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Sacrifice who you are, for what you will become: The Growth of Religion and Culture Through Eric Thomas

By Jovan Morse

Religion and Spirituality Speech
Throughout history the topics of religion and spirituality are embedded into the foundations of American history. From the Great Awakening to the Civil Rights Movement, and even now, there has been a constant struggle of ideas that are directly connected to religious ideas and practices. The Great awakening was the first event that raised questions about what religion means, and how religion controls mass amounts of people. When looking at these events, one must analyze influential people who have spearheaded the historical shift from traditional institutions, to more unorthodox styles of religious and spiritual practices. For the Great Awakening, people often think of the famous theatre actor, and public preacher George Whitefield. When a person thinks about the leader of the Civil Rights Movement, they think of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Although these men were religious, there are others who provide guidance in other aspects of life that do not use religion to teach others. Eric Thomas is an inspirational speaker that travels worldwide to speak to large audiences. These people often seek guidance and support in their life. Thomas devotes his life to speaking, and he is an advocate in his own right.

All of these men have one thing in common. They are all public speakers. These men use different styles of rhetoric to influence mass amounts of people for religious and ethical purposes. Each man has a different reason for his own speech, but all of these men, in some way or another, speak to provide support and guidance to their fellow men both emotionally, and spiritually.

The Men behind the History
There are many men who have contributed to the progression of religious and spiritual ideas that people often look back to for reference in
today's society. When dealing with the ideas of religion and guidance through religion it is important to look at the most influential people during their time periods. The men that come to mind in terms of spreading messages to mass amounts of people include George Whitefield, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and John Cage. This portion of the essay will showcase how these men used their own individual speeches, or influence through other means, in the past to promote awareness for, and attract followers to, their specific movement.

George Whitefield was one of the original users of rhetoric in a public forum. Stout explained that Whitefield was labeled as, “Anglo-America’s first modern celebrity, a preacher capable of commanding audiences across two continents, without institutional support, through the sheer power of his personality.” (1991, p. xiii). Whitefield used his skills in acting and translated those skills into a public style of preaching that became a famous and innovative way to spread message and ideas about religion. Whitefield was one of a kind when it came to producing messages in an entertaining way. Stout goes on to explain that Whitefield, “Transformed the traditional sermon into something different; a dramatic event capable of competing for public attention outside the arena of the churches.” (1991, p. xvi). This is evidence that Whitefield was a founding father to an artform that would be the foundation of public discourse throughout history. George Whitefield cultivated a new form of mass media that would be used in future generations, and will ultimately be a basic skill that advocate leaders need to have in order for their messages to be heard.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a preacher and a civil rights activist in the 1960’s. His sermons were captivating, and popular. His March on Washington invited thousands of people from all across the country. His public speeches were similar to Whitefield’s sermons. Dr. King had a similar style in that he used his rhetoric to cultivate awareness of the problem and an understanding of another option. Hoping to positively change the mindset that America had on black people, and people of color in general, Dr. King would use letters and speeches to captivate images of how America is acting during the civil rights time period, and how they need to change for the good of society. Although one sentence does not begin to explain the power in his letter, there is one excerpt from his document titled “Letter from a
“Birmingham Jail” that spreads a message to America on his thoughts about the state that society was in during Dr. King’s time behind bars. “Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.” (Dr. King 1963). Dr. King pointed this out when he was unjustly arrested during a legal protest. Much like Whitefield, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also used his own method of incorporating religion into his speech to adhere to his principles and beliefs. One example of this is in his “I Have a Dream” speech. “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.” (Dr. King 1963). Dr. King played an important role in the fight for equality for minorities in America. His preaching style, and passion for what he believed in is unique. This passion will be another characteristic that a leader of advocacy must have as we look at our next influential individual.

John Cage was an advocate for homosexual males in the late 1990’s. Cage was a homosexual male who was famous for composing music that spoke to the homosexual community. He struggled with institutional religions that would denounce his sexual identity due to traditional ideas set forth by the foundations of the religion. Cage would turn to Zen Buddhism as a religion best fit for his sexual preference. Katz stated that, “Through Zen, Cage could connect his involuntary, highly individuated experience of the closet with a larger social-ethical politics of monadic noninterference. Through such psychic sleight of hand, social necessity was transformed into moral virtue.” (1999, p. 235). Cage had searched for his own religious identity, and in return created a movement based off of society’s historical actions towards the gay community. Cage would go on to produce a new form of music to raise awareness of the indecencies that were directed at the homosexual community. This new form of music introduced the power of silence. Katz explained the significance of silence in that, “Closeted people… They do not, at least in my experience, draw attention to themselves with performative silence, as Cage did when he stood before the fervent abstract expressionist multitudes and blasphemed, “I have nothing to say and I’m saying it.” (1999, p. 238). This powerful statement of “saying things without saying things” is a Cage’s was of providing a space for people who need to grieve, or speak in their own selves about the tragedies that are going on with the
gay community. Cage lead the resistance against popular opinions of the gay community using space in his music, and support from his music throughout. This method of action without action came from Dr. King, but the way in which he conducted this method was in a different format (music), and for a different cause. All of these men used their beliefs and experiences to create a new approach to religious and spiritual guidance that a person would not experience by foundational and institutional structures.

New Form of Speech
As each generation is being passed by the next, there are new means to which people can seek guidance. The exploration of media and technology created a new forum, where religious and spiritual pursuers can search for guidance and understanding outside of the traditional institutions. This type of pursuit is best translated by Wade Roof, who states that, “It might be said that demography collided with religious and cultural changes to make this sector of the population the principal carrier of an emerging spiritual quest culture.” (1999, p. 49). People want to be part of something that will confirm their purpose of living, or create a feeling of security when they are alone, so they turn to religion or spiritual guidance for help. As discussed before, advocate leaders such as George Whitefield, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and John Cage all played an important role in the fight for certain human rights such as right to follow other religions, or the civil rights of minorities or gay people. There are others who do not wish to listen to these people as they do not relate to one’s own experience. The progression of technology, and the rise of social media outlets, helps relay messages from other people. Confused seekers can now search for specific speeches or people that speak directly about the issues or struggles that one goes through. Eric Thomas is one of many who people turn to for virtuous beliefs, and understanding of self worth. Thomas is a motivational speaker whose life can relate to many. He skipped school, got in trouble with police, did not have a dad in his life, and was eventually kicked out of his house by his mother when he was a teen. He looked to religion as a support system. While on tour, Thomas was asked about how God has impacted his speaking when he speaks to others. He explained that, “I felt I.
This sense of purpose; an identity. 2. This calling, God was saying this is what I have called you to do, this is why I created you…” (Cato 2013). Thomas uses a lot of his speeches to motivate change in people’s lives.

Religion is a provocation for some, but there is a larger amount of people who are starting to move away from traditional religions in search of what Stout defines as a “numinous experience”. In Stouts literature there are two scholars who explains that, “The numinous means something like “awesome” and… has gained currency in the postmodern world, and even materialists and atheists are able to affirm a “numinous” quality in nature and human experience…” (Casement and Tacey 2006, p. xvi). People seek this numinous experience by going to concerts, or taking drugs. Others who want a more intimate, but safe way of finding this numinous experience can listen to motivational speakers like Eric Thomas. Thomas’s videos are profound in the content he uses for his discourse, and the style in which he films these videos. In one of his video rightfully titled “God Led Athletes” Eric Thomas is speaking about people who want to be successful. He passionately states that, “There is no one else, and nothing in your way. Until you reach the top!” (Thomas 2013). Visuals of athletes training are being shown, and motivational music is being played while Thomas is speaking. This visual, matched with the music and words being spoken with authority creates a feeling of struggle with the result of success. This video is one of many where Thomas integrates his words with music. Another video talks about his life and how being homeless was his greatest experience in life. He says that, “At the end of pain is success. My greatest asset is that I was homeless, so I can’t feel a whole lot of pain.” (Thomas 2008), People that have been through what Eric Thomas has been through can not only look at him on the same level, but they can also look to him for support and guidance. Eric Thomas went from being homeless with no education, to receiving his GED and becoming a world famous inspirational speaker that can be viewed anywhere that has internet service.

People can now view a YouTube channel from Thomas all over the globe. By doing this, fans create a sort of “online congregation”. Stout says that, “While the spiritual leader of a congregation observes physical interactions between parishioners at house of worship, participation in
Internet sites such as Facebook may go unnoticed. We have arrived at the point where virtually any religious phenomenon can be experienced through technology.” (2012, p. 19). Thomas is using media to provide his message to anyone that needs it, without promoting his religion in an a vexing manner. The creation of new technology results in the creation of new media outlets. Thomas takes advantage of this so that he can spread his story with people. Roof explains that, “In this respect the media creates “spiritual omnivores” that is, people hungry for new experiences and insights with the hope that some encounter or a revelation lying just ahead will bring greater meaning to them.” (1999, p. 69). By listening to the words that Thomas speaks, a person can fuel this so called “hunger” that is needed to bring greater meaning to one’s life. However, gaining interest in a modern day technology based “preacher” is only the first step in creating a movement like the other influential speakers. Roof (1999) attests to the act that, “Healthy belief now as in the past involves some degree of quest, and quest pushes as it always has towards resolution of belief.” (p. 76). Although Thomas does not label himself a religious leader, he does lead a community of followers using spiritual support and mental toughness for those who need it. He asks often throughout all of his videos that a person should always believe in themselves, and by doing this he is creating a belief system centered around his ethical responses to his life experiences, and others.

**History Repeating Itself**

People are often caught between positive and negative beliefs that correlate with connotations of religion and spirituality. Roof explains this confusion well when he says that, “American’s today often all on a spectrum somewhere in the middle as believers who also seek, or seekers who are believers of one sort or another.” (1999, p. 76). There are many followers of Eric Thomas who do identify as someone who does not follow religion, but rather someone who is spiritual. The most important message that is carried throughout all of his videos is the will to succeed, and the path that people must take in order to get there. Thomas explains the story of a Guru who met a man at a beach to get a better understanding of how to be successful. The Guru, being wise and successful in his own life, guides
the man to the sea where he holds the man’s head underwater until he is nearly unconscious. The analogy being made here is that when someone wants to be successful as bad as they want to breathe, then they will be successful. After this amazing story he talks about sacrificing things that we as a society deem more important than are success such as phones, football games, parties, etc… (Thomas 2008). How does this connect to religion and spirituality? Well, think about the implication that Thomas presents to the audience. People raise parties and time on their phones on a higher pedestal compared to education. We as people understand that the phone and parties do nothing to supply us with the grades we need, or the tolls we gather on our “quest” to become successful, yet people spend more time on these products than anything else. Thomas uses his words to provide realizations of society through his own perspective. Much like his predecessors Whitefield (Stout 1991), and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1963), Thomas explains issues on current events taking place in our society, and creates a dialogue that completely shifts the way people think and act. Although he does not boast about his religious views, Thomas can be compared to a technological preacher.

All of the men who have advocated for a specific cause has created history in their own respect. When comparing all of these distinguished advocates for change in their era, it is important to highlight similar themes that are embedded in their character. Stout described Whitefield as, “Anglo-America’s first modern celebrity, a preacher capable of commanding audiences across two continents, without institutional support, through the sheer power of his personality.” (1991, p. xiii). Thomas uses his personality to motivate people. Dr King uses his experiences as a preacher, and as an African American to relate to the audience that he addresses. Cage also used his experiences as a homosexual male to relate to others in the same situation (Katz, 1999). Eric Thomas (2008) talks about his experiences with being homeless with a lack of education, which in today’s society can be an overarching theme for a lot of people. These themes that are present in today’s society will be studied by scholars for years to come in order to understand culture and religion through the mainstream media spectrum.
Katz, Jonathan D. “John Cage’s Queer Silence; Or, How to Avoid Making Matters Worse.”


Pop Culture in News: The Rise of Infotainment Programming

By Charlotte Harris

The influence of pop culture is increasingly present in the reporting of news. Traditional hard news programming has adopted style techniques of entertainment programming and “soft news” – entertainment hybrids such as late-night comedy have grown increasingly popular. This new fusion of news and entertainment is commonly referred to as “infotainment.” The rise of infotainment has drawn criticisms from media scholars and news consumers alike due to the lack of quality content – substantive issues are ignored or glossed over in favor of easy-to-digest, sensationalized stories that appeal to the largest market segment. In this “era of merging information dissemination and entertainment” (Frantzich, 157), style triumphs over substance, raising the concern of whether news programming’s lack of hard-hitting critical analysis is detrimental to an informed society.

This new form of television journalism is driven by ratings and characterized by the reporting of sensationalized stories rather than news concerning political, civic, and public affairs (Thussu, 11). TV news, with a format conducive to short and superficial stories, encourages “horse race coverage” that focuses on the winners and losers during elections at the expense of substantive issue coverage (Moy, Xenos and Hess, 112). Some of the techniques of infotainment are similar to those used in entertainment programming, including a glossy production value, catchy theme songs, and narratives and characters that mirror television sitcoms (Peterson, 2). News broadcasting increasingly favors informal communication styles featuring personalities, style, storytelling and spectacles (Thussu). In an effort to create compelling narratives, infotainment broadcasts often fail to account for nuances or complexities that provide a more accurate perspective. Fact is blended with fiction or a distortion of the truth in order to produce content that is entertaining above all else.

This shift away from hard news coverage and critical analysis has mainly occurred as a result of several industry trends: global communication privatization, broadcast deregulation, and technological convergence.
In the U.S., major news networks are increasingly consolidated under conglomerates following the deregulation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and increasingly lax Federal Communication Commission policies (Berry and Sobieraj, 77). Not only that, but these conglomerates are entertainment businesses first and foremost; for example, Viacom-Paramount owns CBS News, and Disney owns ABC News (Thussu). News is now a “consumer-driven commodity” with success assessed by profit margin rather than information quality (Berry and Sobieraj, 78). As broadcasting relies increasingly on profits and corporate advertising, news agendas and priorities reflect topics likely to garner the most ratings. News gathering is an expensive undertaking, and an increased emphasis on profitability leads networks to find cheaper ways of producing content (Berry and Sobieraj, 79).

With audiences increasingly drawn in multiple directions, news networks seek to capture the interest of the audience through entertainment-style programing. Attention-grabbing stories featuring sex, violence, and shock factor seek to “break through the clutter” of a crowded news ecosystem (Berry and Sobieraj, 82). Following the shift in media terrain in which content must stand out and differentiate itself from the competition (Berry and Sobieraj, 86), outspoken ideologues that were once considered too objectionable for traditional programming have now found a home on television. News programming, once more homogenous, is increasingly fragmenting as networks present commentators with entertainingly opposing points of view, a programming style honed for its entertainment value. News stories and political issues framed in a polarized manner lack the critical analysis of, for example, long-form journalism.

Critics fear the implications of this emphasis of infotainment over critical analysis. For one, viewers bombarded with visuals may experience an information overload that prevents them from differentiating between public information and corporate propaganda (Thussu). Secondly, inaccurate portrayals and distorted depictions of important government functions like Congress may shape a skewed view of the political system (Frantzich). Furthermore, the use of figureheads as public intellectuals, one of the hallmark characteristics of infotainment, raises a concern that this position taking has replaced investigative journalism (Thussu). Infotainment broadcasts
that lack substance are not just a dumbing down of discourse – instead, critics say, they work to create a false feel good factor among the audience, which is then lulled into complacency and convinced of the superiority of the West (Thussu). Media professionals seek to develop a “geopolitical amnesia” among viewers, promoting a shallow understanding of global conflicts that focuses on manufacturing viewers’ opinions rather than developing their understanding (Thussu, 79).

Most disturbing, though, may be the portrayal of wars and conflict on television news. For broadcasters, war is just another source of entertainment for their viewers. The conflicts are presented with the West established as the uncontested superiority, legitimizing a neo-imperial ideology (Thussu). One of the most prominent examples of the shortcomings of contemporary news programming is the coverage of 9/11 and the subsequent U.S. invasion and war in Iraq. In the aftermath of 9/11, reporters were expected to be “patriots first, journalists second” (Miller, 99). In the context of fragile post-terrorist attack America, reporters were careful not to appear unpatriotic by criticizing the government. Rather than adopt a critical lens expected of journalists and question the official sources’ claims, most journalists played into the government’s false narratives. The news media perpetuated the government’s unfounded claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction as grounds for war (Miller). Official sources, historically seen as a starting point for journalistic investigation, were presented as unquestionable authorities in news broadcasting. The use of official sources may seem like nonpartisan professionalism but, in fact, it provides a problematically one-sided view of international affairs that presents the U.S. as the uncontested superior (Miller). In fact, Pew Charitable Trust reports found that opinion, rather than fact, dominated reporting in the months following September 11 (Miller, 82).

Coverage during the Iraq war was not much better. News commentary consisted not of a critical analysis of the questionable basis for the war, but rather, “diminished the dominant discourse to technical efficiency and state propaganda” (Miller, 84). The American news media, unlike foreign stations, failed to provide any coverage of the Iraqi civilian suffering (Miller, 90). Instead, they relied on infotainment. During the Iraq war, ABC News enlisted Hollywood action-adventure director Jerry Bruckheimer to produce
Tales from the Front Lines, an entertainment series depicting the invasion of Iraq (Miller, 89). Culturalist ideologues were invited on news broadcasts to present their opinions, ultimately contributing to a national misinformation of the American people that saw a diminishing understanding of U.S. foreign policy and international relations (Miller, 78-80). The infotainment format that favors outspoken figureheads and turns to official authorities does a disservice to the knowledge of the democracy, particularly during times of war.

As hard news programs adapt entertainment techniques to keep their increasingly disconnected audience engaged, traditional entertainment programming also takes on a role in delivering news (Moy, Xenos and Hess, 113). There is a distinction between two types of news that are both commonly referred to as infotainment. In one sense, infotainment is the commercializing of traditional news by using flashy graphics, cinematic storytelling, and opinionated pundits (Thussu). On the other hand, infotainment could also refer to the entertainment programs such as late-night comedy shows that address news stories but inherently remain as forms of entertainment. This “soft news” type of programming, although undeniably infotainment, may actually play an important role in reaching and informing citizens. The inadvertent exposure to news that occurs when normally politically averse or unaware citizens tune into their entertainment programming and encounter news may be beneficial to keeping society informed. Regardless of the content of this “soft news,” it has an impact on overall political engagement, which include voting and discussing politics (Moy, Xenos and Hess, 113). Soft news outlets such as late night comedy may be easily dismissed as solely inducing apathy and dumbing down national discourse, but it is important to consider the alternative interpretation of current events that it offers viewers. Humor may trivialize, but it can also be a source of comedic relief and unique insight (Peterson, 3). Still, the effects of watching infotainment like comedy shows on political engagement are more complex – there’s no way to say whether infotainment positively or negatively impacts information of citizens and democratic participation (Moy, Xenos and Hess, 125). Either way, all types of infotainment news play a role in informing the public. As such, the media
have a responsibility to present quality news to the audiences that tune into television news as their main source of information. Increasingly subpar reporting on television news can be traced back to structural issues, particularly a lack of diversity of media conglomerates that own news channels. Ownership is increasingly concentrated into the hands of ever more powerful media conglomerates, many which have conflicting holdings that influence what stories they choose to tell on the news. Diversity is an issue onscreen, too, as the people who appear on TV network newscasts are predominantly white, middle-aged, male, and Republican (Miller, 94). An increasing diversity of newscasters would be important in providing differing viewpoints. The media is constructive of the reality, and thus a more diverse set of perspectives offered and identities represented would be beneficial to a well-rounded, informed society.

The question remains if the responsibility of setting the dialogue of public discourse even falls to television anymore. With the rise of technology, news media is one of the societal institutions most susceptible to change. Television no longer reigns as the dominant medium as more and more people – particularly youth – turn to contemporary digital media such as social networking sites or online news websites to get their information (Hersh). Studies and research on the results of infotainment look at traditional media sources like television news but fail to factor in the effect of digital media (Hersh). Traditional news media experience even more competition in the marketplace for capturing the increasingly fragmented attention of their audience due to digital media. It remains to be answered if the new competition is further encouraging the trend of infotainment as a means to attract the increasingly elusive audience attention. Television news may also see a “second life” on the Internet which could be to their advantage. Infotainment such as late-night comedy shows may find a new outlet for their content as short, sharable soundbite clips that easily circulate around social media. This may be a positive result of the rise of digital media for certain types of news programming.

Infotainment is a multidimensional phenomenon that describes several types of contemporary news media. These types include the traditional programming that increasingly adopts entertainment techniques to appeal
to a fragmented audience or the entertainment programming that takes on a secondary role of delivering news. It remains to be seen if the American public benefits from either type of this hybrid of entertainment and news. Some see infotainment as a corporate distraction from the critical issues (Thussu), while others see an advantage in infotainment’s potential to reach otherwise politically disengaged citizens (Peterson). The quality of information, diversity of perspectives, and measurable impact of consumption are all issues of contention when it comes to infotainment. Additionally, we must consider where new digital media sources fit into the landscape of infotainment. An understanding of the rhetorical power and implications of infotainment provides crucial insight into news consumers and, ultimately, informed citizens.

Works Cited


Describing contemporary society as complicated is one brief step towards understanding how it functions, and more importantly how these methods are rapidly progressing. The way in which the Digital era alters the lives of individuals in society is immensely apparent. How significantly it continues to progress and unfold however brings this obvious nature to light even more so than before. At the age of twenty-one, it is almost effortless to remember an era where having a cell phone in one hand at all times was rarely seen, and texting your friend on a daily basis more than gaining face-to-face communication was almost unheard of. Beyond this broad understanding of the digital era and how it affects interpersonal communication, it is important to note the more significant impacts that progressing time has on individuals, and more importantly society and the culture in which we live. As networked, structured, digital mediums enter the lives of individuals on a global spectrum, the question of what it means to be human and how we obtain certain aspects of humanity such as morality, virtues and ethics is universally altered and increasingly becoming complex in nature.

Primarily, digital media and ethics obtain a great deal of depth and countless areas of observation. Whether it be the question of an artist’s musical integrity or an individual’s authentic image over social media sites such as Facebook or Instagram, among other digital media and the mediums we have access to today bring to light a great deal of insight in regards to virtues and ethics. The concept of authenticity however holds several realms of observation. Francesca Gino, Maryam Kouchaki and Adam D. Galinsky observed the way authenticity is linked with morality, bringing to the reader’s attention many significant points in truly understanding it’s meaning and relevance to a person’s experiences. They suggest that “Inauthenticity poses a challenge to a person’s sense of self. Authenticity involves both owning one’s personal experiences (thoughts, emotions, needs, and wants) and acting in accordance with those experiences. A commitment to one’s identity and
values (Erickson, 1995) is important for effective self-regulation. When this commitment is violated, people feel inauthentic” (Gino, Kouchaki, Galinsky, 984). This specific observation becomes noteworthy given the contrast between authenticity and its involvement with one’s personal experiences, and how a violation in this experience results in contradictory feelings of inauthenticity. It is almost as if we gain a sense of awareness towards our actions and emotions, needs and wants, and thus obtain a specific sense of standards towards this character. It also ties into countless aspects of our social, personal or professional lives. Authenticity and similar virtues such as reliability and honesty become dominant when it comes to individuals actions, whether it be the way they connect with others, the aspects of life that appeal to them, or the certain activities that they may be drawn to.

More specifically, virtues and morality influence an individual’s decision-making behavior significantly. People have a tendency to have an influence on each other; from the hottest restaurant to try out in town, or the most organic foods you can purchase for the family. We see consumer’s becoming wearier of what they purchase, how it is being portrayed to the public, and more importantly how they feel when they purchase it. When it comes to authenticity and the concept of ethicality, it becomes very clear how these moral judgements contribute to consumer’s buying behavior. It then becomes vital for marketing and advertising patterns to not only be noticed, but also observed and analyzed from a perspective of authenticity and honesty. Whether companies offer a form of charity, or a unique and original new brand, they come face-to-face with society; a society that values dependability and genuine character over what makes something interesting or valuable. Companies and businesses, as well as individual people may not be authentic at all, specifically as authentic as they may market themselves to be. However, it is the way in which they communicate that is. Despite the potentially true authenticity of the company of Toms Shoes, the way in which they advertise and market their brand portrays an authentic, ethical image, results in the booming success of their business, and rapid financial growth they obtain. Regardless of how immensely interesting a product being sold at Lush Cosmetics may be, it’s organic, original nature becomes the focal point of the consumer, leading to a feeling of satisfaction and comfort that
they are making a positive choice in regards to the lifestyle. Toms Shoes and Lush thrive in their given industries and gain a favorable financial status, all thanks to their authentic marketing and honest image. Ultimately, profitable companies such as Toms Shoes, Lush Cosmetics, and Whole Foods are precise examples of not only how companies may market and advertise themselves in such a way that portrays an authentic, honest and ethical light, but also how said companies thrive and succeed amongst many others due to these marketing tactics.

Ultimately, these companies are amongst many that use authenticity and ethical values as a positive marketing strategy. By appealing to the hearts and minds of individuals, they successfully create seemingly authentic brands and ethical products, tapping into the emotional appeals of their consumers – for the most part. On the other hand, there may be some cynical, questionable perspectives proposed when comparing and contrasting the companies and their individual marketing and advertising tactics. It also becomes clear how these companies use platforms to build a specific image and representation of themselves to gain popularity and business from the public. Essentially, the purpose of this paper is not only an observation, but also a clear-cut compare and contrast of profitable businesses and their methods of marketing and advertising communication, specifically Toms Shoes, Lush, (RED) and Whole Foods. How these companies have succeeded, failed, been challenged and have become the center piece of satirical conversation is only a fraction of the depth that this convoluted marketing mix opens up.

At the heart of moneymaking businesses stands Toms Shoes. Society may know them by their “One to One” business slogan, where every pair of shoes bought donates another pair of shoes to a child in need. Others may be familiar simply through their stylish variety of shoes, ranging from different patterns and colors. Toms shoes may be spotted on the majority of school campuses, being worn by every millennial in sight and promoted by computer stickers, or banners reading “TOMS” hanging on the walls of bedrooms, apartments and dorm rooms. However this sustainable, ethical motto that they strive so hard to project to the public has been questioned and brought to the public eye in more cases than one. The buy-one-give-one slogan that captured the hearts and morality of individuals everywhere has come into
question; specifically regarding whether or not the company of Toms Shoes is accomplishing the seemingly authentic and ethical promises they portray to consumers. To start, Toms attempts to market their brand in a way that makes consumers feel good about the loads of money they are spending on a small pair of espadrilles. The day they purchase their Toms and slip their feet into the soft, simple shoes, they allow themselves to envision children in need doing the same thing—all thanks to their sixty-dollar shoes. They successfully turn the “ordinary shoe-buying experience...into a magical fairy tale” (Chapin, 2015), and this is where a closer observation becomes absolutely vital. Does Toms Shoes follow through with their authenticity and ethical decision-making promotions, or do they use this ploy as a beneficial marketing strategy to appeal to consumers, and make the profit they need to succeed?

Despite the fact that Toms Shoes as a business may just be using this charitable, honest approach as an emotional sales pitch to the public, there are pieces of evidence that express their authenticity that they strive to embody, for example asking their consumers to do things like the “One Day Without Shoes” challenge. This steers the attention away from their product directly, and forces the consumer to actually put themselves in the place of kids who may not have any shoes; both an ironic and metaphorical illustration of their passion towards this charity. At the same time, society rapidly built a strong brand awareness, turning their brand into an inspirational social campaign, rather than an expensive advertising approach. As if the buy-one-give-one promotion wasn’t enough, Toms then asked its digital community, also known as “the Toms tribe”, to “post a picture of their bare feet on Instagram with the hashtag #WithoutShoes. For every post the brand donates a pair of shoes to a child in need” (Rogers, 2016). The connection between Toms and their customers is strengthened while simultaneously promoting a sense of community, thus appealing to more consumers through a relatable, authentic and genuine image.

With this, it is also important to point out the flaws in this system; more specifically, the aspects of Toms Shoes that may be approached with a cynical perspective, bringing to question how truly authentic their business is. Knowing the social movements they attempt to implement and the seemingly genuine connection they strive to bring between individuals and
themselves both in person and through digital technology, it is important to bring to question the fundamental marketing and advertising tactics of the company. Clearly, the appeal to consumers is that their buying behavior is bringing them closer to something that matters. Whether or not this is actually being achieved by the business is where we realize how authentic a business really is. Christina Binkly of The Wall Street Journal writes about marketing in regards to Toms Shoes, claiming that “Corporate America has a long track record of charitable fund-raising and has been exploring brand tie-ins with charities for decades. But Toms is going a step further than most in blurring the difference between brand and charity; the brand doesn’t exist outside the charitable work. Its success shows that good works can be a powerful profit engine” (Binkly, 2010). She touches upon this universal aspect of corporate America and “Cause Marketing” specifically, noting how brand tie-ins not only profit business, but make it more difficult to find the distinct difference between charity and marketing all together. Thus, the door opens to controversy and conflict pertaining to Toms Shoes, and companies in relation. One damaging perspective may be the fact that Toms produce shoes that are made of a lightweight cloth, one in which obtains little sustainability and long term life. In the long run, are the sixty dollars being spent on these thin, flat shoes that realistically cost around twenty dollars, acting as an advantageous barrier between the hot, dirt soils that may result in infection? Additionally, are there not more beneficial ways to spend the profits from this company, for example on direct health care changes and additions to these communities that allow them to obtain a more healthy, livable life style? This ties back into their primary marketing tool, where we may recognize that the buy-one-give-one paradigm is a faulty tactic. Journalist Jonathan Favini writes, “The buy-one-give-one model is an archetype for that classic aid mistake of giving fish, rather than training fisherman. While TOMS gives shoes in over 50 countries, their products are made only in Argentina, Ethiopia and China. That means in most the communities they give, their “shoe drops” constitute an economic bomb to any local industry that may have existed prior to the introduction of free international shoes” (Favini, 2013). Conclusively, it becomes clear that there are a variety of flaws in the business of Toms, and how they strive to obtain a virtuous image by reflecting authenticity, honesty.
and ethicality. Not only are the results damaging to the established charities throughout the country that do strive to benefit a specific cause, but they damage the existing industries in countries around the world. With this being, companies such as Toms would not be considered profitable if they did not have significant success, even if only for a period of time. However, whether or not the authenticity they portray to their consumers is in fact authentic remains a topic of comparison.

The company Lush Cosmetics offers a platform of interesting comparison and contrast as well. Unlike Toms Shoes, Lush achieves no structured or paid marketing methods, advertising tactics or promotion what so ever. They have successfully built an empire of influential beauty products, from shampoo or body soap, organic nail color to their trendy and greatly known “bath bombs”. Through word of mouth and the tools social media has to offer, Lush promises purely hand made, organic and ethically created products that not only satisfy their customers needs, but also allow them to feel positive and ensure their morality when purchasing their pricey cosmetics. In fact, they literally promote these aspects of their business on their website and throughout their stores, with signs reading “Ethical Buying”, “100% Vegetarian”, “Handmade” with hands forming a heart shape, “Fighting Animal Testing” and even “Naked Packaging”. Just like Toms, Lush gains a persuasive standpoint in the industry by allowing consumers to justify their purchases. A crucial point to their success in contemporary society with parallels with Toms Shoes, is the selling point of a healthy and well-lived life style. In many industries, companies promote going green, being ethical and sustainable and saving the planet one modified product at a time. Lush’s approach to their selling that differentiates themselves is their dedication to the ethical treatment of animals, authentic packaging and real, honest perception of their products to the public. It is almost a perfect representation of an approach that revolves around virtues and ethics, while also pushing to gain profitable success; gain consumers through their ethical perspectives, showing a seemingly authentic and honest way of selling, and make their consumers feel as though they are helping to save the world one organic, ethically made, none animal tested bath soap at a time. Lush obtains an almost three hundred million dollar net worth, showing just how far an
There are areas of observation towards Lush Cosmetics where we may see their system being both a positive influence and negative impact as well. I personally went to a Lush store, specifically located in the Nashua Mall in Nashua, New Hampshire. I had the privilege of speaking with a store sales representative; she greeted me with a warm smile the moment I walked into the strongly fragrant store full of fresh cut blocks of soap and colorfully displayed bath and body cosmetics. I was able to discuss with her how I heard of the store through a friend who highly recommended their products; ironically due to the fact that they do not only satisfy her needs, but also are the most organic and “real” products I will ever come across. This lead to the sales rep, who goes by the name of Kathryn, to explain to me how Lush relies on word-of-mouth only for marketing. I asked if she felt as though this was a strength or a weakness, and she explained how it makes the store so unique and almost “more appealing to most people, specifically a younger generational crowd due to their involvement with social media”.

However, Kathryn and I discussed how with this sense of “word-of-mouth” marketing comes the idea that clearly, it is very untraditional in regards to how companies not only succeed, but gain more exposure in the industry.

With out a doubt, Lush has had a successful story when it comes to their popularity amongst consumers, specifically females of all ages, however maintaining a spotlight within society is crucial to their ability to sell. I was also unaware of the fact that because their products are as “organic” as they strive to promote them to be in the store and on their website, they obtain expiration dates to ensure their fresh nature and satisfactory character. Thus, given their relatively expensive prices, the less they sell, the more waste they are consequentially left with. This also opens a threatening door for Lush Cosmetics, given that the high prices may leave consumers to seek out a cheaper alternative; when I asked Katherine her thoughts about these potential dangers, she spoke in a positive light, stating how their customers are for the most part extremely loyal to the brand, given that it fits their lifestyle. Once they experience Lush Cosmetics, “it is hard to ever go back to another alternative”. Hearing these enlightening yet conflicting pros and cons towards Lush Cosmetic coming directly from a store representative
ensured the contrasting and comparable aspects of companies who strive to be marketed as authentic and ethical. Clearly, Lush demonstrates strong attempts to obtain their ethical and original image; in fact their website clearly states that “we believe adding chemicals is harmful for the body and for the environment. A long shelf life also loses the active benefits of fresh natural ingredients. We do not waste money on excess packaging, advertising, expensive marketing, and storage facilities for large stock-holding to make profits through economies of scale. The Lush customer is paying for the highest quality ingredients from ethical sources - organic where possible - in expertly formulated products, made with care by hand” (Lush Retail Ltd, 2014). Just as many other profitable companies who strive to stand for authenticity, Lush gives a detailed account as to why they do what they do, and what benefits it has, rather than focusing on the significant amount of money going into these products that are so different than the alternatives. This shows the central focus of veering consumers away from choosing a cheaper alternative, because it not only weighs in on their authenticity and ethical values through their lack of extravagant packaging and advertising, but they also call attention to how buying other products are “harmful” to the human body. Additionally, there is an implication that by giving their business to these cheaper alternatives, it will harm not only their bodies but also their well beings. In this manner, there is an apparent demonstration of Lush Cosmetics marketing tactics, or lack there of, which leads to their authentic image and ethical perspective on buying and selling.

Lush Cosmetics and Toms Shoes, despite the additional detail that may be explored towards their marketing and advertising methods, represent the universal concept of authenticity and ethicality being used as a stratagem towards brand promotion. Considering the areas of exploration towards the contrasting marketing efforts of both Toms Shoes and Lush Cosmetics, further platforms of measurement become evident, specifically the well known, successful company of Whole Foods Market. Whole Foods is not only prominent for their revolutionary food buying experience, but has quickly gained the spotlight of satirical reports and comic relief. These aspects of Whole Foods’ popularity speak excessively towards not only how Whole Foods has portrayed themselves as a profitable company, but also how
society has perceived this image. Likewise to Toms Shoes and Lush Cosmetics, the road to success and growing profits was rapid and agile; not only do they market their products as organic and ethical, but they contribute a large part of their success to the growing communication of their consumers amongst society.

Consequentially, many areas of question have surfaced when it comes to this company and their claims of authenticity and ethicality. It comes as no surprise that any profitable company may be challenged in regards to their intentions and drive behind success; with fame and fortune comes much attention, both positive and negative. This has been made especially clear with the companies of topic, and now Whole Foods as well. One aspect of Whole Foods that took much longer than expected to be acknowledged is the fact that shoppers have been paying considerably more for produce than they would be at an alternative supermarket or chain grocery store. In a sense, they have succeeded at doing so, which has lead to “a lot of competitors, from rival organics chains like Sprouts and Trader Joe’s to mass-market retailers like Walmart and Costco. As a result, the price premium for organic produce is crashing down. On a recent shopping trip, a pound of organic apples cost $2.99 at Whole Foods but just $1.99 at Sprouts and even less at Costco” ((The Economist Newspaper, 2014). Despite their ability to begin a social movement, sparking the interests of individuals amongst society who are attracted to the appeal of no harsh preservatives and chemicals in their foods, thus giving them justification towards spending twice as much as they should be, their power in the market quickly met it’s match.

Further, their efforts to maintain an original and authentic company not only have been and continue to be challenged and questioned by their previously loyal customers, but also are recalled on several accounts. In 2015, Whole Foods faced significant criticism for selling six dollar bottles of “asparagus water”; simply a glass bottle of water with three stalks of asparagus. Given that this was a direct product of Whole Foods, the public reacted strongly to their failed and seemingly pathetic attempts to be perceived as organic and authentic for the sake of making a six-dollar profit. If this was not enough confirmation to the public that this company’s questionable attempts to portray a set image may be solely for the benefit
of their success, it certainly reassured many business professionals, scientists and specialists of all areas. “Alan McHughen, a botanist at the University of California, Riverside, argues that the whole industry is “99% marketing and public perception,” reeling people in through a fabricated concept of a time when food, and life in general, was simple and wholesome”, precisely stated by The Economist News Magazine. Clearly summarized is the fact that Whole Foods is one of countless companies within the industry that plays off of marketing and public perception, ultimately taking responsibility for the majority, if not all of their success.

Given the topics of advertising and marketing, primarily regarding how the individuals behind the colorful displays, creative testimonials of these companies and even the class bottles of “asparagus water”, it is enlightening to recognize individuals such as Amy Snow, the Vice President of Research & Strategy for Kelton Global, and her experiences with the advertising and marketing industry. Amy discussed her ongoing involvement with branding and the specific successes she has had with businesses, both large and small. All in all, Amy made valid points concerning how businesses go about growing their presence in the market, and obtain a differentiator amongst their given industries. Amy gave specific cases of how authenticity and individuality has affected her personal growth, and professional endeavors as well. “I grew up in the north east, and was taught that smoking was evil and filthy and only stupid people smoked. And I moved to the south and started working for a firm who was founded by a man who had spent his entire career at R.J. Reynolds...eventually I just talked them into hiring me and the first thing I told them was ‘but I will never work on cigarettes’, and they just said ok. It was never an issue. I worked there 11 years, and cigarettes were the biggest clients. At Kelton where I work now, we refuse work on a regular basis. Keeping in mind when it comes to your career, do not be afraid to decline an opportunity that does not stand for what you believe in”. As Amy informed us students about her hands on experience with branding and marketing, it was important to understand her choices professionally when it comes to her personal, moral values and beliefs. Despite the relevance of morality and values when it comes to this industry and how people like Amy market a brand, it is interesting to gain a perspective towards the other side of the
spectrum; how these employees and professionals have to not only grasp the correct, successful ways of appealing to consumer’s wants and needs, but how to also make decisions themselves based off of their beliefs and morals. “There are ethical tensions everywhere” Amy added. “There are ethical tensions for marketers, for brands...Don’t fall for the corporate agenda. You need to realize that everyone there is trying to make a name for themselves. A big thing in the research world right now is to focus on empathy building. And basically in a nut shell what that means is, don’t swoop in as a brand and figure out how to fast sell something to consumers, but instead embed yourself in their world, figure out who they are, actually figure out what matters to them; what they care about, what they need. I think that for me personally, studying people and decision-making and what matters to them (the consumer) and hire order values is a huge part of why I find satisfaction in my work. I also feel like some of the stuff that I do is for the greater good and actually does make better products and better services and does put the consumer more in a position of power, rather than it being a push model, where brands decide what they want to sell and push it down on the consumers”. Hearing these words from Amy about the marketing world and her personal decision making processes within her professional life is critical in understanding the depth that lies behind profitable companies and how they market to their consumers. Not only do we gain context towards the relationship businesses strive to gain with their consumers, but also they do it in a way that they anticipate will result in them gaining a dominant presence in the industry and result in their overall success. By finding what triggers a consumer’s desires, what they need and what matters most to them, marketing professionals such as Amy Snow, successfully connect businesses with their consumers in the most affective, successful way; by allowing them to be viewed as authentic, relatable, ethical and honest.

The take away from this account of marketing and authentic advertising in all is the universal concept that regardless of the industry, companies strive to be profitable by constructing an authentic and ethical nature. Consumers are lead to believe that they are giving their business to a wholesome company who relates to their moral values and virtuous perspectives. Subsequently, the platform of observation towards companies
such as Toms Shoes, Lush Cosmetics and Whole Foods becomes available, specifically when comparing their tactics, contrasting their methods and analyzing their overall, fluctuating success. In contemporary society, the cynical perspective towards advertising and the success of companies in their respective industries invites satire in its many forms. In an era of digital technology and mixed media, the most influential information society comes across is essentially fed to them on a silver platter; through their favorite blog sites, journals, news channels, comedy shows, smart phone apps and so on. Despite the heavy weight that marketing and promotion places on society’s perceptions of the companies in which they give their business to, digital media takes a large responsibility of such strong influence. Individuals such as Stephen Colbert, Jon Stewart and Jimmy Kimmel have reinvented the way modern day news stories are expressed and observed, ultimately providing a somewhat honest approach to controversial aspects of business, economics, politics, celebrity news and more.

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Gender Discrepancies in Makeup Usage and the Subsequent Impact on Appearance Expectations

By Rebecca C. Bishop

Any cosmetics aisle in any convenience store in the world contains rows upon rows of powders, creams, and colors, all gleaming on their pedestals. It is easy to look at this wealth of variety, at its skin-matching, age-defying technology, and think that it is a product of the modern age. However, makeup has been around for over 6000 years now, and cosmetics even longer (“A History of Cosmetics,” 2016). These products began as home-ground minerals, and have since evolved into a five hundred-billion-dollar industry with immense global reach (Wood, 2015). Why is makeup the long-standing giant that it has become?

The simple fact of the matter is, makeup makes people more attractive, and everyone wants to be more attractive. Despite this fact, primarily women use makeup. That makeup aisle filled with products is also filled with pictures of beautiful smiling women and female celebrities wearing those products. There are no men to be seen enjoying the skin-smoothing benefits of foundation or the healthy glow provided by blush. Even though men have the same desire to be considered attractive, they do not tend to use makeup daily. Men’s lack of makeup usage and women’s use of makeup perpetuate harmful conceptions of female appearance.

Beauty is a complex concept. On one hand, it is a set of socially constructed and reinforced ideals that vary across cultures, and throughout time (Lamkin, 2015). On the other hand, there is a cognitive and biological component to the interpretation of beauty. Features that are considered beautiful are usually markers of physical health and strength: things that signify an ideal mate and therefore cause attraction (“Face the Facts,” 2013). Symmetry denotes good breeding and good development. Symmetry is also a key aspect of what makes beauty signification a cognitive process. Langlois and Roggman (1990) determined that attractiveness is based on being perceived as prototypical. Our brains are cognitive misers: they want
to use the least amount of cognitive energy. The easier a task is, the more pleasing it is. If a face is average, it is easier to process, and therefore pleasing to the brain. Makeup makes people more attractive by artificially creating or improving these visual characteristics (Stock, Haley, Vickery, & House, 2011, p. [1]). For instance, makeup adds symmetry, increases apparent eye size, and makes lips redder. These are all socially taught features of attractive people, biologically favorable signs of health, and are easier to process because they add symbolism of what a face should look like, which makes them cognitively pleasing. If an individual has not been born with the genetic components to match current standards of attractiveness, then they can create those outward signs themselves with makeup.

Using makeup to make oneself more attractive to potential mates does not just work in theory, it works in practice. In 2008 the North American Journal of Psychology published a study on how the use of cosmetics by women affected the rate of approach by men in a bar. Previous studies suggested that women are rated as more attractive when wearing makeup in photographs of them with and without makeup. This study explored the effects of makeup on female attractiveness in face-to-face interactions. The study found that, on average, men approached more quickly when makeup was worn (Gueguen, 2008, p. [1]). This is due in part to makeup creating an image of biological health and prototypicality, and also to makeup being a form of non-verbal communication (Knapp et al. [165]). Physical appearance is a key part of nonverbal communication because adornment changes the context of the message conveyed. Thus, individuals who wear makeup are taking on a possible social meaning of wearing makeup: wanting to appear attractive, and wanting to attract. Anyone trying to attract a partner would see makeup as a reasonable method to increase their chances. However, men do not use extra products to attract partners, they do not need to communicate attraction with facial adornment, and standards for attractiveness differ due to this unequal use of makeup products.

Everyone wants to be beautiful. Apart from the anecdotal evidence of humanity’s desire for all of the benefits being beautiful provides, there is a biological need to attract a mate, and there is also a lot of support for attractiveness as a socially learned desire. Humans have an innate need to
procreate to ensure the continuation of the species, and the individual's genes. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution ("Darwin's Theory of Evolution," 2014) states that only the strongest will survive, so a large component of mate selection is choosing those who emulate the most favorable characteristics for survival. Logically, humans would want to try and emulate those favorable characteristics to the best of their ability, in order to be chosen as a mate.

Moving past simple primal urges, there is the social nature of human learning. Albert Bandura's social learning theory (McLeod, 2016) explains how children learn through observation. This vicarious learning was demonstrated with the Bobo Doll Study, in which children watched adults punch an inflatable clown doll. When they were told to interact with the clown doll, they also punched it. This is a kind of conditioning where children see either positive or no negative consequences when their peers act in a certain way, and so they learn to repeat those same actions in order to gain those same positive consequences.

The other side of this phenomena is observing their peers receiving negative consequences and learning to avoid those actions. It is in this way that children learn the desire to be attractive. When children see attractive people being treated well, when they see their mother smile when their father calls her beautiful, or when they see their friend at school wearing eyeliner for the first time and receiving a lot of compliments, they are learning that it is better to be attractive. When they see their friend being bullied for looking different, they learn that it is better to look like everyone else. It is for this reason that people want to be attractive.

It is counterintuitive then, that men do not wear makeup. If everyone wants to be attractive, and makeup makes people more attractive, it stands to reason that everyone should wear makeup. This is not the case. Biesterbos et al. (2013) found through a study done on the usage patterns of personal care products that in the past 6 months, 32.5% of females had used foundation, 50.7% had used eyeshadow, 61.6% had used mascara, and 55.6% had used lipstick or lip gloss. In comparison, 0.5% of men had used foundation, 0% had used eyeshadow, 0% had used mascara, and 0.5% had used lipstick or lip gloss (Biesterbos et al., 2013, p. [4]). However, Gueguen (2008) mentions that “over the past decade, men have increased their use of cosmetics to increase their...
“Attractiveness” (Gueguen, 2008, p. [1]), it is still minimal, and not widely seen in dominant culture. This lack of male makeup usage could be attributed either to societal restriction, or to a societal non-requirement.

The groups of men typically associated with wearing makeup include actors, newscasters, gay men, drag queens, and musicians. This general consensus is clearly seen in this comment thread on Reddit.com: “Men who work on film, television, or on stage wear makeup. Don’t hear much about men wearing makeup in everyday life unless they’re drag queens or carnival clowns”, and “I’m pretty familiar with many gay/very effeminate men wearing makeup, but not straight men” (SomeEpicName, 2015). Either men don’t want the connection with these groups and so they don’t wear makeup, or they feel they can’t wear makeup because there are “taboos [that] link to masculinity and virility...because [make-up] belongs to the female world” (Blanchin, Chareyron, & Levert, n.d., p. [35]). The restriction of makeup use to certain groups is what creates different appearance expectations for those groups.

Even when men do wear makeup, they do not tend to wear it the same way women do, and these discrepancies in use perpetuate different expectations of attractiveness, because men advertise different characteristics with their looks. The characteristics that women emphasize tend to differ from straight men. Men might want to conceal a few flaws and cover up tiredness, and maybe they use some styling gel for hair and eyebrows, but on a daily basis, women are using more products (Biesterbos et al., 2013, p. [4]), and changing the way their faces look in a more extreme fashion. Women do similar washing and grooming, and they too conceal blemishes, but they also add eyeshadow, eyeliner, mascara, and lipstick (Biesterbos et al., 2013, p. [4]). If men do use products, they are basic ones that only mildly change the face by evening skin tone. When women use makeup, it is to bring out cheekbones and brow ridges (“How to Do Your,” n.d.), to deepen and widen eyes, and to add colors.

Obviously women can look attractive without makeup, but in society, women are thought to be more attractive when wearing makeup (Gueguen, 2008, p. [1]), and men do not have that more attractive possibility to be compared to. When someone looks at a man’s face, they see the man’s face,
but when someone looks at a woman, they see the woman’s face as either with or without makeup. A man’s natural look is good, and a woman’s natural look is subpar. The fact that that comparison exists, that the possibility of being more attractive always exists for women and not for men, is why there are different expectations of beauty for women.

These different expectations of women are stated definitively by Sprecher, Sullivan, and Hatfield (1993), who asked men and women to rate various characteristics in terms of how likely they would be to marry a hypothetical partner with those characteristics. The data demonstrate that men are less willing than women to marry someone who is “not ‘good-looking’”, men are less willing than women to marry someone who is 5 years older, and men are far more willing to marry someone who is 5 years younger (Sprecher, Sullivan, & Hatfield, 1993, p. [1076]). Men favor youth and attractiveness in women, yet this same expectation isn’t put on men by women.

The argument persists that women enjoy using makeup because it is simply a form of expression. Women feel that the makeup they use can change or emphasize who they are. This sentiment is reflected in the 2007 study, “Why women use makeup: Implication of psychological traits in makeup function”. Korichi, Pelle-De-Queral, Gazano and Aubert discussed results which stated that women who used makeup to hide their features were more anxious, defensive, and emotionally unstable compared to women who used makeup to become more attractive to potential partners. The latter appeared to be more sociable, assertive, and extroverted. (Korichi, Pelle-de-Queral, Gazano, & Aubert, 2008, p. [127]). This implies that makeup usage reflects existing personality characteristics. However, In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir states in The Second Sex that when a woman internalizes her social role as a sexual object, she then enjoys the process of making herself more attractive (Beauvoir, 1949), suggesting that makeup usage continues to reinforce the construct of women as objects which exist for the use and observation of the male gaze, and that it is both a choice and a societal pressure.

One example of this rift between appearance expectations for men and women, especially in media, is newscasters. Male and female newscasters both occupy the same role, and they both wear makeup. However, the way
they wear that makeup is different. Male newscasters wear “simple powder to take away the shine” because “wearing too much make up is worse than not wearing enough”, as men do not need extravagant makeup like women do (Ninomiya, n.d.). Female newscasters wear a larger amount of more complex makeup. One newscaster from Fox News says that her makeup artist would “outline the outside of her lips, coat her eyelids in so much shadow ‘[she] felt [she] should be wearing a sash and tiara’” (Abraham, 2012). These media images that people consume shape their worldview, because the repeated exposure forms lasting associations (“Mere Exposure Theory,” n.d.). Ergo, when individuals see men on television looking more natural and women on television looking more glamorous, they are receiving messages that train them to see male and female attractiveness differently.

Another example in the media of unnatural female appearance depiction comes from Jean Kilbourne’s work on the representation of women in advertising. Kilbourne’s research has made it clear that media propagated stereotypes of female passivity and objectification deeply influence the way Americans view women and the female appearance. She states that the most important change the advertising industry needs to make is the portrayal of women, because the images depicted are not real, and they aren’t achievable by any natural means. Even ‘natural’ looks take a lot of time, money, and preparation (Kilbourne).

The makeup industry thrives by supplying the idea that women need to be beautiful to be happy. Popular culture and advertising conditions “a woman ... to view her face as a mask and her body as an object, as things separate from and more important than her real self, constantly in need of alteration, improvement, and disguise. She is made to feel dissatisfied with and ashamed of herself, whether she tries to achieve “the look” or not. Objectified constantly by others, she learns to objectify herself” (Kilbourne). More makeup is sold if women are unhappy with the way that they look: the more female dissatisfaction created, the more money the company makes. That is a massive incentive to make women feel like they can never live up to a perfect standard through the images they see everyday, as well as the attitudes of those around them, which are affected by the same images.

Images present in the media have a substantial, lasting effect on how
individuals perceive the world around them. Many times, advertising effects women's self esteem through the presentation of damaging expectations, roles, and stereotypes. Even though media images did not create or cause these problems, they keep the issues alive by creating an environment in which the sale of the female body is accepted (Kilbourne). The effects of the media on public opinion and emotion are real and tangible. The sheer amount of images is enough to sway perspective, since the average person sees 2000 ads a day. These media images comprise an immense educational force (Kilbourne) within a culture, and repeated exposure teaches its inhabitants how and what to think. In this case, Americans are taught to think that women are only worthwhile if they look perfect.

This conception is damaging. Anyone who does not fit a perfect ideal of beauty will feel pressure to be as good as the women they see on television. This pressure and subsequent failure to achieve perfection creates feelings of sadness, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, which lead to higher rates of eating disorders and mental health issues. One Wall Street Journal study referenced by Jean Kilbourne perfectly illustrates the divide of gender expectations and the ensuing harmful practices. The study states that, “more than half the fourth-grade girls were dieting and three-quarters felt they were overweight. One student said, “We don’t expect boys to be that handsome. We take them as they are.” Another added, “But boys expect girls to be perfect and beautiful. And skinny!” (Kilbourne). When girls who have not yet begun puberty are convinced they need to be eating a certain way to appeal more to the opposite sex, there is a problem. All advertising is geared toward insecurity, however “the majority of harmful messages are focused more toward women” (Chapman), and this harm needs to be addressed.

Makeup has been making people more attractive for a very long time. An issue present today is how the unequal use of makeup between genders and media depiction of that inequality creates differences in how attractiveness is perceived between genders. Attractiveness is a social, biological, and cognitive concept. Makeup makes people more beautiful by indicating cultural symbols of beauty, biological signs of a healthy mate choice, and a symmetrical averageness. Men find women more attractive with makeup, and there is an apparent lack of studies on whether women find
men more attractive with or without makeup (maybe because men aren’t the
ones on display for choosing by a potential mate). Still, everyone wants to be
beautiful because of evolution and social learning.

Men do not typically wear makeup because they are not considered
more attractive or more professional based on makeup usage. Even when
men do wear makeup, it is simple and natural. Conversely, women wear more
makeup to seem more put-together. Images of women in media wearing
more makeup propagate expectations of women looking more glamorous.
The same expectations do not develop for men because their makeup is
not as obvious. Women have a higher ‘made-up’ standard to be compared to
that men do not have. Women wear makeup to be beautiful and men do not,
because men favor youth and attractiveness (both things that can be emulated
with makeup use) more than women do. These preferences create different
expectations for what men and women should look like. Even though many
women enjoy wearing makeup or use it to feel more confident, it still
perpetuates sexual objectification and unequal expectations in appearance.
Makeup did not cause these imbalances in appearance expectation. Cultural
evolution of gender roles through time has caused differences in appearance
expectation, but those expectations are perpetuated by the now-established
differences in makeup usage norms.

Different use of makeup between the genders is not the root of
all image problems experienced by women, but it is a big factor in the
inequality of expectations and the subsequent negative impacts on female
self-esteem. To decrease the societal side-effects of unnatural and unattainable
representation, we need more realistic images present in daily media. More
variation in types of women, more average women, wearing less makeup.
The ‘#nomakeup’ (Mlotek) phenomenon, where celebrities post selfies of
themselves without makeup, grew out of a desire to see realistic images of
women in the media, and encourage people to feel comfortable with their
natural look. If trends like these continue earnestly and honestly, individuals
will know what people really look like, and they will begin to develop
healthier ideals of appearance, and learn to accept different types of beauty.
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Rushing Towards a Religion

By Ellen Gibbs

Introduction

No other program within a college or university has as strong of a system of beliefs as those found within sororities. Sorority chapters under the Greek Life Society are perceived as sisterhoods in the public eye, they are believed to be a mirror image of the student body, and yet their practices would prove otherwise in contrast to its core beliefs. All sororities have a system of beliefs, an oath, or a mission statement they claim to abide by, which is rarely the case when examined closely. This falsity of integrity can be proven by comparing the perceived injunctive norms, that is, “what students think other members of their organization believe to be acceptable” (Larimer, Turner, Mallett, & Geisner p. 204) to the established “framework of appearances that must be maintained, whether or not there is feeling behind the appearances” (Goffman, p. 3) within the public’s eye of moral standards. They are the unspoken beliefs, morals and ideologies that can either hinder or promote a member into the social hierarchy. In the process of recruitment, instead of judging social responsibilities and academic standing, females are scored on appearance, and conformity in relation to the bell curve that is female sex patterns in society. In other words, recruiters, “will tend to select members who are loyal, disciplined, and circumspect” (Goffman, p. 1) compared to members who oppose, disrupt, or avoid participating in certain under-the-table activities as well as failing to maintain a professional stage of self. This would likely beget a negative impression from the house-wide acceptability among sisters.

Hiding behind the language of mask and performance are the hush-hush obligations, customs and values found in sororities. Capitalized on drinking and a degree of promiscuity — being sexually accessible to members of the opposite sex, particularly, the boys belonging to that of a fraternity, with the presumption that you are a blonde, tan, and skinny bombshell. Sisters themselves also unify within a particular class: mostly white, upper crust identified members reign supreme. Rarely will a chapter stray from its racial, ethnic, social, and religious constraints, but would deny any degree of discrimination if confronted by the issue. When examined closely, these
homogenous social constructs result in a collective identity formed under “a set of symbolic forms and acts” (Bellah, p. 21) that brings related individuals together as a community. This suggests sororities serve as traditional religious institutions in the lives of its members.

In recent times the media has excelled at exploiting sororities, digging up evidence that contradicts the so-called mission outlined within a sorority. Yet as with any religion, the media also tends to exclusively highlight only extreme cases. As a result, what we perceive to be true of sororities is a vision redefined by the social media. That being said however, the majority of sororities are not suppressing, but rather weaving these images, stereotypes, connotations and representations — albeit not so positive ones with respect to feminism — into their culture’s identity and system of beliefs. A number of cases show that beginning in the 1960s, through the exchange of mainstream media, sororities gradually began to emphasize “on social exclusivity” and as a result, the “tendency toward structured, formal policies and procedures, became less appealing to them” (Going Greek - History, 1960 - 1980, The University of Cincinnati Libraries). In respect, sororities have morphed, facilitated, and even promoted the hegemonic ideals depicted of them by society, even if the results show varying degrees of isolation and gender discrimination.

**Historical Background**

For a majority of Americans, the late 1960s and 70s rang as an era of social change and civil rights movements. This was not the case for sororities, who began to stray from their core values to the discriminating and narcissistic behaviors still in practice today. This act of counterculture was most prevalent in the context of race. The sorority known as Kappa Delta, which now brandishes countless images of black, Asian, Latina, and many other diverse females on its social media, was under fire at the University of Wisconsin in 1966 when the President of the chapter, originally from Virginia, refused to sign a nondiscrimination pledge. Another incident that shows sororities acknowledge and promote a certain image among its members portrayed to society happened at the University of Utah in 1971. The sorority, Chi Omega addressed themselves as, “The Sorority Bitches”
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(The Washington Post, Times Herald, Oct. 29, 1971) when they sent a letter of congratulations to the university’s first black homecoming queen. The women of the chapter said they were impressed with her femininity and vast use of English vocabulary. The kind words are used with sardonic undertones aimed to mock the idea that a black female student could stand a chance as homecoming queen. What once portrayed itself as a chapter, which promoted equal opportunity for all, was now carelessly flouncing themselves as an organization based on discrimination.

Chi Omega, the first sorority chapter to emerge, in 1895, is rooted in the deep heart of the south, at the University of Arkansas. Jobelle Holcombe, the founder of what is known as the largest sorority to this day, alludes to the members’ convictions as some sort of religious awakening, a numinous experience, brought about by “the spirit of the fraternity” (Holcombe). That same religious vision Holcombe had for Chi Omega is still prevalent to Chi Omega today. The sorority itself proudly writes on their official website, “the secrets, symbolism, and [rituals] that now bind together over 345,000 women” (History - Chi Omega, chiomega.com) are what suggest this is a representation of a religious institution.

During Holcombe’s presidency of Chi Omega, “secrecy was an important element in securing organization” (Galloway, p. 34) as were the practices, rituals and readings of The Chi Omega Constitution. For young Chi Omega to grow as a functioning and structured organization, symbols within the chapter had to be constructed as well as the recruitment of members. This was done with the influence of The Eleusinian Mysteries, a series of initiations during Ancient Greece under the cult of Demeter and Persephone, at the time, they were deemed as the highest rite of passage to religion. The rituals and systems of initiation each member must go through represents the holy sacraments specific to Christian beliefs.

In the process of initiation, Ida Shaw (1867-1940), author of The Sorority Handbook (1919) and founder of Tri Delta (1888) described, “the sorority ideal is the symmetrically developed woman” (Galloway, p. 3). This model goes without saying that a “sorority girl” is “a cultured woman with lofty ideals and noble principles” who “has pledged both heart and hand to honor and truth, that she has set her face to the light, never to turn back”
(Shaw, p. 55). The light Shaw refers to can be shown to represent a greater being. The Eleusis of Chi Omega, Vol. 10, goes as far as labeling this spiritual figure as a symbol of the ideal sorority woman, embodying exceeding beauty, worthiness, self-confidence, academic standing, privilege and loyalty. Each sorority member should walk in the omnipresent image of her, to “think what she has done and is doing for us… can we afford not to be loyal to her?” (PSI, p. 147) essentially describing a belief, “in a divine or superhuman power, and practices of worship… directed towards such a power” (Zinnbauer, Religiousness and Spirituality). The ultimate being defined in sororities is in itself a religious figure.

The characteristics that simulate religion in sororities can be encompassed by Pan-Hellenism, as mentioned in Shaw’s handbook, it’s a term used to describe the beliefs embodied by all the members of a sorority. Under this belief is The Key, a text that, like The Ten Commandments or Capital Vices, must be practiced and adhered to. Some of which include, “to secure (1) uniformity of inter-fraternity courtesy, (2) cooperation in purchasing fraternity jewelry and stationery for purposes of increased security and cheapness… (5) inter-chapter cooperation and etiquette” (Shaw, p. 37). Like most traditional religions, there contains a list of religious precepts, moral obligations and duties that followers abide to as part of their practice. It’s an additional facet of religion that brings followers closer to their God. For Judaists, it is the list of 613 Mitzvot, in Christianity they are referred to as The Ten Commandments, the Qur’an mentions these pledges as The Statement of God, and in Mormonism they are known as The Eternal Gospel Principles. Sororities have made their own version of divine principles, with a theological text, just as these religious institutions have, in this way, sororities mimic writing styles similar to that of religious texts.

The Bible tells its followers to, “let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts” (NIV, Colossians 3:16). Singing sacred music has been apart of almost every religious tradition and ritual, it has the power to overwhelm us emotionally in ways dialogue cannot. In extreme cases, like for Holiness evangelist William
H. Durham, the experience goes beyond Earthly. Durham recounts the effects of singing to the Lord possessed, “[Durham’s] physical being, in a literal sense, in so much that He could at His will take hold of [Durham’s] vocal organs, and speak any language He chose through [Durham]” (Taves, p. 333). Durham’s case resulted in him singing in tongues and was what he defined as his baptism, which is not unheard of in religion. Many followers of Christ will not believe they are true Christians until they have a certain numinous experience. This tactic is used in sororities but to increase morale and enthusiasm. Nonetheless, sororities use song as a way to convert its members, to get them drinking the Kool-Aid — if you will.

The motives behind sororities and religious institutions was and continues to ignite the fear of isolation in its followers, promising a solution to that fear, that is, by fostering a community, and doing so at a cost that is both economically and mentally transpiring for the individual.

Then vs. Now

Today, religion has become less of a belief, and more of a commodity, less of a state of mind, and more of a demonstration. Sororities follow a similar pattern that religions do, to establish self-identity by engaging in “self-symbolization” that is, “legitimized by others who accept these symbols as valid status markers” (Arthur, p. 364). Religions, especially in the marketplace, play off our symbolic strive towards self-completion — for Jewish girls turning of age, it’s the thirty thousand dollar splurge on a Bat Mitzvah. For many traditional Mexican Catholics, it’s an elaborate quinceañera. In consumer goods, companies like Alex and Ani have dominated the jewelry market on sacred symbols. A quick search on Amazon for religious home décor accents results in over two thousand eight hundred hits, with anything from wall crosses, to a hand-held comforting clay cross and something advertised as a badge of faith Pastor plaque.

Proclaiming self-identity in a sorority is to demonstrate a sense of belonging taken at face value. Many of these symbols that provide a degree of self-adequacy to the individual are in the form of jewelry, badges, and for some members is beyond skin deep, in the form of a tattoo. “It becomes a part of your identity” Lori, a member of Alpha Alpha Alpha (AAA) states,
“when Alpha is in your soul, you can’t help but express it by wearing Greek things… so in this way, you can see a girl’s identity” (Arthur, p. 373). A female student at the University of New Hampshire recalled her rush experience, before separating herself from the sorority, “each house wears matching outfits each day” during recruitment, to indicate unity and superiority among the other sororities they are in competition with. A stringent dress code like that found in sororities is also found in female clothing in the traditional Hindu religion. Recently, women have increasingly been wearing the traditional garment known as a sari, to everyday use, and the once humble bhindi made traditionally from kumkuma, a powder used to signify a married woman, is now being bought off as an accessory. Celebrities from Selena Gomez to Katy Perry and Kendall Jenner have all been seen with the trend at events such as The Grammy Awards, even just walking down the streets of New York. Further acts of cultural appropriation include Vanessa Hudgens, when in 2014 she was spotted wearing a traditional Native American headdress at Coachella. Regardless of the situation, whether as a proclamation to faith, community, or merely a fashion statement, religious commodification has negatively impacted the traditional religious institutions. Individuals are no longer in search of the sacred word or in the concentration of organized forms of church. Modern society has adopted the notion of a spiritual marketplace, in a way that “the economic models of religious behavior” (Turner, p. 7) have dismantled traditional religions and replaced it with our own, pick-and-choose secular organizations, such as sororities. The decline in institutionalized religion is contingent upon the rise of modern, organized communities. That is not to say there aren’t modern organizations where subjectivity is still present like it is in traditional religion. In regard to Episcopal churches, one observer remarked towards their bias on the LGBT community, saying “this organization does not have much of a future because there are already a lot of churches in the United States for people who don’t want to worship with gays and lesbians” (Turner, p. 152). Indeed, but even those modern organized religions, like sororities, have a bias built within its code of conduct. A female student at UNH rushed the fall of her sophomore year, but backed out at the last minute, saying that “physical appearance” in the eyes of recruiters, “plays a huge role; what you’re wearing,
how much makeup you have on... even the shape of your body” had a way of swaying whether or not an individual would be accepted in the sorority community.

Song, as mentioned previously, has a way of incorporating itself into almost every organized society. Sororities are no different, says one female at UNH, “at the beginning of the day each house would have a song or cheer they would perform while you stood and watched them… most cheers had to do with why that specific sorority was the best one.” Preaching the word of God and singing in a traditional church environment has the same effect on believers as it does on members in a sorority.

Case Study

To emphasize this point, look up any sorority, particularly in the South, where the whole debacle unraveled. At the University of Alabama, Alpha Phi’s motto is, “Union Hand In Hand” and their symbol is an ivy leaf. Their house sleeps seventy-two of its members and includes a formal Chapter Room with executive offices. Each room is anchored with cathedral-like chandeliers and wall-to-wall crown molding. On the exterior, columns and pillars echo the architecture of Ancient Roman times. A quick glance at the sorority’s Instagram will show the majority of women are Caucasian, tall, blonde, tan, and have a figure that appeals to society. If there is a question of what to wear — their website has the answer to that as well.

This speaks to religion on a homogenous level. Appearance, personality traits, stature and core dedication are the initial agents that spawn belief. This is not religion in the way that Bryan S. Turner argues as, “consciousness of self, [the] conscientious individuality… the soul, which develops in the process by which members of a society come to be differentiated” (Turner, p. 56). Instead of religion being defined through means of conformity, Turner is saying religion is found under the individual’s secular rationalism, that being, the thoughts and beliefs one has, which will guide them to a specific community, as opposed to the collective rituals meant to generate those beliefs.
Reflection

What should be highlighted is the fact that religion is no longer a term associated with boundaries. The term itself has degraded to something looser; it’s not thought of as the differentiated social institutions versus the individual in a traditional sense. Rather, religion is a system of meaning. Religious meanings, broken down, are essentially the same as cultural meaning, that is to say “religion is to culture as Meaning is to meaning” (Besecke, p. 184). This idea of religion is not to be determined by a label, although it can help, but instead a question of religion in terms that measure the degree of interest in a specific field. Based off this definition of religion, sororities are indeed, a religion. In the cultural sense, it acts in ways like any modernized society does: through the spiritual marketplace, which makes a member’s rite of passage and unity to that particular institution, a public display of self. The public face of a member is determined by the beliefs and trends adopted by her institution, in this case sororities, which stem from the ultimate source of all being: popular culture and mainstream media.

This presents a similarity between modernized religion and the said traditional institutions of religion: both have undergone change because of pop culture and the mainstream media. That being said, sororities are like a religion, ran under an even greater institution known as the media. The media sets the agenda; the media establishes current conventions and ideologies that humans abide by. As media expands, the range of self-expression also expands. Despite the infinite number of religions one can morph, each one is sociologically impacted by media’s influences, which are born from the very institutions itself.

These discoveries have shown how the term religion is used on an institutionalized and individualized scale. Popular, new, evolving beliefs are now widely accepted as “a particular way of life and with membership of a particular community” (Turner, p. 20). Be it Catholicism or Veganism, Judaism or the sorority based, Panhellenism. These are religions, despite how popular they are in the current shift of religious trends. Society has a way of “generating religious conviction” (Stolow, p. 4) in these institutions through the marketplace and mainstream media. Here is where religion and media come full circle — to keep the wheel of society turning, there has to
be religion in the aspect of Turner’s definition, for there to be religion, there
must be people with a set of beliefs, for there to be media, the marketplace,
and consumerist values, there must be aesthetic, materialistic, and a medium
of communication of self-expression.

No, religion is not going anywhere, for the time being. Religion is only
changing into individual sects, with influences of religious practices found in
the oldest surviving, traditional religions. The argument of sororities is just
one example of the contemporary secularized communities that has adopted
religious conventions in the ever-expanding freedom of communal expression.

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Introduction

In this paper, I will be focusing on body behaviors associated with a sensory test sequence of actions. A sequence of actions according to Kidwell follows a “first, then, finally” timeline or script (2000). Sequence of actions are performed by a person to complete a goal. Here, a sensory test sequence of actions is a script people follow when they want to know more about an object that they are handed for the first time. People here use their senses (touch, smell, sight, taste, hear) to learn more about an object they are handling for the first time. After testing the object using some or all of the senses, people make an observation out loud to other participants.

I will also be discussing the bodily actions a person performs when they are handling an object, observing it, and making comments. This will include stable and unstable body positions, gestures, and gaze to show attention and engagement.

Method

The data presented was collected in a college dorm between roommates. This took place at night. Both participants are 20 years old. This case is taken from a larger video, approximately 40 minutes long. The subject of conversation in the video is a jar of air freshener.

Data

The following is the complete transcript from the video, using Jeffersonian transcription style. Z stands for myself, Zoë, and R stands for Rebecca.

01 Z: do you know what it is? ((takes off lid of jar))
02 R: WHA::T ((gaze on jar))
03 Z: its just baking soda and like (1.0) those wax things ((hand in air)) you can stick in "laundry loads ((hand moves to lap)) to make them smell nicer"
04 R: its WAX?
05 Z: yeah; its what tho[se
**Analysis**
In the following lines, we see the beginning of the conversation. This introduces the subject of discussion and the purpose of the dialogue.

01  Z:  do you know what it is? ((takes off lid of jar))
02  R:  WHA::T ((gaze on jar))

Z initiates the conversation by asking “do you know what it is?”, and showing R the object by taking off the lid. R says “WHA::T”; this action responds to Z’s initiating action and accepts the new topic of discussion. By showing R the jar and attaining joint attention, this creates an opportunity for a response (Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2007: 609). Joint attention, according to Kidwell and Zimmerman, is a triadic process between two participants and one object (2007: 594). Gaze, according to Kendon, indicates to participants where attention is being held (Kendon, 1967). R turns her gaze towards the jar, signifying she is putting her attention on the jar. Here, joint attention is created between Z, R, and the jar of air freshener when Z brings it up and R gazes towards it.

These lines constitute a “show encounter” between two people.
(Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2007: 596). In this example, Z shows the object to R, making R become the “show recipient”. R responds by saying “WHA::T.” Z treats this as an adequate response by responding to R and continuing the conversation (Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2007). This show encounter sequence starts the conversation and leads into the sensory test sequence of actions. The purpose of the dialogue for R is to learn what the jar is for and what is inside of it. The forthcoming bodily actions will be devoted to R testing the mixture in the jar, which will use the senses. A sensory test sequence of actions here helps people to discover the properties of an object using their senses, and follows this script:

1) Person takes object
2) Person handles and observes object
3) Person makes audible observations from object

When people take the object, it is usually for the first time that they are holding it. While it is in their hands, the participant needs to figure out the properties of the object to infer its purpose, how to use it, etc. In order to do this, the participant uses their senses to test out the object. In this process, the person is able to observe the object and draw conclusions. Finally, the person makes comments to other people in the surrounding area. The action of making observations out loud is important in sharing learned knowledge to others.

In this section of transcript, we see R taking the object in her hands as part of a sensory test sequence. This is the first step in the sensory test sequence of actions, and starts the script. R has the object in her hands and next she is handling it in order to observe and later make observations. This is the second step in the sequence of actions.

07  Z:    yeah↑ its what tho[se
08  R:    [is that a good idea ((arm reaches
09         toward jar, body moves forward))
10        (0.2)
11  R:    ((arm and body move back to home position))
12  Z:    >no you know< ((hands R the jar, gaze moves away from
13         R and jar)) like those um (.) what are they called
Rebecca first tries to take the jar in line 08, shown in figure 1.1. She reaches her hand toward the jar and as she does this, her body leans forward. This position indicates her curiosity and level of engagement with the topic of conversation. When the jar is not immediately handed to her, R retreats her hand and body, moving herself back to home position, as shown in figure 1.2 (Schegloff, 1998: 542). This is a stable position that allows Z to keep the floor while she is talking in line 12. In line 12, Z hands R the jar, allowing R to handle it. R takes the jar in her hands and puts her finger inside the jar so that she can feel the contents of the jar. This action allows R to observe the jar and perform sensory tests.

The following lines show another example of when, during a sensory test sequence, a person makes audible observations from the object in question. This is the final step in the sensory test sequence of actions that finishes the test. This is the final observation made by R, and concludes the sequence of actions.
In lines 24-27, R is making audible observations about the object. This is the third and final step of the sequence of actions. With the mixture of air freshener on her fingers, R smells her fingertips. She comments in line 24 that “it smells really familiar,” which is one observation she makes. R then tries to remove the mixture from her hands, rubbing it off her fingers as she lifts her hand then puts it down to her lap. She makes her final observation here, ending the sensory test sequence when she says “it smells like my aunt’s apartment actually”. In figure 2.1, we see Rebecca bring her hand up to her face to smell the air freshener. She then rubs it off her hand in figure 2.2, and brings her hand down her lap in figure 2.3, shown in the red circle. This brings her hands and body to a stable home position (Schegloff 1998: 542), projecting that she is ending her turn and done making observations. This ends her turn, and finishes the sensory test sequence of events. When R gazes at Z in line 27, this signifies that R is done with her turn, giving it to Z, and is waiting for Z to say something (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974: 717).
Conclusion

From this analysis, we learn the components of a sensory test. Participants use a sensory test sequence of actions when they are handed an object for the first time in order to learn more about the object and make observations. There are three parts to the sensory test: first the person takes the object in their hands. This is the first time they are handling the object. Next, the person observes the object to learn its properties. People effectively do this using their senses. Finally, the person makes observations about the object out loud to other participants. This action reports what they have learned and shares thoughts and reactions to others.

Further research can be done to study possible variations in the sensory tests, for example using diverse objects to see if people would create a different sequence of actions. One could also study quantitative tests rather than qualitative, such as the sensory test.

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The Effects of a Trip to India on the Music and Life of George Harrison
By Carter Bennett

Introduction and Overview

“We were talking, about the space between us all / And the people, who hide themselves behind a wall of illusion.” George Harrison wrote the lyrics just read in 1967. Most music buffs would know that the lyrics are from the song “Within You Without You” off one of the Beatle’s most famous albums, Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. The song’s foreign sounds and introspective lyrics created an ensemble that threw listeners a curveball. Although the song was different from what people were used to hearing, responses to the song were great. Famous musician Tom Petty said “Within You Without You” was Harrison’s “culmination” (“My Favorite Music”). Some find though that the story behind the song, and the man who wrote it is much more entertaining than the song itself. Yes, the song caught everyone’s attention, but where did this song come from and why does it sound so different from other Beatles songs?

The answers to the questions previously stated lie in George Harrison’s decision to travel to India to practice an instrument he took interest in. Although the main reason for the trip was to study the instrument, Harrison ended up obtaining much more than just the skills to play a new instrument. Instead, Harrison’s journey led him to a different part of the world where he and his music would forever be changed. Harrison portrayed what Wade Roof Clark calls, “quest culture” in that he stepped away from the normal religious practices he grew up with in order to find himself. The story of George Harrison is extremely related to the history and relationship between media, religion, and culture due to the Beatle’s immense popularity and impact on the world. By examining Harrison’s experiences with Eastern religious practices like transcendental meditation, it is evident that Harrison was an advocate for “quest culture” and that his experiences altered the music he created and additionally caused an impact on those that listened to it.

The History of Quest Culture
The term “quest culture” refers to people like George Harrison whom go on “spiritual quests” in “search for unity of mind, body and self” and choose to focus more on experience and energy rather than faith (Roof 46). The first appearances of quest culture can mostly be attributed to the Baby Boom generation during post World War II. Roof explains that those born between 1946 and 1955 “quickened the pace of social and religious change” (50) due to the many impactful events they experienced like the civil rights protests and obviously the Second World War. The events had many effects on those at “formative stages of their lives” (51), including the loss of confidence in “dominant social institutions – political, economic, cultural and religious” (51). For example, in the mid 1960s, dominant religious institutions like Protestantism and Catholicism faced a decline in attendance and influence (51). The “cultural carriers” of that time instead turned their attention to the self and to values like “self expression, quality of life, environmentalism, peace, and inner well-being” (58).

Prior to George Harrison, there was a man named John Cage whom turned to these values and represented the quest culture lifestyle almost perfectly. John Cage was a self-expressive pianist whom became famous during the 1940s and 1950s. In the late 1940s and early 1950s Cage moved away from traditional Western religions that centralized homophobia and instead studied Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism’s meditation practices helped him move beyond from his pain (his homosexuality) by acknowledging it in his own way (Katz 234). Cage’s way of acknowledging his pain was to make a song that was completely silent to act as a form of resistance to the common and dominant cultural perspectives on sexuality (238). Wade Clark Roof would identify Cage’s actions as his “wholeness-hunger”. Roof explains wholeness-hunger as “what underlies much of today’s spiritual malaise” (Roof 62). He additionally says that wholeness-hunger roots from people trying to find connections and can lead to “rebellious attempts to reclaim the fullness of life arising out of a deeply felt alienation” (63). Cage’s alienation obviously is him being a homosexual in a society that glorifies homophobia.

The history of quest culture is a short history that began only several decades ago, but at the same time, its history is rich with different examples of people who followed the lifestyle. Although quest culture is a term coined
in regards to American society, George Harrison can be related to quest culture just as well as visionaries like John Cage.

Harrison’s Escape to Eastern Traditions

Even prior to George Harrison’s birth, he had already unknowingly begun his spiritual quest. While in his mother’s womb, his mother would listen to her favorite radio program entitled, Radio India. The program would emit the vibrations of sitars and other mystical sounds that his mother hoped “would bring peace and calm” to her unborn baby. Eventually though, on February 25, 1943, George Harrison was born into his Catholic family in Liverpool, England. “German bombs had left Liverpool in ruins” so as a child, Harrison played around with his friends by daring one another to jump from one demolished rooftop to another or creating bow and arrows from pieces of broken glass and wood (Greene 2-3). In addition to playing with his friends, George loved listening to music and when he turned ten, his mother purchased him a guitar. A family friend taught George some basic chords and at first he struggled and complained to his mother that, “I’ll never learn this”. His mother responded back by saying, “if you stick to it, I’m sure you’ll make it” (5).

Well, Louise Harrison couldn’t have been any more correct with her prediction about her son’s guitar playing. Less than ten years after revealing her prediction to her son, on October 5, 1962, 19 year old George Harrison heard himself and his band (The Beatles) on the radio for the first time. (32). From then on, the Beatles and Harrison created number one hit after number one hit and quickly became household names. The craze for the Beatles known as Beatlemania began to spread all across Europe and eventually made its way overseas to the United States where the Beatles would visit for the first time in 1964. Their trip to the United States was intense, as seventy three million viewers tuned into The Ed Sullivan Show to watch the four British boys play some of their hits (39). Joshua Greene describes the event in his book by stating that the immense excitement from the American people came from them “being traumatized by recent events and desperately in need of relief” (39). The Beatles offered that relief and in return received fame and fortune.

George returned to England and on his twenty-first birthday received
“the most mail ever delivered to one address outside of the royal family” according to the postal service (41). George’s newly achieved wealth and fame allowed him to do many things including; paying his father to retire, moving to a luxurious apartment in London, purchasing expensive shoes and tailored suits, and lastly adding top tier vehicles to his garage like the Jaguar XK 140, Aston Martin DB5, and a black Mercedes (41). George’s source of income though didn’t come out of thin air. He and the Beatles were constantly busy whether it be making movies, touring across the world or creating new music over the next couple years.

All members of the band began to be fed up with touring and decided after their final concert in 1966 at Candlestick Park that they’d take a hiatus from the band (66). Each band mate had different goals after separating including George’s goal of “To do as well as I can do, whatever I attempt. And someday to die with a peaceful mind” (66). Harrison then decided to leave for Bombay, India, in order to meet up with his mentor, Ravi Shankar. At first Harrison stayed in Bombay, but soon “the mania” (Beatles fans) found him and he later moved to the Taj Mahal. The initial known reason for his stay was to learn the sitar but he gained much more from his trip (The Beatles Anthology 233).

Later on, George admitted that his reason for journeying to India was actually due to a “lingering thought” he had after taking LSD. He explains that the thought was “the yogis of the Himalayas” (233). He goes into more detail saying that although Ravi and the Sitar were a vital part of the trip, it was actually “a search for a spiritual connection” (233). George recalls Ravi introducing him to a yoga teacher that would provide George with simple yoga and meditation exercises to cope with the pain of sitting with a sitar all day. In addition to the yoga exercises, George discussed spirituality and religion with numerous locals. George remembers listening to Ravi Shankar’s brother tell him, “If there’s a God, you must see him, and if there’s a soul we must perceive it – otherwise its better not to believe” (233). Hearing people say things like this reminded George of his negative outlook on the “Christian attitude” of telling you what to believe and not to experience it (233). Harrison’s trip to India caused him to solidify his notion of “you can’t believe anything until you have direct perception of it” (233) and thus changed his life.
forever.

George recalls the trip to India by saying, “It was the first feeling I’d ever had of being liberated from being a Beatle” (233) but he ultimately had to return to his job. When Harrison returned home with all this knowledge, not only was his outlook on spirituality and music altered but also his appearance was different. During the recording of the Beatles album, Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, Harrison grew a moustache, because Ravi Shankar told George to disguise himself, which he explained was apart of the “collective consciousness” (236). Even the other Beatles joined George with the new look and also listened in to what he had learned from his trip to India. The process of recording Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band in 1967 was what George described as “done slightly different” from their other albums (242). In short, they relied heavily on the drug LSD for inspiration and George’s sound had changed. Subsequently, George’s new found fixation on Eastern transcendental meditation and the sitar changed the sound of his music. He created a song entitled “Within You Without You” which captured his trip to India in musical form. The sound of the sitar filled the song and the lyrics expunged introspective and spiritual imagery. John Lennon is quoted saying that George’s “mind and his music were clear” (242) with “Within You Without You”. At that time it was safe to say that George Harrison had changed since Candlestick Park in August of 1966.

Analysis of Harrison & Quest Culture

Harrison is one hundred percent an exemplar of the quest culture model. To begin, Roof says that those who fall into the quest culture lifestyle fall into it due their exposure to impactful events at “formative stages of their lives” (51). Being born into the “ruins” of 1940s postwar Britain would definitely be a part of someone’s life that could form the person you are decades later. Additionally, as a young musician touring through the United States in the early 1960s, Harrison was exposed to unbelievable amounts of attention that may cause a person to question his self-worth. After returning from America he’s quoted saying to a magazine, “people treat us sometimes as if we are just things and not human beings” (Greene 42).

Harrison’s soon defection from the Catholic faith and search for “a spiritual connection” (The Beatles Anthology 233) are other actions that Roof
would identify as quest culture attributes (Roof 58). Like John Cage, Harrison resorted to Eastern religious practices like transcendental meditation and during his trip to India was told “you can’t believe anything until you have direct perception of it” (The Beatles Anthology 233). The statements he heard in India that regarded experiencing rather than just believing live up to the quest culture idea of focusing more on experience and energy rather than faith (Roof 46). Harrison had this notion prior to his trip to India but hearing it from others made him feel more comfortable about the idea. Harrison’s new found perspective of experiencing led him to engage in practices like yoga and transcendental meditation that would further his “spiritual quest” to find himself.

Similar to John Cage, Harrison’s music altered after being exposed to new things like spirituality, meditation, and yoga. Harrison used the song “Within You Without You” as a way for his listeners to realize that he wasn’t the same person anymore. Wade Roof Clark would explain that this was Harrison’s “wholeness hunger” (Roof 62). Harrison’s deeply felt alienation (63) was a combination of being left out of the “McCartney and Lennon songwriting circle” (Greene 77) and the thought that people weren’t treating him as a human being. “Within You Without You” acted as his way to step into that songwriting circle and to show listeners that he had found a connection in something. Harrison chose to share that connection by saying in his lyrics, “Try to realize it’s all within yourself, no-one else can make you change / And to see you’re really only very small / And life flows on within you and without you.”

Concluding with the Impact of George Harrison

Harrison’s trip to India would change his life and music forever. After the release of Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, George dove even deeper into spirituality and Eastern practices. In 1968, he would bring along his band mates to meet with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in India but none of them would end up following the practices as much as George would (Rabey). Soon after the Beatles separation, Harrison would begin to make what Martin Scorsese called, “spiritually awake music”. The music was infused with newfound knowledge from his experiences with Eastern practices (Rabey). Up until Harrison’s death in 2001, he would remain a close relationship with
Ravi Shankar and continue his spiritual quest.

The impact Harrison left is best described by referring to position 3 on the religion and culture chart on the “Continuum of Perspectives” handout. It states, “Religious traditions can be redeemed through cultural understanding and practice (like music) that generate transcendental experiences outside the bounds of traditional institutions.” Harrison’s choice to make music that promoted spirituality and meditation left an impact on people fifty years ago and even people in the last decade. For example, Ryan Bennett, a twenty-four year old whom graduated college in 2014, has said that Harrison’s music, specifically “Within You Without You” inspired him to research meditation. Bennett began listening to the Beatles during his years in college and he soon later practiced meditation on a weekly basis (“Brief Interview with Ryan Bennett”).

Bennett’s example is only one of many other instances of people who felt inspired by George Harrison. Harrison decided to look away from dominant religious institutions and instead focus on finding himself through experiences with practices that were foreign to both him and the society he was raised in. Harrison exemplified the quest culture lifestyle and promoted it all throughout his life. It’s unfortunate that George Harrison’s spiritual life was cut short by cancer in 2001, but it’s certain that he left an impact on the world that’s worth a thousand lives.

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Comm-entary 2017


Disconnected From Millennials: Why Hillary Clinton’s Campaign Failed to Captivate Young Voters

By Jenna Ward

*Disclosure: this essay was written during the 2016 primary season, months before the general election*

As the grueling, unpredictable 2016 primary season dwindles down to an end, it is probably safe to assume that Hillary Clinton will seal the Democratic nomination. As much as her campaign envisioned this victory when Clinton first announced her candidacy last year, the win did not come as easily as they had anticipated. Clinton did not take the nomination by storm, but instead, faced an uphill battle against some unexpected vices. More specifically, the Clinton campaign somehow failed to connect with a large portion of Millennial voters. A revolutionary opponent, a backlash against big corporations, and a new wave of feminism are just a few of the reasons why Clinton missed the mark with young voters. By observing the effects of new media and particular factors of the 2016 primary, it will become evident why Hillary Clinton did not become the leading candidate for a group she expected to rally behind her, as they did with Barack Obama in the 2008 Election. Before describing the specific factors that caused a decrease in Millennial support, it is important to first showcase an example of Hillary Clinton’s overall disconnect with young voters. In April 2016, Clinton appeared for an interview on MSNBC’s Meet the Press with Chuck Todd. Todd brought up some controversial topics, such as Clinton accepting campaign donations from the fossil fuel industry. He then played a clip of a Greenpeace activist confronting Clinton, asking her to stop accepting money from the fossil fuel industry. Todd then asked Clinton to elaborate on what the Bernie Sanders campaign has been lying about in regards to questionable campaign donors. She began to defend herself by elaborating on her commitment to climate change causes and stating how sources such as The Washington Post and The New York Times have debunked these claims made by the Sanders campaign. Which as much as the public would like to
believe that those are independent and unbiased sources, both publications have favored Clinton over Sanders multiple times (Frank 2016). This is not where it ends—Clinton proceeds to defend herself by passive aggressively throwing young voters under the bus. Clinton states, “I feel sorry sometimes, for the young people who, you know, believe this—they don’t do their own research.” It didn’t take long for people on social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, to initiate retaliation against the attack on young, politically involved Democrats. The hashtag #HillaryResearch began trending, and posts containing the hashtag were paired up with corresponding memes displaying exactly why young people are not supporting Clinton. People were infuriated that Clinton would make such a heavy statement that assumes young Democrats were only supporting Bernie Sanders because they could not be bothered to do their own research. Young people are not blindly persuaded by just a few media platforms or centrist oriented news outlets; their informational world is far more rich in diverse in ideas and perspectives, helping promote independent thinking and a willingness to criticize the status quo. The #HillaryResearch case study is a prominent example of how young people utilize the internet to voice opinions, share ideas, and retaliate against attacks made by elites. Since the 2012 Election, and even a bit earlier, memes and hashtags have gained major popularity in creating new forms of political discourse. Young people in particular took to these new methods of voicing their views within the political sphere. Memes exist under the dark abyss of mainstream media, away from the control of primetime television personalities. Unfortunately, when mainstream media does get a hold of a popular meme, the lifespan of the meme comes to an end (Jurgenson 2012). Memes represent the grassroots authenticity of a political campaign fueled by the power of young people. It is important to stress that a campaign itself cannot generate a successful meme. A meme that does not have that authentic “underground” value, like the ones created by Reddit and Tumblr users, will not attain viral status. Memes serve as a way for the average person to mock political elites on a large platform, which was never possible before (Jurgenson 2012). Younger people have access to this whole new medium of political discourse that older generations never did. Young people not only share and even create memes with their peers on social media, but they’ve
also had contact with the world through easily accessible screens and near-constant internet connectivity for much of their lives. Information is obtained fast and processed just as quickly. Millennials are not solely sitting passive, absorbing information through television screens (which some view as propagandistic) or from an outdated, conservative and status quo based school textbook. The information needed to make decisions is rapidly refreshed online, making it easier than ever to formulate a balanced political standpoint. Millennials make up a large part of the population, and Hillary Clinton has been missing the mark when it comes to winning the support of the young, tech-savvy voters (Silver 2016). One could have imagined that young people might be energized about Hillary Clinton’s campaign because of her gender. Yet throughout the race, Clinton must have been deeply frustrated by the fact that young people, including young women, were vocally rallying in support of a man who is older than her. Bernie Sanders, the grey-haired political outsider from Vermont who continuously captivated the idealizations of young adults across the country was a constant source of frustration for Clinton, who expected an easy and quick election. With meme culture heavily backing Bernie Sanders, mass amateurization had essentially gained a whole new meaning with discourse becoming even more amateur than it already was (Iyengar 2011). A meme supporting Bernie Sanders is similar to what a political blog post was in 2004—a way to challenge dominate news narratives and ideologies. #HillaryResearch has been one of the many social media phenomena that have contributed to the Bernie Sanders campaign. The Facebook group Bernie Sanders’ Dank Meme Stash, which boasts over 430,000 members, has been a breeding ground for pro-Bernie and anti-Hillary memes throughout the election cycle. This page has been a platform for a bottom-up movement to fight back against establishment politics. Similar to elections in the past, young voters want to elect someone into office that represents an agenda based on authenticity. There is something about a “political revolution” that screams authenticity, and attracts supporters who want to reduce the power and greed that exists in a political establishment. Although Ron Paul represented a Libertarian-based campaign in 2008, the Sanders campaign mirrors a similar set of values as the Paul campaign did then. College students and young folks who were tired of establishment
front-runners in the GOP letting them down rallied behind Paul, and created a bottom-up campaign that attracted an unanticipated amount of attention. By garnering support on mediums such as blogs, Facebook, and MySpace, the Ron Paul support base grew into an energized and vocal grassroots campaign (Soha 2008), although they ultimately failed to win against the GOP establishment. The Sanders campaign followed a similar suit, by initially failing to grasp any attention from mainstream media. Unlike the Ron Paul campaign, the Sanders campaign took their grassroots foundation and turned it into a significantly more successful and widespread revolution. The Bernie Sanders campaign picked up speed seemingly out of nowhere, notably when his campaign raised over $20 million by January 2016 all through small, individual donations that averaged to about $27 per person (Schouten 2016). His progressive ideals of economic and social equality pushed him to the top, by first fighting tooth-and-nail with Clinton in the Iowa caucus, then blowing her out of the water in the New Hampshire primary. The Clinton campaign at this point quickly realized that the nomination would not be won as easily as planned. The hashtag #HillaryResearch heavily circulated by young Bernie Sanders supporters exemplified many of the reasons why Sanders is their preferred candidate. It was a way for young people to rebuff Clinton and the Democratic establishment, saying, “Yes, we most certainly do our research and that’s why we are not supporting you.” Young people are gravitating towards Sanders because they are tired of watching power-hungry politicians say one thing, and then do the opposite for the sake of collecting contributions from large corporations. These same young voters have found Hillary Clinton guilty of playing the role of a power-hungry politician who puts on one face for the American people, and then another for large corporations. Looking back at the #HillaryResearch case study, a Greenpeace activist fearlessly confronted Clinton, asking her to stop accepting donations from fossil fuel companies. Although she denied these claims in the interview, Greenpeace (one of the most well-known and accredited environmental advocacy groups) still argues the former secretary of state has concrete ties to the fossil fuel industry. Clinton talks big game about fighting back against climate change, yet 60 registered oil, coal, and gas lobbyists have each personally given $142,640 to the Clinton campaign. Out of those 60 lobbyists,
13 are bundlers. Those 13 lobbyists bundled $2,502,740 in contributions to the Clinton campaign (Coleman 2016). To clarify, lobbyist bundling is when fundraisers pool a large number of campaign contributions from political action committees (PACs) and individuals. Bundlers are usually corporate CEOs, lobbyists, hedge fund managers, or extremely wealthy people. Bundling allows these groups to chute even more money to campaigns than they could independently under campaign finance laws (PublicCitizen). This is an example of how wealthy and powerful elites of a destructive corporation fund the Clinton campaign, while Clinton attempts to paint the public a completely different picture. This certainly is not the only instance of Hillary Clinton’s commitment to corporations and establishment politics. Her evident likability on Wall Street, along with her $675,000 Goldman Sachs speaking fees, has left a bad taste in young people’s mouths. Clinton has also been fired at by millennials for holding a particular belief on an issue, and then altering that belief for the sake of gaining progressive votes. Over the past year, there have been viral videos all around the web hinting towards Clinton’s supposed hypocrisy. For example, the famous comparison of Clinton declaring she was against gay marriage in 2004, but then suddenly showing her support for the LGBTQ+ community in 2013. Take these reasons and team them up with the uncertainty of the status of her private emails, her flip-flopping stance on whether she is centrist or progressive, her agreement with the Iraq War in 2004, her actions before the economic crash of 2008, and her overall connection to the establishment are reasons why Millennials are displeased by the thought of a Hillary Clinton presidency (Taibbi 2016). With all of this uncovered information, the #HillaryResearch hashtag became a vehicle to further move memes and viral videos that bring awareness to the dishonest values Clinton represents. This Internet vehicle describes the new media term, end-to-end communication. Endto-end communication describes how the Internet gives people the ability to spread information about Clinton from the present and from the past. For young social media users, this creates a clearinghouse for new stories and a long-lived archive of past stories (Shirky 2008). By firing at young people for unreasonably supporting Bernie Sanders, Clinton ended up sparking bad publicity for herself on a platform where young people reign. Clearly Hillary Clinton did not become a millennial
favorite for reasons previously stated, but she also missed out on a group of people whom she expected to bring overwhelming support to her campaign. Young feminists, also know as the 4th wave feminists, made it clear on both the internet and in the voting booths that Clinton was not their preferred candidate. Unlike older feminists, young women do not see gender first, but instead are interested in the candidate who demonstrates the best approach to women's issues. Right from the start, young women proved that they were not going to choose a candidate solely because she is a woman. Results from early in the primary season showed that Bernie Sanders won the support of 84% of women under the age of 30 in the Iowa caucus (Kaplan 2016). In the New Hampshire primary, Sanders beat Clinton by nearly 60 points in the same demographic (CBSNews). Of course women across all age groups are concerned with women's issues, but the definition of these issues has altered throughout the years. Millennial women want a candidate who appeals to all women. This means women of color, women of lower class, women of cultural and religious minority, disabled women, and LGBTQ+ women. These women make up what is called intersectional feminism, which has become a key difference between 2nd / 3rd wave feminists and the 4th wave feminists of today. Intersectional feminism appeals to all oppressed women, and connects the various degrees of oppression. Young women find that Hillary Clinton appeals to the ideals of “white feminism” which exclusively addresses the struggles of only white middle-class women, while Bernie Sanders appeals more to intersectional feminism (Kozlowska 2016). Building off this idea, the prominent women of Clinton’s generation have made it painstakingly clear that their ideals do not match with those of today’s feminists. At a Hillary Clinton rally in February 2016, Madeline Albright, the first woman US secretary of state, said with great vigor: “There’s a special place in hell for women who don’t help each other” (Rappeport 2016). In other words, women who don’t vote for Hillary Clinton are sinking their own ship. Although the 78-year-old Albright has since apologized, young women were rightfully insulted by the ironically sexist comment. Madeline Albright was not the only notable 2nd wave feminist who took a dig at young feminists for supporting Bernie. That same month, Gloria Steinem, a pioneer for women’s rights of the second wave, voiced her opinion on Real Time with Bill Maher
as to why she thinks young feminists are supporting Sanders. “They’re going to get more activist as they get older. And when you’re young, you’re thinking ‘Where are the boys?’ The boys are with Bernie.” Maher, obviously shocked by the comment, replied by stating if he ever said that he’d be in trouble (Rappeport 2016). Steinem has also apologized for her statement, but young women are well aware that feminists of the past and feminists of the present are not on the same page. Today’s feminists, along with many young people, want to fight to bring down the hierarchical political establishment that has been oppressing people based on gender, race, sexuality, class, and disability. Young women see Clinton as part of the establishment circus, and do not believe she is the right person to dismantle institutional oppression. It’s important to note that Hillary Clinton supporters highly value issues such as maternity leave, equal pay, universal child care, and reproductive rights. Sanders supporters also value these issues, but they view issues such as economic equality, racial and criminal justice, climate change and education with high importance as well. Young feminists see these issues heavily intertwined with women’s issues (Kozlowska 2016). For example, economic equality is a women’s issue because according to the U.S. Department of Labor, women account for less than half of the U.S. working population, yet nearly 6 in 10 workers earning the minimum wage are women. In an attempt to garner support from young feminists, Hillary Clinton did try to connect through the use of new media and famous millennial women. A well-known attempt was Clinton’s surprise appearance on Comedy Central’s Broad City. Broad City, the quirky television program known for its elements of girl-power and smoking weed, seemed like the perfect opportunity for Clinton to appeal to young women. The promotion for Clinton’s cameo episode was present all over Twitter, with a group selfie of Hillary Clinton, Ilana Glazer, Abbi Jacobson, and producer Amy Poehler. The Clinton campaign tried to capitalize off two mediums: Comedy Central (cable television largely viewed by millennials), and Twitter (social media platform use heavily by young people.) Although it was a good idea in theory, perhaps a rebellious comedy like Broad City isn’t quite the place for an establishment politician like Hillary Clinton to appear. This was not the only attempt to win the support of young women. The Clinton campaign also took a swing by recruiting
famous millennial women like Lena Dunham, Demi Lovato, and Katy Perry to advocate for her presidency on social media and at her rallies. Despite these efforts, Clinton still fell short when it came to attracting a wave of young ladies to rally behind her campaign. Although Hillary Clinton was overall successful in winning the majority of states and delegates in the 2016 primary, her campaign ultimately failed when it came to securing the Millennial vote. New media platforms, such as memes and hashtags on Twitter and Facebook, created a different type of political discourse that worked against Clinton. This new political discourse created a medium where average people, especially the young, could retaliate back against establishment politicians like Hillary Clinton. The new media landscape of millennials instead viewed Bernie Sanders as the grassroots, anti-establishment savior who might have had a chance of eradicating inequality in the United States. The largest failure here was that even young women had difficulty putting their trust in Hillary Clinton, due to an overall shift in feminist values. There’s no doubt the primaries exemplified an apparent disconnect between Hillary Clinton and young Democrats, but that doesn’t mean there’s no hope for creating a connection in the general election. When faced with the GOP alternative, most left-leaning millennials will see Hillary Clinton as the better option.

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The Ethics of Physician-assisted Death

By Amanda Dwyer

Physician-assisted death is the process that allows terminally ill adults to request from their physician, receive from their pharmacist, and ultimately take a lethal dose of medication to end their life. The decision is voluntary and only the person receiving the medication can administer it. Often interchanged with terminology such as physician-assisted suicide and death with dignity, the act is currently legal in six states in America. The United States Supreme Court ruled that each state would be permitted to regulate the policies that involve physician-assisted death (PAD) in 1997. Oregon was the first state to legalize PAD under the “Death with Dignity Act” followed by Montana, Washington, Vermont, California, and most recently Colorado. Physician-assisted death has been and remains to be highly controversial and debated, not only in our country but the entire world. People’s opinions on this act are deeply intertwined with individual’s ethics and ultimately their beliefs about what a “meaningful life” truly is. The battle about whether or not PAD is ethical relates greatly with what people hold in their minds as virtues and vices.

Opponents of physician-assisted death ultimately make their arguments based on spiritual reasons, or responsibilities of the medical field. Physician-assisted death was once more commonly known as physician-assisted suicide and to this day, the term is still regularly used, especially with those who find in their life pleasure, engagement and meaning within their religious values. Today 70.6% of Americans identify as Christian. Research shows that Christians are less likely to support the legalization of PAD when compared with those who have no religious beliefs. The predominant religion in the United States conditions explicitly that any form of suicide is wrong. It goes against religious beliefs that a higher power is to choose when life is given and when life is taken away. Furthermore, it is argued that a physician prescribing the drug that will ultimately take a life goes against the Bible’s words “You shall not kill.” Those who hold high value to their religious beliefs do not believe that doctors have the right to “play God.” Another religious argument that opposes PAD is that when an individual is
diagnosed with a terminal illness those surrounding that individual are to care for them and treat them with virtues such as compassion and love. They believe that this is a time when caregivers can better understand the meaning of life.5 Those who fight the legalization of policies supporting physician-assisted death because of spiritual values believe that PAD is unethical in every aspect. They attribute vices to those who choose to pursue this act and those who support it, such as greed, impatience and cowardice. Their religious beliefs hold them and others to high standards that reflect their understandings of virtues such as passion, loyalty and faith.

Another dominant argument that opposes the act of physician-assisted death is the principle that this act contradicts the ethical role that the medical field is supposed to hold, in relation to the Hippocratic oath.6 Some believe that doctors should have a moral responsibility to act as a healer, and only this. They suggest that people should use alternatives, rather than PAD, to comfort them as the illness takes its course. The act of physician-assisted death directly contradicts the American Medical Association’s Code of Medical Ethics, by intentionally ending a life, even if the patient wants it.7

Furthermore, some argue that its legalization could result in a weakening of the guidelines that currently are in effect where it is legal. Some discuss the possibility that this act could eventually be performed on people with mental diseases, old age, suffering from depression, among other things, rather than just for those who are terminally ill. This could result in doctors abusing this procedure, whether that is because of the greed of a larger profit with insurance company, or the selfishness of utilizing easier procedure rather than other medical options.8 Those who oppose PAD, because of their ethical standards for the medical field, believe that those who choose to forego PAD, as a patient, a doctor, or a supporter, emulate vices such as greed, injustice and impatience. Those who oppose physician-assisted death lay their moral beliefs with their oppositions to this procedure. Ultimately, they believe that it is ethically corrupt and morally incorrect because it goes against their interpretation of important values.

People who support the legalization of physician-assisted suicide understand the procedure with a completely different mentality. Those who support this procedure root their reasoning within their appreciation of
“autonomy.” They support PAD because they believe that every terminally ill, competent patient, with six months or under to live, should have control of how their life will end. That patient’s death is inevitable and therefore they should have the freedom to choose ‘dying with dignity.’ “Each individual has a right to make the most intimate and personal choices central to personal dignity and autonomy.”

Physician-assisted death allows terminally ill patients to be relieved from the pain they endure and the agonizing end that a terminal illness can entail. Supporters believe that PAD is a procedure that can help to end the suffering of patients who are already facing piles of hardship. The policies currently protecting the use of PAD restrict the procedure to the patient only when fully competent to consume the drug, and they must administer the drug. This counters the opposition’s belief that doctors may misuse this treatment. Furthermore, they argue that if patients have access to medical treatments that may extend their lives, that they should access to treatments that will end their suffering.

Supporters of PAD believe their opinions represent their values of compassion, respect and understanding.

Each side of the ethical argument of physician-assisted death holds significant weight that truthfully reveals what they believe is morally correct. Each side’s understanding of values significantly influences their opinions. After researching each judgment of whether the act of physician-assisted death is ethical or unethical, I have been able to assess the medical procedure by internalizing the information and comparing it with my own core ethics and values. I choose to support physician-assisted suicide.

A study conducted by Gallup in 2015 revealed that 68% of Americans support physician-assisted suicide. In the last two decades, the public opinion has shifted towards support by more than 20 percent. Mass media plays a detrimental part in the way that the public views and forms their opinions on issues. Recently, media coverage of this medical treatment has been more sympathetic and compassionate. It has focused more on the individual who is facing a terminal illness, rather than comparing the act of PAD to suicide or suggesting it is an abuse of medical power. By focusing on the character of those who are terminally ill and hope to explore the
option of PAD, the public has shifted their opinions on the topic to a more compassionate viewpoint. A piece of media that specifically influenced my opinions was a YouTube video of a woman named Brittany Maynard. The rise of the digital economy has played an integral part in communicating the topic of physician-assisted death. Although mass media can often be abused and taken advantage of, I believe that the rise of the digital economy in the relation to PAD has allowed for people to understand the procedure from a different perspective. It has realigned many vices that were casted upon it to many virtues that those who support PAD represent.

Brittany Maynard was a 29-year-old woman from California. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 2006, and married Daniel Diaz in September of 2012. On January 1 of 2014 Brittany Maynard was diagnosed with a form of brain cancer. She received treatment, a partial craniotomy, soon after it was detected. The cancer returned in April of that year, this time as grade 4 astrocytoma. Brittany was given six months to live. At the time, death with dignity was not legal in California. Brittany and her husband, along with other close relatives, chose to move to Oregon where the procedure was legal. From then on, she became an advocate for the legalization of physician-assisted death.

Brittany shared her story by uniting with “Compassion & Choices” and publishing a piece for CNN, “My Right to Death with Dignity at 29”. Her story touched the hearts of Americans, and I believe this powerful impact was because the media represented Brittany Maynard’s character. Brittany represents arguably all virtues. Brittany was courageous, compassionate, kind, wise, fair, loving, brave, and sought happiness everyday. All of the traits that she represented put her in the category of a morally upright individual. The media’s coverage of her story was able communicate this with the public, myself included. By exploring some of the key virtues that Brittany Maynard was able convey with the help of the rise of communicative media, I am able to argue that PAD is an ethically correct decision.

Brittany was courageous. Death is something that every individual will face eventually, but the act of choosing when one’s self will die through the medical channel is relatively new and extremely controversial. Brittany was
the first young woman to receive such vast amounts of national attention for her decision to forego PAD. She put herself in a position to be questioned, criticized and closely monitored. Brene Brown, an American researcher and professor once said, “Vulnerability is our most accurate measurement of courage.” In a YouTube video released by CompassionChoices, titled “A New Video for my Friends” Brittany says, “To be perfectly candid, in the last three months I’ve gained over 25 pounds, over nothing I’ve put in my mouth except for prescription medications. I don’t like being photographed, I don’t like being filmed, I don’t like spending a lot of time looking in the mirror and I am not full of self hate or loathing, it’s just that my body has changed so quickly, You really stop recognizing yourself and that’s really personal.” Brittany did not feel comfortable even looking at her own appearance because she no longer felt like herself. But, because what she was advocating was so important to her she put herself in front of a worldwide audience. By putting herself in this place of extreme vulnerability, she exemplifies the virtue of courage.

Brittany Maynard was compassionate. Author Brad Warner once wrote, “Compassion is the ability to see what needs doing right now and the willingness to do it right now.” When Brittany was diagnosed with brain cancer and given six months to live, she lived in California. At the time, PAD was not legal there, so when she wanted to explore that option she was forced to move from California to Oregon. With less than six months to live, she was put in a position where she had to leave from her home, her friends, her family and the life that she knew and loved. Brittany said, “I am heartbroken that I had to leave behind my home, my community and friends in California.” This only added to the agonizing hardships that her terminal illness had forced upon her. Brittany became an advocate for “death with dignity” laws so that others in her position would not be troubled with yet another devastating difficulty. She immediately did everything she could to work towards legalization of physician-assisted death everywhere. She saw what needed to be done, and even with less than six months to live, she had the willingness to do so. Brittany said, “My goal of course is to influence this policy for positive change and I would like to see all Americans have access to the same healthcare rights.” Her compassion for this cause allowed the public to understand just how important this issue was to her.
Brittany Maynard was happy. She chose physician-assisted death because she was determined to have her already limited days be ones that included joy. “People who criticize me for not waiting longer, or whatever they’ve decided is best for me, it hurts because I risk it. I risk it everyday that I wake up. I do it because I still feel good enough, and I still have find enough joy and I still laugh and smile with my friends and family enough, that it doesn’t seem like my time right now. But it will come because I feel myself getting sicker, it’s happening each week.” Finding happiness, whether that was through hiking, traveling, or spending time with her friends and family, was what gave Brittany’s life meaning. Brittany knew that her life was inevitably going to end prematurely. This fact was inevitable. What was avoidable was letting the disease dictate the rest of the time she was given. Brittany explored the options of palliative care as well as terminal sedation, two medical options for terminally ill patients. “The procedure involves drugging the patient into a coma. Nutrition and fluids are then withheld until the person dies of the disease or dehydration. No one can tell when that would happen… I can’t imagine what that process would be like. I may be minimally conscious, suffering, unable to move or speak… I refuse that procedure because I want to live fully until I die… I cannot change the fact that I am dying but I am living my final days to the fullest.” Death with dignity allowed her to live her the rest of her days as she had hoped. She was able to choose when she would pass, before the disease would take not only her life, but also her happiness and her purpose.

Death is something that every individual will meet one day. Psychologist Erik Erikson studied is well known for his studies on the psychological development of humans. He studied the psychological developments that humans go through as stages, beginning at birth and ending at death. The final stage of life, stage 8, begins at age 65 and ends at death. During this stage individuals reflect upon their lives with a sense of integrity or a sense of despair. If one is able to look back upon their lives with a sense of fulfillment due to how they spent their years, and a feeling of pride because of who they have become, the individual is able to accept death. If one is not able to do this, they feel dejection and fear death. 14

Erikson’s study can be applied to terminal illness. Terminal illnesses
reduce individual’s timelines. This final stage happens at an earlier stage for some, as they are faced with the real possibility of death much sooner than they had planned. Their integrity vs. despair stage can happen at an age much younger than 65; in the case of Brittany Maynard, that age was 29. One of the main arguments that supporters of PAD make is that individuals with a terminal illness should have the right to die with integrity. Physician-assisted death allows for patients to end their lives before their disease depletes their true character. The option of having PAD allows patients to come to terms with death and accept their fate with their integrity intact. Terminal illness has the capability of completely diminishing one’s honor and rips them of who they have worked to become. Death with dignity allows for one to have autonomy over the way that they will die. This helps to diminish the fear of suffering and a painful death. For terminally ill patients, PAD can help them reach this final life stage with integrity rather than despair, as well as peace of mind.

One once said, “When writing the story of your life, don’t let anyone else hold the pen.” To be authentic is to stay true to your values, even when it’s challenging to do so. It’s a relationship between your actions and your morals. Brittany Maynard was a young woman who illustrated the virtues and values many seek to obtain. She was compassionate, kind, brave, wise, and terminally ill. But, she did not let this terminal illness take away the abundance of other virtuous features she spent her life achieving. Brittany’s loyalty to her values was tested when she was given six months to live, but physician-assisted death allowed her to remain true to integral herself. Under the watchful, skeptical eye of the American public she was able to prove that death with dignity can be a morally correct decision. The autonomy of choosing how she would die allowed her to live the rest of her life with value. She did not allow others to dictate her decision because they had previous reservations of why PAD is ethically incorrect. By holding the pen of her own life, she allowed others to understand PAD from a different perspective and paved the way for a new conversation on both the legality and the ethical correctness of death with dignity.

The media has provided the public with a new form of communication. The media coverage that Brittany Maynard’s story received
reframed the controversial topic of physician-assisted death. Her story touched millions and allowed the public to rethink if this treatment is actually unethical. Brittany Maynard passed on November 1, 2014 in her own home with her immediate family and close friend. Those who were with her described her passing as peaceful, filled with sharing of memories and final words of love. The advocating for the legalization of PAD in all states done by Brittany before her death influenced the conversation about the correctness of this act. She demonstrated in front of a national audience that she was a beautiful person, with a love for living, even though she was facing a terminal illness. Rather than allowing the disease completely deplete her authentic self, full of happiness, compassion, courage, she decided to forego this treatment. Her final communication with the public was in the form of a Facebook post she wrote while laying in bed. “Goodbye to all my dear friends and family that I love. Today is the day I have chosen to pass away with dignity in the face of my terminal illness, this terrible brain cancer that has taken so much from me… but would have taken so much more. The world is a beautiful place, travel has been my greatest teacher; my close friends and folks are the greatest givers. I even have a ring of support around my bed as I type… Goodbye world. Spread good energy. Pay it forward!” Brittany’s beautiful authentic self was evident even in her final moments. She, with the help of PAD, was able to exit the world with integrity, not in despair. Her personal story, which she graciously shared with the world, has changed how people view physician-assisted death. Her legacy created a lasting effect on the ethicalness of the treatment. On June 9, of this year, one of Brittany’s goals was achieved. California legalized and put into effect physician-assisted death, under the “End of Life Option Act.” Physician-assisted death is not suicide. These people do not want to die; rather they do not want their illness to kill them.

(AP Photo) Pictured above is Dan Diaz, Brittany Maynard’s husband, holding a photo of Brittany on their wedding day, at a rally last year calling for Governor Jerry Brown to sign the right-to-die bill.
To engage with my topic I decided to advocate for the legality of physician-assisted suicide in all fifty of the United States. Brittany focused on legalizing PAD in California her home state. Currently in New Hampshire this treatment is illegal and there is no pending legislative activity in regards to it. I decided that sending my paper to elected officials would be a good place to start effectively communicating why I believe physician-assisted death should be legalized in New Hampshire. I sent a paper copy of this paper along with the results from a survey that I conducted on public opinion on PAD of students at UNH along with older individuals to the following address.

Officer of the Governor State House
107 North Main Street Concord, NH 03301

I also emailed a copy through the government website.

To understand how people in my life feel about the legality of physician-assisted death I released a survey. Below are my results:

When asked, “Do you agree or disagree that physician-assisted death should be legalized for terminally ill patients?” Overall, 68% of 63 respondents responded that they agree (strongly or somewhat).

I also contacted New Hampshire legislators by emailing them a post that Compassion and Choices, the advocacy group Brittany joined with,
I am one of the 100 million Americans who followed Brittany Maynard, just 29 years old, and her courageous journey to death with dignity in Oregon. Now I am answering her call to action to join a nationwide movement that will make death with dignity an accessible healthcare choice for terminally ill Americans. She said it was unethical that most of us don’t have that option, and I agree.

Like 70 percent of people in this country, I believe that our rights and freedoms are ours to exercise until we take our last breath, and having a terminal illness doesn’t change that. I am calling on you as my elected representative to guarantee those rights for me.

You have the opportunity and the responsibility to give this freedom to your constituents. The record shows that in states where it is an authorized medical practice, aid in dying works as intended, and is not subject to abuse. It also provides great peace of mind to terminally ill adults as they approach life’s end.

Brittany Maynard demonstrated that people who want death with dignity would rather live and are not suicidal. She was busy living fully until the very end. Brittany chose to access Oregon’s 17-year old death-with-dignity law and her extended family supported her decision to avoid the cruel and drawn out dying process her cancer would bring. Aid in dying is not a choice of death over life. It is an option for those who are dying that spares them unbearable suffering and offers a controlled and peaceful ending. All dying people deserve that option, and the tremendous peace of mind that comes with it.

I also decided to look into other ways that I could begin to get involved on a national level. I was able to sign several petitions through advocacy websites where physician-assisted death is being discussed.

I now receive emails about other petitions I can sign, and other ways I can get involved to help fulfill the goals I have because of Brittany’s legacy. I look forward to the updates I hear by email about progress that my interaction with the cause has helped achieve.
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A Rhetorical Analysis of Before the Flood

By Hannah Lane

An Introduction to the Film:

Most people agree with scientists that climate change is a fact, so why do we need another film about the topic? In the fall of 2016, producer Leonardo DiCaprio and director Fisher Stevens launched their world premiere of Before the Flood commercial free on multiple platforms, including The National Geographic Channel. They explored climate change across the globe, and found possible solutions to the major problems they exposed.

This film is important to look at critically for a few reasons. First, the film is a great description of the current struggles of climate change in the world. It is presented in a time where the topic is becoming a bigger issue every day, and people are looking for answers. Second, the film is also important to analyze to discover what techniques the rhetor used in order to convey their message. The film uses multiple methods to get the audience’s attention and support, so it is important to look at these aspects of film making as well.

Descriptive Analysis of the Film:

In this section of the paper, the focus will be on examining the film based on the strategic choices of the rhetor. I will focus on the purpose, persona, audience, structure, tone, evidence, and other linguistic strategies of the text to determine this. This will help describe the documentary while also helping to bridge the gap between the choices made, and what they eventually will mean to the audience.

There are clearly two purposes for this film. The first is to educate the public about the immediate danger of climate change. In the opening scenes of the film, you can hear narrator DiCaprio say, “try to have a conversation with anyone about climate change and people just tune out” (Stevens, 2016, 00:04:48). This statement shows what the problem is- climate change is not taken seriously enough. The second purpose of the film is to show what steps can be taken to reduce our impact on the earth. For example, the film talks
about reducing the amount of meat we eat, and voting for politicians who will fight for climate change laws. From the start, the audience is presented with the problem, and is then talked through the solutions available.

In terms of persona, the role of the rhetor is to identify with the audience. DiCaprio speaks about his life and why he is the one to tell this story. Around 5 minutes into the documentary, he talks about people calling him “just an actor” and naïve. In response, he talks about how his whole life has brought him to this moment. He argues that he grew up being fascinated with extinct animals from a young age, and being angry because humans were the culprits. His entire life he has spoken about the issue, but he also talks about how surprised he was to find out how much he needed to learn about the subject. He shows that he knows probably as much as the average person. However, he is credible in the film because he takes these common questions and brings them to the experts.

Disregarding the historical analysis of the piece, the intended audience is most likely the people who either do not believe in climate change, or to those people who want to learn more. The film was originally aired on the Discovery Channel commercial free, but is now available on multiple platforms. This includes YouTube, Hulu, ITunes, Google Play, and more. So in reality, the audience is anyone who can access the internet and has speakers or a pair of headphones. The created audience will eventually be the people who watch and share the video with their own audiences. For example, I was introduced to this film because I saw an advertisement on television. So, the target is everyone, but the created audience is who decides to share it and talk about it on their own.

The tone of the film is both somber and hopeful at the same time. It takes the approach that this topic is extremely real and threatening, but that it can also be partially prevented. In the majority of the documentary, DiCaprio talks to over 20 experts who describe the problems that are contributing to climate change. It is a clear problem that is presented, and does not provide a solution or a feeling of hope until the very end. At this point, the screen is blank with only the words, “it is up to all of us” (Stevens, 2016, 1:29:00). So, while most of the film takes a somber look at the world, there is also a point of optimism towards the end.
In terms of the structure of the artifact, I have found two methods used. The first is a problem/solution method. DiCaprio is shown speaking to over 20 different specialists and experts in different fields of environmental change. The experts range from Climatologist Jason E. Box, to Executive Director of the Rainforest Action Network Lindsey Allen, all the way to Astronaut Dr. Piers Seller. In each of these sections, the experts talk about what problem climate change has presented to them, and what solutions they think need to be addressed and done.

The second method of the rhetor is a narrative and dramatic approach. This film is not only presented with cold hard facts, but also ties in an emotional aspect as well. DiCaprio talks to these experts through his own personal journey. He is following along, just like the audience is. For example, DiCaprio offers an emotional side when he goes to the melting ice caps with Dr. Enric Sala. In this scene, he shares how sad he feels that the animals in these waters need to migrate away from their homes to survive (Stevens, 2016, 00:10:00?). This type of conversation brings an emotional side to the story.

When sharing the facts provided in this documentary, there are many supporting materials presented to the audience. As mentioned before, there are over 20 professionals and experts who talk about their part in the science of climate change. It is not just scientists, but also politicians and world leaders who express their findings as well. Accompanied with these facts are multiple charts and animated graphs to help show the audience what the experts mean. For example, the process of carbon being released from burning trees and wood is shown in an animation with specialist Lindsey Allen (Stevens, 2016, 00:46:00). This helps the audience to understand what the complicated ideas are in the field.

Lastly, there is a painting that tells a story similar to the one DiCaprio is talking about. It is the painting of the Garden of Earthly Delights by artist Hieronymus Bosch in 1500AD. I will be explaining the purpose of this painting in greater detail in the method section. For now, I want to point out how it is a useful metaphorical tool that shows a world similar to ours that is destroyed by human greed and overpopulation. The use of this painting is a great metaphor that the audience can see and relate to.
Historical and Contextual Analysis:

In order to understand a piece of rhetoric, it is important to look at the historical and contextual aspects that are external from the artifact. In this section, the focus will be on these external elements. To do so, I will look at the exigence, audience, and constraints the video faces. This will be helpful when determining the effectiveness of the rhetoric later on during the critical process.

Exigence describes how the artifact came to be, and why it was created. Before the Flood was first aired in the fall of 2016 by Leonardo DiCaprio and Fisher Stevens, making these two men the main rhetors. In the start of the film, DiCaprio explains how the issue of climate change has focused on small, individual aspect like changing your light bulb. However, he argues that this is not the case anymore because the problem has gotten so much worse. (Stevens, 00:07:00). This explains the need to have the documentary and why the previous climate change documentaries do not work. In an interview for GQ Magazine, director Fisher Stevens said of DiCaprio, “and I said, ‘Ok well if you’re going to be in it, I’m down.’ Because who is going to bring awareness to the environmental issue more than Leonardo DiCaprio, at this point?” (Halls, 2016). This statement shows how DiCaprio had the idea for the film, and got Stevens on board. Lastly, in referencing his previous climate change films, Stevens says, “I knew Racing Extinction was great, but I didn’t know how many people were going to see it. I knew that if I could make a great film with Leo, we’d have a shot at a lot of people seeing it” (Halls, 2016). This final quote brings to light why DiCaprio was so important for the film. It was not about having the main narrator as an expert like past films, but gaining the public’s attention by bringing in the appeal to celebrity.

This alludes to some of the constraints that the rhetors face. When it comes to a video, the goal is usually to go viral. This is a hard thing to accomplish. Darlena Cunha, writer for Wired.com, explains how, “there’s a frustrating truth to success in the Internet age: in order for your work to reach an audience, someone with power has to give it a chance, and in order for someone in power to give it a chance, it has to have an audience” (Cunha, 2014). Thankfully, the documentary had an advantage by having a celebrity
be on center stage, and being directed by a well-known director. These two groups already have a following, so it ensured that the video would at least be seen by these two communities.

It is also important to look at the reaction the audience had after viewing the film. In general, the film was highly praised. It received a 70% on Rotten Tomatoes, 8.5/10 on IMDB and 95% by Google users (Google Search, 2016). Jeffrey M. Anderson, critic of Common Sense Media stated that, “this is one of many documentaries about climate change; many aren’t much fun, but with DiCaprio at its center, this one offers crucial, current information, as well as a measure of hope” (Anderson, 2016). In another review, Roxana Hadadid from Punch Drunk Critics raved by stating that, “this is well-researched, clearly articulated, and quite frankly terrifying stuff. Before the Flood makes you want to slap people in the face with your knowledge” (Hadadi, 2016). In these reviews, it is clear to see that the audiences and critics enjoyed the film. It received countless positive reviews and reached around 60 million people. (Calvario, 2016).

Overall, Before the Flood accomplished part of what it set out to do. It had a specific purpose, to help reduce the impact of climate change, and educate people about the seriousness of the situation. As stated above, the film accomplished at least one of its goals, which was to spread the word. Whether it helps the problem, we will have to wait and see. For now, it is just clear that the video has people talking about the issues at hand.

Method Analysis:
Through the descriptive and historical analysis, I have found that it will be most useful to use three major methods to analyze the effectiveness of the text. Through this section, the focus will be to comprehend what the methods ask of the critic, and then to explore what that means about the text, and if it fits into the method. I will be discussing a traditional neo-classical approach, a narrative approach, and an ideological approach.

A Classical Approach:
This first approach I chose is a classical approach. The main scholar on this method is Aristotle. He discussed a few ways to analyze the text, but the most important is to only analyze a persuasive or argument based one.
discussed before, it is clear that the main purpose of the film is to make an argument that climate change is a bigger deal than we had thought, and to show the audience the steps needed to fix it. Aristotle also talks about categorizing the message based on its intended purpose. The message can be forensic, which focuses on making decisions while recounting the past, deliberative, where the message discusses something that needs to be done in the future, or it can be epidictic. This is a commemoration or celebration of an event (Aristotle, 2006). In Before the Flood, the rhetor argues for actions that need to take place now/in the future to help reduce the impact of climate change. This means that the artifact falls under the deliberative category.

The next step is to analyze the message through invention, disposition, style, and delivery. This allows the critic to easily see what steps the rhetor took to create their argument, which will be helpful later on when discovering if the rhetor was successful or not. The first category is invention. This looks at the logos, pathos, and ethos of the artifact (Aristotle, 2006). For Aristotle, logos is the logic, or arguments made. In the film, we discussed how the arguments are made by the over 20 experts in the field. They argue how climate change is real, and then present how the problem effects their world of expertise. This is an argument by example, and you can see samples of this throughout the documentary. For instance, Harvard economics Professor Gregory Mankiw talks about the economic issues with climate change. He describes how taxes can be used to solve the issues by providing a carbon tax. As the prices for carbon rise, people will consume it less (Stevens, 2016, 01:01:00). Another example of this is from marine ecologist, Jeremy Jackson. His expertise is in coral reefs. He explains how they are dying from too much carbon intake, which is in turn causing starvation in fish who used to thrive off of the coral (Stevens, 2016, 00:46:00). From his experience in the field, he offers a different argument for climate change prevention than others.

Next, the critic is to look at the pathos and ethos of the artifact. Pathos is how well the artifact relates to the audience. As stated before, Leonardo DiCaprio is the voice of the audience. He finds through his journey that climate change is and will affect us, making the audience fear the same. Ethos, on the other hand, is the credibility of the rhetor. I have discussed this before
in past sections of this paper. The rhetor is credible because the film uses over 20 experts and specialists. It is not an actor telling you the facts, but scientists and professionals with experience in the field. It is also easy to find the disposition and style of the documentary. Disposition is the organization of the piece. The organization of this film is essentially a narrative. It opens and closes with the painting the Garden of Earthly Delight, and infuses the hard facts and arguments in-between. The style of this is very clear and concise. There is a story tied together with facts, experts, charts, and graphs. The rhetor wants the audience to know the consequences of climate change, and does not want to discuss the matter without coming to a specific point. As for the delivery of the artifact, the use of live camera shots and animated graphs are catching to the eye. The most prominent are the images in the beginning and the end, which show an almost dystopian world.

Interpretations of a Classical Approach:

After going through the steps to a classical Aristotle Perspective, I have concluded that it was a successful argumentative artifact. It met all of the requirements of the method, and it was easy to see what the rhetor did right. The choice to use multiple experts provides credibility to the rhetor and to the film as a whole. It means that they knew DiCaprio was not the most credible source from the start, so they needed to make up for that. This means that the rhetor believes that audiences put value in facts and science in our society.

A Narrative Approach:

The second method I chose to use was a narrative one. Walter Fisher, author of Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm, explains how, “narrative criticism focuses on the stories a speaker or writer tells to understand how they help us make meaning out of our daily human experiences (Fisher, 1984). People respond more to stories because they are easier to relate to and understand. For this section of the paper, I will only be discussing the narrative presented at the beginning and ending of the film. According to Deanna Sellnow, author of The Rhetorical Power of Popular Culture: Considering Mediated Texts, there are multiple elements the critic
must identify in order to make conclusions about the artifact. These include setting, characters, narrator, events, temporal and casual relations, audience, and themes (Sellnow, 2013). I will now go through this process for the narrative of the Garden of Earthly Delights (Appendix I). DiCaprio brings up this painting in the beginning and end of the documentary. The painting, which hung above his crib as a child, is set in world that looks much like ours. The characters presented are humans and animals roaming the earth through time. DiCaprio, the narrator of the story, compares the painting from the past to our current and future lives. It involves three different acts. Act I is the creation of the world. It shows the how the animals and humans start to be created, and the land is lush and green. Act II is the story of humans and animals happily living together at first. Then, as Bosch paints downwards, humans begin to take over. Creation goes into their hands, and they begin to control the animals and overpopulate the earth. In Act III, Bosch portrays the dark and scary consequences of the previous act. The sky and earth are scorched black, and the humans and animals begin to die off. This is the part right before the biblical flood, where human sins are washed away and start anew (Mellin, 2016). DiCaprio describes how this happens over a long period of time. To get the audience into perspective, he points out that we are currently in the second half of Act II, but very close to Act III. This pushes the idea that the more we consume, the more it will hurt us in the end. The theme provided by this painting is one of greed and power.

**Interpretations of a Narrative Approach:**

After looking at this narrative approach, it is clear that the rhetor wanted the audience to not only see the facts presented about the subject, but also understand it from a more meaningful and real place. This metaphor of Bosch’s painting shows the consequences of human’s actions against the climate. It is scary, but also very likely based on the expert’s facts that were shared. DiCaprio successfully shared this story by using all of the elements of a traditional narrative. He most likely chose to use the metaphor because it is a connection to the audience in a different way than before. It is for all of those people who connect to images more than science or boring evidence. It means that while we value facts in our society, it is easier for us to understand images and stories.
An Ideological Approach:
The final method I will use to analyze the text is an ideological approach. This is the idea that you will be able to analyze the effectiveness of an artifact based on the dominant ideologies that are presented. In doing so, one must also silence the opposing ideologies. Michael McGee, author of the “Ideograph”: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology, explains how, “ideology, however assumes that the exposure of falsity is a moral act: though we have never experienced a ‘true consciousness,’ it is nonetheless theoretically accessible to us, and because of such accessibility, we are morally remiss if we do not discard the false and approach the truth” (McGee, 1980, p. 3). In this sense, McGee argues that it is our duty as moral beings to fight for what is good and get rid of the morally bad.

In terms of this documentary, the overall ideology is humanity. DiCaprio shows that we still have the ability to save ourselves and save each other. It is not hard to see why this is a dominant idea of society. Everyone wants to live in a better world than before, and no one intentionally wants to hurt others. Of course, this is not true for all people, but it is the dominant idea of society and humanity in general. For example, we expect to be helped in times of need, and in turn put value on charity and giving opportunities to those who cannot attain them.

Before the Flood latches onto this idea of humanity and uses it to push their agenda. An example of this is of the people DiCaprio speaks with in India. Sunita Narain, an Indian activist and environmentalist, talks to him about the struggles of India’s citizens trying to break out of poverty. She describes how they care about climate change, but with 300 million people without power or light in the country, sometimes the cheaper option (coal) is the only answer. She continues with the idea that if richer countries put the money and effort into renewable energy, then it will be more affordable for these 300 million people to impact the world in a better way (Stevens, 2016, 00:34:00).

Since humanity is the ideograph, cruelty and indifference will need to be shown as immoral. Since this is generally clear to most people, the documentary instead focuses on the immoral allegations against the scientific community, who essentially say that humanity is not in danger. The rhetor
shows these people as the “outsiders” and politically corrupt. For example, DiCaprio interviews the mayor of Miami Beach, Philip Levine. He talks about sunny day flooding, and the dangers that it poses for the city (Stevens, 2016, 00:20:00). When DiCaprio asks why their current solution to the problem will only help for the next 50 years, Levine says that it is people like Florida Governor Rick Scott and Florida Senator Marco Rubio who are to blame. Since they do not agree with scientists about climate change, they refuse to help make long term plans to prevent the problem. Instead, they only approved the 50 year, short term plan, which costs the city 400 million tax dollars.

**Interpretations of an Ideological Approach:**

By looking at the film through an ideological approach, I have found that the rhetor’s choice to use humanity was an important way to draw in the audience and show the negative side to corrupt politicians. It means that the rhetor knew that there would be people who would encounter the film with this kind of mind set. So, while it might ignite hatred or rage for politicians for some audiences, it could also make these politicians look closer at what they have fought for. This is obviously a fantasy, but one that is important to see. Focusing on the humanity of the topic shows that the rhetor believes that the audience will most likely connect with the idea. They are inclined to believe it more than other ideas, because it is a dominant ideology in society.

**Evaluations:**

This last section will focus on my own thoughts on the effectiveness of the documentary. I will take into account how the artifact fit the different methods, and the response of the piece as well. In order to do so, I will look at seven different aspects of the film. This analysis includes methods of; utility, artistry, morality, science, historical, psychological, and political views.

The first question to answer is in terms of utility: did the message do as intended? In most cases, I would argue that it was successful. It got the word out to the public that climate change is no longer a small issue. As stated in the descriptive analysis, DiCaprio talks about how we used to think that changing a light bulb would fix everything. It is clear now that this is not the case. The film also received majority good reviews, and reached over 60 million people. As for getting the word out, yes, I think it accomplished that.
As for the second purpose, of showing what actions need to be taken, I am not so sure. The more I think back to the film, the less I remember what it is that I can specifically do. It is very clear about what the dangers are, but only says to think more critically about the foods and products that you consume, and to vote for officials that agree with you. While this is a solution, it is not a very easy one to accomplish. I foresee this film having great impact at first, but not impacting the actual laws very much. In fact, this film came out right before the 2016 election, where many republicans who are against the idea of climate change were voted into office.

As for artistry, I definitely think that the movie had creative points throughout. I really enjoyed the story of the painting, and watching DiCaprio fly across the world on this “epic” journey. It brought an imaginative side to a film that could have honestly been quite one sided and boring. The narrative brought the audience into the conversation, showing them how much it can affect their life.

Morally, the film follows the ideology that it is moral to help each other prosper, and immoral to let the people suffer from a dying planet. It advances the good only if the audience decides to actually listen and follow along. Interestingly, the film focuses mostly on the consequence of human suffrage, and not of planet suffrage. This might have been to draw the audience in and make the problem feel very real to them personally. It would have been even more powerful to see not just the effect of climate on the people, but also the world as a whole.

Scientifically and historically, the rhetor successfully shows how the problem is relevant in the past, and needs to be a priority in the future. It represents reality with plenty of cold, hard facts and evidence. It also talks about the past issues with climate change, and how they are most likely going to repeat themselves or get worse as time goes on. This is useful, because it shows the audience how relevant the topic is.

My biggest issue with the film is with the psychological and political agendas that it tries to accomplish. Psychologically, the film motivates the audience to do something. People will leave the film wanting to eat less beef, and reducing their palm oil consumption. However, the political side, which tries to change legislation, is more abstract. Changing your diet or the products that you buy
is easy for an audience to do. It is a whole other complicated thing to try and change legislation. Their solution to this was to vote for politicians who agree and accept climate change. In the wake of the election, this is pretty irrelevant. What is the solution to the problem when the vote has passed, and it did not go according to plan?

Final Thoughts:
Overall, I am very pleased with Before the Flood. I was surprised to learn so much from all of the experts that spoke. I was also drawn into the narrative of DiCaprio’s journey and impacted by the Garden of Earthly Delights. After watching this film and speaking with my roommates, we all challenged ourselves to eat less red meat. I have also made it a goal to buy less products with palm oil (which by the way is in everything). So, in some aspects, yes, DiCaprio did make me rethink climate change. However, I am still left with a pit in my stomach of dread for our future. Will this new wave of politicians take this film and the scientific facts that are presented into consideration? At this point, I do not think that even Leo knows.

Appendix I:

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<th>ACT I</th>
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Garden of Earthly Delight, painted by Hieronymus Bosch, 1500AD. Retrieved from: https://www.beforetheflood.com/explore/the-painting/
Work Cited


Halls, E. (2016, October 20). Leonardo DiCaprio almost died making his


