YOU BELONG
AT MONTEVALLO.

University of Montevallo
TRIO McNair Scholars Program
2018 Research Journal

Welcome!

Undergraduate research is the pinnacle in undergraduate education as it truly is a comprehensive learning experience. One of the reasons I am so passionate about undergraduate research is that I have seen in some of my students over the years a transformation which is undeniable when they do an undergraduate research project. It requires the student to draw knowledge obtained from many different courses and venture into the unknown, where standardized laboratory experiments are a thing of the past. When research students discover something that has never before been known, it is most exhilarating. Seeing students transformed as a result of the undergraduate research experience is very rewarding. It is this I cherish as a teacher and researcher.

The University of Montevallo Undergraduate Research Program coupled with the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program provide undergraduates from all fields of study the opportunity to conduct research under the guidance of an experienced faculty member. The relationship that is created and nurtured as these projects are carried out is remarkable. The guidance students receive in a research setting is undeniably one of the greatest benefits. In addition to learning research methods and improving critical thinking skills, completing an undergraduate research project affords the student an opportunity to present their research to their community of scholars at professional meetings and conferences. Learning to communicate the results they have obtained with the world around them is a feat in and of itself. This certainly assists students as they prepare for graduate school and their future career. Participating in undergraduate research not only prepares students for the future but imparts confidence in all who participate.

As an undergraduate, I participated in undergraduate research, the experience changed my life and opened doors for me that I didn't know existed before that experience. As a result, I encourage everyone I can to get involved and participate in undergraduate research. It very well could be the most challenging and rewarding experience that one can do as an undergraduate. I hope that you all enjoy the articles contained in this issue of *You Belong at Montevallo* that showcase the work of our 2018 McNair Scholars.

Sincerely,

Cynthia P. Tidwell
Professor of Chemistry and Coordinator of Undergraduate Research

History of the University of Montevallo

Due to the efforts of Julia Tutwiler who advocated for the technical training of girls, theUniversity of Montevallo opened in October 1896 as the Alabama Girls' Industrial School (AGIS), a women-only technical school that also offered high school-level courses. AGIS became the Alabama Girls' Technical Institute in 1911, further adding "and College for Women" in 1919. The school gradually phased into being a traditional degree-granting institution, becoming Alabama College, State College for Women in 1923. The school's supporters lobbied the Alabama Legislature which passed a bill on January 15, 1956 that dropped the designation "State College for Women", effectively making the school coeducational.

The first men entered the school that same month. In 1965, the board of trustees authorized President D. P. Culp to sign the Certificates of Assurance of Compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the fall of 1968, three African American women, Carolyn Buprop, Ruby Kennbrew, and Dorothy (Lilly) Turner, enrolled in the university. On September 1, 1969, Alabama College was renamed the University of Montevallo. Today, the University of Montevallo is the only public liberal arts college in Alabama and is a member of the prestigious Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC).

Montevallo is located in the geographic center of the state of Alabama in an area rich with Civil War history. With slightly over 3,000 students, the university generates a significant economic impact on the surrounding communities in Shelby County. Many of the buildings on campus predate the founding of the college, including King House and Reynolds Hall. The King House is reserved for special guests of the campus, and Reynolds Hall is still used by the Theater Department and alumni relations. King House was reportedly the first home in Alabama to receive pane glass windows.

Montevallo's campus is considered an architectural jewel. Its appearance is more in line with private, elite institutions. The central part of campus is a National Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Olmsted Brothers' firm, who also designed the grounds for the Biltmore House in North Carolina, designed the main portion of the campus. Frederick Law Olmsted designed Central Park in New York.

Acknowledgements

About TRIO

The Federal TRIO Programs were established by Congress to provide educational assistance and opportunities for all Americans regardless of ethnic/racial backgrounds or economic status. TRIO encompassing Talent Search, Upward Bound, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunities Program, and the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievements programs reflect our country's commitment to diversity and equality in education. These programs, funded by the Title IV Higher Education Act of 1965, generally serve first generation low-income students, students with disabilities and students from groups underrepresented in higher education.

About Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.

Ronald Erwin McNair was born October 21, 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina. McNair's thirst *for* scientific knowled*g*e led him to a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics from North *Carolina* A&T State University, gradua*t*ing magna cum laude. Earning a Ph.*D. i*n Physics fr*om M*assachusetts Institute of Technology in 1976, he became a widely recognized expert in laser physics while working with the Hughes Research Laboratory.

Further distinguishing his career, he was chosen from a pool of ten thousand applicants for the NASA Space Shuttle Program. In 1986, Dr. McNair was a mission specialist aboard his second Challenger flight when the shuttle was tragically lost in an accident that claimed the lives of the entire crew. To honor the memory of Dr. McNair, Congress allocated funding for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program.

The University of Montevallo TRIO McNair Scholars Program

The University of Montevallo is committed to the legacy and memory of Dr. *Ron*ald E. McNair. Our schola*r*s, representing a diver*se* background, look forward to continuing their educational endeavors in graduate and doctoral programs. The program facilitates educational and academic growth through research opportunities, faculty mentoring relationships, and related services. The scholars attend and present their research at national conferences and network with professionals in their fields of study.

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The American South and *Le Grand Sud de France:* A Multicultural Comparison of Slang

By: Destiney Amos

Abstract

When compared historically to Aix-en-Provence, France, the small, sleepy town of Montevallo, Alabama in the United States of America is relatively young and dry, but despite the cultural differences between the two cities, the issues of language in each area are more similar than one might think. An aspect that both towns share is their picturesque landscape, which have long been inspiration for artists, but the land is not the only thing that connects the two towns. Both towns are in the south of their respective countries and both have residents who use slang frequently. This one characteristic propelled this research to explore possible similarities between the types of people and situations in which residents use slang and what these parallels reveal about each city. This research compares the slang used in the American South and the French South. By surveying participants about the frequency and situations in which they use slang in both languages with culturally equivalent words regarding "friendship", both similarities and differences between the United States of America and France are uncovered. This survey also discerns which type of people in their respective countries (man, woman, gay, straight, young, old, etc.) use certain slang words.

Introduction

When compared historically to Aix-en-Provence, France, the small, sleepy town of Montevallo, Alabama in the United States of America is relatively young and dry, but despite the cultural differences between the two cities, the issues of language in each area are more similar than one might think. Both cities are centers of commerce; Montevallo has its fertile soil which first attracted Native Americans of the Creek tribe and then its first white resident Jesse Wilson

in 1814. (Nutting, 18). Aix-en-Provence has its olive and wine industries as well as its long and rich history which dates back to 184 BCE, when it was first established by the Romans ("Aix or Aix en Provence"). One aspect that both towns share is their picturesque landscape, which have long been inspiration for artists, but the land is not the only thing that connects the two towns. Both towns are in the south of their respective countries and both have residents who use slang frequently. This one characteristic propelled this research to explore possible similarities between the types of people and situations in which residents use slang and what these parallels reveal about each city.

Literature Review

Slang words are usually non-standard, or words which do not seem to fit into the accepted cannon of words because they describe something that already has a word attached to it. A word is standard, "if it [is] the only one available in English to cover a certain concept or thing" (Adams, 3). It is often uncertain if words are considered slang. There are words in English, like bedhead for example, which are not recognized in any slang dictionaries, yet they are widely accepted as slang (4). Slang is something which Adams describes as being able to be noticed instinctively, at least by native speakers when he says, "Do we know what counts as slang and what doesn't, not by thinking about it, but in the gut?" (4). If a speaker is non-native, they are thus more likely to miss out on these cues of slang.

The dictionary definition of slang is tricky, as many prominent dictionaries describe them very differently, as Adams proves in comparing dictionary definitions of the word "slang." *The Encarta World Dictionary* defines slang as, "casual speech or writing words," or, "words used by an exclusive group to exclude members not of the group" (7). *The American Heritage College Dictionary* defines slang similarly as, "A kind of language especially occurring in kind and

playful speech usually made up of short-lived coinages and figures of speech deliberately used in place of standard terms for effects such as raciness, humor, or irreverence," or, "Language particular to a group; argot or jargon" (8). On another hand, *The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* defines slang as, "Language peculiar to a particular group: as argot or jargon," or "An informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech" (8). Finally, *The New Oxford American Dictionary (NOAD)* categorizes slang as, "A type of language that consists of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people" (8).

In the same way that Americans may transform words like "family" to "fam" or "best friend" to "bestie," the French, too, have similar transformations of their words. One common Parisian example is the changing of "Je ne sais pas" (I do not know") to "Chėpas" (Durán and McCool 287). Despite the languages having different forms, different words, and being in totally different language families, the slang may still operate in the same fashion in both languages. French does have some unique attributes, however. For example, the "e" at the end of word or sometimes in the middle of a word, commonly called the "e caduc" or "schwa", can be dropped completely. The same goes for the negative identifier "ne" (288). Both English and French drop parts of speech or parts of words, or even whole words entirely in the name of convenience, but they also use shortening methods to create slang words.

It is notable here that the English dictionaries use French borrowed words as synonyms for the word "slang" (Adams, 8). Adams describes a connection between English and French when he says, "Jargon is the oldest of the terms, entering English from French in the fourteenth century to mean 'unintelligible talk'" (8). In this situation, English words could not suffice to

describe a concept, so a slang word for the word "slang" arose from the French. Jargon, in this sense, is a word used to describe an in-group connection between a group of people and to which others are excluded and thus cannot understand the words being used. Argot is another word borrowed from French which is used to describe slang, but it has a much different connotation than jargon. Argot replaced another word used to describe slang "can't" (8). Adams states that,

> Can't started as a verb, probably in the sixteenth century, and referred to the beggar's whine (can't likely derives from Latin cantus song, and refers to sing-songy speech), though by the eighteenth century it referred to the language of gypsies and thieves, as well as beggars (in the minds of many, the groups overlapped) (8).

Although all three words seemingly overlap, the difference is crucial. A useful example is,

> Criminals speak can't or argot when they're on the game; anyone pursuing a legal vocation or avocation, from doctors to model train enthusiasts, employs a jargon suited to that particular occupation; any other language that characterizes a group and identifies speakers with that group ends up slang by default (9).

One thing is certain; "slang always rebels against the standard" (10).

The jargon surrounding language itself is complex and precise. The word "lexicon" is used to describe all the words in a language" (Schultz, 1). Tournier, a French linguist, created a spatial model which can help with understanding different types of vocabulary.
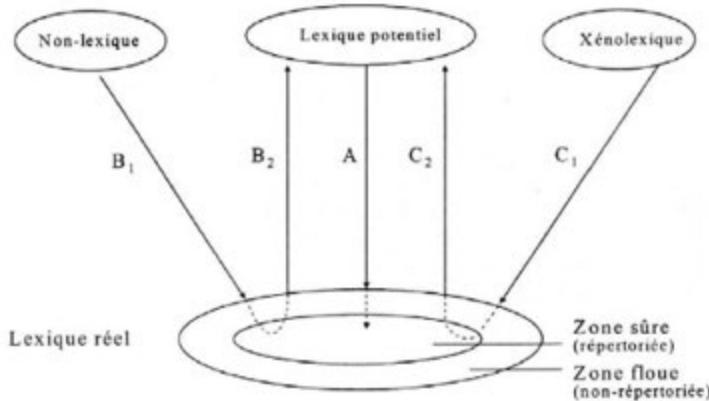
Fig. 0-1: *Tournier-model* ([3]1994, 15)

Schultz describes how the spatiality of the Tournier model can explain some of the different types of slang that is used every day,

> We find a safe zone (*zone sûre*) within this actual vocabulary which encompasses all the items which have been coined and lexicalized. In addition, we find a *zone floue*, including the items that have been produced and enjoy some currency in a language, but have not yet become amenity of the lexicon, i.e. they have not yet been recorded in the dictionary. *Le lexique potentiel*, the potential vocabulary, comprises all the lexical units (together with their forms, functions and meanings) which might be created according to the lexicon-producing rules of a language. The foreign vocabulary (*xénolexique*) comprises all the forms, all the functions and all the senses of lexical items which at a given time make up the foreignisms in a language. There is also the non-lexicon (*non-lexique*), including all the lexical items which at a particular point of time cannot be coined because of the existing lexical units and the lexicon-generating rules at that time"
>
> (21)

 Slang may either be categorized as potential vocabulary because often, slang disappears and changes form so frequently that it frequently is never recorded in dictionary, despite being widely spoken.

Despite the many definitions of slang, there has never been a research study which compares Montevallo, Alabama and Aix-en-Provence, France. This single deficiency in past studies makes this research able to a contribute to the current canon of linguistic slang studies. The audience, most likely limited to academics in the South of the United States of America, may find this research particularly valuable because this study is completely unique and has never been done before. Audiences in the south of the United States may also find parallels between their own use of slang and people with whom they do not share a language and who live thousands of miles away.

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this survey study is to examine the relationship between slang used in the south of the United States of America (Montevallo, Alabama) and the slang used in the south of France (Aix-en-Provence).The research question that this study aims to explore involves the relationship between slang words regarding "friendship" in the American South and French South, as well as how the use of slang might reveal cultural similarities between both countries.

Methodology

The purpose of this survey is to determine if parallels exist in the use of slang between the United States and France, particularly in the south of both countries. The survey method was chosen for this study because it was completed by participants online and allows complete anonymity and may have provoked more truthful answers. All participation in the survey was voluntary, and participants had no direct incentive to complete the survey. Since the survey participants had no gain from certain answer choices or comments in the survey, it would be logical to conclude that the answers given were truthful and not hidden under shame or another façade. Since this research involves international and domestic participants taking the same

survey translated into each language, it was much easier for people to participate if they could simply take the survey in less than ten minutes on their own time instead of in a controlled research setting. Using the survey method also allowed for direct quantitative comparison of the English and French surveys. Since the primary researcher was also spending six weeks in Aix-en-Provence during the research period, information about French culture was also gathered from the actual town as well.

Data, in the form of survey responses (both multiple choice and comments) were collected from both surveys over the course of a month. The English version of the research involved collecting data via a survey. The population consisted of 226 people. See chart E-Q17 for the types of participants.

Chart E-Q17

Which one best describes you?

Answered: 226   Skipped: 0

College Professor
College Student
College Staff
Other

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%
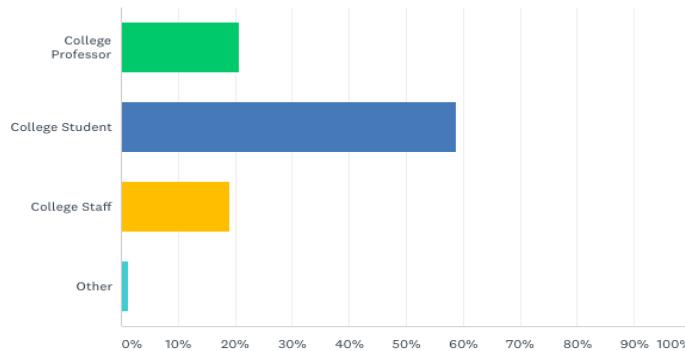
Forty-seven participants were college professors, 133 were college students, 43 were college staff, and three participants identify as "other." All English-speaking participants were alerted to participation through the "Broadcast" system at the University of Montevallo, which sends emails to active students, professors, and staff on campus. Although participation was anonymous and a random-cluster (the study never asked for name of participants or had a list of

names off which to find participants), the usage of the Broadcast system allowed for assurance that the survey would only reach people involved in academia at the University of Montevallo. All English survey participants were asked these same questions with the same answer choices which can be found in Appendix.

The French survey was constructed, and data was gathered in an almost identical manner. The two main differences were the language and thus the slang words for "friendship "which were chosen based on French slang. Participants were also gathered in a different way, while still maintaining the same random-clustering. Since there is no Broadcast system at the Institute for American Universities in Aix-en-Provence, participants could not be as easily recruited as in Alabama. It was necessary to go door-to-door, looking for participants at the Institute for American Universities. The survey was sent directly to individuals, instead of just a mass email. It was also posted on the school's Facebook page.

Only eight participants completed the French survey. This number is not statistically valuable, but it may be an accurate representation of the slang used at IAU at this point in time. The University of Montevallo website states that the average enrollment for students is 2,700 and there is usually 300 staff members ("UM at a Glance"). There are approximately 200 faculty and students at IAU during the summer term. 7.533% of UM students and staff responded to the survey, and 4.0% of IAU students and staff responded to the survey. Although is clear that many more UM students responded to the survey than did IAU students, the short terms (three or six weeks) which include intense courses that could last up to 4 hours a day each for IAU student could account for the difference, as well as the difficulty with distributing the survey.

Chart F-Q22

Quel choix vous décrit le mieux?

Answered: 8   Skipped: 0
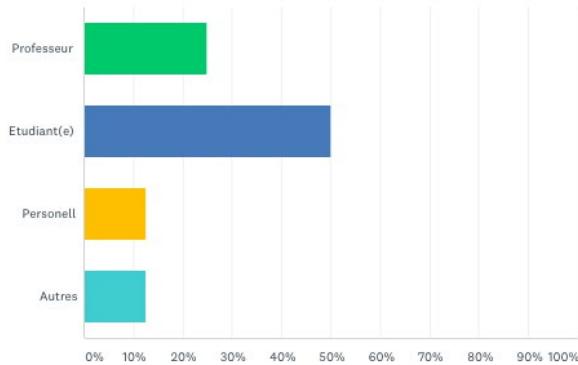
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Professeur	25.00%	2
Etudiant(e)	50.00%	4
Personell	12.50%	1
Autres	12.50%	1
TOTAL		8

Four (50%) of the French respondents were students, which two were professors, one was a staff member, and one identified as other. The questions French participants were asked culturally equivalent questions with answer choices which can be found in Appendix 2.

It is important to note that the English survey has less questions than does the French survey. This anomaly is due to the fact that since the words are not literal translations of the English words but instead cultural equivalents, there are several possible translations for each slang word resulting in more questions on the French survey than the English one.

Data Analysis

In order to accurately decode the data, each question has a results chart, which displays the different types of responses. It is important to note that since participants had the opportunity to choose more than one multiple choice answer, the total responses are over 100 % of participants. The comments which participants added voluntarily are also included in the data analysis, while not every comment is included because some comments may express the same

ideas. By using these methods, this research hopes to discover trends between who uses slang and in what situations and how these trends are different in Montevallo and Aix-en-Provence.

Results of English Survey

Most English participants (92%) use the word friend with their closest friends. The word "friend" itself is not a slang word since it is standard; "friend" is the word which all the other questions on the survey branch from since they are non-standard words. Only 3.11% of people said that they would never use the word "friend." This is unsurprising considering that slang is not vulgar nor does it have any connotations like many other words which participants were asked about on the survey.

As on every question, this question pertaining to the word "buddy" had a space for open-ended comments from participants. Several commenters agreed that they would use this word, "to describe everyone not just my actual friends" (commenter one). Commenter 18 notices the peculiarity of this question, since it is not actually a slang word saying, "It is a pretty normal word." Commenter 25 noticed one of the flaws of this survey, in that each question lacks context saying, "This completely depends on context. It's possible I would use this in each of these choices, but each scenario would be different." Commenter 21 agreed when they wrote, "Tone is important with this." There were no comments which questioned the validity of the word "friend"; all the comments explored different situation which were not included in the answer choices i.e. with a sexual partner (Commenter 5).

"Pal" itself is a non-standard word, and in terms of this research, that fact alone deems it a slang word; "pal" is non-standard because there is already a word for friend, which serves an almost identical purpose and connotation. Most participants (44.20%) said they never use the word "Pal" is an English word which many commenters pointed out is quite old-fashioned.

Commenter one said, "I don't know that I would "never" use this word, but I would use it very seldomly." Other participants noted a non-serious connotation of the word. Commenter five remarked, "I would only use this in a flippant manner, never in serious conversation." Commenter twelve used their own personal experience to explain this connotation describing the word as, "A goofy, gender-neutral way to announce yourself, like "it's ya pal, [name]." Unlike friend, which commenters had a vast amount of situations in which they thought it appropriate to use the word, the comments in question agreed that the participant either never used the word or used it in an ironic and joking manner. Commenter 5 is a male, gay college professor between the ages of 25-35.

Question three resembles question two in that the word "buddy" is another synonym for friend with a slightly different connotation. Most people said that they would most likely use the word with a child (55.85%) or with their closest friends (45.13%). Most commenters agreed that the word has a condescending connotation. Commenter 13 said, "I use this when speaking to my male children or my younger brothers but always with a child. Unless I am being sarcastic with an adult like, ok buddy, or great buddy." 13 of the 29 commenters said that they would use this term exclusively with animals.

"Bestie" is a fairly new word which is a shortened version of the term "best friend." Unsurprisingly, most people said that they would use this term with their closest friends (53.54%) while a whopping 43.36% said they would never use this word. Commenter 4 said, "This word is so outdated!" Commenter 4 is a female college student between the ages of 18-24. Commenter 11 exclaimed, "I am too old to use this word. This word is what my children use!" Commenter 11 is between 25-35, and she is college student. While most people in the survey use the word to talk about their best friends, others who are older than the 18-24 age bracket seem to

shy away from it, while some young people seem to shy away from the word because it is not trendy enough.

The responses for the word "dude" were very mixed. 51.66% of people said they would the word with their family, 65.78% said they would use it with their closest friends, 51.11% said that they would use it with a stranger, and 37.33% said they would use the word with a child. Commenter 5 aptly described this phenomenon saying, "I use the word dude for literally everyone and anything." Commenter 5 is also a female college student between the ages of 18-24.

"Prick" is a word which undoubtedly has a negative connotation, and the results of the survey reflected this fact. Most people asked (44.89%) said that they would never use this word. Almost the same amount of people (43.11%) said that they would use the word with someone they dislike. Commenter three said, "I would use this to describe someone, but never to their face." Commenter three is 35-45-year-old female, straight college student. Commenter nine said, "I'm pretty sure this word is really offensive." Commenter nine is an 18-24-year-old female, straight college student.

This word "broad" had the most overwhelming majority of responses (79.11%) which said, "I would never use this word." 12.00% of participants also left a comment, which is more than any other question on the whole survey. Most younger respondents had never even heard the word before. Commenter seven said, "It seems too 'old' for my generation. I associate it with an older generation." Commenter seven is a 35-45-year-old female, straight college professor. Commenter nine said, "I'm a former social studies teacher and know the history of the term. I also try not to use terms like this because it's offensive and demeaning." Commenter nine is a 35-45-year-old male, straight college professor.

Although "bitch" and "broad" mean nearly the same thing, the connotation and attitude surrounding "bitch" is much less negative than with "broad". In fact, 53.60% of participants said

that they would call their best friends bitch. At the same time, 45.50% said they would the word with someone they dislike. Commenter five said, "I would use in a way of addressing friends, but not in a negative way (gay men do this often)." Commenter five is a male, gay 25-35-year-old college professor. Commenter five suggests that the word has a less negative connotation when used by a gay man as opposed to a straight man. Commenter one said they would use the word when, "Referring to a female dog, but not a person." Commenter one is straight male 25-35-year-old college professor. Commenter eight said, "I basically use the word bitch daily regarding anything. I call anything a bitch, even if it didn't do anything to me. This morning I called my coffee table a bitch because I had pushed it into an inconvenient place, and it got stuck." Commenter eight is an 18-24-year-old gay, female college student. Based on these answers, the term is accepted for wide use except for by heterosexual males.

Since the word "colleague" is a term that does not have a negative or positive connotation, it is unsurprising that most people (91.56%) said they would exclusively use the word with their work friends. Commenter five said, "Those I work with, friends and non-friends." Commenter five is a 35-45-year-old female, straight member of college staff. According to commenter five and several other commenters, colleagues do not have to be friends.

"Fam" is one of the only words on this survey which is racially charged, and this phenomenon is reflected in the mixed answers of the survey. 60.27% of people use the word with family while 57.59% use the word with their closest friends. 28.79% agreed that they would never use the word. Commenter four said, "To me this is AAVE (African American Vernacular English) so I would feel uncomfortable using it as a white man." Commenter nine presented the same ideas saying, "I feel uncomfortable using this word, even jokingly, as my Black friends

have said they don't want me using it." Race was not a factor asked about in the demographics portion of the survey, but the people who self-identified themselves as white all agree that using the word is not appropriate for anyone who is not Black.

"Squad" is a particularly new slang term, like "bestie", and the results show a similarity between the two words. Both words are less used by young (18-35) year old people because they feel it is too outdated. The majority of people (53.78%) use the word with their closest friends, a whopping 41.33% said they would refer to no one with this term. Commenter five said, "I think this term is a generation behind me (I'm 31)." Commenter 10 said, "I sometimes use it ironically." Commenter 10 is 45 plus years of age.

"Gang" is a controversial word, and there were many mixed responses for this question. 50.67% said they would never use the word, while 36.89% said they would use the word with their closest friends. Two people (both 18-24-year-old college students) noted they thought the word was a reference to the children's show Scooby Doo, in which a group of friends who refer to themselves as a gang solve mysteries. While many others (most older than 25) noted that the word reminded them of the inner-city gangs, like the Bloods or Crips. In general, older generations use the word in the negative, serious connotation while older generations use it in the silly, Scooby Doo connotation to refer to their friends.

While most people (50.67%) said that they would never use this word, 36.89% of people said they would use the word "hoes" to apply to their closest friends. This numbers reflect a varying difference in how people use and understand the word, very similar to the word "gang". The people who use it with their friends have a more positive connotation which they add to the word, while the others place a more negative connotation on it. Commenter five said, "As a term of endearment, as a joke, not to offend." Commenter five is a 35-45-year-old female college

professor. Commenter four said, "A hoe is not a person, but a gardening tool." Commenter four is a 45-year-old or plus male college professor. Younger females and gay men agree that the word is use a positive connotation while older or heterosexual males view the word in a negative light and use it less.

Results of French Survey

"Un/une ami(e)" is the cultural equivalent version of "friend." Similar to English, the more the common the word, the more mixed responses for the usage. However, 100% of respondents said they would use the word with their best friend. Note that 92% of English participants said they would use the word in the same way. Unfortunately, there were no comments for this question.

"Un/une Copain/Copine" is a word used in French to denote a good friend. Most participants (75%) said they would use the word with their family or with their best friends (62.50%). The closest cultural equivalent for this word would be buddy or pal. Unlike buddy or pal, copain/copine does not have a connotation of being an antiquated term. Instead of being used ironically or not used at all, copain/copine is used more frequently, perhaps because it lacks antiquity.

"Mon/ma copain/copine" has a slightly different connotation than does un/une copain/copine. Mon/ma copain/copine translates to "my good friend" whereas un/une copain/copine translates to "a good friend." Frequently, mon/ma copain/copine denotes a boyfriend or girlfriend or it can simply be used to describe a very close friend. The usage of this word depends on context. This word is especially hard to translate because there not an exact equivalent in English. The results for this question were very mixed, perhaps due in part to the lack of context that the question provided. 62.50% said they would use the word with their

family, 50% said they would use the word with their best friends, ad 25% said they would use the word with their boss. Again, the lack of comments made it difficult to analyze why people would use the word in this way, but it does follow the same mixed pattern as a common word like "friend."

"Un gros" is yet another word, which like pal and buddy, are non-standard synonyms of friend. This word first began to be used in 1914, and this may be the critical reason behind why a whopping 37.50% of participants responded that they would never use the word ("Mon Gros"). In the same way that buddy and pal are antiquated terms used usually either ironically or not at all. 62.50% of participants said that they would use the word with their family, and 50% said they would use it with their best friends. The people who responded that they would never use the word were generally younger students.

"Un/une sauce" is another nonstandard synonym of friend. Most participants (66.67%) said they would use the word with their best friends, while 50% said they would use the word with their families. 33.33% of participants said they would never use this word. One respondent even said that they did not believe the word was used to talk about friends. This commenter is a college staff member between the ages of 35-45. Yet another commenter said that they did not understand the word. This commenter is a student between 18-24 years of age.

"Un/une pote/poto" is another way that the French express close friendship with another person. Pote is word which is used very frequently in the media, exemplified in the restaurant in Marseille, France called Sushi Potes, which is the site of a popular reality television show. 62.50% of people agreed that they would use this word with their best friends, and 50% said they would use it with their family. Only 12.50% of participants (only one person) said they would never use the word.

"Mon/Ma meilleur(e)" literally translates to my best, an equivalent of bestie in English. 62.50% of people said they would the word with their best friends, which is similar to the 53% of English-speaking people who said they would use bestie with their best friends. It is notable that 25% of participants said that they would never use the word. Although there were no comments, it is possible that this large chunk of people who never use the word as similar to the people who do not use bestie in that they are younger and believe the word is outdated.

"Un Mec" is often used in the same manner as dude is in English. 62.50% of participants said that they would use the word with their best friends, while 65.78% English-speaking participants said they would use the word dude with their best friends as well. 25% of people said they would not use the word, while 14.22% of English-speaking participants said they would not use the word "dude." Again, the lack of comments makes it difficult to truly understand the reasoning behind the French answers, but the closeness in percentages between the two languages may imply that like dude, mec is used by younger generations and older generations alike in a genderless and humorous form.

"Un con/connard" is synonym of "prick" or "dick" in English, a pejorative term which usually refers to a male. 62.50% of participants said they would use the word with their best friends, while a mere 25% said they would never use the word. 44.49% of English-speaking participants said they would never use the word, while only 21.78 % said they would use the word only with their best friends. It is possible to attribute this difference to the immensely different cultures. American people tend evade a problem in a conversation, while French people usually face problems head on. "Sixty percent of French people asked in an IPSOS poll cited rudeness as the number one source of stress in their lives. That was higher than unemployment or debt. And they worried that to outsiders, the French might seem just a little too … French."

(Wallace, 1). One truth about the French is that they are more open and direct than many other countries. There even exists a specific term for the culture shock that some experience while vacationing in France and remarking in how differently the French handle situations; it is called the Paris Syndrome (Wyatt).

"Une nana" does not have the same meaning as in the English word; it tends be used in the same way that the word "broad" is used in English. 37.50% of participants said they would use the term with their best friends; however only 37.50% of participants said they would never use the word. Note that 79.11% of English-speaking participants said they would never use the word broad when referring to a person. This differences again could be contributed to the different contexts of the different words. While "broad" is very antiquated and sexist in English, "nana" may not have the same context to French-speaking people.

"Une salope" is word that connects directly the word "bitch" in English. 37.50% of French-speaking participants said they would never use the word, while 25.23% of English-speaking participants said the same. 50% of French-speaking participants said they felt it appropriate to use this word with their best friends, while 53.60% of English-speaking participants said they would use the word in the same context. Although no comments were collected from the French portion of the survey, recall that the English participants use the word freely and jokingly, except by heterosexual males.

There was no equivalent to the word "un/une gars" in the French portion of the survey. The word is almost always used in the "un" (masculine) form. In this form, the word denotes a little boy or young man. If used in the "une" (feminine) form, it denotes a young girl. It is a word that has a somewhat ancient context, like pal or buddy ("Gars"). Quite surprisingly, almost all the participants (62.50%) said they would use the word with their best friends, while only

12.50% of participants said they would use the word with a child. A fair amount of participants (37.50%) said that they would never use the word. The fact that most people only feel comfortable using the word with people their same age with whom they are close and not with a child, implies some sort of demeaning or negative connotation.

"Un/une camarade" is a word which can have many different meanings in English while having no negative or positive connotation, like "friend." The cognate in English, "camarade," is very similar and denotes nearly the same French meaning. As has before been observed, the most broad word have very mixed responses in the situations in which are used because it possible to use them in many different instances. 50% said they would use the word with their boss, 50% said they would use the word with their family, and 50% said they would use the word with a child. One could use the word with their boss to express sentiments a team-like environment in the workplace. Using the word with family could express closeness and bonds between member. This word is often used in a classroom setting, with younger children in the phrase "les camarades de classe" which means classmates.

"Les collègues" directly corresponds to the English word "colleagues." French-speaking participants use the word with their work friends 100% of the time, while English-speaking participants use the equivalent 91.56% of the time with their work friends. Both words are very specific, and it very hard to say either word without immediately connecting them to work because they have such a strong context associated with the workplace. The more specific a word is in this survey, the more slanted the results are the closer are the French and English percentages.

There is unfortunately no equivalent of "fam" in French. The word "une équipe" is pretty close, being the literal translation for "team." 75% of French participants said would use the

word with their work friends, 50% responded they would use the word with their best friends, while 37.50% said they would refer to their family with this term. English-speaking respondents used "fam" for the most part (60.27%) with their families. The most striking difference between the results of the two words is related to the use when connected to children. 37.50% of French-speaking participants said they would use the word to refer to a group of children. Only 4.02% of English-speaking participants said that they would use the word to refer to a group of children. It is possible that this difference could be attributed to the new invention of "fam" compared to the relative antiquity of "une équipe."

Earlier in the survey, French participants were asked of their usage of "un/une pote/poto." A similar phrase used in French is "une bande de potes," similar but not the exact same as "fam." Unsurprisingly, 62.50% of participants said they would use the word with their best friends. Much like "une équipe," 37.50% of French-speaking participants said they would use the word with a group of children. The lack of comments sheds no light on the reasons why French-speaking individuals would use the word to refer to a group of children, one hypothesis is that is promotes friendship and camaraderie between children.

Another synonym for "fam" in French is "un tribu" which comes from the same root as the word "tribe" in English. This word promotes interconnectedness between groups of people, as it denotes, "A group of people forming a community" ("tribe"). Most agreed (50%) that they would refer to their family as "un tribu." Again, very interestingly, another 50% said that would refer to a group of children as "un tribu." Unfortunately, no one chose to leave comments on this question, but it could be related to the cultural reason why French people use other similar words to refer to children in a very close and interconnected manner.

The final word which was asked of the French participants were questioned about is "un gang," which the exact same word in the English is virtually, although it does not have the same connotation and is not used the same way. 75% of participants said they would never use the word, while 50.67% of English-speaking participants said they would not use the word. While 36.89% of American participants said they would use the word with their best friends, 0% of French participants thought this is an appropriate usage of the word.

Conclusion

In general, some parallels between English and French became clear after analyzing the results of the surveys. First, more general words, like "friend" or "un/une ami/amie" or "buddy" or "un/une camarade" are used in really mixed situations. Since these words are common, standard words, people who participated in these surveys used the words with different types of people, despite their demographics. Common, standard words like these are used by almost all types of people; there are very few people who claimed they would never use the words.

On the other hand, words coded for very specific situations, like "colleagues" or "les collègues," are used in both cultures in an almost identical situation. The more precise a word is, the more slanted the results are and the more similar were the results when the two languages were compared. At least in the case of this survey, the broader a word is, the more varied the responses. The more precise the word, the less situations may be used word is used in.

Newer slang words like "bestie" and "squad" were reacted to strongly by English-speaking participants. Older participants (35 plus years of age) thought the words too new to use, and college-aged participants (18-25 years of age) thought the words were not new enough to use. Most participants who used words like this are in middle age bracket, between 25 and 35 years of age.

Other words have cultural connotations which would require further research. For example, the word "gang" in English has specific connections to inner-city violence, which is tied to certain American cities. The word "gang" in English was also recognized to be a term use in the classic American cartoon *Scooby Doo.* Both of these are details that the French would not identify with and thus skew the results dramatically between the two languages. Specific racial tensions like with the word "fam," also do not exist in the exact same way in France as in the United States.

One core difference between French and English that the participants in this survey revealed is that the French use team words like "une bande de potes," "une équipe," and "un tribu" drastically more with children than in the United States. The results revealed that team words like this are rarely used when referring to a group of children when speaking English. One theory behind this difference could be France's focus on education, which is reinforced by college education which is a tiny fraction of the costs in the United States.

The differences between France and the United States of America, between Aix and Montevallo, stray far beyond just the word used; however, the slang that people use in both locations bring them together, in their need to categorize themselves communicate efficiently with others. Though the French and Americans may speak different languages, have different laws and policies, and be shaped in much different ways, the people within each respective country are drawn together by their enteral need for community and communication.

"While slang outlines social space, attitudes about slang partly construct group identity and identify individuals as members of groups" (57). While this research focuses on slang in general, there are certain words that code for a certain community, whether it be older people, black people, college students, etc. Slang can be used to separate groups, as well as bring

together communities of people, the standard from the non-standard. On the same hand, slang also bonds people together in because they share language patterns and understandings. "The power of words to maintain social distinctions like this one isn't the stuff of ancient history, but an inevitable social manifestation of language, as true of tomorrow as of yesterday and certainly true in America today" (67).

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The Initial Effects of Caffeine on Blood Pressure and Heart Rate, when Ingested Through Coffee, in Humans

By: Justin Barrick

Abstract

Caffeine, 1, 3, 7- trimethlyxanthine, is a widely consumed drug. People, regardless of age or economic status, consume it daily. It can be found in a variety of foods, beverages, and medications like: coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, and some forms of headache medications including: Excedrin, Midol, and Aspirin. Caffeine can produce a variety of effects on humans, depending on the amount of consumption, such as: increased alertness and fatigue, improved performance on tasks that involve vigilance, attenuation of the effects of sedatives, beneficial effects on psychomotor skills and attention, increased anxiety, headaches, irritability, insomnia, vertigo, and tinnitus. According the Mayo Clinic, a standard 8-ounce cup of caffeinated coffee has about 95-165 mg of caffeine. This research looks at the effects of caffeine on blood pressure and heart rate within a 30-minute time period after ingestion in young adults, ages 18-26 who do not have a history of hypertension or caffeine intolerance.

Introduction

Caffeine, 1, 3, 7- trimethlyxanthine, is a widely consumed drug. People, regardless of age or economic status, consume it daily (Preedy, 2012). Caffeine is found in a variety of foods, beverages, and medications like coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, and some forms of headache medications such as: Excedrin, Midol, and Aspirin (Whitney & Rolfes, 2002). Caffeine can produce a variety of effects on humans, depending on the amount of consumption, including: increased alertness and fatigue, improved performance on tasks that involve vigilance,

attenuation of the effects of sedatives, beneficial effects on psychomotor skills and attention, increased anxiety, headaches, irritability, insomnia, vertigo, and tinnitus (Preedy, 2012 and Sharma, Sheehy, Kolahdooz & Barasi, 2016). According the Mayo Clinic (2017) a standard 8-ounce cup of caffeinated coffee has about 95-165 mg of caffeine. This research looks at the effects of caffeine within a 30-minute time period after ingestion in young adults, ages 18-26.

Methods

Ethical Approval

All experimental procedures used in this study were approved by the Human and Animal Research Subjects Committee at the University of Montevallo. Subjects were given a verbal and written description of all procedures, purpose, and risks involved in the study prior to participation. As part of the study's safety measures, emergency procedures were posted and at least one faculty member was present during data collection. A written consent form was given and required to be read and signed by all participants. An incentive of $10.00 cash was also approved for all participants. For these trials, participants were asked to not consume anything containing caffeine at least two hours prior to arriving. Data collection were conducted in a temperature-controlled room. Data collected was also stored on a password locked laptop, kept in a locked room when not in use. All participants, to keep confidentiality, were given an ID code.

Subjects

Seventeen willing participants without a history of hypertension or caffeine intolerance were selected to participate. Participants were also incentivized for their times with ten dollars. Their ages ranged from 18-26, being either white, African American, or Hispanic, who either

consumed caffeine daily, more than twice a week, once to twice a week, or never. All participants' demographics can be found in the graph below. The main thing to be noted from this graph is that majority of participants were 21-year-old white males that consume caffeine daily.
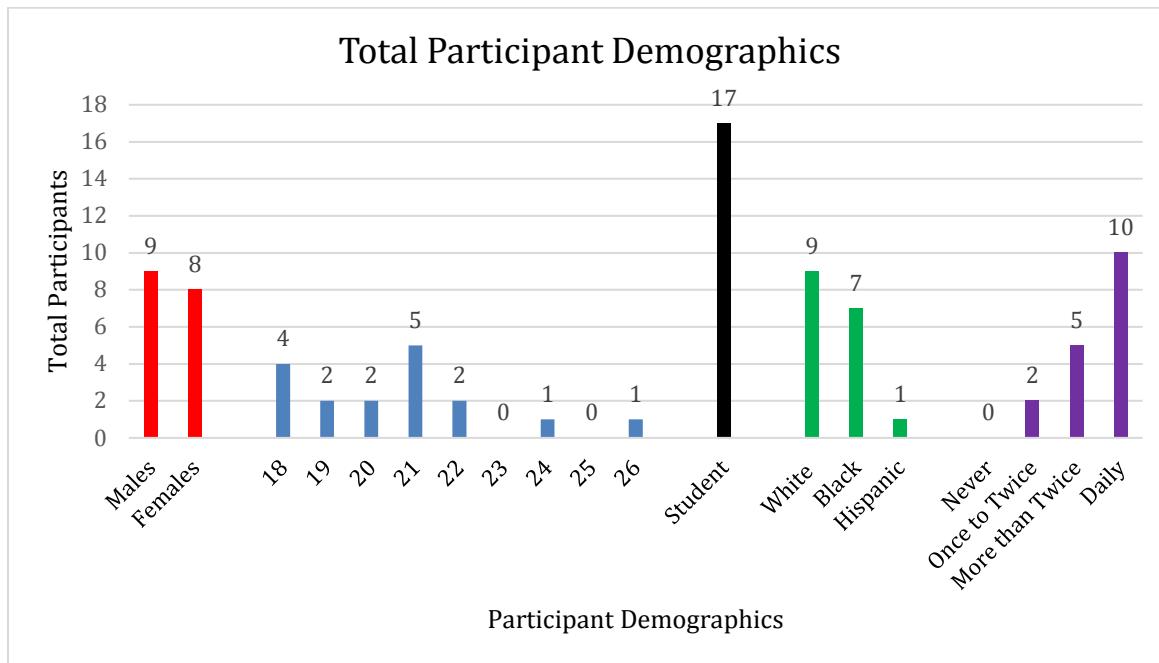
Instrumentation and Beverage of Study

To keep all variables with the blood pressure and heart rate (BP and HR) data collection consistent, an automated blood pressure cuff was used. A blood pressure, systolic and diastolic pressure, and heart rate is given when used. To keep all the variables with the coffee consistent, a Keurig brewing system and K-cups were used. The 8 fluid ounce setting, kept at 189℃ was used to brew all coffee. Maxwell House Medium Roast K-Cups were used.

Experimental Protocol

Two baseline BP and HR measurements were taken. Measurements were initially obtained when the participants entered and then 15 minutes later. Each participant had 15

minutes after the second BP and HP measurements to drink eight fluid ounces of black coffee. Then, three BP and HR measurements were taken initially after the 15 minutes has ended, and every 15 minutes after for 30 minutes. The two baseline BP and HR measurements were averaged together to use as the participant's baseline, and then it was compared to all three additional BP and HR measurements. This was completed to determine if a significant correlation between blood pressure, heart rate, and caffeine ingestion existed. A percent difference calculation was performed for each measurement as well.

Data Analysis

Blood pressure and heart rate can be affected by a large quantity of variables, including the ingestion of a stimulant, diuretic, or drinking any volume of liquid. Caffeine, when found in a cup of coffee, has all three of these antagonistic variables. Research has shown that in doses as low as that found in a single cup of regular coffee, caffeine can produce a short-term, significant increase in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure (Shils et al. 2006). The blood pressure and heart rate of each participant was measured at four points: before consumption of coffee (baseline), immediately after consumption of coffee (initial), 15 minutes after consumption, and 30 minutes after consumption. The baseline was compared to the three other measurements and a percent difference was calculated for each comparison. All data can be found in the Table 1 located under the Charts, Graphs, and Tables section.

Results

The data for the baseline-initial comparisons are shown in the charts below.

PERCENT DIFFERENCE OF THE SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE FOR THE INITIAL TIME INTERVAL
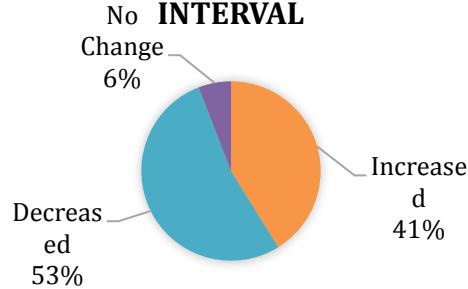
No Change 6%

Increased 41%

Decreased 53%

PERCENT DIFFERENCE OF THE DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE FOR THE INITIAL TIME INTERVAL

Increased 53%

Decreased 47%

PERCENT DIFFERENCE OF THE DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE FOR THE INITIAL TIME INTERVAL
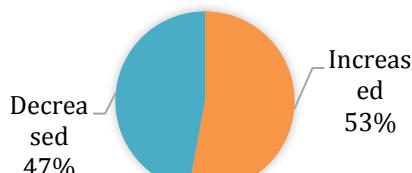
Increased 53%
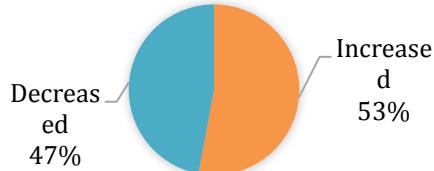
Decreased 47%

Forty-one percent of the participants initially had an increase in systolic pressure, 53% had a decrease in systolic pressure, and 6% had no change. Fifty-three percent had an increase in diastolic pressure, while 47% had a decrease, and 41% had an increased heart rate, while 59% experienced a decrease. This suggests that the ingestion of caffeine has an unpredictable effect on BP and HR initially. In addition to considering the initial BP and HR after ingestion, 15 and 30-minute intervals after ingestion were also assessed. At 15 minutes after the same set of analyses were performed as the initial set. These analyses yielded the same results, an unpredictable change in BP and HR. Fifty-nine percent of the participants' systolic and diastolic pressures increased, 35% of the participants' pressures decreased, while 6% experienced no change. Twenty-nine percent of the participants experienced an increase in heart rate, while 71%

experienced a decrease in heart rate. At 30 minutes after ingestion, the same results were also found. Fifty-three percent of participants had an increase in systolic and diastolic pressures, while 47% had a decrease in pressures. Twelve percent of the participants experienced an increase in heart rate, while 88% experienced a decrease in heart rate. The charts for time intervals of 15 and 30 minutes can be found under the Charts, Graphs, and Tables section. The average of all participants' changes for each time interval were determined and plotted as noted in the graph shown below.

Average Change after Coffee Ingestion
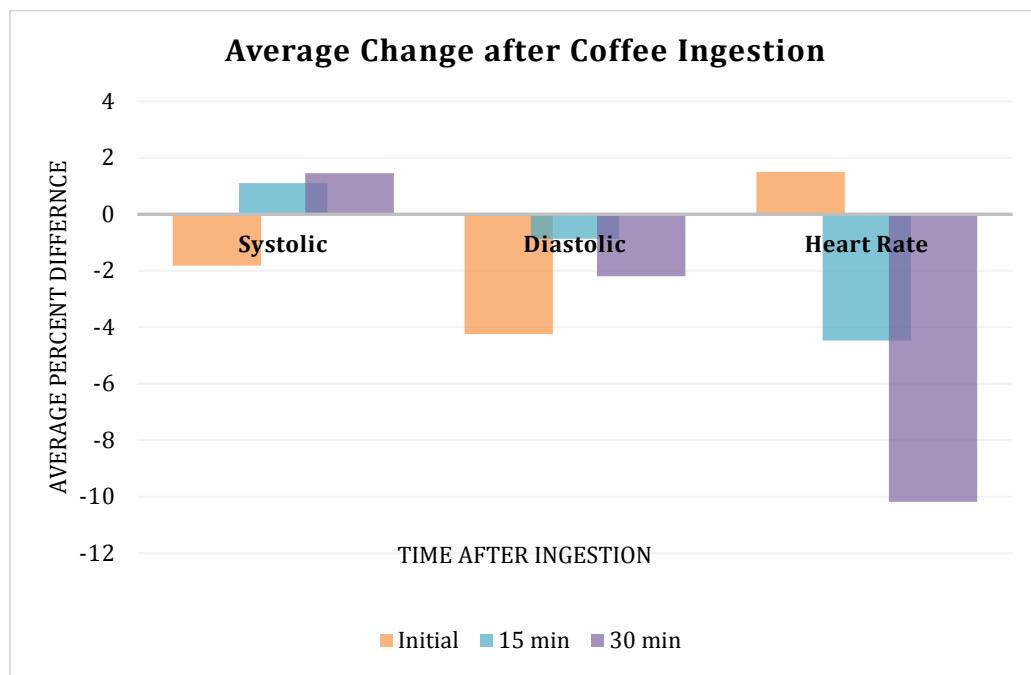
Initially after ingestion the systolic pressure was lowered significantly, while at 15 and 30 minutes after ingestion the pressure was increased significantly. The diastolic pressure at all three times were significantly lowered. Initially the heart rate was increased, while at times 15 and 30 minutes the rate was significantly lowered. In a study done by R. M. Brothers et al. (2017) caffeine was found to cause a slight increase in systolic, diastolic and mean blood pressure on the order of two to ten mmHg.

Discussion

The effect of caffeine was determined to be unpredictable on BP and HR. Due to restraints on time, only 17 participants were able to participate. This is a small population size; this small sample size may have contributed to the unexpected findings. The participants also were given a questionnaire, in this a question about caffeine consumption is asked. Since over half of the participants answered that they consume caffeine daily, a tolerance could have been established in their bodies. This tolerance would have most likely canceled out the effects of this dose of caffeine. Due to the temperature of the coffee after it was brewed was too hot for any participant to drink, ice cubes were added to cool the coffee to a drinkable temperature. The temperature of the coffee also effects the rate of absorption in the body. So the cooler temperature could have slowed down the absorption rate of the caffeine.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the participants' BP and HR measurements were taken, twice to get a baseline and three times after the ingestion of coffee. These measurements were then compared to each other to see if there is a correlation between each other. The data gathered and analyzed suggests there is an unknown correlation between blood pressure, heart rate, and the ingestion of caffeine due to the unpredictability of its effects. In future efforts, a more controlled participant group would be chosen and used to go through the same protocol as the participants in this research.

Acknowledgments

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Charts, Graphs, and Tables

Graph 1:

Total Participant Demographics

Total Participants (y-axis): 0–18

- Males: 9
- Females: 8
- 18: 4
- 19: 2
- 20: 2
- 21: 5
- 22: 2
- 23: 0
- 24: 1
- 25: 0
- 26: 1
- Student: 17
- White: 9
- Black: 7
- Hispanic: 1
- Never: 0
- Once to Twice: 2
- More than Twice: 5
- Daily: 10

Participant Demographics
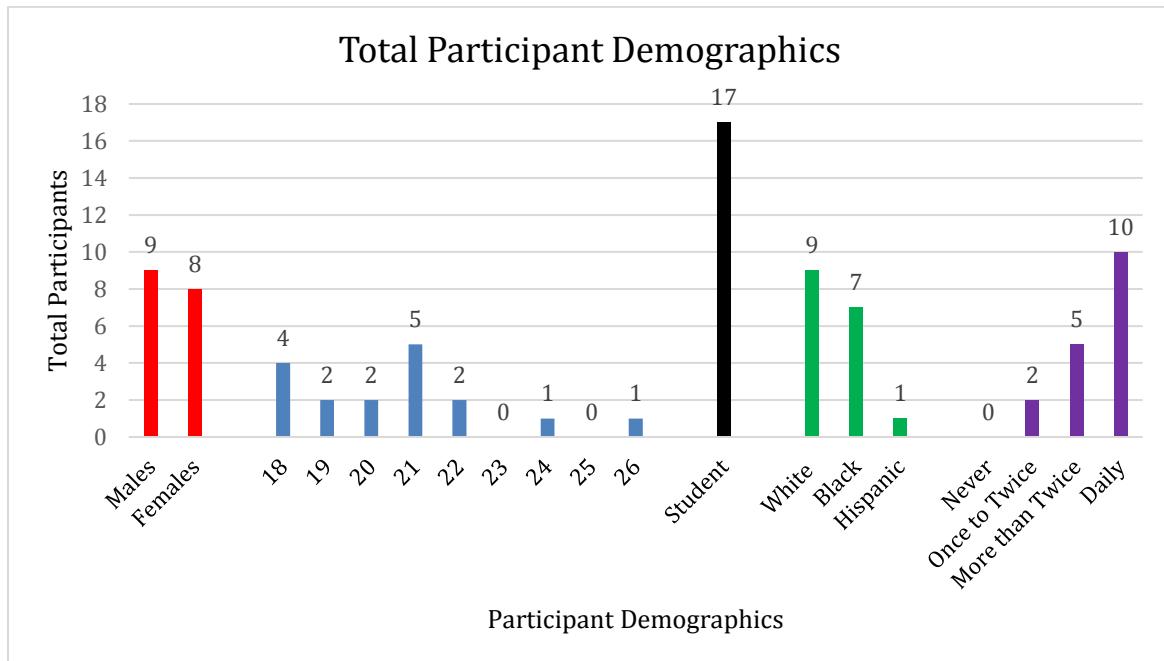
Table 1:

Participant	Baseline: Systolic	Initial	15	30	Baseline: Diastolic	Initial	15	30	Baseline: Heart Rate	Initial	15	30
1	127	128	142	132	75	79	82	78	61.5	64	64	55
2	106	109	104	112	74	77	76	73	53.5	63	62	62
3	117	111	120	119	73.5	74	69	80	69	71	66	60
4	109.5	97	110	114	67	64	63	69	71	62	67	69
5	116	103	118	120	70.5	67	75	64	96	95	89	93
6	109.5	117	116	103	74.5	71	76	79	77	78	70	66
7	105.5	123	112	118	77.5	91	88	88	60.5	90	65	52
8	116	127	115	121	80.5	78	90	79	79.5	71	71	69
9	110	114	121	120	80	89	88	86	82	68	67	68
10	120	113	145	114	87.5	78	87	82	80.5	113	94	70
11	113	113	95	85	87.5	50	54	53	98	96	87	83
12	132	131	132	129	96.5	9	98	101	111	106	98	96
13	127	111	130	105	74	75	64	61	60	53	61	47
14	117.5	116	109	108	75	79	74	79	110.5	106	101	97
15	122	123	126	131	69	72	71	79	73	76	70	78
16	106	102	101	95	76	53	76	67	83.5	78	75	80
17	136.5	117	123	123	76	74	79	75	88	87	78	77

Chart 1:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE OF THE SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE FOR THE INITIAL TIME INTERVAL

No Change
6%

Increased
41%

Decreased
53%

Chart 2:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE OF THE DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE FOR THE INITIAL TIME INTERVAL

Increased
53%

Decreased
47%

Chart 3:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE FOR THE HEART RATE AT THE INITIAL TIME INTERVAL

Increased
7%

Decreased
10%

Chart 4:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE FOR THE SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE AT THE 15 MINUTE TIME INTERVAL

No Change
6%

Decreased
35%

Increased
59%

Chart 5:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE FOR THE DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE AT THE 15 MINUTE TIME INTERVAL

No Change
6%

Decreased
35%

Increased
59%

Chart 6:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE FOR THE HEART RATE AT THE 15 MINUTE TIME INTERVAL

Increased
29%

Decreased
71%

Chart 7:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE FOR THE SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE AT THE 30 MINUTE TIME INTERVAL

Increased
53%

Decreased
47%

Chart 8:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE FOR THE DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE AT THE 30 MINUTE TIME INTERVAL

Increased
53%

Decreased
47%

Chart 9:

PERCENT DIFFERENCE FOR THE HEART RATE AT THE 30 MINUTE TIME INTERVAL

Increased
12%

Decreased
88%

Chart 10:

Average Change after Coffee Ingestion

AVERAGE PERCENT DIFFERNCE

TIME AFTER INGESTION

Systolic   Diastolic   Heart Rate

4
2
0
-2
-4
-6
-8
-10
-12

■ Initial   ■ 15 min   ■ 30 min

Amplifying Black Women's Voices: An Analysis of the Social Movement Against Colorism on Social Media

By: Jasmine Baxter

Abstract

Historically, studies on racial politics have examined racism exclusively, ultimately overlooking the ways in which affected groups internalize such prejudices. Particularly for black women, this incorporation of racist values has resulted in the emergence of colorism—a systematic hierarchy wherein lighter-skinned women with more Eurocentric features are rewarded, and darker-skinned women with more Afrocentric features are penalized. These penalties often mean fewer socioeconomic privileges, lower rates of social acceptance, and overall negative media framing/biases toward women with darker complexions. To further understand the contemporary consequences of colorism, this text examines intra-racial division through an anti-colorist movement on social media with a focus on erasure, dehumanization, and self-hate.

Keywords: black women, African American women, colorism, racism, Eurocentric beauty standards, skin tone stratification, skin tone bias, and internalized racism

Introduction

Since the inception of the United States, racism has played a key role in the lives of black people. This racial inequality has been researched extensively in the field, allowing scholars to uncover issues ranging from subtle, yet systematically racist practices in education, i.e. the school-to-prison pipeline and zoning techniques (Hunter, 2016), to discrimination within the media, online, in print, and on television (Steele, 2016). Although that research is necessary, much less exists in terms of skin tone disparities within racial and sexual borders; colorism is a form of bias that thrives off this obscurity, allowing black people—women specifically—with more Eurocentric phenotypical features, such as looser curl patterns, lighter skin, and thinner

noses, to be viewed as more desirable and granted easier access to societal privileges (Brown, 2009; Steele, 2016). To further understand the modern influences of colorism, this text aims to answer the following research questions: How does colorism operate in a social media context? In what ways do social media artifacts with anti-colorist sentiments function rhetorically, particularly through their social reach and the conversations that surround them?

Indisputably, colorism has a pronounced impact on black women's livelihoods. As early as elementary school, this skin tone bias persists in "multiple settings and interactions within the school environment, including classroom dynamics, teacher – student interactions, peer interactions, family – school interactions, and school discipline procedures (Telles & Ortiz, 2008)" (Hunter, 2016, p. 55). If this system is so deeply intertwined with everyday life that it affects adolescents, then the problem only intensifies as time goes on; colorism affects every social sector, from college campuses and workplace culture (Brown, 2016; Gasman & Abiola, 2016), to advertising, television, and books (Sengupta, 2000; Steele, 2016). This prevalence speaks to the importance of studies about colorism, especially those that go beyond an analysis of the system and into its personal and cultural impact. In this digital age, social media sites contain some of the truest mirrors of contemporary culture, especially with the rise in online activism (Luttrell, 2016). These platforms could provide valuable insight on what colorism communicates to black women, as well as afford appropriate avenues to challenge the system.

Literature Review

Colorism's Socioeconomic Background

Colorism has a very deeply rooted socioeconomic background. In early Western folklore, linguistics, and anthropology, ideas of dark as evil and light as pure were abundant (Sengupta, 2000), and these notions were readily reflected in societal norms. Whiteness had

quickly become synonymous with "all that is civilized, virtuous, and beautiful; blackness in opposition, with all that is lowly, sinful and ugly" (Steele, 2016, p. 56). It was around this time that people who were white adjacent became a commodity; Steele (2016) noted that in Kerr's (2005) article "The Paper Bag Principle: Of the Myth and the Motion of Colorism," she explains that "lighter-skinned Blacks in the antebellum south were often considered more intelligent, more handsome, gentler, and more delicate than their darker-skinned counterparts who were viewed as more suited for strenuous labor (p. 273)" (p. 56). This belief echoed in slave owners' records as they depicted lighter-skinned black women as more fragile and often gave them more desirable house jobs away from the harsh rays of the sun (Gasman & Abiola, 2016; Hunter, 2016; Steele, 2016). Evidence also supports that, during this era, the purchase of a light-skinned female slave with long hair and Eurocentric features was a symbol of high social status (Gasman & Abiola, 2016). White slave owners sometimes released these women from slavery, but if they were kept, they sold for a much higher price than their darker-skinned peers (Gasman & Abiola, 2016). Circumstances such as these fragmented the black community, resulting in a manufactured social division (Gasman & Abiola, 2016; Hunter, 2016).

Even within the boundaries of slavery, lighter-skinned black people were in a better position to advance their education (Gasman & Abiola, 2016). Because they tended to work skilled jobs, they could apprentice their children in popular trades—bootmaking, cabinetmaking, painting, and bricklaying, for example—and had a better chance at becoming literate, so they could teach their children to read and write (Gasman & Abiola, 2016). This informal learning gave their offspring generational privileges, forming a subset of black people who could "purchase their freedom, as well as that of other family members, create wealth, enter leadership

positions during Reconstruction, and enroll in newly-created, postwar Black colleges and universities on more secure footing than some of their peers" (Gasman & Abiola, 2016, p. 41).

People in these groups took full advantage of their privileges after slavery (Gasman & Abiola, 2016). Frequently, black people who were lighter used their skin tone and informal schooling to assimilate into white culture where they were much more likely to gain well-paying employment, a formal education, and international travel—but only to the extent that white people allowed (Gasman & Abiola, 2016; Steele, 2016). Comparatively, in recent years, studies have suggested that black women are more negatively affected as their skin color darkens (Brown, 2009). For instance, Brown (2009) discusses Hunter's (2005) study of the socioeconomic status of black women, indicating that, across a five-color gradient where the first skin tone was darkest, income increased by $673 annually. Socioeconomic inequities create a space where darker-skinned women are more likely to be unemployed, undereducated, or poor (Monroe, 2016; Robinson-Moore, 2008), and their children are no better off when teachers typically give preferential treatment to students who meet societal beauty standards (Robinson-Moore, 2008).

Colorism's Media Prevalence

Often, media reflects and reinforces negative attitudes toward dark-skinned black women, effectively illustrating how perceptions of beauty can function as social capital (Brown, 2009). Most notably, in print, Toni Morrison's (1972) *The Bluest Eye* tells the story of a family named the Breedloves (Brown, 2009; Robinson-Moore, 2008). The family is poor—as are many black people in the novel—but the feature that sets the Breedloves apart is that their daughter, Pecóla, has pronounced inner struggles that stem from her belief that she is ugly (Brown, 2009; Morrison, 1972). Pecóla describes her idea of beauty as having white skin and blue eyes—

particularly like child star Shirley Temple—and thinks that if she was beautiful, it would alleviate all her family struggles (Brown, 2009; Morrison, 1972; Robinson-Moore, 2008).

Other novels invoke similar themes; Brown (2009) points out that in Zora Neale Hurston's (1999) book, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the character Janie is quoted as saying "ah jus couldn't see mahself married to no black man. It's too many black folks already. We ought to lighten up the race" (p. 3). She also notes that, in the memoir *Don't Play in the Sun: One Woman's Journey through the Color Complex*, Marita Golden (2004) "describes a scene from her life that echoes the words of Hurston's character" (Brown, 2009, "Qualitative Analysis," para. 4). One day, Golden (2004) was playing outside when her mother stepped out of the house and said "come on in the house—it's too hot to be playing out here. I've told you don't play in the sun. You're going to have to get a light skinned husband for the sake of your children as it is" (p. 4).

Books are far from the only places that embody these ideas. Robinson-Moore (2008) recounts a scene in Tyra Banks's (2005) *America's Next Top Model* when Banks explains the night she went to a club where lighter-skinned women were allowed free entry, but darker-skinned women were required to pay. Additionally, in Kiri Davis's (2005) short documentary titled *A Girl Like Me*, students make statements like "people love themselves, except for their color," and "there are standards that are imposed upon us…like, you're prettier if you're light" (Robinson-Moore, 2008). A girl even says that when she wore her natural hair, her mother told her to stop because she was starting to look African (Davis, 2005; Robinson-Moore, 2008).

Yet another widely known example of colorism is Disney's *The Proud Family* (2005) because two main characters, Penny and her mother, Trudy—both lighter-skinned women with straightened hair—are given fully-developed, multi-dimensional roles, while the secondary and guest female characters are written as more rudimentary, and their personalities heavily rely on

colorist notions and stereotypes (Steele, 2016). More specifically, Dijonay is an overtly sexualized, dark-skinned girl with big lips and blonde hair, and all of her attempts to fit in with beauty standards fail (Steele, 2016). She even fawns over another character, Sticky, when the show makes it abundantly clear that there is no way he would ever be attracted to her (Steele, 2016). Similarly, Trudy's darker-skinned husband, Oscar, is given a less elevated social status and coarser hair and speaks/behaves in a way that Trudy's family disapproves of (Steele, 2016). There is little room for these characters to break away from their stereotypical roles.

On a different, but related note, skin tone biases are prominent in advertising and news media as well. Sengupta (2000) argues that the increased use of lighter models in advertisements implies that the advertising industry views them as more effective, but others claim that practitioners just want to avoid "negative responses from mainstream customers with racially intolerant attitudes" (Watson & Dejong, 2011, p. 397). In reviews for movies such as *The Blind Side* (2005), critics use negative adjectives that echo ideologies about the goodness of white people and the inferiority of black ones (Cochran, Dhillon, Rabow, Vega, & Yeghnazar, 2012). Instances such as these only further perpetuate negative stereotypes.

Colorism's Mental Impact Overall

Colorism's mental effects are a culmination of both socioeconomic and media representation because identity construction is increasingly dependent on socialization (Robinson-Moore, 2008). The messages lighter-skinned women receive early on affirm their existence much more often, allowing them to have an increased amount of confidence, while darker-skinned women "remember being excluded more often than included, triggering feelings of fear, isolation, and lowered self-esteem" (Robinson-Moore, 2008, "Conclusions and Implications," para. 3). These women are left to find ways to counteract the negative effects on

their self-esteem and self-concept on their own. As Mathews and Johnson (2015) said, "low self-esteem that is experienced by women of darker complexions is only what her society mirrors; that she is not worthy of feeling appeal in herself" ("Theoretical Framework," para. 8). Mediated images of black people are powerful (Steele, 2016), and they have managed to create a sense of division within the community that's only amplified when people don't speak on these issues (Gasman & Abiola, 2016; Mathews & Johnson, 2015). This knowledge underscores the importance of studying how young black women are using their influence on social media to navigate their experiences with contemporary colorism.

Methodology

With the examination of texts about colorism came the realization that there is no pre-existing framework for an analysis such as this one. Previous studies were dedicated to understanding the mental impact colorism has had on black women, both light and dark-skinned, but not to the ways in which these women challenge intracultural structures in popular culture. It was important to find a method that not only matched the broadness of the research questions—that explored a) how colorism operates in a social media context and b) how anti-colorist social media artifacts function rhetorically—but also allowed the themes to emerge from the texts organically, without the weight of pre-existing constructs or strict guidelines. Sonja K. Foss's (2018) method of generative criticism fit this mold best, as it provides structure for rhetorical critics who are unsure of exactly what patterns they will find. Employing this method involved encountering a "curious" or interesting phenomenon—in this case, colorism on social media—and then allowing that interest to drive the search for an artifact that would suit an in-depth investigative study (Foss, 2018, p. 411).

The particular focus of this research was Candace "De La Fro" Sinclaire, a prominent black writer, feminist, and filmmaker who constantly speaks out against colorism through her online platforms, specifically her Twitter, Tumblr, and official blog. The sample included posts and threads that specifically mentioned the word "colorism"; these criteria totaled 158 tweets, one Tumblr entry, and one blog post. Each selected artifact was coded, in detail, for intensity and frequency of various themes (Foss, 2018) related to colorism and then evaluated to see how each piece functions in the context of the discourse. Finally, these data were analyzed and interpreted to create a schema that explained how each artifact functions rhetorically (Foss, 2018). In order to fully grasp Sinclaire's influence in the realm of social media, however, it is important to understand the purpose that each medium serve.

The Function of Social Media Platforms

According to Li and Bernoff (2011), "people have always depended on each other and drawn strength from each other…and have always rebelled against institutional power in social movements" (p. 10), and this togetherness has not been lost—it only shifted to online forums (Luttrell, 2016). Social media has become an important communication channel for countless communities because many people spread information, knowledge, and opinions online (Luttrell, 2016). Sinclaire (2016) took advantage of this space, and at only 24 years old, she has a strong online presence; her posts have garnered upwards of 41,000 followers on Twitter (n.d.) and over 82,000 reposts and likes on Tumblr (2015). Having such a large following allows her to enhance her influencer status through social currency—the possession of "information related to a unique topic that others may not be aware of" (Luttrell, 2016, p. 130)—and to build and nurture community-based relationships that provide her with a vast amount of support overall

(Breakenridge, 2012; Luttrell, 2016). Beyond these general functions, however, lies more specific purposes for each social media platform.

Twitter. According to Kerpen (2011), some of Twitter's best uses are insight and real-time engagement. This insight refers to a person's ability to see what people are saying about certain topics (2011) that is helpful especially in the context of anti-colorist movements. Influencers like Sinclaire cannot successfully combat dominant societal attitudes or form meaningful social movements if they are unaware of what their audience believes or requires from them. This awareness, coupled with the ability to have conversations in real-time, allows them to manage their social media presence and remain connected to the conversation (Kerpen, 2011).

Tumblr and other blogs. Most prominently, people use blogs as spaces to connect with their audience more deeply and to position themselves as thought leaders in their community (Kerpen, 2011). Although Twitter limits posts to 280 characters, Tumblr and other blogs allow people to have more extended, in-depth conversations—much like Sinclaire does on her official blog—so that the readers can better understand what informs the writer, and the writer can better understand the interests of their readers (Kerpen, 2011). The networks also allow people to become their own unrestrained media outlet, as many blogs have larger audiences than newspapers today (Kerpen, 2011).

Through an extensive analysis of each platform, several themes quickly emerged, all of which were instrumental in explaining how Sinclaire's rhetoric could be functioning online. These themes will be discussed in depth in the next section.

Discussion

Based on colorism's socioeconomic origins, media prevalence, and mental impact, and on the study of Sinclaire's arguments against colorism, it's evident that intraracial skin tone biases often imitate racism. For example, both colorist and racist ideologies rely on the belief in the superiority of lighter-skinned people, on the systematic condemnation of darker-skinned people, and on the marginalization of people with Afrocentric features, amongst many other connections. Interestingly enough, the theory that such prejudices stem from an internalized form of racism was a focal point in the text, specifically as Sinclaire discussed recurrent intracommunity issues like erasure, dehumanization, and self-hate.

The Erasure of Dark-Skinned Black Women

One of the most prominent discussion points across Sinclaire's platforms was the erasure of dark-skinned black women. In this specific context, "erasure" refers to any instance where black men and/or lighter-skinned black women make efforts to diminish the impact of colorism (Sinclaire 2017h; 2017j). Skin tone biases have undeniably created a large-scale systematic hierarchy (Gasman & Abiola, 2016; Hunter, 2016; Robinson-Moore, 2008; Steele, 2016), but by nature, social media gives people a platform to discuss their ideas (Luttrell, 2016)—many of which are seen as thinly-veiled attempts to invalidate critiques of colorist notions. Most notable is the emergence of concepts like "reverse colorism" that imply that colorism affects both light and dark-skinned people equally; the name itself is a play on "reverse racist" claims, where a white person asserts that racism affects both black and white people in the same way. Sinclaire openly challenged this idea by posing a couple of questions to her Twitter followers: "Why is this even a debate? Colorism definitely does not 'go both ways.' When does systemic oppression ever go 'both ways?'?" (2016g). The tweet itself received nearly 800 retweets and over 1,100

likes (Sinclaire, 2016g) as affirmation, but the most significant part is that the post sparked a conversation about how it is "inaccurate and dishonest" to claim that light-skinned black people experience colorism (Sinclaire, 2016c; 2016d). Notably, there are times when black people will make over-generalized judgements about those with lighter skin, such as saying they reject people often or take weeks to respond, but the comments do not compare to dark-skinned people being constantly labeled as unintelligent, undesirable, and unemployable. This is not to say that the prejudicial comments that lighter-skinned people receive aren't harmful because they can be, but they are a "response to marginalization…not systematic oppression," as Sinclaire argued (2016d; 2016e, 2016f). Implying that colorism goes "both ways" effectively derails and dilutes the issue, which allows skin tone-based discrimination to continue (Sinclaire, 2017j; 2017k). This line of reasoning could apply to declarations of reverse racism as well; perhaps that is why Sinclaire's threads about "all lives mattering" colorism garnered so much attention (2017g; 2017i).

To provide some background, one of the most popular ways that people denounce colorism is by responding to social commentary with phrases such as "we're all black first" or "at the end of the day, we're all black" (Sinclaire, 2017g). In response, Sinclaire published the following tweet on May 27, 2017: "'We all black' or 'black is black' are basically the equivalent of 'all lives matter' when it comes to colorism. It's erasure at best" (2017l), but it received little attention—only about 60 retweets and 85 likes—and no real community engagement (2017l), although the lack of interaction could have been based more on when she posted and not the actual topic. In July, she posted a similar tweet: "Responding to critiques of colorism w/ 'We're all black at the end of the day' is the equivalent of 'all lives matter" (2017i). This one had noticeably more success—more than 300 retweets and likes (2017i)—and at this point, she

realized that she was under the scrutiny of the public eye and subsequently began to build a public argument. She openly and deliberately began to challenge the dominant discourse in a sizeable portion of her community, choosing to discuss the ways that "we're all black" diminishes the importance of acknowledging colorism (2017j). The phrase ignores how important the distinctions within the community are (2017j), she said, as she pointed out that darker-skinned people are still "uniquely disenfranchised" (e.g., receiving harsher prison sentences) and that the community's responses to colorism have typically neutralized relevant issues (2017h; 2017k).

Sinclaire's next thread gained little more notoriety than the previous one, but the language she used made it arguably more controversial. On December 31, 2017 Sinclaire tweeted the following:

"We're all black first." "At the end of the day we're all black." These statements share more similarities with statements like "all lives matter" and "I don't see color" than we would like to think. ...Walk with me (2017g). / Each of these statements are usually used to silence valid critiques from whatever marginalized group said systemic oppression is affecting. Each of these statements purposefully undermine and dilute the actual problem at hand because ppl don't want to face their truths (2017c). / Each of these statements inaccurately suggest we're all seen as equals and diminishes our differences. People would rather harp on our similarities so that they can conveniently take attention away from our differences and play like we're on an even playing field when we're not (2017d). / Each of these statements spill out of privileged people's mouths so that they don't have to admit they benefit from a system that harms others because that would mean accountability (2017e).

This thread was strikingly different from the others. While proposing similar functions of "we're all black" and "all lives matter," Sinclaire simultaneously stripped her argument of all the pleasantries of the posts before it. Instead, she embodied a distinct bluntness when calling out members of her community, and often purposefully used accusatory language they might not have been receptive to, i.e. "ppl don't want to face their truths," and "they can conveniently take attention away." This type of loaded language, in combination with the logical structure of her social criticisms, is a consistent characteristic of her explanations. Similar to other posts, the creation of the "all lives matter" metaphor was an attempt to force others to accept that they have societal privilege by comparing them to their oppressors. The shock value drew attention, and, again, Sinclaire managed to prompt a conversation about colorism on social media that she herself admits is not easy to have (2016a). The reality is that, in the words of the rhetoric, "the pigment of our complexions further defines and impacts our experience as black folk and how ppl view and treat us" (Sinclaire, 2017f). Dark-skinned women are no exception.

The Dehumanization of Dark-Skinned Black Women

Another recurring theme for Sinclaire is dehumanization that is not a new concept to black people in any way. Only decades ago, television included prevalent white people in blackface and oversized, painted red lips, while people all over the world reduced black people to caricatures, exhibits, tar babies, and gorillas. Today, that diminution has not completely subsided, but it has found a secondary home in the black community; with regard to the artifacts, "dehumanization" is defined as the reduction of dark-skinned black women to nonhuman and/or generally undesirable terms.

As discussed earlier on, one of the main purposes of social media is to build relationships within a community (Breakenridge, 2012; Luttrell, 2016). Black people have done that for

years—that is evident in the construction of forums like Black Twitter—and this development remains so successful partly because of the constant use of jokes and memes. However intentional, these jokes are often reflective of a relatively normalized set of beliefs, so often times, dark-skinned women are subject to large-scale bullying because of the ways other black people are conditioned to see them. Particularly in May 2016, there were several colorist "jokes" floating around Twitter, and they all utilized an image of eight women lined up in a color gradient with the lightest one on the far left and the darkest one on the far right. The captions ranged from "ladies line up in order from independent to Child Supportive" (Sinclaire, 2016l), to "ok now ladies. Line up in order from highest to lowest GPA" (Sinclaire, 2016l), to "ladies line up from most valuable to least" (Sinclaire, 2016l). Eventually, these posts received enough notice to land in front of Sinclaire, who captured them and published a full-length rebuttal on her website. The blog post, titled "The Harm Behind 'Harmless' Jokes about Black Women and Girls," debuted with more than 1,000 retweets on Twitter, and is still one of her most popular posts about colorism to date (Sinclaire, 2016m). In the article, one of the biggest claims she makes is as follows:

> Black men and their token non-black homies slandering black women is not rare at all. In fact this is a daily occurrence. Young black men have built an audience off of "trolling" black women. They have built a large following (talking 10K+ following) simply off of cracking "jokes" about black women and girls. (2016l)

The phenomenon itself is understudied, but black women all over social media have called attention to how black men benefit from these colorist "jokes," and online fame is only one component. This popularity, however, does not outweigh the damage that these jokes cause to women with darker skin. Because of the intersection of black women's identities—being both

black and a woman—they are at a distinct disadvantage in society; white men, white women, and black men all oppress them in different ways, and making jokes that both align with centuries of racism and reduces them to caricatures only invites further discrimination. People outside the community frequently use these reprehensible displays to validate their prejudicial convictions. In fact, black and non-black people talking about others they mutually dislike/oppress will bring them together, Sinclaire claimed (2016l); even the posts insulting dark-skinned women managed to get retweets from people of varying backgrounds, although neither of the accounts were particularly popular.

Situations like these only contribute to what Sinclaire calls "the normalization of degrading black women" (2016l). However, the degradation they experience is, again, based on skin color. Earlier on, as part of a colorism thread in March 2016, Sinclaire tweeted that "DS [dark-skinned] women are called 'roaches' and 'apes'. LS [light-skinned] women are told they 'don't text back'" (2016b), and later, in August 2017, she said "remember, ppl also call DSBW [dark-skinned black women] 'roaches' regularly. Michelle Obama was called all kinds of apes. Check yourselves" (2017b). These tweets epitomize her style of challenging her community directly, thereby provoking community engagement, but they also demand that people reflect on what they say and who they say it to. She acutely reminded her audience that these insults weren't purely coincidental; they were "a reflection of a deeply embedded bias folks have about skin complexion" (2017a)—a truth that she elaborated on in her blog post:

> Do you think, living in a world doused in colorism, it's a coincidence that most of your jokes revolve around dehumanizing dark skin black women? You think you came up with that? You didn't come up with any of your jokes. These jokes have been written for decades. These jokes were not written by you. They were written by white supremacy.

Every 'joke' you have about black women stems from anti-black racism and misogyny

instilled by white supremacy. You think it's a coincidence that your 'jokes' are rooted in

stereotypes about black women? (2016l)

Once more, she compared people in her community to their oppressors, and once more, she used

a shamelessly blunt, bold tone and targeted "you" language to deliver her message. Because of

her constant challenging of black men, her audience demographic is primarily other black

women and she caters to them, using her vast platform to express and legitimize their collective

anger. She gives them a voice, and that voice is key in liberating dark-skinned women from

colorism.

The Underlying Struggle with Self-Hate

Another theme that emerged in the analysis is self-hate that was the easiest term to

describe because Sinclaire explicitly defined it herself, yet also the hardest to explain because the

term bears a lot of pre-conceived notions already. Many people readily assume that if someone

says that they struggle with self-hate, they mean they hate themselves, and sometimes they do;

even Sinclaire has said that "black women–especially young black girls–internalize these 'jokes'

and grow to sincerely hate their blackness" (2015), and that statement has undeniable validity,

especially online where it received over 87,000 notes worth of endorsements on Tumblr (2015).

However, fewer people address how black people making colorist jokes actually communicates

their views on blackness. So, in this context, self-hate means "having internalized

racism/internalized anti-blackness" (Sinclaire, 2016k); "it means to be anti-black while also

being black. It is being black and being resentful towards aspects of blackness" (Sinclaire,

2016l). In other words, racism affects mentality, and black people frequently reach a point where

they subconsciously see other black people as inferior too (Sinclaire, 2016i). Using seemingly

harmless jokes, black people weaponized features they commonly share—i.e. skin color, facial structures—and use them to attack other black people (Sinclaire, 2016l), markedly on social media where there seems to be no consequences for their actions.

Closer to the end of her blog post, Sinclaire asked, "would weaponizing our features as insults not imply that there's something inherently wrong with our features" (2016l)? In instances such as these, as she discussed potential underlying thought patterns, people repeatedly replied with "it's not that deep" (2016i) and said that they haven't "been brainwashed" (2016j) to invalidate her arguments. Her final response was biting:

> "It ain't that deep." It is though. Colorism runs deep as hell. So deep to the point you see dark skin as inferior subconsciously. (2016i) / And from there you make these jokes about DSBW [dark-skinned black women]. Jokes that are reflective of racist 'tar baby' narratives. You're brainwashed. Like hell. (2016h)

"Brainwashed" may not be the most positive word, but the term touches on the very important issue of societal conditioning. Referencing her earlier point, degrading black women has become a cultural norm (2016l) because black people have been subtly taught that black women are less valuable in various ways, from watching them work the same jobs as others for less pay, to watching them be constantly demeaned and relegated to background characters in the media, if present at all. She corroborated this reasoning in her blog:

> Whether black men realize it or not, taking digs at black women is their way of distancing themselves from their blackness. Part of their conditioning is being taught that black women are lower or entry level and fairer, non-black–especially white women–are at the top and more valuable. (2016l)

Pushing the black community to see the harm in the jokes they make and in their overall responses to colorism lays the groundwork for shifting cultural attitudes. As Sinclaire said, "these jokes have been written for decades" (2016l); having black influencers that speak out against colorism could potentially change the direction of the discourse. The way she expertly embodies the action she calls for in her strategic responses to the dominant rhetoric could be a template for other online activists.

Conclusion

All in all, the rhetoric of one of today's most well-known figures on black social media revealed many topics of discussion. The three themes discussed here—erasure, dehumanization, and self-hate—seemed to reflect the most pressing issues regarding colorism and the negative impacts it has on individuals today. In regard to the research questions, colorism operates through much more direct channels on social media than observed in systematic analyses. Longstanding stereotypes and assumptions about dark-skinned black women have informed colorist posts and challenging those ideas through social movements is admittedly hard. However, this study is one of the first to examine in-depth how one person can use social media to shift a discourse that is decades old. Sinclaire's main rhetorical purposes may have been to explain and alter perception, that she does effectively by providing information and a template for logical arguments against colorism, but her communication has elucidated many more outcomes. She initiates action by calling on people to check themselves and their ideologies, maintains action by being a necessarily cathartic voice for other dark-skinned black women, and even formulates beliefs by encouraging people to toss out their old, harmful ways of dealing with colorism. The constant push and pull between ideologies is almost hostile, but people like

Candace Sinclaire are critical in the creation of spaces for dialogue and debate within their own communities.

That said, examining Sinclaire alone was one of the primary limitations of this study. Although thousands of retweets, likes, and reposts indicate some form of community agreeance, there are many more online activists with different opinions and approaches. There was also no mention of how colorism could have actually affected Candace's platform; as a dark-skinned black woman herself, she may not have as much of a voice as a light-skinned black woman would have, but differences in social reach could be an area for future research. Other possible studies could provide a broader view that is more inclusive of other prominent black social media figures. The research could also go into how black men build platforms by devaluing black women, and how different approaches on social media can create a change in attitudes towards issues as sensitive as colorism.

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Mental Health and Mental Illness Policy in Alabama

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Abstract

There is a mental health crisis in the state of Alabama. In the state, there is one mental health professional per 1,260 people (Mental Health America). Throughout Alabama's history, there has been little progress towards creating an efficient mental health care system. Despite the efforts of Peter Bryce, the first superintendent of what the public knows as Bryce Hospital today, there has been no ensuring of moral treatment for mental health patients. The 33-year-long court case Wyatt v. Stickney caused a drastic change in how Alabama treats those with mental health issues. The stigma on mental health in the American south influenced the current policies in place for treatment for those with mental illness and protocol among mental health professionals and other staff members. Along with this, the current policies at both the state and federal levels are weak, considering that 148,000 Alabamians have reported having thoughts of suicide (Kaiser Family Foundation). This research analyzes the public policies in place at the state and federal levels to explore why Alabama is struggling to provide quality service to those in need of mental health treatment. In order to avoid partisanship, various sources have been consulted about policies, history, stigma, and current efforts of reform. The goal of this study is to construct a policy proposal that includes potential solutions to Alabama's mental health crisis.

Executive Summary

In Alabama, there is an inefficient policy in place and little advocacy for reforming mental health practice. In the state, there is one mental health professional per 1,260 people (Mental Health America). Throughout Alabama's history, there has been little progress towards creating an efficient mental health care system. Along with this, the current policies at both the

state and federal levels are weak, considering that 148,000 Alabamians have reported having thoughts of suicide (Kaiser Family Foundation). Throughout the state's history, Alabama has done little to alleviate the issues mental health patients face every day.

The state of Alabama is failing its citizens by not providing adequate mental health and mental illness treatment. The problem that has encouraged this failure is the federal government's lack of oversight on state-level mental health departments. This lack of oversight has led Alabama to a severe shortage of mental health professionals, a lack of funding through the state's cigarette tax, and inadequate facilities and conditions due to ineffective minimum standards. There are two proposed alternatives: establish a national minimum standards policy and outlaw the procedure of the lobotomy.

Within this analysis, the criteria political feasibility, social acceptability, and liberty were considered amongst the current policies and the proposed alternatives. The alternative of establishing national minimum standards would not appeal to the state of Alabama, mainly due to the thought of infringing on the rights guaranteed by the Tenth Amendment. The outlawing of the lobotomy procedure may face some opposition, but it would not only alleviate the negative stigma on mental health and mental illness in Alabama, but also allow for patients to choose safer treatment options.

Based on this policy analysis, it is recommended that the federal government should gradually increase their oversight by outlawing the lobotomy procedure. While Alabama normally resists federal interference, it would be in the best interest of the state to be willing to accept this federal oversight in order to provide mental health and mental illness patients with the treatment they not only need, but also deserve.

Mental Health vs. Mental Illness

For the purposes of this research, it is important to define the terms "mental health" and "mental illness," because these two terms are not interchangeable. While both terms are slightly related, the experiences of both are drastically different.

Mental health is defined as someone's "mental well-being," which ranges from "emotions, thoughts and feelings, ability to solve problems and overcome difficulties… and understanding the world around us," (What's the difference between mental health and mental illness?) Everyone has mental health; however, some people have a more difficult time coping with some mental health challenges. However, that does not mean they possess a mental illness.

Mental illness is defined as "an illness that affects that way people think, feel, behave, or interact with others," (What's the difference between mental health and mental illness?). Different types of mental illness range from anxiety disorders, mood disorders, eating disorders, etc. Not everyone has a mental illness, and those who have been diagnosed with one struggle worse with coping and mental health than those who do not.

In short, everyone struggles with mental health, but not everyone struggles with mental illness.

Bryce Hospital and the Moral Treatment Plan

The state of Alabama has always struggled with treating those with mental illness. After mental-wellness advocate Dorothea Dix toured Alabama in the 1840s, the state legislature passed a bill to build a mental hospital in Tuscaloosa named the Alabama Insane Hospital, which is known as Bryce Hospital today. When the bill was passed in 1852, the hospital did not finish being constructed until 1859 due to lack of funding.

In 1859, Peter Bryce was appointed as superintendent of AIH. Bryce had previously studied mental health in Europe and worked at mental hospitals in South Carolina and New Jersey. Upon AIH's opening in 1861, there were 66 patients admitted. According to Bryce's 1862 AIH annual report, the patients that were admitted were "diagnosed" with mental illnesses ranging from "melancholia," depression, to "idiocy," extreme intellectual disability, (Alabama Insane Hospital Report).

When the hospital opened, Bryce had implemented his "moral treatment plan." In his plan, physical abuse was condemned, there was to be no use of straight-jackets or any kind of restraints, and there were to be religious services and events for the patients. For the late 1800s, Bryce's idea of moral treatment seemed progressive. Establishing the societal norm within the walls of the hospital were crucial for Bryce's moral treatment plan (Bryce Hospital Historic Preservation).

Peter Bryce's Moral Treatment Plan set the precedent for the whole state, and all other mental health institutions soon followed in Bryce's steps. However, it is important to note that even though there was a plan in place to ensure the fair treatment of the patients, the hospital "had been deteriorating almost from the hospital's opening because of a demand for services that exceeded the staff or space available," (Hospital and Community Psychiatry).

Partlow State School and Eugenics

Sixty years after Bryce Hospital was founded, the Alabama Home for the Feeble-Minded was established by Dr. William D. Partlow. (The AHFM would later be renamed to Partlow State School in 1927.) Partlow State School served as a facility for psychiatric patients ages six to eighteen and housed over 100 patients in its beginning. Partlow State School was designed to facilitate an "everyday life" for the children, despite the fact being trapped within the walls of the

building. In fact, the establishment of the school by Dr. Partlow was not influenced by the idea of a true "moral treatment plan."

Dr. Partlow's beliefs were significantly different from Dr. Bryce's. While Bryce was established with the concept of treating the patients as actual human beings because it is morally right, Partlow was established under a very radical belief: eugenics, "the selection of desired heritable characteristics in order to improve future generations, (Britannica). To Dr. Partlow, the school's purpose was to separate the "feeble-minded" from members of society who were deemed "physically and mentally fit," (Eugenics in Alabama).

Eugenics was introduced to Alabama in 1919, the same year that Partlow State School was established. The theory of eugenics was introduced to the Alabama state legislature in a policy proposal by none other than Dr. William D. Partlow. Dr. Partlow's support for eugenics encouraged the legislature to overwhelmingly vote to pass a eugenic sterilization statute. This statute allowed Partlow State School to be constructed as a means of separating the "worthy" Alabamians from the "unworthy" Alabamians. Having immense support behind him, Dr. Partlow was also allowed to sterilize all of the "inmates" of the school. (In the bill, it stated that those who were deemed "feeble-minded" were considered to be inmates, (Alabama Eugenics)).

Lobotomies in Tuskegee

Alabama's mental health system only deteriorated more after Dr. Partlow's movement to implement eugenics within the system. The system worsened even more when a man named Dr. Walter Freeman almost came to the state to perform lobotomies and electroconvulsive therapy on black veterans in 1948.

The Veteran Affairs Hospital in Tuskegee, Alabama, was interested in conducting a presentation of the lobotomy, a medical procedure that involves cutting into the prefrontal lobe

of the brain in hopes that the incision would "rid" someone of their mental illness. The VA

hospital begged Dr. Freeman to visit and perform multiple lobotomies on black veterans. Dr.

Freeman was thrilled, and even asked the VA hospital if he could compare his results by "giving

another group of veterans electroshock therapy," a procedure where a seizure is induced by

electricity in hopes to "rewire" a mental illness out of someone's brain, (The Lobotomy Files:

One Doctor's Legacy).

While it seemed that Freeman's visit was confirmed, it was quickly cancelled. VA

consultant Dr. Francis Murphy had two issues with Dr. Freeman's procedure: 1) the validity of

the operation since Dr. Freeman could not physically see the part of the brain the incision would

be made on and 2) the demonstrations' perception by the public as fueled by racism, since the

procedures would only be conducted on black veterans. The animosity only intensified when a

national VA consultant Dr. Glen Spurling stated that Dr. Freeman would only be allowed to

perform multiple lobotomies "over his dead body," (The Lobotomy Files: One Doctor's Legacy).

The VA in Tuskegee retracted their invite from Dr. Freeman once these concerns were voiced.

Wyatt v. Stickney

In 1970, Bryce Hospital had over 5,200 mental health patients. That same year, the state

cigarette tax, the tax that is earmarked as funds for mental health, was planned to be cut

dramatically from the state budget. This forced Bryce to fire nearly 100 employees, leaving only

"one physician per 350 patients, one nurse per 250 patients, and one psychiatrist per 1,700

patients," (Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program). All of the patients at Bryce lived in

inhumane conditions, making it impossible for the few employees left at Bryce to provide

effective treatment and a quality living space. The hospital became a "dumping ground,"

(Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program). Bryce closely resembled a "prison" and a "crazy house" due to these conditions:

> "The dormitories are barnlike structures with no privacy for the patients. For most patients, there is not even a space provided which he can think of as his own. The toilets in restrooms seldom have partitions between them. These are dehumanizing factors with degenerate the patients' self-esteem… Other conditions which render the physical environment at Bryce critically substandard are extreme ventilation problems, fire, and other emergency hazards, and overcrowding caused to some degree by poor utilization of space," (Hospital and Community Psychiatry).

After the layoffs, five of the former staff members at Bryce filed a lawsuit with the United States District Court for Middle Alabama regarding the living conditions for the patients at Bryce against the mental health commissioner, Dr. Stickney. In order to make their argument more credible, the staff members had a patient represent them in the case. This patient was Ricky Wyatt, a 15-year-old boy who was admitted to Bryce Hospital for his troubling teen angst by his aunt Mildred Rawlins. Wyatt had no diagnosed mental health challenges.

Early on in the litigation, the plaintiffs were concerned with the rights of the employees at Bryce, and we're hoping to have their positions reinstated. However, when it became known that Bryce's condition resembled, what a Montgomery journalist called, "concentration camps," the focus of the litigation shifted to the rights of patients (Disability Justice). This became a huge factor in Judge Johnson's ruling of the case. Judge Johnson's ruling of this case introduced a concept that many states throughout the country would begin to adopt for their own psychiatric facilities: minimum standards.

***Wyatt v. Stickney* Ruling and Minimum Standards Policy**

On March 12, 1971, the judge over the case, Judge Frank Johnson, issued his ruling on the case:

> "There can be no legal (or moral) justification for the State of Alabama's failing to afford treatment — and adequate treatment from a medical standpoint — to the several thousand patients who have been civilly committed to Bryce's for treatment purposes. To deprive any citizen of his or her liberty upon the altruistic theory that the confinement is for humane therapeutic reasons and then fail to provide adequate treatment violates the very fundamentals of due process," (United States District Court, M. D. Alabama).

Along with this statement, Johnson ruled that there are had to be minimum standards in place for hospitals to function. There was no excuse for patients in Bryce Hospital to be treated with such indecency, and Judge Johnson knew that these issues would only continue and worsen if he did not address them accordingly.

On April 13th, 1972, 35 standards for quality treatment were issued. In section II of Judge Johnson's minimum standards ruling, standards for Humane Psychological and Physical Environment included standards of the following:

1. "Patients have a right to privacy and dignity.

2. Patients have a right the least restrictive conditions necessary to achieve the purposes of commitment…

6. Patients have a right to be free from unnecessary or excessive medication…

9. Patients have a right not to be subjected to treatment procedures such as lobotomy, electroconvulsive treatment, [aversive] reinforcement conditioning or other unusual or

hazardous treatment procedures without their express and informed consent after consultation with counsel or interested party of the patient's choice," (United States District Court, M. D. Alabama).

These standards drastically changed mental health treatment in Alabama, but it did not solve all the problems. Even though this case continued on until 2003 and aimed to emphasize the humane treatment of the mentally ill, the minimum standards that were implemented in Alabama's mental health system were not enough to combat the issues psychiatric facilities still faced, like lack of funding and mental health/illness professional shortage.

Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility and the "Prison Treatment"

In 1981, a facility to evaluate and treat the "criminally committed citizens" was established (Alabama Department of Mental Health). This facility is known today as Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility, and due to its reason for establishment, the facility is ran much like a prison.

Taylor Hardin's purpose did not stop former governor Robert Bentley from considering turning the facility over to the Department of Corrections (Prison chief, Bentley say mental health plan still in early stages). Why was this being considered? Well, Alabama needs more prisons, of course.

However, this idea was removed from the table once it decided that the state did not have the funds to convert Taylor Hardin. While this idea is long gone from the state's issue list, it still demonstrates how Alabama feels towards psychiatric patients: nothing. The fact that the state even thought of converting a psychiatric facility ran like a prison into an actual prison only pulls the mental health system away from any progression towards quality treatment.

Robert Bentley, Zelia Baugh, and Present-Day Budget Cuts

It is plain and simple: Robert Bentley did (and still does) not care about those who suffer from mental health challenges and/or mental illnesses. Yes, this is a harsh statement to make, but during his time as governor, the Alabama Department of Mental Health suffered a lot of unnecessary cuts and changes.

After 88 years, it was announced in March of 2011 by the state that Partlow State School was going to close down, and the last resident did not leave until December of that same year. While the school's origin was founded on a racially insensitive concept, as time went one, Partlow became a facility where younger psychiatric patients were being treated. The school became necessary for Alabama's mental health system, but now it no longer operates and sits desolate in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

In February 2012, former Alabama Mental Health Commissioner Zelia Baugh announced that four of the six mental hospitals in the state were closing. One of the six hospitals that closed was Searcy Hospital in Mobile, Alabama. Searcy was one of the state's largest facilities and was very similar to Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa. Because of its size and similarity to Bryce, Searcy was considered a necessity for the Department of Mental Health. However, Searcy now sits decaying on an immense lot in Mobile, only reminding Alabamians of Bentley's carelessness for the state's Department of Mental Health.

Former governor Bentley proposed in his General Fund budget a $12 million cut to the state's Mental Health Department. This act forced thousands of patients to be relocated to the remaining two facilities or community homes.

It is important to question where the Department of Mental Health receives funding. The funds are fueled by an aspect of Alabama's budget that most of society is trying to fight against

with educational campaigns: the state's cigarette tax (Alabama State Budget 2018-2019). Along with this, it is important to also question what kinds of things are funded within the state's Department of Mental Health. What is funded by the state's cigarette tax range from salaries for state employees with the Department of Mental Health to proper maintenance of all of the state-owned facilities (Alabama State Budget 2018-2019)? The fact that the state's Department of Mental Health has to rely on the tax of an unhealthy habit is ridiculous.

Under Bentley's administration, Baugh had many ideas to help the Department of Mental Health Reform. However, her efforts were not enough to bring change to the department, so she resigned in June of 2012.

The Problem

Alabama has a mental health crisis. With the increasing numbers of citizens who need mental health treatment and the lack of professionals to address their issues, the problem becomes worse every day. One of the aspects of Alabama's mental health and mental illness policy is the lack of a true definition of what a person who struggles with mental health and/or mental illness is. Because of this lack of understanding within the state government, it creates multiple obstacles for Alabamians that need the treatment they deserve.

The problem with Alabama's policies regarding mental health and mental illness is the lack of federal oversight on practices and procedures conducted at the state level within Alabama's mental health system. This overarching problem has created other underlying issues, such as a shortage of professionals in the field, the lack of funding from the state's cigarette tax, and the mistreatment of the mentally ill as criminals.

Alternatives and Criteria for Alabama to Consider

Current Policies of the Alabama Department of Mental Health (Status Quo) The

following are current policies in the state of Alabama's Department of Mental Health:

1. State Issued Minimum Standards: In 1972, the state of Alabama issued a policy of

   minimum standards, requiring all mental health and mental illness facilities to

   provide minimum basic rights and necessities to mental health and mental illness

   patients. These rights and necessities range from the right to refuse or accept any

   forms of treatment to providing a clean and organized facility.

2. The Use of the Lobotomy: In the state of Alabama, it is still legal for someone to

   undergo a lobotomy. Alabama does not legally require any reporting each year on

   how many people receive this procedure. While patients are guaranteed the right

   to refuse or accept this procedure, there are many risks that come along after the

   completion of the procedure.

These regulatory policies have been in effect for a while--- the lobotomy procedure was

performed frequently in the early to mid-1900s, and the state's minimum standards were issued

in the early 1970s. While state legislators may believe that the status quo is the ideal outcome for

"reform" measure within the Department of Mental Health, it is in the best interest of the state to

embrace federal oversight and be open to other alternatives.

National Minimum Standards Policy In the previous historical analysis, the federal case

of *Wyatt v. Stickney* set a precedent of what minimum standards a Department of Mental Health

should possess. However, Alabama's minimum standards differ greatly from other states in our

country, which explains why Alabama's mental health and mental illness treatment system is

ranked one of the lowest in the country. Due to the large amount of autonomy states have

regarding their treatment systems, there are many inconsistencies and failures when treating mental health and mental illness patients in the United States. Establishing a national minimum standards policy would help regulate these inconsistencies and failures.

Outlaw of the Lobotomy The last recorded lobotomy was conducted in 1967 by Dr. Walter Freeman, the same doctor who was invited by the Tuskegee VA Hospital and performed a lobotomy on Rosemary Kennedy. Since then, lobotomies are considered to be rarely conducted. However, only a few states require reporting of conducted lobotomies, so the true statistic is unknown. Alabama is not one of these states.

That is not the only pressing issue with the lobotomy. Lobotomies are considered an operation to "rid" someone of their mental illness by cutting nerves and a particular lobe of the brain. Mental illness does not have a definite cure, and cutting someone's brain, one of the most important organs of the body, will put a patient at risk for enduring severe side effects, like loss of basic motor skills.

While it is recognized that the lobotomy has been modernized by using lasers instead of ice picks, the lobotomy is a dangerous procedure, and having this type of regulatory policy would give accountability to the federal government and ensure more oversight on the humane treatment of mental health and/or mental illness patients.

Political Feasibility Political feasibility is the criteria that considers all political actors and their level of acceptability on a proposal (Kraft and Furlong). Due to the political nature of this issue, political feasibility is crucial to examine. The 2020 election is quickly approaching, and candidates will be constructing strategies and platforms to gain more votes. Analyzing the political feasibility of these alternatives will determine the general view of politicians, and also

determine if a politician would advocate for these alternatives in their platform (Kraft and Furlong).

Social Acceptability Social acceptability is the criteria that considers the public's opinion and approval on a proposal (Bardach). The public's opinion on the proposed alternatives is the most important factor within this policy analysis. This is due to the efficacy between politicians and their constituents. The more an alternative is accepted by the public, the more adoptable the alternative will be.

Liberty and Freedom Liberty and freedom are criteria that consider the possibility of infringing on the rights of the public through measures such as security and privacy (Bardach). Alabama is a proponent for the Tenth Amendment, which grants rights to the states that are not stated as federal rights in the Constitution. Considering the liberty and freedom amongst the two alternatives is needed. Another aspect of this criteria to consider is the infringement of liberty on a patient's right to choose certain forms of treatment. A patient's right to choose certain forms of treatment is important, because they should have bodily autonomy.

Outcomes and Assessment of Current Policies and Policy Alternatives

While the overarching problem defined is the lack of federal oversight, addressing this problem on its own would complicate Alabama's mental health and mental illness treatment system. Instead, it is best to use incrementalism, the act of gradually amending a system or institution, since Alabama's Department of Mental Health is an immense institution.

Figure 1: Outcomes Matrix

	Political Feasibility	**Social Acceptability**	**Liberty and Freedom**
Status Quo	✓	✓	✓
National Minimum Standards	✓	X	X
Outlaw of the Lobotomy	✓	✓	✓

A method to analyze the criteria previously introduced above is through an outcomes matrix, a constructed chart that displays the alternatives and criteria with their projected outcomes (Bardach). Through this outcome's matrix, labeled as Figure 1, it is evident that the status quo and alternatives are projected to have approval within political feasibility. However, the status quo and alternatives differ greatly in the criteria of social acceptability and liberty and freedom.

The current policies Alabama has in place has projected approval within all criteria. The political feasibility of the status quo is the most ideal for the Alabama state legislature because it means less change to their set agenda. Agenda setting determines what type of policy is constructed, and the agenda is usually set by constituents. If a politician feels that their constituents are satisfied with the status quo, then there will be no reform measures taken.

Within the criteria of social acceptability, the current policies reach approval amongst the public. There are two reasons behind this approval--- agenda setting and lack of knowledge on current policies. The public sets the political agenda, and in Alabama, the political agenda currently does not include reform within the Department of Mental Health. This is evident

through the proposed amendments from the 2018 midterm election. The state was focused on the issues of religious expression and the legality of abortion. Along with this, the average Alabamian may not be educated on the state's current mental health policies. Since the public is uninformed, the need for reform is not considered. While there are some interest groups working within Alabama to promote this reform, there is not enough grassroots support to demonstrate to the state government that the status quo is not acceptable, therefore society accepts the current policies.

One of the most important government aspects to Alabama is the Tenth Amendment. If the public and state government were outraged at all by the current policies infringing on the state's rights, they would have been changed long ago. With the current policies, the state is able to determine its own minimum standards within the Department of Mental Health. The current policies also provide little infringement on liberty, because it guarantees a patient's right to accept or decline any form of treatment.

The alternatives of national minimum standards and the outlaw of the lobotomy both have the projected approval within the criteria of political feasibility. At the moment, the 119th Congress is concerned with the repealment of the Affordable Care Act. While the issues of mental health/mental illness treatment and healthcare are not directly related, they can still be considered in the same agenda of politicians. If the issue of healthcare is being considered in regard to medication and access to treatment, then why not also consider the act of treatment as well? Considering forms and administration of treatment within the state-level mental health departments would alleviate some of the issues attached to the current policies.

If the federal government were to issue national minimum standards for state-level mental health departments, it would ensure better definitions of the terms "mental health" and

"mental illness" in Alabama. The lack of a solid definition for these terms is an underlying issue in Alabama's Department of Mental Health, so a national minimum standards policy would fix this issue.

Outlawing the lobotomy is also politically feasible due to the evolving technology in medicine and therapy. The lobotomy is considered an archaic form of treatment, and with the advancement of medicine and therapy, adding this alternative to the agenda would be accepted by politicians. This is also due to the needs of our evolving and growing mindset of the public, which politician are supposed to represent.

However, these two alternatives differ in the criteria of social acceptability and liberty/freedom.

While having federally issued minimum standards is politically feasible, the public may have opposition with them, particularly in the Deep South. In the Deep South, there is a negative stigma on government interference, especially when the government attempts to regulate certain institutional operations. The public in the Deep South may not be very accepting of federal minimum standards, because of the deep-rooted resistance of change. The current standards are more comfortable for the Deep South, because they have been in effect for many decades. Therefore, issuing national minimum standards is neither socially acceptable nor accepted under the criteria of liberty and freedom.

Outlawing the lobotomy is more socially acceptable than the national minimum standards, because the public would agree on the fact that the lobotomy is an outdated and dangerous procedure. With the evolution of medicine and therapy in society, the public can see that new methods of treatment for mental health and mental illness are more suitable than eyeballing an incision of the brain.

Since the alternative of outlawing the lobotomy is politically feasible and socially accepted, it is also approved under the criteria of liberty and freedom. It is understood that patients have the right to choose forms of treatment. However, with the testimonies provided by those who have underwent a lobotomy, it is generally understood that the procedure could have a severe impact on a patient's behavior. The last recorded lobotomy in 1967 ended like Rosemary Kennedy's--- botched. If this procedure keeps resulting in severe damages to a person's behavior, then it is likely not benefiting neither anyone who undergoes this procedure nor anyone who conducts it.

After the analyzation of current policies and proposed alternatives, the outcome that would be ideal is the status quo. However, due to the multiple issues that underlie the overarching defined problem, the status quo cannot and should not remain. This leads to the conclusion that the best solution is to outlaw the lobotomy. Outlawing the lobotomy is an effective step to gradually reforming the federal government's oversight of state-level mental health departments, specifically Alabama's Department of Mental Health.

Outlawing the lobotomy is a unique alternative that has not been implemented due to one reason--- no one cares about "crazy" people. Ignoring the legality of the lobotomy is comfortable for politicians, because reformation in treating mental health and mental illness is not a priority to them. If the United States and state of Alabama truly cared for those who struggle with mental illness and mental health challenges, then both of these institutions would have embraced the evolution of medicine, therapy, and society by ridding the country of a dangerous and deeply stigmatized procedure. By outlawing the lobotomy, the country will gradually be taking steps towards ending the negative stigma on mental health and mental illness, and provide a chance to research more treatment options for mental health and mental illness patients.

The Future of Alabama's Department of Mental Health

If Alabama continues on the path that the current policies have laid for the state, many of those who struggle with mental illness and/or mental health challenges will not receive the treatment they need and deserve. While Alabama is resistant to change and federal interference, it is in the best interest of the state to embrace them. Embracing both change and federal oversight will not only assist Alabama's Department of Mental Health with the issues it currently has, but also ensure the safety of mental health and mental illness patients. The United States has a duty in ensuring the welfare of society, and this is one of many methods the country can carry out this duty. Mental health and mental illness are very complex issues; they do not discriminate, have mercy, or make life an easy journey. The federal government and the Alabama state legislature must work together to aid Alabamians with the goal of making life still worth living.

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Celebrity Feminism and the Victimhood Persona: Delegitimizing the #MeToo Movement

By Brianna Garner

Abstract

Celebrity Feminism is a term that is often associated with public figures such as Amy Schumer and Taylor Swift, celebrity women who attempt to bring the injustices and inequalities of women into the public spotlight. However, it is a term that, so far, does not have a solid definition. This study aims to define white celebrity feminism, but, more importantly, it also aims to highlight how white celebrity feminism affects feminist movements, such as the #MeToo Movement. This study hypothesizes that some celebrity feminists actually damage the reputation of forward-moving feminist movements, such as Jeetendr Sehdev suggests. In his study, Sehdev concentrates on the problematic involvement of celebrity women in feminism because it is often used to garner popularity. Some of the celebrity women who garner attention during these movements often use the victimhood persona, such as Taylor Swift, to highlight their need for involvement, creating another problem for the image of celebrity feminism. The use of the victimhood persona, i.e. someone who constantly claims to be a victim of circumstance, has been used as a fuel to launch people into stardom, especially with the rise of social media and internet fame. However, when celebrity women use this persona, the feminist movements that they participate in are negatively affected, and the issues that women are trying to fight against are brought under scrutiny, highlighting the question of whether or not there is a way to redeem celebrity feminism and the figures representing it.

Timeline of Feminist Thought

The fight for feminine equality is an ongoing fight that has deep roots and a unique history in the United States. The feminist fight emerged as a need for equal representation in

democracy, and it has now transformed into a need for equality in all aspects of everyday life. However, along with this evolution of the feminist fight in America, the view of feminism has also drastically changed. Feminism started out as a unique, extraordinary revolutionist movement where women were challenging the power and authority of their male counterparts. Women began to fight against the institutional oppression that they faced, calling out the inequality that they faced both inside and outside of the home. In the early emergence of feminism, women were looked at as brave, bold even, for calling out the power of men and challenging the nuclear roles they had often filled, something that men especially were not fully on board with. Today, however, the term "feminist" has transformed into a derogatory label that is often associated with the idea of "man hating." This defamation of the idea of the feminist cause not only harms the work that feminists are putting in, but it also harms the fight for equality that many women and men are working towards. This change in the American view of feminism not only questions what women are fighting for, but it also questions the equality and change that feminists have already managed to gain. This change, in part, seems to come from the involvement of celebrity figures and the transformation of feminism from a need for representation to a need for equality and individuality.

The Suffrage Movement that began in the United States was the start of the first wave of feminism, and, for its time, it was completely groundbreaking. Women were fighting for the right to vote, they were fighting for equal representation in both government and the job force, they were fighting to be equals to men, and this fight is still an ongoing epidemic that has not been won yet in the United States. This wave of feminism, according to Ellen DuBois, was most successful for the "identification of the family as a central institution of women's oppression" ("The Radicalism of the Women's Suffrage Movement: Notes toward the Reconstruction of

Nineteenth-Century Feminism," Page 37). The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a change in the idea of familial obligations. Not only were men's roles broadened by the start of the century but so were women's roles. Women were allowed, in essence, to have a little more freedom in the social sphere, specifically because of the downfall of the nuclear family and the rise of the individual. However, this freedom was still limited to the privacy of their familial roles. As a whole, women were still defined politically and economically by the men they were married to, and this constriction led to the need for more individual expression and autonomy in both the public and the private sphere. Not only was this idea radical for its time, but it helps identify the reasons that women were not being treated as an equal partner to men: they were being restricted to household normality and the ideas of an oppressive nuclear family. While this form of feminism was radical for the women involved in it, women of this time never actually achieved the emancipation of household roles and the equal representation in politics and the workplace that they desperately fought for. According to DuBois, these failures of First-Wave feminism led to the rise of Second-Wave feminism ("The Radicalism of the Women's Suffrage Movement: Notes toward the Reconstruction of Nineteenth-Century Feminism," Page 63-64).

Second-Wave feminism works to expand on the ideas of the Suffrage Movement by breaking away from matronly roles and expanding the concept of feminism to include a much larger group of women. This wave of feminism is headlined by the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 and an increase of safe abortions for women. This wave of feminism is applauded for white middle-class women refusing to be treated as second-class citizens by men in the work environment. These middle-class women broke laws, rioted, and demanded to be heard, but their voices are the only ones primarily remembered from this revolutionary fight for equal rights and sexual freedom.

Much of the history of Second-Wave Feminism excludes the truth about the intersectionality that occurred. However, the truth about Second-Wave feminism being led by white feminists is often a misrepresented fact. Oftentimes, the history of Second-Wave feminism excludes the reality of multiracial representation that occurred within women's lives, meaning Second-Wave feminism historians excluded women of color and women of lower classes. By failing to recognize the involvement from women of color, Second-Wave feminism fails to represent the equality these women fought for. According to Becky Thompson, Second-Wave feminism fails to encompass an array of views that do not coincide with the oppression of white women during this time. Thompson titles this form of feminism as "hegemonic feminism," stating that this form of feminism ignores the presence of racial differences and strictly identifies equality with men as its goal instead of equality of all women. During this wave, women of color worked to bring to take feminism outside of "women only" spaces. They rallied for feminist treatment in white only spaces, gender inclusive spaces, as well as in predominant black and Latina spaces. Both waves of feminism exclude other women, and by excluding specific groups of women from a women's movement, full liberation cannot occur. Thompson argues that Second-Wave feminism fails to be inclusive, but it also focuses on the individual rights of women rather than justice for women. Instead, Thompson suggests that women of color, as well as anti-racist feminists, bonded together during this movement to create multiracial feminism ("Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," Page 336-338).

The emergence of multiracial feminism comes after the failure of Second-Wave feminism to include women of color and elaborate on the idea of intersectionality between different races of women. Multiracial feminism looks to correct the mistakes of Second-Wave feminism by becoming a form of feminism that looks for the equality of all women in the

workplace and in politics, not necessarily trying to make women equal to men. This form of feminism, which occurred in the United States in 1970, looked to identify the struggles of women internationally rather than just in the United States and identify similar oppressions that occur with these women ("Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism," Page 337). Marian Ortega states that white women have an "arrogant eye" that does not allow them to see that all women do not have the same experiences as white women. Therefore, white feminism fails to correctly identify the problems that multiracial women face, either in the United States or out of it, but white women, specifically, want to be able to fight for the rights they believe they are being denied. Multiracial feminism seeks to create a sort of community of women that is in agreement about the inequalities of all women. By creating this society, multiracial feminism hopes to break away from arrogant perceptions and create this goal of equality; however, white feminism becomes the main form of feminism that brings in the Third-Wave of feminism ("Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant: White Feminism and Women of Color," Page 58).

This anti-inclusive Second-Wave feminism of the twentieth century brings in the Third Wave of feminism which is commonly called celebrity feminism or neoliberal feminism. This form of feminism focuses on the idea that celebrity women are not held as equals to their male counterparts in films. However, although neoliberal feminism looks to correct the inequality of women in the workplace, specifically women in the media, it fails to create a narrative of equality and inclusion; as theorists K and R argue, it, "disavows the social, cultural and economic roots of these inequalities in favor of the neoliberal ethos of individual action, personal responsibility, and unencumbered choice as the best strategy to produce gender equality" (Keller and Ringrose, Page 1).

The Overview of Celebrity Feminism

The history of feminism is riddled with swarms of women fighting for equality, representation, and liberation from the ideals of the nuclear family, and the women involved in these fights have been women from various economic and cultural backgrounds; however, feminist culture has become increasingly popular in the public sphere, causing high-powered women, such as celebrity women, to publicly claim a feminist status. For instance, celebrity women such as Lena Dunham have actively participated in feminist movements, trying to establish a field of equality. In her show *Girls,* Dunham creatively brings forth female characters that go against the regulations of the nuclear woman and familial roles. By creating these anti-feminine roles, Dunham is questioning what a modern woman looks like, free of the regulations of the nuclear family. This quest of freedom can also be seen in comedy sketches from Amy Schumer as well, especially since she constantly refers to herself as a promiscuous woman on stage. Schumer attempts to break the image of a stereotypical woman by embracing the controversial role of a woman who enjoys sex and is actually happy with her appearance (Frank, *Frankly speaking with Amy Schumer*).

These celebrity women are able to bring institutional beliefs about women to a larger audience, whether it be through comedy or television, and they are able to challenge them. Schumer looks to highlight the idiocrasy of the demure woman through her blatant and heavy personification of her own body (Frank, *Frankly speaking with Amy Schumer*). Where Schumer's boldness in the media actually allows feminism room to grow by challenging the institutionalized structure and form of the female body, other celebrities, who claim to be feminists, negatively affect such efforts by reinforcing artificial stereotypes about feminists, such as being a man-hater, and failing to actually interact with the cause itself. Not only do these

declarations of feminism from high-powered celebrity feminists garner more attention than other, more casual, declarations of feminism, especially with the help of social media, but, more importantly, they alter the meaning of equality and responsibility that modern feminism is trying to accomplish. They change the meaning behind modern feminism.

Much like the transition from the first wave of feminism to the second wave, the goal of celebrity feminism alters what modern feminist movements are trying to accomplish. These current movements are trying to establish a field of equality, in the workplace and the home, between men and women. Celebrity feminism seeks to alter this ideal by focusing on the representation of the individual rather than the collective. In her article titled "The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism," Catherine Rottenburg argues that neoliberal feminism focuses on the freedom and privilege of the individual unit rather than the holistic group of underrepresented individuals. Although these celebrity voices have "helped to reinvigorate a public discussion about continued gender inequality in the USA… they have also underscored that this emergent feminism is predicated on the erasure of the issues that concern the overwhelming majority of women in the USA and across the globe" (Rottenburg 419). These high-profile voices tend to erase the economic and cultural differences that Second Wave feminism sought to espouse in its later years by creating a space where individual equality is more important. In this way, celebrity feminism is closely aligned with the emergence of neoliberal feminism. By focusing on the freedoms of the individual, neoliberal feminism is ceasing to take into account the idea of collective freedom. This exclusion of the collectivity narrative fails modern feminism by limiting the scope of issues that feminism tries to cover, especially since neoliberal feminism focuses on the discrepancies and inequalities of the individual form.   Therefore, neoliberal feminism and

celebrity feminism become the same thing in modern times with the celebrity figures focusing on the aspect of individual freedom and inequality.

The Problems with Celebrity Feminism

The spread of celebrity feminism has come from the increasing feminist awareness among young celebrity women. These women often try to help and highlight the problems of inequality and ostracization that many young women deal with on a daily basis. For instance, many of these women will try to raise money for feminist causes, such as Kesha's court costs, on Twitter. However, celebrity feminists often garner negative attention from their declarations of feminism because these declarations are followed by a lack of risks and active involvement in feminist causes, outside of donating to the cause itself and capitalizing on the movement when it is "trendy." According to a study directed by Jeetendr Sehdev, the negative reactions to celebrity feminists, from both men and women, are directed at their lack of effort. The study used opinion polls to question whether celebrity involvement in feminist movements affects the "level of caring" from the public. Twenty percent of people surveyed said that celebrity involvement in feminist causes does not affect their level of support to the cause itself. However, a shocking eighty percent of people surveyed stated that celebrity action on feminist causes, whether high or low, would change both the view of the celebrity as well as the cause they were supporting. Therefore, a lack of support from these celebrity figures actually causes a negative reaction to feminism and celebrity involvement in feminist causes (Hosie, "Celebrity Feminists are making People Care Less about Women's Rights, Study Says") Although Sehdev identifies the problems with celebrity feminism, he fails to recognize the second tier of this problem: the victimhood persona.

The victimhood persona, as defined in this paper, is closely connected to the psychological theory of the victim identity. The victim identity is mostly associated with people who are constantly identifying themselves as victims of life. According to Andrea Matthews, a licensed professional counselor, a person with this form of identity identified with an early trauma in their lives and they perpetually see themselves as the victim of life because of that trauma ("The Victim Identity"). While this identity is a recognized form of a psychological disorder, it has yet to be applied to celebrities in the public sphere. In applying the Victim Identity to celebrity figures, I am proposing an extension to this theory about how the Victim Identity works in relation to a public persona. For this paper, I am calling this the Victimhood Persona. The Victimhood Persona is a form of celebrity victimhood that many celebrities, at least in modern times, use to gain popularity and fame. These individuals often identify themselves as victims in the public eye, hoping to garner attention and sympathy from their fans through the excessive use of the victim identity. This persona, unlike the victim identity, works to creative a public narrative where the victims' beliefs are constantly reaffirmed, making these celebrity identities caught in a cycle of victimhood affirmation. The Victimhood Persona has only become easier to perpetrate since the development of social media outlets.

How Celebrity Feminists Adopt a Victimhood Persona

White celebrity women who use the Victimhood Persona to portray themselves as victims in the public eye are an area of concern for feminist movements, and one such celebrity woman is Taylor Swift. Taylor Swift's career started with the release of her first single "Tim McGraw" on June 19, 2006, and this was the time her portrayal of victimization also started (Yahr, "Taylor Swift's First Song"). In the song, Swift sings about her high school boyfriend who is going away to college, and, as is typical, Swift feels heartbroken by the separation. The song opens with

Swift singing, "He said the way my blue eyes shine put those Georgia stars to shame that night/ I said, 'That's a lie,'" highlighting the idea that Swift's boyfriend has betrayed her and lied to her, creating herself as a victim of a cruel man (Swift, "Tim McGraw). However, this is not where Swift's decade long career as a victim ended, merely where it began.

In 2009, Swift was able to publicly claim the identity of the victim when, upon receiving an MTV VMA award for "Best Music Video," Kanye West stormed on stage to tell the crowd that Beyoncé deserved the award instead of Taylor Swift. Although West was simply trying to call out the systematic racism that is constantly occurring in the music industry, especially in awards ceremonies, the only thing many people took away was that a young, sweet girl was being attacked by the "angry black man." The infamous photo from the VMAs, Figure 1, captures the moment of Swift's rise to victimhood perfectly. In the photo, Swift can be seen holding the award, dressed in white, looking innocently demure next to West. West, however, looks somewhat aggressive, dressed in black, angrily gesturing towards the crowd in front of him. West can be seen standing in front of Swift, taking attention away from her rigid body. The picture, as a whole, serves to highlight the differences between the artists, and place Swift in a position of victimhood by creating her as a victim of an angry figure: Kanye West (Fig. 1).

Although the incident seems to have been somewhat traumatic for Swift, especially since she was so young when it happened, it did not fail to include her in a narrative of victimhood in her career, a narrative that she frequently visits throughout her decade-long career in the industry. However, this precise moment in Figure 1, is a turning point for Swift in her career, where she can switch to the victim of lovers to a victim of the career that she has chosen. Swift shapes this narrative, making her look like a distressed heroine in the music industry. By using this narrative, Swift not only allows herself to be victimized in the public eye, but she also allows

herself to be "the forgiver" in the narrative between her and West. In fact, in her interview with *Vanity Fair,* Swift shows her interviewers that she even has a framed picture of the 2009 incident in her Tennessee home, highlighting this idea that she is seemingly over the debacle that occurred between her and West (Diehl and Sales, "Taylor Swift's Telltale Heart"). This portrayal of Swift as the victim of West launched her career in more ways than her lyrics could have and she has used the persona of victimhood to become even more popular.

Fig. 1 NT, 2009. Kevin Mazur

Swift and Kanye's public debacle did not end with Kanye's public apology to Swift after the VMA award show. In February 2016, the delicate friendship that emerged between West and Swift was brought to an end, once again, when West released his song titled "Famous." In the

song, West raps the lyrics, "I feel like me and Taylor might still have sex, I made that b—h famous," highlighting his involvement in making Swift a memorable victim at the 2009 VMAs. After the song was released, Swift released a statement that the song was "misogynistic" and that she had cautioned West against releasing the song. At the 2016 Grammys, Swift took to the stage to collect her award for "Album of the Year," and in her acceptance speech she stated that, "To all the young women out there are going to be people along the way who will try to undercut your success or take credit for your achievements. Or your fame," directly calling out the fact that West attempted to take credit for making Swift as famous as she currently is. However, the fact that Swift knew about the lyrics soon came to light when Kim Kardashian, West's wife, released the phone recording where Swift agreed to the lyrics before West released the song. In an interview, Swift stated that she did not know that she was being recorded while she was on the phone with West. Although Swift stated that she did not approve the lyrics, even though there was proof to the contrary, she changed her objection to the use of the phrase "that bitch" and its misogynistic nature. Once again, Swift placed herself as the victim of a male identity, specifically a black male identity, and reinforced her use of the Victimhood Persona as well as forming an identity closely aligned with neoliberal feminism. Much like neoliberal feminism, Swift focuses on herself and lack of freedom from oppressive male figures, such as West, as she claims when her team states that "Kanye West and now Kim Kardashian will not leave her alone" (Woodward, "How Taylor Swift Played the Victim for an Entire Decade and Made Her Career).

After Swift's public humiliation and outing as a "snake" by Kim Kardashian, Swift disappeared from the public eye for over a year, only reemerging to release cryptic Instagram videos involving snakes. Soon after these videos were released to Instagram, Swift released her

newest single titled "Look What You Made Me Do." Although the song, as well as the music video, attempts to show that Swift has broken away from her use of the Victimhood Persona, all it really seems to do is further perpetuate her as a victim figure in an edgier way. Swift sings, "The world moves on, another day, another drama, drama/ But not for me, not for me, all I think about is karma," highlighting the idea that, unlike the rest of the world, swift is incapable of moving away from something that has made her a victim once before, especially with the lines "Look what you made me do" (Swift, "Look What You Made Me Do"). In this lyric, Swift attempts to portray herself as a figure that had no other choices; her actions were the result of someone else pushing her. These lyrics directly contradict Swift's statement that she "no longer wants to be included in this narrative," the narrative that portrays her as a victim of West's actions in 2009. While the video and song attempt to portray Swift as a figure who no longer cares about this narrative, she focuses on her lack of choice in a feminist manner that paints her as a victim of other's actions.

In many ways, Swift attempts to portray the idea of a feminist woman by highlighting her belief in the mantra that women should empower each other. Swift perpetrates this empowering figure by having a collective, or rather a "girl squad," constantly surround her. She prides herself on being inclusive and accepting when, in reality, her squad is made of celebrity women much like herself: Selena Gomez, Lorde, Karlie Klouse, etc. These women are primarily heterosexual, white females who are constantly in the public eye. In fact, the squad is often referred to as "exclusive," highlighting the separation that this form of feminism causes. While it seemingly focuses on the idea of the collective, as modern feminism is want to espouse, it fails to include those that are outside of a celebrity "it" status, and it, essentially, allows Swift to be put in the center of the squad. The only feminist values the women seemingly encourage are female unity

and the freedom of the feminine body, but they fail to recognize the need for an inclusive identity. This perpetuates the ideals of neoliberal feminism, such as the freedom from the oppressive male figure, and profits from the use of the Victimhood Persona.

Swift's squad allows her to profit from this neoliberal feminism and Victimhood Persona. This identity came to a head when Swift brought allegations against a DJ who inappropriately groped her at a photoshoot. Following her sexual harassment, Swift became involved in the #MeToo movement, allowing her a platform to bring this form of feminism and victimhood to a larger social movement.

How Celebrity Feminists Can Rehabilitate Activism (Hope for the future of celebrity feminism?)

When paired with the Victimhood Persona, white celebrity feminism can have a damaging effect on larger feminist movements. However, there are some redemptive figures in the celebrity field that allow for positive responses, such as Lady Gaga. Where Swift is criticized for being a figure focused on the freedom of the individual figure, Gaga attempts to be a figure that fights for the freedom of the collective. Gaga states, "Being a lady… means letting yourself be vulnerable and acknowledging your shame or that you're sad or you're angry. It takes great strength to do that," highlighting her emphasis on the freedom and acceptance of the collective as a whole, not the individual figure or identity. In his article titled "Lady Gaga Embodies a New Model of Feminism," Judith Jack Halberstam states that, "Gaga feminism is a politics that brings together meditations on fame and visibility with a lashing critique of the fixity of roles for males and females," emphasizing Gaga's work on freeing both male and female figures from the roles of the constrictive nuclear family (Halberstam). In this way, Gaga is going against the need for individual freedom, a freedom that neoliberal feminism calls for, and focuses on the need for role

flexibility, something that neoliberal feminism struggles to embrace, especially since it focuses solely on the individual body.

This form of "Gaga feminism" can be seen in the juxtaposition with how Gaga introduced herself into the #MeToo movement as opposed to how Swift introduced herself into the movement. In January of 2018, Lady Gaga performed her song "Million Reasons" on stage, and she called out the Time's up survivors with her onstage, many of which were closely aligned with the #MeToo movement. By focusing on the group of individuals rather than herself, Gaga is not only directly negating the image of neoliberal feminism, but she also presented an image of a collective that needed recognition.

Fig. 2 *Lady Gaga - Til It Happens To You (Live From the 88th Annual Academy Awards)*, 2016. NP.

The Future of White Celebrity Feminism:

The problem often found with white celebrity feminism, a problem identified in this paper, is that it adopts the beliefs of neoliberal feminism: the belief of the need for individual freedom instead of collective freedom. By focusing on the needs of the individual, white celebrity feminism does not recognize the struggle of the collective identity of women. This lack of recognition leads to a misunderstanding of what is wrong, what isn't equal, and what needs to be fixed. The future of white celebrity feminists depends on the idea of inclusion and recognition, and that is the only way it will be able to thrive.

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An Analysis of Monster Rape: Fictionalized Creatures with Real Consequences

By: Erin Green

Abstract

Depictions of rape are common in horror television shows; some rapists are humans, and some are monsters. The viewer's reactions to assaults depicted in 13 Reasons Why and American Horror Story: Hotel differ: human rapists are scarier than monster rapists, despite nearly identical assaults. This paper therefore examines sexual violence committed by monsters in the horror genre, and argues that because human rapists could be anyone, they are more terrifying than literal monster rapists. This paper makes the assertion that Horror alters a viewer's perception of sexual assault and influences rape culture by its continued use of monster rapists. This paper will analyze a corpus of televised horror shows including 13 Reasons Why, American Horror Story: Murder House, and American Horror Story: Hotel, as well as traditional literary texts like The Monk and Exquisite Corpse, to further examine how modern horror fiction's portrayal of rape leads to desensitization.

Introduction:

The monster is a creature exhibiting terror and harm and "is continually linked to forbidden practices, in order to normalize and to enforce" (Cohen 16). While fiction has always depicted forbidden acts like sexual assault, necrophilia, cannibalism, and murder, these acts are much more abundant in horror fiction. I will examine horror from old text such as *The Monk,* one of the first gothic novels to explicitly show forbidden acts such as sexual assault and murder. *The Monk* is included in my corpus because Matthew Lewis, the author, created the themes that would continue to be replicated in future gothic novels. In order to understand the gothic horror

genre, I must first understand its origin and how the genre was created by analyzing Lewis' work.

Gothic themes from Lewis' *The Monk* transitioned into further and more contemporary texts such as *Exquisite Corpse*, by Poppy Z. Brite. During the 19th century, when *The Monk* was published, it was a piece striking many of its audience with shock and criticism for its graphic display of rape and murder, but to a more contemporary audience who had come to see rape and murder more regularly produced in fiction, it was not as scary as it was in the 19th century. Brite's novel reconstructed the modern gothic horror genre by intensifying the depictions of rape and murder by his inclusion of cannibalism and necrophilia. For a while, this became the norm for the gothic horror genre, where novels like *Exquisite Corpse* utilized extreme body mutilation and sexual violence in fiction to scare their audiences.

American Horror Story, created by Ryan Murphy, is a popular gothic horror television show. Murphy relied, not only on physical representations of monsters to scare his audience, but he also relied on the continued gothic depiction of murder and sexual violence. *American Horror Story* also exemplifies the transition of textual monsters to visual monsters since the audience would be able to see the physical manifestations of the monsters they once read in novels like *The Monk* and *Exquisite Corpse*. Even though *American Horror Story* allowed audiences to see their fears of rape and murder more closely with its inclusion of physically grotesque monsters, it did not shock audiences as much as non-horror texts such as *13 Reasons Why*. By the time of its premiere, *American Horror Story* was following the narrative norm of gothic horror—monsters raping and killing humans. This narrative had become so normalized audiences no longer were frightened by it because they expected to see monsters committing sexual violence and murder.

The Monk and *Exquisite Corpse* are textual examples of monsters in fiction committing sexual assault, both of which are precursors in the transition to televised monster rape, which is what my research analyzes. Television's portrayal of monsters committing sexual violence in the gothic horror genre reflects the sexual violence and rape culture happening in the real world. *13 Reasons Why* exists within the gothic genre because of its themes of death and romance. *13 Reasons Why* is a story exploring dark contemporary themes of suicide, romance, suspense, depression, and sexual violence. Even though *13 Reasons Why* had no physically grotesque monsters, necrophilia, cannibalism, or body mutilating murder, it still received strong responses from its audiences. *13 Reasons Why*'s audience were more frightened by the depictions of sexual violence because of its human assailants in a realistic setting, which will be the main situation in performing my analysis.

Following a literary and film studies model, I use Jeffrey Cohen's *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* as a basis for understanding the monster itself and why viewers are so interested in monster representation in fiction. Cohen uses seven theses to express the symbolism of monsters and alludes to them being a culture itself. Cohen states, in "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," that the consumption of monster fiction comes from an individual's desire for the forbidden acts. While sexual violence and murder are not exclusive to the horror genre, this genre depicts the most images of those behaviors and grounds its philosophy in these acts.

Noël Carroll, author of *The Philosophy of Horror: Or, the Paradoxes of the Heart*, explains the aesthetics of horror and what exactly makes the genre so terrifying. Carroll dedicates attention to describing what makes a monster and how monsters operate within the horror genre itself. Similar to my research, Carroll is "interested in the emotional response that horror is *supposed* to elicit" (Carroll 30). The expected response from viewing horror is for the

audience to be frightened. While this is the goal for horror, it is not always the outcome. Carroll describes a formula for horror stories, a formula I argue that has become so integral to depicting monsters in horror fiction that it is no longer scary.

Part of Carroll's formula for horror includes an aspect concerning gender and sexuality. Since my project focuses on gender and sexuality within the horror genre, I find Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* beneficial when analyzing how gender and sex are integrated into the genre as a narrative structure. Clover focuses specifically on horror cinema, dealing with occult films, slasher films, and rape-revenge films[1]. Additionally, Clover explores the connotation of horror films being sadistic because of their portrayal of psychosexual fury towards women.

Gothic horror not only discusses gender and sexuality, but also sexual assault and rape culture. I find Jack Halberstam's *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* to explore and explain the psychosexual culture of monsters within horror cinema. Halberstam talks about gender in horror, but in addition to horror, he speaks about how psychosexual fury in monsters leads to terrifying images of sexual violence.

While there is an abundance of sexual violence in horror fiction, the viewer's reaction to monster-human rape scenes is not nearly as intense as human-human rape scenes. The audience is aware the characters are fictional and are desensitized by rape and expect the monster to be the perpetrator of sexual violence. When viewing humans raping humans, the scene is more disturbing to audiences because of its humanized relatability. I claim a priest or parent is more likely to rape someone than a demon or ghost; therefore, I argue the significance in analyzing a viewer's reaction to monster rape because, while the scene may feature a fictional creature, it is

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[1] A subgenre in the horror genre featuring exploitation style horror where a character is raped and seeks revenge slasher-style on their rapist as a way of reclaiming their body.

rape nonetheless, and becoming desensitized to sexual violence simply because a monster is committing the act rather than a human can influence one's view of sexual assault and encourage rape culture.

To understand rape culture, one must first understand sexual violence. Sexual violence is "an all-encompassing, non-legal term that refers to crimes like sexual assault, rape, and sexual abuse" (Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network). Examples of sexual violence include sexual assault, sexual harassment, incest, Intimate Partner Violence, and rape. Sexual violence is important to understand because the concept of rape culture is created from sexual violence being normalized and romanticized. Rape culture is "a term that was coined by feminists in the United States in the 1970's. It was designed to show the ways in which society blamed victims of sexual assault and normalized male sexual violence" (WAVAW Rape Crisis Center). Victim-blaming is an important action within rape culture; it is the process of determining what the rape victim did wrong to get raped instead of blaming the rapist. Examples of victim-blaming would be asking what the victim was wearing or how much alcohol they consumed.

Additionally, "rape prosecution is like a chess game that the contenders try to win. In this game, the legal institution pits the state against the person accused of a crime…In this game, rape victims become pawns in the hands of the contenders" (Martin 48). Corrupt legal systems and unjust court sentencing for rapists are also examples of rape culture and happens in real life.[2]

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[2] Brock Turner, a Stanford University student, "was convicted of three counts of felony sexual assault" for "sexually assaulting an unconscious woman on campus" (Salam). Even though Turner faced as much as fourteen years in prison for three counts of felony sexual assault, Judge Aaron Perskey sentenced him to "six months in a county jail and three years' probation" (Salam). A year later, Turner tried to appeal his case, and his father directly contributed to rape culture when he stated, "his son should not go to jail or have his life ruined for "20 minutes of action."" (Salam). The court case focused more on blaming the victim, normalizing the assault, and protecting the assailant.

The romanticism of abusive relationships also contributes to rape culture. Since rape culture claims sexual violence is to be expected, relationships that cause "physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse" (CDC) are normalized behavior. Normalizing abusive behavior erases the victims' voices and further protects the assaulter. Rape culture is also linguistic, meaning it has a harmful language such as "boys will be boys" which claims men, the largest demographic of sexual assaulters, are expected to commit sexual violence. Another example of harmful language is reporting sexual violence as "sex" instead of "rape." By changing the title, the act is normalized. Rape culture is intensely reliant on linguistics of how sexual violence is communicated. Without a linguistic change, rape culture cannot change. Last, society becomes victims of rape culture by becoming desensitized to sexual assault in literature, film, or music.[3] Ignoring the normalization of rape perpetuates it and excuses sexual assault in society. The mentality of expecting sexual violence is common in horror fiction. Monsters are characters in the horror genre that are usually the villains of the story and readers expect them to commit some form of sexual violence. A common behavior when viewing rape in monster fiction is desensitization, which normalizes rape because people do not consider the act to be a disturbing act. Readers become desensitized when viewing rape in monster fiction because the assaulter is a monster, which they expect to be violent. Even though they expect monsters to commit violence, they are not disturbed by the act simply because it is a fictional creature.

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[3] Music lyrics are notorious for describing acts that can be considered sexual assault, but listeners become desensitized and oblivious to the perpetuation of rape culture. Desensitization of sexual assault in music is important since "banning them from […] iTunes is just unrealistic — but that doesn't mean that [one] should ignore the fact that these artists are normalizing rape in our society and describing examples of sexual assault as if they are typical relationship and hook-up behaviors" (Welch).

With writers and readers sexualizing monsters, most of the monster's fear-inducing behaviors occur during sexual acts. Like real-life monsters—rapists, fictional monsters take advantage of humans via rape tactics, including: alcohol use, manipulation, seduction, and force. This is fiction directly reflecting reality. Like sexual violence being normalized in society, fictional monsters are expected to sexually assault humans, and have been doing so in horror fiction for some time. When readers view the literature expecting humans to be sexually assaulted by monsters, they are recreating a rape culture already existent in reality, but within the fictional story itself.

Textual Monsters:

The ancestor of gothic horror can be traced back to 1796 with the publication of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk: A Romance*. It is set in 18th century Madrid and focuses on the sexual predations of a monk. Knowing that Ambrosio, a religious leader, commits sexual assault and murder makes the rape more disturbing and harder to disassociate because of his humanized and relatable status as a human. Human-on-human rape characteristics desensitize audiences viewing monster-on-human rape. Even though *The Monk* and *13 Reasons Why* exists hundreds of years apart, they both a have a common marker—sexuality. Halberstam says in order to understand "How sexuality became the dominant mark of otherness is a question that we may begin to answer by deconstructing Victorian Gothic monsters and examining the constitutive features of the horror they represent" (Halberstam 7).

Poppy Z. Brite's *Exquisite Corpse* is a gothic horror novel published in 1996, years after the 19th century novel, *The Monk*. Both texts have the same concept of human rapists engaged in horrific acts, however, Brite's novel updates to a modern audience who have become desensitized to *The Monk*. *Exquisite Corpse* features two human male rapists interested in

necrophilia and cannibalism and they become monsters by engaging in acts previously associated with monsters. In Halberstam's *Skin Shows*, he speaks about the monster as a body. He states, "Victorian monsters produced and were produced by an emergent conception of the self as a body which enveloped a soul, as a body, indeed, enthralled to its soul" (Halberstam 2). This is similar to the theory of monster culture in which Cohen says, "the monstrous body is pure culture" (Cohen 4).

The textual monsters, while exhibiting signs of psychosexual fury, differ from visual monsters, as the horror is on the screen for the audience to literally view, instead of being on a page where the reader must imagine the rape. Textual monsters though are the beginning of the gothic horror, which eventually invaded the modern television with shows like *13 Reasons Why* and *American Horror Story*. One can certainly utilize textual monsters as a basis for understanding the horror genre and its monsters. Additionally, as the textual monsters historically come before visual monsters, they began depicting the characteristics of the monster body, which is further explicated in Cohen's *Monster Theory*. In the stories featuring human rapists, like Bryce from *13 Reasons Why*, he becomes "The monster's body quite literally [because he] incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy" (Cohen 4). All four characteristics of the monster body are explored in *13 Reasons Why*. Bryce uses fear to silence his rape victims and to silence anyone who speaks out against him. Bryce has a desire to have sex with Jessica and Hannah. Bryce gives students at Liberty High School anxiety from committing sexual violence, and Bryce creates a fantasy in his head that he has done nothing wrong and that he is not a rapist. This fantasy in Bryce's head tells him that Hannah and Jessica both wanted to have sex with him and that he does not need their consent to do so.

Visual Monsters:

13 Reasons Why is the newest example of humans taking on the characteristics of monsters through sexual violence. The television show came under scrutiny for not only its depiction of a suicide on screen, but also two rape scenes being depicted on screen. While the assaults were identical to the assaults occurring in *American Horror Story*, the response from the audience was different. The audience responses from watching the rape scenes are different because *13 Reasons Why*'s assailants are human and *American Horror Story*'s assailants are monsters.

In *13 Reasons Why*, Hannah Baker's story is told through the use of cassette tapes. One of the first depictions of rape occurs in the episode, "Tape 5 Side A" of *13 Reasons Why*, and it is between two classmates, Jessica and Bryce. This scene, similar to the Addiction Demon scene occurring in *American Horror Story: Hotel* involves an intoxicated victim who is taken advantage of by someone else. In both scenarios, there is a person watching the rape take place. The only difference between the two rape scenes is the assailant and the observer. In *13 Reasons Why*, both the assailant and the observer are humans, but in *American Horror Story: Hotel*, the assailant and observer are monsters. In "Tape 5 Side A," Jessica is at a party with her boyfriend, Justin. Both are drunk as they make their way upstairs to a bedroom to supposedly have sex, but Jessica is too incapacitated to respond, and Justin leaves her inside the bedroom until Bryce, the series' rapist, shows up. Hannah is the observer for this act and she watches as Justin leaves drunk and passed out Jessica in the bed and allows Bryce to come into the room and violate her. Hannah stands in the closet and watches as Bryce pulls down his own pants and Jessica's and begins raping her (Yorkey 40:55-41:24). The importance of this scene is what is common in horror fiction: the environment. The room is dark, the rapist walks into the environment where

the victim is, prying around, ready to make his attack as a werewolf or vampire would. Bryce is similar to the monster rapists in horror fiction; he is "the notion of a [rapist] propped by psychosexual fury, more particularly a male in gender distress, has proved a durable one, and the progeny of Norman Bates stalk the genre up to the present day" (Clover 27). Bryce, throughout the entire series of *13 Reasons Why*, is fueled with sexual perversion and the eager to have sex with whomever he pleases, whether they consent or not.

"Tape 6 Side B" is the episode in the first season where the second depiction of rape occurs on screen, which is where a lot of scrutiny began campaigning for the show to be cancelled. Hannah, once an observer of sexual violence in previous episodes, suffers her own sexual assault with the same human assailant. In this scene, Hannah is sitting in a hot tub with human rapist, Bryce Walker. The difference in this scene than the scene with Jessica is that Hannah is fully conscious, which is like the rape scene occurring in *American Horror Story: Murder House*, where the Rubber Man rapes Vivian or in *American Horror Story: Hotel* when the ghost, James March, rapes the residents of the Hotel. Bryce begins to touch Hannah seductively, but she attempts to leave because she is not interested in having sex with him, but Bryce's monster body becomes visible when he exhibits monster characteristics such as being violent with the victim. He grabs Hannah when she tries to leave the hot tub, saying "Don't go. We're just having fun" (Yorkey 43:20-43:29). After the events of Hanna committing suicide, the main character, Clay, confronts Bryce by forcing him to admit that he raped Hannah. Bryce tells Clay, "She came to my party. Mine. She got in the hot tub with me, without a suit on. Right? And she made eyes. I know that's hard for you to hear, that your crush wasn't pure and clean" (44:16-44:46). Bryce is victim-blaming Hannah, which is an example of rape culture. Instead of Bryce taking responsibility for his actions, he blames Hannah for her rape. This example of rape

culture occurs a lot in horror fiction since a lot of the rape and murder happen because the victim is engaging in something deemed scandalous such as sex, alcohol, or drugs.

"Bye," the final episode of season two of *13 Reasons Why* changes the gender of the victim and the assailant. The victim this time is Tyler, a school outcast, and the assailant is his bully. This time there is more than one observer, but unlike Hannah who is watching with horror as Jessica is raped, the observers are watching to partake in Tyler's bullying. In this scene, Tyler is in the boy's restroom when a group of jocks, loyal to Bryce, confront Tyler. The main instigator is Montgomery, who works as Bryce's right-hand-man in protecting him from being prosecuted for raping Jessica and Hannah. Since Tyler makes it his goal in season two of *13 Reasons Why* to expose Bryce for the sexual assault, Montgomery targets him directly to attempt to silence him. Like Bryce, and the monsters in *The Monk*, *Exquisite Corpse*, and *American Horror Story*, Montgomery reacts to his victim violently by first smashing his head into the mirror and then repeatedly smashing his head into the sink while telling Tyler, "God! You ruined my fucking life, faggot" (Yorkey 38:45-38:52). When Montgomery blames Tyler for ruining his life, Montgomery exhibits an example of rape culture. Montgomery ruined his own life by protecting a rapist and now by committing his own sexual violence. Montgomery then drags Tyler to a stall and forces his head into the toilet, nearly drowning him. He instructs one of the jocks to hold Tyler down while he grabs a nearby mop and shoves it into Tyler's rectum (39:03-39:49).

As with the rape scenes from season one of *13 Reasons Why*, viewers considered the scene to be too explicit and campaigned for the show's cancelation. *American Horror Story* intensified its rape scenes as seasons progressed, but they did not receive more campaigns for cancelation like *13 Reasons Why* because *American Horror Story* has physical monsters,

whereas *13 Reasons Why* has human monsters. *13 Reasons Why* viewers also felt Yorkey, the creator of the show, had not been responsible with the content presented in *13 Reasons Why*, but like most gothic authors, Yorkey was "quite scrupulous about taking a moral stand against the unnatural acts that produce monstrosity" (Halberstam 12). In an interview, Yorkey states *13 Reasons Why* is a show committed "to telling truthful stories about things that young people go through in as unflinching a way as we can" (Lockett). Tyler's rape scene is just as intense as rape scenes in *American Horror Story*, and both have occasions where men are sexually assaulted by other men.

American Horror Story: Murder House is the start of the differentiation between monsters and humans in horror fiction depicting rape. In *Murder House*, unlike *13 Reasons Why*, the monsters are physical monsters with less humanized physical features. Physical appearance is an important part in defining monsters in horror fiction. In the *American Horror Story* television show, these "Horrific creatures seem to be regarded not only as inconceivable but also as unclean and disgusting" (Carroll 21). Also, as the rapists in *American Horror Story* are literal monsters instead of human monsters, they are less relatable, less realistic, and not as terrifying as the human rapists, which audiences are able to easily connect to because human rape is a real crime. The first monster in the first season of *American Horror Story* is the Rubber Man, which is a latex bodysuit usually inhabited by a ghost. The ghost notorious for inhabiting the Rubber Man identity is Tate Langley, someone whose goal is to impregnate the human female resident of the house he is haunting. The significance behind the Rubber Man suit, besides the fact that it is the physical monster body that Tate wields to commit his sexual violence, is its original intended use[4]. The Rubber Man's bodysuit is purchased by Chad, the partner of Patrick, because of their

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[4] The Rubber Man suit is a latex suit used for bondage fetishes within the BDSM (bondage, discipline/dominance, submission/sadism, and masochism) community. BDSM is a community dedicated to the sexual exploration of the

marital conflict. Chad uses the body suit to fix their marital conflict. The same rubber suit that was intended to fix a broken marriage is worn by their eventual killer. Tate, while in the bondage suit, sexually assaults Patrick with a fire iron in the same fashion that Montgomery sexually assaults Tyler with a broom in *13 Reasons Why*. After Chad and Patrick are killed, the Harmons move into the house and Tate's immediate plan is to impregnate Vivian.

Tate only desires to impregnate women to please another ghost in the house, Nora. Nora wants a baby, and when Tate realized Chad and Patrick's marriage was beginning to end, he knew there was no chance they would adopt a baby; therefore, he had to kill them for another family to move in. Tate rapes Vivian in the first episode of *American Horror Story: Murder House*, again disguised in the bondage rubber suit to hide his identity. Vivian assumes the person in the bondage suit is her husband, Ben (Murphy, 00:42:20). Even after being the perpetrator of two sexual assaults in *Murder House*, fans still romanticize Tate. Murphy says, "Tate is the true monster of the show but because Evan [Peters][5] has made him so likable and lovable and complex, I think people are torn" (Stack). The fan base of *Murder House* had several viewers feeling emotionally connected to Tate, wanting him to fall in love with Violet, Vivian and Ben's daughter, and for their relationship to work out, despite the fact he sexually assaulted and killed several people. In the episode "Smoldering Children," Violet founds out Tate is a ghost and she asks why he kept his status a secret. Tate tells her, "Hi, I'm Tate. I'm dead. Wanna hookup? I don't think so" (Murphy 00:38:10). Tate's dialect is specific to young adults, thus allowing some teenage viewers to see him more desirably. Wanting Violet and Tate to have a relationship

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combination of pain and eroticism. The wearer of the rubber latex suit would normally be worn by a submissive as a form of humiliation. Rubber fetishism is the fetishistic attraction people have towards wearing rubber or latex clothing. Latex fetishists sometimes refer to themselves as "rubberists," and gay latex fetishists sometimes refer to themselves as "rubbermen," which is significant since the name of the killer in American Horror Story: Murder House is called the Rubber Man.

[5] The actor.

together, despite him raping Vivian and killing several others, viewers excuse Tate's actions. The thought of a "ghostly relationship"[6] between Violet and Tate, while supernatural, is still an abusive relationship being romanticized. Tate is written as a monster, not only because of his status as a ghost, but also because he rapes and murders other characters. Tate "embodies those sexual practices that must not be committed, or that may be committed only through the body of a monster" (Cohen 14). Based off of Carroll's criteria for a monster in *The Philosophy of Horror*, Tate is a monster. Because he is a ghost, his sexually violent actions are romanticized because the horror genre has normalized monsters committing sexual violence against humans.

American Horror Story: Hotel is the fifth season of the horror anthology television series featuring various monsters, vampires, demons, and ghosts committing mass amounts of rape and murder in the Hotel Cortez, a haunted hotel in Los Angeles. In the very first episode of *Hotel*, called "Checking In," Gabriel, a heroin addict, checks into the Hotel Cortez. After Gabriel checks into a room, he unrolls his bags and injects his body with heroin and begins seeing the hotel's murderous ghosts. As he is enjoying his high, a ghostly maid, Hazel Evers, appears and tells Gabriel, "When people die, they soil the sheets—blood, shit, urine. I can take care of every stain there is." The Addiction Demon steps from the darkness of the corner of the hotel room. The Addiction Demon[7] is a naked creature with wax-like skin, no eyes, mouth, hair, or nose, with a strap-on conical drill-bit dildo attached to its pelvis. It is a presentation of how "The

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[6] Some viewers found Tate and Violet's relationship to be abusive. Tate is depicted as a manipulative liar. Once Violet moves into Murder House, he takes advantage of someone who is already emotionally vulnerable. Tate does not tell Violet he rapes her mother, but once Violet finds out from someone else, he begs for her forgiveness. Violet does not forgive him and does not want to be together with him, but Tate informs her how his life would be ruined if she does not stay with him. Tate also never genuinely apologizes for his wrongdoing. Even though Tate's is portrayed as a manipulative individual directing an abusive relationship, viewers still romanticize the character. There is merchandise such as t-shirts reading: "Rubber Man is my Baby Daddy" and online discussions of people wanting to "find a guy like Tate." Interestingly, Tate is not written and portrayed as a soft-spoken misunderstood boy, but it is only to entice Violet. Violet's entrapment underscores how scary Tate is, but that is not the reception of the audience.

[7] See photo on cover page.

monster in horror fiction, that is, is not only lethal but—and this is of utmost significance—also disgusting" (Carroll 21). The Addiction Demon throws Gabriel on the bed and rapes him with the drill-bit dildo. (Murphy 00:18:42-00:19:01). Since heroin is a drug that can cause hallucinations, it probable to assume Gabriel thought he was hallucinating when he saw the ghost, Hazel Evers, in his room talking to him. As he is using a hallucinatory drug, he is unable to give consent, not that the Addiction Demon even asked for it to begin with.

As the Addiction Demon rapes Gabriel, Sally—another drug addicted ghost living in the Hotel Cortez—enters the room to observe the rape scene. As she walks by, a mirror on the wall reflects Gabriel's rape (Murphy 00:20:24-00:20:35). The mirror reflection is significant because vampires cannot be seen in the reflection of the mirrors, but rape can, because rape is reality, and vampires are not. Sally, a bystander of the rape, tells Gabriel, "The more you scream, the more he likes it" and "tell me you love me" (00:20:48). The rape scene continues with Gabriel screaming for help, and Sally tells him, "Say 'I love you, Sally' and it will all go away" (00:21:40). Sally excuses the rape and justifies the Addiction Demon's reason for raping Gabriel. She tells Gabriel to say, "I love you" as if his love for her has anything to do with the rape itself. Also, the Addiction Demon rapes Gabriel because of his heroin addiction[8], which insinuates the rape as a justifiable action because of his "bad habit" and "bad attitude." By implying Gabriel is being punished for doing heroin and being rude to the front desk attendants, this scene discusses rape culture by producing the "he deserved it" mentality so prevalent in current society.

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[8] The parallelism between sex and drugs is significant. Most sexual assault occurs when one or more people involved in the act are intoxicated with either drugs or alcohol. A student in Lisa Wade's American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus claims, "Sex and alcohol…are the only two essential ingredients for any college party that is deemed 'fun' and the potential for sexual contact is quote often 'the only reason students socialize'" (Wade 86). Like the heroin Gabriel uses in American Horror Story, alcohol used on campus can impair people's ability to consent to sexual activities. According to Planned Parenthood, consent must be freely given, meaning, "consenting is a choice you make without pressure, manipulation, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol."

The second episode of *Hotel*, "Chutes and Ladders," begins with Gabriel awaking after seemingly dying in the first episode when Sally sewed him into the mattress he was raped on. Gabriel tells Sally, "you lied. I'm not free." Sally replies, "Well, you got that right asshole. It's your own damn fault, thinking you could cheat death" (Murphy 00:00:00-00:01:08). Sally is ultimately victim blaming. When the Addiction Demon rapes Gabriel, Sally instructs Gabriel to tell her he loves her, so the demon will cease the assault. Gabriel ends up doing as Sally says, telling her he loves her, but she still tells him it is his fault after he had been sewn into the mattress. Sally perpetuates the mentality of Gabriel having a justified rape and murder because of his heroin addiction, not realizing it is not Gabriel's fault he is raped and killed, but the Addiction Demon's fault for Gabriel's rape, and ultimately her fault for his death. Sally's victim blaming examines how society perpetuates rape culture by blaming the rape victim instead of the rapist. Kate Harding, author of *Asking for It: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture--and What We Can Do about It*, states, "If the real crime of rape is the violation of another person's autonomy, the use of another person's body against their wishes, then it shouldn't matter what the victim was wearing, if she was drinking, how much sexual experience she's had before, or whether she fought hard enough to get [away]" (Harding 12). Yes, Gabriel displays a snobby attitude at the front desk when requesting his room; he injects himself with heroin, an illegal drug; he does not show any sign of fighting back; and he says, "I love you," but that does not make his rape any less real than the rape in *13 Reasons Why*.

More sexual violence is displayed in *Hotel* when the episode "Chutes and Ladders" reveals the hotel's creator, James March, a ghost also residing in the hotel. James March is a serial killer before and after his death, but his ghostly form allows him to commit murders more easily. "Chutes and Ladders" reveal his origin. March builds the hotel in 1925, wanting hallways

with secret passageways, all to help him with his massive amounts of murders. Iris describes the hotel as "the perfect torture chamber…an engineered alibi" (Murphy 00:56:20). In one James March recollection, he performs the monstrous act of having sex with a dead girl, while slicing open her body with two knives (00:57:31-00:58:00). This scene embodies simultaneous sex and violence, as James March is having sexual intercourse with a woman, presumably against her wishes, while also violently murdering her. His sexual violence is excused because of James March's position of power as both building designer and owner. James March's torture chamber is built for the humiliation of his victims, with him taking pleasure from their pain. At one point, James March ties a woman up and builds a wall around her, where she will remain trapped for the rest of her life. Like rape, "the underlying motivation for [James March's torture] is that of domination rather than sexuality" (Ellis 21). James March appears to have an exaggerated interest in a sadism, the receiving sexual pleasure from causing or witnessing someone's else pain. James March's interest in sadism only intensifies the relationship of sex and violence in sexual assault. Even though James March and the Addiction Demon both depicted horrific acts of murder and sexual violence, *American Horror Story* was not campaigned for cancellation like *13 Reason Why*.

Conclusion:

Petitions, campaigns, and parent television organizations have called for *13 Reasons Why* to be canceled several times because of its content, even though its content is very similar to the content produced in *American Horror Story*. The only difference in the scenes depicting sexual violence are the assailants. *13 Reasons Why* assailants are relatable human characters while *American Horror Story* assailants are physical monsters—ghosts and demons. The Parents Television Council is a censorship advocacy group that aims to "provide a safe and sound

entertainment media environment for children and families across America" (Stolworthy).

Parents of the council state the depictions of rape in *13 Reasons Why* are too graphic for young

adult audiences. They also claim the scenes containing rape were unnecessary and exploitive.

One of Parents Television Council's main argument for the cancelation of *13 Reasons Why* was

targeting the wrong audience. The Parents Television Council argued that because the show

centered on high school students, majority of the audience consuming the series would be middle

school or high school aged children, because it would be highly relatable for them. Other viewers

felt as if the depictions of sexual violence were unauthentic and inappropriate, and solely used

for shock value.

Unlike the Addiction Demon in *Hotel*, Tate, from *Murder House* has a human physical

appearance. While Carroll writes that the distinction of monsters in the horror genre is made

from their grotesque appearances, Tate is not grotesque, and even attracts several characters in

the show. Not only are the fictional characters in *Murder House* made attracted to him, but the

viewers also become attracted to Tate, thus overlooking the murder and rape he commits in the

show. Overlooking Tate's sexual violence contributes to rape culture and commercializing his

character without the flaws also contributes to rape culture.

Even though these monster rapists are fictionalized creatures, viewing horror has real

consequences. Concluding my analysis, I claim there are three stakes when audiences become

desensitized from viewing monster rape in horror fiction: a potential script to deal with reality,

the potential to be the perpetrator, and the contextualization of escapism. These three

consequences of being desensitized to viewing monster-rape in the horror genre impacts rape

culture itself and how people respond to rape culture and sexual violence.

The first consequence of being desensitized from viewing monster-rape in horror fiction is the potential script for reality. Viewing the depictions of sexual violence, such as scenes from *American Horror Story*, and the audience having little to no trauma reactions displays how complicit some viewers of horror have succumbed to the horror genre's rape culture. Because rape is so existent in the horror genre, audiences become so use to witnessing sexual violence that it surpasses into reality. Additionally, fiction reflects what happens in society, the desensitization of monster-rape is reflective of rape culture-conforming people.

The second consequence that comes from audiences being desensitized to rape in horror fiction is the potential to be the perpetrator. Many of the stories are told from the perspective of the monster rapist and can act as a how-to-guide for sexual violence. *The Monk*'s main character happens to also be the antagonist: Ambrosio. Readers are in the head of Ambrosio and know his monstrous desires to rape and murder and witness him enact all of his plans to capture his prey, Antonia. Also, in Brite's *Exquisite Corpse*, both serial killers collaborate a plan to find someone to rape and murder and the readers are completely aware of their plan and follow the perpetrators step-by-step until they finally reach their goal. *American Horror Story*, while containing visual monsters instead of textual monsters, still repeats the narrative of the monster's perspective being the main perspective. Audiences see inside the heads of the Addiction Demon, the Rubber Man, and James March to understand their thought process of capturing victims for rape and murder. Even though these stories contain simple how-to-guides for sexual violence, author responsibility is never addressed to the extent of Brian Yorkey's *13 Reasons Why*. Yorkey is criticized for delivering how-to-guides to rape and suicide, but the only difference between Yorkey's rapists and Ryan Murphy's rapists is Murphy's rapists in *American Horror Story* are physical monsters, whereas Yorkey's rapists, are monsters because of their act and not because of their physical

appearance. Because Yorkey's rapists are human characters to whom viewers can easily relate, his rapists are scarier. Most viewers can identify a classmate, a sibling, or a teacher, and to give those individuals a how-to-guide for sexual violence would be detrimental; but because viewers cannot identify similar monsters that appear in *American Horror Story*, they do not worry about a how-to-guide for sexual violence for monster rapists.

The final consequence of horror desensitizing its audience is escapism, which is both positive and negative. Viewing monster fiction could be a coping mechanism for sexual assault victims to deal and discuss their trauma in fictional settings. Escapism is essentially seeking a distraction from unlikable realities. Fiction already offers a separate world for people to escape to from their daily lives, but horror fiction including monster rapists could allow sexual assault survivors to escape their realities of real sexual violence for a fictional setting of sexual violence to either think about sexual violence without the consequences of real sexual assault or to not think explicitly about their specific sexual assault situation. Allowing people to escape their own sexual assault experiences to discuss it in a fictional setting appears to be what *13 Reasons Why* attempts to do, but it misses the mark since people are more disturbed by the graphic depictions of sexual violence instead of the discourse *13 Reasons Why* attempts to engage in. *American Horror Story* defines itself as entertainment and can be used to escape the realities of the real world where the kind of violence portrayed in the television series is fictional. Also, escaping physical harm is a part of the consequence of escapism since people wanting to examine sexual violence can do so in *American Horror Story* and *13 Reasons Why* without physically harming other people. The fictional setting allows for the discussion of real issues with fictional characters, which can better help people understand sexual assault.

Even though escapism allows for the ability for parties to discuss real issues like sexual violence through fictional settings, escapism can have a negative result as well, which could directly contribute to rape culture. Escapism can work in a different way when viewing monster-rape in horror fiction. Escapism can allow people to view sexual violence as something fantastical rather than realistic. The escapist fantasy derives from the fact that the monster-rape takes place in an unreal setting. Because horror fiction has normalized monsters committing sexual violence, audiences are no longer afraid of monster-rape, and instead expect to see monsters committing sexual violence. The escapist fantasy does not apply to *13 Reasons Why* because its monsters are human characters who are so relatable and so realistic to current sexually violent crimes that it becomes truly terrifying for the audience. Monster-rape has been normalized in the horror genre so much that switching the assailant to human rapists instead dismantles the escapist fantasy that rape is not real. These consequences are negative because monster-rape alters a viewer's perception of sexual assault, leading them to becoming desensitized to rape in fiction as well as rape in reality.

The horror genre continues to push the envelope with its sexual violence, gore, and murder scenes because the goal is to scare its audience. Similar to how audiences no longer found the textual monsters to be as disturbing as the visual monsters, the horror genre has to update its methodology for scaring audiences if their current tactics are no longer doing the job. Consequently, horror has gotten more violent, gorier, and more sexual—explaining why people feel that *13 Reasons Why* and *American Horror Story* features explicit and unnecessary scenes of sexual violence and death. I argue that horror's desire to become gorier can cause audiences to become desensitized to sexually violent acts like monster-rape, but I also argue that that is not the genre's intention. Horror both contributes and breaks down rape culture. It contributes

obviously by its ability to desensitize audiences to rape, but it breaks down rape culture by firstly portraying these scenes and giving audiences the ability to escape and discuss them in fictional settings. Additionally, horror breaks down rape culture by making these acts scary. Horror's intention is not to make light or make fun of these issues. Murphy's inclusion of the Addiction Demon in *American Horror Story: Hotel* was to reveal how bad addictions can be by juxtaposing it with another terrifying act—rape. Horror does not want to sugarcoat these horrific acts by not allowing them to be displayed in front of the audience. Viewers should witness such forbidden acts, should be afraid of them, and their fear should promote a dialogue about rape. Even though this is the horror genre's intention—to push back and break down rape culture—it indirectly contributes to rape culture by its continued use of monster-rape, which became normalized in the genre, thus desensitizing its audience to rape in fiction, which in result could lead to a desensitization of rape in reality. The consequence of desensitization of rape in the real world is a more powerful rape culture and a culture that no longer sees rape as a true threat.

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When Can We Relax? An Analysis of Black Women's Hair in Working America
By: Rebekah Koen

Abstract

For Black women, the ability to style hair is of utmost importance. Learning how to braid, plait, twist, straighten, weave, and chemically alter hair has been generationally used to achieve economic advancement and higher social status. This ideology created by American racial stigmatization has created an interdependent system of discrimination and disadvantage for women of color. As a result, modern workplace dress codes equate inherently Black hairstyles such as afros', dreadlocks, and cornrows with being unprofessional. Operating in this manner marginalizes minority workers who value racial identification over office compliance. The effect of this results in an increase of stress-related illnesses, anxiety, and depression. In this qualitative study, Black women discuss their experiences through the lens of Black Feminism and the results show how racial stigma has contributed to the psychological, social, and economic oppression of minority women, especially in regards to how Black women style their hair.

Keywords: Black Feminism, Black Hair, Black Women

Author's Note

Knowledge is power, but access to this power is blocked by many barriers. Be it socioeconomic class impeding access to education, limited comprehension of relevant terms, or simple disinterest in the subject matter there will always be those who miss out on a learning opportunity. It is because of this, a unique challenge presented itself when composing this paper. This topic needed to be something I was passionate about enough to not grow weary of, would benefit from additional research, and still be interesting to other readers. Once said topic was found, it needed to be approached in a way that would not alienate newcomers or seem so pedestrian well-versed scholars would ignore this subject completely. My goal was to provoke

thought. Most importantly, this paper needed to be presented in a way which would not come across as hopelessly pedantic. The solution to this problem revealed itself in much of the same way the summation of this research did. As the writer, I needed to quit being so concerned about what other people would think about the packaging and focus on doing what came naturally. I am passionate about this topic. My personal experiences make it difficult to adhere to the academic standard of remaining impartial, formal, and avoiding use of the dreaded word, I, and so I will not. The focus should be on the content, not the presentation.

In a similar sense, I am of the mindset my appearance should not dictate what others deem me capable of achieving. Now, of course, there are some who would assume this is a reference to tattoos, hair color, piercings, etc. But coming from a more basic worldview, and being pragmatic enough to understand we as a society have a long way to go before any such policies change, I wondered how race and gender impacted the way I was perceived by others? From my first job interview I was always taught to look professional, but do not overdo it. I had to wear makeup, but not too much. Wear heels, though they could not be too high. If I wore a skirt, it could not be too short or too tight - if pants, not too loose or too long. This was all before getting to the matter of hair. As I grew older, the issue of hair became a bigger and bigger source of contention. For Black females, the ability to style hair is of utmost importance. Learning how to braid, plait, twist, straighten, weave, relax, and pick hair is a skill set most black women cultivate as soon as you learn to sit still for mom's hot comb the night before Sunday School.

Unfortunately, that gene skipped me and I had plenty of hair to worry about, or at least I did until I chose to shave all of it off. My decision to go natural - an expression used within the Black community to describe hair untreated by chemical relaxers to permanently alter curl patterns within kinky hair- was not made lightly. I had what many times in my life was referred

to as good hair (hooks, 1989). It was long and straightened quickly without much effort. Even in its natural form, my curl pattern was very loose and did not tangle easily. Everyone always wanted to try to style it in some new way, and because I was not skilled in the cosmetology area, I let them. This quickly became an issue after I left for college. Keeping my hair presentable was frustrating and expensive, but family members were quick to remind me of how much worse off I would be if I went natural and how much harder it would be to maintain a professional image. Not to mention, a large part of me was proud of the length of my hair and worried I would not be pretty if I cut it off. Over time, the more I became frustrated with my messy straightened hair, the more enticing heading down to the local barbershop became. Practicality eventually overcame pride, and with the encouragement of natural haired friends, I became a member of team "Big Chop". Afterward, I found myself worrying about how others would perceive me. As a Black woman I was used to having to prove myself as more capable than my fellow peers, but after cutting my hair I started to encounter people who questioned my femininity as well. I began to wonder what the cultural meaning was behind this change and if there was a newer perspective I could add to the conversation. This research is the culmination of my learning experience and I hope you enjoy it.

Introduction

Black women have been able to manipulate our social and economic advancement in society using hair ever since we were granted the right to achieve upward mobility. The straightened and chemically altered hairstyles worn by my ancestors improved their status despite the institutionalized racism embedded within American culture. Even so, modern workplace dress codes equate inherently Black hairstyles such as afros, dreadlocks, and cornrows with being unprofessional. Operating in this manner marginalizes minority workers who value

racial identification over office compliance. The effect of this results in an increase of stress-related illnesses, anxiety, and depression. With the modern naturalist hair movement in America once again gaining popularity, society's implicit bias towards Black hair must be examined to prevent further injustice (Patton, 2006).

This research traces the historical impact barriers have had on Black women through the lens of Black Feminism and Intersectionality. Black women who consented to share personal testimonies discuss how their race, class, and gender created an interdependent system of discrimination and disadvantage for women of color in the workplace. These experiences affected their sense of self and created multiple levels of oppression for them in the working world. This study seeks to deconstruct racial stigma prevalent in American society contributing to the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of minority women.

Literature Review

This literature review identifies factors which contribute to and have an effect on workplace discrimination as it pertains to Black women's hair.

American Racial Ideology

Though the primary focus of this research is the unique experience of the Black woman, I would first like to take a moment to reevaluate race, the quintessential social construct. Much like a diamond, it has worth simply because someone pronounced it to be valuable. In the same manner, the concept of race was embedded within society to justify slavery, to explain away the inhumane treatment of a darker people. This practice which ended around 150 years ago still has an effect on power, influence, visibility, wealth, and economic opportunity today (Oluo, 2018). Some claim none of these matters because slavery ended a long time ago and racism has been pronounced dead. How can that be true when even today people debate whether slavery or states'

rights was the real cause behind The Civil War? This refusal to move past race being a social construct negatively impacts people's lives. We as a society cannot move past race without acknowledging its existence first. We cannot solve the prevalent issues that are a side-effect of racism without having a straightforward conversation about why it is still occurring. What we can do is admit people are more than just their race, while discussing how racial oppression has influenced their life experiences (Gay, 2014). We can treat race the same way we treat other societal constructs - government, currency, and time itself - to explore how these identities can intersect with each other and influence our interactions with the world (Oluo, 2018). Only after we change more people's mindsets about the new definition of race can we create lasting, impactful change.

Barriers to Advancement

From a sociological standpoint, people within a community have the ability to achieve various levels of success. In American culture, race, gender, and class are the determining factors. Though they should have no influence on one's ability to achieve success, these factors end up having an expansive amount of authority. Continuing the discussion of race, allow me to reiterate everyone is affected by this American racial ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Be it an aid or hindrance, its impact depends on one's position in the racial order. Black people and dark-skinned Americans are at the further end of this spectrum, falling behind white people in every area of life because of the social construct that is race (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Oluo, 2018). Some people imagine this as similar to the least popular kid in class being picked last when forming teams. The reality is altogether much more complicated. Imagine you are not only picked last for the team but while playing you are treated unfairly by players and officials alike. Any time you manage to score the crowd boos. Even though you are tired and sweaty, you still have to keep

playing because if you stop for even a second everyone will believe you are just a quitter. You do not have a moment to catch your breath or even re-lace your shoes.

It seems like an over the top metaphor until you realize how much unfair treatment Black people have to deal with throughout their lives. Simply identifying as Black sets one on a difficult path (hooks, 2015b). Black people receive rude treatment in stores and restaurants. We encounter stereotypes about being lazy, unintelligent, angry, promiscuous, and irresponsible every day (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Davis, 1983; hooks, 2015 b; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Oluo, 2018, Robinson, 2016). Worse than that, when we point out these injustices, we get accused of projecting our insecurities onto the world. If we achieve nothing during our lives, it is because Black people never aim to amount to anything. When we accomplish something, it is because of affirmative action (Gay, 2014; Oluo, 2018; Union, 2017). It is also easy to be skeptical about the automatic devaluation of Blackness until one looks at the numbers. For instance, Black housing and cars are estimated as thirty-five percent less valuable than White-owned ones (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Black people are victims of racial profiling by the law enforcement, resulting in them being seven times more likely to be convicted of an offense (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). We are three times more likely to be poor, earn about forty percent less, and have about one-eighth of the net worth of White people (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Even in integrated school systems -here the more modern usage of the term meaning class, not race, nevertheless primarily influenced by it- Black children receive an inferior education, limiting their chances for upward mobility (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). These forms of institutional racism are excused away with the claim that if we would only behave differently outside of how society perceives us, Black people would get treated better. We would overcome the ways in which the educational system, social welfare system, and criminal justice system enforce the many

problems the Black community faces. This is known as respectability politics and does nothing to tear down institutional barriers exacerbating racism and maintain the status quo of generational poverty (Gay, 2014). All it does is perpetuate the belief of Black as less than.

Similarly, the color of skin has historically affected the chances of upward mobility in the eyes of the public, in educational systems, and in the workforce. It has been the responsibility of the marginalized individual in predominantly White environments to confront racial bias (hooks, 2015b). However, it should not be the responsibility of Black people to demonstrate how better or different we are from our brothers and sisters when being Black should not even be viewed as bad. Black people work past these difficulties every day, but we are just as guilty of enforcing these same standards. We judge, mock, and disparage those whose looks do not embrace our way of thinking (hooks, 2015 b; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). The reason why we act, dress, and teach others to behave in a fashion as similar to White as possible is because it makes it easier to be socially mobile and accepted. To do otherwise is to be viewed as less than, suspicious, or violent (hooks, 2014; hooks, 2015b). We teach our children that they alone must prove themselves as equal to the default of White superiority instead of questioning or defying such a system. This is why The Talk- teaching Black children how to behave and announce movements when interacting with the police- exists, why Black parents enforce yes sir or ma'am, emphasize ask and not axe when speaking, and order kids to come home before the streetlights come on in minority communities. Yes, it is for our safety but is also so we do not forget how the rest of the world views us. We have to be better, smarter, and classier than everyone else just to be considered equal. We do twice as much work for less than half the credit. We get zero recognition outside of our communities for overcoming hardships. We grow up believing we have to excel just to be seen as human because all our lives we have been shown we do not

deserve anything better (Union, 2017). It is shameful to live in a society where the value of marginalized people is determined by how well we can live up to standards put in place to provide a barrier between those who are gifted equality, and those who have to earn it by scaling barriers visible only to the oppressed (Oluo, 2018). These stereotypes should not exist, but I should not have to fear what people will think of me if I fail to defy them either.

Stopping the Sapphire Stereotype

There was a catch-phrase during my teenage years which gained popularity and never ceased to put my younger self in a bad mood. I went to a primarily White high school and usually tried to go unnoticed. I would go about my day, dreading the moment when a student requested help with some task or other. Inevitably in a response to this request, I would hear a voice, usually male, in a high pitch tone cry out, "I am a strong independent Black woman who don't need no man!" (Tate, 2017). This would not be complete without the neck-rolling, finger-wagging, hands on hip, popping lips accompaniment. My classmates would break out in laughter and I would sit in the back, fuming, with no clue as to why this bothered me so much. It was not until I was older I realized I was not missing some magic part of the "joke". I never found it funny for the same reason majority of my classmates did; the joke was the stereotypical portrayal of an ignorant, loud-mouthed Black woman, also known as the Sapphire caricature.

The issue therein is the very reason why people do not appreciate Black women as we are today. People are eager to identify us with anti-Black propaganda, bad-mouth us when we embody similar traits, but to make a mockery of it to the public is still somehow humorous. This mindset devalues all aspects of Black womanhood and makes it difficult for Black females to develop a positive self-concept (hooks, 2015a). The stereotype of the angry, mean Black woman is not noticed by many others, not because it is insignificant, but because it is considered an

inherent characteristic of Black femininity regardless of her actual behavior (Robinson, 2016). This stereotype colors the daily interactions of Black women, despite their appearance, and negatively shapes their reality when in actuality their mannerisms are affected by prejudice before we even have the chance to act. Furthermore, negative stereotypes of Black women such as this are not only anti-woman, they are anti-person. Reinforcing this belief makes it easy to excuse away inhumane treatment because no self-respecting person would act that way in public, or at least that is how we are raised to believe. It does not bode well the remains of their story is mocked by a portrayal which cause racists and slave owners alike to feel justified in their bigotry. However, I will give the joke credit where it is due, it got one thing right after all. Black women are strong. We inherit our strength from our ancestors who bore the burden of being a woman in addition to slave hood.

During slavery, Black people were treated like objects, lower than even cattle. Black men had lost their land, their status, their families, but Black women bore the sole burden of losing their sex as well (Davis, 1983; hooks, 2015a). They were genderless, expected to produce the same amount of labor as the men while carrying babies and being bartered as a sexual reward for the best male workers. If a slave driver felt a Black woman was too proud or a male slave felt emasculated, she would be raped and beaten as a reminder of how weak and powerless she was supposed to be (Davis, 1983; hooks, 2015a). A terrible burden to bear, the only way these women survived was from the strength they gained from enduring this unimaginable hardship. This devaluation of Black womanhood during and after slavery sabotaged their self-confidence and self-respect. It systematically reinforced the social control of White people. For years the Black community attempted to change the negative characteristics perpetuated by the White majority, but unfortunately, their successes also promoted the idea that to be accepted in society

one had to imitate White people. Even after a quarter-century of freedom for Black slaves, Black women still bore the burden of same sexual inequalities and oppression. Working conditions kept them in the triple bind of race, gender, and class. Sexual abuse was common, but to report it meant to lose employment; endurance gave rise to the notion of the sexually promiscuous Black woman (Davis, 1983). This Sapphire caricature was dark-skinned, voluptuous, and well-versed in all things sexual. To discredit this myth, young Black girls were taught to emulate the mannerisms of White women; the perfect symbol for innocence and womanhood. Doing so would surely make Black women worthy of consideration and respect (Craig, 2006). Unfortunately, the American social hierarchy still places us at the bottom even after fifty years of what Americans have lauded as total equality.

A Short Hair-Story of the Black Woman

The emphasis for Black women to act the part of a proper woman also included looking the same way as well. A woman who appeared to have put extra time and money into her appearance with a little help from Madam CJ Walker's products was not only dignified but opened doors for the entire race to benefit from her elegance (hooks, 1989). Straightened hair was the ultimate weapon in the battle to defeat racist depiction of Black people and accumulate social capital (Yosso, 2005). While constraining, this self-presentation showed access to wealth, leisure time and sanitation while encouraging others to persevere (Craig, 2006). It was not until the 1960's that women who were by social definition considered unladylike and unattractive were given a new name. Black is Beautiful was a campaign product as a result of the Civil Rights Movement which provided new ways of being beautiful which had not existed before (Craig, 2006). During this first natural movement, women cut off their chemically straightened locks and donned afros similar to the likes of Angela Davis, with no shame. Mainstream

America viewed her as threatening and aggressive, but for many Black Americans, she provided much-needed courage to embrace natural hair and show pride for the African ancestry (Robinson, 2016). The Black and proud generation no longer felt the need to meet the White man's definition of conventional attractiveness but dealt with the unrelenting pressure from others within the Black community to meet those standards as well (hooks, 2015b; Lewis, 2013). This increased pressure to meet Eurocentric beauty standards and be physically attractive caused pain and shame related to skin color, hair texture, body shape, and weight amongst Black women (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). These issues still affect Black women today.

Shortly after the Black Panther Movement, in the 1960's, Black females began to straighten their hair again (Craig, 2006). The association of afros with masculinity and violence furthered the stereotype of the ignorant and angry Black woman (Robinson, 2016). It became an inherent assumption about Black femininity regardless of our actual behavior. This prejudice often colored the daily interactions of Black women, despite their appearance, and shaped their economic opportunities to the point where they were forced to shift their appearance as a matter of long-term survival. This modification not only broadened opportunities socially, educationally, and professionally, but it also reworked negative beliefs other Americans had of their race (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). A significant amount of time, thought, and emotional energy is spent altering appearance and behaviors as a response to this oppression. The pressure to conform causes an alteration in personal beliefs as Black women begin to believe the stereotypes, doubting their self-worth, and questioning their capabilities. Research shows that a disconnection between who you are and who you pretend to be can cause shame, self-esteem issues, self-hatred and fear of rejection in rates three times more often than in White men and women (James & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). It is saddening that mental health issues can be

exacerbated because a Black woman's appearance does not line up with what others deem acceptable.

Black Feminism & The Importance of Intersectionality

A feminist is defined as a person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes, but not many Black women identify as feminists (Adichie, 2015; hooks, 2015a). This reason is because feminism has historically been more invested in improving the lives of heterosexual White women over the rights of other women (Davis, 1983; Gay, 2014). Intersectionality takes into account an individual's race, gender, sexuality, and class while acknowledging how they build on one another and alters people's life experiences (Warde, 2017). In the same manner, the problem of gender affects Black women every day, but the injustices we encounter throughout our lives are just as likely to be a result of racism than it is to sexism by itself (Adichie, 2015; DuBois, Miley & O'Melia, 2013; hooks, 2014; hooks, 2015a; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). Black feminism, first coined by activist Kimberlé Crenshaw supports the belief that social justice movements should consider the intersections of identity, privilege, and oppression has on women in a way mainstream feminism has yet to admit (hooks, 2015a; Oluo, 2018). For instance, the concept of the glass ceiling is an unofficially acknowledged barrier to advancement experienced by women, preventing them from rising above a certain level in the corporate hierarchy (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). Feminists explain this form of sexism constrains a female's ability to reach her full financial potential and limits socioeconomic opportunities. Be that as it may, Black women still have higher rates of poverty and homelessness than White women (Miley, O'Melia, and DuBois, 2013). With the aid of intersectionality, Black feminists can explain this is due to the stigma against Black women due to their race in conjunction with their gender. The two age-old forms of bigotry have a much

more prominent effect than what has been publicly acknowledged, especially regarding how Black females are perceived in the work environment.

What's Hair Got to Do with It?

Hair is the one thing besides skin color that is entirely public. It is open to interpretation by others for the type of person they determine us to be. It was and still is one of the most powerful visual cues for wealth, beauty, and respectability (Lewis, 2013). These same beauty standards promote the superiority of Eurocentric features such as light or White skin and long, straight hair (Patton, 2006). Think of how magazine and online articles for the top twenty most attractive people. The women chosen as what society generally believes to be most beautiful all have one thing in common. These lists contain majority White, blonde celebrities. Any women of color included in the list are racially ambiguous, have long, straightened hair, or have achieved a status where they are famous for their wealth instead of their race. Exceptions to the rule are those who have made a career out of refusing to let Eurocentric beauty standards dictate their appearance, such as Lupita Nyong'o, and even then she had to define her status as a phenomenal actress before people changed their opinion of her features. This is because Black women and their naturally textured hair is the exact opposite of the traditional opinion of beauty (Godsil, Goff, Johnson, MacFarlane, & Tropp, 2017). This has caused an expectation for Black women to downplay their racial and ethnic identities in all aspects of their self-presentation, but especially in regard to their hair. Furthermore, no matter the texture or length, whether it is presented as dreadlocks or braids, with or without extensions, the hair on a Black woman's head is considered separate from her identity but essential to her reputation (Prince, 2014). It is been this way for centuries because the practice of altering appearance and behavior to avoid

judgment allowed women of color to preserve their status in the already limited social order of America.

Many studies illustrate the history of Black women incorporating habits such as code-shifting and covering in order to highlight specific skill sets instead of drawing attention to their race. Hair and the racial bias against it was systematically combated against with physical and chemical alterations in order to present a more Eurocentric appearance to the public (Craig, 2006; Dumas & Rosette, 2007). After World War One, techniques for straightening Black hair became more widely available. Increasing numbers of African American women began regularly straightening their hair instead of covering it up. It is difficult to find an exact date for when hair straightening changed from being a mainstream practice an expectation Black female grooming norms, but by the 1960's wearing kinky hair outside of the home was considered a public shame (Craig, 2006; Kringen & Novich, 2016). When the youth of the Civil Rights Movement began to reject the practice of chemical relaxers and hot combs in favor of wearing their hair naturally, they also rose above the indoctrinate preaching anything uniquely Black was shameful. Many White people and older Black generations were appalled. Even now, the same groups consider showing off natural hair as distasteful, unattractive, and rebellious. Despite the growing acceptance of Black hairstyle in working environments, many Black women continue to feel we must change our hairstyles to gain access to professional environments, fit in, and avoid scrutiny (Craig, 2006; Lewis, 2013; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). This is evidenced by studies showing women with less racially identifying hairstyles are rated to be more professional and competent by their peers and are predicted to experience more success in their careers, regardless of their actual talent, productivity, or intellectual capability (Opie & Phillips, 2015). Black women who wear their hair in its natural state are presumed to be outspoken and disagreeable,

while women with straightened hair are considered as more effeminate and conservative (Prince, 2014; Union, 2017). Additionally, Black women with straightened hair are more likely to receive job offers and promotions, granting them further access to upward mobility (Dumas & Rosette, 2007; Lewis, 2013; Patton, 2006). In the workplace, we are described as more "intelligent, kind, happy, flexible, interesting, confident, sexy, assertive, strong outgoing, friendly, poised, modest, candid, and successful" (Patton, 2006, p. 36). This traces back to America's history of assigning respect to those who press their hair straight with burning hot curling irons and irreparably damage it with toxic chemicals. It causes the expectation of hair straightening and other racial assimilation modification practices to fall directly on Black women (Dumas & Rosette, 2017; Oluo, 2018). As a result, we live in a country where Black hair is not considered attractive or professional.

These instances show how Black women must bear the cost of shifting and code-switching -changes enacted by Black women in order to alter perceptions of themselves based on speech, mannerisms, and appearance in social situations- in order to be accepted. In a survey about shifting, nearly eighty percent of women have to change their diction, mannerisms, and interest in order to be accepted and fit in with White middle-class America (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Opie & Phillips, 2015). Performing otherwise causes fear of retaliation through acts of discrimination, most frequently at work, and results in further marginalization (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Kringen & Novich, 2016; Prince, 2014; Union, 2017). In fact, there are very few high achieving Black women who are not adept at this act of shifting (Jones & Shooter-Gooden, 2004). This treatment negatively affects self-esteem, causing feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, and shame (Craig, 2006; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Robinson, 2016). Altering Black hair is the ultimate way to shift, and even though it is not currently met with outright hatred, it

still receives collective wariness from society (Green, 2017, Robinson 2016). Even so, Black people are just as guilty of upholding others to this standard as other races are.

Shifting Rules At Work

Due to racial tensions and the history of the Black woman, the state of hair determines our employability and -by extension- access to economic security. The maintenance of our hair determines what we are able to accomplish in the area of our professional lives, more often than not it is an explicit term of our work contracts (Green, 2017; Prince 2014). In fact, the most basic job interview justifies a tremendous amount of anxiety among Black women since we do not know if a potential employer will consider them fairly due to their race, gender, and hairstyle, the opinions of which have been shaped by years of White supremacy, male dominance, and cultural assimilation (Cutts, Hooley, and Yates, 2015; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004, Prince, 2014). In one instance, a woman was instructed to cut off her curly-locks in order to proceed to the second portion of her interview in a call center, or be deprived of the job altogether (Green, 2017). As a result, many Black women wear straightened hairstyles to avoid the stigmatization and barriers to professional advancement which comes along with natural hair (hooks, 2015b). Doing so allows us to conserve our professional image, fit in with colleagues, and be respected in the workplace (Dumas & Rosette, 2007). Some agencies further bar Black women from the workplace by enforcing unintentionally biased grooming policies which implement the hyper-regulation of Black women's hair after hiring them. For instance, American Airlines banned employees in customer service positions from wearing braids in response to a Black female who wore her hair in the same style (Green, 2017). The military currently has a policy which forbids unkempt, faddish, or twisted hair due to its unprofessionalism and an indication of criminality (Green, 2017; Oluo, 2018). On the surface, this describes dreadlocks, but the enforcement of this

policy also prohibits a number of African American hairstyles including micro-braids and two-strand twists. Other employers have directed Black women to seek supervisory approval before changing styles, a mandate not imposed on White female employees (Green, 2017). The explicit bias shown toward Black women's non-chemically altered hair causes Black women to lose their jobs resulting in lower status and salary among Black women (Dumas & Rosette, 2007; Godsil, Goff, Johnson, MacFarlane, & Tropp, 2017; Opie and Phillips, 2015; Patton, 2006). Regardless of how women of color choose to wear their hair, the penalties invoked against them prevents Black women from being fully self-actualized (Godsil, Goff, Johnson, MacFarlane, & Tropp 2017). Women of color in the workplace experience cognitive dissonance about this, often feeling as if we have to choose between exercising personal agency and adhering to corporate pressures to conform (Patton, 2006). Individuals who view their hair as an important aspect of their personal identity, but must compromise it in exchange for an advantageous transition to the workplace in order to fit in and satisfy employers, essentially have to put society's preference above mental health. Doing so decreases workplace efficiency and personal happiness (Cutts, Hooley, & Yates, 2015; Dumas & Rosette, 2007). Additionally, this practice creates a barrier to our equality, inclusion, and dignity in society enforce by Black and White women alike (Green, 2017; Kringen & Novich, 2016). Though some Black women choose to comply with these hair policies, the question should change from if we can change to conform to society's standards; to whether we should be required to do so.

Methods and Instruments

Black female faculty and staff from a southern university received an email invitation with a brief introduction of what the research is about, an invitation to participate in a recorded group discussion for research purposes, and a copy of the informed consent and statement of

confidentiality form. Respondents who elected to participate in the group interview were chosen by convenience sampling based on their schedule and availability via Doodle poll. The group interview session was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for results pertaining to how bias towards Black women's hair can affect one's sense of self. This ensured confidentiality, put the participants at ease, and created a more relaxed environment for interviewing. After transcription, the narratives were offered to the interviewees for review. If the interviewee accepted the offer to review the transcripts, the transcripts were sent for member checking. They were allowed to make changes, additions, clarifications, or amendments if they felt it was necessary to properly get their points across prior to coding and publication. As the primary research investigator, I chose to conduct qualitative data collection in the form of an open-ended group interview due to its efficiency. In one session I can collect data I would never have been able to garner details about from a closed-ended survey question. By gathering information from three people in two-hours I was able to foster an environment that felt more natural for the participants while tripling the sample size (Patton, 2013).

I also decided to use the group interview as the qualitative method of data collection to avoid what Adichie calls "the danger of a single story" (Adichie, 2009). Both argue that when researchers rely solely on a singular narrative, we risk misunderstanding how people's life experiences are vastly different. The perspectives one can develop throughout a lifetime are intricate due to the compilation of stories that make up a singular experience. To use one person's history and opinions of hair to generalize an entire populations experience would take away the humanity of this subject. I did not want this research to only be about my experience, to become the spokesperson for Black hair when I am not the only Black Woman to have gone through this. All too often in society, it is presumed one can know all there is about Black people

by hearing the opinions of one Black individual (hooks, 2015a). I do not, nor have ever held the desire to become that person. Being the same race may cause people to have similar opinions and insight on a particular topic, but to assume so is naïve. Instead, I hope the stories of the women who participated in this study to contain snapshots of my same experience, to provide a correlation between Black women and cognitive dissonance about feelings toward natural hair. There are three participants in this study and though they have similar commentary, the instances covered in this research are still not the only experiences and opinions of Black women's hair in the workplace.

Findings

The three women who consented to participate in this group interview did so under pseudonyms. Destiny, Monica, and Brandy are all Black women who work in higher education. While endeavoring to properly code the interview, I found there were several instances where their past relationship with their family and hair affected how they presented themselves in the workplace and influence what values they want to instill in their children. Occasionally their stories overlap, and I will denote when this occurs. The best way to understand the different perspectives about Black hair in the workplace and the effects it has on Black women is by allowing the reader to get to know Destiney, Monica, and Brandy the same way I did. I began each interview by asking the participants what they feel it means to be a Black woman in America. They do not consider their identity as a Black woman to be two separate entities; instead, it is a singular experience which cannot be disentangled. Afterwards, we discovered how the meaning of hair has transformed for these women through their early childhood, middle adolescence, college career, and their current professional roles. These are their stories.

Destiney the Debutante

Destiney is what I imagine to be as close to a working Southern Belle as one can get in the modern Black community. She was confident but cordial and out-spoken while remaining polite. She wore head held high and her "puff", as she good naturedly nicknamed it, even higher. She was down to Earth and loved a good laugh. Destiney also never saw herself as needing to cultivate a public self to hide her outspoken persona:

> I grew up in an all-Black neighborhood but went to [an] all White school. My all Black neighborhood that was my comfort zone. My church was there, my friends were there, so they knew me and who I was. So when I went to school if somebody tried to check my Blackness I'm not here for it. I can go home to the people that know who I really am. I kinda stayed to myself at school to avoid putting myself in environments where people could question my Blackness because I was so comfortable in my separate life that I had at home.

In her younger years, Destiney always had her hair done up in the latest style. She is a big believer that hair should be used for self-expression, not solely to make good impressions:

> My momma couldn't do hair either, but my Daddy was a money man. He made sure we had a standing hair appointment every other Thursday since I was in the sixth grade. So having my whole Black home, White school existence, I used my hair as way to be like, y'all know I don't fit in so how about I show you know how much I fit in. So whatever new style there was out, I was rocking it. And yeah, people would talk, but I didn't care.

[...]When I went to law school, I had my red hair and I remember a professor saying you should change that if you want to be successful here. And I did, cause I didn't know any better. I went to the shop and we dyed it this safe brown [color] and I was miserable. I went home on the Christmas break and we went right back in it [to red].

Now that she is in a more stable career where people know her work ethic, she is more comfortable with wearing her hair however she desires. When asked if there were any hardships she experiences due to her race and gender, she recounts:

When you had asked that question, my mind immediately went back to law school. There was a professor who was an older White gentleman who insisted on calling me and the only other Black girl in the class girl. He didn't call nobody else in the class girl, so I repeatedly let him know that I ain't nobody's girl but my Daddy's. And I would over and over and over again check him on that and he would repeatedly do it. He just couldn't see where I was coming from. But I wasn't going to let him sit there call me girl in a room of one hundred fifty people, half of which were female, and you're only calling two of them girl. That is an experience that I take with me everywhere. And in the office where I work, there is a coffee maker and when there are White people who come in they automatically assume I am there to make coffee. Baby, I don't make coffee. And I will as nice nasty as I need to tell them that I don't make coffee. You're more than welcome to help yourself, but that's not what I am here to do.

It is not by chance she has made it as far as she has in her career. At this point in her life she believes it is the loss of her employers if they ever decide to judge the content of her head by the cover of her hair. She does not let anyone's perception of her influence how she values her own self-worth, no matter the effect it has on the way people treat her.

I don't care and I don't really think about it too much but I do notice when my hair is blown out people will say "Oh that's my favorite style" or "Oh your hair looks so nice, today". Well, boo, it was nice yesterday too when it was just piled up on top of my head. You just didn't realize it was nice yesterday. I think other people are aware of when my hair is in its natural state or when it's blown out, but I don't let that [bother me], I cannot control what other people's reactions are. I can only affect how I respond to it and I let it go in one ear and out the other. And I note to myself, "Oh okay you one of those, I got you". And I just remember that for the next interaction I have with them. [...] But I will say, Black people, in particular, are more judgmental because it has been so ingrained in them that straight hair equals better. They question me like why you wearing your hair like that? They let you wear your hair like that at work? Well, don't nobody "let me" nothing cause I am grown. Now, my god-mamma is ninety and if I went there today, she would have something negative to say about my hair. And she will always end it with, it's a good thing you smart. Kinda like, girl that's the only reason they keep you down there. Well, that is the only reason that I am here. This [gestures to hair] is just extra.

This confidence is admirable, but because of her early self-actualization she now experiences a disconnect with her children. They too are enrolled in a majority White school, but

do not have a majority Black community to fall back on like she had in her developing years. When they are antagonized by their peers for being different she has to choose between introducing them to the complex world of shifting, which she never really embraced herself, or prepare them for a lifetime of feeling isolated from their peers. Following this revelation, the three women discussed instances when they have felt the need to prove to others their authenticity as a Black person. Thought they do not seem to outright recognize it, each woman describes how second-nature the act of shifting can become for Black women in America. The conversation went as follows:

Destiney: You know to go along with it. And back to your remarks earlier about having to prove yourself, I have never had that experience. I was telling them earlier I kind of grew up in this weird environment -all Black neighborhood, all White school. I never experienced that because I had my safe-haven. But listening to you talk now as a mama, my girls experience that and sometimes I struggle with helping them work through that experience because I don't know that experience. When they go to school and my oldest baby hears all the Black girls tell her she talks White and I am just kind of like girl... Just tell them to get out your face. I am seeing that now it's because I don't know how that feels cause I have never experienced it. From hearing y'all's remarks I am going to try to approach that in a different way that helps her. Because she knows she's Black all day, but she does speak differently. She can't even stand how I talk, she always asks me "Ma why you talk like that?" And I just tell her this is how I talk. But moving forward I am going to try to help her navigate that in a healthy way that esteems her and builds her up.

Monica: And she will learn how to do it too overtime. My daughter's almost fifteen and when we go home or even go to the Boys and Girls Club she knows how to, I don't want to stay it but, flip her Black switch on and off and be herself based off of where we are.

Destiney: And I see my babies starting to do that too.

Monica: She will learn how to handle herself accordingly

Brandy: And I think when you younger it's harder to do that. People's reactions seem harsh to you because it says you're not authentic. You're saying to me that I am fake. I think the fake part is what broke me down. I was bubbly and talkative. I use big words. That just who I am, but you're telling me all that these things are not the way I am meant to be. I not Black. That's what crushed me as a teenager because you want to have Black friends, White friends whatever. To me it was okay, regardless. But it hurts you when somebody attacks your personal self, you know what I mean? That to me is awful for a young woman to go through.

Monica: And it makes me want to say to them what makes your Black better than mine? What makes you think you're acting like a "good" Black person? Would your ancestors think that you're better than me? I think not.

Destiney: And that's kind of how I tell her to approach it. But sometimes I can tell she leaves me frustrated like Ma, you ain't help me at all, bye.

Mild-Mannered Monica

Monica's story focuses less on self-esteem and more on how her journey has influenced the relationship she has with her family. As a child, Monica's mother constantly tried to tame her natural hair with a variety of styles in order to make it look better. The onslaught of chemicals weakened her hair to the point where it would break off constantly. She would dream having long hair while having to prove her blackness to her peers. The story came up as we spoke about the relationship between hair and self-confidence. I had asked about why Black people who have natural hair choose to focus so much on hair type and length. Her response was poignant and well-received within the group:

> I think it goes back to that standard of beauty. That expectation of White, long, straight, blonde. Even as a kid, like when I was a little girl like I am talking about four or five years old I did want long straight hair. I can remember having literal dreams about long hair. So I think a lot of it comes from what we see. What we're told looks good versus is how we feel comfortable wearing our hair. So it's that standard of beauty. Now would I like some long 3c hair? Yes, but I am going to rock with this 4c that shrinks up really bad because I love how different our hair is. It's versatile. [...] To me, everything goes right back to motherhood. My mom had three girls and a boy and she did not know a thing about hair. Which was why my hair was this long [holds up little finger] when I was a little kid. Which was why I always dreamed of long hair because I didn't have any hair. I am just sitting back thinking about all the things that they used to do to our hair and

thanking God that I don't do that to my daughter. She never had to experience the torture of crying when you get burned by that hot comb.

Monica shared multiple instances where she let the love she had for her child manifest itself through the way she cared for her daughter's hair. This was a common sentiment for the women in the group. Hair was not only an identifier for the Black female experience, but one's sentiments about hair was often passed down generationally.

My hair, it goes back to my childhood and my daughter. I remember the day, it's been five years since I have been natural. When I was younger, I wore relaxers -and I always said that when I got older I'd go natural, because my sisters have been natural for years- and I finally caved in because I never wanted my daughter to get a relaxer. So I remember the day I finally decided I can't be a hypocrite to my kid and tell her she can't wear her hair straight while I am constantly getting these relaxers. And so I remember the day, I sat around a group of Black women who were all natural. My daughter was there with a group of other young girls and women were there and we just cut it all off. And she stood there and told me "Mommy I am so proud of you for being able to just let that go and embrace the head that God gave you". Now I love my hair and I can never see myself going back to relaxed hair. I just feel like me.

As a result of this conflation of love with hair maintenance, Monica now experiences difficulty allowing her daughter to have control of her own head. She is torn between continuing

to give her child the hair education and care she wishes she had gotten when she was younger and giving her daughter the space, she needs to begin her own hair journey.

Lemme tell you something, my momma knew nothing about hair. We had it all. We had the Jheri Curls in the third grade. We had to put our own activator in and wondered why my hair was like it was and why it felt so funny. We went back and forth from that to relaxers. My hair was beyond damaged. My different hair styles came from getting older and learning about hair, about proper hair care, but that didn't happen till I was already in my twenties and learning about my hair. I felt like I was released. Now my daughter is in high school this year and she wants to start doing her own hair. It breaks my heart because she's about to ruin everything I worked to get her hair toward. So, I mean it's a lot for me -to let her do her own hair how she wants to do it. She still has her hair though. We have some places where I have shown her, like if I were doing your hair it would not look like this in the back. Let's work on this. I wish I was still in it, but it also I hate doing hair too. I am like my mom, I do hate doing hair. So it freed me up, but I am trying to teach her what I was not taught.

Unlike Destiney, Monica experienced being an outcast in her younger years for her personality and skin color.

I never really thought about what it means to be Black. I never had any horrific stories. I was brought up in a mixed area I would say. In high school and elementary school, it was always a mixed environment. I never really had any racial stories, I guess. I think what

comes to mind -I was talking to someone about this the other day- I feel like my issues with being Black came from other Black people. Like with the colorism thing. Especially being brought up in a family where the majority of my family members were fair skinned, you know? Like, I was one of three darker skinned granddaughters and I would feel that from my family members. They would say things like "You're cute for a little chocolate one" and stuff like that at such a young age. For a long time as a kid I felt like being darker was a bad thing for a Black person. Then the older I got, I started thinking oh okay, so being Black is really good. Like the darker the berry the sweeter the juice. So those are my only memories of being Black. [...] For me being Black is like I am proud of it. Of course, like you always got that "White girl" quote fingers kind of thing. I have been told I act White, but I don't really know what acting White means. I mean I am just me. I am just Monica and I am proud of who I am. Growing up, I had my Black card taken a few times. Especially when I was younger, but then the older I got I started to wonder to myself, "Why should I have to prove to you that I am Black?". I shouldn't have to do this. I feel like I lived the life of a Black person, however that is supposed to be, but I feel like I get viewed as a Black woman, regardless. I am just Monica. And I think, now that I look back on it, I think a lot of people were joking. I mean at first it was hurtful as a young person but looking back on it I don't really think they meant me any real harm. I think that's just the way kids are. Like I am going to joke about you, you talk like a White girl. Or the way you do something that's not normal for a Black person or you say something and people are like oh I am going to take your Black card. And it's a joke now, I just laugh about it because I don't get hurt by the things people say anymore.

Though Monica could not think of any particular experiences in her current career for which has experienced negative consequences due to her hairstyle of choice, she has used her position in life to continuously open up doors for other people. When applying for positions which seem to have a lack of diversity, she points this out to her superiors in hopes of opening their eyes to the bias that sometimes corrupts the workplace. Her decision to do what is right even at her own expense is the reason why she has to be secure in herself.

Bubbly Brandy

Brandy had quite the warm personality. Of all the participants her stories exemplify just how much hair can be used to identify the self when society requires Black women to conform. The most talkative of the bunch, Brandy often expressed her beliefs of hair being the epitome of the Black experience. Though she also felt it was exhausting:

We have so much versatility with our hair. it's like a blessing and a curse. You can do straight. You can do curly. You can be purple today, red tomorrow depending on your genetics and hair make-up. But again, this is kind of back to social relationships and who you are. I am almost forty and I just do not care. And sometimes there's too much routine. I cannot do the roller-wrap or oil-sheen. I have done it all before. Dominican blowouts, Micro braids, and Goddess-locs. Before now, I probably would not have even imagined putting my hair in some fake dreadlocks at a job. But where I am at now is to the point, it's like I don't care. You all have interviewed me. I am qualified to be here. If I am less to you in your eyes for my hairstyle, then I am going to let that be your issue. I will continue to do my job until you tell me otherwise. it's just simple acceptance. I just

don't care anymore. My hairstyle now just needs to fit into a routine of five minutes or less right now. I just can't do it, I might go back to the creamy crack [code for chemical used to straighten/perm tightly curled hair (Robinson, 2016)] I might, I don't know, but right now it's hot. I can't do all that. It's too much.

She decided to shave her hair off because she felt it was too much of a hassle. It was no small feat. She often used her hair as a way to distract others from hard times or provide a cover for her fear and insecurities:

Again that's that pressure of being Black. We talk about strength and empowerment but we're fragile because a lot of times you are worrying about your peers, the person next to you, or behind you. You end up being sensitive about that. I think that I have been through a lot of styles. From weave and color, sew-ins, no color, natural to the creamy crack at its finest. I remember I got a Dominican blowout, and I had layered blond on the top, red-brown in the middle, and a dark chocolate underneath. It was laid! When I tell you I looked like a Pocahontas, girl, the cut on my hair was so fly. I went to the cancer center to see my mom when she came out of surgery and I went to check on her and her first words to me were, who did your hair? Let me touch it.

A woman of many stories, her experiences show just how integral a woman's relationship with her hair can be in conjunction with one's race and life experiences (hooks, 1989). As a child she often tried to expand herself and personality beyond the confines of her race:

Definitely in high school I was always told you're a "good" Black person or you "talk White". Like What does that mean, you know? And for me I was crushed because I had both White and Black friends and I was just a band nerd, I played clarinet. I had to be cool with Black and White where I was. So for me -I don't know if you call it code shifting or what I don't know- but Black girls can be mean when they don't feel like you would speak the language right? And I struggled with that quite a lot. The loud voice, cool groups, what people think is Black. But I think eventually I settled myself in college and figured out hey, I'll just be smart. I'll just let race be what it is and if you don't accept me, that's on you. But I wasn't strong enough for that in high school. I was like, oh no Black girls don't like me. I am Black, my mom's Black, my sister's Black. Why do people say I am not Black enough? I also have a strong mother. My dad was in the Air Force so I did pre-K and Kindergarten in London, England which was very White, and I am the only Blackie in school and the tights are like this color [holds up manila envelope] and my Black legs don't match and it looks weird. I went through a lot of that urge to prove myself and find acceptance and among the White groups, the Black groups, the blended groups. Eventually I just settled in myself that I would just be kind you know? It is what it is.

Brandy provided the most opinionated insight into why she thought people were concerned with the way women, but especially Black women, wore their hair.

I think is just another opportunity to divide, unravel, pick apart, and ask questions when just who you are as a Black woman should be enough. That's what's most frustrating

about it. How you wear your hair shouldn't be indicative of how well you are able to do your job. That's just not right. It shouldn't have any relation. We don't nitpick White women in the same way, but for some reason Black women have to be refined and professional. It's associated with your value. That's sad. On the flip side if you have really nice hair you'll be very valued with certain people. The unnerving part about it is how it is associated with your work. It's a crock of crap. It really is crazy how the way you style your hair can create this stigma about your intelligence, your ability to perform. It's hard to escape as a grown lady.

This lead to a discussion on the impact policies on hair have on the policing of Black bodies outside of the workplace and the lasting effect it has in America today.

I feel like it is a delicate balance between expressing yourself, you know, within the constraints of whatever your professional identity is. I would hope deciding committees and colleagues just become more accepting. If it has nothing to do with doing your job and doing it well, then let's not put a policy in a handbook or procedure or waste our breath about it. I feel like a lot of times policy regulations have been motivated by racial prejudice. I hate it. I have been a Black teacher in a very predominantly White high school, very racially divided. I think they called it a Hygiene Committee or something like that, where they would focus on students with the red, blonde, or purple braids. They would have to change their hair color or get suspended out of school. But at the same time you'd have like the White Goth look, that's been going on for forever and ignore that. But you put the first Black teacher on that committee and expect me to make all

these Black girls undo their hair. I couldn't separate how if you were a high performer with straight A's in AP Chemistry, how your red braids were enough reason to interrupt their education. I wasn't going to play the scapegoat. It was culturally insensitive and had nothing to do with the students' school work and their performance. Having these conversations give you a chance to speak up when you need to and try to understand what another person is coming from. I feel like we all just need to be authentic to who we are and have values and respect for the other person. Just be free and let people be free, don't nitpick. We have an ugly racial history in the deep South and it's bad. To use things like hair, or the way you talk, just adds a further way to divide us. Kids grow up dealing with this type of stuff for no reason. I want to move forward and not go back. We have Black characters, like Shanaynay from Martin, with the weaves and the fingernails but when can we have something more authentic? Black culture is life but when can we get something that's more than just funny or pain? But for this, in the words of Rodney King, can't we all just get along? Because it's certain things that White people do which irritates the crap out of me right? But I don't want to necessarily have to write a lot of policies or procedures around it. We can all find a way to be ourselves that doesn't hurt or disrespect ourselves. But I guess that's what equity diversity and cultural diversity masterminds have to figure out. How can we be diverse yet be inclusive? That's something we are always going to continue as a university to grapple with. We're all about the sexual revolutionary experience and we real free with it, but when you want to talk about race, you want to separate and divide it. Let's be all the way free. You can be you, and I can be me. But it takes time. It's just not going to happen overnight but I am encouraged.

Brandy's response embodied the very sentiment which inspired me to conduct this research project. The experiences she, Monica, and Destiney shared show the effect the practice of straightening and altering Black hair has on Black women's lives. It becomes negative only when it becomes an expectation and not a choice for Black women (Cutts, Hooley & Yates, 2015). Together we had a conversation ending in support of the sentiment that Black women should not have to bear the burden of altering their appearance to please employers and co-workers. Instead, society should work to better recognize its own bias and create a less marginalizing, less appearance-based standard for determining workplace professionalism.

Conclusions

Though the research participants life experiences differed, data shows how America's racially divided past has had an extensive effect on the futures of Black women. The way colonizers treated slaves influenced how society viewed them once they were free. In an effort to gain higher status, Black women began to practice the looks and mannerisms of White women. Eventually the practice of appearing White became the standard for judging people's worth and ability to contribute to the betterment of society. Deviation from the norm negatively affected Black women's status and decreased their chances for employability. The three Black women who shared their stories showed how hair can impact Black women throughout their lives. Together these factors reveal how something most people feel is inconsequential, i.e.) the way Black women choose to wear their hair in the workplace, is fundamentally tied to one's upbringing and formation of positive self-esteem (hooks, 1989).

Destiney was fortunate enough to have access to a majority White school system, and rather than choose to assimilate, she used her hair as a way to express her individuality. She had the support of her Black community to provide her with confidence if she ever felt insecure

about her place in society. During her college years, Destiney experienced depression and anxiety from having to compete in law-school, in addition to having to battle sexism and change her hair in order to be taken more seriously. Now that she is in a more stable career where people are familiar with her work ethic, she is more comfortable wearing her hair however she desires. Even so, she still experiences instances of micro-aggression where people assume she is a secretary or suggests she looks better with her hair straightened. She now experiences a disconnect with her children because they too are enrolled in a majority White school. Due to the fact that they do not have a Black community to fall back on for building self-esteem, she has to choose between introducing them to the complex world of shifting for Black women or prepare them for a lifetime of feeling isolated from their peers.

Monica's story focuses less on self-esteem and more on how her journey has influenced the relationship she has with her family. As a child, her mother consistently tried to tame her natural hair with a variety of styles in order to make it look better. The onslaught of chemicals weakened her hair to the point where it would break off constantly. As she dreamed of having long hair, she also had to prove her blackness to her peers. As a mother, she now experiences difficulty allowing her daughter to have control of her own head. She is torn between continuing to give her child the care she wishes she had gotten when she was younger and giving her daughter the space she needs to grow into a more independent young woman. Even so, Monica is not tentative about pointing out injustices in her place of work. Though she has no fear of negative repercussions for wearing her hair in its natural state, she laments knowing if she were not as educated or in a position of high esteem she would experience difficulties due to the way she styles her hair.

Brandy shares what it was like as a child trying to present herself beyond the confines of her race. Her desire to be seen as a person, not too Black or too White lead to someone focused on achievement and personality. A woman of stories, her experiences show just how integral a woman's relationship with her hair can be. She believes there are certain experiences Black women go through which help develop their personality because of how it specifically deals with hair. This sentiment was reflected in many of the references for this work. Multiple authors wrote about getting their hair braided during the summer and straightened with a hot comb for special occasions (hooks, 1989). As a mother Brandy goes out of her way to make sure her daughter experiences the same situations so she will grow up embracing and being proud of the Black part of her identity. Brandy also provides insight into how and why straightening and altering hair for work is only bad when it becomes an expectation and not a choice for Black women.

Together the three women who participated in this research agreed Black women should not have to bear the burden of altering their appearance to please employers. Instead, society should work to better recognize its own bias and create a less marginalizing, less appearance-based standard for determining workplace professionalism.

Gaps in The Research & Implications for Future Study

Though this study investigates a variety of subjects, it is not a comprehensive evaluation. In order to assess this topic in full, certain areas should be covered in more detail in the future. Age is one such area where deeper introspection is necessary. Younger generations are reported to view physical qualities as a less important than previous generations. This may indicate that the trend for Black women with natural hair to be evaluated as less professional to be aging out as older people retire. This research also does not cover how races outside of Black women are

affected by standard definitions of femininity in the work environment. Further evaluation can also be put into court cases for past decisions made about Black women's hair. Examples of how Muslim women are affected by workplace clothing policies and how the law ensures equal and fair treatment for their way of life would be useful in determining the direction for future research projects. Deeper introspection should also be given into how different combinations of career choices and hair style affects upward mobility. Though a study with surveys about life experiences would be valuable in collecting large amounts of data, an interview session with more participants and multiple meetings would improve the findings of this research. This information can be used to cultivate more information on how other body modifications affect advancement in the workplace, such as body piercing, tattoos, and even people who have decided to transition genders.

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Diverse Enough for You? A Pattern of Oversight in American Politics

By: Terrie Palmer

Abstract

There have been many opinions surrounding diversity and how it proves to be effective during times of election. This issue was strongly debated about during the 2016 Presidential Election. Although our nation continues to be divided over the outcome, both sides seem to agree that the candidates lacked any real interpersonal discussion with constituents. A comparison chart showed that this oversight led to a lower minority voter turnout, specifically in African –American and Hispanic voters (Frey). However, simply putting the focus onto minority political participation might not solve all our problems and can potentially create more division. According to previous studies, the majority has a duty to ensure that the minority has some amount of recognition (Kanthak). However, the attention stops once they grow enough in size to be a threat and doing this creates internal conflict that divides the group and this also ensures that the majority remains in control (Kanthak). The purpose of this research is to get a perspective of how minority participation hinders or progresses political change and figure out how the push for political diversity has increased minority political participation.

Introduction

Diversity is a controversial subject that brings about varying opinions, especially regarding political representation. Never is it a more heated debate than during the years leading up to a presidential election. Although our nation continues to be divided over the outcomes, both sides seem to agree that both parties are failing to reach out to underrepresented communities and lack interpersonal discussion with constituents. Our recent election cycle was disappointing in terms of

minority campaigning to say the least and charts show that this led to a lower minority voter turnout at the polls (Frey).

However, for all the opinions surrounding diversity focused campaigning, there are instances where minority turnout can make or break a campaign. This was recognized regarding the success of Doug Jones in the Alabama 2017 senate election. Jones's win was heavily contributed to the number of African-American women who went out to the polls (Lockhart). Yet, for all the positives that are associated with increased diversity, criticism comes from conservative majority voters who feel overlooked and undervalued. On the other hand, minority groups feel that these complaints are only being made to take away from their efforts as they are finally being recognized. These conflicting views contribute to the broadening division that we are currently seeing in society and leads voters to wonder what can be done to reach a compromise.

Background and Literary Analysis

Minority political participation has been a topic of interest for scholars over the years. *Minority Representation and the Quest for Voting Equality* examines the history of minority voter rights and how we examine the voting process today. The book also addresses issues already familiar to the topic of political diversity including gerrymandering, uneducated voters, and the growing polarization in our society. Likewise, it provides reasoning as to why minority votes are so hard to examine at large. Early studies into racially polarized voting began during the late seventies, although finding evidence of a distinct pattern has proven to be hard (Grofman). Voting records are not available to the masses and public records do not offer a clear interpretation of racial trends (Grofman). This causes most studies into voting trends to be inconsistent and hard to use for future predictions.

The book does identify two methods of establishing group voting patterns: homogenous statistical analysis and ecological regression. The homogenous method examines small precincts while the ecological method examines graphs and statistics as they align with the diverse makeup of the region (Grofman). However, these methods rely on the outcomes of multiple variables and are distinctively different in outcomes depending on the type of election. Yet, both methods influenced the ways that I decided to develop my research because I wanted to obtain a quality amount of data without overcomplicating the process. Since the campus population dwindles in size during the summer, the idea of examining individual voting trends would not prove to be effective. Instead, a survey proved to be more effective in me getting a sense of the various opinions regarding key issues that are already being spoken on about diversity.

The book also addresses the perceived outcomes surrounding the push for proportional representation. Like what we are seeing now, there is going to be a continual struggle to get equal representation. Similarly, African-Americans and Hispanics cannot hold onto the expectations of receiving representation equivalent to their population size (Grofman). This was not written to discourage minority voters, instead it serves as a dose of reality for the work that lies ahead. The authors also write that these groups should be mindful to not tolerate discrimination of any kind or settle for the low representation that they have now (Grofman).

"*Who Loses in American Democracy? A Count of Votes Demonstrates the Limited Representation of African Americans*" examines the way that we look at minority representation and voting patterns. When it comes to studying minority representation we tend to focus on descriptive and substantive representation (Hajnal). Descriptive Representation examines how much your representative looks and physically represents you. Substantive tends to be better at getting an indicator of how minorities vote because it looks at the extent to which your

representative represents your interests, regardless of shared characteristics (Hajnal). In general, minorities worry more about how the policies enacted by officials in office affect them. This is largely due to the majority wins system of our democracy which makes it hard for voters to have a fair chance at winning, since minorities have been historically underrepresented.

A good argument for descriptive representation is made in *"Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes".* Jane Mansbridge reasons that descriptive representation is good at establishing trustworthy relationships between representatives and voters. In this method voters are more trusting because they can see that someone like them is making the policy (Mansbridge). This allows the representative to have a larger advantage over other candidates who might typically be an outsider. Representatives chosen through this process are also seen as being able to determine what is good for their voters.

"Valuing Diversity in Political Organizations: Gender and Token Minorities in the U.S. House of Representatives" makes a strong argument about the need for minority interaction in politics. Diversity matters because underrepresented groups bring a new perspective to political issues and decision making (Kanthak). However, there is the matter of them gaining enough attention to be considered for these positions of power. The majority has a duty to ensure that the minority has some amount of recognition but typically the attention stops once they grow enough in size to be a threat (Kanthak). Containing the minority to a smaller size has the effect of creating internal conflict that divides the group and this also ensures that the majority remains in control (Kanthak). This tactic is mostly effective due to public view that minorities are fairly represented. Kanthak writes that descriptive representation only continues to reinforce perception that underrepresented groups are being fairly represented. This does not mean that the suppression of the minority cannot be used as a motivation for them to try harder. Once a minority reaches a

certain threshold of acknowledgment, they can go on to establish coalitions, allies, and change the overall mentalities of its members (Kanthak).

"The Conditional Effects of Minority Descriptive Representation: Black Legislators and Policy Influence in the American States" reinforces this idea and acknowledges that membership in the majority party should make way for minorities to reach institutional positions of power and have a trickle-down effect on influencing all levels of influence (Preuhs). So, promoting minority political participation can be seen in a positive light.

"A Response to Inequality: Black Women, Racism, and Sexism" takes these ideas one step further by examining the specific ways that limited representation negatively effects African-American women. My research wants to look at all levels of diversity and gender effects political issues more than most would think. The reading acknowledges that black men and women were historically alienated from the political and social spheres (Lewis). However, black women have had the unfortunate issue of being placed into two groups of oppression due to their gender (Lewis). It limits their opportunities to move up at the same rates of their male counterparts and creates a cycle of struggle. The desire to overcome at least one of these limitations creates conflict that results in the issues of race prevailing over gender (Lewis). If we look at political participation today, we see that women are beginning to be recognized for their positive political contributions. Yet, there is more work to be done for them to secure the political significance slowly being attributed to minority males. Likewise, this must not be limited to this one minority, women of all races need recognition to achieve full diverse equality. It is simply a matter of going about it in the most effective way.

Methodology and Predictions

To get a clear understanding of public opinion, I created and distributed a mobile survey that allowed participants to decide on which aspects of diversity are lacking in politics and how it influences perception of equality. To obtain a good quantity of results and diverse opinions the survey was left open to faculty and students from May 20, 2018 through June 9, 2018. The intent being to see if the push for diversity has any merit or is there room for improvement that could better all of society. My predictions prior to distribution assumed that a good portion of responses would lean towards seeing success in diverse representation and a high favor regarding the success of future elections, recent election aside. However, the data shows a different perspective.

Results and Analysis

Q1 Ethinicity: Please specify from the options listed below

Ethnicity	Percentage
African-American	18.22%
Asian/Pacific...	0.74%
Caucasian	72.86%
Hispanic or Latino	2.23%
Native American	2.23%
Other	3.72%

Q3 What is your age?

Age	Percentage
18-24 years old	51.48%
25-34 years old	8.15%
35-44 years old	17.78%
45-54 years old	11.11%
55 and older	10.74%
Prefer not to answer	0.74%
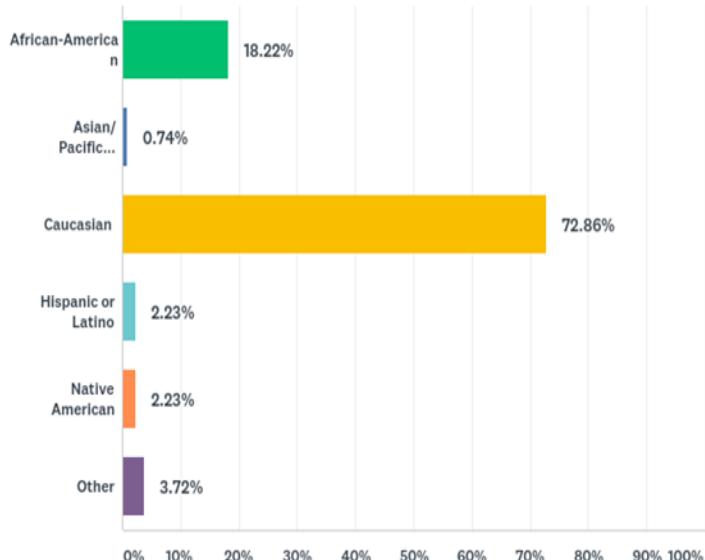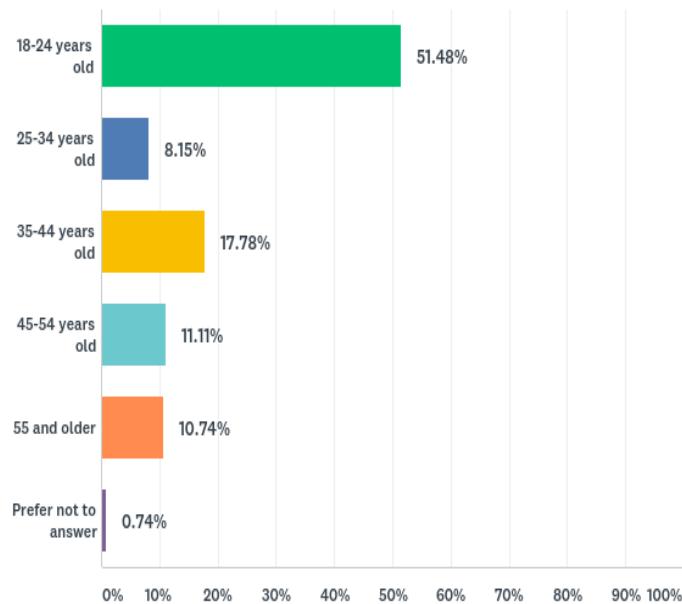
Q4 What is the highest degree/level of school you have completed?

| Degree/Level	Percentage
Less than high school diploma	
High school diploma or...	13.28%
Some college, no degree	31.73%
Associates Degree	5.54%
Bachelor's Degree	14.39%
Master's Degree	13.28%
Professional Degree	1.48%
Doctorate	19.56%
Prefer not to answer	0.74%
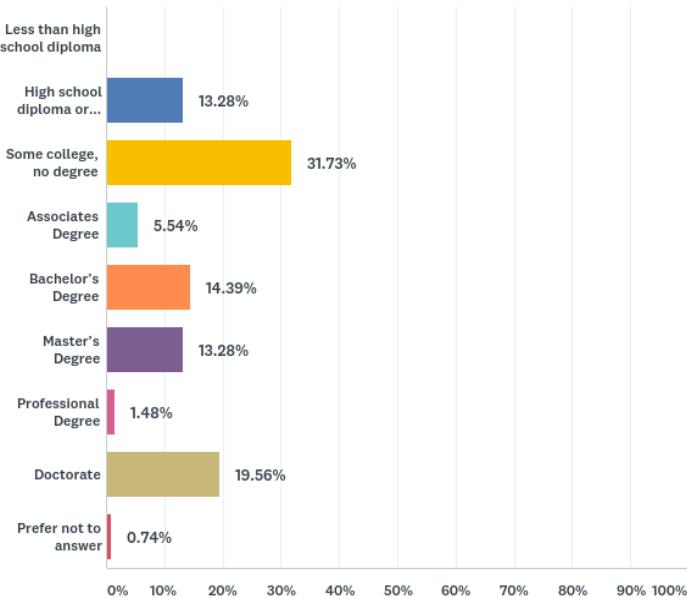
## Q5 What is your current employment status?
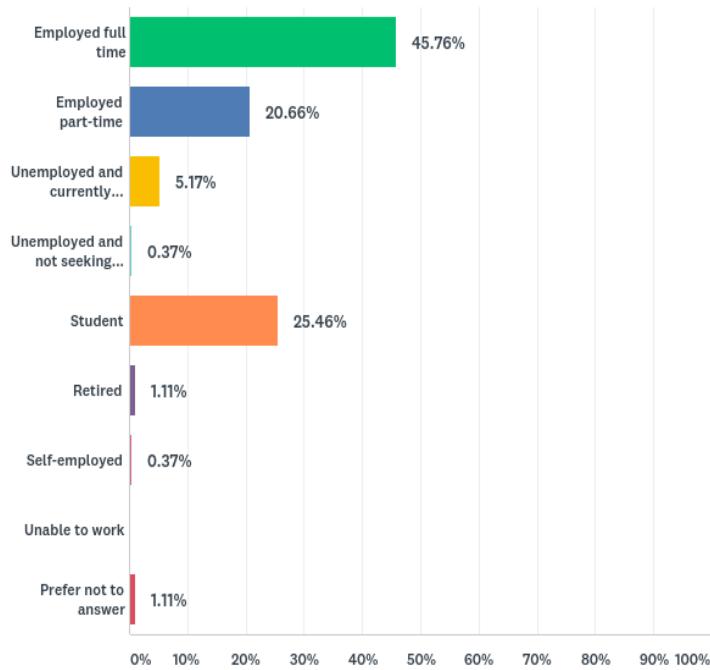
Demographics were important to me when collecting data because these factors often influence how people develop political views. The charts above lay out the participant's ethnicity, age, level of education, and current employment status. The data shows that most of the survey participants were Caucasian, 18 to 24 years old, having received some form of college education, and are full-timed employed. Not surprisingly the number of minority responses were less than thirty percent with African-Americans leading the rank at eighteen percent. I think this number is fairly correct considering the community in which it was distributed.

Q6 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the amount of diversity amongst our current politicians?


Very satisfied	5.17%
Somewhat satisfied	7.38%
Neither satisfied no...	18.08%
Somewhat dissatisfied	30.63%
Very dissatisfied	36.53%
Prefer not to answer	2.21%
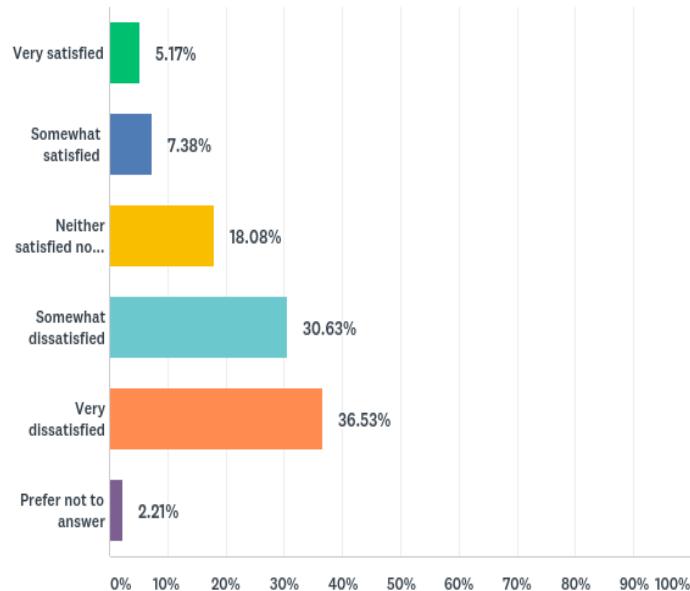
Q7 Do you feel that emphasis on minority representation has had a negative impact on politics?

Yes	16.97%
No	61.99%
Somewhat	17.34%
Prefer not to answer	3.69%
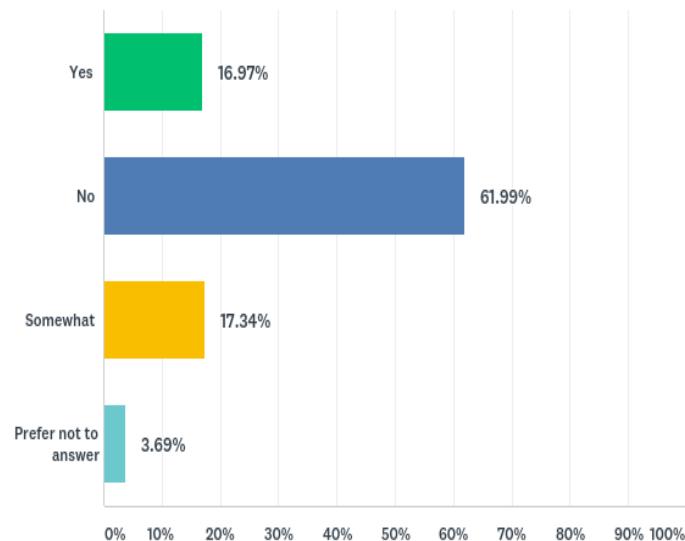
Q8 Do you agree that our current political climate promotes diversity?

- Strongly agree — 2.95%
- Agree — 9.23%
- Neutral — 16.24%
- Disagree — 40.96%
- Strongly disagree — 28.78%
- Prefer not to answer — 1.85%
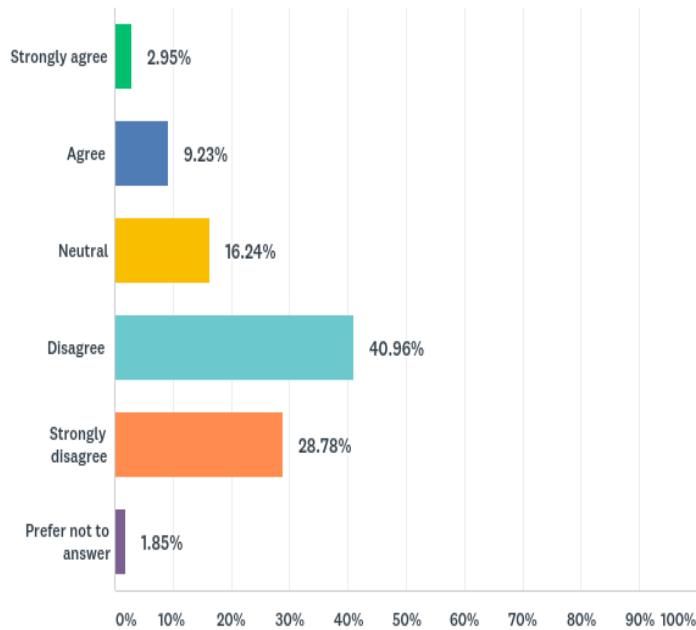
Q10 Focus on diversity has overshadowed more important issues facing our nation.

- Strongly agree — 10.00%
- Agree — 19.26%
- Neutral — 15.56%
- Disagree — 35.19%
- Strongly disagree — 18.15%
- Prefer not to answer — 1.85%
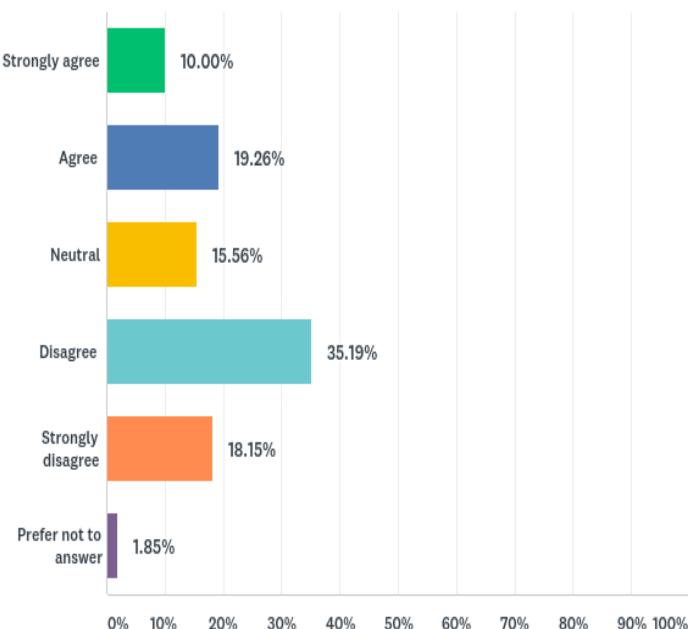
Q11 I am more likely to pay attention to political races that have more diverse candidates.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	20.30%
Agree	35.42%
Neutral	23.62%
Disagree	13.28%
Strongly disagree	5.90%
Prefer not to answer	1.48%
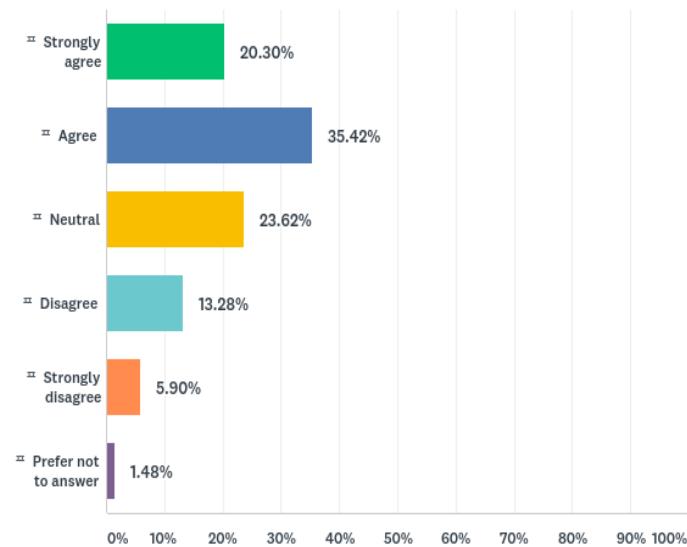
Q12 I think that there is lack of diversity seen at the state and local levels of government.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	38.52%
Agree	39.26%
Neutral	10.74%
Disagree	7.41%
Strongly disagree	2.96%
Prefer not to answer	1.11%
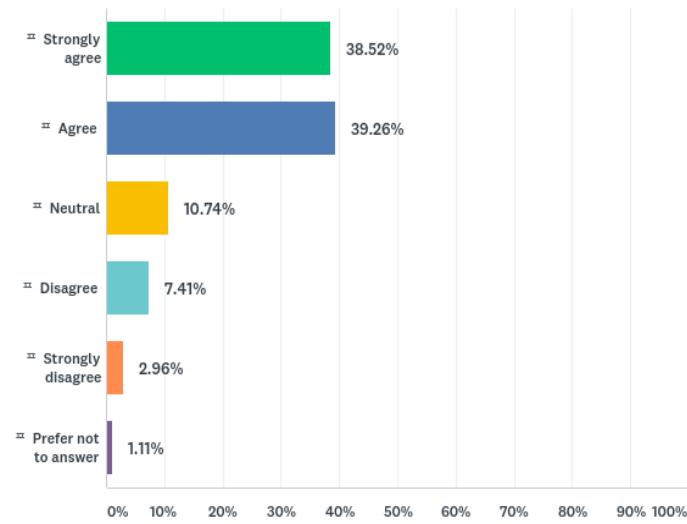
Q16 Seeing politicians that look like me motivates my participation in election cycles.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	15.13%
Agree	24.35%
Neutral	19.93%
Disagree	25.09%
Strongly disagree	14.02%
Prefer not to answer	1.48%
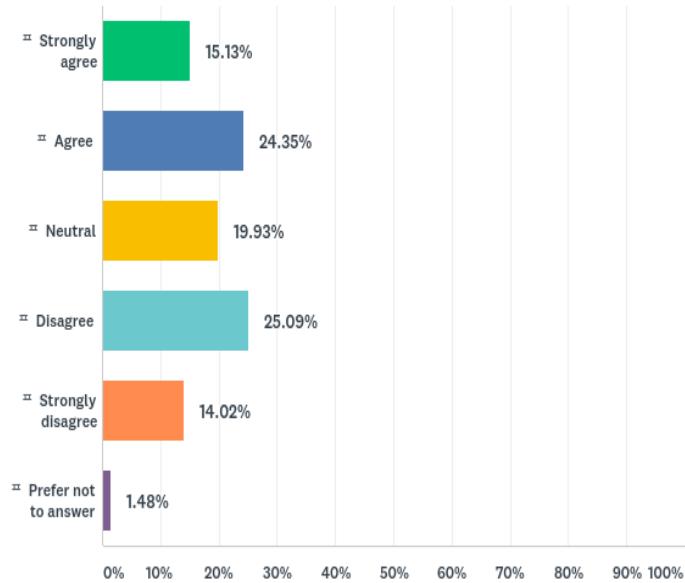
Q17 If a candidate's platform aligns with my values, I do not care how much they look like me.

| Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	54.61%
Agree	36.90%
Neutral	4.80%
Disagree	2.58%
Strongly disagree	
Prefer not to answer	1.11%
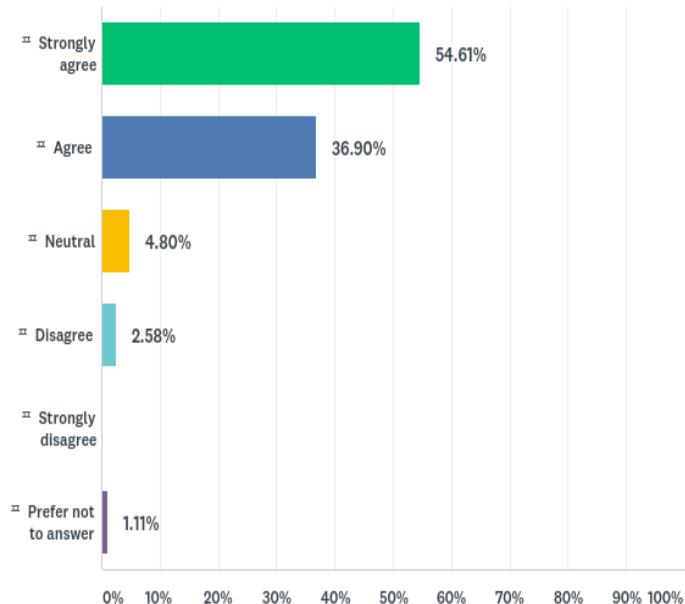
The charts above list out the responses to questions regarding diversity that typically come about during times of election. Contrary to my previous predictions, a good percentage of my participants feel as if there is a lack of diversity in politics and that the current political climate discourages it. Likewise, a large percentage feel that there is not enough diversity in state and local elected officials and they would be more interested in races that offer more representation. This is pretty consistent with much of what we hear from the public regarding diverse representation and supports the argument that there is more to be done at all levels of government.

That being said, there is more to be done in terms of how we go about encouraging diversity. When conducting this survey, I posed questions that would provide data on if simply emphasizing diversity is enough and which method of examining minority political participation was more effective. Survey questions seven and ten asked participants to answer if the emphasis on diversity has had a negative political impact and if they feel like it has overshadowed more important issues. Sixty-one percent of participants said they felt like emphasis on diversity has not had a negative impact, yet a little over thirty-four percent said yes or somewhat. In terms of overshadowing the numbers are lot closer with twenty-nine percent agreeing to certain extent and thirty-five percent disagreeing that diversity takes away from other important issues.

These results while conflicting, gave me an insight into how people can be multi-layered in their political outlooks. I also think that these responses could vary if this survey was given at different times of the year since issues come and go and the public's opinion can change. While some people don't perceive diversity as a negative issue, they can also acknowledge that there are other issues that could be focused on first. It does not mean that they are unwilling to reach out and offer support to minority efforts.

As for the benefits of descriptive versus substantive representation, it seems that substantive representation was valued over descriptive. Nearly ninety-two percent said that physical representation were not important if the candidate aligned with their values. By contrast close to forty percent said that seeing someone who looked like them would encourage political participation. If we applied this to minority poll turnouts it could be argued that, aside from visual representation, there is a lack in the number of candidates whose platforms align with the values of these communities. To properly represent these minority groups, we must be able to assess the issues and values most important to their community and hold candidates accountable to addressing them when developing their campaigns. Although this is not to say that we should not work to promote and develop leaders within these communities as well.

Q13 I think that we need to address the lack of gender diversity in politics.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	42.44%
Agree	35.42%
Neutral	8.12%
Disagree	8.86%
Strongly disagree	4.43%
Prefer not to answer	0.74%
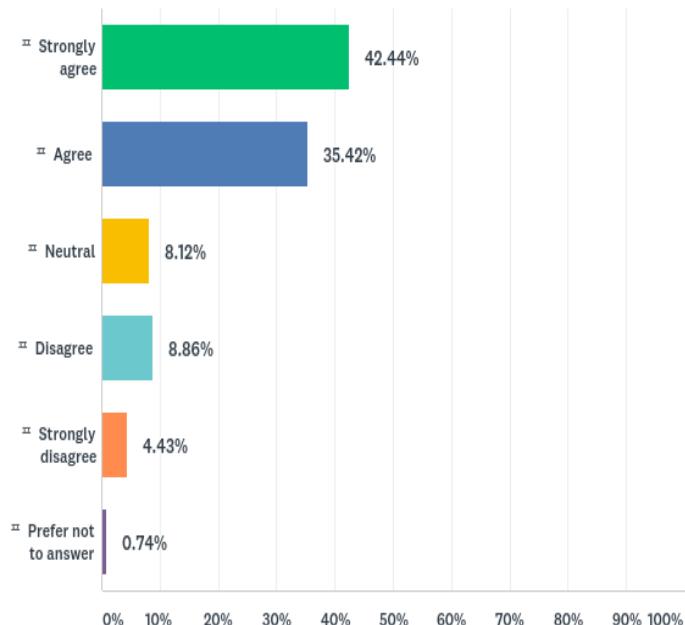
Lastly, I asked participants to give opinion regarding the lack of equal gender representation in politics. When you hear the word diversity, the easy correlation would be to assume race but women have historically fought for the right to participate and be recognized in the world of politics. The chart above shows that participants overwhelmingly agree that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Women are fairly underrepresented in politics and often are not given a seat at the table when it comes to issues such as healthcare. Yet, they prove to be a valuable asset and offer a different perspective than their male counterparts. To consider politics fully inclusive we must take note of ideas from various ethnicities and genders because without their insight we will never progress.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research reaffirms some of the preexisting opinions surrounding diverse representation and evaluates the effectiveness of minority driven campaigning. We cannot simply isolate people into different political categories based off demographic anymore. It is not effective and does a disservice to the public who could benefit from getting a better understanding of constituents. We should reach out to these communities to properly asses their interest and values as well and not assume that we know based on studies from the past. In the future I would like to expand this research to do a cross comparison across the various states to see which areas are lacking more than others.

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Can the Use of Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets Help Reduce the Fear of Public Speaking?

By: Angela Smith

Abstract

In recent years, technology has been for years used as tool to help people who suffer from different types of phobias and anxieties. Virtual reality is one of the alternatives being used to assist with these social phobias. In this study, the Virtual Orator was used to provide a simulation that allowed participants to give a speech with a virtual audience. The participants only used the simulation once. The results show how the participants felt about giving a speech, and if the simulation can be utilized to prepare before giving a speech. Future implications for using VR headsets are discussed.

Keywords: VR, public speaking, anxiety, technology, headsets

Introduction

Public speaking is used in a plethora of arenas today. Elementary schools, college level, and businesses all use a component of public speaking to convey information. Problems arise when some people are terrified to talk in front of an audience. These individuals can have symptoms of hands sweating, dry throat, physical distress, and feeling pained. Glossophobia, or most commonly known as speech anxiety can affect grades, promotions, and your very way of life.

Researchers and psychologist have come up with different to help with this phobia. Some of these techniques have worked, but there are still opportunities to provide better treatment. As the world begins to evolve, things change, and some people consider older techniques to be undesirable. Different forms of visual concepts are now being conducted to help with the fear of the public speaking. The form that is used in this research is a Virtual Reality (VR) simulation using the HTC Vive headset. VR is one of the newest forms of technology that is utilized to help with all kinds of things.

Technology is the new wave of life. Every year a cell phone comes out with new features such as letting customers see the people that they are talking to while adding words or emojis. Cars are becoming smarter as well. There are brands that can parallel park for you or brake immediately when a pedestrian is passing in front of the vehicle. VR is becoming a rising form of technology, and using the headset allows people to be immersed into a new world. Virtual reality exposure combines the best of cognitive behavior and in-vivo exposure; In-Vivo Exposure Therapy is a form of Cognitive Behavior Therapy that is used to reduce the fear associated with these triggers. It allows people to work through their fears in a realistic environment without leaving a safe space.

Phobic people are hypersensitive to certain details that set off an irrational fear as soon as they are perceived, whether they are real or virtual. Virtual reality therefore allows us to recreate the essential features of a situation to trigger the fear reaction, at an acceptable therapeutic level, and thus allow patients to learn how to control it and encode in their emotional memory that the situation isn't dangerous. It may be surprising to learn that facing our fears in virtual reality can really help in real life. For this study, we combined the use of a VR headset simulation to see if it can help reduce the fear of public speaking or be a tool to utilize to prepare for a public speech.

Literature Review

The DSM-V, (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), is a handbook used by psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers to help diagnosis and find solutions for some of these issues. According to the DSM-V, social phobia is "the unreasonable or excessive fear of social situations and the interaction with other people that can automatically bring on feelings of self-consciousness, judgment, evaluation, and inferiority" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). "Put another way, social phobia is the fear and anxiety of being judged and evaluated negatively by other people, leading to feelings of inadequacy, embarrassment, humiliation, and depression" (Roy, et al. p. 411, 2003).

Phobias are one of the most common mental disorders. According to Garcia-Palacios and colleagues, an estimated 6% of the United States population struggles with a specific phobia (2001) Traumatic experiences or fearful events can occur during childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood in which the speaker could have endured a negative childhood experience related to public speaking. Genetics may play a role, as might evolutionary factors.

Harris, Kemmerling, and North's (2002) study found: "Social phobia affects up to 13% of individuals at some time in their lives. This tends to begin in middle to late teenage years and is often associated with moderate to severe functional impairment in the areas of education, employment, family relations, romantic relationships, friendships and other interests "(p. 543).   It can be hard for people to explain or get their point across when they are not able to speak in front of an audience. People that experience public speaking anxiety avoid social or performance situations. If these situations become unavoidable, they can feel intense anxiety and distress.

Individuals may underachieve at work or at school because of this anxiety and often avoid speaking in classroom situations. In more severe cases, they may drop out of school rather than face a feared situation, such as a class with mandated oral reports that constitute a significant proportion of the final course grade (Harris, Kemmerling, & North, 2002). Virtual Reality may be utilized to overcome some of the difficulties inherent in the traditional treatment of phobias.

VR provides a low-stress way to overcome this fear and improve speaking skills (North, North, Coble, 2017). A lot of people cannot say what they need to speak successfully in front of an audience. In the public speaking realm, practice can instill individuals with confidence and positive attitudes toward speech performance. While it is public knowledge that practicing a speech is likely to improve speech performance, there is not much known about the effectiveness. Students in public speaking classes are often encouraged to practice speeches prior to delivering them. However, they may not always be informed of the various practice methods available to them, much less the overall effectiveness of these methods in facilitating one's desired performance (Smith & Frymier, p. 115, 2006).

VR is a human computer interaction, in which users are the participants in a three-dimensional (3D) virtual world. Smith and Frymier (2006) note that "Most of the therapies using VR draw on the principle of exposure consisting in confronting and accustoming the patient to the stress situations". Virtual reality allows the presentation of virtual objects to all the human senses in a way close to their natural counterpart. This technique attempts to mock in vivo exposure, which is a form of Cognitive Behavior Therapy that is used to reduce the fear associated with these triggers Eliminating many constraints of the real world, VR seems to bring significant advantages by allowing exposures to numerous situations through the creation of a strong feeling of presence in the situation (Klinger, et al., 2005).

Most people are not born public speakers: they are trained to become one. A lot of people try and avoid situations where they must perform or speak in public. Raja and Farhan (2017) point out that "Many people who converse easily in all kinds of everyday situations become frightened at the idea of standing up before a group to make a speech. Such people need to realize that they are not the only ones who may be going through these emotions; in fact, almost every speaker feels the same". Eliminating many constraints of the real world, VR seems to be an advantage that can help with the fear of public speaking.

"One significant asset of virtual reality is the possibility for the therapist to control the intensity of the stimuli (e.g., variations of the stress situations, addition of new sources of stimuli: tactile, visual) in order to make progress in a continuous and soft way for the participant" (Klinger, et.al, 2005).

 It is not always the case during in vivo exposure for social phobia, where it can be difficult to obtain adequate and controlled social interactions. Virtual exposure can be a useful intermediate step for social phobias (Klinger, et.al, 2005).

According to Pertaub, Slater and Baker (2001), professionals are expected to present numerous talks to both small and large audiences at different intervals of their professional lives. If they become

victims of public speaking anxiety, they face a backlash and this anxiety can have a severe influence on their career (Raja, 2017). "However, most youth suffering from this anxiety do not receive any treatment. One reason could be that the symptoms are interpreted as signs of shyness presumed to disappear with age" (Tillfors, et.al, 2011). Many authors and researchers stress upon the significance of virtual environment. They suggest that exposure to virtual environments and simulations can result in fighting public speaking fear in people Sandra, Robert and Max 2002) undertook a study to examine the efficacy of Virtual Reality Therapy (VRT) in overcoming public speaking anxiety of university students (Raja 2017). In 1973, the Bruskin Report released that the number one fear of Americans was speaking in public. Even though this was studied in the mid-1930's public speaking and stage fright were not yet investigated (Harris, Kemmerling and North 2002).

Methodology

The recruitment phase was the first step in getting the research started. After getting the approval from the IRB committee, it began by emailing professors to speak with their classes about the research that would be conducted. In these classes, my research protocol the need for a consent form that needed to be read and signed before participation was explained. Students also were recruited by word of mouth from other students.

The participants that were used for this study only needed to have some fear of public speaking. The fear could be on the scale of minimum to extreme. Participants were also used if they were not sure if they had a fear of public of speaking. The participants also needed to be affiliated with the small college campus in Montevallo. Once all participants had read and signed the consent form the data collection began. The participants filled out a Likert-type survey. This survey was considered the entry survey and had 34 questions that asked questions such as: "While preparing for a speech, I feel tense and nervous and my hands tremble when I am giving a speech." The answers to the question ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree with neutral in the middle.

The simulation used was a program called Virtual Orator. We were able to secure a temporary license from a researcher on Virtual Orator's tea for free. The program normally cost $300 for individual groups and $3000 for institutes. We were not paid for uses the program. The researchers were interested in the research that we would be conducting. An HTC Vive headset was the product used to help participants see the virtual world. This system is used with a room scale aspect that allows the participants to move around while giving the speech. The participants, while in the simulation saw themselves in a classroom with students sitting waiting on them to speak. The participants started speaking once the audience clapped and ended in the same way. They only gave an impromptu 1-minute speech about their summer plans, no one except the researcher were in the room while participants gave their speech.

The last phase for the participants was to fill out an exit survey. The exit survey asked short answer and open-ended question about their experience. A quantitative question that was asked, is "what aspects of your public speaking you want to change?" A qualitative question that was asked is "if the simulation could be used to prepare me for a speech in front of a real audience."

After coding all the results, which including changing the numbers that were negatively worded. The numbers and opened questions were then inputted into an excel spreadsheet. Once in the excel spreadsheet the numbers from the Liker-type questions were calculated getting the averages on how the participants answered. The qualitative questions were read through to identify themes.

Results

There were (n=11) participants in the study. All the participants were 18 years old and older. The quantitative question answers ranged from 1 to 5. On the question that asked "Is this simulation realistic" the average score was a 3.8. On the question "the simulation gave me some anxiety" the average score was a 2.9. The question that asked "Could the simulation be used to help prepare me for a speech in front

of a real audience" the average score was a 4.3. When asked how the participants thought about the

simulation some answered: "It was neat that the figures move like people would. Also, having the

applause was helpful to make it feel more real. "Another participant said, "Very realistic, I would love to

be able to use this to prepare for a speech", and I think that it is an amazing idea for people with stage

fright to prepare for a speech".
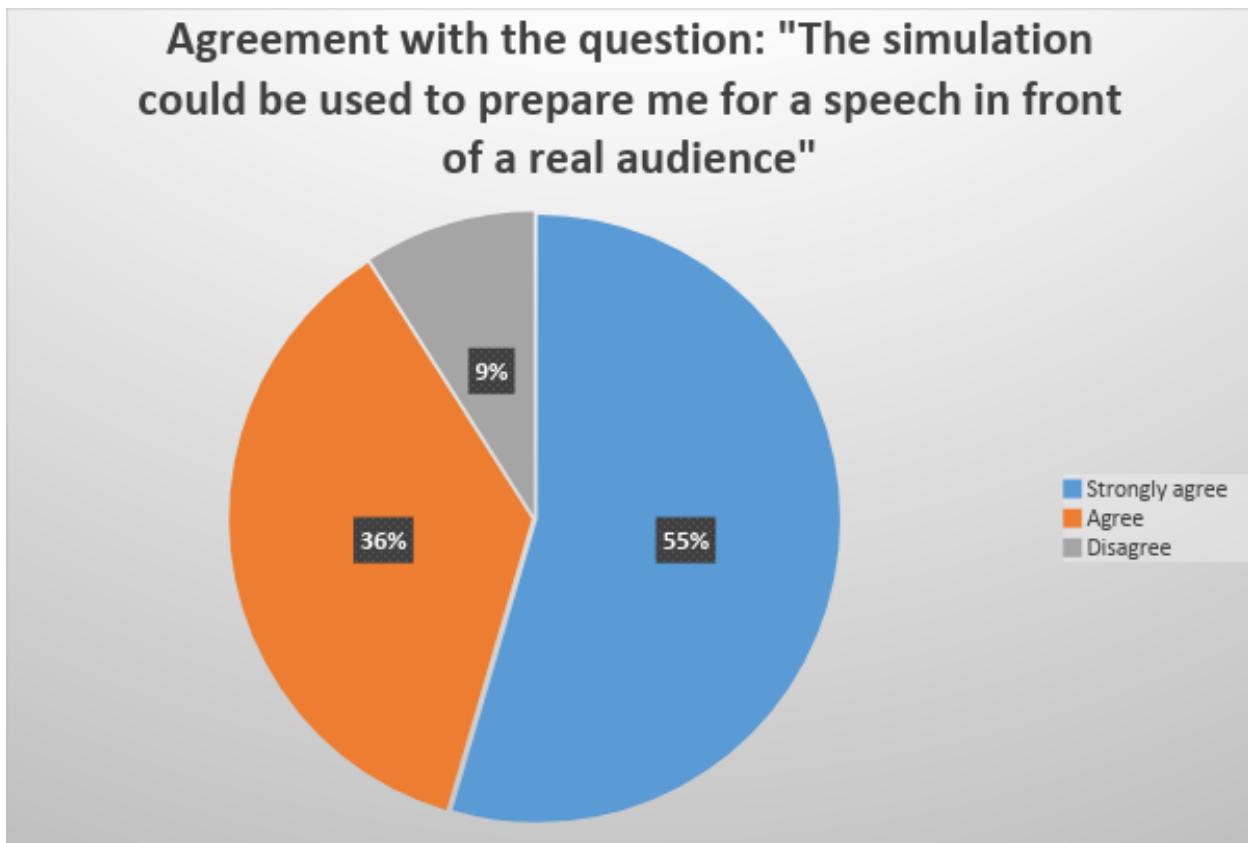
Participants (n=11)
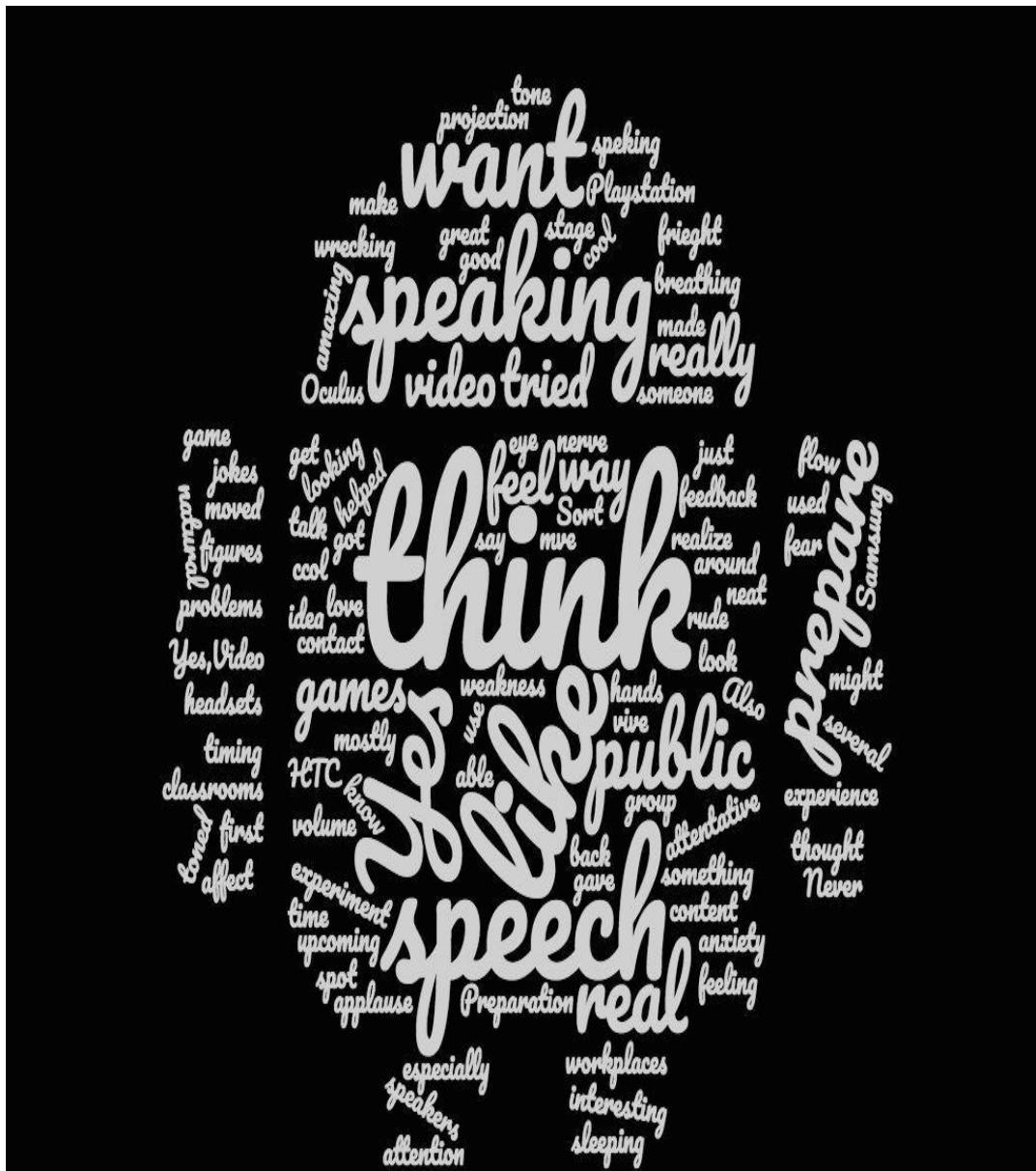
WORDCLOUD CHART: WORDS MOST USED DURING QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

Discussion

In this study, 91% of the participants agreed that the simulation can be used to help prepare them for a speech. The information supported what the researchers believed the end results would be. The interesting news was that 9% did not agree that it can be a tool to help but stated that it could help others. The information seems to be contradicting from their original statements. They said in one statement that

the simulation was not helpful but could help others who are preparing to give speech. It is possible that their fear of public speaking is minimum, and therefore they do not need the additional time to prepare.

The simulation proved to be very effective. The people who were students acted the way students would in classrooms. They moved around, talked on their cell phones, and seemed to not pay attention to the speaker. Some of the virtual students even had their heads on the desk as if the speaker's speech was uninteresting. One of the best features was that the virtual students clapped when the speaker began and clapped when it ended just like a class would in the real world.

The simulation was also able to give feedback on the speaker's speech. It let the researcher explain to the speaker what things could be worked on. Examples of comments that simulation gave was if the speaker talked single-toned. The simulation let the speakers know that their voice was too low or too high. It reported if the speaker on focused on the front or back row verses the entire room using eye tracking. This feedback let the speakers know what things they need to focus on. This feedback should be able to help them when they are giving a speech. Some participants even mention that they felt like they knew what the problem areas were in their speech.

The limitations for this research study include: (1) the number of participants. If the participant's number would have been greater, the study would have broader results. (2) The semester of the research. The research was conducted during the summer semester of college, and therefore did not have a lot of students on campus. A lot of summer classes are conducted online. Had the research been conducted during spring or fall semesters it could have produced more students, and it would have recruited from several organizations. The oral public communication class was not offered during the summer months of research. This could have been a class with a good amount of interested students as the focus is learning how to speak in public. (3) The VR equipment is expensive so everyone is not allowed to operate it. It also has to fit in a room that is at least 10 x 10. (4) People admitting that they have a fear of public speaking or needed help with this fear. When talking with prospective participants some stating that they

had some fear, but felt they did not need help. (5) The amount of times the participants used the simulation. Because of the time constraint students were only able to do the simulation once.

In future research projects, the study will be conducted during a spring or fall term to have more participants for data collection. This study in the future can recruit students from seniors from high school, who will be entering college where they have to take an oral public communications class. The study will also have the simulation done on more than one occasion for participants to find out how much it is helping. The time to give a speech will also be longer and have something written down for participants to say versus saying some out the top of the brain.

Future implications of this study involve a need for more research of VR- assisted training simulations. It also highlights the potential for students to practice public speaking in a non-treating environment. Is VR the future? We will have to wait to find out.

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Advancing Art Accessibility

By: Cheyanne Smith

Abstract

Historically access to art has been treated as a privilege, reserved for those who are sighted. A blind person who would like to study at an art school would most likely be turned away because of a lack of resources. The purpose of my research is to explore the development of "art mediums" to bridge the gaps between the "disabled" and "abled". I will present my work on the development of seeing sounds in accessible and affordable ways. Furthermore, my research is designed to facilitate access to art that does not rely on the ability to see.

Keywords: Inclusive design approach, art and technology, art education

Introduction

There is evidence in cave paintings that show how as a species we have collectively been creating art for over 25,000 years. That is 15,000 years before we were settled and understood how to grow food out of the ground. The very act of choosing to spend your time creating imagery over hunting, sleeping, or other general actions pertaining to survival not only implies the importance of art, it also suggests how fundamental art is to our well-being. I would argue that the act of creation, of putting something that once only existed in the mind out in the world, is fundamental to our humanity. This led to this question; as a society we treat art as a privilege, why should it be reserved for those who can see? If are blind and want to study at an academy of art, you most likely will find that most places will turn you away on account of not having anything to offer. If you are deaf and want to join an orchestra, your luck is likely to be just as slim. This study's goal is to develop art "mediums" that are not limited to one sense in order to bridge the gaps between the disabled and the abled. The main project pursued a qualitative

research approach involving the exploration of seeing sound in affordable ways so anyone can have this accessibility to creation. Seeing the limited research on this study only added to the significance of this topic.

Literature Review

Much of the sources included in this literature review were necessary for the methods in creating the 'visual-sound' device, and for exploring the avenues concerning teaching art under special circumstances. The following paragraphs will discuss the sources found in the order they appear in the references, as well as discussing their relevance to this project.

The first article, *The No-Fail Method of Painting and Drawing for People Who are Blind or Visually Impaired* was written by Rosalyn Benjet. In it Benjet discusses ways in which art therapists motivate those who are visually impaired to create art. Although it was originally intended for art therapy, it can easily be integrated in a standard class setting. Much of what is discussed in this article is the primary inspiration for the class I will teach at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind.

The second source was published under The MIT Press by Christian Kroos and others. The Article is titled *Evoking Agency: Attention Model and Behavior Control in a Robotic Art Installation*. In it, the authors present their collective artistic, scientific, and engineering work based on their robotic installation (the Articulated Head) and two other perception-action control systems. The crossing of disciplines and methodology behind the work inspired the approach to this project.

The third source also involves human-computer interaction. This is an article by Suranga Chandima Nanayakkara and others titled *Enhancing Musical Experience for the Hearing-Impaired Using Visual Haptic Displays*. This is one of the few sources I could find that also

addresses the issue of how to enhance the experience of music for the hearing impaired. The findings from their research informed me of what already had been accomplished in the field of developing systems for the hearing impaired and gave me a foothold to present my own findings, ultimately adding to the knowledge of this field as a whole.

The fourth source comes from an article written by S. K. titled *Collectors Bring Icons to the Blind* and it discusses the opening of a display designed for the visually impaired in Moscow, Russia. The motto of the show could best be described as 'Touch and Learn', as this tactile display made it possible for viewers to learn about the history and imagery associated with the collection in the House of Icons of Moscow. The approach is an influence to the approach in my research as well.

The fifth source comes from a Swedish museum's website for the Scenkonstmuseet, or the Stage Art Museum. In one of their main exhibitions they have a 'Sound Forest' that invites visitors to get lost. This interactive space's ability to cross the borders of the hearing and hearing impaired has prompted me to make art work following a related format.

The sixth source comes from the Journal of Web Librarianship. This article, *Creating an Online Scientific Art Exhibition Formatted for People with a Visual Impairment*, explored venues for navigating the issues of and improving the efficiency in implementing online exhibits for those with a visual impairment. This approach to improving accessibility and assistive technologies has further inspired the approaches in my own research.

The final source in this paper was written by M. Taylor for the International Journal of Art and Design Education. The title of this article is *Access and Support in the Development of a Visual Language: Arts Education and Disabled Students* and it focuses on ICT (Information Communication Technology) and practical assistance technologies that are

meant to enable the disabled to create artwork. This focus on improving accessibility to arts and art curriculum is another strong source that informed the work presented in my own research through its approach to improving ICT and P.A. technologies.

Methodology

The idea to find an effective way to see sound was inspired by watching the ways a speaker can make water dance. How do you go about capturing those effects? The first step is to take advantage of the physical properties sound already has; i.e. sound waves travelling through a medium. This led to the creation of many designs that explored a functional and affordable device that could do just that (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
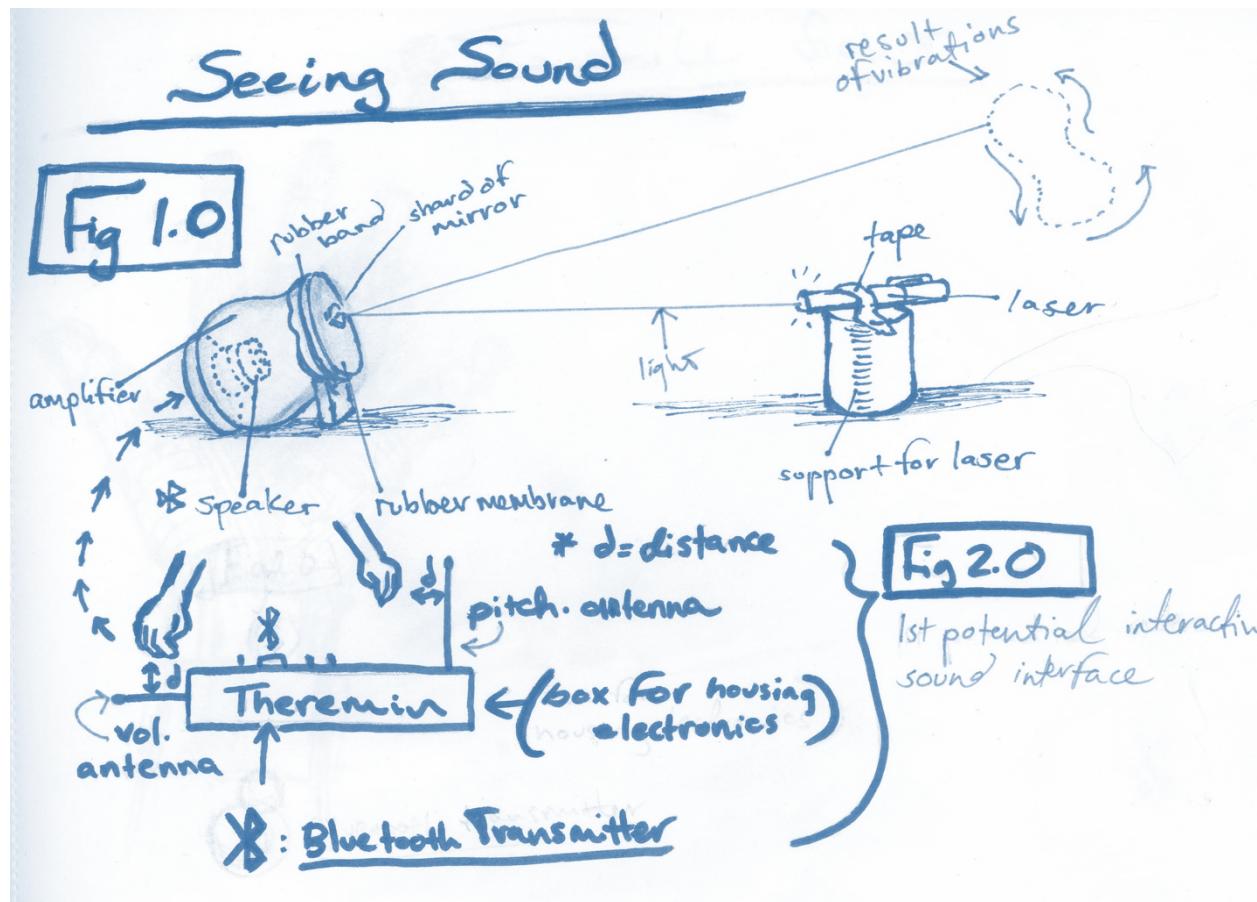
In summary, this device is a rounded ceramic piece encasing a Bluetooth speaker that can play any tones you send to it. The mouth of the piece is covered in a rubber membrane (a stretched-out balloon, for instance) with a small mirror attached. Separate from this, there is a laser pointer aimed at the small mirror. When you play a sound through the speaker, it then vibrates the membrane. This vibration is transmitted through the mirror riding on the sound waves as the light being reflected effectively translates into a visualization of the sound itself. As a musician, being able to see a song you wrote adds a whole layer of understanding to music that was otherwise unreachable. The intent of this device is to allow those who are deaf a way to listen in on to what the big hype of music is, and perhaps even give them a way to write music themselves.

This merging of senses covered by the sound device sparked the notion of introducing this work to the public to understand the impact this project could make. To do this, my research and a teaching opportunity with the Magic City Art Connection's Imagination Festival merged. I spent 3 days outside of the Birmingham Museum of Art teaching a pop-up class with over 1000 young students of the surrounding district. I set up my device and hooked it up to different instruments (primarily a pure tone generator) so the students could observe a sound and assist me in "sculpting a song" based on the sounds. To sculpt a song, I started by constructing a geometric framework out of dowel rods and tape. This was done not only for the sake of structural stability, but also to reference the geometric forms the device produced. As the extended weekend went on, more and more kids (and a few of their parents) used pipe cleaners, string, and various other objects to replicate the notes of their choosing. You can see one of the students working on a portion of this sculpture in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Findings

The product of the sound device led to many outcomes, both in displaying aesthetically pleasing geometric forms and in the emotional impact it had on those who encountered it. When an in-tune frequency was played through the device, the light it displayed had aesthetically pleasing properties as well. The light followed a rhythmic geometric pattern, and each sound had a unique signature of its own as well (See Figure 3 & 4.)

Figure 3 & 4.
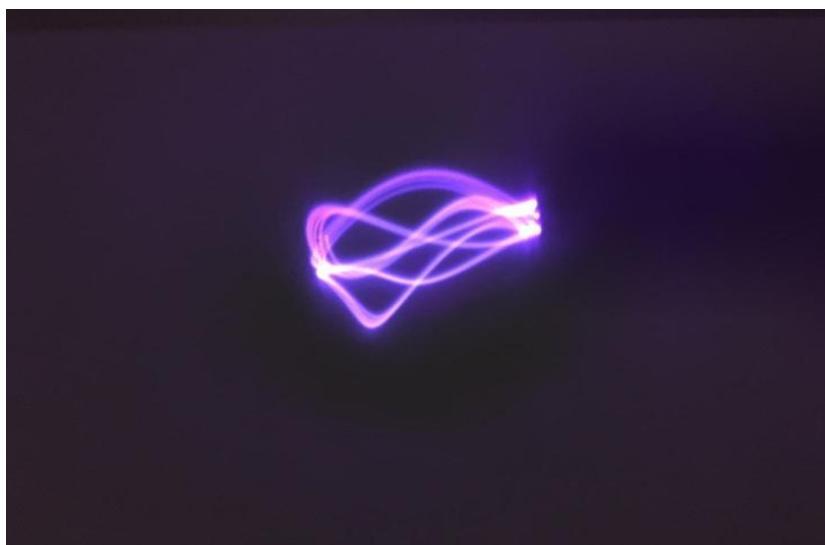
When sounds were layered it had especially impressive displays of morphing geometry (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5.
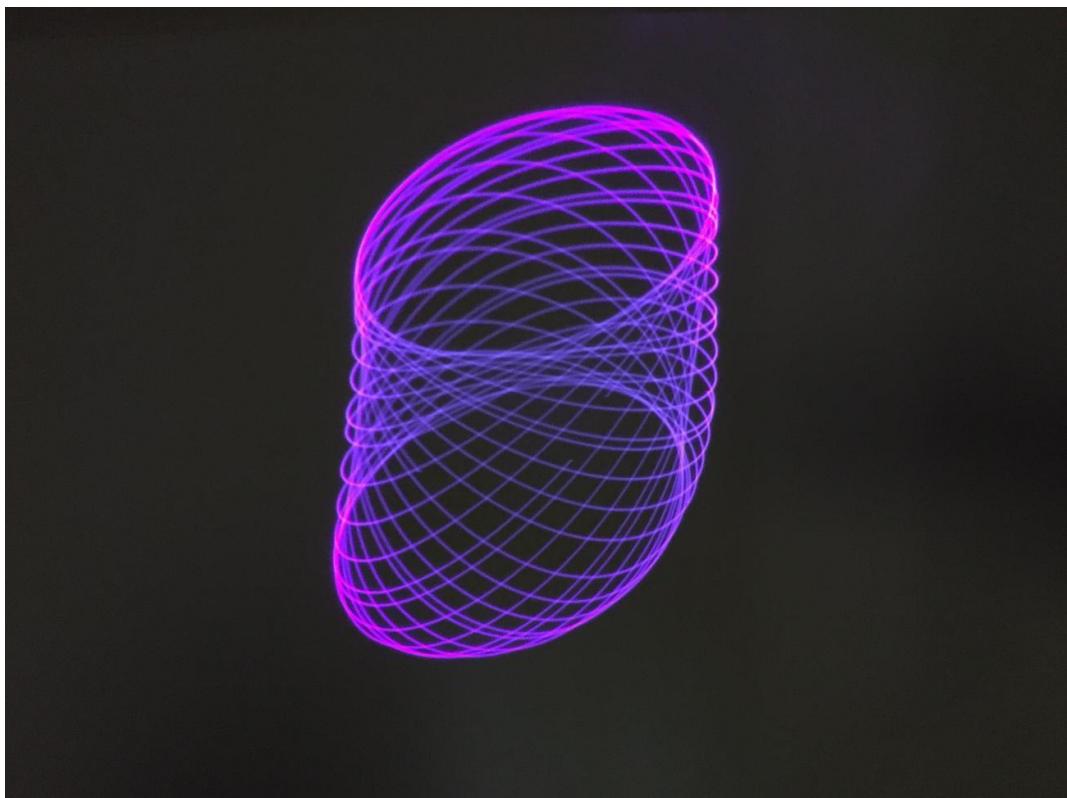
Music tended to create a messy display, but once the different parts of a song were isolated (such as separating bass and treble), the forms became clear again and continued their impressive display. The reactions from this device were incredibly positive. Reactions from peers, mentors, and especially those who attended the Imagination Festival have made it clear to me that this topic is worth expanding not only for the sake of science but also for the sake of the people this will impact.

Conclusion

The device that transposes sound to light led to the conclusion that there is a correlation between the way a frequency looks and sounds. This correlation and the positive impact it had on spectators suggests that this prototype has much promise for the deaf community. The intent of this research is to assist in dissolving the often-overlooked segregation of the disabled from the abled by making work that does not rely on the ability to see and hear. A secondary goal of this research is to make the designs created for this project open sourced so if anyone wants access to technology like this it will be possible for them to make something similar at home. The potential for the sound aperture's ability to bring understanding and to assist in mental health in ways that previously were not available or accessible will hopefully inspire future researchers to contribute to this issue.

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Appendices

The Relationship between Cosmetics and Dominance

By: Da'Qunaika Smith

Abstract

This research investigated the relationship between make-up use and dominance. We investigated women's attitudes toward make-up and their perceptions of their dominance. Previous research suggests that people perceive women who wear makeup as high in dominance. Therefore, we predicted that women who wear more makeup would be higher in dominance than women who wear less makeup. Amazon's Mechanical Turk workers were paid to participate. 223 women (mean age = 22, sd = .795) participated. Participants reported their attitudes toward make-up use, dominance, and length of their ring and index fingers. 2D4D, the ratio between participant's ring and index fingers, is associated with testosterone in utero and may be related to dominance. Consistent with our hypothesis we found that a small, positive correlation between make-up use and dominance (n=220, .266, p<.001). This suggests that people's perceptions that make-up is associated with dominance may be correct. Women who wore more makeup reported being higher in dominance. However, we found no relationship between make-up use and 2D4D ratio (r =.121, p = .125). This research provides correlational evidence for the relationship between women's make-up sue and dominance. Further research is needed to understand the cause of this relationship.

Keywords: Make-up, women, dominance, 2D4D, testosterone

Introduction

The vast majority of women in modern societies wear facial cosmetics, which can modify or alter facial cues of different traits, such as attractiveness or confidence. Women apply and wear

makeup for many reasons, to look more attractive, or have positive self-esteem. Researchers have begun to look at the link between make up and dominance. The purpose of this research is to find the relationship between cosmetics use and dominance by researching if women higher in dominance wear make up more than, than women lower in dominance. For the study we will be using three measurements to analyze the relationship between makeup and dominance: 2D4D Ratio Model, The Ray directiveness Scale, and Questionnaire Customary Cosmetic Usage.

Literature Review

Facial Cosmetics

Throughout time women have gone through extreme measures to enhance their physical appearance. For example, "Queen Elizabeth I inspired a generation of women to coat their faces with lead to achieve the perfect pale complexion" (Samper, Yang, L. W., & Daniels, 2018 pg. 126). Women continue these to engage in beauty work, defined as the beauty practices people perform on themselves to elicit certain benefits within a social hierarchy (Samper, Yang, L. W., & Daniels, 2018). People engage in beauty work because attractive people are assumed to possess more socially desirable personality traits, hold greater interpersonal influence, and even earn higher wages (Samper, Yang, L. W., & Daniels, 2018). The impact of beauty is particularly resonant for women, as they are often conditioned and pressured to assess and enhance their physical attractiveness (Samper, Yang, L. W., & Daniels, 2018). . To enhance their physical attractiveness women will apply facial cosmetics. The most common beauty work in the modern era, is the application of facial cosmetics. Makeup or facial cosmetics has become and still is an important part of female beauty and attractiveness. A lot of women apply and use facial cosmetics, with studies showing that 80 percent of women wear cosmetics (Jones and Kramer,

2016). For the purpose of this research facial cosmetics include lipstick, eye shadow, blush, mascara, eyeliner, foundation, and concealer, and powder.

Women and Make-up

Most women apply makeup. In one study, researchers Stacey Fabricant and Stephen Gould (1993) Gould reported on women's makeup use. They interviewed a variety of women on their makeup consumption and asked them their reasons behind wearing makeup. One participant reported that makeup serves in identity reconstruction by aiding women to define who they are and to make women more competent in their new roles, which goes along well in their new states or career positions (Fabricant and Gould, 1993). One reason why women wear makeup is because they are transiting into a new aspect of their lives. For example, another participant answered that she started wearing makeup when she entered into her career field. Entering the workforce and wearing facial cosmetics to symbolize her new role in society. The researchers suggest that makeup provides them with a mask that seems to embody their roles (Robertson, Fieldman, & Hussey2008). Another participant stated that wearing makeup makes her more conscientiousness about her behavior, meaning when she puts on makeup she is more organized, responsible, and disciplined.

In another article, researchers focused on makeup and personality traits. They used a female undergraduate population. The researchers stated that cosmetic usage plays a large role in self-perceptions of attractiveness. Their notion proved to be truthful with a handful of participants citing that wearing makeup makes them feel more attractive and more confident in their ourselves. They got these results from participants completing a cosmetic usage questionnaire. Through this questionnaire makeup was linked to self-consciousness and conformity as well as self-esteem. There was also a reported drastic increase in confidence in

many participants when they wore makeup. Researchers explain that wearing makeup will increase a women's confidence because of how others receive someone when they wear facial cosmetics.

In both articles it seems as though women wear facial cosmetics to not only enhance their appearance to make themselves look more attractive, but they also wear makeup when taking on important roles in their lives. It seems as though most of the time women wear makeup to be perceived as something else, such as more confident or more responsible than they normally are; women seem to wear makeup for others around them and to get a step higher in the social hierarchy.

Dominance

With looking at the relationship between makeup and personality traits, dominance is a trait that has rarely been looked into in relation to makeup. Dominance is theorized to have arisen in evolutionary history as a result of antagonistic contests for resources, common among both nonhuman species and pre-human ancestors (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018). A researcher on dominance defined dominance as "attempts to control one's environment and to influence or direct other people; expresses opinions forcefully; and enjoys the role leader and may assume its spontaneous (Ray, 2011, pg. 1). Dominance has been linked to assertiveness and authoritarianism. Ray suggested that dominance should be postulated as the value of neutral behavior description, with authoritarianism and assertiveness as the socially undesirable and socially describe versions of the attribute (Ray, 1981). Most people associate dominance with being very decisive and strict presence. Being wealthy or being perceived as wealthy can exhibit dominance. Dominance is closely related to power. Power and dominance refer to one's authority or central over others. Studies show that we evolved from an egalitarian hunter-

gatherer society to a nonegalitarian ranked society, and ownership of resources by aggressive, competitive individuals could have boosted inequality (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018).

Dominance is also exhibited in people's facial structure and expression. According to evolutionary psychologists, dominance is perceived from emotional expressions as well as static facial cues. For instance, baby faces are perceived as weak, angry faces are perceived as highly dominant, and sad and fearful faces as low in dominance. Small eyes and a nonsmiling face are perceived as indicators of dominance (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018). This points to dominance being something that people are perceived to have, meaning that someone can look as though they are dominant due to their facial structure, but themselves do not think they are dominant. This is due to a theory called facial morphology, which states "Facial morphology is believed to be part of an evolved mechanism to help maintain dominance relationships" (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018, pg. 1106). There has been animal research done that shows that most group-living animals' facial signals correspond to their position in a dominance hierarchy (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018). Other studies show that people accurately read trait signals from stable facial cues within 100 milliseconds of encountering a face (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018), and that dominance is one of the most fundamental dimensions of trait inferences made from static facial cues, along with valence or trustworthiness.

Perceived dominance can also be due to faces that have higher width-to-height ratio (FWHR). Recent findings show that faces with higher width-to-height ratio (f WHR) are seen as more dominant and aggressive (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018). Although higher f WHR is sometimes associated with positive behaviors such as striving for achievement, high-ratio faces are generally seen as less likeable   because individuals with a high f WHR tend to exhibit aggression, deception, and breach of trust. In contrast to these undesirable traits another body of

research suggests that people with high f WHR faces are perceived as more suitable for leadership positions and tend to achieve high social rank. Perceived dominance is seen as an aspect of perceived competence, and perceived competence is the predictor of achieving a leadership position (Maeng & Aggarwal, 2018). This is why most people in high career positions, such as being a manager or CEO of a company, may dress in such as way or make look a certain to exhibit dominance to their peers. The fWHR and dominant traits are closely linked to testosterone levels, which can also be tested using the 2D4D Model.

2D4D Ratio Model

Digit ratio, or the relative lengths of the 2nd (index) and fourth (ring) fingers (2D:4D), is a sexually dimorphic trait with lower 2D:4D in males compared to females. The dimorphism is found in the fetus and in children; is unaffected by puberty, and puberty and appears to be universal across ethnic groups (Manning & Quinton, 2007). The 2D4D Ratio Model has been used to link aggression and dominance in people. Research on the reliability of the 2D4D Ratio Model has been mixed. Some articles have found relationships between dominance and the 2D4D Ratio Model, while other researchers have not stating found that the model has shown weak correlations with dominance (Hurd, Vaillancourt ,Vaillancourt, & Dinsdale, 2011). Even though the ratio model does not pass in high reliability, it is still widely used because it is easy to measure finger lengths.

Makeup and Dominance

Previously the paper discussed how some women wore makeup when starting a new   feel confident and provides a mask for them that embodies their new career roles. In the dominance section, dominance can be more of look, instead of actually being dominant. With

makeup, women can apply makeup in such a way that they look more dominant than they really are. There are some articles that have linked makeup and dominance together.

One article, analyzed the relationship between facial cosmetics, dominance, and prestige (Mileva, V. (2016). The researchers found that women think that other women that wear makeup looks more dominant. As well as perceiving other women as dominant, participants found women as more prestigious when they wore facial cosmetics. This perceived dominance and prestige could be due to the facial morphology, meaning with applying makeup women can contour or shape their faces to look more dominant.

Method

Participants

Participants were 223 women of various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Participants, reported their races as consisting of 52% percent Asian and Pacific Islander, 61% percent Caucasian, 8% percent Black or African American, 8% percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 7% percent multiple ethnicity, and 4% percent Hispanic. Participants that were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk.

Procedure

Participants provided informed consent and answered questionnaires which assessed cosmetic use and dominance. They also reported measurements of their second and fourth fingers. Participants completed demographic questions and were debriefed. The participants were also compensated for completing the survey.

Materials

Cosmetic use. Cosmetic use was assessed using the 9-item Questionnaire of Customary Cosmetic usage (Robertson et al., 2008). Responses ranged from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 =

strongly disagree. This scale assesses frequency of cosmetic use and positive feelings associated with wearing make-up. A sample item is: "I apply facial cosmetics every day."

Dominance. To access dominance participants were given the 14- item Directiveness Questionnaire (Ray, 2011). Reponses ranged from 1=strongly agree to 5= strongly disagree. This scale assesses dominant like traits. A sample item is: "Would you rather take orders than give them?"

2D4D. 2D4D were accessed through required measurements of both the index finger and the ring finger of the right and left hand of the participant (Manning, J., & Quinton, S. 2007). Participants were asked to hold measure both hands front of them. Then look at where the ring finger joins the palm of their hand. Next, they found their bottom crease, then middle of this crease. They were asked to put the zero0 of the ruler exactly on the middle of the bottom crease. They were asked to measure and report the length of to the tip of the finger from the bottom crease to the tip in centimeters.

Results

The mean score for Questionnaire of Customary Cosmetics Usage was 3.30 (*sd*= .75) and for the Directiveness Scale it was 2.91 (*sd*= .51). 2d4d ratios for the left hand ranged from 0.12 to 8.67 and for the right hand ranged from .00 to 10.33. Consistent with previous research we excluded participants who reported 2D4D ratios of under 0.8 and over 1.2from analyses of 2D4D ratio (Manning, J., & Quinton, S.,2007). Therefore, n for left 2D4D reduced from 222 to 177 and for right 2D4D from 220 to 171. The mean for left 2D4D was 0.99 (*sd*= .08) and for right 2D4D was 0.99 (*sd*= .07). There was a statistically significant, positive correlation between

cosmetics use and dominance, rdominance, $r = .27$, $p < .001$. Participants who reported higher cosmetics use tended to report higher dominance.

There was not a statistically significant correlation between cosmetics use and left 2D4D, r= .12, $p =$. 12, or right 2D4D, $r = .07$, $p = .40$. In addition, bivariate correlations between the Directiveness Scale and left and right 2D4D were calculated. There was not a statistically significant correlation between either left 2D4D and dominance, $r = .21$, $p = .52$, or right 2D4D and dominance, $r = -.05$, $p = .39$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine if there is a relationship between cosmetics use and dominance. As hypothesized, there was a positively correlated relationship between cosmetics use and dominance. Contrary to our hypothesis, cosmetics and 2D4D were not significantly correlated.

Cosmetics and Dominance

The findings reveal a relationship between cosmetics use and dominance. Participants answered questions from the Questionnaire of Customary Cosmetics usage to determine cosmetic usage and answered questions from the Directiveness Scale to measure dominance. These results explain that women who wear cosmetics, also report to be higher in dominance. This is in line with previous literature, suggesting similar results that women wearing cosmetics are perceived to be more dominant. In this study demonstrates that, wearing cosmetics does not make women to be more perceived as dominant, but instead women who wear cosmetics are higher in dominance.

2D4D and Cosmetics Use

In the results section 2D4D and cosmetics use are not significantly correlated, meaning they have no relationship with one another. An explanation for this is because 2D4D is not correlated or has no relationship with dominance. This goes in ordinances consistent with previous literature stating that the 2D4D Ratio Model is not a reliable for measuring dominance (Hurd, Vaillancourt, Vaillancourt, & Dinsdale, 2011).

Limitations

The limitations for this research study includes: (1) One limitation of the study was using the 2D4D Ratio Model which may not a reliable measure for dominance. As discussed earlier, using the 2D4D Ratio Model has mixed results and should not be used as the only measure for dominance. (2) Another limitation was using a correlation analysis since using this analysis, researchers cannot make inferences. This study was correlational in nature which is a limitation as it does not allow causation to be determined. Therefore, we were unable to determine if dominance leads to more make-up use, make-up use leads to more dominance, or whether there is some other variable which accounts for the relationship between dominance and make-up use. (3)In addition, this study was solely conducted online, if the study had included face-to-face interaction, we could have gotten broader results. different results. (4)

Future Implications

Future Implications for research would be to see if there is a link between facial structure and dominance in relation to cosmetics by using the face to width ratio. between age and cosmetics use. Also, when doing similar research, further research could use awning experimental analysis would be best way to study such topics as it would also researchers to test causation. Doing such research on cosmetics and beauty in relation to women will help reveal if

the notion of attractiveness leads to dominance and how attributes of beauty help propel women in their careers and how we can deviate from that. Additional research could test whether wearing more make-up could help propel women in their careers.

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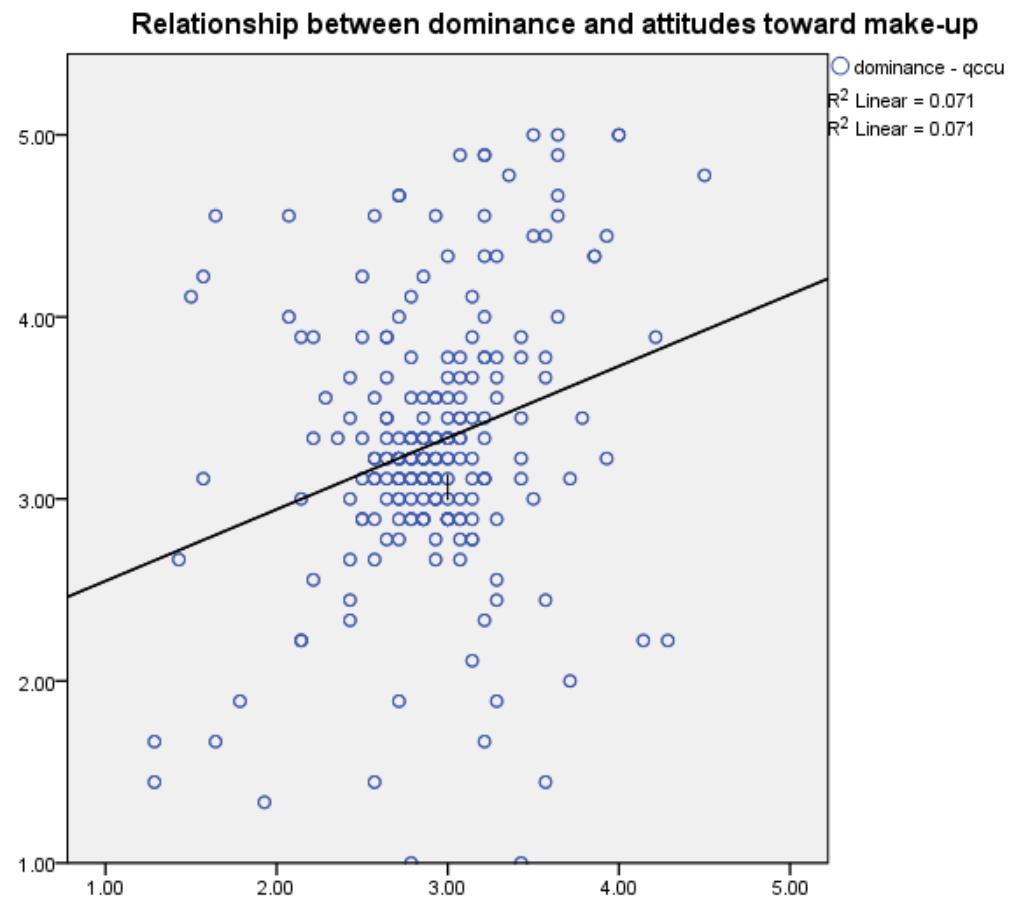
Figure 1: Predicted high correlation between dominance and cosmetics use. Women that apply and wear cosmetics also report higher in dominance.

Synthesis and Characterization of poly-3-hexylthiopehene-vinyl for use in Dye Sensitized Solar Cells

By Alex Weldon

Abstract

Dye sensitized solar cells (DSSCs) are slowly becoming the go to alternative means for greener energy generation. With the headway being made in this area of research the question now becomes what the best substance is to use as a sensitizer, in other words, what dye has the highest energy conversion efficiency. Poly-3-hexylthiophene-vinyl or P3HT has many of the qualities suggested by literature the makes it a prime candidate for use in DSSCs. The synthesis of this dye includes use of Schlink methods due to sensitivity to oxygen atmosphere. Synthesis also undergoes radical chain growth reaction to produce the polymer and modified Grignard synthesis to cap and terminate polymerization. The finished product was a distribution of various lengths of monomer units but on average the polymer was 19 units long. The polymer was characterized using various spectrometric and photometric techniques which showed promising results. Cells were constructed using screen-printing techniques and assembled in a sandwich conformation and tested using a solar simulator assembly measuring voltage. Cell produced a range of voltage outputs. The strongest four cells yielded potentials anywhere from 303mV to 574mV. Problems with this work include the inconsistency in the voltage output of the constructed cells. In order to fix this, future worth with the polymer includes the addition of a linking group the monomer units to ensure better anchoring to the TiO_2 Paste.

Introduction

Dye Sensitized Solar Cells or DSSCs are at the forefront of research because of their use as an alternative, cheaper option to silicon based solar cells. In conjunction with cost

effectiveness, DSSCs are a cleaner form of energy production as compared to conventional means. The first breakthrough in DSSC research was published in 1991 when Dr. Michael Gratzel and his fellow researchers introduced the use mesoporous titanium dioxide as an efficient semiconductor. It was previously believed that ultra-pure, highly structured silicon semi-conductive layers were necessary for efficient solar conversion. This discovery made it possible to create solar cells without the need for highly specialized, expensive equipment. Gratzel also later incorporated organic porphyrins into DSSCs as a dye sensitizer using this newfound semi-conductive layer. However, one of the main obstacles of using organic porphyrins as an electron donor are the complicated synthesis reactions that are typically low yield and have somewhat low solar conversion efficiencies. On the rarity that the low conversion threshold has been overcome, purification processes have been difficult perfect making macro-scale production of these cells nearly impossible. Because of these obstacles facing porphyrin dye cells, new alternatives for electron donors are being explored, such as optically active polymers.[1]

Poly-3-hexylthiophene is an organic polymer that absorbs visible light which causes the molecule to exist in an electronically excited state. In the excited state, electrons in the HOMO (Highest Occupied Molecular Orbital) of the dye are injected into the LUMO (Lowest Unoccupied Molecular Orbital) of the titanium semiconductor layer. The electron travels through an external circuit to the opposite side of the solar cell at which point it is transferred by an electrolytic solution back to the "hole" that it had initially left.[2] The synthesis of this dye includes the Schlink or box method requiring an inert nitrogen atmosphere and low temperatures, close to -20°C[1,3]. The question and focus of this research is to successfully synthesize, determine its electrical and chemical properties, and introduce the P3HT in DSSCs. The synthesized polymer was characterized using: UV-Vis spectroscopy, Fluorescence

spectroscopy, Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption Ionization (MALDI) mass spectroscopy, H1 NMR, Cyclic Voltammetry and Solar Simulation.

Synthesis and Characterization of Vinyl-poly-3-hexylthiophene
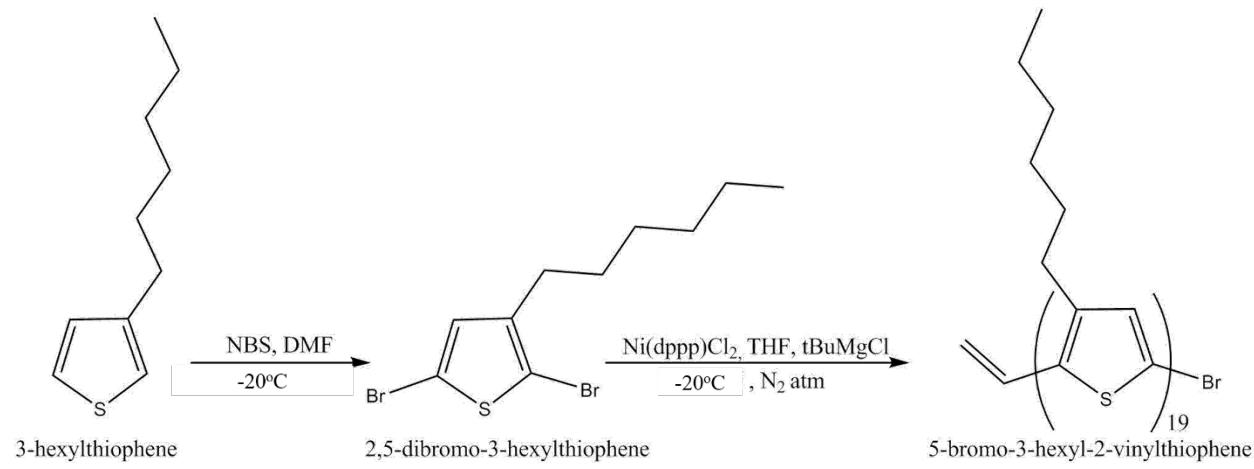
Materials for P3HT Synthesis

All chemicals were purchased at either spectroscopic grade or synthesis grade purity. Dimethyl formamide (anhydrous) ~99.8% purity assay was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. 3-hexylthiophene ~98% purity assay was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. N-bromosuccinimide ~99% purity assay was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Methanol ~99% purity assay was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Dry ice, dH2O ice, dichloromethane ~99.8% purity assay (40-150 ppm amylene as a stabilizer) was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Magnesium sulfate ~99.5% purity assay was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Ni (dppp) Cl2 was purchased from Sigma Aldrich, purity assays were not provided. Tetrahydrofuran ~99.9% purity assay was purchased from Sigma Aldrich, 2M tBuMgCl in diethyl ether was purchased from Sigma Aldrich with no purity assay available.

Synthesis of P3HT

3-hexylthiophene was dissolved in DMF and n-bromosuccinimide was added as a powder to solution. While this reaction is being carried out, the reaction flask was continuously stirred and placed in a dry ice/methanol slurry to lower the temperature to the aforementioned -20°C. After the reaction had progressed for 24 hours, the mixture was quenched with dH2O ice cubes. The mixture was then partitioned using a separator funnel and CH2Cl2 and inverted with fervor. The organic layer was collected and dried using magnesium sulfate. Any remaining dichloromethane was then driven off using a rotary evaporator leaving behind the desired intermediate, 2, 5-dibromo-3-hexylthiophene to be converted later into P3HT. The resulting 2, 5-dibromo-3-hexylthiophene was then further purified using flash chromatography with a pure hexane-pure Dichloromethane solvent gradient over the duration of separation. The now pure - precursor was reacted with a nickel catalyst, Ni (dppp) Cl2, to extend the polymer chain via chain growth reaction mechanism. The extension is considered to undergo a radical/proximity growth. There are two available ligand binding sites on the nickel catalysts that generate a radical form of the 2, 5-dibromo-3-hexylthiophene. When both sites are full and have been radicalized, they are in such proximity that the two lone electrons come together and form a covalent bond between two individual units of precursor, following the same mechanism for the remainder of the polymerization. Again, this reaction is carried out at -20°C and in an inert N_2 atmosphere, due to high reactivity of radicals with a normal atmosphere. The polymer is then capped under the same conditions using Grignard metathesis (tBuMgCl) stopping polymerization by replacing an exposed bromine on the thiophene ring with the vinyl functionalization. The finished product was purified and isolated using Soxhlet extraction. The eluent from the Soxhlet extraction was then loaded on a silica gel/size exclusion flash column for further purification. MALDI Mass

spectrometry confirmed that the reaction process was accomplished as intended and resulted in

an average polymer chain of 19 units long with the vinyl-capped end. [2,3]

Vinyl-poly-3-hexylthiophene Electro-Chemical Characterization

MALDI-TOF Mass Spectrometry
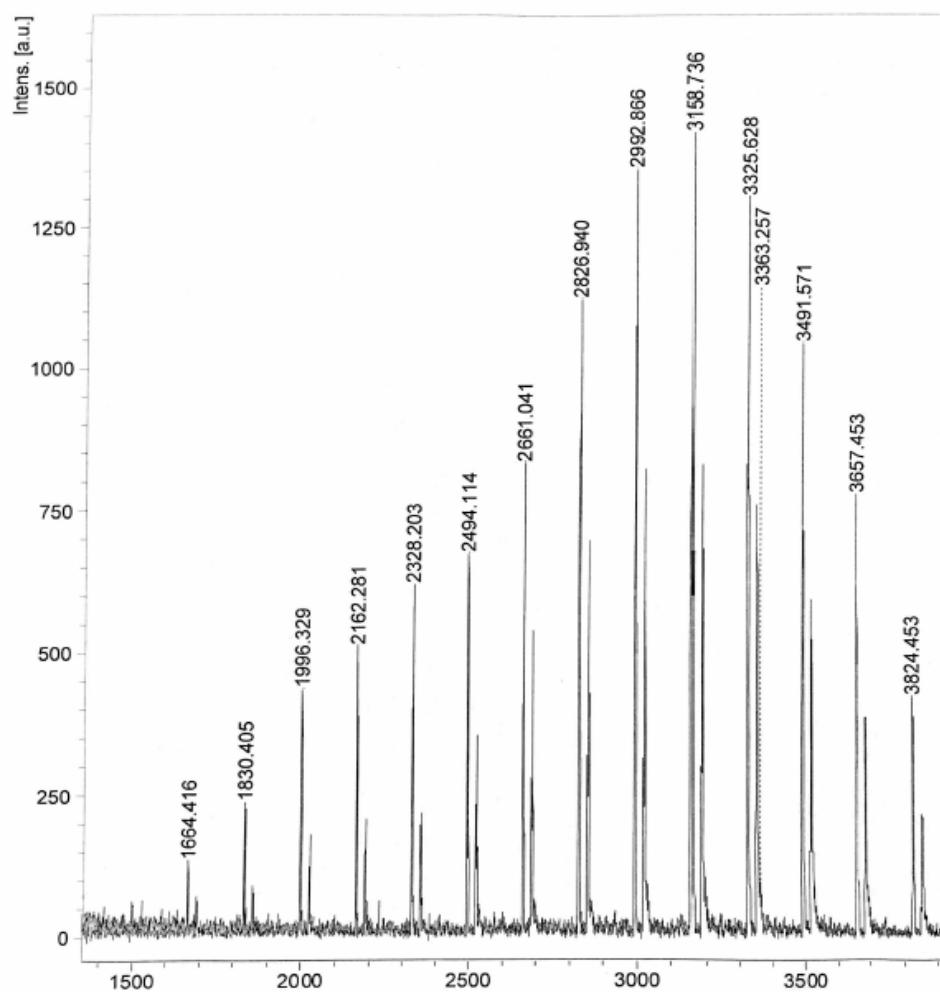
The resulting P3HT that had been created using the above methods was characterized using a

variety of spectrophotometric techniques. As mentioned, the precursor to the polymer was

determined to be successfully synthesized using a 360 MHz H1 NMR. The figure below is the

resulting spectrum of the 2, 5-dibromo-3-hexylthiophene.

H[1] NMR Spectroscopy

Idm-062917.1.fid — 3rd Batch NBS + 3HT — Purified and rotovaped Fraction 1.1-1.7 — H NMR in CDCl3 on 360 MHz
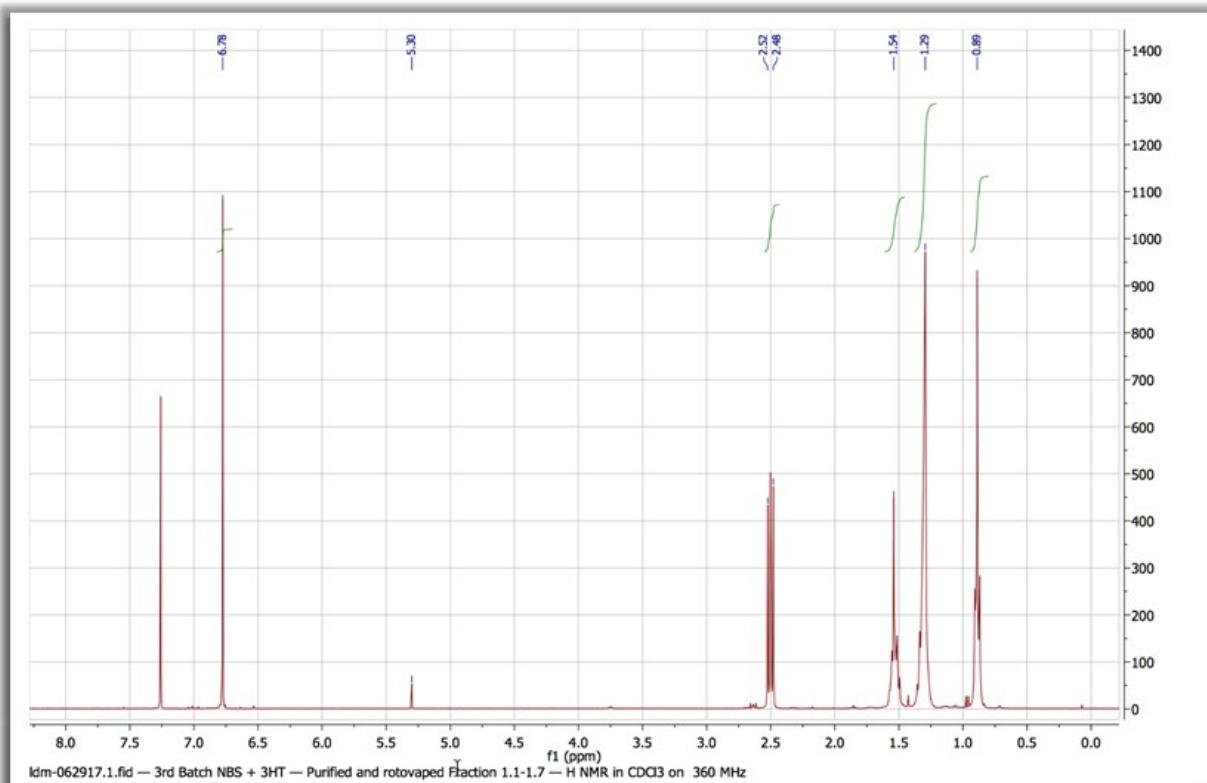
The triplet to the farthest downfield at 0.89 ppm that integrates for 3 hydrogens is the methyl group at the end of the hexyl chain on the thiophene ring. Moving to the left, the next peak at 1.29 ppm that integrates for 6 hydrogens is the next 3 methylene groups. They all have the same ppm because they are all in the same chemical environments. The next peak at ppm 1.54 ppm that integrates for 2 hydrogens is the next methylene group on the hexyl group. The very weak peak up field at 5.30 ppm is some contaminate in the deuterated chloroform that was used as the solvent in this NMR. The peak at 6.78 ppm is the C-H group on the thiophene ring. The peak that is all the way up field at approximately 7.25 ppm is the peak generated from the chloroform solvent.

UV-Vis Spectroscopy

The polymer was additionally characterized using UV-VIS spectroscopy. The included spectrum also denotes the absorption of the starting material, Intermediate, and finished products.
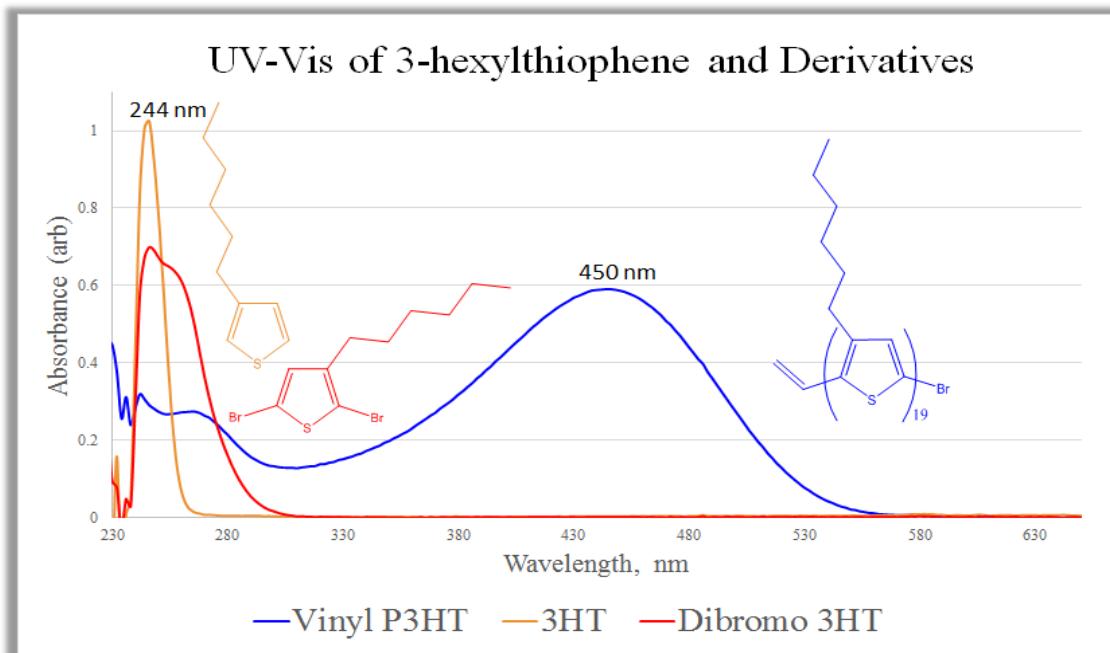

The peak at 244nm is the peak of the precursor from which the polymer was ultimately made from. Note that the absorption for the 3-hexylthiophene is very sharp and in the UV region of the spectrum. The absorption shown in red on this spectrum is the brominated hexylthiophene which has a slight red shift (up field). There still exist a peak at 244nm for the brominated species because of the presence of some unreacted 3-hexylthiophene in solution resulting in the persistence of that peak. The peak of interest shown in blue is the final polymer form exhibiting a very broad absorption ranging from 330nm-530nm.

Fluorescence Spectroscopy
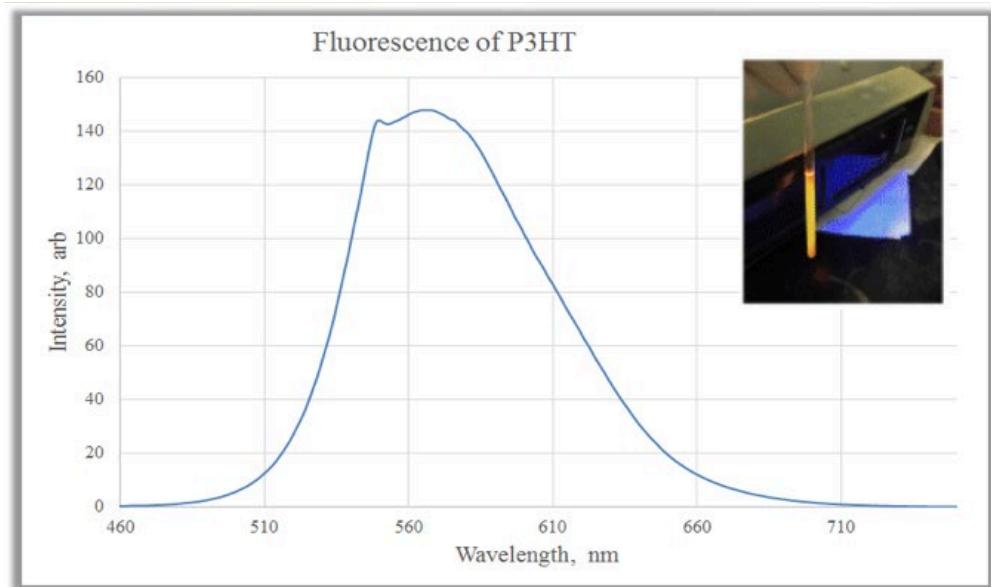
Fluorescence of P3HT was taken and determined to have a broad emission in the visible region of the spectrum ranging from about 530nm to 650nm, peaking at 570nm with an excitation beginning at 450nm.

Cyclic Voltammetry
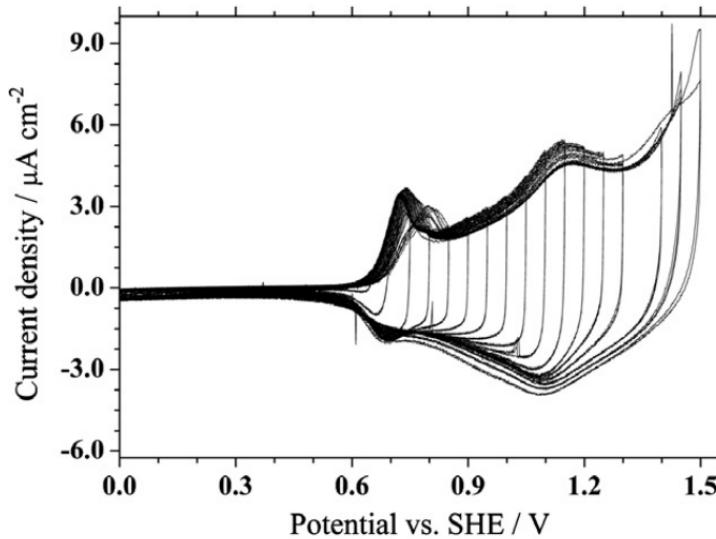
Due to complications with instrument at the University of Montevallo and time frames needed to be upheld for this article to published at through the McNair Scholars program, the cyclic voltammogram provided was not gathered by any parties involved, instead, it was pulled from

article written by Gasiorowski et al.[4] The oxidation of P3HT is a multi-electron process with two very distinct oxidation peaks at 0.52V and 0.93V shown in the image above. This voltammogram is a compilation of several runs at the same scan rate with different switching potentials.

Vinyl-poly-3-hexylthiophene Solar Cell Construction and Testing

Materials for Cell Fabrication

FTO glass slides, TiO2 ~99.5 % purity assay was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Speedball photo emulsion paste with sensitizer was purchased from amazon. A screen/mesh was purchased as well as Speedball 10''x14''wooden frame which was bought from amazon. 100% ethanol was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Iodide/TriIodide electrolyte solution.

Cell Fabrication

A piece of screen mesh was stretched over a wood frame and held in place by staples insuring the pores of the mesh are somewhat straight. After the mesh was secured, a thin layer of the light sensitive photo emulsion paste was then transferred and spread across the mesh and allowed to dry in a dark place for 4-6 hours. A simple negative, vinyl image of multiple 1 cm2 squares uniformly interspersed throughout the image, was created and placed on the screen. The screen was then exposed for 10-16 minutes using a 220W light bulb suspended approximately 16'' above the screen. After exposure, the areas that were covered by the squares wash away when rinsed under water. Once the screen had been fully exposed and rinsed, FTO glass slides were cleaned with a Kim-wipe and ethanol and taped in place under the screen. The screen was then used to print a thin layer of Titanium dioxide onto the center of the FTO glass slides using a screen printing squeegee. The TiO_2 was allowed to dry on the FTO glass, overnight. The newly printed cells are then sintered in the oven at 500C for 3 hours to provide a durable, securely anchored semiconductor layer.[1] Once properly sintered to the FTO glass, the slides were then

allowed to soak in the P3HT (in chloroform) dye for 2-3 hours at room temperature. A counter

electrode was created by coating the FTO side of another glass slide in graphene. An

iodide/triiodide electrolyte solution was added to the cell and a sandwich conformation cell was

constructed by placing the slide graphene side down on of the P3HT/TiO2 and clamping it

together.[1] The completed cell can now be tested using a solar cell testing station which is

composed of an AM 1.5 solar simulator and a Keithley source meter.

Cell Testing

A total number of twelve cells were constructed in the fashion described above and were

subjected to a solar simulation. The first four cells were designated cell 1-4 and were monitored

for four weeks to observe any degradation in voltage output. On the same day of fabrication cells

1-4 produced a voltage output of 574mV, 475mV, 303mV, and 547mV respectively.
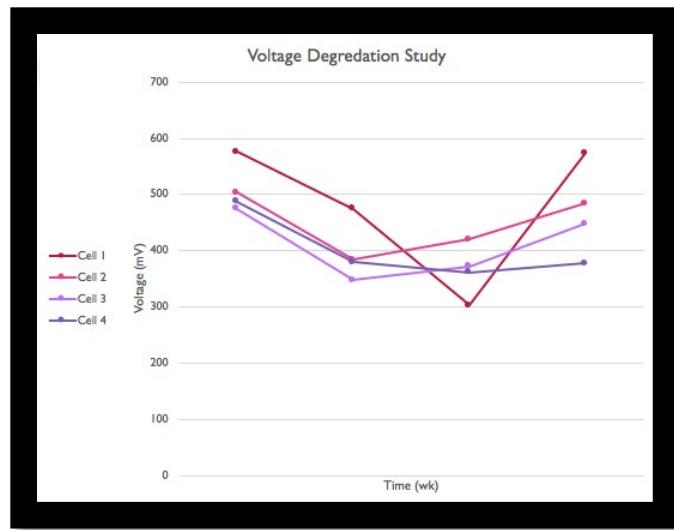
Conclusion

The polymer was successfully synthesized with a degree of polymerization of 19 and was characterized using multiple techniques. All the characterization spectra showed promising results indicating poly-3-hexylthiophene as a prime candidate for use as a dye in DSSCs. Problems with cyclic voltammeter prevented the acquisition of CV data on the polymer. Due to time restrictions surrounding the publication, a CV spectrum was retrieved from another source and used in its place. The provided voltammogram showed P3HT to offer multiple reversible oxidations. DSSCs sensitized with the polymer produced strong voltage outputs but inconsistently. This could be due to how the polymer is introduced to the TiO_2. As a suggestion to this problem, the addition of linking groups to the end of the hexyl chain such as carboxylic acid groups could possibly increase affinity for the paste and stabilize voltage outputs. Other future work to be conducted on P3Ht include further CV testing and synthesis of the polymer with the above-mentioned linking groups.

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Music as a Means of Black Empowerment: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Representation of Empowerment in Contemporary Popular Black Music

By: Justin Williams

Abstract

The analyzation representations of black empowerment in contemporary popular music by providing a close text analysis of musical lyrics from works by Beyoncé, Janelle Monáe, and Kendrick Lamar. These artists use their lyrics to focus on black empowerment from unique styles and diverse viewpoints and each introduces the topic to their intended audiences in distinct ways. The essay begins by introducing literature and providing a historical context surrounding the rhetoric of black empowerment in music, and then explores the guiding research question: What does black empowerment look like in contemporary popular black music and how is it functioning rhetorically? The goal of this project is to understand how music can inspire empowerment and action through expression.

You're walking down life's road, society's foot is on your throat. Every which way you turn you can't get out from under that foot. And you reach a fork in the road and you can either lie down and die, or insist upon your own individual life. Those people who made up the songs were the ones who insisted upon life and living, who reaffirmed themselves. They didn't fall down into the cracks or the holes. I think that was an incredible example for me and I learned from that.

- Odetta, singer, activist, voice of the Civil Rights Movement. (Sullivan, 2011, p. 1.)

Introduction

When one thinks of black empowerment one of the first things that may come to mind is Martin Luther King Jr. leading black Americans into a new era; an era of freedom where they are

not suppressed because of the color of their skin. Black empowerment comes in many forms; it can be by word of mouth, activism, politics, or as is in the case of this study it can be through music. Through the art of music, artists have voiced their opinions on matters that face the black community since before the civil rights era. Music is a means of not only empowering the black community, but also giving them a voice when their voice has not been heard. Black people have had to deal with the hardships and struggles of being a different skin color since slavery. Black people have used music and songs such as negro spirituals to keep hope and sanity alive. Since the times of slavery, black people have used music to address the shared pain of captivity and abuse. Sometimes this music came in the form of Negro spirituals, sometimes it came in the form of protest songs that shed light on specific issues faced by the community in their struggles for equality and civil rights.

This essay describes and analyzes representations of black empowerment in songs from some of today's top black musicians. It provides a close text rhetorical analysis of musical lyrics from recent albums by Kendrick Lamar, whose music focuses on the perspective of being a black man; Beyoncé, whose music focuses on the experiences and empowerment of black women; and Janelle Monáe, whose music focuses on the intersection of being a black woman who is also part of the LGBT community. The paper first explores the literature surrounding this topic and provides historical context that will allow insight into how music has been used as a means of black empowerment through history up to contemporary times, often inspiring positive outcomes within the community that can result in both comfort and action. The overall goal of this project is to understand the ways music can inspire empowerment and action through expressions of overcoming shared pain and finding power through identification within the black community.

The guiding research question for this project is: What does Black Empowerment look like in contemporary black music and how is it functioning rhetorically?

Literature Review

The purpose of this review of literature is to describe ways prior research has addressed the issue of black empowerment through music and to show where the current essay fits into this larger conversation. The review begins by explaining what black pain is, how it is often a response to negative stereotypes that are transmitted through popular culture, and ways people in the black community have used music to counter these stereotypes to encourage empowerment and action.

Black Pain

In order to address the research question: "What does black empowerment look like in contemporary black music and how is it functioning rhetorically?" we first must understand what black empowerment is and how it is defined. Black empowerment is a response to the experience many writers have discussed and described as the problem of "Black Pain," which is the ongoing consequence of slavery and cultural repression of black people in the United States. Author James Baldwin acknowledges the weight of racial terror and contends that African Americans have coped with such terror by approaching its sources with 'ruthless cunning, an impenetrable style, and an ability to carry death, like a bluebird, on the shoulders" (Baldwin, 1985, p. 79). In Baldwin's view, black people have always risen to the demands imposed by white racism by making "bricks without straw," which is another way of saying that they have found ways to inscribe their humanity on the face of white American culture in spite of and to some extent because of white America's effort to dehumanize them" (Baldwin, 1985, p.104).

Baldwin's work can be generalized to describe black pain experienced by all, but he tends to focus on the problem from a male point of view. In the article "Being a Black man in a white America: A burden even Obama couldn't escape," Young (2017) claims, "The black American male in the white American gaze has long been an object of fear: excessively sexual, insufficiently cerebral, physically imposing, instinctively criminal. It's no mystery where these assumptions came from: if you enslave people, break up their families, humiliate, brutalize and denigrate them and spend far more on their incarceration than their education, then the mere prospect of them reaching their full human potential will strike fear in you." Young is describing something that affects both men and women of the Black community and why they go day to day looking over their shoulder. The article illustrates how even a strong Black man like Obama, who has risen to the top of the world, still is stereotyped and profiled because of his race.

Other scholars have looked at the pain of black women. One of the first historical figures to mention the unique problem facing black women was Sojourner Truth, who in 1851 gave her "Ain't I a Woman?" speech, which explicitly stated the problem of the exclusion of black women from the arguments for women's rights at the time. She pointed out that black women's needs were being ignored and instead they faced the double stigma of being both woman and black. Angela Davis' book *Women, Race, & Class* (1983), describes some of the horrific consequences of this double minority status faced by black women, "since women were classified as 'breeders' as opposed to 'mothers,' their infant children could be sold away from them like calves from cows" (p. 7). In fact, one year after the importation of slaves ended, a South Carolina court ruled that female slaves had no legal claims on their children, allowing them to be sold away. Davis describes in detail the challenges facing black women throughout history in the face of racism and abuse. This objectifying of black women throughout history has

resulted in several common stereotypes seen in popular culture including the angry black woman and the jezebel stereotypes, among others. Women have been seen as objects throughout history and it is a part of the pain seen in black women today.

Others including Audre Lorde (2007), have described the pain of intersectionality for black people who are also members of the LGBTQ community. Lorde not only looks at the racism side of things but also at the LGBTQ side. Though she looks at it more from the female perspective, her observations can also apply to anyone who does not fit into the expected gender norm. She describes the unique pain of intersectionality in her book *Sister Outsider*, "Racism and homophobia are real conditions of all our lives in the place and time. I urge each one of use to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears. Then the personal as the politician can begin to illuminate all our choices" (p. 113).

Each of these authors describes a generalized pain felt by black people, but they also acknowledge that this pain intersects with other elements of an individual's identity. Black empowerment is an attempt to tap into the shared pain to encourage comfort based on the shared experience and also often to call the listeners to action. Protest music provides an example of where this attempt to address the shared pain and to counteract the negative stereotypes of black people so often found in popular culture.

Negative Stereotypes

Expressions of black empowerment in protest music are often responses to negative stereotypes of black people that are common in popular music and culture. Research has looked at stereotypes of black people throughout history and in popular culture (Ahmad, 2017; Basu, 2016; Heard, 2017; Watson, 2016). Most stereotypes are negative, for example Tucker (2007)

identifies examples of where contemporary popular culture "continues the practice of criminalizing black men," she adds, "contemporary representations constitute the legacy of stereotypes and beliefs about black men that underscored blackface minstrelsy and the ritualized lynching that took place during the Jim Crow era." (p. 11). These representations "reflect the peculiar combination of fear, envy, and desire that underlies white America's views of and responses to black men" (p. 12). Martin (2015) in article, "Fear of Black Men: How Society Sees Black Men and They See Themselves," describes being racially profiled, how to appear non-threatening, and discusses how to remain proud of being a black man. Other research (Rinehart, 2017) talks about negative stereotypes related to rap music and Hahn (2014) discusses the role of black men in music, how white teenagers perceive them, and how black artists use how white teenagers perceive them as a crutch to make money. There have been a few songs in regard to this specific subject one being artist J. Cole's recent song "1985" where he discusses some of the same problems with black artist using the white audience to make money. One article (The History of Blackface) talks and details some of the black stereotypes in history which include: Uncle Tom, pickaninny, mulatto, and buck.

Research on representations of images of black women in the press are consistently found to be stereotypical and problematic (Rhodes, 1993). Research has uncovered several common stereotypes of Black women: mammy, matriarch, sexual siren/jezebel, welfare mother (Bobo, 1995) and attempts by *Essence* magazine to overcome these stereotypes (Woodard & Mastin, 2005). According to Woodard and Mastin, *Essence* has been successful at helping Black women counteract and overcome these negative stereotypes by strongly supporting, "the feminist principles of self-definition and the connection of everyday experiences to consciousness" (p.277). Davis (1983) also discusses topics facing black women ranging from the history of

racism in the women's rights movement, in the labor movement, and in reproductive rights policy. Black women have faced barriers in all of these areas, often due to misunderstandings and negative stereotypes found in popular culture.

Effects of Stereotypes

Research has looked at the effects of these stereotypes on black people. One area of research focuses on the effects of the negative stereotypes of black men and how these stereotypes negatively impact the overall image of black men as scary or violent. One study (Hahn. 2014) talks about the politics of race in rap, Why Americans See Black Men as A Threat (Basu 2016), not letting those stereotypes turn people off from hip-hop music (Rinehart 2017). Other topics that are talked about are how society sees black men vs how they see themselves (Martin, 2015). The effects of stereotypes in the black community cause rifts between the black community and others based on misunderstandings and generalizations that result. This lack of understanding can also lead to negative outcomes and make other people think or look at the community in a bad light. These stereotypes play a role in perpetuating the negative image of black people and contribute to the "pain" that comes along with being a black person. As a way to defend against this pain, black musicians have responded throughout history with protest music that encourages the empowerment of black people.

Protest Music: Historical Context

Sullivan (2011) provides an in-depth overview of the history of protest music in the black community focusing primarily on music from the 1960s until now. He acknowledges, however, that music has been used rhetorically as far back as slavery when spirituals were sung to inspire hope, comfort, and sometimes action. He describes how these roots continued to influence black music through history. He explains, "The songs born from slavery—whether sung in abolitionist

times or in the modern Freedom era—were concerned with liberation from bondage, absolute equality and a resolve to push forward. Whether the freedom comes on earth or in heaven is less relevant than the way the songs forge a connection to the shared cultural heritage and history of oppression" (p.31). His book, *Keep on pushing: Black Power music from Blues to Hip-Hop,* describes how music has been used through protest songs to empower Black audiences and introduces the idea of "Black Power Rising" through music. He describes how black artists have been using their voices as a means of protest and responding to different movements and events since slavery. He lists and analyzes the work of influential artists such as Lead Belly, Odetta, Harry Belafonte, Len Chandler, Nina Simone, Richie Havens, Gil Scott-Heron, Marvin Gaye, through more contemporary artists from the 1980s such as N.W.A., Public Enemy. These artists and many more have used their craft not only as means of showing how they feel but also encouraging identification and connection through the common bond of shared pain and overcoming that pain together. Sullivan summarizes their impact by stating, "The truth sayers in music's politically active wing use their words and experiences to affirm life and attempts to free the listener's minds to make them think about their relationship to the world, and how they will survive it…They have known and felt the conditions of the outsider looking in and they have delivered the outsider's feelings in a song" (p. 220).

Another of using a positive message of black empowerment in music came in 1968, when "We're a Winner" by the Impressions, became the #1 record on the R&B charts. The song offered a triumphant sound of pride in motion and hope for a brand-new day for black people. Pushing a little higher, Mayfield issues the affirmation: "At last that blessed day has come, And I don't care where you come from, We're movin' on up (movin' on up)". It seemed that there was no one who didn't seem to believe it. A new mood had taken hold, though there were waters still

to cross and a river of tears to shed. There were movements of pride, progress, and inspiration to cheer as the movement kept moving on.

Hip-hop, a predominantly African American genre with ever-increasing nationwide popularity, presents a valuable opportunity to examine how racial tension still manifests itself in today's society. Originating in the South Bronx in the early 1970's hip-hop represented expression of rebellion and discontent. Due to its roots and prevalence in African American communities, the American public has long associated hip-hop with a particular demographic (Hahn, 2014). Hip-hop serves both an entertainment value, but it can also be used to soothe black pain and to call people to action. Today, music is still used for this same purpose of expression, vocalizing how artists feel on subjects, starting movements, and trying to sooth the mind of the audience. All in all, the music of today's society and era take from the older artists and recreate new messages and opinions while still keeping the initial message of empowerment of striving for better lives and opportunities.

Music as Empowerment

Research has been dedicated to analyzing how music is used as a means of empowerment. For example, Moody-Ramirez, M. & Scott, L. M. (n.d.) conducted a case study of millennial audience reception of Rap lyrics depicting independent women and found that participants noted that rap music has the potential to influence their decisions and perceptions, showing that music can be used to alter the perceptions of the audience in positive ways. Another researcher, Emerson (2002), describes "the recent appearance of Black women performers, songwriters, and producers in Black pop culture has called attention to the ways in which young Black women use pop culture to negotiate social existence and attempt to express independence, self-reliance, and agency" (p. 115). Tucker (2007) also discusses in depth examples of artists

who have attempted to reframe the negative stereotypes through other popular genres like movies with directors such as Spike Lee introducing an alternative point of view. Black empowerment has been on the rise for decades, encouraging the black community through music to respond and break free of negative stereotypes.

Although many of today's black artists are creating protest music and music intended to empower Black people, this essay narrowed focus by considering artists that address three different audiences within the intended black audience: black men, black women, and black LGBTQ individuals. The songs selected for analysis were selected based on recent record sales by artist and clarity of target audience. The artifacts include songs by Kendrick Lamar, which focuses primarily on male black power; by Beyoncé, who focuses on black women; and by Janelle Monáe, whose music and persona are intersectional and focuses on issues of being a black LGBTQ woman. Each artist stands out on their own, but they all have a certain intersectionality that seems to connect with this topic and speak a message of black empowerment to various specific audiences within the black community.

Method

In order to approach the artifacts with an open mind and to allow themes to emerge from the text, Foss's (2018) method for generative criticism was used as a guiding method for this study. This approach allowed key themes to emerge, rather than simply revealing the obvious explicit rhetorical message of an artifact. This method required the researcher to view the artifact being studied and then examine specific points of interest within the artifact including patterns and themes that emerged. The emergent themes were divided by points of interest into broad themes and categories that began to explain how the messages were functioning rhetorically. These categories and themes were then coded, explored, and the broader themes interpreted to

attempt to illustrate and understand how the idea of black empowerment is represented and encouraged in these artifacts/songs. The ultimate goal is to provide an in-depth description and analysis of how the rhetoric of black empowerment is functioning in the artifacts.

As was mentioned, songs from three artists were included for analysis: Kendrick Lamar, offers the perspective of the black man, Beyoncé, the black woman, and Janelle Monáe, the black LGBTQ+ woman. All of these artists are at a point of their careers that give them power and dominance in their fields and therefore influence over their audience. They have the power and the means to use their gifts as a way to empower their culture through what they say in their lyrics and music. Each artist has a different point of view and way of thinking; but they all have the same outcomes in mind: empowering their people to take a stand for the better and to strive for better for their communities.

Out of the discography of the artists listed above, four songs were chosen to be analyzed in this study. After listening to the different albums and songs that these artist have, four songs were chosen because of the message behind them and they were the ones that lyrically seemed to most represent black empowerment; two songs by Kendrick Lamar "Alright" from his *To Pimp A Butterfly* (2015) Album because of the hope and pain he is using to empower the black community and "Black Panther" from *The Black Panther Soundtrack* (2018) because of the strong message of empowerment with the elements of pain and black intellect. Beyoncé's song "Freedom" from her *Lemonade* (2017) album was chosen because of the raw pain and emotion that she turns into action and an empowering message to her audience. Last was Janelle Monáe's "Django Jane" from her *Dirty Computer* (2018) album because of the empowering message she gives off; out of all of the songs chosen she has the least pain and more about empowering people and giving off hope. In the following section we will discuss how these songs reveal a

pattern of themes that fit together to answer the guiding research question for this study is: What does Black Empowerment look like in contemporary black music and how is it functioning rhetorically?

Discussion

From these four songs several themes emerged, which divide into three main categories specific to the experience of being a black person in today's culture: pain, hope, and empowerment. Emerging themes of black pain range from descriptions of the shared experiences of the artists, to mentions of the incarceration of black people, and the negative stereotypes and violence associated with a culture that has been branded in a shadow of negativity. The themes emerging that deal with hope range from reassurance to religion to the success that others have had. Examples of empowerment range from descriptions of success, sometimes in the form of being a king or queen, sometimes in examples of success that people strive to have. While the themes dealing with black pain will be discussed first, these themes intersect with the emerging themes of hope and empowerment.

Black Pain as Common Ground

The first theme to emerge when the songs were analyzed, was the theme of the artists sharing stories and examples of painful experiences throughout their lives that are specific to being black. Sometimes that pain intersects with other elements of the artist's identity to create problems that might be common for others in their audience who might also share these intersections. For example, Kendrick Lamar's "Alright" opens with him sharing his story and the lyrics go on to describe deeply painful and personal moments of struggle as a black man. This song is Lamar sharing his story with his audience and inviting them to relate. He is making a

connection and building trust by sharing his experiences and pain. By doing this he can move his audience into action to make a change.

The song starts with Lamar saying "Alls my life I had to fight, nigga" (Duckworth, 2015, 1.1) One might see this line as an echo of a former line from *The Color Purple* where Sofia is talking to Celie after just being beat by Harpo (Walker, A, 1982, p.31) and it could be interpreted as him showing who his audience is: the black audience. He goes on to say, "Hard times like, God!" (1.3) where he is asking God "Why me?" The next line of the song (1.4) is him talking about drugs; he states "Bad trips like, Yea!" (1.5) "Nazareth, I'm fucked up, homie you fucked up" Lamar is talking to Jesus; he is saying that the desperation led him to seek solace in drugs, which led him to worse situations; he is also saying that not only is he messed up but also his friends and other men in society. Next is verse 1 (1.15) where Lamar continues to tell his story of pain and his struggles. He says, "I recognize you're lookin' at me for the pay cut" (1.16) indicating that he feels like everyone wants something from him. He adds, "But the homicide be lookin' at you from the face down" he is talking about black people being killed because of a person being black and the death that plagues that black community. References to this violence continue in line 1.18 when he says, "What mac-11 even boom with the bass down," which is him saying that you can hear the gunshots that kill black men even in the "silence" like a ghost. (1.19) He goes on to say, "schemin', and let me tell you about my life" where he is continuing to share his experiences and his pain (1.20).

He goes on to confess ways he tries to deal with the pain in negative ways such as using drugs, sex, or spending money. For example, he says "Painkillers only put me in the twilight" (1.21) showing how he dealt with his pain, but it did not help or work. He tried women, "Where pretty pussy and Benjamin is the highlight," but found women and money are not enough for

him. These two lines also show his attempt to alleviate his pain and how neither of these things were exactly enough to do so. He goes on to acknowledge that he knows he is not dealing with his pain the right way when he says in line 1.22 "Now tell my momma I love her but this what I like." He knows that he is doing wrong as is seen in the next lines: "tell 'em all to come and get me reapin' everything I sow, so my karma come and heaven no preliminary hearing" (1.24-1.25). He is owning his actions and showing that he is aware of what he is doing; karma is coming for him and he feels that because of what he has done he may not get into heaven. He describes his feelings of guilt and confusion when he says: "tell the world I know it's too late, boys and girls, I think I gone cray, drown inside my vices all day, won't you please believe when I say" (1.27-1.30) this is his emotional pain, him talking about his personal struggles with his vices. He then goes on into the pre-chorus to say that he understands being down with line 1.31: "when you know we been hurt, been down before, nigga."

Lines 1.32-1.34 take a broader view and talking more about how this problem is not just his alone, but a common experience for other black men. In the first lines of the pre-chorus he says "when our pride was low, lookin' at the world like, 'where do we go' nigga, and we hate the popo, wanna kill us dead in the street fo sho, I'm at the preacher's door." The lines begin by reminding the audience that "we" are in this together. In the second section of this quote, he is sharing what he did for help: went to church and turned to God. He is saying that black people cannot turn to the police so they turn to God" (1.17). Verse 2 goes into him talking to the devil as in line 1.46 "Anything, see my name is Lucy, I'm your dog" where he is describing the temptations of the devil; he is taking away the devil's power by calling him Lucy. In line 1.47 he moves to one of the temptations that he struggles with when he says, "Motherfucker, you can live at the mall." He is referring to the temptations of capitalism and consumerism. In line 1.48

he explains, "I can see the evil, I can tell it, I know it's illegal." He confesses that he knows what's wrong but still does it. Though the pain in this song seems to take up the majority of the lyrics, he uses it as a way to connect with his audience and show them that he also has or had some of the same struggles as them and that he understands the situation.

While Lamar's "Alright" goes into great detail about his experience with black pain, he also discusses it in his song "Black Panther." The pain in this song is seen in line 2.5 (Duckworth, 2018, 2.5) where he describes the dark side of empowerment or being a powerful black man as: "King of the filthy, King of the fallen, we livin' again." He is listing some of the stereotypes given to black men that create barriers and misperceptions. He describes in more detail the harshness of what America may see them as in line 2.6: "King of the shooters, looters, booster, and ghettos poppin," where he again shows the stereotypes often imposed on black men. He speaks of the violence associated with black men in America and personifies the pain of coming from the "ghetto" or the lower parts of the city that are where the lower class live; the place where black people have been stereotyped to be living. In line 2.8 he refers to the constant struggle of violence that is also assumed about black men when he says, "King of the culture, King of the soldiers, king of the bloodshed." He implies the fact that black men have traditionally been sent to war first and how the black life is seen as less and can be seen as not being worthy. Though the pain in this song speaks loudly and brings up the harsh truth for listeners; it is only the start of something that will bring about action into black men. While the last song from Lamar dealt more with the pain in the black man and the black community "Black Panther" is a song that deals mainly with the empowerment of the black man and those around him. It touches on pain in a lesser way than "Alright."

Beyoncé's "Freedom" offers another point of view of the experience of black pain, she also uses a narrative voice to describe her pain, but her pain comes from the perspective of a black woman. Beyoncé's pain is seen in her shared experience of the infidelity of her husband. She is connecting with her audience, women, but mainly the black woman. She is heartbroken by what has happened to her. She channels that pain into her music. In line 3.5-3.6 (Beyoncé, 2017, 3.5-3.6) she says "Lord forgive me, I've been running/ Running blind in truth" she is saying that she has been blind to what has been going on around her. Whether you want to look at it as her talking about her marriage or what is happening to the black community; she has been blind to the world around her and her situation has opened her eyes. Though Lamar takes over most of the pain that is talked about in this song it still makes a big impact. He says in line 3.38-3.40, "Channel 9 news tell me I'm movin' backwards/ Eight blocks left, death is around the corner/ Seven misleadin' statements 'bout my persona" talk about the stereotypes associated with black people and the constant struggle between black culture and mainstream media. The shared pain of black people is another way to connect with the audience. In lines 3.41-3.45 "Six headlights wavin' in my direction/ Five-O askin' me what's in my possession/ Yeah I keep runnin', jump in the aqueducts/ Fire hydrants and hazardous/ Smoke alarms on the back of us" Lamar talks about the police violence against black people. He establishes a joint pain here while the countdown from ten to five can also be viewed as a play on one of Beyoncé's earlier songs where she counts down from five to one and she is talking about love. Here Lamar uses an extension of that countdown to talk about pain and hurt. This can also be viewed as Beyoncé using Lamar to talk about the pain she feels after her husband cheated on her. The last part of this song that seems to talk about pain are lines 3.51-3.54 where Lamar says, "Stole from me, lied to me, nation hypocrisy/ Code on me, drive on me/ Wicked, my spirit inspired me/ Like yeah, open

correctional gates in higher desert" he uses his time to talk about the pain of black incarceration and how prisons can be in the middle of nowhere and lead to the isolation of black people where they can be forgotten.

In this song Beyoncé uses the pain and heartbreak from the infidelity of her husband and channels it into power and action. She, instead of crying and sitting idle, turns the hurt she has into determination and action to help the cause that she feels that she may have been blind to. She has the softest language out of all of the artist that were chosen but she uses the radical and straightforwardness of Lamar to get her message across. He makes an appearance in this song as a feature where he continues the message that Beyoncé has started. The duet between these two artists on this one song is one example of how people in the black community can work together to promote empowerment across the culture and different intersections of identity and can turn pain into hope and empowerment of black woman and the black community as a whole. The pain felt from this song is heartfelt, but it leads to some extraordinary hope and empowerment.

The final song analyzed was Janelle Monáe's "Django Jane," which was different from the other three songs in that she does not dwell on the pain. She seems to assume the audience already knows where she came from, but also the song is more focused on the feeling of empowerment. The only pain that Janelle even brings up in this song comes down to two separate lines. The first one being 4.14 (Robinson, 2018, 4.14) "Kept us in the back of the store" where she is talking about the shared pain of black people being kept in the back and how they were often overlooked. Since she has recently come out as a member of the LGBT community she can also be seen as talking about how the LGBT community has also been overlooked and put on the back burner. In line 4.25 she says, "Remember when they use to say I look to mannish" is her talking about how people use to criticize her because of her clothing choices just

because she did or does not wear the traditional attire of a woman. She shows through these examples that she understands the common experiences of invisibility and alienation of being a black LGBT woman. She doesn't spend much time on the pain, and like the other artists provides hope that there is a way out of the pain.

Each of the songs analyzed for this paper follow the descriptions of black pain with offerings of hope, but hope looks different based on the point of view of the artist. This next section will describe and analyze how the different artists offer hope in the face of shared pain. Lamar's "Alright," provides the most in depth description of the pain experienced by a black man. In the face of that pain, the chorus offers a clear sense of the hope that Lamar gives in this song overall. The hope is based on one's willingness to ask for help from a Higher Power. The lyrics describe the part of him that knows everything will be fine and that not only will he get through this but also the black community. He says in line 1.6, "But if God got us, then we gon' be alright" (Duckworth, 2015). This is where he establishes his faith in God and his outlook on the situations that are coming at him. He believes that as long as God has them the black community will be alright as long as they believe in and turn to God. The chorus of the song which spans from line 1.7 to line 1.14 is sung by Pharrell Williams. Here is where they set up the mindset of being hopeful and bringing reassurance to the black community. It goes back to the meaning in line 1.6, as long as they turn to God and believe, everything will turn out just fine. In line 1.35 he says, "My knees gettin' weak, and my gun might blow, but we gon' be alright," where he is referencing how black people are getting tired, but they are going to continue to try to overcome. While this section is short, it speaks volumes about the hope and reassurance that the black community needs and has when they turn to not only God but also each other. It helps

to reiterate that a person cannot do everything on their own; they will need help to get through and overcome the pain.

Unlike in "Alright," where he focuses primarily on sharing his narrative of black pain and immediate hope through prayer, Lamar focuses only briefly on hope in "Black Panther." The section of this song that deals with hope is short, but it is very important in the light of getting the message across. Lamar speaks of the possibilities that black men have. Line 2.9-.10 (Duckworth, 2018, 2.9-2.10) "King of the wisdom, king of the ocean, king of the respect/ King of the optimistics and dreamers that go and get it" is where he says that black men can be kings and that they have the power and the mindset to be one. In line 2.27 he says, "Because we don't glue with the opposition, we glue with peace" that we do not have to fight, it is not what we want but if necessary, that's what will be done. He goes on to bring up religion again in his music which seems to be something that he uses a lot to bring hope into men. In lines 2.15-2.16 he says "King of my enemies, may they fall defeat, I rejoice/ King of the skyscrapers, dodgin' hater, broken religion" that God will help you through the situations and that God will make your enemies fall away; that they will not hurt you. He speaks of broken religion where he could be talking about how the religion in America seems to be so broken when it comes to people following the laws of God. The hope given off in this song has so many possibilities and opportunities as long as one takes them and uses them to the best of their abilities. There is no shortage of black men to take on the roles that are out there and they can do so if they set their mind to do so.

Like in the songs of Lamar, Beyoncé channels her pain into something greater in her song, "Freedom." In fact, in this song can be seen as an embodiment of hope. "Tryna reign, tryna rain on the thunder/ tell the storm I'm new" (Beyoncé, 2017, 3.1-3.2) this is her emerging from

her pain into the hope of a new outlook at her situation and the pain that comes with being a woman. The song goes on in lines 3.55-3.56 with Lamar taking over to say, "Yeah, open our mind as we cast away oppression/ Yeah, open the streets and watch our beliefs" to say that black people will resist and they are the embodiment of the black culture here; she is saying they will do the same and they will emerge from the situations that hold them. In line 3.7 she says, "I'ma rain, i'ma rain on this bitter love" she is talking about healing and her power; the water is cleansing her; this can be seen as a play on baptism. "I'ma wade, I'ma wave through the waters" (3.19) is her talking about taking control and not hurting anymore. The reason it fits into hope is because it is a play on the negro spiritual "wade in the water" which again relates to religion. Lines 3.11-3.19 (3.11-3.19) "Freedom! Freedom! I can't move/ Freedom, cut me loose! / Singin', freedom! Freedom! Where are you?/ Cause I need freedom too!" is the first part of the chorus and is where Beyoncé literally calls out to freedom in hope of it coming to find her and free her, black women, and the black community. In line 3.37 Lamar says, "Ten Hail Marys, I meditate for practice" is Lamar talking about praying to God for help and guidance. In lines 3.68-3.72 he asks, "What you want from me? / Is it truth you seek? Oh father can you hear me? / What you want from me? / Is it truth you seek? Oh father can you hear me? / Hear me out" is a prayer to God; Lamar is talking to God for guidance and understanding of the condition of the black community. He doesn't know what he should do so he turns to God for help. The hope in this song leads to the empowerment that follows close behind.

In contrast to "Freedom," in "Django Jane" Monáe focuses less on the pain and she barely brings up the hope at all. However, she embodies the hope in her music; she has come out as a member of the LGBT community and she is speaking of major power that she has obtained by taking control of her own life and choices. She makes shout outs and talks of emergence the

same as Beyoncé. She makes a shout out of hope in the line 4.8-4.10 (Robinson, 2018, 4.8-4.10) "A-town, made it out there/ Straight out of Kansas City, yeah we made it out there/ Celebrated, graduated, made it pass/fail" she shouts out Atlanta, which can be seen as the music capital of the south, her hometown Kansas City, and her success with school. Line 4.15 says, "We ain't hidden no more, Moonlit nigga, lit niggas" is her talking about black people emerging and coming out of the shadow of America. They are coming out and are showing out. The same can be said for the LGBT community in the past few years. The laws that have helped them; the process may have been slow but things are progressing for both groups. Monáe shuts down society and makes it known that she is powerful; she is the hope of a better day and she has come to claim her throne like a true queen.

Each of these artists acknowledge they are part of the black community by describing personal experiences of pain that others can find common ground with. They go beyond that common ground to show that they have found a way out. Their expressions of hope provide the foundation for hope that their audiences can then build up empowerment and move beyond the pain.

Finding Empowerment

Each artist describes empowerment by describing what success looks like, sometimes their own success and sometimes by mentioning the success of other black people. Empowerment can be overcoming emotion or pain as in Lamar's "Alright" and Beyoncé's "Freedom" and it can come in specific actions as is found in "Black Panther" and "Django Jane." As described in these songs, empowerment is freedom from judgment of others and freedom to choose one's own path.

"Alright," is autobiographical in the description of struggles, but he is also calling others to action for example when he asks the question, "What you want, you want a house, you a car?" (Duckworth, 2015, 1.44) this is him asking what is important to you? He adds in line 1.45, "40 acres and a mule, piano, a guitar?" where he is talking about reparations and what will be enough for you, his audience. These lines bring forth empowerment because he is asking his audience to reflect on what is important to the black community and the men in it. He wants to know what they value and what they will do to get it. In line 1.50 he goes back to his own narrative when he says, "Thinkin' of my partner, put the candy, paint it on the regal." He is saying that he can do what he wants. He still struggles as he describes in line 1.51, "Diggin' in my pocket, ain't a profit big enough to feed you" where Lamar seems to be talking to the devil. He seems to be talking about being blind to his surroundings.

Next Lamar finishes up his second verse where he continues his talk with the devil and in the end he says "My rights, my wrongs; I write 'til I'm right with God." He shares his desire to continue on a path of good until he has fixed his relationship with God in spite of the struggles he has with the devil and temptations. In lines 1.73-1.78 he talks about the hope and love of the black man. This section normally wouldn't go into empowerment, but it seems to fit because of him saying to black men to keep their heads up even though they struggle and have hard times. He knows that America's perception of the black man makes it hard to love them, but he tells them that he will be alright and that they will too. That black men are a favorite in the black community and that he will continue to pray for them and himself. Ultimately Lamar ends with telling the black community, but is speaking more to black men, to turn to God. That God is the most empowering person that they will come across or find.

Lamar focuses much more on describing what success looks like in "Black Panther." Though this is the shortest of the four songs picked it seems to be one of the most empowering out of the artifacts chosen; Lamar uses his voice to empower and talk about being a king, the actions of one, the intelligence of the black man, and getting involved in the cause. The empowerment in the song speaks louder than the hope in the sense of making people see what they can do. It shows black men what it means to use the roles you have to make a difference. In line 2.11 he says, "King of the winner's district and geniuses with conviction" where he talks about the survival and intellect that the black man has (Duckworth, 2018). The greatest gift a man can have is his mind. What he chooses to do with it determines whether or not he will be called intelligent or ignorant. In line 2.12 he lists: "King of the fighter, king of the fathers, king of the belated" where he is introducing the idea of looking towards the past kings and soldiers and learning from their mistakes and what they have done and using it to make a difference today. "I embrace them with collision, kings did it" (2.18) this line is saying fight back; do not be suppressed and do not stand there and be walked all over. In line 2.19 he says, "King's vision, Black panther, King Kendrick, all hail the king" is the line where he takes ownership of his kingdom and he lets the world know he is a king. He is saying that we as black men can and should do the same. You can be a king of whatever you do. In lines 2.30-2.33 Lamar calls his audience to action and reflection by asking: "Are you an activist? What are your city plans for? / Are you an accident? Are you just in the way?/Your native tongue contradictin' what your body language say/Are you a king or you jokin'? Are you a king or you posin'?" he wants to know what you are going to do to help the cause. What are you going to do to support your people? In lines 2.35-2.37 is where he giving off a few duties of a king and what is expected of them. "Because the king don't cry, king don't die/King don't lie, king give heart, king get by, king don't

fall/Kingdom come, when I come, you know why" This is him telling black men that to be a king these are a few of the criteria. You have to be strong and you cannot back down. Do not let anyone get in the way of you and your kingdom. Though Lamar is not as harsh and hard in this song as in "Alright," he still gives off a powerful message of being a king and some of the things it takes to be one. You cannot let anyone stop you from doing what needs to be done. It is more about the empowerment and giving hope than anything. Within a mere thirty-nine lines this song does so much for the empowerment of the black man.

Much like in Lamar's "Alright," Beyoncé's "Freedom" is an autobiographical narrative of the pain she experienced and overcame. The empowering message that Beyoncé gives to black women and to the black community consists of perseverance, power, and action. She starts this song off by announcing that she is a queen. In line 3.1 (Beyoncé, 2017, 3.1) she states "Tryna reign, tryna rain on the thunder" the language she uses is so subtle that you would not pick up on it if you did not see the lyrics that she released with the song herself. She is a queen emerging from a storm and she has finally realized the power she has. In lines 3.3-3.4 she says, "I'm a wall, come and march on the regular/ Painting white flags blue" is her saying that she wants you to challenge her; she dares you to come at her. She is determined to overcome, and she is not willing to surrender. She is being a spokesperson for the black woman. Saying how they never give up and how they are always determined to overcome the strife and hard times they are faced with. "I'm telling these tears "Go and fall away, fall away/ May the last one burn into flames" (3.9-3.10) this is her making a decision to start over. She will not cry anymore; there will be no more tears and she will turn them into action instead. This is the determination of the black woman. Lines 3.15-3.18 (3.15-3.18) "I break chains all by myself/ Won't let my freedom rot in hell/ Hey! I'ma keep running/ Cause a winner don't quit on themselves" is where she is

breaking her chains and getting her own freedom. She is going to run towards action instead of turning away from it. This is also another reference to the determination and perseverance of the black woman. Lines 3.21-3.22 state, "I'ma riot, I'ma riot through your borders/ call me bulletproof" is where she actually recognizes the power that she has, and she is saying that you cannot and will not hurt her. She is going to do what she can, she will not be stopped. In lines 3.57-3.58 Kendrick Lamar comes in and says, "And when they carve my name inside the concrete/ I pray that it forever reads" is Lamar saying that even after death and they carve his name into his headstone or after they carve his name into a star on the walk of fame he wants to be known for fighting for the freedom of black people. The action that Lamar talks about in this song is the action of the black woman. In lines 3.46-3.50 he adds, "But mama don't cry for me, ride for me/ Try for me, live for me/ Breathe for me, sing for me/ Honestly guidin' me/ I could be more than I gotta be" He is asking the mothers to provide action. He wants them to get out in the streets and do what needs to be done. He wants them to fight back and help their children. He wants the black woman to have a voice and for them to use it. The last line of the song 3.73 is the quote: "I had my ups and downs, but I always find the inner strength to pull myself up. I was served lemons, but I made lemonade." This line solidifies the determination of black women. It shows and proves that they will do what they have to do to get through life. They will turn any hard situation into something greater and use it to not only help themselves but the black community as a whole. This song is for the empowerment of the black community, but it is mostly for the black women. It talks about the determination that black women have and the pain they have to overcome and the will power that they use to do so.

More than any of the other songs, Monáe's "Django Jane" focuses on what empowerment looks like and how to get there. "The first line of her song is "This is my palace, champagne in

my chalice" (Robinson, 2018, 4.1) She is making a statement by saying she is not only a queen but an accomplished queen. She opens her song strong by making this statement and saying look at me and what I have done. Line 4.2 she says, "I got it all covered like a wedding band" which is her saying she has everything completely covered. She is in control and forever will be. Line 4.3 "Wonderland, so my alias is Alice" is her saying that the world has turned into a freak show, but she is in control and she has the power in this situation. Lines 4.4-4.7 "We gon' start a motherfucki' pussyriot/ Or we gone' have to put 'em on a pussy diet/ Look at that, I guarantee I got 'em quiet/ Look at that, I guarantee they all inspired" is her connecting to the women and saying that they will come together and that they have the power. They will use sex to get what they want by taking it away from the men all together. She knows that will get the attention of the men and that will cause a change in events and mindsets. Lines 4.20-4.21 "Highly melanated, ArchAndroid orchestrated/ Yeah, we highly melanated, ArchAndroid orchestrated" is her saying not only will black women come together but all women of color. "Running outta space in my damn bandwagon" (4.24) is her taking credit and calling out the fake people in the movement. When in lines 4.26-4.29 she says, "Black girl magic, y'all can't stand it/ Y'all can't ban it, made it out like a bandit/ They been trying hard just to make us all vanish/ I suggest they put a flag on a whole nother planet," she is shouting out and giving credit to other black women and black members of the LGBT community; she goes on to resist and say that their oppressors have been trying to put them down but they will not stand for the mess that is being brought upon them and that the oppressors better take it somewhere else.

Monáe embodies the success she describes. "Jane Bond, never Jane Doe/ And I Django, never Sambo/Black and White,Yeah that's always been my camo/ It's looking like y'all gon' need some more ammo/ I cut em off, I cut em off, I cut em off like Van Gogh" (Robinson, 2018, 4.30-

4.34) she is saying that she will be powerful and that you will know her. She will not be another unidentifiable person in the background. You cannot and will not hurt her and she will not listen to the mess and nonsense that is being spewed at her. Line 4.35 says "Now pan right for the angle" is her saying that everything is all a performance and she knows her role and she will play it to the best of her abilities. You will not catch her slipping. Lines 4.41-4.45 (Robinson, 2018, 4.41-4.45) "You want the world? Well, what's it worth? / Emoticons, Decepticons, and Autobots/ Who twist the plot? / Who shot the sheriff, then fled to Paris/ In the darkest hour, spoke truth to power?" is her saying that they will escape the troubles but what will you do to help the cause? What will you do to support and help overcome? Line 4.49 (Robinson, 2018, 4.49) "And tuck the pearls in, just in case the world end" is her saying that everyone needs to be ready for a fight just in case it comes down to it. "For the culture, I kamikaze/ I put my life on a life line/ If she the G.O.A.T. now, would anybody doubt it? / If she the G.O.A.T. now, would anybody doubt it? / Do anybody got it? Do anybody got it? / I say anybody got it?" (Robinson, 2018, 4.56-4.61) is her again asking what will you do for the cause? She wants to know what you will do. Everyone needs to do something.

Monáe also spends a lot of time giving credit to other successful women of color when she says, "Already got a Oscar for the cause/ Running down Grammys with the family/ Prolly give a Tony to the homies/ Prolly get a Emmy dedicated to the" (Robinson, 2018, 4.16-4.19) These lines are her talking about the success of black people, black women, and LGBT. The EGOT winners among these demographics. 4.36 (4.36) "I got away with murder, no Scandal" She is shouting successful black women; Kerry Washington, Viola Davis, and Shonda Rhimes just to name a few. 4.37-4.40 (4.37-4.40) "Cue the violins and the Viola's/ We gave you life, we gave you birth/ We gave you God, we gave you Earth/ We fem the future, don't make it worse"

She is talking to the men here; she is talking about being born of a woman, mother earth, and Mary, the mother of Jesus; She feels that if you apply a feminine touch to things the world will be better. Line 4.46 (4.46) "Made a fandroid outta yo girlfriend" is her saying that if the men do not listen she bets they girl will. Lines 4.50-4.53 (4.50-4.53) "And nigga, down dawg/ Nigga move back, take a seat, you were not involved/ And hit the mute button/ Let the vagina have a monologue" is her saying to the men shut up and be quiet, she is telling them to be quiet, you don't entirely get what is going on and to stay out of it and listen to understand instead of listening to respond. The women need to speak not the men.

Monáe makes powerful statements herself and she is ready to get behind them and defend herself and others. She is ready to rally her troops and get to work reshaping this world into what it needs to be. Monáe has the most empowerment out of all of the songs that are used in this study; she may not use that much hope but she does use her name, image, and power to get things done. This song seems to be the most empowering out of all four songs that have been used. It is from the point of view of a black LGBTQ+ woman. Her message is for black women and the LGBTQ. She rarely talks about that pain or even hope but more of the empowerment, power and success. She calls out men and get deep into some of the roots of the problems as she sees them.

Conclusion

The use of music as a means to address the shared pain black people have experienced daily and throughout history continues today in the songs of the artists discussed here, and in the works of many more who use music to express their experiences, struggles, and successes. The analysis of these four songs indicates that contemporary black music reflects the songs of the past in that each song begins with narratives that establishes common ground and trust through

stories of shared pain. They begin by describing experiences of personal pain and struggles that the listener is invited to relate to as they can find parallels in their own lives. This common ground is needed because the artists then move their listeners to hope. Each artist acts as an embodiment of hope because they show that they have overcome. Once given hope, the listener is shown what it means to be empowered and they are given tools to help become empowered. These messages are functioning rhetorically because they are promoting a new way of thinking about personal pain, making it a shared pain. When they see they are not alone in their pain, the audience finds hope that things can improve, and they can then take action and are empowered.

Each artist appeals to different and sometimes intersecting audiences. Kendrick Lamar being the male figure of this project talks from the perspective of a man and talks about certain themes that are reflected in both Beyoncé's and Janelle Monáe's music and work. Janelle Monáe seems to be the outlier here because she focuses less on the pain and more on the empowerment and action that needs to be done. Beyoncé channels her pain and heartbreak into action, hope, and perseverance. This essay shows how each of these artists emerges empowered through the pain and hope and provides a map for how the audience can do this also.

One of the primary limitations of this study is the limited number of songs and artists that were analyzed. In order to make a generalization about the findings, more research should be done to see if this pattern remains true across songs that attempt to empower listeners. Related to this limitation is the fact that this study only mentions the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. Further research is needed to more fully understand how these elements of one's identity intersect and interact in shaping one's self esteem and likelihood of identifying with the message in the song. Future research might take several different points of view to examine how black empowerment is functioning in music. For example, another study might take a much

deeper look at the body of work of particularly influential artists to see how they address these issues over time. Each artist examined here is known for continuing topics in the lyrics of their songs, and it might also be informative to examine how their thoughts evolve throughout their lives and experiences. Another study might look at music geared toward other social movements or minority groups to see if the pattern found here is consistent as a means of helping an audience find agency and power.

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