scorned the frivolity of English Romanticism, the literary genre that was popular across Europe and North America during his lifetime. Idealism did not fare much better in his regard.[1] As a man of science, Zola believed that art and literature should exist in society not as some mindless entertainment, but to serve a higher scientific and moral purpose. While he was never a sought-after dinner guest, Zola did make waves in literary circles

1 Émile Zola, "The Experimental Novel," in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, 2nd ed., ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2006), 707.

for his suggestion that scientific methodology be applied to the creation of an "experimental novel." According to his essay *Le Roman expérimentale* (1880), the novelist "should operate on the characters, the passions, on the human mind and social data in the same way that the chemist and the physicist operate on inanimate beings."[2] Only by collecting such data on human behavior is the experimental novelist able "to penetrate to the wherefore of things… and to reduce them to a condition of subservient machinery."[3] Conducting experiments on characters in realistic fiction serves two purposes: the first, to gain a better understanding of man as both an individual and as a social creature; and the second, to discover the laws that govern human nature.[4] Once these objectives have been met, it is possible for the experimentalist to remedy all manner of social ills.[5] As such, it is the duty of novelists to uplift humanity by producing moralistic content.

While Zola identified first and foremost as an "experimentalist," history recorded his dogma under a different name. His concept of "experimentalism" echoes what contemporary researchers know as naturalism, a subgenre of literary realism wherein fictional characters are dominated by their biological, economic, and environmental forces.[6] As a proponent of naturalism, Zola believed that studying fictional characters in a realistic setting would reveal the secrets of humankind.

Although Zola would certainly disapprove of the idealism present in Wordsworth's poem, he could appreciate the ballad as a study of family dynamics during the Romantic Period. As a narrative poem, "Lucy Gray" introduces the eponymous heroine alongside her mother and father. Her mother and father are limited to their parental roles; however, the tenderness of their dialogue suggests that they form a close family unit. The father's behavior also demonstrates a vested concern in his wife's safety and well-being. He instructs Lucy to bring her mother a lantern to light her way home, to which Lucy replies:

> That, Father! Will I gladly do:
> 'Tis scarcely afternoon–
> The minster-clock has just struck two,
> And yonder is the moon![7]

Lucy's response is clearly romanticized, rather than realistic; children do not typically respond to assigned tasks with such enthusiasm. Lucy's calm and cheerful demeanor reflects the romantic ideal of childhood, which depicts children as

2 Zola, "Experimental Novel," 702.
3 Zola, "Experimental Novel," 703.
4 Zola, "Experimental Novel," 704.
5 Zola, "Experimental Novel," 704.
6 Robert Archambeau, "From Plato's *Ion*," (English 450: The Theory of Literature, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL, 29 August 2022).
7 William Wordsworth, "Lucy Gray," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 9th ed., ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), lines 17-20.

innocent souls that are yet undimmed by the harshness of reality.[8] But in setting aside concerns of scientific accuracy, the verse provides a good deal of insight into the life of the British working-class at the turn of the nineteenth century. Children were raised to be ready and willing to obey authority, which led to numerous accidents and their exploitation in the burgeoning industrial and mining industries.[9] In accordance with historical pattern, Lucy's willingness to deliver the lantern ultimately causes her to die from exposure to the elements. Moreover, the characters' social interactions as a young family seem quite natural: that of a mother, father, and child looking out for one another's well-being. From a sociological standpoint, the gamble the family makes in a bid to guarantee the mother's safety feels entirely realistic for the nineteenth century.

The ballad of Lucy Gray also relates existential truths about religion. Examined as a work of literature from 1799, the poem exemplifies the Romantic Era's standard of virtuous behavior; it can also be read as a warning to parents not to send their children outside in advance of an incoming snowstorm. However, the ballad's ambiguous ending also remarks on the uncertainty of religious faith. Following their daughter's disappearance into the blizzard, Lucy's parents give up hope of seeing their child again. They begin to weep, and console each other with the notion "in heaven, we all shall meet."[10] However, their hopes that Lucy is safe in heaven are dashed when rumors of a ghostly child begin circulating through the town.[11] According to the legend, Lucy Gray traipses through the snowdrifts, all the while "sing[ing] a solitary song/that whistles in the wind."[12] While the girl does not seem outwardly unhappy with her fate, she is nonetheless cursed to wander the moors searching for her mother, never to find her rest. In a world where Christianity exists alongside ghost stories, Wordsworth's poem suggests that religion cannot be treated as an absolute truth.

Oscar Wilde could not have been more different than Émile Zola if he tried (and indeed, historical accounts suggest that Wilde made a conscious effort to drive his contemporary up the wall). As a comedian of the Victorian Age, the gentleman playwright adopted his mentor's disdain for conventional mimesis.[13] Wilde made a name for himself as the spokesperson for aestheticism, or the school of "art for art's sake." With his flamboyant dress and biting wit, Wilde's avant-garde approach to art and criticism made him one of the most fashionable dinner guests in Victorian high society.[14] In the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Wilde issued a series of provocative statements defining what art should and should not be. He further developed the theory of aestheticism in his essay "The Decay of Lying"

8 Deirdre Shauna Lynch and Jack Stillinger, "The Romantic Period," in Greenblatt, *Norton Anthology*, 17.

9 Carol Christ and Catherine Robson, "The Victorian Era," in Greenblatt, *Norton Anthology,* 1022.

10 Wordsworth, "Lucy," line 42.

11 Wordsworth, "Lucy," lines 57-60.

12 Wordsworth, "Lucy," lines 61-64.

13 Carol Christ and Catherine Robson, "Oscar Wilde," in Greenblatt, *Norton Anthology*, 1720.

14 Christ and Robson, "Wilde," 1720.

(1891), which takes the form of a dialogue between brothers Cyril and Vivian in apparent mockery of Plato's Socratic dialogues. According to Wilde, the fine arts cycle through three stages upon their introduction to mainstream society, with the first being a form that is purely intended as "abstract decoration," and the second being a stylized representation of the surrounding world.[15] Works that fall into these first two categories constitute art because they engage the imagination. However, as more and more people apply this new form in a futile attempt to understand the world, the ineffable beauty of art is dealt a fatal blow. Wilde argues that "the condition of any art is style" and that realism therefore "do[es] not succeed in producing even that impression of reality at which [it] aims."[16] Art imitates life, but strict scientific accuracy is dull and flavorless. Although the gentleman playwright has scathing words for the naturalists "who have invaded the kingdom of romance,"[17] Wilde voices approval of Wordsworth's romantic ballads.

As the spokesperson of aestheticism, Oscar Wilde would certainly appreciate the beauty of Wordsworth's poem. The ballad of Lucy Gray consists of sixteen rhyming quatrains, a feat that both accentuates the poem's musicality and demonstrates Wordsworth's dexterity as an English poet. There are some stanzas in the poem, however, that are not strictly necessary in recounting the events leading to Lucy's tragic fate. Indeed, this added detail allows Wordsworth to breathe life into the poem's protagonist and surrounding world. The second quatrain of the verse establishes Lucy Gray as the quintessential romantic heroine:

> No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
> She dwelt on a wide moor,
> –The sweetest thing that ever grew
> Beside a human door![18]

This fanciful description of the child provides deterministic insight into Lucy's personality. Without contact from the wider world, Lucy grows into her sweet temperament and wide-eyed innocence. Such characteristics tie into the romantic ideal of childhood, while simultaneously endearing Lucy to the audience. The poem also illustrates how Lucy interacts with her surroundings. In an implied simile, the verse likens Lucy to the deer that occupy the snowy moors:

> Not blither is the mountain roe:
> With many a wanton stroke
> Her feet disperse the powdery snow
> That rises up like smoke[19]

15 Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," in Adams and Searle, *Critical Theory*, 717.
16 Wilde, "Lying," 717.
17 Wilde, "Lying," 718.
18 Wordsworth, "Lucy," lines 5-7.
19 Wordsworth, "Lucy," lines 25-28.

The wholesome image of a child kicking up snow keeps the verse from becoming overly despondent. Graceful as a mountain roe, Lucy seems fully at ease in an inhospitable environment. While these quatrains are not essential to the overarching narrative, Wordsworth's inclusion of such storytelling devices makes the story all the more vivid. His stylized description of the characters and landscape paint a fanciful picture of Lucy's world in the mind's eye.

The style inherent to the folk ballad effectively spins tragedy into folklore. While the presence of the supernatural establishes Wordsworth's ballad as a work of fiction, the tragic death of Lucy Gray was nonetheless inspired by the high child mortality rate in England throughout the 1800s.[20] The narrator's opening remark that "Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray"[21] signals that the child's story has been told many times, while the penultimate quatrain reminds the audience that they are listening to a tale that has been passed down for generations:

> –Yet some maintain that to this day
> She is a living child;
> That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
> Upon the lonesome wild.[22]

Many years have passed since Lucy's disappearance, but the sightings of a "living child"[23] imply that her spirit still roams the moor. There is no denying that the child is dead; a little girl cannot be expected to survive a snowstorm, and she failed to return home to her parents. However, Lucy's fate remains a mystery: How did she die? Has her spirit really returned to walk the earth? In the absence of answers, kin are left to their own devices to process what happened. The rumors circulating through town are only rumors.[24] But regardless of whether the tale is meant to be believed, the ballad of Lucy Gray exists in a world wherein folktales provide comfort in the aftermath of tragedy. Lucy's legend lives on as a whisper in the wind.

For millennia, Plato's dogma has sparked arguments regarding how the world should be represented in literature. While some writers elect to adapt the philosopher's standard of accuracy into their work, others vehemently protest his dismissal of fantasy and fiction. This dispute eventually led to the rivalry of Émile Zola and Oscar Wilde in the nineteenth century. The world depicted in "the Ballad of Lucy Gray," however, appeals both to Zola's experimental naturalism and Wilde's brand of aestheticism. The ballad's narrative detail provides ample opportunity for sociological study, while simultaneously engaging the imagination with aesthetic beauty and style. While Zola and Wilde never saw eye-to-eye regarding the intended

20 Christ and Robson, "Victorian Era," 1022.
21 Wordsworth, "Lucy," line 1.
22 Wordsworth, "Lucy," lines 57-60.
23 Wordsworth, "Lucy," line 58.
24 Wordsworth, "Lucy," lines 57-60.

purpose of art, they concur that imitation of the world, with all of its mysteries and madness, is necessary in its creation. The ballad of Lucy Gray stands at the crossroads of function and beauty, thus ensuring its longevity within the canon of English poetry.

Portrait of the Company Photographer

[Tobi Tontic]

I hear the screeching brakes from my living room couch, soon followed by the all too predictable thunk of a heavy package dropped on the front porch. Inside is another set of vintage lenses of many makes and models, each attachable to a different type of outmoded implement. For the last ten years, packages like these have appeared at my home as my father rekindled his lost love for photography—specifically, the artfully un-editable and indelibly expensive form of film photography. Soon there will be test shoots and lens repairs, an inevitable photo trip, and the attendant transformation of our downstairs bathroom into a developer's laboratory.

You might ask "To what do we owe this rapid change in my father's character?" from a simple salaryman to an avid amateur artist. However, it is not so much a what as a when–his early years growing up in a little-known corner of Europe–and the man he shared his time with, who together bring this piece of my father to me. Milorad Jojic, perhaps the greatest photographer Bosnia ever knew and internationally recognized for his eye for detail. A family man of few friends, but a wide-ranging traveler, who sought success in all he did. My great grandfather, the one they called "Brko." To find him, we must travel back some 50 years or so to the quiet and orderly city of Sarajevo, situated comfortably between Italy and Hungary. A nice enough place, if you were willing to look past the occasional cloud of smog, the pigeons underfoot, and the communist dictatorship.

Yugoslavia was a nation deliberately assembled, comprised of several cultures and religions not famous for their neighborly hospitality. Their union was not meant to be and likely never would come about if the right pressures were not applied. But the consecutive occurrence of two worldwide conflicts has a way of making nations rethink their place in the world, and the 'Slavs decided it was time to present a united front. Adopting a modified version of Lenin's principles, the

six nations of Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Macedonia were unified by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and held together by the charisma of Josip Broz Tito.[1]

From its very start, Yugoslavia was a nation of two goals: to redistribute the resources of the six states to elevate the whole, and to maintain social cohesion in the process. The first objective was accomplished through the delegation of tasks. Northern Serbia turned into farmland, the Croatian coastline drew in tourists, and Montenegro took charge of transportation. Historical researchers working for Planning Perspectives wrote that, all told, "[O]ne-fifth of the GDP was on average spent on investment. The structure of investments in different sectors … [reflecting] the goal of equilibrating the 'productive forces' of unevenly developed regions…"[2] Nowhere was this more obvious than in the industrial and housing sector, the one type of development which was hugely popular across all regions. Josip Broz Tito transformed once-rural areas into organized blocks of shiny new apartments, each one powered and plumbed by newly developed infrastructure from companies such as ENERGOINVEST.[3]

In one of these boxy buildings, a model citizen of the new republic, and employee of the aforementioned company, rides down an elevator that is hardly more than a metal box on a rope, but which seems to him an improvement over taking the stairs. Once outside, he readies his trusty Hasselblad, placing its lens cap in the pocket of his freshly ironed suit jacket. He peers through the viewfinder, testing the focus as he passes the regular sights. A couple of pigeons scatter as a cyclist passes. A ćevapčići vendor unlocks his restaurant, coming in early to bake the pita fresh. And, above his head, half a dozen old ladies hang their laundry to dry from private balconies.

Satisfied that everything is in working order, the photographer sets his mind to the day's travels. Today, his work involves inspecting the thermal power plant being set up in a low-lying valley. Documenting the equipment there could require athletic maneuvering and possibly even rock-climbing equipment. Venturing down into the depths may not be the safest task, but the work of a photographer is rarely easy. In those days, the perception of the profession was strangely two-sided. Sometimes the man behind the camera was seen as the astute and technical observer, almost scientific in his precision. At others, he was a "…daredevil adventurer, a hunter of images," as Stephen Bottomore put it, in the Journal of Film History. [4] Mr. Jojic certainly preferred the former but sometimes his duties required him to play the latter—a small price to pay to help reshape his country.

1 Tijana Dabović, "Pursuit of Integration in the Former Yugoslavia's Planning," *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 34, no. 2, (2019) pp. 217-18. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/02665433.2017.1393628.

2 Dabović, "Pursuit of Integration in the Former Yugoslavia's Planning," 218.

3 Dabović, "Pursuit of Integration in the Former Yugoslavia's Planning," 219

4 Stephen Bottomore, "Introduction: Behind the Camera," *Film History*, vol. 24, no. 3, (2012), pp. 256. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/filmhistory.24.3.255.

But these were not the dangers he found most concerning. Upon his return, this film would need developing, a delicate process that involved numerous health and safety risks, such as "inflammation and burning of the eyes, respiratory conditions, nasal discharge, dermatitis, … asthma…" and more, according to Lindgreen, in the PSA Journal.[5] Luckily, his position as the manager of a development lab granted him all the ventilation and equipment necessary to remain relatively safe from the fumes. However, he would still need to perform the development very carefully to avoid ruining his hard work. He had, of course, successfully developed dozens of photoshoots – so many, the other employees called him "Meister," a master of the craft—but that never quieted the voice in the back of his mind that kept him on point. Little did this industrious artist suspect that within his lifetime it would be much more than a roll of film on the line. It would take a few more decades to arrive, but disaster was looming, and it would put an end to all their high-minded efforts in national enrichment.

Josip Broz Tito died in 1981. He took his leave at an inopportune time, as Yugoslavia was in an economic downturn due to decades of attempts to mix capitalist and communist strategies. The country was supposed to abide by a core plan put forth by the best minds of the central government, but when individual union members disagreed with the plans their deviations were largely tolerated. This laissez-faire approach inevitably led to uneven development, favoring places like Serbia and Croatia, who had been powerful before the unification, which in turn helped reignite old resentments.[6]

All this, along with numerous building projects contracted by private citizens, most of which weren't even up to code. According to a survey conducted in the 1970s, "73 cities showed that illegal housing accounted for one-half of the total private construction."[7] I confess to not fully understanding the system myself, only as testament to its contradictory nature. One can only guess what it must've been like trying to navigate this development dogpile as a company like ENERGOINVEST, its workers taking long hours attempting to keep things afloat, nervously waiting to see if the government's latest course correction would be the one to topple the business. In these last years, their former visions of a futuristic homeland must have seemed very far away.

With their leader gone and the government proving incapable of resolving rising inequalities, or even presenting a coherent strategy, the strong national identities of the regions begin to reassert themselves, their previous constraint pushing them forward, like an uncompressed spring. By the early 1990s, violence broke out across the country as the ethnic groups retreated within themselves and chased away their former allies.

5 Lindgren, "Playing it safe in the darkroom." *PSA Journal*, vol. 57, no. 12, (1991), 22. Gale Academic OneFile, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A11810635/AONE?u=crys82357&sid=AONE&xid=b2bb8ec1.

6 Dabović, "Pursuit of Integration in the Former Yugoslavia's Planning," 222, 227, 234.

7 Dabović, "Pursuit of Integration in the Former Yugoslavia's Planning,", 226-227

So far, this seems like a straightforward start to a Civil War, but historians present a more complex view, pointing out that "Such domestic competing nationalisms were not unique to Yugoslavia. The dissolution of Yugoslavia had much more to do with the political intrusions of the Western powers…"[8] To be specific, it was America and Germany who were too hasty in recognizing the secessionists as independent entities, far more so than they would have been in, say, Asia. These actions are especially frustrating because the conflict was none of their concern, with diplomats becoming involved only by "situational factors, personal idiosyncrasies, inexperience, and misperceived domestic pressures."[9] There is a genuine possibility the chaos and bloodshed that erupted in the wake of these visits could have been avoided, or at least greatly reduced if only the diplomats had kept cooler heads.

But the violence did come. Friendships were broken by centuries-old feuds, religious minorities were driven away or forced into hiding, and those who could either fled or hunkered down. And so, it came to pass, in an apartment, sitting under a mountain's shadow, an old man was lost in thought. Despite the occasional gunfire or distant booming of an explosive, his family was safe in their home, outside the firing range of those who would besiege them. This was fortunate, at least. The thought of anything happening to them was almost too much.

Everything seemed beyond him now. Politics had reduced his perfectionism to nothing, and the years sat heavily on his back. He looked upon his cabinet of hard-earned awards and felt some solace that this part of his work had ended well. He finally put down the camera after his stroke in 1980, not out of medical necessity, but simply because he felt that he had collected enough of the world in his viewfinder. It was a job completed and a job well done.

Those days, thinking of cameras always brought thoughts of his grandson. Before he left for America, Stevan insisted he know the tricks of The Meister's trade and Brko had no choice but to oblige, rolling the film one final time to show him how it was done. As another boom sounded in the distance, a faint smile curved the old man's mustache. To think of the young man, barely 18 and already making his own life on another continent, safe and away from all these troubles. Milorad had every confidence in him and silently wished him well, idly wondering what sort of pictures he was taking.

8 Raju Thomas, "Self-Determination and International Recognition Policy: AN ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION OF WHY YUGOSLAVIA DISINTEGRATED." *World Affairs*, vol. 160, no. 1, (1997), 17. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20672506.

9 Raju Thomas, "Self-Determination and International Recognition Policy," 18.

[Biographies]

Authors' Biographies

Kotryna Andriuškevičiūtė '24

"Culture and the Brain: Comparisons Between the West and East Asia"

Kotryna is a junior double majoring in Asian Studies and Neuroscience. She will be inducted into Phi Beta Kappa this spring and has been a member of Nu Rho Psi since her sophomore year. She has served on the Asian Studies SAAC and will be joining the Modern Languages and Literatures and Neuroscience SAAC for the 2023-24 school year. Her paper was written as a senior research project for Asian Studies with Prof. Wu.

Nick Kasikas

"The Institutionalization of Anti-Asian Thought"

Tiyandza Mngomezulu '26

"The Perception of Africa as a Monolith in Western Film: Reflections on the African-American Psyche"

Tiyandza is a freshman from the Kingdom of Eswatini double majoring in Economics and International Relations, with a minor in Theatre. Tiyandza is a member of Black Women United and serves on the executive committee as their media specialist. She is currently involved in the Spring theatre production titled "LEAVE THE LIGHT ON: An Anthology of Care," which is a new theatrical work devised and written by Lake Forest College students. She also works as an engagement assistant in the Alumni and Development office and was behind the success of the 2023 Forester Day. Her paper was written for FIYS 161: Narrative and Knowledge Production, taught by Dr. Daniel Henke.

Em Allen, '25

"Romanticization and Reaction: Jules Breton's The Song of the Lark"

Em is a sophomore majoring in Art History with a minor in Museum Studies. She works at the Durand galleries under Professor Rebecca Goldberg, assisting in the curation and installation of exhibits, and is a recipient of the Durand Art Scholarship and the Gilman International scholarship. Em is currently studying abroad in Berlin at Freie Universität. Her paper was written for ARTH 217: Nineteenth Century Art, taught by Professor Rebecca Goldberg.

Davis Rowe '25

"Martin Luther and the Necessity of Priesthood"

Davis is a Sophomore double majoring in History and Philosophy. Davis is a musical director at the WMXM radio station and will be serving on the SAAC for the history department. His paper was written for HIST 328: European Reformations 1200-1600, taught by Anna Jones.

Evie Deitrich '23

"Pride Celebrations: Mainstream or Radical? Gay or Queer?"

Evie Deitrich is a senior majoring in history and minoring in politics and Spanish. She is the current Programming Chair for Omicron Delta Kappa as well as the Recruitment Chair for Alpha Phi Omega. She also serves on the Student Academic Advisory Committee for the History department and is the secretary of the Clio Society, the campus history club. Her paper was written for POLS 354: Identity Politics, taught by Dr. Evan Oxman.

Sawyer Kuzma '26

"What the Heart Wants: How Representation in Media Impacts Asexual Individuals"

Sawyer is a freshman majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Sociology & Anthropology. They are a baritone player in the concert band. This paper was written for FIYS 161: Narrative and Knowledge Production with Dr. Daniel Henke.

Claire Pardus '23

"'SportaRobbie' Slash in The LazyTown Community: Fanfiction's Function to Liberate Queer Individuals"

Claire is a senior graduating in May majoring in English (Writing Emphasis) and minoring in Communication. She was a transfer student from The College of Lake County, arriving at Lake Forest College in the fall of 2021. A member of LFC's Sigma Tau Delta chapter, she is the President of the LFC Writing Club and has had the pleasure of having creative works published in college magazines such as Tusitala and CLC's Prairie Voices. Her paper was written for COMM 370: Feminism and Pop Culture, taught by Dr. Elizabeth Benacka.

Kate Kiameh '25

"Social Services of Hezbollah"

Kate is a sophomore majoring in politics with minors in legal studies and social justice. Kate is a student ambassador, Gummere Fellow, writing center tutor, and member of the student government. Her paper was written for POLS 140: Introduction to Comparative Politics, taught by Professor Ajar Chekirova.

Kyle Hush '23

"Presidential or Parliamentary Government: The Democratic Future of Turkey"

Kyle is a senior politics major. This essay was written for POLS 358: Democratic Theory, taught by Dr. Evan Oxman.

Serenah Quiroga '23

"An Analysis of the Racial Disparities in Capital Punishment Sentencing within the United States: A Literature Review"

Serenah is a senior graduating this May with a double major in Neuroscience and Psychology. She has held various leadership roles and involvements on campus including; athlete on the Women's Varsity Soccer team, Co-President of Synapse, Co-captain of the LFC Dance Team, Course Facilitator for the HPP Program, SAAC Representative for the Psychology Department, First Connection Mentor, and a peer teacher for three courses in the Neuroscience and Biology department. Her paper was written for her senior seminar PSYC 430: Psychology and Law, taught by Dr. Nancy Brekke.

Belle Tseitlin

"The Sandwich Generation Experience: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Stress, Perfectionism, and What it Means to be a Sandwich Generation Caregiver"

Editors' Biographies

Kieran Artley '25

Kieran is a Lake Forest College sophomore from Brookfield, Wisconsin, majoring in History and considering adding a major in Economics and a minor in Art History. He joined Inter-Text this year out of a desire to be involved with something on campus and an interest in writing and editing.

Editor Sam Bickersteth '24

Sam is a junior from Battle, England, majoring in English literature and philosophy. He is the president of Inter-Text, having been interested in restarting the journal after the pandemic. Beyond this, he is a Fielding Fellow, Carnegie scholar, ODK member, and plays with the men's soccer varsity team.

Aaron Brand '24

Aaron is a Junior studying History and Philosophy. He offered to table for Inter-Text and woke up at an editor's table. He hopes one day his work will be read by people not paid to do so and believes Inter-Text is a way to make this dream a reality.

Lucy Bunger '26

Lucy Bunger is a freshman from Rochelle, Illinois, majoring in Spanish and Economics. She joined Inter-Text this year as an editor interested in the publishing process and meeting skilled writers.

Mary Laura Carey '23

Mary Laura Carey is a senior from Chicago, Illinois. She is double majoring in environmental studies and studio art. This year was her first time joining Inter-Text. Mary Laura is also an active member of United Asia and is the secretary. Additionally, Mary Laura is part of Omicron Delta Kappa. She also did cross country and track during her time at Lake Forest College.

Alexandra Gascoigne '26

Alexandra is a freshman from England, studying neuroscience and philosophy. She is a first-time editor of the Inter-Text Journal, additionally serving as a member of the College Council, a member of the Student Government Senate, and a tutor for Psych 110. She currently works as a Starbucks barista and will conduct summer research in Professor Ta's lab as a Richter Scholar.

Nitzarandini Jimenez '23

Nitza is a senior exchange student from Mexico. She is majoring in Literature with special focus on editorial and creative writing studies. Upon arriving at LFC this semester, she joined the Inter-Text journal in order to gain some hands-on experience in the editorial and publishing process.

Michelle Mattson '23

Michelle is a senior from Boston, Massachusetts, majoring in environmental studies and minoring in economics. This is the first year she was a member of Inter-Text and decided to join because she wanted to get involved more on campus after the pandemic. In addition to being VP of Inter-Text, she participated in L.E.A.P. in her freshman year of 2019, was a member of the Women in Business club fall of 2022, and in the spring of 2022, she studied abroad in Cork, Ireland.

Nicole Nagel '23

Nicole Nagel is a senior from Champaign, Illinois who spends her days studying English literature and French. She joined Inter-Text in the 2022/2023 school year to gain experience working with peer-reviewed publications. In her time at Lake Forest College, she has published poems, short stories, and academic articles.

Tobi Tontic '25

Tobi Tontic is a Junior from Lakemoor, Illinois, majoring in communication. He joined Inter-Text for the opportunity to learn from the writing styles of his fellow students and bring their work to a larger audience. He is also working behind the scenes to create a physical disabilities club to help give a voice to those who are seldom heard.

Yena Kim

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