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Rhetoric

"They Can't All Be Right, but They Can't All Be Wrong:"

Religion, Politics and the Teenage Outcast in Saved!

The religious satire *Saved!* focuses on a protagonist named Mary, a "perfect" high school senior at a fundamentalist Christian school, who ends up becoming pregnant following her attempt to "cure" her gay boyfriend. Writer/director Brian Dannelly uses over-the-top characters and scenarios with a teen comedy style to highlight the absurdities and injustices that may come along with overzealous religious fundamentalism, a statement that holds much relevance in contemporary American society and politics. In this paper, I argue that, while many religious satire films in the past have aimed to critique the dogma of particular religions, *Saved!* attempts to voice disapproval of the ways in which religion tends to be exploited for less than righteous purposes. Additionally, I will make the claim that *Saved!* is not, as many of its detractors would argue, a film that mocks or vilifies Christianity. Rather, it is a story that is ultimately pro-faith and one that promotes tolerance, acceptance, and diversity. It was necessary for the movie to somewhat exaggerate the characters and situations in order to fully expose the potential harms of certain all-too-common practices and beliefs to a culture that is so enmeshed in them.

Saved! was written and directed by Brian Dannelly and co-written with Michael Urban. MGM released the film in 2004. Single Cell Pictures was the first company to sign on to the production. Its two owners are Sandy Stern and Michael Stipe (of the band R.E.M.). Stern explains the appeal that the script had for him: "I look for something original, something that stands apart from the crowd, a story that is told in an exciting new way. When I read *Saved!* it was so of the moment, so topical, had something to say, and it was funny." (www.savedmovie.com) Stipe commented along the same lines, "I thought it was one of the funnier and more absolutely audacious, subversive scripts I had seen in some time. I just fell in love with the characters and the story immediately." (www.savedmovie.com) The filmmakers' choice to go with a quirky, independent production

company allowed them a greater sense of artistic freedom, as well as the liberty to express their sociopolitical message with less fear of censorship.

Writer/director Dannelly's personal biography has a lot to do with his creation of this film. He went to a Catholic elementary school, a Christian high school and a Jewish summer camp. In his high school, there was a rule prohibiting students of the opposite sex from being closer than six inches to each other, even at school dances. He witnessed a few record burnings, and the entertainment for his senior prom was a puppet show. Co-writer Urban grew up with a Southern fundamentalist Baptist upbringing. The creators' religiously diverse backgrounds taught Dannelly one major lesson, which he expressed in one of Mary's voiceovers in the movie: "They can't all be right, but they can't all be wrong." Dannelly explained, "I wanted to make a film based on that. I wanted to write a movie that was grounded with the iconography of a mainstream teen movie yet incorporated concepts and ideas you would never see in those kinds of movies- an accessible film with an independent spirit." He added, "Sometimes things are twisted and exploited in the name of religion or god. I wanted to explore that." (www.savedmovie.com)

Dannelly took his cast and crew to a "Salvation Rally" at a stadium in Anaheim, California to experience first-hand what it is like in the fundamentalist youth Christian underground. Dannelly saw some good elements in that subculture, such as its sense of community and security, and its provision of motivation. However, he also saw a darker side to it, stating, "The danger can be that the road is really narrow. Not everyone can walk it and if you don't live up to certain biblical standards, you risk being left behind, alone and alienated. It's hard enough being a teenager without having to make the path so difficult with no room for mistakes- God knows I made plenty." (www.savedmovie.com)

Throughout all of the controversy surrounding this movie, the creators have maintained that it was *not* intended to mock faith, but, rather, is quite pro-faith. It was meant to advocate tolerance, acceptance, diversity and the discovery of one's individual beliefs. Dannelly argues that before making up one's mind in regards to any kind of beliefs, one must be able to challenge them. Only then, according to Dannelly, can one make educated assertions rather than arguments full of empty and unquestioned words and ideas.

Funding for *Saved!* was difficult to secure. Dannelly was a first-time director and the subject matter was somewhat edgy. Its well-written script and Dannelly's procurement of a talented ensemble cast was what

it took to get the attention it needed. Still, the funding fell through just two weeks before filming was scheduled to start in 2001. Infinity, along with United Artists, finally got production going. In addition to financial difficulties, the film also lost several filming locations due to the plotline, including someone's house and a Lutheran church. A Christian rock band also pulled out of the movie at the last minute because of the film's content.

The school used in the movie was a real school, located in British Columbia, Canada. It was chosen because of its postmodern architecture and fractured design. According to Dannelly, this setting served to reflect the breakdown of the comfortable Christian world for the story's characters. The sets also included many neutral colors such as beiges, and everything was somewhat monochromatic. This was meant to offset the "colorful" cast of characters in comparison to their perfectly "spotless" environment (both literal and figurative).

Saved! tells the story of a group of high school kids attending a (very) Christian high school. The story's protagonist, a high-school senior named Mary, begins the movie depicted much like all her classmates, as a cookie-cutter perfect Christian teenager who has dedicated her life to Jesus. She quickly discovers that her perfect Christian boyfriend is gay and has a vision of Jesus telling her she needs to "save" him from his affliction. She interprets this as a mandate to sleep with him for his own good, believing that Jesus would restore her virginity in return for having "cured" her boyfriend. Ironically, Mary gets pregnant. Feeling betrayed by her own faith, she begins to rethink beliefs she had always held as absolute truth. Her longtime friends begin to turn on her, and she finds comfort in a new group of misfit friends, including a Jewish, chain-smoking and outspoken girl, and the wheelchair-bound self-avowed non-Christian brother of her former best friend, the fanatically religious Hillary Faye. The film follows Mary's experiences, from being the poster child for good Christian girls to becoming a total social outcast in her community. Throughout the course of the story, the viewer witnesses the protagonist's spiritual growth as she finds herself questioning beliefs that she had always thought were inherently unquestionable. Over the course of Mary's journey, she begins to see the dark, intolerant side of zealous, fundamentalist Christianity. We see a girl who blindly accepts a force-fed set of religious beliefs, followed by a girl feeling utterly betrayed by those beliefs, and, finally, a girl learning to find her own set of beliefs.

The majority of the negative criticism towards the film was expressed from a traditionally Christian or politically right-wing audience, most of whom found the story to be blasphemous and anti-

Christian. Notoriously outspoken evangelist Jerry Falwell went as far as to say, "It is the equivalent of reckless racial profiling that endangers people solely because of their skin color. In the same way, when Christians are habitually illustrated as hate-mongers and religious tyrants the end result can only bring about trouble for believers." (www.worldnetdaily.com) Jeremy Landes of Christian Spotlight on the Movies (www.christiananswers.net) is concerned about the fact that, "The heroes of the film acknowledge God with their lips, but they live according to their own desires and moral standards, not Christ's." He adds that, "Young men and women may see *Saved!* and take away a message that Jesus accepts them despite whatever sinful actions they may choose."

While it is true that many Christian characters are written to be hateful, prejudiced and fanatical, I argue that the ultimate message of *Saved!* is not anti-Christian at all; rather it is a movie promoting diversity, acceptance, and, yes, faith. Through the rhetorical device of satire, the filmmakers highlight the absurdity and ridiculousness of knee-jerk, closed-minded religiosity. As for Landes's concern that the possible message being sent is that Jesus accepts all people despite their choices, I agree. Unlike Landes, however, I believe Dannelly sees that as a positive thing.

It is interesting to note that there are, in addition to the disgusted and appalled Christian critics of this movie, a great deal of Christian viewers who are not at all offended by its message. *Saved!*'s producer, Michael Stipe, insists that, "People who are strong in their faith will not be afraid of this movie." (www.savedmovie.com) A roundtable discussion on the Christian film website *Hollywood Jesus* generates some positive reactions from notable members of the Christian community. Pastor Greg Wright comments:

> Why should we be surprised when satires like this-based on very justified stereotypes- come along? And why get worked up about it? The world will know we are Christ's disciples by our love, not by nice, clean little movies that depict Christian high-schoolers and teachers like the plastic little saints that we know they're not. In my book, the church has got a lot more to account for than films like *Saved!* Can't we save our harshest judgment for ourselves? God knows we deserve it.

Satire as a rhetorical tool serves to point out harmful, unjust, or otherwise undesirable elements of society that many people refuse to acknowledge until it is emphasized in an over-the-top fashion. This style differs from the idea of conventional comedy. Leon Guilhamet writes, "If comedy presents its ridiculous objects as things of no importance, the harmlessly ugly or base, satire interprets the ridiculous as harmful or destructive, at least potentially." (Guilhamet 7) "The basic difference between the satiric and the comic," continues Guilhamet, "is the satiric reinterprets the ridiculous in an ethical light. The satire employs comic techniques of ridicule, but discovers harm and even evil in the ridiculousness." (Guilhamet 8)

Guilhamet's arguments are useful in looking at the meaning of *Saved!* The typical comedic elements are present, and the film takes the form of a conventional teen comedy. However, due to its subject matter, *Saved!* has some deeply serious undertones. Today's America showcases a growing popularity of evangelism and religious fundamentalism, reflected clearly in the current state of the government and the neo-Conservative movement. It is undeniable that this kind of strict religiosity can result in some people becoming judgmental, intolerant, and even cruel. But because certain beliefs are grounded in faith, it can be difficult for people to see the potentially harmful effects of them. By exaggerating many of the characters and situations in this film, its creators are attempting to reveal certain difficult to accept flaws in the culture that may not have been detectable with a more subtly written script.

Traditionally, religion has not been something dealt with frequently in American popular cinema (Miles). Specifically, plotlines outwardly satirizing mainstream religious culture (such as *Saved!*), have not been commonly present at the multiplex with the exception of films like Monty Python's *The Life of Brian* and Kevin Smith's *Dogma* (two films that focus on the faults of the Christian doctrine itself, not necessarily the societal manifestation of it in the way of *Saved!*). The latter was inspired by Kristina Drumheller in her article, "Millennial Dogma," to conduct a study of how the Millennial generation (those born after 1982) utilize religious content in the media. It has been argued that the previous generation, Generation X, used religious films as sources of information and personal motivation, while the more traditional Baby Boomers tended to not relate to such fare at all. Drumheller used focus groups of young people to research the reactions towards religious films, using *Dogma*, a Christian satire decidedly more brutal than that of *Saved!*, in particular. She found that the majority of Christian young people, many of whom attended Christian school, felt that the two most

important aspects to be included in such a film were messages of open-mindedness and the invitation to challenge one's own personal faith. The study's participants praised *Dogma* for its disputation of the notion that there is either good or bad, with strict boundaries between the two.

Clive Marsh categorizes the most significant form of religious cinema as "theology in critical dialogue with culture" (27). He describes the need for Christianity to be challenged in film and that "theology and culture must be understood as in a dialogue: existing in a critical, dialectical relationship" (27). The conflict that then presents itself, however, when dealing with Christianity is, "How do you genuinely hold a dialogue with someone when you really believe you're right, but when, at the same time, you want to respect your dialogue partner in his/her otherness" (27)? Marsh continues, saying, "As far as theology's dialogue with culture is concerned, Christian theology will bring its grasp of truth and be reluctant to give ground when, for example, the content of a film presents a challenge to it. But if it is unwilling to be questioned, and reluctant to consider the possibility of change, then it has ceased to live as theology."

Marsh's sentiments are applicable to the function of *Saved!* He emphasizes the importance of a theology's willingness to be challenged and to contemplate future changes. In the same manner that the characters in the film must learn to accept the viewpoints and choices of others, Christianity as an institution must also learn to actively participate in such a cultural dialogue.

Miles sites timeliness as an important factor in religious cinema, arguing that in a time where "congregations [have] become audiences," many people now go to the cinema as much as to church to ponder morality and values (25). Dannelly recognized this characteristic of postmodern society and decided it was time for a film to take that leap into poking fun at the more absurd side of Christian America, while still portraying a vital message to the public. In his review of the film, Roger Ebert writes, "*Saved!* is an important film as well as an entertaining one. At a time when the FCC is enforcing a censorious morality on a nation where 8.5 million listeners are manifestly not offended by Howard Stern, here is a movie with a political message: Jesus counseled more acceptance and tolerance than some of his followers think."

Prominent Christian pop culture critic Jeffrey Overstreet, who attended Christian schools growing up, recognizes the behavior depicted in *Saved!* He saw the movie as a chance for Christians to laugh at themselves and the people around them. Most importantly, he notes,

"[T]he movie maintains its focus on the foolishness of humanity. It never stoops to making a mockery of Christ." In accord with that argument, David Sterritt of *The Christian Science Monitor* writes:

> *Saved!* is the kind of breezy teen-pic that youngsters flock to nowadays and this particular specimen is imaginative enough to explore an environment off Hollywood's beaten path. It's also broad-minded enough to portray the evangelical milieu with flair, satirize its foibles with restraint, and respect its ideals even as it shows how individuals may fall short. (p. 15)

Perhaps the most significant sources for determining the rhetorical intent of a film are the creators themselves. For that reason, it is important to consider the words of *Saved!*'s writer/director. When asked about his intentions and take on the overall message of the movie, Dannelly replied, "My take is, honestly, Jesus loves you. You make mistakes. I think the point is to get through those mistakes. There is something shocking or scandalous about every character in the movie, and the thing for you as an audience to ask is, where do they go from here?" (Ulstein). Writer Michael Urban claims he and Dannelly wanted to make this movie show how, "Sometimes things are twisted and exploited in that name of religion or god." Dannelly sees a considerable problem with fundamentalist Christianity and it is that, "The danger can be that the road is very narrow. Not everyone can walk it, and if you don't live up to certain biblical standards, you risk being left behind, alone and alienated."

The purpose of Dannelly's *Saved!* is to alert the Christian world to the problems of radical fundamentalism and to promote practices of tolerance, acceptance, and love. He uses satire to highlight specific flaws in a tongue-in-cheek, humorous fashion, all while getting at a deeper, more serious meaning. The film does not mock the Christian faith, only those individuals who use their faith to justify intolerant and judgmental behavior.

One scene in *Saved!* that stands out as one of its best occurs shortly after Mary's discovery that she is pregnant. Her demeanor had begun to become noticeably different than it had been in the past. American Eagle Christian High School's principal Pastor Skip, having detected this change, asks Mary's former group of friends, including Hillary Faye, Veronica and Tia, to try to help her through whatever

difficulties she must be going through. Hillary Faye and company take this as a mandate to perform an ambush-style exorcism as Mary is walking home from school.

As the words of Pastor Skip linger as a voiceover, we hear the words, "She's pretty vulnerable right now, so I want you to be extra gentle." We then see Hillary Faye's van pull up to a curb next to Mary on a bright, sunny afternoon, and hear very less-than-gentle screaming and shouting coming from inside. Mary stops dead in her tracks, startled and confused about what is going on. Maniacally, Hillary Faye and her two friends burst out of the van and rush Mary, whom they physically pull back into the vehicle.

The camera pulls back as we see Hillary Faye hold a crucifix over Mary who is being held down in the back of the van by Tia and Veronica. Hillary Faye starts commanding God to extract whatever demon may be residing within Mary. Bewildered by what is going on, Mary cries, "You're performing an exorcism?!" as she wrestles herself free from the arms of her former friends. Mary's resistance angers Hillary Faye and her friends who shout that the evil must be removed from her soul. Tia yells that it is God's will as she holds up a framed picture of Jesus. The girls bark statements like "You are backsliding into the flames of Hell!" and "You have become a magnet for sin!"

Mary begins to get angry and to shout back at her attempted exorcists and calls Veronica on her hypocrisy for acting so pure after what happened "last summer at the Promise Makers Rally." Hillary Faye chastises Mary for "making accusations as we are trying to save your soul."

"Turn away from sin," continues Hillary Faye. "Jesus. He loves you."

"You don't know the first thing about love," responds Mary, turning her back to Hillary Faye and beginning to walk away.

Hillary Faye, clearly frustrated with Mary's unwillingness to accept her intervention, proceeds to hurl the Bible she carries in her hand at her former best friend's back. As she flings the Good Book, Hillary Faye screams, "I am filled with Christ's love! You are just jealous of my success in the Lord!" Amazed by Hillary Faye's actions, Mary picks up the Bible and counters, "*This* is not a weapon. You idiot." She pushes the Bible back to Hillary Faye, turns, and runs away down the sidewalk.

Though this scene is one of the most humorous in the film, its comedic value is not the only thing noteworthy about it. In terms of the film's story, this scene comes as a sort of turning point for Mary, who is seeing the practices of her friends in a whole new light. The viewer would be justified in assuming that, a year before, Mary might have not

seen a problem with behavior like Hillary Faye's. However, once Mary finds herself in the situation she is in, she begins to question the beliefs she had taken for fact in the past. The expressions on Mary's face as Hillary Faye, Veronica and Tia try to perform an exorcism on her and continue to shout terrible remarks at her, reflect her new viewpoint regarding the people she used to call friends. It is clear that the entire incident is seen by Mary as utterly absurd, and the contrast between the character of Mary and those of the three girls is striking. The incident's effect on Mary can be seen in both her facial expression and her dialogue. The look she gives is one of incredulity; one of a person finally understanding the absurdity of what was likely quite common behavior in her community. Contrastingly, the expressions on the faces of Hillary Faye, Tia and Veronica are disturbingly malicious. They seem so filled with anger and malevolence that they are the ones who come off as near demon-like; it seems that perhaps they are the ones in need of an "exorcism."

In what is perhaps a physical representation of the relative social positions of Mary and Hillary Faye, it is interesting to note the clothing in the scene. Whereas Mary is dressed in all black street clothes, Hillary Faye, Veronica and Tia are dressed in multi-colored but identical velour track suits. This wardrobe choice showcases Mary's new status as a social outcast versus the conformist and obedient nature of the other three girls. On a broader lever, it also showcases the conformist and obedient nature of fundamentalist religion itself, in contrast with individuals who choose to think differently. The editing in the scene includes high usage of shot/reverse shot during the initial confrontation between the two "sides" of the spectrum. There is a drastic separation between the intolerant, blindly accepting side of faith and the open-minded, individualistic side. It is difficult to overcome long learned beliefs and cross over to the other side, making Mary's character change all the more commendable.

The most poignant instance in the scene comes towards the end when Hillary Faye throws her Bible at Mary. This action perfectly symbolizes the film's argument that religion is often twisted in such a way that certain people are ostracized, condemned and hurt by those who claim to be dedicated to love. The fact that Hillary Faye would physically harm Mary, with a Bible no less, illustrates her distorted interpretation of faith. Additionally, her accusation that Mary is "just jealous of [her] success in the Lord" illustrates her labeling of religion as part of some sort of social status scale. Upset about Mary's straying from the accepted set of rules, she acts hatefully and cruelly to Mary, using her religion as a justification.

The interchange between Mary and Hillary Faye about love also serves to exemplify the ideological differences between the two. While Hillary Faye sees love as something simply handed to those who dedicate their lives to Jesus Christ, Mary has a much more complex idea of the concept. It is clear that, the way she sees it, a friend who truly loved her would not be performing exorcisms and throwing books at her.

The physical action of throwing the Bible is a humorously perfect act of satire that encapsulates the overall tone and message of this film. Literally using a Bible as a "weapon," Hillary Faye symbolizes the prevalent practices in modern culture that involve the use of religion as a front for acts of intolerance and prejudice. This scene shows how religious fanaticism can have harmful effects such as the breaking up of friendships and the ostracizing of good people. With the rise of Christian fundamentalism in American society, it is interesting to examine its potential dangers, specifically through use of an over-the-top and amusing satirical scene involving typical teenage drama.

A second scene that is interesting to look at takes place immediately following Mary's visit to the clinic where she found out she was pregnant. Though it is only about one minute in length, the scene perfectly captures the betrayal by faith that Mary felt. A bus pulls up to the curb, and Mary steps off of it. As the bus drives off, Mary turns her head to see a towering concrete monument inscribed with a cross. The shot changes, and the camera is now shooting from the high level of the cross. In a high-angle shot, we are looking down at Mary from above and from a distance as she slowly approaches the monument. She stops directly in front of it, holds out her arms and says, "Shit." As if looking for a reaction, the camera, with a low-angle shot, looks up at the cross and zooms in on the symbol. The shot switches back to looking down at Mary, zooming in on her, and she then utters, "Fuck." Again, the camera switches to zoom in on the cross from below. Then, the zooming in on Mary is complete, and while in a close-up of her face, lightly crying, she says, "God damn."

We get the impression that Mary had probably never spoken those words before this moment. For her to say them while face-to-face with a cross, the symbol of her Christian faith, makes it all that more powerful and significant. The editing technique described above makes this scene seem like an actual interaction rather than a person talking at an inanimate object. In a way, this makes perfect sense. Mary had grown up believing that she had to live her life in accordance with what amounts to a symbol. It seems that part of her was expecting to get a response from the etching. However, it is at this moment that she realizes that everything she had previously believed in had betrayed her.

It was a betrayal not of the religion itself, but rather the earthly incarnation of the religion, symbolized by the statue and embodied by the fundamentalist society in which she lives. By speaking profanity in front of a cross, Mary is confronting her betrayer; she is defying for the first time the system that had been doing her wrong all her life. By saying "God damn," Mary is taking the Lord's name in vain, one of the cardinal sins. The fact that nothing happens following this utterance illustrates the message that it is not some arbitrary set of rules that determines one's character, but something bigger. As the plot progresses, Mary learns that it is how a person treats other people that truly builds moral fiber.

Towards the end of the film is a scene at the high school's prom where many of the movie's messages are articulated. In this scene, it is the dialogue that creates the meaning. A van full of teenagers shunned to Mercy House, including Mary's former boyfriend, Dean, arrives at the school, ready to attend their prom. Mercy House is the institution where parents concerned about their children's "morally deviant" behavior may choose to send them for "rehabilitation." Earlier in the film, a character speaks the line, "Mercy House doesn't really exist for the people who get sent there. It exists more for the people who do the sending." Seeing this group of outcasts attempting to infiltrate the school function, Pastor Skip demands they return to Mercy House or risk being arrested. When Dean lets him know that they will not be leaving, he responds by saying, "What you and your friends have done is not cool in the eyes of God."

Patrick, Pastor Skip's son and Mary's prom date and new love interest, then interrupts, saying, "Dad, stop it."

"Patrick, this is not a gray area," he snaps back.

"Dad, it's all a gray area."

"The Bible is black and white," Pastor Skip retorts, exemplifying the unrealistic rigidity of his religious doctrine.

In these last two quotes lie the general principles of the movie. While it would seem to Pastor Skip and those who think like him that there is a simple definition of right versus wrong, many people see a different world, where nothing is that unambiguous. This conflict continues when Dean asserts that he and his friends are entitled to attend their senior prom and be with their friends like everyone else. Pastor Skip stands his ground, saying, "There is no room for moral ambiguity here. The Bible is very clear about this."

At this, Mary makes a statement that sums up the lesson she learned over the course of the story, "So everything that doesn't fit into some stupid idea of what you think God wants, you just try to hide it or fix it or get rid of it? It's just all too much to live up to. No one fits in one hundred percent of the time. Not even you." Dean responds, saying

to Pastor Skip, "I know in my heart that Jesus still loves me." It is then that Mary asks the defining question of the film. "Why would God make us all so different if he wanted us to be the same?"

With succinct and straightforward interactions, this scene neatly recapitulates the dilemma being presented in the film. In a community where one is taught to adhere firmly and obediently to an ancient set of regulations, it can be difficult for some to see past the notion of black and white. However, when presented with a challenge to these beliefs, as Pastor Skip was by Mary, the prospect of rationalizing them can seem impossible. This is evident in Pastor Skip's inability to intelligently refute Mary's arguments. Additionally, this scene distinctly articulates *Saved!*'s message of diversity, tolerance and acceptance.

In analyzing *Saved!*, I found it difficult to understand how it could have possibly been interpreted as a hateful and derisive film. The message seemed so overwhelmingly positive and optimistic that these types of criticisms appear on the surface to be absurd. Looking deeper, however, it is quite easy to see where such opinions come from. People who are brought up in a similar fashion to the characters in the movie are likely to have an extremely tough time seeing anything beyond what appears to them to be a mockery of their beliefs. Though the purpose of this type of satire is to overemphasize and dramatize certain aspects of a culture to the point of absurdity, the point is inevitably missed by some.

Saved! manages to merge the genres of religious satire and teen comedy to create a film that ultimately voices a message of tolerance, acceptance, and personal faith. It preaches a notion of diversity to a society where there is a growing movement to stifle it. Films such as this one serve an important purpose in today's America. It is necessary for there to be voices of opposition in popular culture in order for this country to live up to its self-created reputation as a free and democratic society.

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Gia

"Beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of introduction."
- Aristotle

"Why do women react so strongly to nothing, really
– images, scraps of paper? Is their identity so
weak? Why do they feel they must treat 'models' –
mannequins – as if they were 'models' –
paradigms?" – Naomi Wolfe, The Beauty Myth

Most fashion models are thinner than 98% of American women. This, along with other ideological statistics regarding women and their body images, often separate the "average" woman from the supermodel, the good versus the evil, and the innocent versus the guilty. It is rare that a statistic will pertain to how many models themselves are affected by how they look, however as well as how they choose to live their lives in regards to their appearances. The film *Gia*, starring Angelina Jolie as famous supermodel Gia Marie Carangi, is a rare glimpse into the other side of the beauty myth, a phenomenon that promotes the idea that physical perfection exists and is prominently displayed through most major mediums of society (print, television, film, etc.). The film invites audiences into a world of drug addiction, disease, and the sad truth of the consequences brought upon one individual as a result of the strive for perfection. Though many individuals were envious of the seemingly physical perfection of Gia, the film provides insight into her imperfect life. The loosely based biographical drama tells the audience the troubled tale of the first immensely famous fashion supermodel of the late 1970s, Gia, while functioning rhetorically as a messenger to the audience about the ideological implications of the beauty myth as present in the fashion industry.

In her book "The Beauty Myth", Naomi Wolfe gives the unblemished definition of the phenomenon: an obsession with physical perfection that traps the modern woman in an endless spiral of hopelessness, self-consciousness, and self-hatred as she tries to fulfill

society's impossible definition of "the flawless beauty." The evolution of Gia's life provides an overarching cautionary tale of the negative effects that the strive for perfection has on inhabitants of the fashion industry, as opposed to the industry's influence upon the outside world. Through close analysis of two particular scenes in the movie, as well as a magnified look at the repetition of another scene, it is easy to see the ideological implications of the beauty myth in a new light as they occur within the fashion industry.

The film *Gia*, though loosely based, follows the tribulations of the young high school girl swiftly turned model through a story told "in the words of people who knew her and the words of her own journal" (as neatly typed out for the audience in the establishing scene). Various scenes throughout the film are voiced over with actors playing those closest to Gia, as well as Jolie reading words from Carangi's actual diaries. The film follows Gia through her discovery, and attempts at finding belonging in the harsh, often unaccepting industry of fashion. Her struggles throughout the film include finding social belonging, lobbying between various motherly figures, figuring out her sexuality, and the immense influence drugs had over all of it. The audience learns along with Gia the pressures to remain the "fresh meat…sirloin" (as quoted by a top fashion business executive in the film) of the fashion industry. Despite finding a possible soul mate in her makeup artist, Linda, Gia is still forced to make important decisions based on remaining in sync with the fashion industry. She begins by snorting cocaine to fit in among the other models. As the pressure for perfection matures and evolves, a good friend offers her "the answer to all [her] prayers," heroin. Gia is thrown head first into a whirlwind of addiction and co-dependence, her dealer becoming more important to her than motherly figures and lover combined. Her life eventually consists of two factors: photo shoots and "chasing the dragon," a term of the times referring to smoking heroin. During one particularly desperate search for drugs, Gia shoots up, sharing a junkie's dirty needle in a basement in the middle of a dark nowhere.

As Gia disintegrates as a person, those around her try to reach out and help. Turning them away one by one, Gia eventually loses all those she held dear to her by favoring drugs over people. Her mother refuses to let her move back home during a pitiful plea from Gia, and her girlfriend presents Gia with an ultimatum: drugs or her. Gia chooses the drugs. When all seems lost, her friend TJ is able to reach out to her enough to check her into rehab. Despite efforts to repair her battered life, permanent damage remains. Gia is one of the first women in America to be diagnosed with AIDS, a result of sharing intravenous

needles for the purpose of shooting up heroin. The sad story ends with Gia's death at a much too early age of 26, as well as a lasting memory in the minds of all audiences of who this woman was and what exactly she died for.

The production of *Gia* premiered on HBO in 1998. Angelina Jolie portrayed the lead character in what some have called her "breakthrough" role. It was after her role as the young, sexually frustrated Italian-American woman that Jolie was truly noticed by Hollywood as a distinguished actress, capable of performances greater than the little known roles she had previously accepted. Jolie turned down the role several times before agreeing to play the famous supermodel, stating that Gia Marie Carangi's character was too parallel to her own. On the contrary, it was this aspect of Jolie's performance to which fans and critics attribute the film's success. Despite lack of funds for a theatrical release, the "branded" status of the HBO, made-for-TV movie assisted in making *Gia* a success.

Vanessa Vance designates *Gia* as "quite possibly the most beautiful train wreck ever filmed." Reviews on the made-for-TV movie were conflicting and paradoxical at times, yet literature connected with *Gia* provides interesting insight into the fashion industry. Concepts of beauty have been evolving and changing throughout history.

> Plato felt that beauty was not only a physical,
> but also a moral, concept. He stated that the
> three most important forms, or values, in his
> philosophical system were Beauty, Truth, and
> Goodness. He argued that the good and true are
> always beautiful, but what appears to be
> beautiful is not always good or true. (Adamson
> & Galli, 32).

Aside from argumentation over terms of truths versus falsities and good versus evil, beauty has always been, and still is to this day, associated with a sense of power. According to Peter Adamson and Susan Galli, who have written on conceptions of beauty from a medical perspective, "beauty is recognized as a realm of pleasure and power," (33) and "in reality, women cultivate beauty to optimize the power that beauty brings" (34). Considering these aspects of the concept of beauty, beauty as a commodity evokes a social expectation as well as an immense desire for this power. Adamson and Galli write that, "it is...our quest for love and acceptance to have a face and body that other people want to look at

and know" (34) and that "this is especially true since our society sets beauty standards and places a value on them" (33). The fashion industry monopolizes on this very quest, promoting an ideal appearance for society to envy and strive to achieve for, despite the true inner flaws of motives or individuals.

> While fashion models and other endorsers considered very attractive may not be peers in the eyes of the 'average' female consumer, studies show that male and female consumers alike use them as standards by which to judge the attractiveness of other, more 'ordinary females' (Stephens & Hill).

Therefore, "the more dissatisfied a woman is with her body, the more positive will be her evaluation of a socially conspicuous brand, product, or service advertised by a physically attractive endorser" (Stephens & Hill).

The film *Gia* takes a new stance on this old stereotype. While the film rhetorically deconstructs the fashion industry, it offers a glimmer of identification with a real person trapped within the "model" world. The depiction of Gia's life of fame does not yield jealous viewers. Instead, the film establishes a cautionary audience who witness, through Gia's eyes, the horrors brought on by the pressured to strive for perfection. Through the film, emotions are stirred regarding "the possibility that what girls are and what they become is a matter of consistent, supported, and institutionalized appearance" (Gateward & Pomerance, 19). Gia is therefore classified as one "who call[s] attention to issues because of the way we see them live their lives" (Gateward & Pomerance, 18).

The beauty myth plays a large part in the film *Gia*. According to Naomi Wolfe,

> The beauty myth tells a story: the quality called 'beauty'
> objectively and universally exists. Women must want to
> embody it and men must want to possess women who
> embody it. This embodiment is an imperative for
> women and not for men, which situation is necessary
> and natural because it is biological, sexual and
> evolutionary: strong men battle for beautiful women,
> and beautiful women are more reproductively successful.
> Women's beauty must correlate to their fertility, and
> since this system is based on sexual selection, it is
> inevitable and changeless. (12)

Wolfe, as well as the film *Gia,* prove that despite the "story" that is told,
the beauty myth is appropriately labeled as a fiction, a half-truth. Vance
praises the director when she quips: "Christopher captures the beauty and
glamour of the high life, but is just as explicit with the horrors of
addiction, withdrawal, and the ensuing chaos." In *Gia*, the glamour
Vance speaks of is coupled with the dark back rooms of runway shows,
where Gia can be seen digging a needle into her hand, creating a
"volcano" in her skin. Gia's sense of belonging in the industry that
welcomed her only at the very beginning with open arms was only
complete after she incorporated drugs into her daily life. In attempts to
portray her luck in possessing the objective and universal beauty that
every other woman could have, she, in turn, sacrificed herself and
eventually her life for the projected embodiment of the flawless beauty.
The idea the beauty myth promotes about reproductive success is also
bunk; during one scene Gia suggests she could have children, whom she
would "kiss everyday." Her mentor/agent shoots the idea down with a
weighty disapproving look. The fashion industry turned from something
Gia found success in, to a black hole of addiction in which she was
unable to escape. At various points throughout the movie, Gia tried to
escape from the world that trapped her in such an unhealthy lifestyle, just
to be ignored and placed upon a still slightly higher pedestal to be
photographed. "The contemporary ravages of the beauty backlash are
destroying women physically and depleting us psychologically" (Wolfe,
19). In this case, Wolfe's words ring all too true.

    Gia brings the audience, through the main character's eyes,
through an adventure of metamorphosis of not only herself, but also the
ideological effects produced from the industry within which she becomes
incorporated. As Gia adapts to the pressures of remaining flawless for
the cameras through the only way she knows how (cocaine, heroin, etc.),
the audience's perception evolves from the initial idea that such a life

entails grandeurs of glamour, class, wealth, and fame, to the reality of the ugliness of the industry. We the audience learn, as Gia does, that there comes a point when the industry so fully engulfs the young woman that she loses self control and partial sanity. Yet, despite the utter destruction of this particular individual by the time the credits roll, the audience observes the steadfast industry that is the devil on the shoulder of every woman in America. "This point, where beauty forms the bridge between women and institutions, is what women are taught to seize upon, and is then used as proof that women themselves are finally to blame" (Wolfe, 47). Despite the fashion industry's immense influence on the ideological decisions made by the main character of *Gia*, the depressing outcome of the movie can still be attributed to a personal mistake, leaving the beauty myth as flawless as the image it projects.

Particular scenes in *Gia* allow the audience a glimpse of the deconstruction of the fashion industry, and the revelation that it is, indeed, simply a world of appearances. In turn, the progression of these scenes and sequences serves as a rhetorical representation of the negative consequences of the strive for physical perfection.

In one particular sequence of the movie *Gia*, the dramatic contribution to the story is matched only by the rhetorical value of the scenes and how they were shot. Gia's stardom came at a rapid pace, which made the beautiful young girl turn to drugs at an early stage of her fast-paced career, just to keep up with her surroundings. Though others in her life may have seen her as one on top of the world, this particular sequence allows the audience to see an initial variation of that idealized feeling of confidence assumed when looking at Gia.

In this sequence, one of Gia's earliest photo shoots is bookended by montages that promote the idea of rapid success; a star who is going nowhere but to the absolute top. The sequence begins with a bright flash of white light, that lingers even after shapes and various colors are distinguishable in the camera's frame. Though obviously a photo shoot, the overwhelming brightness of the light is noticeable to the audience, and is symbolic of the importance of the scene to follow in the life the audience has followed thus far. The audience sees a shot of Gia, standing perfectly centered in a circle of other beautiful women. The shot establishes a God's eye point of view, as though these women are not turning towards the photographer for direction in the shot, yet towards their God for their purpose in life. The god's eye positions the audience as omniscient, rather than positioning the characters for effect. Their beautifully tailored and highly fashionable dresses are all similar, though Gia's is obviously the most flattering, for she is the center of the shot. Yet Gia's dress also stands out for another reason; in a sea of white

fabric, hers is the only dress that has black trim: a marked woman surrounded by flawless beauty.

The shot is sliced with cut-ins of images of booking agents chattering away on the phones about one subject only: Gia. Rapid transitions between shots of the agents, as well as Gia's involvement in the shoot are indicated by the sounds of a camera snapping away, as well as flashes of light resembling photo bulbs bursting. The audience is not only witnessing Gia in her element, it is actually invited to *experience* the hustle and bustle of the early days of Gia's career. Shot in black and white, the colors of the cut-ins contribute to their historical value, so as to lead the audience to believe that this is what the response was actually like when Gia first came onto the New York scene in the late 1970s. One agent remarks "She is booked for sixteen shoots this week," which is also historically accurate, considering how many times she appeared in magazine and print ads in the beginning of her career.

Finally the rapid cut-ins of the agents cease, allowing the audience to fully be emerged in this particular photo shoot. The photographer, Francesco, is explaining the shot to Gia and the other models. He tells them Gia is the "center of all this tired, old beauty, shaming them." This dialogue speaks in volumes to not only the girls involved in the shoot, but also the audience. When he speaks of "tired, old beauty" he is echoing other segments of the film that mention Gia's fresh face, and how she was to break though the dated ideas of beauty, creating a new genre of supermodels. Historically, she did just that, her dark hair was a new sight to be seen on the frontier of the fashion industry, which had before only paid close attention to blue-eyed blondes.

As Francesco pauses while setting up the shot, Gia shows the audience her independent, ballsy side by barking like a dog at the other models, and snickering at their reactions. Yet despite this brief look at the surface of her toughened exterior, Gia still retreats during a break from the shoot, alone and isolated.

A cut-in again occurs at this point, a black-and-white shot of yet another booking agent, stressing to the telephone glued to her ear; "I know you *want* Gia, but you can't *have* Gia." The emphasis of the specific words is rhetorically valuable to the idea of "the flawless beauty," which, to her fans and admirers, Gia embodied at the beginning of her career. The next part of the sequence, however, epitomizes her flaws.

Gia, now alone, snorts cocaine while listening to her peers off in the distance. This shot opens up a new view to the audience; we are now allowed a vision of not simply the restricted area containing the photo

shoot, but the larger setting in which Gia sits. Here the audience is invited to witness a more realistic apparition of the fashion industry (and the beauty myth). Aspects of the glamour and excitement of the photo shoot are immediately lost with the revelation that the location of the shoot is actually a decrepit, ugly building. Resembling a warehouse, the lights suddenly seem less dazzling and more the headache-inducing neon type. Gia is seated near a table that is all but a glamorous makeup area; crumbling foundations, and broken eyeshadows are scattered haphazardly across the surface. This implication that the fashion world is all about appearances and possesses no substance reminds the audience briefly of an earlier scene. When Gia is first hired as a model, her employer warns her that "talking isn't required or even encouraged in this profession."

In the scene of the photo shoot, as Gia consults her drugs, she listens to her peers and her coworkers. They bicker with one another, insult the photographer for calling them "old beauty," and insulting each other as well. One is clearly heard to say, "Does this make my ass look fat?" Another model is quick to quip "Your ass *is* fat." Another remarks snidely, "And I'm not standing next to her fat ass either." Gia, while doing her drugs and listening to this, is obviously pained and makes grunts and motions of monumental frustration. Tears not of sadness, but hindrance, threaten her beautifully made-up face. These emotions reflect her feelings regarding her profession. She has, throughout the movie, felt lost and confused in many fields of her life: her relationship with her mother, her sexuality, and now, add to the list her sense of belonging in the world of fashion modeling. Now, as she is lost in a world where appearance is everything, cocaine is the only compensation she has found to dull, perhaps even silence, her emotions.

Francesco joins Gia in her solitude, delivering a monologue that is symbolic of the hovering pressures women in society feel to be perfect, and in this case, to perform while looking flawless. He all but comforts her by saying: "This is your moment. What do you have? You have pain? When you have everything, you have nothing. When everything is right, everything is wrong. Disappointing. Confusing. What can you do?" Gia lets her tough-girl image drop slightly as she sighs back, "people keep going away from me, and that hurts." Francesco is quick to offer her a remedy for her pain; "Work. Life will be there later. Work. It's the only answer I know." Francesco's feeble attempt at alleviating Gia's pain and suffering isn't out of sole concern for her, as well as her health, but more so for his photo shoot and his need for her contribution.

Gia quickly recovers her emotional vulnerability by saying "I should've been a rock star, but I can't sing." Here we see a hint of slandering against the fashion world in her dreams of alternative professions. Just because she happens to be good at what she does, doesn't mean she has to like it.

Francesco continues his endless preaching that work is the answer, that developing drug habits is a direct result of pressures placed on her by her surrounding work, which is the only thing that will answer her cries for help and belonging. He essentially speaks of modeling as something separate from living, saying "Work. Life will be there later." This statement functions rhetorically in the ironic sense that she continues to "work" and abuse drugs throughout the movie, and on the contrary, her life is cut short because of it. Gia quips at the end of Francesco's ramblings "You'd say anything to get that shot." Though he replies "Yes, but this time I'm speaking the truth," he knows very little of the weight his words carry on Gia's advancing career, as well as her tragic life.

Gia and Francesco return to the main area of the photo shoot. Now that the audience has been allowed to encompass the entire building in which the shoot is being held, the area now seems small, cold, and unwelcoming. The girls return to their original pose, yet with a newly angled shot, we are able to see that the position of the shot is less appealing for the girls when not shot from above. In the initial shot, we are unable to tell just how the women are positioning themselves. Now we see that to achieve this image, their heads are bent at an obviously uncomfortable angle, for the purpose of the shot. The previously idolized glamour is again lowered a few notches, reaffirming the film's deconstruction of the modeling industry.

This sequence ends with another montage of Gia's photo shoots. Certain shots included in this montage add historical accuracy to the biographical picture, by not only being in black and white but also being exact replicas of real photo shoots involving Gia Marie Carangi. The breakneck speed of the various outfits, positions, and shoots is dizzying. The same transitions are inserted quickly between scenes, flashes of light and sounds suggest a camera flashing. Again the audience is invited along on the same ride as Gia. Music promotes her inner excitement to please, lyrics include, "if you say run, I'll run." Barely audible tones are weaved throughout the upbeat tempo of the music, however, and one must strain to hear them. Snippets of a child singing "row row row your boat" are coupled with a shot of Gia yawning. As she is looking bored during one shot, more audibly the child is heard singing "life is but a dream." This is a rhetorical symbolization of her inner unhappiness as a

part of an industry that puts so much demand upon her. The glamorous lifestyle is appealing to her at first, but deep within Gia is unsatisfied, with her role in the industry, as well as in life.

After this interlude, the voice-over effect expresses Gia's original happiness with her profession, along with her gradual realization of the importance placed on her image and the negative implications that can come along with such pressure. Gia's own voice adds another chapter to a fairy tale established throughout the movie thus far as a symbol for her inner emotions. Over glamorous shots of beautiful scenes with Gia as the magnificent centerpiece, she says "And she went to live in a beautiful house, and all the people loved her, and she was very very happy. But the people in the village were very poor, and every night they crept into the house where the girl slept and they cut off a piece of her golden hair and they sold it for money. 'She'll never even notice', they said. And so all the gold was gone from her head." Though it is still early in the movie, Gia's voiceover foreshadows the amount of her life that would be taken by those people who "loved her," her admirers in the industry that not only made her, but continued to break her.

An interesting technique used in *Gia* was the repetition of the same scene in two very different places in the movie. The first time this sequence is established is right after the opening credits. The scene, though shot differently, and extended in time, is repeated later in the movie, only after the audience has become aware of Gia's decision to rely on drugs to assist her in keeping up with the fashion industry. The evolution of this repeated scene is equivalent to the eye-opening experience the audience participates in when learning of the dangers encompassed with the strive for aesthetic perfection.

The first time this scene is witnessed, it is a beautiful, awesome sight to behold. The scene opens with a softer white flash of light, fading into black-and-white shots of expectant spectators anxiously awaiting the beginning of a runway show. The effect of the black and white again contributes to suggested historical accuracy, that perhaps this was actually a photo shoot Gia partook in. As color is finally established, a curtain at the mouth of the runway opens, revealing an aesthetically breath-taking Gia. Dressed in dazzling white, confetti falls to add to the dramatics of her entrance onto the scene. Once the last piece of glittering confetti falls to the floor, Gia advances down the runway, head-on into the camera. Her swift approach to the camera doesn't even allow time for focusing, so a blurry Gia is immediately in the audience's face and then past before they even know what has hit them. This shot symbolizes not only her intense beauty that hits audiences before they

are prepared, but also her immediate, breakthrough success into the business.

As she physically advances down the runway, the audience watching the movie is as overwhelmed by various shots and angles of Gia as the audience at the show is in the movie. Swift editing allows us to view Gia from all angles, mostly from slightly below, adding to her goddess image as she is looking down at all those who surround her. Her dress and accessorizing muff are as white and bright as the lights shining down upon her. When she reaches the end of the runway, she exerts her independence and sense of individuality by chucking her (no doubt costly) accessory into the audience and raising her arms as if to proclaim her arrival, her immediate dominance of all. This portion of the scene differs in speed; her action is profound even more so due to the fact it all happens in slow motion. The scene ends with a shot of women in the audience laughing at Gia's antics. All the women are wearing long black garments, and all the women are made to appear extremely unattractive.

The second time the audience witnesses this scene is later in the movie when we are now fully aware of Gia's drug usage and hopeless attempts to stay afloat in the sea of the fashion industry. Now that the scene fits chronologically, the shots are more fitted to the reality of the situation and show audiences the price paid when a real person becomes a "model."

The same shot opens, the same expectant audience awaits Gia's arrival. This time around, the shot setup is much larger, panning across a wider view of the now clear room. This also brings about the knowledge of a lot more people in attendance to this event, perhaps more than her closest admirers and friends. As the same curtain opens and the same confetti falls, the shot makes Gia appear less almighty in comparison with the first time around. Instead of the goddess image flashing from various lower camera angles, the way this scene is edited changes Gia's entire entrance into the room. As she advances down the runway, the image of her remains steady, one camera staying at one angle the entire way. The aesthetics of the shot are uncomfortable; Gia appears to walk too fast down the runway, and now hardly seems towering over all those watching her. Instead she now appears lost in the sea of the drab people that outnumber her in the room. As she reaches the end, she throws her garb, this time in normal speed. Again, the audience (the movie audience *and* the fashion show audience) is made uncomfortable by the speed at which she does this; it is a sloppy act, hardly defiant. As Gia twirls about the stage and kicks her shoes off, it becomes quickly apparent to us that she is high and is most likely unaware of the actions we once thought so meaningfully rebellious. The audience at the fashion

show catches on to what we have already had the privilege of finding out, as Gia stops her antics to notice her surroundings (perhaps for the first time). The clapping and cheering quickly begin to fade. As Gia leers at those watching her, we access her point of view; some level of sudden realization registers as to where she is and what she is doing. Her perception of the people around her (who eventually cease clapping altogether, some proceed to point and whisper accusingly) lacks the color of reality. This time black and white is used less for historical purposes, and more for connections with Gia's feelings of misplacement and desperation. As she retreats to the mouth of the runway, the points and whispers continue. Stumbling back through the curtain she once so dominantly burst through, our last glimpse of Gia is also in black and white, incorporating her into a world of the misunderstood, disengaged, and misled. The variation on this repeated scene resembles Gia's transition from one who was on top of the world to one who made imperfect ideological decisions to cope with the perfect world surrounding her.

Another scene depicts the evolution of Gia, as well as the audience's perceptions of the fashion world which have now transformed from images of success, glamour, beauty, and wealth to those of despair, isolation, addiction and depression. The audience is again invited to see what happens to a real person turned "model" for the industry of appearances. Another photo shoot with Franscesco is revealed to the audience at the beginning of this scene, though it is unlike any photo shoot witnessed previously. This shoot comes at a point in Gia's life when she has nothing but her addictions to sustain her. She is sitting in the center of a room, surrounded only by makeup artists and those performing last minute touch-ups before the shot. This time she is without her peers. There is no hustle and bustle surrounding this event. The scene is, instead, thick with a morbid feeling. Those who are talking are doing so in hushed whispers. The people involved tiptoe and sidestep around Gia, who stares off at nothing in the distance. She is on her knees, suggesting her submission and vulnerability. Her glamour is less dazzling than before, all that remains is a saddened beauty. Her hair is snarled and unkempt, her dress a less aesthetically pleasing and crumpled off-white. As the shot is setting up, Franscesco mumbles to himself "We use them up, we throw them away," unknowingly epitomizing Gia's life story in one simple sentence. At this point, Gia suddenly comes to life, lashing out at whoever removed her cherished knife by her side. Though they quickly return it to her, she continues to lecture those surrounding her, and an approaching Franscesco, about the portentous hazards of "taking someone's knife when they need it."

Franscesco attempts to soothe her, yet the audience is not given the relief of his calming words, due to the overlapping voice of one of the technicians commenting on the track marks on her arm, and the "thing on her hand" that reminds him of a volcano. Franscesco assists Gia in easing into a position for the shot where her needle marks do not show. As he returns to his position for picture taking, a tearful Gia thanks him, one of the only legible utterances from her pretty lips to be heard at that point in the movie. This time, Franscesco is the God looking down on Gia, as he ascends a ladder to begin shooting he retracts his initial statement that modeling and life are different experiences. "This is life, not heaven. You don't have to be perfect," he says, producing the first suggestion that Gia is allowed to be thought of as human, and not a creature that was originally thought to embody all the perfections of the beauty myth. Though the audience is able to breathe a sigh of relief because someone finally realizes Gia's level of humanity, it comes with swift realization that it is too late. Damage beyond repair has been done to her body and soul, and even rehabilitation from the drugs will only lead to the discovery that she has AIDS, the disease that will sooner rather than later claim her life. The shot ends with a heartache-inducing single flash of Francesco's camera – a woman who was once surrounded by approximately no less than 300 snapping, flashing, clicking cameras is now the center of a painful process concluding with a single bursting flash bulb.

Gia, the story Vanessa Vance calls a tale of a "young woman [who] lived too fast, rose too far, and fell all too abruptly," is not one to merely make audiences weep, wipe their tears, and move along. Rather, the rhetorical value of this film leaves audiences with a deeper sense of cautionary advice surrounding the ideological implications of the beauty myth, especially encompassed in large industries. The film rhetorically deconstructs one of these industries, revealing the commodity of fashion as an influential world of truly unattainable appearances.

Different individuals, particularly women, variously cope with the pressures of the strive for flawless appearance in today's heavily influential society. The most common coping method is eating disorders to control weight, and it is no wonder that approximately seven million females suffer from eating disorders. Cosmetics, surgical enhancement, and weight loss programs are all tools utilized differently by women in society as attempts to achieve perfection. The film *Gia* offers audiences a rare but valuable glimpse into the life of a real "model," and of the effects of the pressure for perfection. Instead of envying or hating Gia, audiences are invited to identify with a martyr for purposes of education of the masses.

The fashion industry uses their leggy blondes coupled with touch ups and trick shots to promote the flawlessness of the beauty myth as not only possible, but expected of women everywhere. Yet *Gia* allows the audience to see that this is not the case. The life of Gia Marie Carangi is testimony that even the models for beauty, mannequins or paradigms need assistance and aid in coping with the pressures put forth onto them to maintain their unblemished images. Furthermore, coping mechanisms in the fashion industry can be severe; individuals tend to skip expensive makeup and instead develop dangerous drug addictions as a way to deal with pressure. The ideological decisions Gia makes throughout the film are all in response to the overwhelming demand on her most valuable assets to the industry she works for. At one point she quips to an agent inquiring about her needle-battered arms, "It's not my arms you want. It's my face and my tits. And they're fine." Her words ring harsh but true. Gia's problems were ignored in the never-ending desire to expose her beauty for a profit. She is not, however, remembered for her contribution to the industry of modeling and fashion, rather more for how she is defined in a review of the movie as simply an "interchangeable mannequin, pretty animated hanger to display a designer's latest creation". (hometheaterinfo.com) Her story is made more memorable by society's ability to identify with her attempts to cope with the pressures to be perfect as they were pushed onto her, and how they eventually caused her death. *Gia* is a biography that functions rhetorically to deconstruct the fashion industry and show what happens when a real person becomes a "model." More importantly, *Gia* also serves as a cautionary tale regarding the beauty myth through a special glimpse into a world the average public would normally not be invited to see, and perhaps after viewing the film, may wish they never had in the first place.

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"A Good Ana Doesn't Die:" Pro-Anorexic Websites as Contemporary Manifestoes

To study the world of eating disorders is to uncover a universe of seclusion, pain, loneliness and unobtainable perfection. In today's superficial society, it is no wonder that so many females suffer from an obsession with perfection. We are taught at a young age to value what our society values; to see ourselves in terms of social standards. The image of a slim figure has come to represent health and control, while the image of a heavier person is deemed to be less attractive, less successful and less valuable. The pharmaceutical, fashion, food, and cosmetic industries all thrive on purchases made to achieve the unobtainable goal of physical perfection. In a world where no one can be perfect, many individuals are in a constant struggle of control; control over their physical appearance, inner emotions, external environment, and true identity.

Anorexia is a unique reaction to a variety of external and internal conflicts. Those with this illness are considered to have low self-esteem, be perfectionists and abnormally sensitive, and possibly suffer from depression. According to one pro-anorexic website, *Ana Never Dies*, anorexia and depression are in fact linked, "There seems to be a direct connection in some people to clinical depression. The eating disorder sometimes causes the depression or the depression can lead to the eating disorder" (Ana Never Dies). For most men and women suffering with an eating disorder, deeper emotional conflicts represent the core of the depression and lack of control that needs to be resolved. *Ana Never Dies* portrays anorexics feeling helplessly worthless and unworthy, correlating these individuals with deep depression, "I believe that I am the most vile, worthless and useless person ever to have existed on the planet, and that I am totally unworthy of anyone's time and attention. . . . I believe that other people who tell me differently must be idiots. If they could see how I really am, then they would hate me almost as much as I do" (Ana Never Dies). As a coping mechanism, anorexics focus on controlling one aspect of their life: their food intake and eating habits. The disorder requires months, even years, of obsessive and destructive direct tunnel vision. Anorexia demands absolute, single-minded dedication. It is exhausting and it can be extraordinarily lonely.

Thanks to the wonders of the internet, anorexics all over the world never have to feel alone again. Hundreds of websites exist to

bring together these individuals that share common lifestyles, attitudes and beliefs, and create a wedge between them and the rest of society. These sites exist to help girls that are already anorexic to become "better anorexics," to become thinner through the help and support of fellow anorexics. Pro-anorexia websites offer tips on everything from how to avoid eating to "sport vomiting." Extreme weight loss is applauded and female perfection is measured by the size of a girl's arms, legs and thighs. Sites showcase disturbing photos, thinspirations, journals, essays, quotes, commandments, creeds and psalms all reinforcing, normalizing and encouraging the dangerous behavior linked to the devotion of a starving lifestyle. Deep analysis of the disturbing content of pro-anorexic websites produces the understanding that the more these individuals allow dysfunctional exploitation of their body, the faster they become identified and victimized by the body.

Pro-Anorexic Paradox

A website's intention is to create public access to varieties of information. The internet has created a new form of the public sphere unifying millions of people. Individuals can search and inquire information, join discussion groups and forums, e-mail and chat, and publicize private diaries, pictures and otherwise noted disclosed information. Information on the internet is public, not private. Pro-anorexic websites represent an ironic paradox. Anorexics stress keeping their personal lives a secret from their friends, family and peers, however, on the web, these individuals create web-based secret identities, referring to themselves as ana's. Their secret identity is allowed public display. Pro-ana's are portrayed to feel invisible, depressed, alone, misunderstood and thus, they feel excluded from the public. In order to feel visible, anorexics become victims of their body, exploiting to feel a sense of unification. Confidence and visibility is rendered only when hiding behind an emancipated but controlled "ideal" figure or computer screen. Invisible to the world, pro-anorexic websites give ana's a unified voice. Pro-ana's create their own public voice, which allows their secret to be kept individually secret but also public when unified. Pro-anorexic's secret pursuit of thinness, made public via the internet and through the public form of the manifesto, creates a contemporary public and a new unified social structure based on the will for unity and a solid sense of belonging.

Contemporary Manifestoes

In defining the identities of radically active groups and individuals, such as pro-anorexics, the manifesto, a complex and omnipresent, and yet under-analyzed, form of modern discourse helps to articulate and explain the creation of democratic cultural formations, the modern public sphere and audiences based on the rhetoric of exclusivity. Manifestoes narrate the experiences of those whose needs have been ignored or excluded, those who are under the influence of a rigid hierarchical structure and in need of liberation. In essence, pro-anorexics feel isolated and out of their own control. The context of many pro-anorexic web pages resembles the selective, exclusive and proactive content of the manifesto. Janet Lyon, in her ground breaking study, Manifestoes: Provocation of the Modern, argues that, "The manifesto declares a position; the manifesto refuses dialogue or discussion; the manifesto fosters antagonism and scorns conciliation. It is univocal, unilateral, single minded. It conveys resolute oppositionality and indulges no tolerance for the fainthearted" (Lyon 1999, 9). The sites chronicle the exclusions and deferrals of those who feel on the outside of the public sphere and also distinguish rexies, masters of the body and self-control, from anorexics, who are weak individuals suffering from a disease.

Web sites clearly state the univocal and single-minded missions of anorexics and outside advice is not welcomed. *Ana's Underground Grotto*, a premier pro-ana website, displays many examples of the univocal discourse and devotion to mastering the body. The home page states, "No conscience, one motive: cater to the hollow." The urgency of struggle that is found in many manifestoes can be heard loud and clear from declarations such as this one on the sites. Manifestoes are not merely concerned with expressing angry complaints, but are used to produce and intensify the urgency of a particular imperative situation. One essay, available on *Ana's Underground Grotto*, titled, "An Anorectic Army: Thin Chance, Big Difference," describes the urgency of transforming lives and lifestyles, "The anorectic lifestyle is to devote oneself to continuing his/her journey to spreading the 'good news' to the entire world. . . . For those who just can't see we are only trying to save them from themselves, we will fight until the very end. . .this is a revolution. We have a thin chance, but we can create a huge difference if we will just reach out and grasp that one frail chance." Lyon argues that the manifesto "involves the emergence of public spheres and the rise of the modern state" (1999, 10). Furthermore, pro-anorexic individuals

writing manifestoes are working towards gaining a unified voice and furthering the notion of the public sphere by proliferating political, societal and personal identification struggles.

The major factor in connecting the manifesto with pro-anorexic web sites is the use of the pronouns "we," "us" and "them." The manifesto creates audiences through a rhetoric of exclusivity, claiming "for 'us'" the moral high ground of revolutionary idealism, and constructing 'them' as ideological tyrants, bankrupt usurpers, or corrupt fools" (Lyon 1999, 3). Applying Lyon's work to pro-anorexics, these individuals believe their lifestyle separates them from others, distinguishing themselves as master controllers of the body. Members of the government, family members and friends, doctors and nurses or, more strictly, anyone trying to tell a pro-ana information that differs from their rigid ideologies, is considered a suspicious outsider, a fool. They are coming in between pro-anorexics spreading of the "good news" to the entire world. Outsiders only bring the potential of interference with the promotion of pro-ana's new religion and the promotion of a lifestyle that will have a positive effect on an entire world of blinded people and save everyone from themselves (Ana's Underground Grotto).

All pro-ana homepages offer a disclaimer or warning regarding the content of the sites; attempting to separate outsiders from insiders and more directly, those suffering from anorexia and those mastering anorexia. One web page reads, "This site does not encourage that you develop an eating disorder. This is a site for those who ALREADY have an eating disorder and do not wish to go into recovery. . . .If you do not already have an eating disorder, better it is that you do not develop one now. You may wish to leave" (Ana's Underground Grotto). Others simply state, "I am not responsible for your actions. . . .Leave if you cannot handle it" (House of ED).

The warnings resemble responsible advice until one considers the effects of warnings on the psychology of anorexia. The individuals for whom these sites are intended for believe their life is worthless and out of control. They feel excluded, misunderstood and yearn for some sort of recognition and unified community. They do not see this disclaimer as a warning, but a dare; an enticement luring them into a world of perfection. Anorexics are willing to suffer and stay dedicated in the face of adversity. They are portrayed to feel the need to prove to themselves and outsiders that they are valuable human beings merely trying to achieve a goal, "I believe in perfection and strive to attain it" (Ana Never Dies). After reading a disclaimer on a site such as this, one

that even subconsciously hints at the ideal, individuals with a susceptible state of mind, as anorexics are depicted to possess, are enticed to enter and achieve perfection.

The manifesto's creation of new audiences and new publics occurs around a distinct identification. By using the word "we," writers assume the voice of authority and form a linguistic contract, "The potential audience of this contractual 'we' occupies the position of either supporting or rejecting the manifesto as a representative text. That part of the potential audience withholding support cease to be hailed in the 'we' of an audience, and in effect takes up the position of the antagonistic 'you' against whom the manifesto's charges are pressed" (Lyon 1999, 24). The pronoun "we" separates the potential audience and the true audience and forms an effective identification and suggests an affirmed consensus with the manifesto's "we." The manifesto's "we" denotes and empowers kinship and binds participation in a provisional community whose power is located in a potentially infinite public. The criteria for membership includes: shared histories of oppression, similar lifestyles and an expression for change. "The 'we' of the manifesto is highly unstable, inflectable, expansive, and mobile. Such mobility allows its constituency to locate itself in the shifting gap between the promise of universal rights and the harmful withholding of rights" (36). Furthermore, individuals for whom manifestoes are written are constantly finding themselves locked in a position of seeking a positive unified identity and holding a negative identity. Therefore, because Pro-Ana exists as a group that has long been denied access and for whom emancipation does not yet help enhance, Anas are able to create a public surrounding a unified manifestation of their own. Within the public sphere, pro-anorexics hold a negative identity and because they are separated on the basis of non-normative behavior, pro-ana manifestoes argue they have been denied a viable rights-bearing identity. Together, they stand, united by oppression and separation, situating pro-ana lifestyles on the basis of empowerment through isolation. However, situating themselves without a solid positive identity within the public sphere, pro-anas will not merely unify, but exclude and continue to live a life of isolation in a society that marks and shames non-normative individuals.

As strong as they may seem unified, pro-anorexics cannot function individually or without a unified notion of "we" or "us." For example, sites offer tips on how to keep a pro-anorexic lifestyle secret. However, as a unified group, pro-anorexics are seeking a public voice and public understanding for their private revolutionary lifestyles. Manifestoes do not only unify individuals with present grievances, but

countless voices of previous sufferers with shared oppressions. Past and present Anas believe they have suffered long, marked and misjudged lives and the time is now to apply their experiences and knowledge. *Ana's Underground Grotto* states, "as a pro-ana you can use your experiences of being misunderstood, demonized, censored, marginalized, invalidated and criminalized to launch a new awareness of yourself and those around you, of life in this world and your place within the larger society to foster understanding and effect change." The writer goes on to narrate that pain is a necessary emotion that has always distinguished and unified pro-anorexics, "The pain is necessary, especially the pain of hunger. It reassures you that you are stronger and can withstand anything" (Ana's Underground Grotto). The pain of starvation to achieve salvation links these individuals' voices together.

Many servers, such as Yahoo, have stopped allowing certain sites to function in response to complaints and extensive media coverage on this issue of the rise of pro-ana. The web portals believe the sites' sole purposes of existence lies in creating or inflicting harm on others. While this has silenced complaints, the web sites are not gone. Sites now claim to be "diet sites" or "religious sites" and contain the same material. Due to Ana's strong and rebellious voices, they refuse to be silenced by authority figures or individuals of expertise that presume to tell them how to live their lives or disregard any altering life experiences. Anas believe that all non-anas lack understanding and suffering and do not understand pro-ana's real goal.

In this sense, the web sites resemble the manifesto, seeking to create a new vision and version of imminent progress. The ideology behind pro-ana manifestoes yields a quality that can be inflated and used to revolutionize the world. Anas believe that no one will be able to hold up to their strong unified public:

> Contrary to popular misconception, volitional anorexics possess the most iron-cored, indomitable wills of all. Our way is not that of the weak. If we ever completely tapped that potential in our midst, and applied it to other areas outside eating habits and body sculpting, the fact is, we could change the world. Completely. Maybe even rule it. Is THAT what they are so afraid of? Is THAT why they strive so eagerly to silence our voices? Could it really be all about power, and the way our lifestyle exposes where it corrupts? (Ana's underground grotto)

Pro-ana sites project messages such as this one with an emphasis on superiority and pride through self-control. The use of political language

empowers anorexics to feel like transformed human beings who have gained control of their lifestyle; pro-active rebels with a cause rather than walking disorders. Anas argue that real authority and expertise are natural products of authenticity in the relentless educational process called life. They believe every daily experience and understanding is relevant in furthering one's knowledge and expertise. An excerpt from *Ana's Underground Grotto* portrays authoritative valued rhetoric, "My suggestion is this. Living as a pro-ana, you will experience many different things. Some will be pleasant and some will be unpleasant; some will be incredible or unusual while others are dull and banal. All will be potentially valuable in other areas of life as well" (Ana's Underground Grotto). The author goes on to state that matters of food and body are only the beginning and that these aspects of life should be expanded:

> to integrate their valuable conveyances into the realms of intellect, spirit, philosophy, politics, society and community. . . If you can force your body to take on the shape you choose, and train yourself to consume or refuse sustenance not upon impulse or programming but purely at will, then mark my words carefully: there is nothing you cannot accomplish applying these same core skills creatively to other areas of your life. (Ana's Underground Grotto)

As can be read through this declaration of revolution, the pro-anorexic's manifesto aims to expose opportunities and transform the thinkable into the imaginable and the necessary with urgency and unyielding aggression. Again, Lyon's work on manifestoes applies significantly to Pro-Ana websites as contemporary manifestoes. Referring to another unified group of individuals, Lyon states, "Laying their fingers on the pulse of the new world—'the moment of social transition'—the manifesto's revolutionary artisans mark the artistic praxis that will *create* that new world" (1999, 16). Urgency, revolutionary change and separation are portrayed through *Ana's Underground Grotto*'s closing remarks: "There are entire organizations out there, above-ground and underground, just waiting for people with these combined skills and experiences to generate, energize, and mobilize revolution. If not us, who? If not now, when?"

Ana's Underground Grotto even goes as far as quoting Eleanor Roosevelt in an attempt to defend the pro-ana lifestyle. Anas write, "In our victim-mentality saturated society, we seem to have forgotten the basic meaning of that classic statement by Eleanor Roosevelt, 'No one

can make you feel inferior without your consent.'" This quote applies to anorexics because they feel that nothing, no lifestyle, can rule an individual without their consent. Pro-anas strictly believe that anorexia is not a disease, but a lifestyle choice made by free will, and that there are no victims. Many feel persecuted and misunderstood for resisting authority and recovery at the risk of gaining weight. These sites offer reality checks that, "The government is NOT your friend; the government is NOT your protector. EDUCATE YOURSELF. Don't believe everything you are told. . . by anyone. Question everything. . .do your own research. . .form your own conclusions. . .If the majority believes it, it is probably wrong" (Ana's Underground Grotto). From this quote, the conclusion can be formed that anorexics approach the world with distrust and look at every situation and outside person with suspicion. Instead of seeking help or speaking to someone about their condition, these vulnerable minds will log onto pro-ana sites and feel a sense of belonging to a worthwhile community and lifestyle.

Many sites take the idea of an anorexic lifestyle to an even more extreme level and distinguish anorexic behavior from that of a "rexie." These sites define anorexics as individuals who want to get better and want sympathy for their illness. They feel as though they are a victim of an uncontrollable disease. On the other hand, rexies, individuals who live a pro-anorexic lifestyle, argue that the power of a decision is not a disorder. They believe disorders and diseases are inflicted upon individuals and cause suffering. However, decisions are free-willed choices, "Anorexia doesn't just happen. It is the product of decisions made in the mind. Specifically, the decision to not eat, or to only eat certain 'safe' foods, in certain measured quantities, under a certain number of calories" (Ana's Underground Grotto). Rexies state that decisions are made every moment of every day. To master the art of decision making is to realize that and be able to transform, redirect and control your life according to your choices, "I believe in control, the only force mighty enough to bring order to the chaos that is my world" (Ana Never Dies). Rexies want respect and admiration for their lifestyle. They are living for a cause, working towards gaining acceptance for their control and ending exclusion and discrimination.

Pro-anorexic sites display white or brown ribbons aiding in their anti-politically correct brown ribbon campaign. These ribbons symbolize an end to ana's demonized and devalued lifestyle and urge individuals to understand their movement and see that they are only trying to accomplish perfection by governing and mastering their bodies. One site quotes a rexie, "A good ana doesn't die" (Ana Never Dies). Anorexics die from this disease. Rexies believe those who die never

learned how to successfully control their bodies. This is just one of the many philosophies of a pro-anorexic individual. These individuals state that they will never die because they are not using the disease as a means of self-destruction but rather to achieve salvation.

The Public Secret

A bizarre dichotomy of messages forms the crux of this phenomenon. Pro-anorexia sites put identities out on display for the world to view and scrutinize. Pro-ana lifestyles are portrayed with a mixture of pride and defense. All web sites differ and many contradict the essence of being a pro-ana, displaying screams of desperation, "I'd rather die a thousand deaths than live this one life" (House of ED). Most, however, offer encouraging essays, memoirs, eating tips, support on how to purge correctly, undereat and overexercise and state, "If you try a little harder, you'll go a little farther" (House of ED).

Perhaps most intriguing is the amount of dedicated instruction these public sites offer on how to keep this lifestyle a secret. All pro-anorexic web site followers accept that they are engaged in a deadly battle but are extremely proud of their choices, lifestyle and secret. Pro-Ana's haunting ideology reveals, "It's a lifestyle that I'm willing to die for" (Ana Never Dies). The sites state that the mission of a pro-anorexic site is not to spread the illness but promise to do whatever it takes to enable a joining individual's quest for the perfect body. The goals of an anorexic lifestyle are to persuade others that they are fine and that they have the right to live life however they see fit. The way to do this is to seek others attempting to achieve the same goals of happiness and perfection. The pages function as a secretive gathering point for sentient individuals who are working to cause changes to occur in body and conformity to will. The pro-active group will not accept faint-hearted, weak, hysterical individuals looking to be rescued, but rather selectively recruit so-called elite individuals who demonstrate daily the power and results of applying will, imagination, creativity and effort towards meeting their goals (Ana's Underground Grotto).

Pro-anas' secretive lifestyles incorporate underlying ideologies and fantasies of unity that not only are a constituent feature of cults, but also secrecy. In society, there is always a separation between insiders and outsiders. Individuals become separated due to knowledge and hence a sense of belonging is either developed or non-existent. Secrecy suggests withheld information, beliefs and relationships. Nevertheless, secrecy also, "marks a division even as it invokes the possibility that this division can be repaired once what is hidden has been revealed" (Dean

2002, 9). The content of the private information, the secret, does not matter. Instead, the relationship binding select individuals together on the basis of the secret is the necessary element sustaining the social institution of pro-ana. The knowledge enhances the sense of an unbreakable, authoritative bond, "Those who share in the secret seem to have this kind of power, and they seem to have it by virtue of sharing in the secret—this is what sets them apart" (10). Pro-anorexic lifestyles are kept alive and prosperous on the fantasy of their unity and that their secret life distinguishes them from the public and provides them with power.

The ideology behind pro-anorexic lifestyles imbues secret with mystery, fantasy and importance, which in turn promotes and enhances pro-ana identities. By definition, ideology is a number of inconsistencies held together by a fantasy and materialized through everyday actions, practices, technologies, and institutions (Dean 2002, 8). The omnipresent fantasy of a slim, flawless body sustains and materializes anorexic beliefs and defines their actions. Regardless of how outside individuals perceive pro-anorexic web sites, practices, actions and overall lifestyle, these individuals seek to further their identities through public awareness via the internet:

> When we are the content of databases, when our numericized and digitalized identities provide the content that circulates, the content that might momentarily interest or stimulate a stranger thousands of miles away, we become secrets. So we worry that secrets will be—and are—revealed, that in some way who we are as subjects, those precious dimensions of ourselves that we hold most dear, will be stained and tarnished by circulating as so much Net drivel. Yet, at the same time, we worry that our secrets won't be revealed, that who we are isn't significant enough to merit a byte of attention. (1)

This quote captures the ideology behind pro-anorexic web pages and their true followers. Anas want to be valorized but misunderstood, private but public. Their secret online lifestyle does further communicate and act as a method of unification, empowering anas with a certain aura in which to realize and express their identities. However, anas do not trust the outside world with their secrets and true identities. They believe in only themselves and the pro-ana order of business and trust only those sharing the same sense of pro-ana unity. Because of this strict trust and unity, anas only have distrust for the world outside. Anas have been marked and demonized in the past and the only mechanism

available to control their image is to interiorize a unified set of beliefs and habits of judgment.

The secret, which forms pro-ana's sense of belongingness and forms their ideal controlled social existence, inevitably secludes these individuals from the outside world. Feminist expressions of an ideal civic public of citizenship "rely on an opposition between public and private dimensions of human life, which corresponds to an opposition between reason, on the one hand, and the body, affectivity and desire on the other" (Young 1987, 423). Exclusion is by no means an accident. Individuals both on the inside and the outside of the secret are excluded due to the opposition between reason and desire. As a pro-ana, perfection, control and beauty are desired. As a standard citizen, moral reason and health outweigh flaws, stress and the emaciated look. Society places an ideal upon the public. The public in turn exhibits a will to unity, and necessitates the exclusion. In essence, the will to unify always excludes. Most times the identity that is excluded is non-normative or perceived to be lacking any societal value. Differences become marked and the move to bring individuals under a universal category creates a distinction between insiders and outsiders, generating dichotomy instead of unity. This is the game of separation that first excluded pro-anas from the public sphere. Now, an oppressive opposition has been made in anas favor, eliminating the others that make up society. Dean writes, "The medium of the secret widened the private conscience into a society; the society came to be a large conscience, a conscience of the world from which the society voluntarily excluded itself by way of the secret" (Dean 2002, 27). Thus, instead of gaining acceptance and understanding, individuals living a pro-anorexic, secretive lifestyle are pushing themselves farther into seclusion, furthering their separation from society.

With a newly gained confidence via the internet, anorexics are able to articulate their lifestyle and expand their communicative range, furthering the notion of the public sphere. In Publicity's Secret, Jodi Dean asks, "Why should we hide ourselves if we do not dread being seen?" (Dean 2002, 21) Although the 'we' Dean is referring to, is not pro-ana, the quote portrays a pro-anorexic viewpoint on publicity. Pro-anorexics want to be heard and they yearn to feel unashamed of their lifestyle, as portrayed online. However, as soon as faces are no longer hidden behind a computer screen, and webpages and voices and identities are no longer private, what is left of a pro-anorexic's private lifestyle is clearly visible to the public and becomes marked and demonized. When web sites, their zone of privacy, are erased, anas are vulnerable. Rejecting food is an example of expression of a pro-

anorexic's private lifestyle. Present society does not view this act as normal or standardized, but private and ghastly. The private is what should be hidden from view, or what cannot be brought into view. The private, in this traditional notion, is connected with shame and incompleteness and implies excluding bodily and personally affective aspects of human life from the public. (Young 1987, 441). Pro-anorexic's private behavior and identities are shamefully marked and made into a public spectacle due to society's will for homogeneity necessitating the exclusion of many active groups culturally identified with the body. Iris Marion Young argues, "Instead of defining privacy as what the public excludes, privacy should be defined, as an aspect of liberal theory does, as that aspect of his or her life and activity that any individual has a right to exclude others from. I mean here to emphasize the direction of agency, as the individual withdrawing rather than being kept out" (441). The truth of the matter is, however, that if pro-anas wanted no one to know about them, then hundreds of web pages would not exist to stress their existence. Pro-anorexics as individual people withdraw from society because they feel excluded. On the web, accompanied by a cultish sense of belonging, anas can act out publicly in an anonymous private way. As a unified group with a webpage, anas stand together. At home, at school, with friends, in essence without their voice and without one another, anas do not have the strength to attempt public awareness, self-admiration or the search for independent private identity.

A New Religion: Pro-Ana Cults as Belonging

The secret public of pro-anorexics can be framed in the context of cults and in extreme cases, a religious cult through use of rituals and séances. To be a member of a cult is to be a part of something bigger than yourself. Membership requires handing over your lifestyle in hopes of gaining control. In following their ideals, individuals feel a selective sense of belonging, "Members of true cults frequently isolate themselves from the rest of the world and develop a strong sense of community. They seem obsessed with the path to perfection, which, though unattainable, holds out compelling promises" (Hiesse-Biber 1996, 9). Much of the material on pro-ana sites renders preaching of the gospel and achieving deliverance and purity through starvation.

Religion functions as a savior in times of trouble. Pro-anorexic's pursuit of thinness can be closely linked to forming a new public, a new revolution or a new religion. Individuals seeking solace will turn to ideologies, meaningful symbols, beliefs and practices of their traditions

to help them make sense of their lives, creating and discovering a sense of purpose in relation to life. Our media-saturated and consumer-oriented culture easily provides these lovesick, salvation seeking individuals with the images, beliefs and practices that they need and desire in order to reduce the ambiguity of their lives and control the unknown. The pro-ana web pages function as a meeting ground for these individuals; the house of worship for the cult of thinness or cathedral filled with parishioners committed to a life defined by a set of values and rules.

A cult's influences are so pervasive that many believe it is too hard to resist. "Most religious cults center on a spiritual leader who defines the path, and who threatens exile or worse to those of his flock who stray" (10). In the case of pro-ana sites, the spiritual leader is the creator of the sites and the image threatened to those who stray is a life filled with obesity and shame. The primary rituals include: dieting, binging, exercising and measuring achievement by calorie counting, weigh-ins and keeping track of progress in journals. Zealous fanatical rituals that resemble cult behavior include the summoning of Anamadim, the guardian servitor of the anorectic praxis. This ritual has a specific time, preliminary actions, directions, offerings and a final pact (Ana's Underground Grotto). Pro-ana sites also include online journals kept by anorexics that contain religious discourse such as, "I fell from grace by eating a 'forbidden' food," or "I saw the light and lost 5 lbs." Not only do these sites contextualize the disease with religious discourse, they also flaunt religion in the form of creeds, psalms and commandments. In order to gain salvation through starvation, anorexics need to put their faith into the anorexic's version of the 10 Commandments. They believe that gaining weight is sinful, calorie counters are an inspired word of God, one can never be too thin and the only way to fill their spiritual hunger is through symbolic-ritualizing.

Many anorexics believe their eating habits to be condoned by religious fasting. To understand this mind set, "we must see how these struggles function as precarious solutions to a crisis of meaning: as symbolic ritualizing attempts to fill a void, to construct some hope" (Lelwica 1999, 7). Without the eating disorder label, fasting is something religious or spiritual people do to cleanse the body and rejuvenate the spirit. Long before slenderness framed the essence of the ideal body, fasting was a method for women to define themselves and manipulate their environment. History shows that, "prior to the modern era, women's refusal to eat or digest their food held a decidedly religious significance" (Lelwica 1999, 27). Throughout history, varying objectives based on certain social and cultural systems encouraged and

promoted a woman's control of appetite. In earlier centuries, control of appetite was linked to piety, salvation and belief. Perfection, in the eyes of God, was achieved through fasting. Presently, female control of appetite is embedded in patterns of class, gender and family relations. The modern anorexic does not strive for perfection in God's eyes, but rather in the eyes of society. Presently, the ideal is shaped around physical, rather than spiritual, beauty. The horrific irony of it all is that these women are rendering themselves weaker, not in the name of God or everlasting salvation, but at the expense, and in the name of, strength.

Conclusion

Pro-anas become more victimized by the body as they search for ways to control, but inevitably, ignore it. These active individuals render themselves weaker in the name of strength with hope to gain salvation, purity, unification and society's acceptance. Sites repeatedly portray individuals willing to die for a controlled and perfect lifestyle. Pro-ana sites use the rhetorical features of the manifesto to separate the idea of anorexia as a disease from a controlled lifestyle choice made by free will. The manifesto frames pro-ana web site's modern discourse as an exclusive, single-minded form of public rhetoric refusing any further dialogue. The manifesto provides anas with a univocal, strong revolutionary voice disconnecting insiders, those living a private lifestyle, from outsiders. Disclaimers, secrets, histories of oppression and rigid ideologies derived from "membership" all work to further enhance the wedge between the rest of society, anorexics and pro-anorexics or rexies. Based on their secretive and separating ideological behavior and feelings of a marked and demonized seclusion from society, pro-anorexic individuals live private lives.

Disclosing private information in the form of the public manifesto forms the paradox of pro-ana's unified relationship. The bizarre dichotomy that surrounds pro-anorexic sites is the groups yearning for public awareness, power and valorization of their distinctive, private and distinguished lifestyle. The ideology behind pro-anorexic lifestyles imbues secret with mystery, importance and the fantasy of unity, which in turn promotes and enhances pro-ana identities. Their private but public online lifestyle furthers communication by acting as a method of unification, empowering anas with a certain aura in which to realize and express their identities. Anas, however, are not placing their faith in their independent individualistic identity, but in the fantasy of unity. Alone, anas want to be private; together they yearn for glorification and publicity. Marked and misjudged by society, pro-anas

stand, united by oppression and exclusion, working towards gaining a viable rights-bearing identity. Anas have been marked and demonized in the past and the only mechanism available to control their image is to interiorize a unified set of beliefs and habits of judgment. Because the will to unity always excludes, instead of gaining acceptance and understanding, pro-anorexic's secretive lifestyles push anas farther into seclusion, furthering their separation from society.

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Accurate Exhibits
A Critique From A Rhetorical Standpoint

Museums play an interesting role in our culture; they are a place we go to learn about our world's history whether it be art, science, or anthropology. We have charged them with the task of preserving our history. Since the 1960s there has been an explosion of museums around the world. In 1989 the International Council of Museums (ICOM) estimated there were 26,700 museums worldwide, and their popularity has only continued to grow. This growth has made it increasingly important to learn about how they present our past. Do museum exhibits accurately depict history? How do they make us think about the future? This paper takes a critical look at the role of the museum and its function as a cultural technology and creator of nostalgia.

Before one can analyze modern museums and their exhibits, it is important to learn about their own place in history. ICOM defines a museum as:

> A non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.

This was not always the case however. Museums can be traced back almost to the beginning of civilization. The first recorded museum was erected by Ptolemy I in 280 BC in Alexandria, Egypt (www.digitakegypt.ucl.ac.uk). It was more of a temple to the muses than a place to store and exhibit artifacts. The Alexandrian Museum was also Ptolemy's personal palace, not a public institution.

The next major advancement toward what we know as the museum was during the Renaissance. Wealthy, young royalty who were influenced by the new surge of knowledge, started to create collections. Their goal was to create a microcosm of the world in which they lived in. These collections were called, "cabinets of curiosities," "closets of rarities," and "kunstkammer," which means art closets in German (www.kunstkammer.dk).

It was very costly to build these cabinets of curiosities; therefore it was reserved mainly for royalty. This sometimes lent to the blurring of an ideal microcosm. Renaissance royalty used these early museums to show off both their prestige and wealth. They would fill their kunstkammer with only the most exotic animals and the most outrageous artifacts. This would either show their wealth or glorify their family's heritage (www.kunstkammer.dk). Like the Alexandrian museum, they were also still off limits to the public.

Not much changed to the kunstkammer until the seventeen hundreds, when men like Neickel and Linnaeus devised ways to classify artifacts and nature. Massive efforts began to organize vast and complex collections in museums across Europe. According to Lisa Roberts, director of the Garfield and Lincoln Park Conservatories, classification is very important to the human race, "it is the process by which people sort everything from laundry to knowledge" (Roberts 15). Valuable works of art began to be distinguished from objects of little worth. The advent of these classification systems should not be downplayed. Not only did it provide a way to store and keep record of the objects on display, it revolutionized the way people perceived the objects. It became possible to truly measure the monetary worth of an exhibit.

Across the ocean and sometime later, in America, two men forever shaped the future of the museum. Those two men were Charles Peale and, believe it or not, P.T. Barnum. Barnum was in the business to appeal to the masses. He enjoyed shock value, creating fake monsters and animals to draw in crowds, whereas Peale was interested in museums for their scientific value and educating citizens about the country they lived in. At Peale's museum one was to "study the perfection of the Creator, social order, and civic responsibility" (Roberts 23). These two men really personified the conflict that museums even today struggle with, finding a happy medium between education and entertainment.

As is evident in this brief history, most of these historic museums could not even be considered a museum if held up to ICOM standards. Many were created either to shock and entertain, or glorify the owner's country and family. This illustrates that the origins of the museum have not always provided the groundwork for creating accurate exhibits.

One of the obstacles blocking historically accurate exhibits in the modern museum is nostalgia. The way that museums portray history often times create this sense of nostalgia and the artifacts on display become mystified. In John Berger's book, *Ways of Seeing*, he addresses how art becomes mystified when it is duplicated or taken from its original context to be put on display. The art or artifacts intended

meaning changes and their "function [becomes] nostalgic"(Berger 23). Their whole being, in a way becomes nostalgia. The danger is that it becomes a relic of the time that it came from, instead of an object that finds its own meaning in the current time period. In other words, when people travel to the Louvre to see the painting of the Mona Lisa, many are going to see an expensive, famous painting, not to learn about its significance today or its contribution to the world of art.

Michael Kammen, professor at Cornell University, calls this nostalgia a "history without guilt." Many museums like the Baseball Hall of Fame play up the greatness of success and conveniently leave out the unpleasant facts, such as baseball's horrible handling of racial integration, to create this mystical feeling (Holmgren). This brings us back to the struggle that curators and museum owners have in creating a place that is both entertaining and educational. Andrew Barry writes about this dilemma while discussing science museums, "the public needs to understand science, but before this is possible, the museum must first understand what the public wants"(MacDonald 25). There lies a Catch-22; museums are meant to teach and preserve history, artifacts, and knowledge, but they also need to attract visitors in the first place. It becomes very tempting to put an emphasis on the entertainment and less so on education or accuracy.

The way exhibits are actually set up and how they are presented also play a great role in how we perceive our past. In Valerie Hartouni's book, *Cultural Conceptions: On Reproductive Technologies And The Remaking Of Life*, she argues that legal reasoning and political discourses allow communication itself to become a technology that is able reproduce and create life. Because our society accepts the outcome of cases such as Baby M, which tackled the difficult legal issue of surrogate parenthood, we allow the discourse of the court of law to dictate who can and cannot be a mother. Sharon MacDonald makes a similar statement in the book, *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*, when she says, "museums. . .can be regarded as cultural technologies which define both certain kinds of 'knowledge' and certain kinds of publics" (MacDonald 5). They have the power to shape our knowledge of the past, because we go to museums trusting them to be, "institution[s] in the service of society," and expect them to show us an unbiased view of the truth.

The problem, McDonald says, is that exhibits, "tend to be presented to the public rather as do scientific facts: as unequivocal statements rather than as the outcome of particular process and

contexts"(MacDonald pg. 2). Her point is that exhibits are carefully planed out, edited, and arranged. The way an object is lighted, what a plaque says, or whether the exhibit should be behind glass or not is all thought out. How and what you should learn is carefully planned before you even pay to get in the museum.

A perfect example of this is to take a look at the controversial Smithsonian exhibit entitled: *Crossroads: The End of World War II, The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War.* Although it was never actually finished, it created a great social and political controversy. The problem was who would choose what would be used in the exhibit and how it would be displayed. On one hand, directors in charge of this project wanted to, "respect the sensitivities of veteran's groups and [American] historians," but knew if they wanted to create a balance they needed to, "respect Japanese sensitivities" (MacDonald 202).

It just so happened that various war veterans groups and the Air Force Association were helping to fund the *Crossroads* project (MacDonald 198). Many of these groups protested the fact that the museum was planning on adding Japanese viewpoints into the exhibit and eventually cut their funding, which lead to the demise of the exhibit. In effect these groups became the sole owners of the museum as a cultural technology. If the museum was going to say something that they did not approve of, they would quickly put an end to it. That is a very powerful position. The veterans groups and the Air Force Association then had the power to decide what happened in history, and shape the future how they saw fit.

According to Berger, this nostalgia and power struggle over exhibit display can become a "substitute for democracy" (Berger 149). This stance is a somewhat controversial one. He claims that museums, as well modern media, fail to focus on the present. He justifies this by stating, as explained above, that history and art museums create mysticism around their subjects and block their meaning in the present while most science museums look only at the past and future. If this is true, then Americans are always looking at the past and the future. This leaves no room to think about things in the present like voting or the political processes going on right before our eyes. Instead of thinking about what truly are the right decisions to make in the present, museums and media lead us to believe that we should look solely to the past or the future for the answer.

It is not the intention of this paper to say that museums are purposely out to trick us or harm us. It is the total opposite, most curators try their hardest to present information in the most fair and unbiased way possible. The question, is how do we use museums to our greatest

benefit? Some have said that the answer needs to come from the museums and their organizations themselves.

Stephen Weil, of the Smithsonian Institute, claims that part of the problem is that museums are defined by their function and not their purpose. He states that organizations such as ICOM or American Association of Museums (AAM) have created definitions of museums based mainly on the focus of items and their preservation rather than ideas. The reasons for this, he claims, are due to the fact that if museum rhetoric were focused on the socially beneficial aspects of a museum it would "ultimately. . . invite discussion on a wide range of political and moral issues that could well pit trustees against staff members and staff members against one another" (Weil 46). Instead they choose to "focus on function--good, seemingly value free work of collecting, preserving and displaying—[this] projects a sense of ideological neutrality (albeit, I suspect, a grossly deceptive one)" (Weil 46). So part of the problem is that the very definition of museums leads one to believe that the information presented on the objects displayed are somehow fair and balanced. In reality this is not always the case.

Weil goes on to say that instead of looking at museums functionally we need to start viewing them as potential institutions that encourage stimulation and empowerment. The point is that museums should be viewed and defined equally for their potential benefits to the community, as well as their duties regarding artifacts. This theory does raise a few questions, however. For instance, do museums choose objects to display based on the inherent quality of the object or on its potential to create stimulation? And how can one tell the level of an object's potential to stimulate? Weil's idea is a novel one, however, it would require complex campaigns to bring about and would take years if not generations to actually institute.

Instead of waiting on a revolutionary change of thought by museum institutions, there are things that visitors could and should be doing while they are viewing exhibits. When patrons visit a museum they should keep in mind these questions: Who is the author of this exhibit? What kind of audience did that person envision? How did the layout of the exhibit affect its meaning? Viewing a museum in this light can be greatly educational. Exhibits should inspire scholarly debate and discussion about how to learn about the present from our past – they cannot not be viewed as an absolute truth.

We live in a country where our founding fathers, as Anne Norton put it, placed themselves under the authority of language. Instead of giving absolute power to a monarch, they placed it in the hands of language by creating the Constitution. It is vital that we are aware that

language surrounds us. Through language and rhetoric, museums have become a cultural tool or a technology that shapes how we view our world, knowledge, and our future. Museum curators struggle to preserve the past as accurately as they can. Despite their efforts, however, many times they help to create nostalgia. According to Berger, this helps serve as a substitute for democracy. Instead of allowing museums to be a place to learn from our past and make better decisions in the present, they keep us thinking about how much better the past *was*. It is our duty as visitors to become savvy about the process in which we learn from museums.

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Interpersonal

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Co-Construction in Storytelling

Introduction

Storytelling in conversation is a phenomenon that takes place all the time in the world around us. A major element in storytelling is the fact that it takes more than one person in order to construct the telling of a story. This is called the co-construction of storytelling and the construction is driven by either the teller or the recipient, depending on who directs the flow of the story. This can be done by minimal talk by either the recipient or the teller. The story telling sequence is structured by four different sections, which I will explain below. They are the trigger, the preface sequence, the telling sequence and the response sequence.

In my analysis, I am focusing on an extended story sequence that takes place between three women who are driving in a car. This example of an extended story sequence is important in understanding interpersonal communication in everyday context because it displays how a story is co-constructed between more than just one person. Mandelbaum (1987) discusses how recipients may participate as actively as tellers in the production of a storytelling to help build the story. This co-construction consists of a teller and at least one recipient and in this case, two. The function of the recipient is to engage and shape the story by being actively involved and making comments that can direct the course of the story being told. In the story being analyzed here, the recipient is actively involved in making this a recipient driven story. This is done below, as the teller constructs an extended turn, and has uninterrupted extended sequences, with minimal turns by the recipient. However, even though the recipient does not say much, they are helping the teller draw out the climax of their story by letting them know that they understand what has been told without interfering with the story.

This paper focuses on how the recipient displays to the teller that she understand that she is about to enter into an extended story sequence and how the recipient then draws out more information from her during the story and helps to construct how the story is told. I have broken down the extended sequence into six different sub sequences that demonstrate different elements of the recipient helping to construct the story. These sub sequences combine to make up the trigger, the preface sequence, the telling sequence and the response sequence. The trigger is what evokes

the teller to tell the story. Jefferson (1978) argues that a story is a product of turn-by-turn talk that has been triggered in the course of prior talks. The trigger, in my example, is located right away in line 1, where the eventual recipient of the story makes a comment that causes the teller to recall a story that she wants to share. This leads directly into the preface, which occurs in the beginning of sub-section 2, by the teller. The preface is the introductory section of the story. Mandelbaum (1987) discusses how the story has to be proposed by the teller in the preface and the recipient must either accept or reject this offer. The telling sequence is the actual telling of the story, which takes up a majority of the example that I will analyze, and is comprised of the end of sub-section 2 through all but the end of sub-section 6.

I was first introduced to this telling sequence by Harvey Sacks, in his 1974 piece titled, "An Analysis of the Course of a Joke's Telling in Conversation". In this article, Sacks describes the usage of the telling sequence directly following the preface sequence. He explains this sequence as the point in the story in which the telling finally gets told, sometimes uninterrupted and sometimes with turns taken by the recipient. He then goes on to explain the response sequence. The response sequence marks the end of the story and enables analysis of what was just told which occurs over the last two lines of sub section 6. Sacks compares a story ending to the ending of a joke as very similar in that both the teller and the recipient will analyze the story or joke that has just been told with minimal turns. Every story involves these key components, in which I will analyze later.

The rest of my paper will include a section that demonstrates my database and access, which will show the details of how I received my data and will brief you on what is happening. The next section will be a transcription key to help one understand the symbols that will appear on the data. That will be followed by the analysis of the data, which will be the focal point of this paper in exemplifying and explaining my research. Finally, the conclusion will be the end summarizing and reemphasizing what is being shown in my analysis.

Database & Access

The data that I have analyzed was obtained through an audio recording that was thirty-four minutes and fifty-eight seconds in its entirety. My story telling analysis occurred twenty-seven minutes into the recording. There were three participants in all and their names were Sarah, Liz and Jen. All three girls are in college. Sarah is a junior at the University of New Hampshire and is from Nashua, New Hampshire. Liz is a senior at the University of New Hampshire and is from Laconia,

New Hampshire and Jen is a junior at the University of New Hampshire and is from Goffstown, New Hampshire. The recording was done on September 17th, 2005, while the three girls were driving in a car from Durham, New Hampshire to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Liz was the driver while Sarah sat next to her in the passenger side front seat and Jen was in the back seat by herself sitting in the middle. They covered a number of different topics while talking and they had an estimated twenty-five different story sequences occur during the drive. In order to obtain this data, we simply asked these three girls if they wanted to be involved in our project and they said yes. They were all aware of the fact that they were being recorded at the time and they signed consent forms confirming that fact that they were being recorded.

Transcription Key

This section is dedicated towards helping you understand the symbols that are used in my transcription. Liz, Jen and Sarah are names that are being used in the analysis as pseudonyms, which are false names that I have assigned to them, in order to keep their identities concealed. Liz and Jen have their names written in full every time they speak because they have short names. Sarah on the other hand is abbreviated by Sar. The rest of this section will be listed symbols with the explanation of what they represent next to them.

Symbol - Explanation
.hh- hearable in breath
hh- hearable out breath
.- downward (falling) intonation at possible turn completion point
?- upward (rising) intonation at possible turn completion point
,- continuing intonation at possible turn completion point
=- to indicate quick latching of speech
[- to indicate start of simultaneous talk
]- to indicate end of simultaneous talk
__- underlying indicates vocal emphasis
((pause))- indicates a pause between turns or within a turn
heh heh- indicates laughter
( )- empty single parenthesis means you heard some talk but cannot make it out
(word)- words and phrases in single parentheses indicate a doubtful hearing

Data

This section will include the data that I will later be analyzing. This story came twenty-seven minutes into the car ride and the girls were discussing relationships and other people that they know that have had some bad experiences, but eventually figured out what and who makes them happy. The story is told by Liz and is about a friend of Liz's that has figured out what she wants to do with her life and has found a man that is older than her that she wants to be with. This man ironically has the same name as another boyfriend that she once had. I will be analyzing this story by breaking it up into six sub sequences. Each of these sub sequences will analyze a different section of the story being told.

"Liz's Story"

1   Sar: >I mean even them they have to be really <u>strong</u> people< en really like be 2   able to handle all their problems an <u>not</u> many people are li[ke
3   Liz: [I think it
4   really depe[nds
5   Sar: [good deep down inside that can really do it
6   Liz: I think it depends like where you are in like [your life cuz like
7   Jen: [how much u work at
8   things::.
9   Liz: well me and my friend laura >I was telling you this before like< she didn't 10   wanna go to college:she knew that she wanted to make a career outa
11   working at this <camera photo place> anlike pretty much like takingit over 12   when her grandparents pass away? .hh cause right now her grandparents 13   ownit her uncle manages it and she basically works there full time:. .hh   14   and really likes cameras en tha[t's
15   Sar: [yea:
16   Liz: what she wants to do yak now she <u>knows</u> what she wants to do: >she
17   didn't wanna go to college< she wanted to run this business .hh ya know 18   so shes ina different point inher life than I am:. I dunno what the <u>hell</u> I   19   wanna do:. or where im gonna be .hh ya kno she already had things   20   planned out in her .hh the guy she married is twenty fiv:e. so hes even   21   old[er

22   Sar: [yup.
23   Liz: an hes already been through alota crap in his life he
already .hh did his   24   partying he already did all the stupid shit
that guys do when they're twenty 25   or whatever:. .hh you
know what I mean >and now hes ready to kinalike< 26   .hh
settle down yak[no
27   Sar: [yea but was that her first big
relationship with
28   somebody who was older?
29   Liz: with someone that was older[yea
30   Sar: [or that but has she had a
relationship before
31   Liz: =yea but shes very religous so like her other
relationships like .he >shes   32   never done anything but< kiss
someone.
33   Sar: well yea.
34   Liz: ever.
35   Sar: hmhm
36   Liz: nothing else .hh so her relationships kindof on a different
level than other 37   people but she had dated a couple other
guys from her church .hh which is 38   kinda weird because .hh
she married some guy named josh and she dated 39   another
kid named josh that went to her church I dunn I dunno it was just 40
         weird .hh cause we went from like one josh to another jo[sh
41   Sar:
[huuhh
42   Liz: there was no in between guy:. eit[her?
43   Sar: [yea [thats thats
weird.
44   Liz: [it was really
we(hh)ird.
45   Jen: my moms best friend in high school:. she: divorced >she
was married and 46   she got divorced.< .hh and then the guy
she remarried had the same name 47   as her ex husba[nd
48   Liz: [weir:d.

        This data will now be broken into the six sub sequences in order
to analyze the story further. Each sequence will display a different
element of the story that displays the four components of story telling
and other interesting things that the recipient can do in order to help the
story along and display that they understand what is being told.

Analysis

Sub-Sequence 1 -Trigger

This first sub sequence displays the trigger of the story. The trigger is indicated in line 1 and is what reminds Liz of the story that she will eventually tell.

1   Sar: >I mean even them they have to be really <u>strong</u> people< en really like be 2   able to handle all their problems an <u>not</u> many people are li[ke

3   Liz:
[I think it

4   really depe[nds
5   Sar: [good deep down inside that can really do it
6   Liz: I think it depends like where you are in like [your life cuz like

The trigger to this story sequence is located on line 1, where Sara makes a statement that results in Liz telling a story that she wants to share with her   two friends. Sara's comment brings Liz into a focus that she agrees with Sara a   little bit, but wants to elaborate on the topic with a story about her friend, Laura. Her story begins directly after the comment made by Sara in line 5 by saying in line 6, "I think it depends like where you are in like your life cuz like". This beginning to the story takes off directly from the comment that Sara makes in lines 1 and 5, referring to the fact that people have to be strong with their problems.

Sub-Sequence 2 - Preface

Sub sequence two displays the preface sequence of Liz's story. Here, she sets up the story that she is about to tell by making a statement in line 6 that sets the stage for what she is about to share with the other girls.

6   Liz: I think it depends like where you are in like [your life cuz like

7   Jen: [how much u work at

8   things::.
9   Liz: well me and my friend laura >I was telling you this before like< she didn't 10   wanna go to college:she knew that she wanted to make a career outa   11   working at this <camera photo place> anlike pretty much like takingit over 12
when her grandparents pass away? .hh cause right now her grandparents 13   ownit her uncle manages it and she

basically works there full time:. .hh   14   and really likes cameras en tha[t's
15   Sar: [yea:

Sub-sequence # 2 displays how Sara recognizes Liz is beginning to enter into an extended story telling. Liz begins the story in line 1 and has a shorter extended turn to indicate the preface of her story in lines 9 through 14. In line 15, Sara says "yea". In doing this she has recognized that Liz has more to share with her so, Sara keeps her response short and then leaves space for Liz to continue her story.

Sub-Sequence 3 - Telling Sequence # 1
Sub sequence three displays how Liz enters into the beginning of her story. She is granted an extended turn by the recipients, which displays that they are all aware that the story has begun and Liz will do most of the talking.
16   Liz: what she wants to do yak now she <u>knows</u> what she wants to do: >she   17   didn't wanna go to college< she wanted to run this business .hh ya know   18   so shes ina different point inher life than <u>I</u> am:. I dunno what the <u>hell</u> I   19   wanna do:. or where im gonna be .hh ya kno she already had things   20
       planned out in her .hh the guy she married is twenty fiv:e. so hes even   21   old[er
22   Sar: [yup.

In lines 16 through 21, Liz is beginning her story and in doing this she must tell Sara about a few things as background information so the story is clearer. In line 22, Sara displays that the information that Liz is extending to her is being understood by her saying "yup", and then continuing to let Liz engage in her story. Mandelbaum (1987) states that continuers exhibit an understanding that an extended unit of talk is underway by another person and that it is not yet complete. The continuer is a simple response that lets Liz know that she is being understood and can continue on with her story.

Sub-Sequence 4 - Telling Sequence # 2
Sub sequence four is dedicated to continuing Liz's telling sequence. She is continuing to further her story and is interrupted twice by Sara. Sara is being an active recipient in order to clarify a topic in the story that needs to be made clear in order for the story to make sense.
23   Liz: an hes already been through alota crap in his life he already .hh did his   24   partying he already did all the

stupid shit that guys do when they're <u>twenty</u> 25   or whatever:.
.hh you know what I mean >and now hes ready to kinalike< 26
       .hh settle down yak[no
27   Sar: [yea but was that her first big
relationship with
28   somebody who was older?
29   Liz: with someone that was <u>older</u>[yea
30   Sar: [or that but has she had a
relationship before

In line 27, Sara shows further understanding of the story being
told and offers a question in order to get some clarification of the story.
In line 27, she displays the need for clarification by asking a question
"yea but was that her first big relationship with somebody who was
older?". This is done to elicit more information out of Liz in order for
Sara to get a better handle on the story. She then asks for a little more
clarification in line 30 when she says "or that but has she had a
relationship before". These two instances are ways for Sara to elicit
more information about the story by asking questions.

Sub-Sequence 5 - Telling Sequence # 3
       Sub sequence five displays the last part of the telling sequence.
This is coming to the end of the story and Sarah is showing Liz that she
understands the point of what she is saying by using minimal turns of
talk.
31   Liz: =yea but shes very religous so like her other
relationships like .he >shes   32   never done anything but< <u>kiss</u>
someone.
33   Sar: well yea.
34   Liz: <u>ever.</u>
35   Sar: hmhm

In line 33, Sara replies to Liz's story by saying "well yea" . This
response by Sara is to indicate that the section of the story that was just
told by Liz in line 31and 32 is an obviously important piece of
information. This lets Liz know that she is doing a good job telling her
story because Sarah understands and agrees with her comment in line 31
and 32. This point in the story by Liz marks an important piece of the
story that she is trying to emphasize to Sara and Jen. Sara responds by
showing that she understood that it was an important part of the story and
responds by agreeing with Liz to show her acceptance of the point. Liz

follows Sara's comment by making the point again in line 34 by saying "ever", and Sara again shows that she understands this as a newsworthy point by saying "hmhm" and letting Liz begin to speak again.

Sub-Sequence 6 - Story Climax leads to the Response Sequence

Sub sequence six displays the response sequence, which indicates the end of the story. Here, Liz and Sarah both agree that the story was "weird". This display of evaluating the stories effect as weird, by both of the girls, is a strong indicator that the story has come to an end.

36   Liz: nothing else .hh so her relationships kindof on a different level than other 37   people but she had dated a couple other guys from her church .hh which is 38   kinda weird because .hh she married some guy named josh and she <u>dated</u> 39   another kid named josh that went to her church I dunn I dunno it was just 40   weird .hh cause we went from like one josh to another jo[sh

41   Sar: [huuhh

42   Liz: there was no in between guy:. eit[her?

43   Sar: [yea [thats thats weird.

44   Liz: [it was really we(hh)ird.

The climax of Liz's story is located here in lines 36 through 42 and Sara show's that she understand that this is the end of the story by saying "yea that's that's weird", in line 43. By beginning her talk with the word "yea", she is displaying that she agrees with Liz and then says "that's that's weird" in order to display to Liz that she understands the story and agrees with her assessment by offering an assessment of her own. This acknowledgement of the climax of the story by Sara is successful and Liz abides by repeating Sara's assessment in line 44. This climax leads to the response sequence, which entails the minimal turn-by-turn talk in lines 43 and 44 where Sarah and Liz agree that the situation being told is "weird".

Conclusion

In my analysis of the data that I observed, I pointed out many different ways in which the recipient can help to construct the story. First, I displayed how there must be a trigger to the story that prompts the teller to pass on their story to the recipient. This brings about the preface sequence in which the teller then began to construct the

beginning of their story. The next important ingredient towards the constructing of the extended story sequence is the recognition of the story sequence by the recipient. This takes place in order to let the teller know that the recipient understands that the teller is about to engage in a story sequence. This allows for the telling sequence to begin in which the teller has the opportunity to obtain extended turns of talk. As this extended story sequence began in my analysis, the recipient then made comments that helped to construct the story with the teller. This was shown in many ways such as showing understanding. The recipient used assessments that let the teller know that she understood the story being told thus allowing the teller to continue with her story. Another way in which the recipient can help to construct the story is through making comments or questions that elicit more information from the teller, which lets the teller know that the recipient needs a little more information in order to completely understand the story being told. Another aspect of constructing a story that was pointed out in my analysis was how a recipient can let the teller know that they understood an important, newsworthy aspect of the story. This was done by commenting or agreeing with the important issue that the teller has just announced. The last element of the story telling is the response sequence and this is done in order to display the fact the story has come to an end. This entailed a minimal turn sequence in my analysis that displayed that the teller and the recipient both agreed that the culmination of the story was "weird".

The goal of my study was to examine the co-construction of story telling between the teller and the recipient. My analysis is similar to the work done in Mandelbaum (1987), in which she states that storytelling in conversation is an interactive achievement. My data displays how it takes more than just the teller in order to create a successful story telling sequence and how the recipient is just as important in the process of constructing a story as the teller. The data that I obtained clearly exhibits how the multiple persons involved in constructing an extended story sequence combine to create the pieces necessary to tell a story. These pieces include the trigger, which invokes the telling of the story, the preface, which gives background to set up the beginning of the story, the telling, which is the actual passing on of the story to the recipient, and finally the response sequence, which is the turn by turn sequence displaying analysis at the end of the story. My data has further backed the notions and idea's of the scholars that we have covered this semester in that the story telling is an interactive process that includes the teller and their recipients.

The co-construction of a story is an important practice in understanding interpersonal communication in everyday life and

institutional contexts. The purpose of a the telling of a story is to direct talk to another person or persons. The telling would be senseless if it were to be for no one to hear and understand. With this in mind, the recipient of a story is just as important in constructing a story as the teller. The teller has to make adjustments in telling the story with regards to how the recipient is acting, reacting, and how they are responding. The recipient can help the teller narrate the story in many different ways depending on how they understand the story being told.

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Dynamic Dual
A Classic Study of an Extended Story Sequence

1. Introduction

The conversation practice under analysis is important as it leads to an understanding of interpersonal communication in everyday contexts. In the presented data, K, the daughter, requests information about family friends with whom she has not had contact for an extended period of time. K is a college senior who has been away from home. She uses this time with her parents, P and T, as an opportunity to request updating. This request is answered by P. P uses this opportunity to update her daughter as an interpersonal communication function.

This paper will focus on data presented in an extended sequence. The extended story sequence presents itself in classic style. Triggered by prior talk, there is a preface, telling, and ending sequence. What is particularly interesting is the manner in which this story is told. The structure of the story is noteworthy as it is recipient-driven, rather than teller-driven. Also of interest is the display of a couple (in this case, P and T) as co-tellers of the story.

The data analyzed follows Sacks' classic model of story structure: preface, telling, ending (1974). Also, as Mandelbaum presented, the recipient plays an important role in the process through which a story comes to the floor, is sustained, and is ended (1987, a.). Mandelbaum addresses recipient-driven storytelling as well. This story is most definitely recipient-driven in every aspect. A connection is also made to Jefferson's discussion of trigger (1978). The data shows that this extended sequence was triggered by prior talk, more specifically, the prior storytelling. Lerner (1992) is also acknowledged through a discussion of two of the participants as a couple and the effect that the relationship has on the talk. Another topic of interest (addressed in Goodwin, 1984) is that of a principle character and the presence of that character at the telling of a story. Goodwin also addresses the topic of stories as tailored to a specific gender, which is briefly covered as well in this analysis (1986).

As discussed above, the extended sequence follows classic story structure and also connects to the more recent discussions of recipient-driven storytelling. However, the analysis does not stop with those

theories noted. As with every story within conversation, this telling is unique. Not every aspect of the story presented has been explored academically, leaving the author to speculate about a few aspects of the analysis. Only further study of like conversations would clarify this.
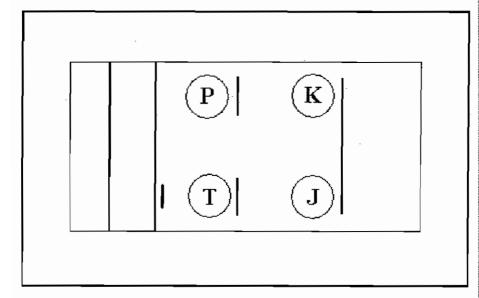
The following analysis will be broken down into four subgroups. The first subgroup will examine the story preface. The second subgroup will focus on the determination of the primary story teller. Thirdly, a segment will be analyzed with specific attention to the teller's inability to complete a phrase and the subsequent help she is given. Lastly, the final subgroup will be examined as an ending sequence. Specific attention will be given to the conversational turn that occurs just prior to the end of the story.

2. Data Base & Access

The data analyzed was recorded by Kristin Condon, author and participant, on September 5, 2005. The data is that of a conversation recorded during a car ride. Consent was obtained prior to departure. The conversation occurs face-to-face during the four participants' drive to Ogunquit, Maine.

The participants are a family: mother (P), father (T), daughter (K) and son (J). The following diagram (figure 1) depicts the positioning of the respective participants.

Figure 1. Family Car

T is the driver, P is seated in the front passenger seat, and K and J are situated in the back seat. T, a 46-year old male, is husband to P and father to both K and J. P, a 46-year old female, is wife to T and mother to K and J. K, the older of the siblings, is 21 years old. She is daughter to T and P, and sister to J. J is 19 years old, son to T and P, and brother to K.

At the time of the recording, the family had not gathered for a period of time. Both K and J had been away at college and had missed much of what has happened at home with family and friends. The family used this time together to celebrate the birthday of P. They are in transit to Maine where they would spend time in Ogunquit. The data collected and analyzed came from the conversation recorded during this travel time.

3. Transcription Key

For those readers not familiar with transcription and the symbols used in it, the following is a list of transcription symbols used in the data sets and the following analysis:

hh	hearable outbreath
.	downward (falling) intonation at possible turn completion point
,	continuing intonation at possible turn completion point
?	upward (rising) intonation at possible turn completion point
:	to indicate elongation of vowel and consonant sounds
=	to indicate quick latching of speech
[	to indicate start of simultaneous talk
]	to indicate send of simultaneous talk
__	underlining indicates vocal emphasis
(.)	to indicate a micropause
-	to indicate a sudden break in talk (cut off)

4. Analysis
4.1. Story Preface

The analysis begins with the story preface. As presented by Sacks (1974), every story has a preface sequence in which either the teller presents a story to be told, or a recipient requests a story. This interaction requires at least two turns to complete. The following sequence contains the preface of the extended story. The reader can find a complete transcription of the extended story in the appendix.

Story Preface
Sub-group 1

	1	P:	an i guess she was jus- they were jus goin at it
	2	P:	hh!
	3	(1.0)	
→	4	K:	when did you see (.) Christo and Barbara?
	5	P:	l[ast night]
	6	T:	[yesterday]
	7	P:	yup

According to Mandelbaum (1987, a.), the recipient plays an important role in the process through which a story comes to the floor, is sustained, and is ended. She writes that a recipient may elicit a story. In this data set, the potential recipient, K, has requested a potential story in the form of a question in line 4. This request is then answered by both P and T, forming a complete preface.

	4	K:	when did you see (.) Christo and Barbara?
→	5	P:	l[ast night]
→	6	T:	[yesterday]

This answering is particularly interesting. P and T answer at almost the exact same time, but P manages to answer slightly ahead of T (note the "l" before overlap). It is important to note here that P and T are a couple (Lerner, 1992). Given their relationship status, it is plausible that a tendency to share talk could exist. This may explain their overlap. Though they answer almost simultaneously, the answers that they give are different. In line 3, Pam answers "last night," whereas in line 6, T says "yesterday."

Both P and T are both capable of answering K's question and telling the subsequent story. They were both present at the time in question and therefore share the same storytelling resources. P becomes the actual teller of the story, though she was not specifically solicited by K. In line 7, P verifies T's answer in line 6. This verification may have been produced to prove her knowledge of the event in discussion. T does not contest this and, subsequently, P becomes the primary teller.

	5	P:	l[ast night]
	6	T:	[yesterday]
→	7	P:	yup

These displays of knowledge and verification may not have been the only determining factors of P's position as primary storyteller. The story emerges with regard to the previous story told. Jefferson (1978) would refer to this as topical coherence. The previous story was told by P as well. The topic of the previous story involved the characters Barbara and Christos. K then requests this closely related story. It is possible that the previous story was sequentially implicative (Jefferson, 1978) in the creation of this story and served as its trigger. Also, P may have become the primary teller of this story because of her position as teller of the previous story.

The next section will delve into an analysis of the recipient-driven body of the story. K continues to be the primary recipient and P acts as the primary teller. The interaction is notable in structure. The teller, P, does not fully control the direction of the telling of the story, nor does she create extended turns. The recipient, K, drives the majority of the telling.

4.2. Story "Telling": Part One

As stated previously, this data selection is interesting due to its structure. Instead of the primary teller, P, dominating the telling through extended turns, the recipient, K, is a participant and helps to drive the story's telling. Mandelbaum addresses this type of interactionally-created storytelling between teller and recipient (1987, b.). She states that the teller does not always drive the story. Recipients can play a large role in the creation and telling of a story. The following segment is an example of such recipient driven telling.

Story Telling: Part One: Candidate Understanding
Sub-group 2

	7	P:	yup
→	8	K:	ah:::: an their-
	9	P:	dad went over to give Christo another::?
→	10	K:	oh god.
	11	P:	l[esson::]
→	12	K:	[lesson?]

Line five carries over from the previous analysis of the story preface and is included for its contextual value. Now, in the beginning of the story telling, it is K who, in line 8, attempts to project the story further. P does not immediately pick up the story telling after her

verification of T in line 7. K's use of assessment in line 8 leads to a continuation of this same talk. If K had used a more minimal turn, there is a possibility that the story could have never emerged. Instead, this assessment in line 8 leads to a continuation of the talk.

→   8   K: ah:::: an their-

         9   P: dad went over to give Christo another::?

This same assessment in line 6 is of interest itself. The way in which the "ah" is presented, with continuation of sound, suggests that this is a show of understanding. This could be taken as a deviation of a minimal turn. K may realize that without further assessment, the story is in jeopardy of not being told to completion. She adds on "an their" only to cut herself off. This cut off of assessment could have been done in order to prompt P to tell more of the story.

         P does go on to tell more of the story in line 9, but her telling invites more participation from K.

→   9   P: dad went over to give Christo another::?

→   10   K: oh <u>god</u>.

It is P's continuation of sound at the end of line 9, combined with her uplifted intonation, that elicits response from K in line 10. In responding with "oh god," K shows candidate understanding. With the emphasis in the word god and her falling intonation, K is not only showing understanding of what P is attempting to say, but also an assessment of it. Following this assessment comes an interesting set of lines, 11-12 as seen below.

         9   P: dad went over to give Christo another::?

       10   K: oh <u>god</u>.

→   11   P: l[esson::]

→   12   K: [lesson?]

By this point, it is a distinct possiblity that K understands what P is attempting to explain. In line 11, P comes up with the word she needs to complete her thought from line 9. K also knows the word and almost completely overlaps P's telling in line 10. This is support the assumption that K understood what P was telling and that this familiarity allows her to participate further in the telling.

The next section will address a particularly intriguing subgroup of the extended sequence. P, the primary teller, continues the story but runs into some trouble. She is unable to complete her thought and begins searching for words. It is the response of the recipients that warrants analysis.

4.3. Story "Telling": Part Two

This section of analysis will focus on P's inability to complete her thought in line 14 and the subsequent reactions of her recipients. The recipients who choose to respond are different than the previous sections. J, a passive and unaddressed recipient until this point, makes an appearance in line 17. T, principle character (Goodwin, 1984) and recipient also comes in on line 20.

Story Telling: Part Two: Word Search
Sub-group 3

→   16   P: and Christo and dad did their (.) [dy]namic
dual:: dinner::
→   17   J: [w-]
         18   (3.0)
         19   P: [cooking]thing
→   20   T: [cooko:ff]=
         21   P: =cookoff:
         22   P: eh: hu hu
         23   P: hh

As seen below, P has some notable difficulty in line 16.

→   16   P: and Christo and dad did their (.) [dy]namic
dual:: dinner::
         17   J: [w-]

The first sign of trouble comes mid-line in the form of a micro-pause. This pause is situated in the middle of her thought, indicating an issue in the telling. It comes at an important point within the sentence. She is attempting to describe what "dad" and "Christo" did. Following this micro-pause is a series of words, none of which fully and accurately describe the activity.

P's first attempt at description is "dynamic dual." As indicated by the continuation of sound at the end of "dual," P does not believe this to be the correct phrasing. The continuation of sound shows that P is still looking for the correct wording, and is drawing out dual in order to maintain the floor while searching for the correct terminology. Her second attempt is the word "dinner." As with "dual," P draws out "dinner." These two instances of continuation of sound denote the use of word search. P is using continuation as a way to maintain her position as teller as she searches for the words to convey her story.

The recipient response during this search is noteworthy. As shown below, J, a previously unheard recipient makes an appearance in line 17.

```
        16      P:      and dad and Christo did their (.) [dy]namic
                dual:: dinner::
→       17      J:                                      [w-]
→       18              (3.0)
```

He comes in right after the micro-pause. This structure is important. J may have taken the micro-pause to be the end of P's turn and began to speak, perhaps asking a question. Once he realizes that this was a micro-pause and that his talk overlaps that of P, he breaks off his talk. At this point, it is realistic to say that he realizes that P's turn has not been completed and surrenders the floor to her.

Another line worth noting is 18. Following the completion of P's turn in line 16, there is a considerable pause of three seconds. This pause is particularly important. It has been made clear that P is searching for a word at the end of line 16. As the teller, she allows this pause to follow her search. This may be seen as an invitation for the recipients to help her and to provide guesses as to what the phrase might be.

From previous analysis, it is very plausible that K is an informed recipient and may have the capability to aid P in this pause. T also has the ability to make a suggestion in this case, as he can be characterized as what Goodwin refers to as a principle character in this situation (1984). He is the "dad" referred to in P's telling, therefore, it is possible and appropriate for him to make a suggestion here. However, all three of the recipients allow these long three seconds to pass, perhaps allowing P to produce the phrase herself and allowing her to maintain the floor as primary teller.

Eventually, P does produce a phrase in line 19, though her talk is directly overlapped by an answer by T in line 20.

	18		(3.0)
→	19	P:	[cooking]thing
→	20	T:	[cooko:ff]=
→	21	P:	=cookoff

Both the teller and recipient provide a simultaneous solution to the word search. This instantaneous talk might be a result of P and T's status as a couple. Lerner discusses that some couples speak at the same time as a result of their relationship. The occurrence may also find answer in the fact that both P and T were present at the event. T was also a principle character and has obvious knowledge of the event and its circumstances.

It is apparent that P is not satisfied with her own solution as she quickly latches onto and repeats T's answer of "cookoff" in line 21. Her latching is followed in line 22 by laughter, as shown below. It is unclear as to what she is laughing at exactly. It may be her attempt to find the correct word, or the activity itself. Following the laughter is a hearable out-breath in line 23. This may be P's way to signify the end of the search and telling.

	20	T:	[cooko:ff]=
	21	P:	=cookoff:
→	22	P:	eh: hu hu
→	23	P:	hh

The final section of analysis will address the ending sequence of the story telling. As will be shown in the data, there is a change in teller as a result of recipient questioning. The principle character, T, becomes the primary teller. Though there is change in teller, the structure of the telling remains recipient driven.

4.4. Story Ending

Analysis of this final section will focus on the switch in teller from P to T. T had been the principle character (Goodwin, 1984) of the previous teller, but now comes into the story as primary teller. This change is prompted by the question posed by recipient J in line 24.

Story Ending: Change in Teller and Primary Recipient
Sub-group 4

	22	P:	eh: hu hu
	23	P:	hh
→	24	J:	what was the project of Christo::?
→	25	T:	oh he's tearing off:: pullin off all the trim in his

laundry room:

	26	(2.0)	
	27	T:	and:: ah puttin new casing up.
	28	J:	so you taught him how to do that?
	29	T:	yeah
	30	J:	did he do it or did you?
	31	T:	well he was doin it.
	32	P:	we gotta go that way, so
	33	K:	hey this looks familiar

It is important to note that this question is not addressed specifically to T. It is plausible that J directed his gaze to T, but as the data is audio only, this is only speculation. T, as a principle character of the story, is capable of responding to the question posed by J. P also would have been capable of answering the question, but did not. This may have been due to the fact that she only had knowledge of the "lesson" given prior to her presence at the "cookoff." Since T was present at the "lesson," he may have been considered more qualified to answer as he does in line 25.

The new topic of the telling is not altogether separate from that of P's telling. J has taken the topic of the lesson from lines 9-12. J's previous contribution to talk appeared in line 17 of the previous analysis. His talk, overlapping that of P in line 16, was very short; one syllable, cutoff. This utterance may have been an underdeveloped form of this question presented in full in line 24 ("w-"). Since his attempt to progress talk in line 17 was abandoned, this question in line 24 may be his attempt to ask the same question. Though this question changes the topic slightly, it is still akin to the previous talk, as noted above.

This change in topic leads to a change in teller and recipient as well. As shown below, the structure remains recipient driven with J asking questions in lines 24, 28, and 30 in order to promote progression of the story. J becomes the primary recipient and T becomes the primary teller. The telling remains recipient driven (Mandelbaum, 1987, b.), as

noted by the question-answer format shown below with arrows
indicating recipient questioning.

→	24	J:	what was the project of Christo::?
	25	T:	oh he's tearing off:: pullin off all the trim in his
	laundry room:		
	26	(2.0)	
	27	T:	and:: ah puttin new casing up.
→	28	J:	so you taught him how to do that?
	29	T:	yeah
→	30	J:	did he do it or did you?
	31	T:	well he was doin it.

    This change in teller and recipient may be categorized as gender
driven as well. J, a male, asks a question specific to the "lesson" portion
of the previous telling. It is very possible that he has knowledge of these
"lessons." The specifics as to what these "lessons" entail are absent from
the prior talk. He displays the knowledge that these "lessons" involve
construction projects in line 24 through his use of the word "project."

    T, a male carpenter/craftsman and owner of his own construction
company, then answers the question. Granted, as stated above, this may
have been because he was present at the activity, but his profession, as
well as gender could have played a role in his position as teller. In a
discussion of gender, a male is more likely to display understanding of
construction. J, a male, also apprentices under T. This interest in the
construction profession may have prompted him to ask specifically about
the project.

    Goodwin addresses the topic of stories as tailored to a specific
gender in his examination of Auto Discussion (1986). The separation of
genders as a result of theme may explain why teller changes with the
recipient in this data. The theme of construction may have elicited T to
answer and continue the telling based on his gender. This would
potentially explain why P does not answer J's question in line 24, or why
K steps back as active participant.

    This discussion of the "lesson" leads into the ending of the story.
The question-answer structure ends abruptly at the end of line 31.

	30	J:	did he do it or did you?
→	31	T:	well he was doin it.
→	32	P:	we gotta go that way, so
→	33	K:	hey this looks familiar

T's answer in line 31 ends with falling intonation. This may have
signaled to J that the telling has ended. Without a drawn out sound, or

upward intonation, T does not indicate that there is more to tell. P then jumps in on line 32 and changes the topic.

Because the recording was obtained while on a car ride, this comment from P shifts the focus of conversation from the story telling to that of the activity at hand; driving. Line 32 alerts T, the driver, as to where he should be going. K then makes the observation in line 33 that cements the change in topic from the story to the present activity and surroundings. The story is not revisited again.

5. Conclusion

Interpersonal communication is present in everyday interaction. The analysis presented proves storytelling in conversation important to an understanding of this. In this particular case, the data shows the story told as an updating device. This form of interaction is particularly important to those disconnected from loved ones for an extended period of time.

This telling follows the classic story structure as presented by Sacks (1974). All fragments included within the analysis follow this structure of preface, telling, and ending. Also of great importance is the turn-by-turn structure of the telling. The teller does not hold control in the telling of the story. It is the recipients who drive the story, asking questions and providing responses that lead the story. Of particular importance is the presence of the principle character at the telling. This adds another dimension to the telling and ultimately leads to the inclusion of the principle character as primary teller.

Appendix

Dynamic Dual
Extended Sequence

1	P:	an i guess she was jus- they were jus goin at it
2	P:	hh!
2	(1.0)	
3	K:	when did you see (.) Christo and Barbara?
4	P:	l[ast night]
5	T:	[yesterday]
6	P:	yup
7	K:	ah:::: an their-
8	P:	dad went over to give Christo another::?
9	K:	oh god.
10	P:	l[esson::]
11	K:	[lesson?]
12	J:	oh::
13	P:	and then I got called over for dinner
14	K:	ha ha
15	P:	and dad and Christo did their (.) [dy]namic dual:: dinner::
16	J:	[w-]
17		(3.0)
18	P:	[cooking]thing
19	T:	[cooko:ff]=
20	P:	=cookoff:
21	P:	eh: hu hu
22	P:	hh
23	J:	what was the project of Christo::?
24	T:	oh he's tearing off:: pullin off all the trim in his laundry room:
25	(2.0)	
26	T:	and:: ah puttin new casing up.
27	J:	so you taught him how to do that?
28	T:	yeah
29	J:	did he do it or did you?
30	T:	well he was doin it.
31	P:	we gotta go that way, so
32	K:	hey: this looks familiar

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"An Alternative Approach to Healthcare"

Despite the dominance of an individualistic orientation to the majority of institutions in our society, there are an increasing number of alternative approaches that are gaining recognition. It seems like we are encouraging the pursuit of profits at the expense of others involved, rather than recognizing their role in the process. This idea can be applied to the field of healthcare, where most doctors have dehumanized their relationships with patients to adhere to the dominant, Western approach. By restructuring the field toward a more relationally-oriented approach for all the parties involved in healthcare, the potential for more productive treatment increases.

This common, default mode of thinking that drives the majority of actions and beliefs in our society is based upon a modernist approach and it can be seen at all levels of interaction. This approach proposes that there is a clearly defined right and wrong way of handling situations, based on what we have been taught. As a result, we value the individual and the knowledge he or she comes to possess. Ken Gergen highlights Edward Sampson's modernist explanation of the person as a self-contained individual who possesses his/her own sense of the truth and discourages the reliance on other people in achieving success (Gergen and Gergen, 2003). This approach sets up a perpetual misunderstanding between people in which we are convinced that our way of thinking is right and everyone else should conform to this. Similarly, this modernistic view is exemplified in the power structure of most of our society's institutions. People assume that those who have gone through extensive schooling or training are professionals in their field and their way of making meaning is automatically superior.

In drastic contrast to the modernist approach is social construction. This approach to everyday life is oriented around relationships, arguing that who we are and how we create meaning in life is a result of our countless interactions with others. We don't behave in certain ways or have certain beliefs because they are the "right" way and have always been that way. We believe or behave in whatever way is constructed at that particular time with the other parties involved. However, there are some constraints, depending on the institutional, cultural, or historical traditions of that discourse. Similarly, the interaction is not fixed, it changes and reconstructs itself in whatever

direction the participants take it in order to construct coordination and meaning. This approach recognizes that it is not possible to ever truly know what someone else is thinking, all we know is that we have the potential to construct any number of realities.

Healthcare is one of the institutions that seems to be straying from its intended purpose because of its conformity to a traditional, individualistic approach. Doctors, nurses, and other care providers appear to have little or no connection with their patients, creating a strictly business relationship. Also, the field relies heavily on the methods taught in medical school as the basis for understanding patients and their specific cases. Because so much credibility is given to the knowledge acquired in medical school, we assume that we should listen to everything the doctor says and not speak up or suggest alternative treatment. This positions healthcare providers as the professionals and alienates patients.

The traditional approach to healthcare also suggests that there is a formulaic and set equation for handling illnesses, which is grounded in the same biology that has been taught for years. This formula involves identifying symptoms, matching them to a specific illness or disorder, and prescribing a certain medication or treatment. In most cases there is a desired outcome and the formula is derived from similar cases that have worked in the past. By adopting this approach to healthcare, the body is treated like a machine that is comparable to all other bodies (Kleinman, 1989). Drugs are seen as tried and true ways to repair our machine-like bodies. Similarly, throughout the steps in this formula the patient is not given a voice. They simply listen to the professional and hope for the outcome that is prescribed for them.

In reality, many illnesses and disorders are complicated and can't always be solved using this formula of traditional healthcare. At the same time, the patient might not be happy with the outcome that the doctor or nurse deemed a success. Many have criticized the current structure of the healthcare system because it encourages doctors to take on many patients in an attempt to gain as large a share of the market as possible. This capitalistic mentality is indicative of the traditional, modern approach to medicine, focusing on the success of the individual doctor rather than the quality of their care and their ability to help patients cope with the problem.

A growing number of scholars in the medical field are acknowledging the benefits of applying social constructionism to healthcare. In the same manner that an approach oriented around relationships can alter the way we make meaning with those around us, it can also alter the way that we understand illnesses. Dr. Arthur Kleinman

(1989) recognizes that pain and illness are socially constructed and there are more parties involved than simply the patient. Doctors, patients, their family members, and their friends all have the power to re-define the illness, what role it serves in their lives, and how to cope with it. The patient's social networks have the ability to exaggerate or lessen the symptoms, to impede or encourage treatment (Kleinman, 1989). For example, two patients with identical illnesses might seek out different treatments because their families view Western medicine in opposing ways.

A constructionist approach to healthcare would argue that illnesses and disorders are not strictly biological. It is possible that discomfort is directly related to the patient's interpersonal relationships. The body can speak to us (Griffith and Griffith, 1994). For example, a working mother's high blood pressure is not purely the result of biology. It is also the result of excessive stress from work, her children, and others with whom she might have unhealthy relationships. Doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers prescribing to traditional medical approaches would be less likely to consider these other forces or give them much credibility. At the same time, a constructionist approach would tell the woman to think about the way she lives and try to restructure her behavior in a healthier way.

Similarly, much more could be learned about the problem if the doctor were to invite the patient to share the narrative behind their illness and applicable aspects of their life. Constructionists agree that recognizing the unique narratives that are present in everyone's lives helps us to put the situation into context by trying to understand where that person is coming from and how they construct meaning. These narratives would differ from the formulaic, traditional approach because they acknowledge that there is more at play than biological symptoms and they give coherence to the suffering. For example, when a construction worker goes to the doctor complaining of back pain and fearing a ruptured disc learns that the problem is less severe and is not covered on his insurance, he refuses treatment. Rather than explaining how the pain is best treated by drugs, the doctor should realize that there is a narrative present behind this man, which explains that he is a single father who can't afford the medicine needed to treat his symptoms because he has to feed his family. When medical professionals listen to their patients' stories and get personally involved in their problem it creates a better, more trustworthy relationship (Frank, 1997).

In order for all healthcare professionals and healthcare facilities to apply this relationally oriented approach to the field, I would suggest that the training in the field needs to be altered. In addition to studying

the biology behind illnesses, medical school students should be trained like therapists, emphasizing the benefits of open communication. The interactions between patients and care providers should involve a dialogue, not a monologue. From a constructionist approach, dialogue invites the parties involved to become more aware of the other and helps them realize there are multiple ways to approach a situation. At the same time, by engaging in dialogue, the parties can re-frame the situation and attempt to create new meaning (Gergen, 1999). However, a dialogic approach does not necessarily mean a simple solution will be agreed upon, it just points out to each party that there are alternative methods out there.

Arthur Kleinman (1989) suggests that a dialogic approach can restructure the nature of the doctor-patient relationship. He stresses that doctors and nurses should treat the patients like professionals and collaborate with them to discuss and decide upon the best ways to approach and treat illnesses. In order to prepare healthcare professionals to do this, they should be trained in some form of psychiatry or therapeutic approach so that they can address both the biological and social issues involved in the patient's illness. Once again, humanizing the professional and the patient would create a bond between the two, which has been lacking in the traditional approach to healthcare.

While there is great potential to reconstruct a new and better doctor-patient relationship through social construction, there are still doctors and patients who like the system the way it is. For doctors, the current system makes them more money and hails them as experts. Also, many patients prefer to get a quick answer from the professionals, be prescribed medication, and minimize the time and money spent on treatment. Most aspects of our society are oriented around the same capitalistic, modern approach that dominates the healthcare institution. Realistically, the field of healthcare probably won't adapt to a new system until our society at large does the same. It is unfortunate that our lives have become so dehumanized however the whole idea behind social construction is that we have chosen to construct the system that way and we all have the power to collaborate and make meaning in a new way.

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U.N.H. Riot Policies

Introduction

Think of all the many groups we belong to: family, sports teams, work, etc. At the University of new Hampshire there is a multitude of possibilities for any one person to belong to a group, but there is one overarching group that all fit into: students, faculty, staff, even town members are a part of the University's community. Yet, within the context of the university we can breakdown into these categories and treated as separate entities. For this case study, we worked with two main groups within the University's community: students and authority figures. Originally, we wanted to look at the ongoing conflict and communication practices between students and authority figures within the context of the university's current riot policies. More specifically, we chose to focus on the communication of students and authority figures in reference to the policy that states that any student caught at a riot would be suspended.

Monologism versus Dialogism

The more standard way to approach communication is what is referred to as monologism. In monologism it is believed that each human being is a small container, which is entirely separate from other containers (Sampson, 1993:31). It is important that these containers maintain their individuality with clear-cut boundaries. This individualistic formulation of the human being creates a negative relationship between the self and others (Sampson, 1993: 33). The more a person (container) becomes involved in another person, the less they are focused on their own life. In monologism, this is seen as a negative aspect of relationships. Also, monologism states that in order to understand the true nature of a human being, it is necessary to isolate them from their relationships and view them as these self-contained modules (Sampson, 1993: 17). It is only after studying these containers as individuals that monologism sees fit to reintroduce other containers into the equation.

There are, however, limits to monologism. Conceptually speaking, proponents of monologism create a problem because they believe that all is contained within the individual, but must utilize dialogue to do their work. Thus, one theory is required to study the nature of the observer, while a separate theory must be utilized to study the nature of the subject (Sampson, 1993: 18). This places the observer in an expert stance where they view the subject from a "God's-eye view from Nowhere" (Sampson, 1993: 18).

Not only do the observers ignore their own activities, but they also tend to not pay enough attention towards the activities of their subjects. By maintaining that the focus should be within the individual, it excludes the importance of the relationship between individuals (Sampson, 1993: 19). This creates, or at least maintains, a power differential between individuals.

There is an alternative to this monologic approach to communication, and it is referred to as dialogue. Dialogue focuses on the relationship between the individuals; it can be understood as synonymous with "relational" and "interactional." Dialogue is a practice, which is ethical, and tensional (Stewart and Zediker, 2002: 229). It is not a steady state, but rather a dynamic and emergent practice that happens between moments and has ethical concerns. The primary tension that occurs is "letting the other happen to me while holding my own ground" (Stewart and Zediker, 2002: 232). The interrelatedness of these two moments allow for a transformation. By letting the other happen to me, one's understanding of another can be increased, while also increasing one's power potential (Stewart and Zediker, 2002: 240).

Dialogism involves authenticity, inclusion, confirmation, and presentness. Authenticity requires a person to be straightforward and honest during communication, while remembering to only express relevant information (Johannsen, 2000: 153). Inclusion requires that a person attempt to understand the views of others (Johannsen, 2000: 153). Confirmation means showing concern for others and valuing them for their own worth (Johannsen, 2000: 153). It is more than just a toleration of the other person. It confirms that the individual is unique, although one may not necessarily approve of the other's actions. Lastly, there is presentness, which means that all participants in a dialogue put their full attention into the dialogue (Johannsen, 2000: 153). This requires that one be willing to be completely involved, and not distracted from the interaction.

The shift that occurs from monologism to dialogism should not be taken lightly. Monologism is what has been considered the norm for centuries, and it is only in the last few decades that scientists have come

to understand that there is another way to look at the world and the human beings that populate it. During everyday activities, humans ritualistically interact with others as individuals. It is only after learning that there is another way to confront the world, that one can truly shift their outlook. It is a difficult process, which cannot happen miraculously one day. Signs of monologism do occur regularly, but one can only truly be dialogic with effort.

Set-up
In order to understand the shift from monologism to dialogism within the group we studied, one must first look at the particular members of the groups and the way in which the groups were compiled. First and foremost, we decided that we would have two smaller groups to represent the sides of the issue. On the one side, we wanted three authority figures that had different interactional positions during the riots and the process of formulating the policies. The first contact we made was with Anne Lawing, the Assistant Vice President in the Office of Student Academic Services. Next, there was Esther Tardy-Wolfe, the Director of Judicial and Mediation Program. Her job includes helping students during the processing of a suspension. Lastly, there was Deputy Chief of Police for the University Police Department, Paul Dean. Deputy Chief Dean's main position requires him to be present and active during all riots, but also as a University police officer, he was asked to participate in the making of the riot policies.

On the other side, we chose three students with differing levels of involvement in both the riots and the policies. First was Lauren Dillon who is a sophomore that had merely heard the stories and has never been involved in a riot or the policies that were put into place. Second was Chris Bugli, a senior at the University of New Hampshire and a bouncer at Murphy's Tin Palace. Lastly, there was Catherine (Cat) Clarke, the Student Body President. Being a senior, Cat had been present at riots during her earlier years, and then she became involved in the policy making process when she became involved in Student Senate.

Once the groups were decided, our project was split into two major parts. First, we conducted our initial interviews. These were one-on-one video taped interviews where we asked each participant the same set of questions. The latter part of the case study included bringing all of the members of the groups together to view the interview and hold a facilitated dialogue about the topic at hand.

Initial Interviews

As stated previously, we began our case study with a video taped interview of each participant. We asked each participant, within the context of their group, the same set of questions. For the authority figures, we had each participant state their name and position on campus, as well as why they became involved in the making of the policies concerning the riots. For the students, we asked the participants to state their name and the extent of their involvement in the riots and/or the policies. Both groups were then asked to state something that they felt was good that came out of the policies, something negative, and their current stance on the policies. We then gave each participant a chance for any final thoughts they may have had that were not covered in the questions or to further elaborate. This set-up of the interviews with specific questions that we wanted answered places us in the expert stance, and thus, put up a wall for the interviews to remain monologic. If we had put down the camera or asked questions about the participant's responses, we may have opened the door for the turn from monologism to dialogism.

Therefore, the interviews were characterized by an individualistic approach to the issue. For examples, in Anne Lawing's interview she responded that she was not happy with the student response. Anne accused the students of not understanding or caring (or at least seeming as if they did not) about how their actions had an impact on public safety. She was upset that students assumed that being a bystander at a riot meant that they were not doing anything wrong. She stated that his gave "them" a goal. By creating a context where she, and all authority figures, were a separated entity from the students, she created an "Us/We" versus "Them," individualistic atmosphere. This situation exemplifies the mentality that there are two sides to the issue, instead of one group with the same goals in mind (the understanding and safety of the community).

As with Anne, Esther Tardy-Wolfe felt unhappy because the students did not understand what their impact was on the situation. During Esther's interview, we were put off by the "Us/We" versus "Them" kind of attitude that was ever so prevalent. It was odd that she seemed open to listening and allowing that other in, but in the same moment had built up a wall between the two sides. This division held true in Deputy Chief Dean's interview as well. The students were further characterized as not knowing, not understanding, and not caring about the situation. Thus, placing blame directly on the students for the riots.

In all the cases, it was if Anne, Esther, and Deputy Chief Dean were saying that the faculty/staff were 100% right and that the students just did not understand. Thus, there we were having a monologic conversation that focused on the individual's sides, instead of a focus on the group as being members of one group with a center. This is monologic because it goes against the belief that dialogue should have a center, and not sides (Isaacs, 2002).

In the student interviews, the focus changed from the student's lack of understanding, towards the policy-makers' lack of thought. Yet again, the interviews were monologic in nature. The students also created a wall between the sides, which disallowed for the group to communicate as all belonging to the community. All of the students at some point said, they had not put any thought into (making the policies)." This is monologic for two reasons. First, it is monoloic because it creates an atmosphere where there are two sides to the issue. Second, it places blame on the authority figures for creating "excessive" policies.

Chris Bugli's interview was the only one that strayed away from the individualistic understanding of the situation to state that he could understand the authority figure's ideals. Chris maintained that the policies were unnecessary because there had not been an incident in a while; yet, he pointed out that the argument could be made that there has not been an incident because of the policies. This is a small step towards dialogism because it shows that Chris is open to others' point of view.

Group Meeting

On April 15, 2005, the two groups were scheduled to meet and watch the interviews in a previously reserved room in Horton. The first difficulty occurred when only three out of the six group members came to the meeting. As a result, the format changed somewhat in that the two of us decided to become part of the meeting, instead of simply facilitating it. We realized that, as students, we helped represent a crucial aspect of the issue, and could contribute to the dialogue through our direct participation. Instead of allowing the absence of some of the group members be construed as a setback, we allowed the other to happen to us and changed the format of the groups. This practice of holding your own, while letting the other happen to you allows a person to maintain his or her own stance, as well as to accept what others present (Stewart, 2002). This often involved acknowledging that the people engaged in the conversation will not agree, and that a person cannot control what happens in the conversation. By following this, we

accepted that we could not change the situation, and therefore strove to see it as an opportunity to experience a different form of interaction than the one we planned.

The meeting officially began with an explanation of the rules. Many of these were taken from the Public Conversation Project, such as no interrupting and negative language (Roth, 1992: 4). The purpose of these rules was to create an atmosphere in which each person felt safe and comfortable enough to speak freely. Each participant was given the option of passing if they did not want to speak when it came time for their turn. Participants were also given paper and pencil so that they may record their impressions and notes from watching the interviews. This also gave us a chance to record our observations throughout the process without seeming like experts. This transition from seeming to being would later prove helpful in the dialogue.

After the interviews were over, each member was given the opportunity to give their impressions. Luckily, Esther Tardy-Wolfe had brought a guest with her who was a university alum, and was also a member of the group that originally created the current riot policies. It was interesting to note how, as a relative outsider to the project, he merely reiterated the views expressed during the authority group's individual interviews. Perhaps more interesting to the specific project, however, was the sentiment expressed by both Anne and Esther once they were allowed to speak. Each remarked that they wished the absent student participants were present, as they could have answered many of the questions raised by some of the interviews. This demonstrated a willingness to clarify any misunderstandings that had occurred.

The breaking point occurred when Esther told a personal story about a student who had come to her office with questions about an arrest. In the story, she mentioned that the riot policies stated that a student would be suspended or expelled if participating in some form of noncompliance in a riot. This included behaviors as violent as throwing a glass bottle at a police officer, to as small as refusing to move aside when an officer requested it. It was not enough to simply be present at the riot; the student must be engaged in some form of noncompliance.

This announcement proved to be a shock to Lauren, the one student participant present, as well as the two of us. As the dialogue unfolded further, we all realized that we had been operating from a not-knowing stance. As "language creates the nature of what we know, "(Anderson and Goolishian, 1988: 379) we are sometimes too quick to know. In our desire to be able to define the situation, we often do not

take the time to find out all of the information about a situation. When this occurs, a problem is voiced that may not necessarily exist. In this case, the dilemma that had been identified was one that was created through miscommunication, and really was not a "problem." Both sides of the issue had operated under assumptions that were not necessarily true. The authoritative side had felt that the students understood the policies and were unjustly angry about them; the students, meanwhile, thought that one could be suspended simply by being present at a riot, and felt that the administrators were too harsh in their judgments. Both groups had been trapped in only one way of looking at things, which contributed to the "Us" versus "Them" individualistic attitude.

At this point in the meeting, one could see the interactions truly move from a monologic standpoint to a dialogic standpoint. Once engaged, members stopped following the "Us" versus "Them" principle by trying to convince others they were right and instead tried to allow the solution to be created through the conversation. Members of each group, ourselves included, were able to speak freely about our thoughts on the matter and how we, as individuals instead of representatives of a specific group, felt about the new way of looking at the problem. Instead of looking at the situation from a problem solving point of view, we moved the conversation into a format that modeled appreciative inquiry (Barrett and Cooperider, 1990: 229). Members looked at the meeting, not as a way to fix the problem, but instead as an opportunity to embrace the good in the organizations. Instead of focusing on the cause of the miscommunication between the two groups, we decided to look at the possibilities this new knowledge created. Ideas were discussed as to the different ways information could be made more accessible to students. Problems were brought up not as a focus for the conversation, but alternately to give an example of what could be changed.

One of the things brought up was language and availability of the information students need. Lauren mentioned that she wanted to be prepared for the meeting, and had therefore tried to research the policies in question. Unfortunately, she was unable to find the policies according to the different keywords she tried in the search engine. The policies were in fact under a set of keywords that almost the entire group members agreed was very vague. The two of us agreed that we would not have thought to try those specific search phrases. Again, instead of looking at this situation as a problem, the group saw it as a platform for change. The idea of a simple online guide was brought up by Lauren, which Esther and Anne agreed might be a viable option.

Each member of the two groups treated the other as an individual worthy of respect. Esther and Anne never belittled Lauren for her status

as a student, and conversely Lauren and the two of us never treated the administrators with any kind of hostility. The amount of respect gave the meeting area an atmosphere of comfort and tolerance. Each person felt that they could speak their mind without fear of judgment, and the dialogue progressed smoothly. Instead of looking at the problem from different, individualistic sides, the discussion became a dialogue with a center, not sides (Isaacs, 2002). This means that members of the conversation worked together to find a solution, and not separately. Each person met the other in the middle and tried to solve the problem together, rather than convince the other that their side was the correct one.

Another thing that helped the atmosphere was the setup of the meeting. Originally, we had intended to videotape the meeting as we had done during the interview. What we noticed during the interviews, however, was that the participants would answer the questions, and afterwards it seemed their real feelings emerged. It was important that, during the meeting, each person felt comfortable enough to share his or her own opinions, and this did not seem to happen with the camera. As both of us became a part of the conversation, neither one could videotape the interactions taking place.

Conclusion

Each participant left the meeting feeling that something had been accomplished. Our primary goal had been to help the two groups change how the communicated. We were not really sure if the problem could be solved in a single meeting. Once the way the problem was framed changed, however, participants began to demonstrate signs of eagerness at being part of helping solve the problem. Instead of using the individualistic tactic of blaming the other side for "not understanding" or "not trying," members began to use dialogue to understand how they as a whole could affect change in the way the policies were explained. While the problem had seemed at first that neither side was willing to understand the other, the framework changed to an issue of miscommunication. By moving from a monologic point of view, group members were able to find out what the real problem was, and were able to articulate methods of change.

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Mass Media

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The Brandon Teena Murder:
A Case Study in How Communication is used to
Privilege Certain Identities and Punish Others

In late December, 1994, Brandon Teena, a twenty-one year old transgendered person was murdered. The brutal murder in small town Humboldt, Nebraska, received extensive media coverage and prompted public discussion throughout the nation. Brandon Teena's murder, as a media spectacle, highlighted the transgender identity and gave it a place for discussion within the public sphere.

I am going to analyze this case from the perspective of four different theoretical frameworks that I feel shed light on the nature of the Brandon Teena case and the ways that it was made sense of in our culture. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, in "The Social Construction of Reality," write about the social construction of reality and cultural patterns of behavior. Heterosexuality in our culture is treated as the self-evident norm, yet Berger and Luckman's theory sheds light on how modes of behavior are institutionalized and become social reality. Although Brandon Teena was often posited as a deviation or as unnatural, Berger and Luckman show that conceptions of "unnatural" or "abnormal" are man-made and culturally relative.

Next, I look at Edward Hall's theory, which treats and defines culture as communication. Hall believes that culture is what provides the structures that govern our lives. The roles that we perform are the focus of Erving Goffman's work. Goffman writes about the performance of social reality within a culture. Albert Scheflen's theory addresses what happens if people do not conform to the social norms of behavior. He describes the behavior that falls outside of one's "role." When there is something wrong with an institution, scapegoating procedures typically direct blame on individuals and work politically to reify the status quo. Through analysis of the Brandon Teena case, I hope to gain insight about the cultural climate that Brandon Teena's murder took place within and how it was understood culturally.

The Brandon Teena Case: What Happened?

Brandon Teena, born anatomically female, had recently moved to Humboldt from Lincoln, Nebraska. In Lincoln, Teena owed money and had been charged with a few petty counts of stealing and forging checks. Teena moved to Humboldt to start a new life and had been successfully living as a male. In Humboldt, a small town of 1330 people, Teena had a girlfriend, Lana Tisdel, and had befriended two ex-convicts, Tom Nissen and John Lotter (Konigsberg). Teena was taken into custody by the local police on forged check charges where it was discovered that Teena was anatomically female. This information was published in the local paper, and Teena was held on bail in the women's section of the jail. The news of Teena's "true gender" quickly spread through the small community.

Teena's girlfriend, Tisdel, bailed Teena out of jail. A couple of days later, on Christmas day, they attended a small Christmas party together. Nissen and Lotter, Teena's old friends, were at the party and they confronted Teena, demanding to know what sex Teena "really was." While Teena was in the bathroom with Nissen and Lotter, they forced Teena's pants down and forced Tisdel to look at Teena's genitals. Lotter and Nissen then forced Teena out of the bathroom, and displayed Teena's body to the other guests at the party.

Teena left with Tisdel to a hotel close by in order to phone his roommates for a ride. Nissen and Lotter came to find Teena and insisted on giving him a ride (Konigsberg). They brought Teena back to Nissen's house and beat him brutally. They then left Nissen's house, drove to a deserted spot, and took turns raping Teena, both vaginally and anally. They told Teena that if he told anyone about the rape that they would murder him. Teena showed up bloodied and dirty at Tisdel's the next morning. He was brought to the hospital, and the next day he went to the Sheriff's department to report the rapes. Teena was questioned by Sheriff Charles Laux. During the interview, Sheriff Laux harassed, demeaned, and degraded Teena, referring to Teena as "it."

Nissen and Lotter were not questioned by the sheriff until two days later when both denied the charges. During the week after the rape, Teena's sister called repeatedly to ask Sheriff Laux why Nissen and Lotter had not been brought in. The Sheriff reportedly responded by telling her to stay out of it. The day before Teena died, the Sheriff had

called Nissen and Lotter to tell them that they would be brought in. On the night of December 30th, one week after the rape, Nissen and Lotter were finally able to track Teena down. They found out that Teena was staying at the house of his friend, Lisa. Lisa, her baby, and another friend were there when Nissen and Lotter arrived at the house. Lotter and Nissen murdered Teena execution style, with a shot to the forehead. Teena also had multiple stab wounds to his chest. The two men also shot and killed the other two adults at the house.

The murder weapons were found by police the next day on top of the ice from the river where Nissen and Lotter had attempted to get rid of the evidence. Lotter was sentenced to the death penalty, and Nissen got life in prison in exchange for a full confession so that he would not be sentenced to death.

The spectacle that was created by the murder of Brandon Teena took place in a cultural environment that demonized, or ignored altogether, gender identities outside of our culture's binary system. Gender variants were punished and silenced for their failure to fit within the mainstream normative narratives of American society. In the early 1990s, one article reported that an estimated 50% of self-identified transsexuals committed suicide by the age of thirty (Griffy). Between 1990 and 1994, there was an average of one hate crime a month resulting in the death of a transgendered person in the U.S. (Helms). In the sections that follow, I will analyze the context within which Brandon's murder took place and attempt to dissect cultural systems at work that made the transsexual identity problematic.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann

Berger and Luckmann are concerned with what passes for "knowledge" in a society. They analyze and attempt to understand how reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann 3). Every culture has a body of knowledge that consists of the unspoken, socially acceptable rules of behavior (61-62). Berger and Luckmann write about the ways in which human development is very much intertwined within, and dependent upon, environment (46). Because our environment is created by both nature and other humans, the way that a human develops is shared by the social world into which they are born. In this way, Berger and Luckmann write that human beings are in the process of actively constructing their own nature. Berger and Luckmann's analysis discusses

the high malleability that characterizes human sexuality in different cultures. Different cultures construct "natural" sexuality in many diverse ways (47). In every culture, certain patterns of interaction and behavior are what Berger and Luckman would call "institutionalized" (46). In our culture, we essentialize gender in terms of biological sex, and heterosexuality has been institutionalized and socially constructed as the "natural" way to express sexuality.

Because Brandon Teena's transgender identity was outside the realm of heteronormativity, Teena was talked about within Humboldt and in news coverage as a "freak" of nature. In Katherine Ramsland's article for Court TV's Crime Library, she describes how Laux did not like this "creature" and that Nissen and Lotter's rape of Teena was because they "didn't want Lana dating a person they considered a freak" (Ramsland). Anna Griffy writes that Nissen and Lotter warned Teena not to tell because it would be "the word of a freak against two hometown boys" (Griffy) and, as noted above, when Teena was questioned by the police, Sheriff Laux reportedly referred to Teena as an "it" (Konigsberg).

Any behavior that does not fit into peoples' understanding of their particular reality is looked at as "moral depravity, mental disease, or just plain ignorance" (62). This is evidenced by the treatment of Teena's sexuality as a psychological defect, the result of sexual abuse, or a problem that could be fixed through surgery (an issue that will be discussed in more depth later in this article). Roles and situations are defined and appear as a given and unchangeable part of "the way things are." Teena did not fit seamlessly into the allotted role for anatomical females in our culture. Teena's behavior did not fit into the taken-for-granted assumptions regarding sex and gender display.

Edward Hall

Hall is interested in the behavior that is left unexamined within a culture because it is assumed to be universal. Hall writes that the real challenge is to understand and see our own culture and begin to understand cultural forces that drive our own behavior. Hall uses "the major triad" to describe the three different modes (the formal, informal, and technical) that govern our cultural behavior. Our conceptions of sexuality and gender fall within what Hall would call the formal modes of behavior. The degree of behavior learned formally is influenced

heavily by tradition and what we are told is simply "the way things are." Formal behaviors are associated with heavy emotion, and violations can leave people distressed. This is evidenced by the extreme reactions that can take place when people in our culture break from heteronormative ideals. Anna Griffy, the author of an article on Brandon Teena's murder for *The Justice Junction,* writes about the intensity of Lotter and Nissen's anger after discovering Teena's anatomical sex. Griffy writes, "[…] they had been lied to, had trusted, and had been deceived *in the worst way possible*" (emphasis added) (Griffy). The characterization of Teena's performing the role of a male when he had the anatomical sex of a female is seen as the ultimate deception.

In our culture, gender and sex are seen as one and the same. In most coverage, Teena's body is seen as the ultimate indicator of his true identity. The following scene, taken from an article in *Playboy,* is depicted in almost all of the coverage:

> "Has he shown you [what is in his pants]?" John asked Lana. […]

> "I don't care what's in his pants!" Lana said. "It doesn't matter to me what's in his   pants!"

> In a single motion, Tom grabbed Teena and pulled her arms behind her back. John tugged her jeans and boxer shorts down around her ankles. Lana covered her eyes.

> "Look at him," John said between gritted teeth… "Look or Tom is gonna keep holding him like that." Lana turned her head and peeked between her fingers.

> John and Tom then marched Teena out of the bathroom and held her in front of the guests.

> 'Yep, it's a girl," Lotter announced. (Konigsberg).

Nissen and Lotter are depicted as cruel for pulling down Teena's pants and parading Teena's private parts in order to *prove* to everyone Teena's gender. However, my analysis of coverage surrounding the case suggests that we agree with their underlying logic. Ramsland writes about the period after Teena's anatomical sex was published in the

newspaper and word got out that "Brandon [...] was *actually* female" (emphasis added) (Ramsland). When describing Teena's inability to fend off her attackers, Anna Griffy writes that he was unable because "Brandon was a slight figured man. A woman," (Griffy). The same article makes the claim that "when Brandon leaned over and Lana saw the cleavage between Brandon's breasts, she suddenly saw a flash ahead into the future" (Griffy). The way that the narratives are written figuratively parallels Nissen and Lotter's public strip of Teena. Media coverage symbolically strips Teena and looks to the body as proof of Teena's true gender.

Hall's analysis delves into the ways that culture controls and shapes our behavior and ways of thinking about the world. One example of this in relation to Brandon Teena is the way that the majority of coverage uses feminine pronouns in reference to Teena. We think of pronouns as apolitical and self evident. However, essentializing gender to sex *is* a political act. The decision to utilize feminine pronouns denies the reality of Teena's self-identification as male. This example demonstrates just one of the many subtle ways that heterosexual norms organize our society and subtly shape the way that we think and understand the world. The subtle ways in which coverage fused gender and sex confine the potential for gender to be thought of in a more fluid way.

Hall's theory treats and defines culture as communication. He emphasizes that culture is not an abstract concept separate from who we are, but instead affects the very core of who we are. The formal behaviors associated with gender are among the most fundamental ways that we categorize ourselves, others, and our relationships. Teena's refusal to act in accordance with formal modes of behavior in regard to his sexual identity is seen as the ultimate violation of cultural norms. Because formal behaviors are the structure upon which the entire culture is founded, they are very resistant to change. They designate the lines inside of which people live within their given culture. Culture provides the structures and boundaries that govern our lives.

Erving Goffman uses the analogy of a stage when discussing social interaction. He uses this comparison because Goffman believes that people are social "actors" who perform different roles in everyday life. In media coverage, Brandon Teena is portrayed as dishonest and talked about as a woman pretending to be a man. For example, in *The New York Times*, Teena is referred to as "a woman who posed as a man" ("Woman" A11). Eric Konigsberg's article in *Playboy* is entitled "Death of Deceiver." Aphrodite Jones, author of *All She Wanted*, says on the Montel Williams Show, "She was not only a deceiver in the sense of her sexuality [...] why was this person such an obsessive compulsive liar?" *(Perspective)*. Implicit, in criticism of Brandon Teena's so-called "deception," is the idea that people should just act naturally and not play roles. However, Goffman's analysis suggests that every person is playing a part.

The persistent use, in coverage of discourse which posited Teena as "a deceiver" sent the message that Teena did something that called for retribution. John Sloop writes that painting Teena as the "pretender" or "deceiver" works rhetorically and "not only represents Brandon's performance as an intentional deception but also works to essentialize gender to sex or genitalia, gender as a performance is erased, even as a possibility" (Sloop 60). Goffman argues, however, that we can not separate ourselves from the roles that we perform. In his book, he cites how the word person originally meant "mask" (19). Goffman quotes Park's assertion that "It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves" (19).

Goffman writes about the ways in which performances are used to bring to light the shared values of society. Performances highlight the official values, or reality, of a society or culture. Heterosexual intimacy is privileged as the invisible norm in our society. Brandon Teena did the best that he could to have an identity and a relationship that fit the heteronormative values in our culture. In many ways, Teena conformed to norms more than most. Looking at it this way, Brandon Teena's "performance" as a man, and Teena's relationship with women was another performance of social reality. There is an obsession in much of the media coverage with the details of Brandon Teena's sexual relationships with his girlfriends. In the *Playboy* article, Konigsberg writes about the way that Teena sexually satisfied his partners, and the

details provided establish that the sexual satisfaction between Teena and his partners was a result of Teena's successful performance as a heterosexual man. Konigsberg states explicitly, "She was killed, essentially, because she was too successful in passing herself off as a man" (Konigsberg).

In Brandon Teena's case, Nissen and Lotter were reported to be angry with Teena because he had not been truthful about who he really was. Consider Tom Nissen's, one of Teena's murderers, quotation in *Playboy*: "Me and Brandon had a long conversation that evening, in the bathroom. I told him, 'I don't have anything against you, if you had just been straight with me, I would have understood'" (Konigsberg).

Animosity towards Teena in both news sources and by his murderers is caused *not* because of his sexual identity, but by his perceived dishonesty. Narratives seem to suggest that if Brandon Teena had just been honest about who he *really* was then everything *would* have been fine. Goffman says that when people claim to want to know whether a performance is "true" or "false," what they really want to know is whether or not it is "authorized" or "not authorized." By this, Goffman means that people want to know whether or not someone has the right to play the part that they are playing. Because sex and gender are conflated in our culture, Goffman would say that the people angered by Teena "not being truthful," really were angered because Teena was not socially authorized to be performing the role of a man.

Joshua Gamson addresses in his book, Freaks Talk Back, how transgendered people are "programmed in a way that emphasize anatomy as the only true gender marker, and thus any dissonance between genital status and gender identity is seen as a sign of inauthenticity" (97). Gamson writes that they are framed as "gender-liars" (97). Being a transgendered person, in and of itself, is considered to be a deception. Teena's transgendered identity, on its own, disallowed him the ability to proclaim our cultural truth. As a transsexual, Brandon Teena did not have the same access and ability to share "who he *really* was" as someone who fit heteronormative ideals. Teena did the best that he could to have an identity that fit the heteronormative narrative. He was not trying to challenge cultural conceptions of sexuality. Ironically, it was Teena's success at fitting, un-authorized, into the cultural norms of heterosexuality that enraged his murderers.

Teena's punishment for "lying" was to be brutally raped by two men and, ultimately, mudered. However, is there any doubt that the "truth" would have also led to social punishment? In our society, what does it mean for a transgendered person to tell the truth? The ethic that "the truth will set you free" applies only if truth lies within constricting and predetermined categories. What was the truth that everybody wanted to hear? Was the truth that Brandon Teena was a lesbian, hermaphrodite, or even a man stuck inside of a woman's body? For sexual non-conformists, "the truth" constructs their identity as something that needs to be fixed with therapy, surgery, or a good beating.

The struggle that takes place over definitions and over how to categorize Teena's sexuality in public discourse demonstrates how illusive "the truth" is to nail down when it comes to force-feeding gender variants into our binary system. If coverage on the case focused on Teena's lack of authorization to perform that identity as what led to this horrific crime, then the root of the problem could have been brought closer to the surface. The systematic discrimination against anybody who doesn't fit heteronormative values and the problems with our binary gender system might have been addressed. Perhaps the only real truth is that our society's way of conceptualizing sex and gender is insufficient and needs to be re-examined.

Albert Scheflen

Albert Scheflen talks about the way that transgressions of cultural roles, or norms of behavior, are typically understood to be caused by innate personality characteristics of the offender or group (163). Scheflen discusses how scapegoating is a way of controlling the behavior of members of an institution (159). He writes that when "there are problems in an institution, an individual or faction is often blamed for them" (159). In discourse surrounding the Brandon Teena spectacle, rhetorical techniques are used to posit blame on the people and environment, thereby absolving institutional problems that might otherwise be addressed. Scheflen also writes that "reductionistic evaluations" are one of the most common ways of scapegoating. Reductionistic evaluations are the sets of preconceived evaluations on hand that can be called upon to keep institutional members in check (163).

One of the ways Scheflen says that reductionism is used is to evaluate individuals on the basis of quasi-legitimate science (164). Behavior that does not conform to cultural norms is talked about using psychological and developmental language (167). Discourse suggests that Teena's non-normative behavior has some relation to how much he was held by his mother, hormone shots during the pregnancy, or being raped as a child. Teena's transsexuality is labeled "a gender identity disorder." The significance of this kind of labeling, Scheflen would argue, is that "behavioral characteristics of an undesirable type indicate a *mental illness*" (165). Transsexuality is talked about as a disease rather than a legitimate identity category. Ramsland's article, "the Brandon Teena Story," quotes a psychiatry book, *DSM-IV's*, listing of "persistent transsexuality as a gender identity disorder." Konigsberg writes about how "one in 50,000 people is *diagnosed* as transsexual" (Konigsberg). Rhetorically, this marks Brandon as an abnormality.

One of the suggestions presented in media discourse as a solution to Teena's "disease" is a sex-change operation. In the majority of sources, Teena is described as a pre-operative transsexual, although he did not plan to get an operation. Jay Carr, from *The Boston Globe* goes so far to write, falsely, that Teena had already started to undergo sex change operations (Carr D7). As Sloop suggests, the "hermaphrodite and preoperative discourses focus on the penis as a natural sign of masculinity and maleness, reinscribing the gender-as-sex ideology" (75).

Ramsland begins one paragraph by ensuring the reader that "In fact, before long she (Brandon Teena) would be a man" (Ramsland). Ramsland continues by discussing how Teena planned on getting a sex-change operation. At the end of the paragraph, Ramsland concludes with a sentence about Teena's "boldness to defy rigid gender codes" (Ramsland). The ironic thing here is that that is not what Brandon Teena was trying to do. Teena struggled to make sense of her gender identity and fit into the heteronormative ideal. However, because in our culture, sex and gender are conflated, he could not.

Scheflen suggests that the implication of this kind of prognosis is that the person must be "fixed or cured" or carry the disgrace that comes with being marked as an aberration (165). Any variation from the cultural norm is seen as a disease. When Lana Tisdel stays with Teena despite knowledge of his anatomical sex, Konigsberg writes, "Lana's friends and family were troubled by the way Lana was still drawn to

Teena. Lana's mother suggested committing her daughter to a psychiatric unit for a month 'so she could drill it in her mind that Brandon is actually a she'." Observe the way that Tisdel wanting to continue their relationship is understood as a mental problem.

Brandon's sexual identity is often treated as the consequence of something gone wrong in her birth or childhood. Even if it is not stated explicitly, there is information included in coverage that enables it to be inferred. For example, the Griffy article mentions that Teena's mom wanted to get an abortion, but her religion kept her from getting one. The article goes on to include that Teena's mom could not hold the child because of an illness. Griffy then talks about how Teena was molested as a child and had since feared the touch of men (Griffy). The *Playboy* article mentions the rape and follows with a paragraph that says that psychologists said Teena was "a compulsive liar" (Konigsberg). The label of "compulsive liar" plays upon the theme of Teena as both a deceiver and as mentally unsound. All of these facts give the reader possible "clues" as to what is wrong or went wrong with Teena and led to her transsexual identity. This demonstrates Scheflen's theory about how psychology is used to stigmatize and control.

The freak theme is also applied in the characterizations of Tom Nissen and John Lotter, as well as Humboldt, Nebraska, the town in which the crime took place. They are construed in ways that are heavily coded as "white trash." Griffy writes: "Brandon's story is told against a backdrop of bleak farm fields and intolerant, undereducated people who had lived in the same town all their lives and never had seen a gay person, much less having an understanding of complex gender issues" (Griffy). Ramsland describes Humboldt as lower middle-class and as having a high rate of domestic violence. Ramsland adds that "No one even knew what a transsexual was" (Ramsland). Konigsberg writes that the Tisdels, Lotters, and Nissens were outcasts and *"even* (emphasis added) within economically anemic Falls City" were "marginalized, unpopular dropouts and derelicts" (Konigsberg). Scheflen writes that scapegoating works politically to maintain the hierarchal structures that govern society (167). Although Scheflen focuses on race, I am going to apply his idea to class. Poor rural whites are evaluated reductionistically from the onset ("they are all bigots," "they beat their wives," "they are stupid"), which makes them easy to scapegoat. The "white trash" of our country are pigeon-holed as stupid, resource-draining, bigots who cause crime and prevent social change, and it is asserted that sole blame lies at

their own feet. As a result, institutionalized discrimination is dismissed as a possibility and "the pretense of democracy is preserved" (167).

The narratives in the Brandon Teena case focus blame on individuals and small factions of the public. Tom Nissen and John Lotter, two poor undereducated, ex-convicts, are the perfect scapegoats to take the blame for the intolerance and bigotry towards non-normative sexualities that is deeply rooted in our entire culture. Scheflen writes that the process of scapegoating is dangerous because it conceals institutional problems and keeps them from being dealt with.

This does not mean that Nissen and Lotter do not hold any culpability and should not be punished. Even if the scapegoated *are* guilty, Scheflen writes, "their behavior is not the cause of the problem" and their punishment will not end it (159). Whether or not the classifications of Teena, Nissen, Lotter, and Humboldt, Nebraska are correct, they rendered the people and environment of the spectacle as a peculiarity, separating them from identification with the rest of the public. Focusing all of the blame on individuals displaces the real problem and doesn't help us figure out what is going on systemically.

What now?

Analyzing the Brandon Teena case in terms of the theories of Scheflen, Goffman, Hall, and Berger and Luckmann provides insight and gets at the problems with the unspoken assumptions in both Teena's murder and the way that it was talked about in the media. Berger and Luckmann's analysis shows that our social world is not a fixed part of the way things are, but is socially constructed. Brandon Teena was seen as an abnormality and rebel against seemingly self-evident and natural ways of behaving. If there was more of an understanding of the ways in which the "reality" of our social world is man-made, then people would be less likely to automatically condemn alternative ways of behaving.

Hall challenges us to look at our own culture and grasp that our understandings of the world are not universal. In our culture, people are quick to condemn ways of living that do not match up with their own. As in Berger and Luckmann's analysis, Hall emphasizes that ways of behaving are not self-evident. Although in America, we like to believe that we celebrate differences and individuality, real differences lead to stigma and discrimination. Instead of truly celebrating diversity, there is

an implicit celebration of one way to be. As seen in the case of Brandon Teena, people tend to evaluate one another and think that they are better according to different sexual preferences, genders, races, clothing, money, and so on. Hall wants to expose the ways that culture shapes us by scripting the roles through which we live our lives.

Although Goffman's theory does not talk about how roles would change, cultural variations in what is important, and issues of hierarchy and power, Goffman's analysis significantly points to the performative parts of the roles that we play. Because, as Berger and Luckmann, and Hall point out, we tend to see culture as absolute, we do not necessarily see how it shapes and controls our behavior. Hall says culture supplies us with our scripts. In line with that, Goffman writes about how our social performances highlight the shared values of our culture. Brandon Teena is seen as deceptive for presenting himself as a man, however, Goffman argues that we are all playing roles. Goffman sees social situations as very fragile. The roles and the scripts that people use maintain social harmony.

Unfortunately, as seen with Brandon Teena, things are not always harmonious. Although communication preserves social cohesion, Scheflen's analysis helps us understand the ways that it also privileges certain identities and punishes others. Like Hall, Scheflen discusses the "myth of individualism." In American culture, we frame our decisions as individual, although we all seem to choose things within a typical range. But Scheflen says that language plays a subsidiary role and is used to hide what is really going on.

American culture constantly trumpets our claimed love of freedom and democracy. However, our social structure ensures negative ramifications for not adhering to unspoken social codes. Scheflen points out the controls that keep people from behaving differently and exercising any real freedom or democracy. The punishments can be psychological, or, as demonstrated with Teena's brutal rape and murder, acted out physically. We say that America is the land of equal opportunity, but what we preach does not match up with what actually occurs.

The spectacle enacted by Brandon Teena's murder exemplifies the most extreme of social punishments given to transsexual identities in public. However, the discourse around the spectacle demonstrates the

way that the transsexual identity is punished ideologically by being positioned as deceptive and as an anomaly. Although media coverage did bring transgender issues into the public arena, the issues were framed in ways that limited the potential for new ways of thinking about gender. My analysis of the four theories above suggests that our cultural narratives are constructed in ways that stop any collective action from taking place.

If we want to avoid gender tragedies, there needs to be a shift in the way that we look at incidents like the Brandon Teena case. The problems brought up through the media attention in the Brandon Teena case cannot be solved through jailing the murderers or giving transsexuals therapy or sex-change operations. We need to stop focusing on individuals and start asking what behaviors are saying about our society's social structure. We have to "separate guilt from responsibility" (Kerry)[1]. Responsibility lies with the systematic discrimination in our culture against non-normative sexualities.

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[1] In 1971, John Kerry gave a testimonial to the senate about the Vietnam War. In his testimony, upon being questioned by congress about the prosecution of Lieutenant Calley for war crimes committed in Vietnam, he replied that although he did not disagree with his prosecution, that "you have to separate guilt from responsibility, and I think responsibility for what has happened lies elsewhere". He then talked about the factors that contextualized what happened, addressing the systematic problems that contributed to what went on. I am trying to do something similar with my analysis of the case of Brandon Teena. I want to emphasize that focusing blame on individuals circumvents the real problem.

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The Third Tower and the Fourth Estate

Introduction:

After the tragic fall of the World Trade Center towers from the New York City skyline on September 11, 2001, the nation grieved and mourned the loss of life. Photographs in *Time* magazine noted that with the fall of the twin towers and in the cleanup process, a third tower had begun to rise. In a New Jersey landfill twisted metal and distorted building materials were piled higher and higher as the wreckage from Ground Zero was transported away. This was the physical manifestation of the third tower. However, the metaphorical aspect of this other tower was significant as well. The third tower was built from the questions of what to do now and how to cope with this national tragedy in the face of new dangers and fears. These questions began to pile higher and higher as the American public searched for answers. In these trying times, many Americans turned to the three wise men of journalism; Jennings, Brokaw, and Rather, while others looked to the pages of newspapers and news magazines in the hope that the media could provide some explanation.

In any democratic society, the will and power of the government must be balanced by the fourth estate, the media. As Americans, we have become increasingly dependent on a rapidly shrinking number of mainstream media outlets for our information regarding world news and events. Noam Chomsky provides the following definition of the purpose and role of the mass media in our society in the opening of his book, *Manufacturing Consent*:

> The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society (Chomsky 1)[2].

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[2] Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky. Manufacturing Consent. New York: Pantheon, 1988.

It is with regard to Chomsky's comment about how the media communicates messages that my research is based. In the editing process of any type of media outlet, the selection of information is a crucial element. A news station or magazine must choose what stories will make the show or issue, however, this selection process often finds certain views excluded.

While many news agencies claim to be objective reporters of the news[3], the reality is that views running counter to powerful government and corporate objectives are often not reported. This raises the question of why new agencies would be so keen to exclude information that could be damaging to government objectives? In order for any wide-scale public policy to be adopted (such as going to war) there must be public support for that initiative, or to rephrase, there must be the *consent* of the governed. Therefore, the government relies on the mass media outlets to provide specific and strategically selected information with the intention of acquiring that consent. During times of war or imminent danger, this process of "manufacturing consent"[4] becomes increasingly selective and discriminatory against information that would make the proposed governmental objectives more difficult.

In order to prove that this selection of information is particularly strong during wartime, I have conducted research into the coverage of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The atrocities of September 11, 2001 were some of the most traumatic moments in the history of our nation. In the wake of this disaster, most Americans turned to government leaders and the media for answers and instructions on what should be done and possibly prepared for in this time of uncertainty. However, in the coverage of the 9/11 attack there was a critical discussion largely absent from mainstream news. This discussion was about the rationale provided by Osama Bin Laden in reference to the attacks. Osama bin Laden's rationale included three reasons for the events of 9/11:

- The deaths of over 500,000 Iraqi children as a result of U.S. led sanctions against Iraq, which restricted not only weapons making materials, but also vital medicine necessary for hospital care.[5]

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[3]Perhaps the most visible proof being on the front page of every issue of *The New York Times* that claims the paper contains all the news "fit to print."

[4] Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky. Manufacturing Consent. New York: Pantheon, 1988.
[5] CNN Interview 1997

- The continued presence of U.S. troops on the Islamic holy sites of Mecca and Medina within Saudi Arabia.[6]
- The continued military and financial support of Israel by the U.S.[7]

After 9/11 the widespread focus of the American people was on retribution for the attacks. Citing polling numbers from *Time* magazine from September 24, 2001, 62% of Americans surveyed supported a declaration of war, and 81% of those same surveyed favored the assassinations of leaders responsible for terrorism.[8] Since these polling numbers were taken from a random sampling of citizens, it can be assumed that the vast majority of these citizens obtained most of their understanding about 9/11 from mainstream media outlets. Further proof of the impact of the media was that most were not physically in New York City at the time of the attack or had direct access to Middle-Eastern news outlets (since more direct first-hand knowledge could be more realistic and correct). This being the case, the understanding that these individuals reached was a result of extensive media coverage after 9/11, because, as Chomsky states, this distribution of information is the explicit job of the mass media.

Research Question and Design:

The purpose of my research has been to closely examine the media coverage of 9/11 using *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines for the month following 9/11. My question for this research was: how were the rationales of Osama bin Laden discussed in these mainstream publications? My proposed thesis would be that in order to manufacture consent for a large scale military retaliation, nearly all coverage of Osama bin Laden would focus on bin Laden purely as a wanted terrorist, while excluding bin Laden's provided rationales. While these rationales can never justify the deaths of thousands of Americans, it must be discussed and considered at all levels of decision making from local to national politics. The discussion of these reasons was and continues to be of extreme importance if we are to be able to prevent another such attack from taking place in the future, or at the very least to better understand an explanation for 9/11. A discussion of this rationale would not only give us a better understanding but would make us safer. Discussing

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[6] Admitting responsibility for attacks on US on September 11, 2001, on videotape shown on Al Jazeera, October 29, 2004

[7] CNN Interview 1997

[8] Time Magazine. September 24, 2001. (pg 42)

terrorist rationale does not mean that we are catering to the demands of terrorists; instead, this rationale provides us with valuable insight as to how our actions as a country are seen around the world and what the impact of these actions has been and continues to be in promoting strife and global instability. Through open debate, we can make our country safer.

My specific research question will be answered through a comparative study of *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines for four calendar weeks following 9/11. The purpose of this study will be to provide evidence that there was little to no mention of Osama bin Laden's rationale present in the stories written regarding the attacks. The importance of this study is that this is a matter of vital importance to national policy. If we are to make decisions of national and international security, we must have all of the facts and make informed choices. I will draw from and connect my research to the extensive scholarship of Noam Chomsky on the topic of media censorship, particularly in his books, *Manufacturing Consent* (co-editor with Edward S. Herman), and *Hegemony or Survival.* My contention is that through the mass media censorship of Osama Bin Laden's rationales we as American citizens are dangerously ill informed.

Research:

My research will consist of a comparison between *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines for the month following the attacks (September 24, 2001-October 15, 2001). I will provide a graphic representation of my findings first. My chart will have three purposes: showing number of articles per edition (specifically regarding the attack, not just every article to mention 9/11), how many times Osama bin Laden is mentioned (explicitly by name), and the number of times there is any discussion of the rationales expressed by bin Laden and Al-Qaeda after the attack.

The title of each heading will be an indicator for the information contained within its respective column. "Number of stories" will refer to how many stories in each issue had the events of 9/11 as it's principal topic. "Mentions of Osama bin Laden" will be any of the stories used in the previous column that given specific mention to bin Laden through use of his name. Finally, "Coverage of bin Laden's rationales" will refer to the reasons provided by Osama bin Laden in the wake of 9/11 for the events. This number will not reflect the times bin Laden is mentioned as

planning the attack, but rather specifically his *justification* for doing so. Each of the articles in the "coverage" column will be expressed in detail in the next section.

Time Magazine:

Week	Number of Stories	Mentions of Osama Bin Laden	Coverage of Bin Laden's Rationales
September 24, 2001	20	46	1
October 1, 2001	21	45	1
October 8, 2001	17	32	0
October 15, 2001	12	40	2

Newsweek Magazine:

Week	Number of Stories	Mentions of Osama Bin Laden	Coverage of Bin Laden's Rationales
September 24, 2001	15	21	0
October 1, 2001	11	32	0
October 8, 2001	8	16	0
October 15, 2001 (Extended Special Report on 9/11)	16	10	1

Explanation of Research:

Time:

In analyzing these results, the overall findings are consistent with my proposed thesis. I hypothesized that in the wake of 9/11 there would be extensive coverage of Osama bin Laden, but scarce commentary on the rationales he gave for the attacks. In total, there were 70 stories in *Time* specifically about the 9/11 attacks and within these stories bin Laden's name was mentioned 163 times. However, also consistent with my proposed claim, there were 4 total mentions of the rationales provided by bin Laden.

The first mention of bin Laden's rationales were in the September 24, 2001 issue in an article titled "The Most Wanted Man in the World." The main focus of the article was on what was known of bin Laden's history, primarily his violent and militant history. During the discussion of bin Laden's actions during the build up to the first Gulf War in 1990, the article stated "the Saudis invited in U.S. troops for the first time ever. Like many other Muslims, bin Laden was offended by the Army's presence"(57). This single sentence reflected the only mention in this issue of *Time* related to bin Laden's rationale, yet the sentence is not structured in any way to make the reader think of this as being a possible explanation or rationale. Instead, the article continued to say that the Muslims couldn't stand the army with its "Christian and Jewish soldiers, its rock music, its women who drove and wore pants"(57). Next, the article devoted only one sentence to the importance of the holy sites Mecca and Medina to Muslims by stating, "Saudi Arabia has a singular place among Islamic countries and as home to Mecca and Medina" (57). In this entire issue, this tiny reference was the only form of any discussion of the events behind 9/11.

The next article to hold any relation to bin Laden's given reasons for 9/11 came in the October 1, 2001 issue. Placed within the article "Roots of Rage" was a three paragraph discussion on the grievances of the Arab world towards the U.S. from Israeli incursions (45), the placement of over 7,000 U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia (45), and the U.S. backed sanctions against Iraq leading to the deaths of up to 5,000 Iraqi children per month (46). In discussing these three reasons, which were the same provided by bin Laden, this article offered the first legitimate discussion of the provided rationales. However, outside of this article, there was no further mention in the magazine, or in the next edition (October 8, 2001).

During the week of October 15, 2001 an article titled "It's Not All America's Fault" briefly touched upon "the Palestinian question" (a vague reference to U.S. support of Israel and acts of Israeli aggression), but quickly dismissed this reason by claiming that, "They (Arab Intellectuals) did not detach themselves from the tribal tradition of defending 'our' causes in the face of the 'enemy.' Their priority has not been to criticize the incredible shortcomings that they live with."(69) This article provided an example of de-legitimization of the given grievances expressed by some Muslims and a claim that the reason that a select group of Muslims committed these acts was because they were unable to embrace all that is great in the modern world and were bitter.

In examining 70 articles in *Time* Magazine, there were a total of 15 sentences of any relation to bin Laden's expressed reasons for 9/11. Furthermore, these 15 sentences were spread across hundreds of pages and four issues.

Newsweek:

The first point regarding *Newsweek* Magazine is that each issue was on average slightly shorter than that of *Time*, yet the difference was not large enough to make the two irrelevant for comparison. In my examination of the issues of *Newsweek* for the same weeks as *Time* I found very similar results. The total number of articles specifically related to 9/11 were 50, and among those articles, there were 79 mentions of Osama bin Laden's name. However, the total number of articles with any discussion of the reasons expressed in bin Laden's rationale was one single article.

The singular mention came on October 15, 2001 in an article titled "Meet the bin Ladens." Primarily, this article provided a discussion of the family background of Osama bin Laden and claimed that the bin Ladens are "furious at Osama for tarnishing what was once one of their most precious assets, the family name"(57). In fact, the only mention of a reason for the attack was in a graphic at the bottom of the article that states, "58% cite U.S. support for Israel"(57). However, nowhere in the article was this graphic explained or substantiated. Those surveyed for this result were not mentioned or sourced anywhere in the surrounding pages.

One explanation for the almost complete lack of coverage given to any part of bin Laden's rationale could be in the *Newsweek* article from this same issue, "Blame America at your Peril," in which the author claimed that discussion of the reasons prompting the attack would be "appeasement"(41). Additionally, the article stated: "Talk about ironic: the same people always urging us to not blame the victim in rape cases are now saying Uncle Sam wore a short skirt and asked for it"(41). The view expressed in this article is that any discussion of reasons given for the attack is ridiculous and offensive to America and that "nothing from us would have satisfied the fanatics and nothing ever will"(41). Therefore, the coverage in *Newsweek* Magazine of 9/11 regarding the reasons given by Osama bin Laden was extremely limited across the amount of time I surveyed.

Discussion and Application:

In the wake of 9/11 Noam Chomsky discussed the issues of terrorism and the global American military agenda in his book *Hegemony or Survival*. Chomsky wrote:

> After 9/11…George Bush asked, 'Why do they hate us?' The question was wrongly put, and the right answer was scarcely addressed. But within a year, the administration succeeded in providing an answer: 'Because of you and your associates, Mr. Bush, and what you have done. And if you continue, the fear and hatred you have inspired may extend to the country you have shamed as well.' On that, the evidence is hard to ignore. For Osama bin Laden, it is a victory beyond his wildest dreams. (Chomsky 42)

An important point regarding my research is that in the wake of a national catastrophe, two widely read and respected news magazines effectively limited the debate over *why* the events of 9/11 happened. Many articles were quick to mention that the Arab world hates the decadence and freedom exemplified by the U.S., however by not discussing the actual rationale of bin Laden, we as citizens are left with only a part of the puzzle and are less safe from possible future attacks. An example of this partial discussion (from the elimination of bin Laden's specific reasons and subsequent replacement with broader claims such as "Why Muslims hate Americans") came in the October 15, 2001 issue of *Newsweek* entitled "Why They Hate Us." In this issue one writer claims that the answer to this question is as hard as the question itself: why has this attack happened now? What caused 9/11? This is a prime example of how the debate was bounded after 9/11. Osama bin Laden's reasons were known by *Newsweek* and *Time*. The proof of this statement is that, although scant attention was drawn to the reasons, they were printed in the issues I examined. This example shows that there was a deliberate effort on the part of the mainstream news media to define the parameters of public debate regarding the reasons behind 9/11 by disabling a discussion regarding bin Laden's rationale.

In order to fully understand a situation and make informed decisions (such as whether or not military action should be taken and who against) it is of vital importance that we are able to explore all the given information regarding a topic and decide for ourselves which are salacious and which are of merit. In this case, the news agencies decided

to make that choice for us as illustrated by a *Newsweek* article from October 15, 2001 stating; "American discussion of rationale was appeasement." (41)

This action taken by the media is a further example of Noam Chomsky's concept of manufacturing consent. According to Chomsky, the general purpose of the mass media is to provide the consent of the masses for government action, "the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. The representatives of these interests have important agendas and principles that they want to advance, and they are well positioned to shape and constrain media policy.[9]" My research regarding the coverage of bin Laden's rationale agrees with Chomsky's model and provides an example of Chomsky's concept. If the mass media were to include coverage of bin Laden's rationale it would be more difficult to achieve widespread popular support for military strikes against Afghanistan (and later Iraq).[10] Thus, by curtailing this discussion, the media outlets organize consent for military retaliation.

The specific content selected by *Time* and *Newsweek* is not merely accidental. There was a conscious choice made on behalf of both magazines to focus more on labeling bin Laden as a terrorist bent on destroying the U.S. out of a jealous rage. This link was accomplished by mentioning his name in articles concerning 9/11 hundreds of times so that the American public would imprint the image of bin Laden's face alongside the burning towers in New York and disregard any other substantive discussions.

While the purpose of my argument is not to try to state how bin Laden may or may not be a terrorist (because these terms are themselves subjective), I am instead concerned with the careful media construction of bin Laden in order to control public sentiment. This singular notion (bin Laden as a terrorist) reflects the goal of manufacturing consent, through narrowing the field of discourse with no discussion of bin Laden's rationales and juxtaposing his name with stories about the destruction of the towers, the structure of the public consciousness for action against alleged followers and co-conspirators becomes easier.

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[9] Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky. Manufacturing Consent. New York: Pantheon, 1988.

[10] Time Magazine. September 24, 2001. (pg. 42)

Conclusion:

The end result of the systematic exclusion of information in the news media has been a fundamental shift in the questions we ask or even *think* to ask. In the book *Hegemony or Survival*, Noam Chomsky states: "The question is wrongly put: they do not hate *us*, but rather the policies of our government, something quite different."[11] This is the important message and explains the intent by the government and media in this distortion of information. A common rule of our capitalist economic system is that people are not likely to buy a new product unless those people believe that they need whatever this new product might be. This means that the role of the advertiser is to show the potential customer why the customer needs this product and how this product will make their life better and why this new product is superior to an older version. The role of advertising is to create and establish the desire necessary to purchase a product. Capitalism relies on this constant creation of new wants and desires in order to sustain the growth of the economy.

The action taken on behalf of the news media after 9/11 was no different than this capitalist framework. The product being sold was military retaliation against terrorist networks across the globe. While initial polling numbers (cited earlier) were very high in favor of swift military action, the government and media had to take action to ensure that the American public would continue to support a military response. In effect, the media orchestrated an elaborate ad campaign on the part of the government about the war on terror. One of the key elements to this campaign, and any advertising campaign, was the selection of information that would be available to the general public after 9/11. If Osama bin Laden could be consistently framed as supporting and committing these acts because of mindless hatred for America and the American people, then Americans would feel threatened and support military action. This process is no different than the advertising I explained earlier in this section. The danger posed by publicly discussing bin Laden's rationale was not the "appeasement" mentioned in *Newsweek*, but rather, discussing these issues would draw into question several actions of the American state that are rarely discussed. The

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[11] Chomsky, Noam. <u>Hegemony or Survival</u>. New York; Metropolitan, 2003.

threat regarding this discussion was to the American military industrial complex and their ability to carry on operations largely out of the public eye. By censoring bin Laden's rationale for the attacks, the American people were left with a seemingly simple choice regarding how they should act and whom they should support: the military.

Through my analysis of *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines for the month following September 11, 2001, the deliberate censorship of coverage discussing the provided rationale by Osama bin Laden is evident. During that month, *Time* and *Newsweek* filed over 120 articles relating to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Within those articles, Osama bin Laden's name was mentioned 242 times, while there were only 5 articles that devoted any coverage to discussing the expressed grievances of Osama bin Laden, which would tell the entire story. If the goal of the press is to file stories that cover all angles of world events in as objective a manner as possible, then *Time* and *Newsweek* were effectively doing their job only 4%[12] of the time.

The purpose of this research is not to claim any measure of justification for the atrocities of 9/11. Those horrific events involving the deaths of thousands of Americans will not ever be erased from the public consciousness. However, if Americans are to prevent further attacks from taking place on American soil or around the world, we as citizens must be able to make informed decisions regarding support for government policies and objectives. This consent is only possible if the citizens of this country have access to major media outlets that provide news coverage that addresses all perspectives of a story, not just the ones favorable to the military and the government. The term "the fourth estate" was originally coined because the founding fathers imagined a free and independent press that would challenge the three branches of government. Now over 300 years later, the fourth estate has become little more than a subdivision of government housing. As citizens we require a media that will provide us with access to information so that we can participate in the democratic process. Without a free media, all citizens can do is continue to stare as the wreckage of the third tower rises higher and higher, each layer signifying our losses since 9/11: our families, our friends, our rights, and our very sense of self. The American people now stand in the shadow of this tower, spread across the country and bound together by loss. As most Americans remain resolute against

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[12] Of the 120 total articles, only 5 devoted any coverage to bin Laden's rationale, therefore these were the only articles to attempt to adequately cover the important issues.

the fears and dangers of terrorism they still stand in darkness, awaiting a media that can inform them and show them the light they deserve and need.

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Jennifer Kelley

A Clam's Discourse:
How the Clamshell Alliance
affected public consciousness
going through and around commercial mass media

Throughout history marginalized groups have found themselves alienated from the ruling majority or powerful elite for many reasons. For some it was their race, for others their sex or social class. And for some it was their ideology or political position. Marginalized communities have had to fight to get their voices heard, often taking a back seat to those in the social, political, and economic mainstream. The successes of these marginalized groups are important to note because they mark the ability to influence and affect public consciousness and public opinion, against adversity and the obstacles of a disadvantageous position. Today's commercial mass media play an important role in dictating what views and positions are viewed by the public. They also hold the power to shape and frame the information revealed to the public. Since the transformation from the political press to the commercial press, the mass media have been reserved for the political elite. That is, stories are often framed in favor of the powerful, forcing marginalized groups to seek alternative channels of expression.

Susan Herbst, in her work Politics At The Margin, identifies and analyzes the efforts made by multiple marginalized groups to express their ideology and beliefs, despite their isolation from the mainstream. Herbst notes that "Many groups of political outsiders build collectives outside the mainstream. By emphasizing a sense of community and solidarity, such groups are able to mobilize their members, cope with discrimination, and express themselves more effectively." (Herbst 1994, 9) The Clamshell Alliance is an example of such a group. The Clamshell Alliance was a group that recognized the importance of building a foundation built on a sense of solidarity and community among group members. A group marginalized by its political ideology, the Clamshell Alliance used the means at their disposal to reach the public. The Clamshell Alliance is an excellent example of a marginalized, grass-roots group that employed multiple tactics to influence public discourse and public opinion regarding nuclear power.

The Clamshell Alliance was formed in July of 1976 and was dedicated to stopping the installation of nuclear power in Seabrook, New Hampshire. The group's goal was predicated on the idea of raising public

consciousness on the issue of nuclear power. The plans for the nuclear power plants in Seabrook consisted of two 1150-megawatt reactors. In March of 1976 citizens of Seabrook voted against the Seabrook nuclear power plant by a vote of 768 to 632. (Clamshell Alliance Papers, Series 1, Box 12, R.R. Cushing manuscript) Legal attempts to stop construction of the plant had been made for years before the vote, however a license was granted in July of 1976, and subsequently construction of the nuclear plant was begun. The Clamshell Alliance began with a group of New England activists and expanded to a community of activists from all over the nation, with public support from other countries who pledged themselves to some of the same ideals for opposing nuclear power. From the beginning the Clamshell Alliance declared its dedication to non-violent direct action. The Alliance felt it was their responsibility to oppose the Seabrook nuclear plant because of the threats it posed to the preservation of the natural environment, the health and safety of citizens, and to a democracy where the opinions and beliefs of citizens were recognized and accounted for.

The Public Service Company of New Hampshire was a major proponent for the Seabrook nuclear site and owned 50 percent of the project. New Hampshire's governor at the time, Meldrim Thomson, was also a fervent supporter of the nuclear plant. Governor Thomson's involvement in the construction of nuclear power at Seabrook is important to note because his position as governor gave him power and influence over the construction of the plant, as well as over the public. The Clamshell Alliance recognized that the PSNH and Governor Thomson had a large advantage over the Alliance in terms of political and economic power. Further the Clamshell Alliance was aware that in most cases the regulatory and judicial processes were time-consuming dead ends when it came to marginalized groups with very little political power. Thus the Alliance realized they would have to devote their energy to alternative methods of affecting change on the issue of nuclear power.

The Alliance believed in working to "re-assert the right of citizens to be fully informed, and then to decide the nature and destiny of their own communities." (Clamshell Alliance, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1, Founding Statement) To the Alliance, the PSNH was a large corporation motivated by greed and private profit. As Renny Cushing, a member of the Clamshell Alliance explained, "there was a realization on the part of early organizers that the nuke was not an aberration, but that the foundation of atomic power rests on the greed of capitalism." (Clamshell Alliance, Series 1, Box 3, Folder 14) From this statement it is clear that members of the Alliance felt that the capitalist order of society was being used as a guiding force for economic profit for proponents of the nuclear

plant. Further, the Alliance saw the nuclear industry as an organization motivated by the political and economic promotion of a powerful few, rather than helping the public satisfy its energy needs. This idea is very similar to a contention made by Alex Carey in <u>Taking The Risk Out Of Democracy,</u> that "business and industry are seen to be governed by considerations of power and profit, to the neglect of important social and human concerns." (Carey 1995, 144) Both ideas illustrate the power of political and economic elite to the detriment of the public good.

It is important to understand the Clamshell Alliance's ideology and philosophy in order to understand the identity of Alliance members and the forces that drove their movement. The ideology of the Clams was encompassed in different beliefs and values that they felt conveyed their determination and the strength of their cause. The Clamshell Alliance identified a quote by Albert Einstein to guide its ideology concerning nuclear power and political action. Einstein's quote, "To the village square we must carry the facts of atomic power. From there must come America's voice," symbolized the Alliance's loyalty towards the public's voice and power. (Clamshell Papers, Series 1, Box 7, Folder 9) In "Declaration of Nuclear Resistance," the Alliance addressed its belief that the public should have control over an issue affecting all lives, such as nuclear power. The document stated that "a supply of energy is a natural right and should in all cases be controlled by the people. Private monopoly must give way to public control."(Clamshell Alliance papers, Series 1, Box 7, Folder 9) This statement covers a major part of the Alliance's ideology, focusing on its belief that the powerful elite should not be the sole decision makers regarding an issue involving the public's good. It reiterates the Alliance's conviction that the public's views and opinions must be considered and addressed for the advancement of the common good.

The Alliance's ideology was further conveyed through its strong belief in nonviolent civil disobedience and direct action. The Alliance remained loyal to its belief that peaceful action, coupled with a strong determination to influence the public's knowledge concerning nuclear energy, could achieve its goals. The organization of the Alliance itself was connected to its theory of democracy. In the beginning of its history the Alliance reached decisions through consensus, showing the Alliance's desire to promote solidarity of action. The Alliance believed the voice of citizens should be heard and considered in a democratic nation, and conveyed this through its decision-making process. There was no hierarchy to the Alliance's internal structure because the Clamshell felt all its members should be equally responsible for spreading their anti-nuclear position.

In an attempt to influence and shape public opinion, the Clamshell Alliance employed different means of public discourse. Since the Alliance's main goal was to stop the construction of the Seabrook nuclear plant through raising the public's awareness and consciousness on the issue of nuclear power, public discourse was a key factor in fulfilling this goal. As Gamson and Modigliani identify in their article, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power," there are several areas of discourse that competing sides utilize to frame an issue in a way advantageous to their position. Specifically, Gamson and Modigliani recognize "specialist's discourse", "oral discourse," "challenger discourse," and "media discourse" as the public discourses often influential in affecting public opinion on issues such as nuclear power. (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 2-3)

A specialist's discourse allows a group to address an issue, using terminology aimed at those that are professionally linked to the issue. Thus, in this case, the Clamshell Alliance's use of specialist's discourse allowed it to arrange its information in a manner that would not raise doubts from those associated with the nuclear science establishment. The Clamshell Alliance dispersed pamphlets, diagrams, and other materials that contained specialist's discourse in order to legitimize the information and the scientific claims it produced on nuclear power. The Alliance also found it important to address the nuclear power issue in technical and scientific terms so that the news media would recognize its assertions as legitimate and reliable and give its position air time. An example of the specialist discourse composed by the Alliance is found in the January, 1979 edition of "The Clamshell Journal." (Clamshell Alliance Papers, Series 1, Box 6, Folder 18, The Clamshell Journal.) The first section of the Journal entitled, "Ecology, Paradox, and Nuclear Power," was dedicated to explaining the problems and disadvantages of nuclear power in a scientific and technical manner. The section examines nuclear power through the language and paradigms of ecology and thermodynamics. Terms such as 'ecosystem,' and 'biosphere,' as well as 'The First Law of Thermodynamics,' are defined and explained in accordance with scientific advancements in energy and nuclear power. The section then goes on to discuss in scientific terms the inefficiency of electrical power produced by nuclear power. Another example of specialist's discourse used by the Alliance to propel its claims of the danger of nuclear power was a diagram of the human body, detailing the numerous medical problems that can occur throughout the body as a result of direct exposure to nuclear waste. A pamphlet on the medical implications of nuclear power composed by a medical doctor was also

issued to help substantiate the claims made by the Alliance. (Clamshell Alliance Papers, Series 1, Box 6, folder 19)

The Clamshell Alliance engaged in many attempts to orally express its public discourse on nuclear power. Through demonstrations, occupations, town meetings, and news conferences, the Clams worked to express their philosophy and beliefs concerning nuclear power installation at Seabrook. One such instance was a "people's town meeting and forum outside of the Portsmouth High School to coincide with the visit of President Carter." This town meeting was formally announced in a press release by the Clamshell Alliance. (Clamshell papers, Series 1, Box 2, folder 1, Press Releases) Thus this announcement can be identified as oral and media discourse, used to favor the stance of the Clamshell Alliance.

Throughout the Clamshell Alliance's history it released numerous press releases detailing rallies, meetings, and demonstrations. Because the press releases were constructed by the Alliance, they delineated the events with the oppositional tone to nuclear power the Alliance embodied. The majority of the press releases constructed by the Alliance worked as "challenger discourse." Gamson and Modigliani define challenger discourse as discourse "intended to mobilize their [the challenger's] audiences for some form of collective action." (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 3) Many of the press releases were created by the Alliance to announce public demonstrations, or react to past demonstrations. Thus, in this case, the collective action that the Alliance wished to create or invoke was public opposition to the installation of nuclear power at Seabrook, by alliance members and the public. The Clamshell's challenger discourse took the form of a legal occupation and alternative energy fair in June of 1978. This instance of challenger discourse directly intersected with the Clams' attempts to have their discourse displayed by media. In the days leading up to the occupation the Alliance worked to spread the word to media about a radio teach-in the Alliance was conducting in order to raise awareness for its issue. A letter was sent to Clam members, directing them to get the word out to media contacts to "ensure that news coverage of the June 24th Seabrook occupation/restoration delves into nuclear issues adequately." (Clamshell Papers, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 4, News releases for June 24th occupation)

Media discourse was also recognized by the Alliance as an important mode of raising public consciousness concerning nuclear power. The Alliance composed a Media Committee dedicated to getting news of its events heard by the public. The committee was responsible for preparing and distributing news releases to the press, and writing

letters to editors when the releases were not picked up by the press. Ultimately, this committee aspired to expand awareness on the issue of nuclear power and spread its message regarding its anti-nuclear position on the issue. Any news releases by the Clamshell Alliance that were used by the press achieved the difficult task of framing the issue in favor of the Clamshell's oppositional stance on nuclear power. However, although the Clamshell's efforts and successes in framing media discourses should be noted, it is also important to note that the issue was framed in favor of the establishmentarian position in numerous instances of media discourse. For example, the notoriously right-wing *Manchester Union Leader* framed the majority of its pieces concerning the Seabrook nuclear plant in favor of the Public Service Company of New Hampshire and Governor Thomson. According to a piece by a Clamshell Alliance member, Catherine W. Wolff, it "launched a heavy attack on the Clam in the weeks preceding the [April 30] occupation..." and "claimed that the Clam was a communist organization." (Catherine W. Wolff 1977, 22)

To better judge the ability of the Clamshell Alliance to optimize the exposure their discourse received among media outlets, it is important to isolate a major event in the Clam's history and dissect the media coverage the event received in terms of quantity and quality. Reporters and journalists often frame a story in favor of one side or another, by carefully selecting what information is included in a story and by allowing the discourse of one side to dominate the story. As many authors and scholars have noted, the way in which the media frame a story has the ability to influence and even shape the formation of public opinion. The mass media have the power not only to dictate what events they cover, but these news outlets also have the power to shape public consciousness by the way they frame an event. To assess the intersection of the Alliance's oppositional discourse with media discourse, it is also necessary to look at the tactics and channels used by the Clamshell Alliance to reach the public and influence public awareness and opinions regarding nuclear power.

The first major occupation of the Seabrook site took place on April 30, 1977. More than 2,000 people marched into the Seabrook site, prepared to occupy the site for days in order to halt construction on the nuclear plant. At the time the occupation was the largest nonviolent civil disobedience action against U.S. nuclear power to be conducted. The occupation resulted in the arrest and containment of 1,414 occupiers for thirteen days. The occupiers were required to post bail, from $100 to $500. Most of the occupiers arrested had expected to be released on personal recognizance and refused to pay the bail. The occupation and

ensuing two-week containment of the prisoners fueled major media coverage of the event.

The Clamshell Alliance organized concise and detailed plans for the April 30 occupation. The plans included various methods of raising public awareness. As a result of the economic and political obstacles that impeded the Alliance's ability to garner strong ties with mass media, the Alliance made efforts to reach the public through backchannels of communication. One method used by the Clamshell was reaching the public through various press releases, both before and after the occupation. Also, the Alliance issued numerous fliers and pamphlets to members and to the public to educate them on the purpose and nature of the planned occupation. The Clamshell's recognition of the importance of media for the occupation was addressed in an occupier's handbook, composed by the Alliance. The section of the handbook entitled "Media" stated, "Good relations with the media are essential for a good occupation. It's important to respect the media's impact on the public." (Clamshell papers, Series 1, Box 7, Folder 6, Pamphlets about Seabrook) This last sentence is especially important because it shows the clamshell's realization that media have a large influence on public opinion, through their coverage of events, and their power to frame and shape events in favor of one side or the other. Another method used by the Clamshell to facilitate expression of its discourse through the press was a broad set of instructions for using the press to reach the masses entitled, "How to use the Media Effectively." The goal of this document was to teach Alliance members how to successfully maximize the possibility of getting their ideas across through the media. The instructions included tactics for developing media lists, identifying media contacts, developing contacts with reporters and editors, as well as tips for press conferences. (Clamshell papers, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 2, Press Releases)

The Clamshell Alliance developed extensive records of, and contacts with, numerous television and radio stations, as well as newspapers throughout New England. For example the "Seacoast Action Handbook" was a compilation of news and entertainment media throughout New England. (Clamshell Papers, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 15, Media List) The Clamshell also had a list of daily newspapers from different New England states, and highlighted those it felt would devote substantial coverage to its cause. The Alliance also notified the public and media of its occupation through press releases prior to the occupation. The releases echoed the Alliance's commitment to nonviolent resistance and its anti-nuclear position. (Clamshell papers, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 2, Press releases) I believe these are evidence of

the Alliance's efforts to use media as an outlet for broadcasting its oppositional discourse to the masses. However a more in-depth analysis of these efforts is necessary to reveal fully how successful the Alliance was at getting its discourse heard in its own terms. A look at the coverage by Dover's newspaper, *Foster's Daily Democrat,* of the April 30 occupation will allow for an evaluation of the Clamshell Alliance's ability to have its discourse represented in media coverage.

The *Foster's Daily Democrat* produced numerous articles pertaining to the Seabrook nuclear plant, the April 30 occupation, and the imprisonment of protesters following the occupation. By carefully reading and analyzing the information disseminated by the articles, as well as the general nature in which the articles were shaped, I was able to judge how, and in whose favor, the journalists framed the articles. I believe it is important to note Gamson and Modigliani's definition for what they refer to as "media packages." Gamson and Modigliani argue, "media discourse can be conceived of as a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue." (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 3) This is relevant in revealing how the news stories about the April 30 occupation were framed, and which group, the Clamshell Alliance or the proponents for the nuclear plant, won the battle of dominating the media package with their discourse.

The first article concerning the April 30 occupation was in the April 27, 1977 issue of the *Foster's Daily Democrat.* The story, which made the front page of the newspaper, was entitled, "Governor Declares: 'Nuke Demonstration Is Terrorist Cover.'" The headline itself was very revealing as to which group the article would be framed in favor of, giving prominence to Gov. Thomson's statement by making it the title, and thus the focus of the article. The article's first paragraph went on to elaborate Thomson's charges against the Clamshell, and didn't give a rebuttal to the Clamshell until much later in the article. Although the article did quote Cathy Wolff, a spokesperson for the group, it gave much more coverage to Gov. Thomson, Thomson's staff, and the PSNH. By creating a theme representative of Thomson's accusation, a theme conveying the Clamshell in a violent or volatile nature, the journalist clearly framed the story in a way that allowed the establishmentarian position's discourse to dominate the article.

An April 29 issue of the *Foster's Daily Democrat* contained an article entitled, "Thomson, Clamshell Meet Peacefully." Although Governor Thomson and the PSNH held a strong presence in the article, the article seemed to give priority to the Clamshell. The article gave attention to the Alliance's cause through numerous quotes from the group members involved in the meeting articulating their commitment to ˉ

their philosophy of civil disobedience through nonviolent action. A press release issued by the Alliance accusing the Governor and *Manchester Union Leader* of "creating a climate of violence" was also quoted in the article. Along with the quotes from the group members, and a mention of the Clam press release, a visual image of the two Clamshell members involved in the meeting also conveyed the ability of the Alliance to have their discourse aired by the media.

The article, "Seabrook Braces for Protest," in the April 30 issue of *Foster's Daily Democrat* was framed as a matter of law and order, giving priority to the law enforcement officials who were planning to keep order for the April 30 occupation. Although the article did discuss the plans of the Clamshell Alliance, its main theme was that of law enforcement strategy for the occupation. The article quoted Gov. Thomson as saying, "'Definitely we're going to enforce the law'," and then went on to say, "State police were expected to muster more than 300 men, including many local policemen in cities and towns across the state."(*Foster's Daily Democrat* April 30, 1997) These quotes lead the reader to believe that there is need for adequate law enforcement at the occupation, and may create the impression that the Alliance's occupations are volatile. These quotes demonstrate the nature of the messages expressed in the article and show how the journalist's frame of the event may influence the way readers think regarding the occupation.

An article published in the first issue of *Foster's Daily Democrat* after the April 30 occupation framed the occupation in terms of the Clamshell Alliance's cause and was the most obvious example of the Clamshell's success in having a mass medium convey the Alliance's anti-nuclear discourse. The opening sentence of the article "Along the Clamshell Road" stated, "Loaded with placards, college students and grandparents traversed a country road in harmony on Saturday, singing songs against nuclear power and shouting 'no nukes.'"(*Foster's Daily Democrat* May 2, 1977) Not only did this statement convey the Alliance's cause for the demonstration, it also represented the use of a journalistic framing device, the catchphrase. The slogan "No Nukes" was adopted by the Clamshell Alliance early on in their battle against the Seabrook plant, and the journalist's use of the catchphrase exhibits the Clamshell's capacity to publicize their oppositional stance to nuclear power. The article made only one brief mention of law enforcement, while the rest of the article was overpowered by the Clamshell's discourse concerning nuclear power, as well as their thoughts concerning the occupation. The article was accompanied by four visual images of the protestors, which reiterated the strength of the Clam's domination of the overall media package. Although the Clamshell was successful in

publicizing its philosophies and cause in "Along the Clamshell Road," another article situated right next to the first was framed by the perspective of law enforcement. The article, "Protestors Fill Seacoast Armories," described the arrest and containment of the occupiers. Law enforcement authorities were quoted throughout the article, as was the PSNH. The Public Service Company of New Hampshire's presence in the article aided in framing the occupation as unlawful interference with the progress package. The progress package, as addressed by Gamson and Modigliani's work, "frames the nuclear power issue in terms of the society's commitment to technological development and economic growth." (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, 4) Thus, the article took on a clearly pronuclear frame through the progress package, as well as shaping the article in terms of law and order. This article shows the powerful competition the Clamshell Alliance had to contest with in order to have its beliefs and values resonate with the public.

In the days following the occupation numerous articles were dedicated to the arrest and containment of occupiers in National Guard armories. Although some articles were once again framed by law enforcement, there were those that reflected poorly upon Governor Thomson and positively upon the occupiers. One article in the May 4th issue of the *Foster's Daily Democrat* entitled "Demonstrators Wait in Makeshift Prisons" contained numerous visual images of the occupiers in a National Guard armory, accompanied by detailed accounts of the condition and nature of the "makeshift prison." However, an opinion article in the same issue, "Costly Clamshell" charged Clamshell members with costing the state money, while "doing nothing to promote the anti-nuclear movement." (*Foster's Daily Democrat* May 4, 1977)

Although the majority of news articles concerning the April 30 occupation and arrest of occupiers may have been framed to support Governor Thomson, the PSNH, and other advocates for the Seabrook plant, it is still necessary to consider the impact of the Clamshell's efforts. The *Foster's Daily Democrat* dedicated numerous news articles to the Clamshell's cause, subsequently allowing the Alliance to spread awareness concerning nuclear power and publicize its cause. Another factor to consider is the general prominence and publicity given to the April 30 occupation. News articles about the April 30 occupation ran in issues of the newspaper before the actual occupation, and continued for weeks after the occupation to cover the arrests of protestors. Therefore, the Clamshell Alliance was successful in having a mass medium cover and give great exposure to its occupation, allowing its message to reach the public. It is important to mark the successes achieved by the Alliance, because it symbolizes the ability of a marginalized group to

fight the obstacles posed by its deprived position. The Clamshell was fighting to spread its discourse against a powerful and economic elite that had much clearer opportunities to dominate mass media. As it is important to mark the successes of the Clamshell Alliance, it is also important to mark its failures. The Alliance's discourse failed to dominate the *Foster's Daily Democrat*, a clear indication of the obstruction marginalized groups face when trying to produce change in a society controlled by politics and commercialism. Journalists often frame stories in favor of power and authority, often the political elite. Thus issues are often defined for the public in terms of these official sources, making it hard for marginalized communities to influence public opinion.

The Clamshell Alliance devoted efforts to numerous means of communication in order to raise public consciousness concerning nuclear power. Although these efforts did not allow the Clamshell to dominate channels of mass media, they did provide the Alliance with opportunities to spread its discourse. The backchannels of communication employed by the Alliance provided alternative routes to reach the public. The Clamshell Alliance's solidarity in structure and nature was a testament to the progress possible by social movements fostered by marginalized communities. The intersection of the Clam's oppositional discourse with media discourse granted the Alliance a rare opportunity to influence public opinion. The frequency and prominence afforded the Clam's April 30 occupation by a mass medium proves the ability of a grass roots, marginalized group to enlist public support and affect change regarding a major social issue. One of the reactors was eventually built in Seabrook to produce nuclear energy for surrounding communities. So, although the Clamshell Alliance was not successful in their ultimate goal to end construction of and prevent the nuclear plant, they were successful in obtaining a notable achievement. Ultimately, the Alliance evolved from a small, grass-roots organization to a legitimate power capable of influencing public opinion and consciousness.

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Viewer Identification with the Thieves of *Ocean's 11*

Steven Soderbergh's 2001 remake of the Rat Pack classic *Ocean's 11* was one of the year's biggest box office hits. The film broke the record for a December release by making $39.3 million in just its first three days in theaters.[13] In total, the film grossed over $180 million[14] and a sequel followed in 2004. Steven Soderbergh was one of the most sought-after directors at the time, having just recently made such Academy Award-winning films as *Traffic* and *Erin Brockovich*.[15] *Ocean's 11* also starred a number of Hollywood's most popular actors, including George Clooney, Matt Damon, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt, and Andy Garcia. The film recounted the story of Danny Ocean, a thief recently released from prison, who gathers a group of eleven fellow criminals to perform one last job: to rob the safe of three of Las Vegas' most lucrative casinos. The plot thickens when it becomes clear that Ocean has an ulterior motive: vengeance on Terry Benedict, the casino owner who is dating his ex-wife, Tess.

The reputations of the cast and the director may have been what attracted audiences to *Ocean's 11* in the first place, but viewers were pleased to find more than just beautiful faces in the film. One reason the film may have been so popular was the fact that it successfully transcended many different genres: action, comedy, suspense, and romance. It was a film enjoyable to many different audiences. It also received positive reviews from a wide variety of critics, such as Ebert and Roeper, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Rolling Stone*.[16]

One reviewer, Thane Peterson, went so far as to claim that the remake was better than the 1960 original, starring such film icons as Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr. Peterson claims that the films were alike in that they were "cool, deftly plotted, and fairy tale based" with "inside jokes and campy cameo appearances."[17] However, the original represented the "casual racism, sexism, and macho posturing" that was so common in the 1960s, and the new *Ocean's 11*

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[13] Peterson
[14] Cella
[15] Cella
[16] Cella
[17] Peterson

was "pure fun" with the "loose, easygoing feel that the original movie was supposed to have but didn't."[18] Peterson says that the remake had some amusing character performances and that even though the film contained several huge stars, the cast had an ensemble feel. In contrast, the actors in the original film appeared "tired and hungover" and that "no one seems to really want to be in the movie."[19] Peterson also disapproved of the racist treatment of Sammy Davis Jr. in the film by the white cast members.

Major Question:

The 2001 film *Ocean's 11* was without question a huge monetary success and an enjoyable movie to many audiences. However, in praising the film for its wit and entertainment value, critics have overlooked the fact that the audience is forced to root for the bad guys. The title refers to the group of eleven men, organized by ringleader Danny Ocean, who band together to rob the vaults of three of Las Vegas' most famous and most tightly secured casinos. In the film, the robbers are the heroes and the "victim," the owner of the casinos, Terry Benedict, is the villain. This plot is not consistent with our traditional notions of justice and law-abiding society. So how, then, did the director convince the audience to identify with "the bad guys"?

Theoretical Rationale:

In his article "TV and Interpersonal Behavior," Joshua Meyrowitz developed two media theories, "para-proxemics" and "para-social impressions," based on interpersonal behaviors observed by Hall and Goffman. In his "para-proxemics" theory, Meyrowitz noted that by using certain shot structures, directors can influence the viewer's orientation to a scene, the viewer's perception of and response to characters, and the viewer's perception of relationships among characters. For instance, a close-up shot gives the impression of an intimate interaction between two people. A long shot gives the viewer the feeling that the character is far away from the viewer or from another character. The viewer reacts in this way because the shots mimic how humans act towards each other at different distances in real life interpersonal interaction ("proxemics").

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[18] Peterson
[19] Peterson

Meyrowitz's "para-social impressions" framework explains how a director is able to identify situations and characters, align the viewer with selected characters, and reveal relationships among characters through shot structures. Meyrowitz's theories will be very useful in explaining why the grammar variables used in *Ocean's 11* make the viewer sympathetic to a band of criminals.

Another influence of this study was Jennifer Kelley's analysis of the "bad guys" in her paper "Influencing Viewers to Perceive Characters Positively: Interaction of Grammar Variables and Content in *Goodfellas*." She studied how the production variables used by the director helped the viewer to "associate, identify, and even accept the bad guys" even though the characters commit horrible acts of violence and lack traditional moral values.[20]

Method:

In my study, I plan to look most closely at the scenes in which the main characters are introduced and the section of the film in which the actual casino robbery takes place. According to Meyrowitz's theories, the scenes in which the characters are introduced are important in aligning the viewer with certain characters. If we are with a character from the beginning, we often feel as though we are on his "team." For this initial study, I will limit the analysis of the scenes of introduction to those of Danny Ocean (George Clooney), his main partner Rusty Ryan (Brad Pitt), and casino owner Terry Benedict (Andy Garcia). The scenes in which the robbery takes place are important because they contain several moments of suspense. Logically, we should feel suspense in favor of the police or Terry Benedict, but in reality we feel nervous that Ocean's eleven will not succeed. How are the production (or "grammar") variables manipulated in favor of the crooks? I will be looking for the usage of close-ups (the character's face), medium shots (the head and torso) and long shots (full body) in portraying characters. High angle shots (in which the camera looks down from above the characters), low angle shots (in which the camera is low, looking up at the characters) and level shots also have certain implications. I will also look at the orientations to scenes and editing techniques such as cross-cutting and split screen.

Results:

Ocean's 11 begins with Danny Ocean's parole hearing. The viewer hears prison sounds during the credits, such as voices yelling and

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[20] Kelley, 409.

metal clanging, which set the scene before any visuals are presented. The camera is in a stationary position in front of an empty chair. Danny enters the room and sits in the chair as he is being interviewed about why he is in jail and what he plans to do if he is released. The camera is at a medium distance and is a level shot of Ocean. It mimics the motto of the court system: innocent until proven guilty. Ocean is shown here as "on the level." The viewer's first impression of a person shown in a prison in an inmate's uniform would normally be that he is a "criminal," but in this scene we (as the viewer) are in the position (literally) to believe him when he claims his innocence. At the very end of the scene, the camera cuts to a close-up of Danny's face as a voice from the backgrounds asks him, "What do you think you would do if released?" We do not see or hear him answer, yet we are encouraged to guess what Danny is thinking. Because the audience is so physically close and can "read his mind," we begin our emotional attachment to Danny Ocean.

The next sequence of shots show Danny's release from prison and follows him as he experiences freedom. He is continuously shown with level shots and more close-ups. The camera dollies with him as he walks, as if the viewer is walking alongside him. He stops in an Atlantic City casino to see an old friend, Frank. In their conversation, Frank is shown in over-the-shoulder shots from Danny's side, as if the viewer is sitting next to Ocean.

The next character introduction to be analyzed is that of Rusty. Rusty is first presented in a split-screen close-up with Danny, indicating that although they are not physically together, a connection between them exists. In the split-screen, the characters are shown as the same size and at the same level to let the viewers know that we should feel the same way about Rusty as we do about Danny. The camera slowly dollies back to establish Rusty's location. Soon after, Danny and Rusty are together at a poker table in an attempt to teach the game to a group of celebrities. The table is large and crowded with people. The distance separating Danny and Rusty is far, but they are shot with a telephoto lens from behind the shoulders of each other to compress the space between them. The viewer almost forgets that Danny and Rusty are not alone in the room and the viewer feels like an insider to their private conversation.

In the next scene, Danny and Rusty are shown driving in a car through the streets of L.A. The camera is mounted on the back of the car, moving with it, the city zooming by. The camera (the viewer) is like a passenger in the backseat. When they reach their destination, Danny tells Rusty about his next heist idea. The two men are at a small table in

a candlelit restaurant. They are whispering and their faces are shown in tight close-ups. The viewer is truly an insider on the plan, one of the gang.

The third character in this analysis, Terry Benedict, is introduced to the audience very differently from Danny and Rusty. Terry Benedict's name and reputation as a powerful, smart, cold and ruthless businessman are mentioned before he is even shown on screen. In fact, he is not shown in person until about 45 minutes into the movie. The viewer "meets" each member of Ocean's eleven and even knows the basics of the plan to rob the vault before seeing him. The viewer is already on the "team" of Danny Ocean before meeting the rival "team" of Terry Benedict. For the first few shots of Benedict, he is portrayed through long shots and often from behind. Prolonged close-ups of him are not shown until later, when the audience knows enough background information about him to know not to like him. He is often shown from a slightly low angle. Even though the viewer does not like him, he or she respects him as a figure of power and intimidation, unlike the eleven who are shown with level shots, with whom the viewer is supposed to connect and identify. It is mentioned often that former robbery attempts of Benedict's casinos resulted in the ruination of the lives of not simply the robbers, but also of their families and friends. When the audience knows how much is at risk if Ocean's men do not succeed, the job is all the more exciting and suspenseful and we feel some anxiety over the risks being taken by "our guys."

The scenes in which the casino robbery takes place are crucial to my argument that the audience "roots for" Ocean's eleven. During the actual casino robbery, several moments of suspense occur when the viewer doubts momentarily that the eleven will succeed. These moments are important because they make us realize just how involved we are in the story and that we are not just sitting back being entertained. These scenes are suspenseful because of the production techniques used, not simply because of the content of the scenes. One brief moment is when Yen, the Chinese acrobat, is inside a box in the vault. A briefcase was accidentally placed on top of the box that, when Yen tries to free himself from his hiding place, will fall onto the floor covered in laser security sensors. When it is time for him to perform his part of the plan, the briefcase slowly slips. Dramatic music plays, building the suspense, while low-angle close-ups are shot of the briefcase, signifying its importance. The camera is even placed on the ground, showing the briefcase falling and being caught by Yen right before it hits the floor. This unusual angle shows just how close the briefcase was to the sensors.

The next moment involved Yen jumping from the top of his hiding place onto a bookshelf. This action is cross-cut with two of the other thieves, Frank and Livingston, watching from a monitor and taking bets that he might miss. It is also cross-cut with Danny and Linus on the other side of the door, waiting for him and wondering what is taking so long. Yen is shown in a long shot missing the bookcase but catching himself right before his foot touches the floor. A long shot is crucial to the viewer's comprehension of the event because it shows his entire body and the setup of the room.

Yen's next job is to place disks on the door of the vault so that Danny and Linus can blow it up from the outside. However, after Yen gives the OK signal, the bandage on his hand gets caught and he cannot get away from the door. Soderbergh cross cuts between Danny counting down twenty seconds, Yen looking panicked and trying desperately to pull his hand free, and Livingston watching from the monitor yelling at Danny through a walkie-talkie not to blow the door. The camera slowly zooms in on the door and all three characters during the cross-cutting and music plays to add to the drama. The suspense suddenly ends with the sudden stopping of the music and a steady long shot of Danny pressing the button, only to find a dead battery on his remote starter. The scene ends with a little humor, as Linus says, "See? You lose focus for one second and someone gets hurt," neither of them knowing what almost happened to Yen.

Discussion:

The evidence that grammar variables influence the audience to identify with Ocean's eleven is even stronger when contrasted with the scene in which Reuben recounts to Danny and Rusty the three previous most successful Las Vegas casino robbery attempts. Three short clips of robberies from the past are shown with Reuben's voiceover, each resulting with the thief being quickly and violently stopped by guards. In contrast to Ocean's gang, these robbers are filmed with medium or long shots and their faces are not clearly shown, particularly when being attacked by security guards. The viewer is unable to identify with these characters and does not feel pity for them. One feels how one normally feels when one thinks of a robber-- that he should go to jail.

The fact that Soderbergh makes it so easy for the audience to identify with and support a group of crooks is a scary thought. If one were to describe the film in terms of its content, one would likely not be in support of Ocean. It is the grammar variables that make the viewers feel as they do toward the characters. One could argue that these techniques are similar to those used in propaganda film. *Ocean's 11* is a

clear example of how easy it can be to manipulate an audience into believing something that their rational mind would not normally think. Film is a powerful persuasive tool, and these techniques are well known to the news media and filmmakers of the world, but not often to the public.

Another interesting aspect that grammar variables add to *Ocean's 11* is the element of surprise. Even though the viewers are made to feel like "insiders," we never really know what the thieves are up to. We think we know their plan, but when it is actually executed, we realize that we have heard only about half of it. Soderbergh uses many rack focuses, in which the focus is on one character in a crowd of people and then suddenly shifts to another character in the background. The background character is usually spying, and this technique reflects one of the major themes of the movie: that someone is always watching. Terry Benedict's casinos have cameras everywhere, yet Ocean was able to rob him anyway. We, the viewer, have followed Ocean on every step of his planning, but even we did not know exactly how he did it until we were shown at the end.

Delimitations and Further Study

One major limit to my conclusion is that I was unable, for this preliminary study, to analyze each character in the movie. There were simply too many characters to write about them all, but I suspect that if one were to analyze each of Ocean's eleven, the results would be similar to my own. My study involved a combination of observation and analysis, so another critic of the film could potentially come up with an analysis that differ from my findings. For instance, one might interpret the low angles used to film Terry Benedict as heroic, rather than intimidating, as I saw it. Directors attempt to persuade the audience as a whole, but individual interpretations are subjective.

I made the claim that perhaps the techniques used in this film are similar to those used in propaganda films. A related study could compare the techniques used in *Ocean's 11* and other crime films to war footage or narrative film. War scenes are often framed as "good guys vs. bad guys," and the directors want the viewers to team with a certain side. Similarly, the mainstream news media in the U.S. generally portrays U.S. military actions as "retaliations," or "defensive" actions, rather than as aggression towards another nation.

In conclusion, *Ocean's 11* was a film created solely for entertainment purposes, but its extreme success and popularity make it worthy of study, especially since the plot contradicts the everyday opinions of most of the film's fans. The typical viewers attracted to the

film are not robbers looking for a hero or tips on how to rob a casino. The audience is broad, and Soderbergh succeeds, through the manipulation of grammar variables, in teaming viewers with a world in which they do not belong.

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Thesis Abstracts

The "F" Word:
Feminist identity as declared or disavowed by callers on talk radio
Communication Honors Thesis Abstract
By Kristin Condon

This paper is a study of feminist identity as declared, or disavowed by listeners of National Public Radio (NPR). Specifically, it is the objective of the author to investigate if the participants either self-identify as a) feminists, b) nonfeminists, or c) egalitarians, endorsing feminist beliefs but rejecting the feminist label (also referred to as de facto feminists). The recordings analyzed, obtained from NPR archives, come from shows featuring a "women's issues" theme. Giving particular consideration to the context in which these utterances occur, the analysis centers around the concept of social identity as verbally constructed. This social construction perspective focuses on identity as actively created by participants in a specific situation through their language use and their subsequent interaction with the program host and/or guests of the program. Also explored are the concepts of the presentation of self, identity-in-interaction and face management.

Three Perspectives on Social Problems in France Exposed through Film
Communication Honors Thesis Abstract
By Kristen Lewis

Many are unaware of the various serious social problems that are crippling France today. Widespread unemployment and globalization are harming France's economy. These are affecting all French people, but the immigrant population is the largest victim. France has been a major site of immigration for many years, and unfortunately as a result, the site of much racism, particularly towards the people from the *Maghreb* (an area in northern Africa, consisting of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco). Currently, many of these so-called "immigrants" are in fact the children of immigrants and were actually born in France. They have little to no connection to their parents' native land and are completely immersed in the French language and way of life. However, the French constantly exclude these citizens, especially those of Arab descent.

The French ideology of integrating immigrant groups consists of the Republican model, which demands cultural conformity. In this model, one does not consider ethnic, religious, or class differences in dealing with citizens. Idealistically, this means that everyone is treated equally, regardless of his or her background. However, as a result of this model, race is not recorded on censuses so people are able to pretend that racial differences do not exist. Affirmative Action, which contradicts the Republican model, is a term that does not exist in France, so discrimination in the workplace is widespread. Immigrant children are often placed in low-level classes in school and encouraged to learn trades rather than go on to college. The areas in which these citizen live, known as *banlieues* (suburbs), are run-down areas lacking the cafés and shops that one normally imagines in a French town. Young people become bored and frustrated because they have no movie theaters, gyms, or other venues of entertainment, no jobs, and inadequate schools.

My thesis focuses on the various ways in which the French have reacted to their social situation through film in the past few years. I will be looking at three films: *Les Choristes* (2004), *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001), and *La Haine* (1995). *Les Choristes* presents a nostalgic view of France. It takes place in 1949 and deals with (white) troubled children in a reform school whose lives are turned around by a kind music teacher. *Amélie* presents an idealistic view of current French life. It takes place in Paris (although certainly not in the banlieues) and tells a story involving love and the benefits of kindness and good deeds towards others. *La Haine* contrasts strongly with the other two films in

that it provides a more realistic representation of France. It is a low-budget black-and-white movie with unknown actors. It tells the story of one day in the life of three young men of various racial backgrounds in the banlieues.

The three films are interesting when viewed as three different reactions to current French life: nostalgia, denial, or realization that a problem exists. *Les Choristes* and *Amélie,* both popular and lucrative in France and abroad, were two of the biggest French blockbusters in recent years. They represent the two most popular reactions to France's social problems, which, as I will argue, may have contributed to their success. *La Haine* is a lesser-known film, but at the time of its release was shocking to both the French and the global community. Although the film is now ten years old, the issues it discusses are still relevant today. It may not be as popular or easy to find as the other two films (similar to how the ideas it presents are not as popular or easy for the French to accept) but it is a moving, critically acclaimed, and thought-provoking film.

Guilt, Purification, and Redemption in Lost Generation Literature
Communication Honors Thesis Abstract
By Jillian Sherlock

"You are all a lost generation," Gertrude Stein famously declared to author Ernest Hemingway on the shores of the Seine in Paris. Hemingway and his expatriate friends spent their days writing and floating listlessly around Europe in the years following the First World War and on the pages of his breakthrough novel, Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises Hemingway captures the nuances of this life perfectly. Through his flawed group of main characters Hemingway writes of heavy drinking days and restless nights, of failed love and cycles that always bring the characters right back to where they started.

The characters and plotline laid down in The Sun Also Rises provides a thorough example of the way that Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Model enacts symbolic dramas, in this case in the form of a literal drama. Burke proposes that in society there are an unlimited number of social hierarchies that take place, demanding such high and often contradictory standards that it is impossible to meet them all. Because no one can achieve all of the standards of the hierarchy they experience a symbolic "fall from grace" and therefore, feelings of guilt. Unwilling to accept the feelings of guilt, a person would then strive to purify him or herself, by means of either mortification or scapegoating. To mortify oneself, a person would take the blame excessively, inflicting pain on him or herself in order to "make a change." Scapegoating, on the other hand, requires projecting one's guilty feelings onto another person, to purge him or herself of their guilty feelings.

In the case of this study, I have chosen to look at the way that Hemingway's main character, Jake Barnes, scapegoats his guilt onto Robert Cohn, the group outcast and unquestionably, the easiest target. I argue that Barnes has failed the social hierarchy of masculinity as a result of a war injury that rendered him impotent. Despite all of Jake's other "manly" character traits (such as his passion for fishing and bullfights, and his love for Lady Brett Ashley and drinking) because he cannot perform sexually, he cannot conquer that hierarchy. His intense feelings of frustration and jealousy lead him to scapegoat Robert Cohn, who is portrayed as a fundamentally un-masculine and "different" character. Cohn comes across with the most effeminate qualities of any member of the group—he is virtually controlled by his heart, first allowing himself to be controlled by his girlfriend Frances, and then following a weekend fling with Brett, by following her around gawking, hoping that it might

be love and they might end up together. Additionally, Robert Cohn's religion—he is Jewish—makes him the target of the otherwise Christian group.

I hope to examine these concepts in order to reveal the way that Burke's Dramatistic Model is enacted in Hemingway's great work. Additionally, I plan to study the Pedro Romero character (the bullfighter) and to argue that he is portrayed as the redemptive ideal within the novel—that he is celebrated as the true "man of action." Because of the novel's close links to Hemingway's life, and the lives of the Lost Generation, I will also examine the novel as a "classic" and suggest that it exists as a classic because of the way contemporary readers related to the text, and further, why readers today still relate closely to it. In conclusion, I expect to find that The Sun Also Rises is a redemption-less drama, and that despite Jake's projection of his guilt and Cohn's willingness to take on the scapegoat role, that, in the end, no one is redeemed.