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ABSTRACT

The Cultural and Critical Studies section of the proceedings contains the following 10 selected papers: "Sex Noise Makes Macho Magazines Both Teasing and Tedious" (Jacqueline Lambiase and Tom Reichert); "The Buccaneer as Cultural Metaphor: Pirate Mythology in Nineteenth-Century American Periodicals" (Janice Hume); "Looking the Part: U.S. Anchorwomen as 'Other'" (Tracy Briggs Jensen and Elizabeth Blanks Hindman); "'Don't Want No Short People 'Round Here': Disrupting Heterosexual Ideology in the Comic Narratives of 'Ally McBeal'" (Brenda Cooper and Edward C. Pease); "Communicating A Re-Discovered Cultural Identity through the Ethnic Museum: The Japanese American National Museum" (Joy Y. Nishie); "Arab-Americans in a Nation's Imagined Community: How News Constructed Arab-American Reactions to the Gulf War" (Dina Gavrilos); "Reagan-Era Hollywood" (Chris Jordan); "Media Literacy and the Alternative Media: A Comparison of KAZI and KNLE Alternative Radio Stations in Austin" (InCheol Min); "My Grandmother's Black-Market Birth Control: 'Subjugated Knowledges' in the History of Contraceptive Discourse" (Jane Marcellus); and "Local Culture in Global Media: Excavating Colonial and Material Discourses in the 'National Geographic'" (Radhika Parameswaran). (RS)

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Sex Noise Makes Macho Magazines Both Teasing and Tedious

Jacqueline Lambiase and Tom Reichert

Paper presented Aug. 5, 2001, at the Association for Educators of Journalism and Mass Communication, Critical and Cultural Studies Division, Washington, D.C.

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Sex Noise Makes Macho Magazines Both Teasing and Tedious

Abstract

Maxim magazine features a scantily dressed woman on its cover each month, using a rhetoric of sublime repetition that is as predictable as it is erotic. The covers are sex noise: a dreamlike jumble that has become an idealized public display of subconscious American male macho culture. With rhetorical and content analyses, this study addresses the cultural work performed by Maxim. This magazine may be both "looked at" and "looked through," as a modernist artifact and as a postmodern effect of something else.

Sex Noise Makes Macho Magazines Both Teasing and Tedious

"I think it's going to get to the point where the word sex or sexiest on a cover makes your eyes glaze over."

- Mark Golin, former editor, Maxim and Details

Maxim, the hot rising star of men's magazines in North America, simulates the sexual revolution every month on its cover. On the outside is a scantily dressed young woman, surrounded by headlines that promise "Tonight's the Night," "Expert Sex," and an "All-Sex Workout." On the inside—true to its advertised promises—are photo spreads, advice, erotic ads, innuendo, and graphic party narrative. All these are latter-day simulations of the freedom promised by the sexual revolution of the mid-20th century. All these provide sex noise: a dreamlike jumble that has become an idealized display of subconscious American male macho culture. Maxim' s covers sell a dream, for "[t]o consume in America is not to buy; it is to dream," writes novelist Don DeLillo (1998, p. 414). Marshall McLuhan considers consumption alongside the powerful medium of photography (itself an endless simulation), when it is mixed with Hollywood iconography. It is precisely this formula that Maxim uses so successfully each month in its cover photograph. "The movie stars and matinee idols are put in the public domain by photography," McLuhan writes in Understanding Media (1964, p. 170). "They become dreams that money can buy. They can be bought and hugged and thumbed more easily than public prostitutes."

Borrowing a formula from Great Britain's "lad mags," Maxim's consistent sales pitch through its sexualized covers has proven successful and has inspired imitators across North America and in other parts of the world. This project studies the production and consumption of Maxim by analyzing its cover, its repetitious use of idealized female models featured there, and its construction of an idealized audience firmly embedded in male macho culture. The study addresses the cultural work performed by this magazine, through content and rhetorical analyses and

postmodern theory. With these combined approaches, Maxim may be both "looked at" and "looked through," as a modernist artifact and as a postmodern effect of something else.

Content and Rhetorical Analyses

Paradoxical dream dispenser may seem too deep a descriptor for a magazine such as Maxim. But a paradox it is, because it features sex (exciting), over and over and over again (boring). Rhetorical and content analyses of the magazine's covers focus on this rhetoric of repetition, of *homiologia* (a Greek rhetorical term meaning uniformity in style), of a dull postmodern aesthetic that is as terribly predictable as it is terribly erotic.

For the first part of this content analysis, a larger view was considered in order to collect information about the widespread use of this tedious/teasing formula. Of all the 1999 covers of Maxim, Esquire, and Details (all vying for a similar demographic group, which will be discussed in more detail later), 28 of 35 covers featured a young female cover model or female actor suggestively dressed and posed. Maxim itself featured this formula on all 11 issues it published that year (the magazine combines July and August in one issue). Details used eroticized women on 11 of 12 covers, and Esquire published this sort of cover in half of its 12 issues. All three of these magazines used the formula in February 1999, prompting a Newsweek writer to observe that "[m]en's magazine today practically have to come in a plain brown wrapper" (Turner, 1999, p. 52). Cosmopolitan, a similar product for women which laid down this magazine formula of attracting readers with sexually suggestive women's bodies, is now covered by brown wrappers in at least one major North American grocery-store chain ("Women's magazines," 2000).

Yet this sublime sort of repetition gives comfort to a magazine's readers. To provide a narrower view of this formula, this study also analyzed three consecutive Maxim covers, and they are nearly identical in "content." Each and every month of its own existence since 1997, the Maxim cover presents a three-quarter shot of a nearly nude or suggestively "dressed" and posed female model, usually an up-and-coming actor in her 20s. An endless supply of these B-list actors is

available to provide "variety" within the formula itself. Because of this repetition, one cover alone exhausts the rhetorical repertoire here. A valid question to ask in the face of this uniformity and redundancy is: Does Maxim's cover have content to analyze? Or to put this query another way: Is this magazine's style or form so dominating that content is nearly non-existent and therefore hard to measure?

Indeed, that content's redundancy makes the task overly simple. In the October, November, and December 1999 issues of Maxim, all three cover models look directly at the camera and none is smiling (Figures 1-3). They are deadly serious, performing for an unseen phallus that has never liked a joke. Only the October model, Melissa Joan Hart, has a slight suggestion of amusement about her lips, or it could be simple self-satisfaction.

These bodies are surrounded by words, an irony since this magazine is not about literate text, but about erotic images. Yet the words make sense, because they are as artificial as the photographer's backdrop and the model's body in this mediated scene. The headlines declare the obvious, the logos mixed with pathos to promote this monthly product:

- "Clothes She'll Rip Off You—With Her Teeth" (November 1999),
- "Escape from Death Row" (November 1999),
- "Annual Lingerie Spectacular" (December 1999),
- "Insect Barbecues, Voodoo Sex Spells, Stunt Bras & Fun with Chain Saws" (October 1999),
- "Expert Sex! Order that replacement headboard today!" (October 1999).

In other words, sex noise that easily could be restated as: "Sex," "We've Got Serious Content," "Sex," "We've Got Cheeky Content," "Sex," "Everything's a Ruse," and "It's All About Sex." An overarching headline that appears on every Maxim issue—"Sex, Sports, Beer, Gadgets, Clothes, Fitness"—frames this bandwagon enticement crafted for an idealized kind of male audience, to make these men feel at home in this space and to give them ownership beyond the body they wish to buy, hug, and thumb, in McLuhan's words. And just as McLuhan suggests,

there is cultural work occurring through the production and consumption of such images. It is this effect shown on and through the covers that cannot be measured by content analysis alone, that must be "looked through" instead of "looked at" (see Richard Lanham's The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts [1993] for a slightly different discussion of "looking at" and "looking through" in regard to rhetoric and philosophy).

Dozens of other magazines, featuring on their covers any one of an endless supply of 20-something B-list actors, join Maxim at the newsstand for an endless supply of whatever eye- and libido-candy that can be mustered for another month of sales. Despite Maxim's quick, stunning success in the United States' men's magazine market in just a few years, some of its own editors have become bored with its rhetoric of repetition and have moved to other magazines where invention holds a higher value than a formula of strictest repetition ("Macho culture," 2000).

Repetitions

A rhetoric of repetition may not be conducive to a satisfying editorial product for a magazine's creators, but repetition is generally believed to be a well-proven strategy for advertising and for audiences. Indeed, a magazine's cover is advertising, because editorial content advertised on the cover becomes advertising. It is the flipside to McLuhan's own maxim of "ads are news." When news is advertising and ads are news, both may be considered as allied producers seeking eyeballs for messages. And when both advertising and editorial messages contain sex, eyeballs seem to be riveted. It is so successful an alliance that Maxim's monthly circulation of close to two million in just three years has surpassed Esquire, GQ, and Details, whose circulations stand about half a million each. Outdone by Maxim, Conde Nast's Details announced in spring 2000 its own demise as an American lad mag, with plans to become a fashion trade newspaper for men as a Fairchild publication (both Fairchild and Conde Nast are owned by Advance Publications).

Despite Details' own failure to use the formula successfully, industry observers continue to credit Maxim with the increased use of sex to sell men's magazines (Germillion, 1997; Turner,

1999). Advertising in gendered magazines like Maxim has also become more sexually oriented (see Reichert, et al., 1999, and Lambiase, et al., 1999). Maxim itself seems to be profiting from the cover formula the most. With its rate base at about 2 million in 2000, Maxim's circulation increased 127%, ad pages were up 52%, and revenue was up $31 million over 1999 ("Upstarts," March 6, 2000).

That sexy cover models sell magazines is taken for granted by some in industry circles. According to Jeff Germillion, Maxim (owned by Dennis Publishing) has achieved success because it has "devoted its covers to B-list female celebs, with an accent on cleavage and come-hither looks . . . and fashion spreads with lots of buxom models as set dressing" (1997, p. 28). Even Rolling Stone frequently uses the cover formula; its provocative cover of Britney Spears in 1999 became the magazine's biggest seller of the year, with 233,637 copies sold at the newsstand ("The Best and Worst," 1999). One analyst writes:

> Now all the fellows are slapping cleavage on their covers—in homage, it would appear, to Maxim. Whereas Details used to feature the stubbly likes of Stephen Dorff, the current number is graced by Elizabeth Hurley, touched up in such an unsubtle way that her breasts fairly leap off the page; it's as if they were eyeballs in a Tex Avery cartoon, ogling themselves." (Handy, 1999, p. 75)

Maxim, of course, did not invent this formula, as has been stated. Cosmopolitan has fine-tuned the formula for decades as a fiercely gendered women's magazine. Yet Dennis Publishing's Maxim most consciously simulates IPC's Loaded, the leading men's lifestyle magazine in the United Kingdom in the mid-1990s, with an editorial format focusing on sex, beer, and football (McCann, 1995, p. 13).

It's commonly believed that Loaded and other best-selling men's magazines in the U.K. have attracted readership by featuring eroticized models on the cover and throughout the magazine. Americans have also been impressed with this style of magazine success. AdWeek in 1999 named Maxim's Mark Golin, responsible for the magazine's emphasis on sex and titillation, as Magazine

Editor of the Year (Newman, 1999); Golin even more recently lost his job as editor-in-chief of Details, where he had more or less used the same formula. (It's evident that the editors are as interchangeable a part of the formula as the cover models.) In an interview with Alan Light, editor of Spin magazine, Golin was asked about U.K.-based men's magazines' dropping circulations and his future predictions for similar U.S.-based publications ("The joy of sex," March 6, 2000). Golin responded that "there is going to be saturation. I think it's going to get to the point where the word sex or sexiest on a cover makes your eyes glaze over" (p. M82).

The conventional wisdom of publishers and industry observers about magazine covers' repetitious use of eroticized female bodies has seemed to work, at least in the short term, for magazines such as Maxim. Covers are typically produced by a team effort of art, editorial, and circulation departments, and as a rule, the editor-in-chief has final say regarding cover design (Beam, 1998). According to Wired magazine's editor-in-chief Kevin Kelly, however, "there is absolutely no good theory as to what makes a cover sell" (Beam, 1998, p. 50). Similarly, Mike McGrath, editor-in-chief at Rodale Press, claims only a fool would try to predict with certainty that a particular cover will sell (Beam, 1998, p. 50). Despite this professional uncertainty, the maxim that "sex sells" seems to carry currency in the current men's magazine market and beyond. In fact, former Maxim and Detail editor Golin seems to rely on formula wherever he works in the industry, saying that "as an editor, I turned out sex articles at Cosmo, I did it at Maxim, I even did it back at Prevention magazine at Rodale and so on" (M82).

Since the "cover of any successful magazine is a shrewd advertisement for what lies inside" (Handy, 1999, p. 75), then viewers are motivated to consume more, and as DeLillo and McLuhan suggest, to dream more under the covers. While there may not be consistent evidence for connecting cover design with sales, there are theories which affirm Maxim's strategy. The sexual behavior sequence, a model developed by social psychology, explains responses to stimuli such as sexual arousal, thoughts, emotions, and actions. Magazine publishers construct covers that are sexually provocative and attention-getting precisely because they know this stimuli will increase the

likelihood of magazine purchases. Another useful theory set for explaining Maxim's success is that of selective influences, especially in terms of learned motivations that are acquired from cultural experiences and of uses and gratifications that readers cite as reasons for selecting media products.

Referents

Covers and the interchangeable, eroticized models featured on them must continue to generate traffic or the formula will change. While Details has dropped from the erotic repetition competition, the history of women's bodies objectified for consumption suggests that this formula continues to be stable. One theory about this formula provides a perspective about the powerful ways that women's bodies attract readership (or viewership) to men's magazines, as part of an economical exchange serving not desire but advertising culture. James Twitchell (1996) describes the institution of advertising in terms of cost externalization. He suggests that

> just as the 'work' you do at the self-service gas station lowers the price of gas, so consuming ads is the 'work' you do that lowers the price of this entertainment . . . . It is the basis of the fast-food industry. You order. You carry your food to the table. You clean up. You pay less. In Adcult, matters are more complex. True, you are entertained for less cost, but you are also encultured in the process. (p. 10)

These drive-by, consumable images on magazine covers, then, serve as objects or effects of desire, of dreaming of the sort recognized by McLuhan. And these images both reflect and change the dream of a macho culture looking for an economical way—both in monetary and emotional costs—to feed its fantasies. Much may be learned about macho culture from its objects of desire, namely that images of airbrushed, computer-enhanced women both pander to a supposed need for escape and provide escape.

One model and actor who has benefited from exploiting her own eroticized image on more than 300 magazine covers, Cindy Crawford, calls the part of herself that is a product "fast food,"

since much of her fame "comes from disposable pop culture. Literally disposable. You throw magazines away after a week or a month" (1995, Rensin, p. 51). She continues to shed clothing, despite her own substantial commercial success and contrary to the narrative of B-list actor climbs ladder and turns respectable. Of this stereotype, Crawford believes "[t]hey can't deal with a woman who has a serious career taking off her clothes and being sexy" ("America's premiere supermodel," 1998). Demi Moore, a one-time soap-starlet-turned-box-office powerhouse, also continues to position herself as eroticized object and to embrace this role in the public spaces of magazine covers. Of women like herself, Moore says, "[w]e do feel free when we look at a mirror and feel sensual. I'm not saying go out and strip for anybody. But if you feel comfortable enough to, then . . ." ("Special section," 1996).

Feminist studies have thoroughly addressed concerns about objectification of women's bodies and the damage this does to all women, even to those such as Crawford and Moore who embrace and exploit their objectification while keeping their power at least superficially intact. Their images, feminists would say, are representations "of a male-defined ideal; we might argue that men find it easier to 'consume' depersonalised images than to relate to 'real' women, and that this consumption enhances their perceptions of their own power" (Dickey, 1987, p. 75). These images, too, represent a larger phenomenon of women as willing, self-policing subjects. Sandra Lee Bartky calls this "a saving in the economy of enforcement: since it is women themselves who practice this discipline on and against their own bodies, men get off scot-free" (1988, p. 81). Maxim's interviews with women featured on its covers almost uniformly and explicitly express the "cooperative" nature of these representations, of publishers and models/actors working together to produce the ideal look. Interviews with Melissa Joan Hart, Jennifer Love Hewitt, and Lara Flynn Boyle (Figures 1-3) give just that impression. Their voices do change their own objectified images into speaking subjects; yet their stand-alone images on the cover still serve also as signs of oppression, of bodies without "self-defined desires" (Neal, 1992, p. 107). In offering their own

pillow-talk perspectives about their objectification, however, these models make their bodies-as-referents more ambiguous. They can be simultaneously looked at and looked through.

Another perspective about drive-by, consumable images is informed by postmodern writers DeLillo and Jean Baudrillard, especially in their focus on dissolving referents and endless simulations. In his novel *White Noise*, DeLillo imagines the most-photographed barn in America, and two of his main characters visit this tourist attraction to discuss its meaning. Their viewing of this over-exposed barn is a community experience, "a kind of spiritual surrender. We see only what the others see . . . . We've agreed to be part of a collective perception" (p. 12). In a sense, this tourist attraction affects viewers much as Maxim's covers do. Its repetitive representation has become a communal experience, a shared "aura," just as Maxim has become a "safe place for guys to be guys" (Blanchard, March 1998, p. 14). The magazine provides a repetitive visual vocabulary that simplifies a complex world into desiring males and desirable females, while DeLillo's barn evokes a false nostalgia. Just as DeLillo's barn "disappears" because of its overexposure, so do these magazine covers fade into a landscape of sex noise. Former Maxim/Details editor Golin can attest to disappearance into sex noise; he says that "after a year and a couple of month of Maxim, and I said this before, I don't want to see a flesh-colored crayon much less a naked woman anymore" since nearly nude women on magazine covers are "about as exciting as looking at the price of the magazine" (M82).

Like DeLillo's most photographed barn and Maxim's cover images, other objects have been "freed from their respective ideas, concepts, essences, values, points of reference, origins and aims" and have begun to "embark upon an endless process of self-reproduction" (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 6). He continues:

> Yet things continue to function long after their ideas have disappeared, and they do so in total indifference to their own content. The paradoxical fact is that they function even better under these circumstances. (p. 6)

For Baudrillard, a repetitive visual rhetoric is a rhetoric of disappearance, for "now all we can do is simulate the orgy, simulate liberation" (p. 3). In a postmodern world of erotic magazine covers, women are effects, stranded without a cause. In a world in which "[e]verything is destined to reappear as simulation," especially "women as the sexual scenario" (Baudrillard, 1989, p. 32), women are caught in the same old modernist poses. And men are caught in the same old modernist gazing.

Rhetorics

A previous editor-in-chief of Maxim called the magazine "a safe place for guys to be guys" (Blanchard, March 1998, p. 14), which suggests that real life is perceived as not so friendly to mostly white, heterosexual men. In fact, Maxim's demographics—and those of Details, GQ, Esquire, and even Rolling Stone—are based in a powerful block of likely college-educated, middle- to upper-middle-class, 20-somethings and 30-somethings that advertisers most covet, according to MRI data about subscribers. These magazines have served a portion of that American audience well, in terms of circulation. Yet, although there are real consumers for the magazine, the audience is narrowly constructed and idealized as part of a growing macho culture that has arisen in Westernized countries and is consumed worldwide through magazines, music, movies, and television programming. The magazine covers are simply one effect of that macho culture's reach and influence. And the repetitive cultural formula used on men's magazine covers is an old one.

While women have been depicted as sex objects since ancient times, so, too, have men been stereotyped as subjects interested primarily in sex. Aristotle writes about the character of particular male audiences (he doesn't discuss audiences other than those comprising men), in order to help would-be speakers choose the most favorable appeals. Young men (again, that powerful demographic), he writes, "are prone to desires and inclined to do whatever they desire. Of the desires of the body they are most inclined to pursue that relating to sex, and they are powerless against this" (1991 translation, p. 165). Aristotle advises that emotional appeals, then, should be

based in part on knowledge of these desires. The modern macho culture differs very little from Aristotle's perception in his own time, it would seem, though much about contemporary macho culture is ironically situated. Maxim's publisher, Lance Ford, objects to charges that the magazine appeals to "the lower common denominator. I say we aim for the largest. We're trying to create entertainment value. Make it short. Make it funny" (Germillion, 1997, p. 28). Golin says the magazine is "like your best buddy that your wife or girlfriends hates. But she can't actually scream at a magazine, so you're safe" (Newman, 1999, p. 46). It's important to remember, however, that this "funny" and "safe" environment also works to construct and constrict its audience, that "[m]edia industries and patriarchal differentiations work hand in hand to keep gender in line" (Steinman, 1992, p. 203). Part of the cultural work performed by Maxim's covers is the hardening of categories, the sanctioning of the male/female binary as true and good. And part of its cultural work is erasure through the sheer volume of sex noise.

Perhaps this is why Maxim's covers are so visually arresting, so terribly erotic, and so terribly predictable. Its successful strategy is in the mixing of old and new rhetorics, of nostalgia captured within the simulation. These covers are simultaneously liberating and enslaving for their subjects/objects, comforting and stimulating for their viewers, disturbing for their critics, and profit-making for their producers. As sex noise, these covers dissolve into a postmodern environment that is as full of ambivalence as it is full of erotic hustle. Attending to this noise and discerning its meanings may be as precarious as interpreting dreams, yet it is work that can tell us about human desires, media influence and effects, and a subconscious macho culture that is thriving at the newsstand and beyond.

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The Buccaneer as Cultural Metaphor:

Pirate Mythology in Nineteenth-Century American Periodicals

Submitted to the Cultural and Critical Studies Division

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ABSTRACT

Daring pirates-of-old hold a place of honor in collective public imagination, and the American press has passed along their romantic tales, amplifying and legitimizing them for a mass audience. This study traces the progression of buccaneer legendry in nineteenth-century American magazine articles, examining: (1) uses of history and memory, (2) pirate actions, (3) pirate attributes, and (4) deaths of the pirates. Each offers clues into a changing American press and culture.

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The sea, with its mythic villains and heroes, holds a significant place in mass media and in the American popular imagination, especially when the sea tales are of swashbuckling, rum-guzzling, treasure-hoarding pirates. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, more than 300 years after Henry Morgan terrorized the Spanish Main, even the respectable New York Times Magazine relies on a collective romantic notion of ancient pirates as metaphor when telling the story of modern sea bandits: "They travel on speedboats, not galleons. And they steal jet fuel and aluminum, not doubloons. But the inequities of the free-trade economy have led to the revival of piracy -- and like their swashbuckling ancestors, these thieves are willing to kill for their booty."[1] This metaphor has symbolic cultural significance, as do all such collectively held images, for as historian Richard Slotkin argues, "Metaphors are primitive hypotheses about the nature of reality."[2] He writes: "When we study cultural history we are examining the processes by which metaphors are generated, projected into a material world, and socially reified."[3] How did this metaphor, this collective hypothesis, evolve? Historically, pirates were not always presented as romantic villains. Colonial newspapers, including James Franklin's New England Courant,[4] published serious articles about piracy because, for them, pirates were not romantic; they were criminals who terrorized American coastlines and served as a real threat to lives and property. Yet half a century later, these outlaws would become central characters, almost heroes, of the collective imagination, presented and legitimized in mainstream media. And by the end of the nineteenth century they were caricatures embodying the stereotype of man as raging beast, almost superhuman.[5] This study seeks to examine this progression in buccaneer legendry by asking: How were pirates portrayed in nineteenth-century American periodicals?

THE PIRATES

Many colonial-era pirates were outlaws who fled to the New World in the mid to late 1600s; others were unemployed naval sailors who survived by attacking private, commercial vessels. Privateers, distinguished from pirates because they were authorized by governments to steal from enemy ships, sometimes overstepped their bounds and preyed upon friendly vessels.[6] In fact one of the most infamous pirates, Captain (William) Kidd, before succumbing to the temptations of a criminal life, was a legitimate privateer in the 1690s and actually commissioned by the government to help put an end to piracy. Privateering, once institutionalized as a patriotic service to England and America, was abolished in the early nineteenth century, and criminal piracy abated, too, though more slowly along the Carolina coast and in the Gulf of Mexico.[7] However the tales of pirates persisted, both of those who preyed on American coastlines and of others in Europe and the Orient. The early pirates were "ruthless, unprincipled and notorious for atrocities." Yet, by the mid-nineteenth century their mythology had come of age, with popular books on Blackbeard and Lafitte that described the "adventurers" as both despicable *and* admirable.[8]

THE PRESS

Why this transformation? Could it have been influenced by the rise of the mass press and its sensational crime coverage? Era observers might have agreed. For example, Anthony Comstock, founder of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, in 1883 lambasted sensational crime news, saying it glamorized criminals.[9] In fact such news was increasingly what a post-penny press offered the public. Elliott J. Gorn, in his 1992 study of the National Police Gazette, writes about the impact on late-century mainstream journalism of such sensational crime stories. "By the 1890s, the 'new journalism' practiced by the burgeoning dailies packaged the news as a series of melodramas and atrocities, of titillating events covered as spectacles, complete

with illustrations."[10] This new type of journalism might have influenced media portrayals of pirates and their criminal activities/adventures on the high seas, adding layers of melodrama and focusing on the spirited telling of the tales. Hazel Dicken-Garcia has pointed to major transformations in press content during the nineteenth century, with the earliest decades as "idea centered; by mid-century as event centered; and by the 1890s, an amalgam of event, idea, and 'story or drama.'"[11] As press content was changing, its audience was growing, though the development of true *mass* media with a national market was not complete until the 1890s. (The magazine was the first medium to reach that national audience).[12] Of course, articles about pirates made up only a tiny portion of media content, yet an analysis of the transformations of pirate stories in nineteenth-century magazine articles could add another layer of understanding to the history of U.S. mainstream media and its interconnection with a fascinating and ever-evolving American culture.

NEWS AS METAPHOR

Twentieth-century scholars have looked to crime news as a way to understand a society's dominant ideology. As Michael Welch, et.al., point out in the study "Primary Definitions of Crime and Moral Panic," crime threatens, but also reaffirms the collective morality.[13] The late nineteenth-century press was filled with stories of criminals. Paul I. Wellman, writing about the post Civil War outlaws of the American West, notes that the "dislocations of that conflict brought a wave of lawlessness that transcended all expectations in the length of time it lasted, and in the number of successive generations in which it perpetuated itself as a noteworthy dynasty of outlawry."[14] Outlaws fascinated the American public, and the press was getting more adept at telling stories of their exploits. Kent Steckmesser argues that journalists have made "significant contributions in the 'Robinhooding' of American outlaws," framing them as folk heroes and champions of the

oppressed.[15]

Such media "frames," defined by Gitlin as "principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters,"[16] can offer clues historically about a collective American culture undergoing massive changes. For example, numerous scholars have explored the "crisis of masculinity" at the end of the nineteenth century, when the mythological frontier closed, old values of individualism vanished and rapid industrialism altered the definition of manhood. George L. Mosse, in The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity, notes that the years from 1870 until World War I:

> gave a new impetus to both masculinity and its countertype... The enemies of modern, normative masculinity seemed everywhere on the attack: women were attempting to break out of their traditional role... labor unrest, the rise of the socialist movement, prolonged economic crises, and new technologies that once more seemed to speed up time itself added to the anxieties of the upper and middle classes by the end of the century.[17]

Peter G. Filene notes: "The concept of manliness was suffering strain in all its dimensions -- in work and success, in familial patriarchy, and in the area that Victorian America did not often discuss aloud, sexuality."[18] The impact of the masculinity crisis on crime stories of the "wild west" is well documented, but the banditry of such characters as Jesse James and Cherokee Bill was not the only story. Swashbuckling pirates portrayed in the media had many of the rogue qualities of the Western outlaw, yet the passage of time had shrouded them in the mist of legend. Pirate stories were almost nostalgic reminiscences of a manly and independent lifestyle and might offer insight into some of the cultural anxieties of this tumultuous era.

PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Indeed, nostalgia would play a key factor in media "coverage" of piracy because the nineteenth-century press offered pirate fare nearly a century after the virtual extinction of the actual criminals, and that time lapse would almost certainly affect the way pirates were portrayed. Such pirate stories would have been more often based on history and legend than on any kind of then current event. Thus, an analysis of such articles could offer insight into another important aspect of American culture, its public consciousness. News media help build such collective consciousness. The press, Schudson notes, "constructs a symbolic world that has a kind of priority, a certification of legitimate importance.... And that symbolic world... becomes the property of all of us."[19] Thus articles about pirate adventures, told generations after they supposedly occurred, could offer a prime opportunity to examine not only collective values and morality, but a type of collective folk memory as well. John Gillis argues that memory is not a fixed thing, but a representation of the subjective construction of reality,[20] and Michael Kammen reminds that the distortion of memories can "serve as a panacea in an age of anxiety."[21] Romantic stories about the sea could serve a cultural and even a nationalist need for Americans who never laid eyes on a galleon. Marcus Rediker writes in Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea:

> There is something deeply stirring about the image of agile, determined seamen scuttling up and down a ship's mast in foamy, rolling seas, battling the winds, the waves, and the odds to eke out a living. Such an image commands attention, respect, even awe, particularly in a nation like the United States, bred on frontier heroes and the adventurous, sometimes vicious conquest of nature.[22]

As the frontier closed, Americans probably longed for such stories of adventure and conquest, and as they worked increasingly in cities and factories, they might have sought out a different kind of role model. Edward Tabor Linenthal, in "From Hero to Anti-Hero," traces the transformation of

the symbolic warrior in America and notes that American warriors were common men created instantaneously as adversity demanded, "unspoiled by the professional nature of European warriors." [23] The unpopular War of 1812 and the mass destruction of the Civil War changed American notions about the warrior as individual hero engaged in personal struggle. Warriors, he notes, underwent trials of the hero, yet "troubling ruminations about the nature of heroism and sacrifice began during the Civil War...a war in which glorious images of war existed in tension with the development of weapons of mass destruction."[24] The rogue pirate, a true anti-hero with qualities both dark and heroic, might have offered a safe way to explore such tensions, appealing to a nation struggling with the aftermath of civil strife. In fact, scholars have noted that "interaction between ideological currents and everyday social life, primarily brought about by large scale and mass media forms of communication," created the conditions for the emergence of national myths at century's end.[25]

FOLKLORE AND MYTH

Pirate stories of the nineteenth century could also fall into the category of folklore, embodying the basic definition of a legend. William Bascom, who sought to categorize forms of prose narrative, writes that legends, like myths, "are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but (legends) are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today."[26] Myth-legends, he writes, "are spoken of as 'histories' and are regarded as historically true."[27] Yet often the evidence needed to back up those legends is hard to find, and thus their credibility as accurate historical accounts should be considered dubious at best. As one scholar points out, "Legends are better characterized as historicized narrative."[28] And myths "become part of the language, as a deeply encoded set of metaphors that may contain all of the 'lessons' we have learned from our history, and all of the essential elements of our world view," notes Slotkin.

"Myth exists for us as a set of keywords which refer us to our traditions... And although these signals are brief, they are packed with information."[29] The presentation of any type of news story is intrinsically linked to memory, culture and collective meaning. Thus, mass media, in the retelling of pirate adventures and atrocities, could have added to the mythology of the buccaneers-of-old, all the while offering more clues about the changing culture of nineteenth-century America than about the actual pirates whose lives and deaths they vividly recounted.

METHODS

Twentieth century scholars mention links between the mass media and the changing persona of the pirate,[30] but no one has examined over time, as primary sources, mainstream press articles about pirates and piracy to analyze this changing persona and its significance in journalism history and public consciousness. This study traces press reports of piracy in the nineteenth century to see how these maritime criminals were portrayed, whether that portrayal changed, and how the coverage reflects buccaneer legendry. It examines all nineteenth-century articles listed under the terms pirate, piracy, buccaneer and privateer and others under specific pirate names such as Henry Morgan, Blackbeard, William Kidd and Jean Lafitte in American publications included in Poole's Index and Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. In all, 64 articles were examined, including five from 1800 to 1820; nine from 1821 to 1840; fifteen from 1841 to 1860; eight from 1861 to 1880 (the decreasing numbers here likely due to coverage of the Civil War and its aftermath); and twenty-seven from 1881 to 1899, reflecting a mostly increasing interest in pirate stories as the century progressed. This study notes the changes in pirate stories throughout the century, yet will focus on their cultural significance mainly in the last two decades when both the numbers of pirate stories and the magazine audiences were gaining in numbers. Primary sources examined included articles from a diverse group of general interest and historical publications: The American Historical Record, Atlantic Monthly, Brownson's Quarterly Review, Catholic World,

Century Magazine, The Chautauquan, Continental Monthly, DeBow's Commercial Review, Eclectic Magazine, Galaxy, Harper's Monthly, Hunt's Merchants Magazine, Lippincott's Magazine, Littell's Living Age, Magazine of American History, Munsey's Magazine, Museum of Foreign Literature, National Magazine, New England Historical and Genealogical Register, New England Magazine, Niles' Register, North American Review, Overland Monthly, Political Science Quarterly, The Sewanee Review and Southern Literary Messenger. Magazines are the chosen medium because of their prominence and popularity in the era and because they were the only medium seeking a truly national audience in the middle to the end of the century. Tom Pendergast notes, in Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture: "The magazine became the first true vehicle of mass culture in America, a medium that reached people of all classes all over the nation."[31] This study examines content of these articles in four specific framing categories: (1) uses of history and memory, (2) pirate actions, (3) pirate attributes, and (4) deaths of the pirates. Each category should offer clues into the how media portrayal of pirates changed and reflected a changing American press and culture.

HISTORY AND MEMORY IN PIRATE COVERAGE

These nineteenth-century magazine articles about pirates and privateers examined the uses of history and warned of a type of memory distortion. They discussed the validity of sources of information about piracy, traced the evolution of maritime law, spoke of the need to find the proper place in history for particular characters, and explored collective notions about pirates, including the origin of the word "buccaneer."[32]

Such articles began as early as 1820 when the North American Review examined the history of "privateering." The article argued against the morality of legal privateering and compared it to piracy, with its "root and origin in the general license of plundering, which we justly regard as the vice of a barbarous age."[33] Yet by 1856, as civil war loomed, privateers became the heroes of

history, not the villains. "Your naval heroes are sung, why not your irregular ones? They too, 'brave the battle and the breeze,' and should have their share of honor."[34] For example, Littell's Living Age in 1857 argued that privateering under the flag of the United States had "ever been conducted with as much humanity, gallantry and moral propriety as by the most chivalrous naval commanders of the present or past time."[35] The memory of these privateers had been transformed from pirate to patriot to fit then current needs of a nation preparing for war.

Histories of pirates were not so cut-and-dried. Magazines by 1834 had begun warning readers to beware of the historical sources of information in published pirate stories. As the Museum of Foreign Literature argued: "There is no occasion to resort to poets while the best historians are so pregnant with proofs respecting this practice."[36] The histories, according to this magazine, are exciting enough, abounding with "daring actions, stained by cruel ferocity, and the accounts given by the buccaneers are so well authenticated as to leave no fact in doubt."[37] Yet facts were in doubt. Hunt's Merchants Magazine in 1846, attempting to set the record straight about the over-exaggerated career of Captain Kidd, told readers to rely more on "traditionary evidence," rather than "memory alone," which is "liable to draw to itself the speculations and surmises of each narrator, until they become impressions, and by that means are finally incorporated with it. Especially is this true, of the strange or the marvelous."[38] Articles seemed particularly concerned about the credibility of information published about specific pirates. For example, the reputation of Jean Lafitte, the pirate smuggler who helped protect the port of New Orleans during the War of 1812, was the topic of much discussion in the 1850s, more than twenty-five years after his death in the mid-1820s. Lafitte's "name and deeds had resounded over every land and sea," according to the New Orleans-based DeBow's Southern and Western Review in 1851 and his memory was "justly cherished by the Americans."[39] But Littell's Living Age in 1852 held a different view of

Lafitte and the "imaginary compositions.... scattered through the newspapers and periodicals...which are melo-dramatically worked up in incidents connected with a freebooter's life."[40] The magazine assured readers its sources were "principally from official documents of the United States, from conversations with persons who served under (Lafitte), and from others who knew him."[41] Yet this reliance on official sources did not dissuade Littell's from embellishing the tale a bit, offering unattributed descriptions of the raucous activities in the pirates' lair:

> The return of the buccaneers to their stronghold of Barataria, after a successful cruise, would be hailed with outrageous joy; the plunder would be divided, the orgies would commence, and, as a retributive finale, would be wound up with an occasional stab, or fatal duel.[42]

DeBow's was quick to reassure readers that it was presenting "authentic history" when it returned to the subject of Lafitte in 1855, and it criticized the "idle fictions by which the taste of the youth of this country is vitiated, and history outraged and perverted."[43] Lafitte, the magazine insisted, was "more of a patriot than a pirate."[44] By 1883, the Magazine of American History was still concerned about the validity of sources about Lafitte, arguing: "Most that is now current... is derived from unreliable babblers."[45] It, too, reassured readers that it would "relate only what is based on authentic records,"[46] yet admitted that the noble goal of accuracy was probably in vain. "The human mind craves for the sensational. Hence it is natural that the Lafittes of romance should ever be preferred to the Lafittes of history."[47]

Indeed, by the end of the century, magazines had moved pirate stories squarely into the genre of legend. For example, articles published in Lippincott's Magazine and The Galaxy Miscellany in 1869 talked of Kidd's reputation "in the nursery legend, in story and in song"[48] and

described him as "well known, and yet unknown, holding the anomalous position of one who is much talked of but little understood....Perhaps his virtues are as apocryphal as his gold."[49] Harper's New Monthly Magazine in 1887 lamented that Kidd, once "the very hero of heroes of piratical fame," had been relegated to the dull ranks of respectable people. Blackbeard, the article noted, was different:

> For in him we have a real ranting, raging, roaring pirate per se -- one who really did bury treasure, who made more than one captain walk the plank, and who committed more private murders than he could number on the fingers of both hands; one who fills, and will continue to fill, the place to which he has been assigned for generations, and who may be depended upon to hold his place in the confidence of others for generations to come.[50]

Buccaneer Henry Morgan's "very name spread such terror abroad that with it old women frightened their children to sleep, and then lay awake themselves through fear."[51] A pirate ship called "The Terror" as well as "her bloody-hearted commander" belonged to "a nightmare story of the past."[52] Moslem pirates were said to fill the pages of European history "full of wild romance and stirring adventure;"[53] Oriental pirates inhabited "a vast group of half-fabulous isles... midway between the territories of history and romance."[54] And annals of the pirates of the Spanish Main were said to "have all the excitement of romance coupled with the recommendations of verity."[55] As author Tighe Hopkins wrote in Littell's Living Age in 1891: "Certainly there is something fabulous about the history of the pirates. This, perhaps, is not to be wondered at when one remembers that an air of fable surrounded the pirates themselves."[56] The journal The Sewanee Review in 1892 lamented that the pirates of American history had been, "by common consent,

relegated to the role of heroes of mediocre, blood-and-thunder novels."[57] The article noted:

> The few historians who have condescended to touch the subject at all, have not considered it of sufficient importance to warrant any original research, but have consented in every instance to the use of second-hand materials, and the result has been that they have fallen into repeated errors.[58]

The nineteenth-century magazines examined did repeat numerous pirate tales, especially of more famous adventurers such as Morgan, Kidd, Francois L'Olonoise and Lafitte. And articles did emphasize the romantic and sensational aspects of piracy all the while questioning the historical accuracy of the pirate legends that filled the pages of both news publications and novels of the era.

PIRATE ACTIONS

Actions of pirates written about in these nineteenth-century periodicals did change throughout the course of the century. As the decades passed, the characters became more brave, successful, cruel, and organized, and their stories filled with more atrocities and adventure.

The earliest accounts of pirate actions described those of crooks, cowards and petty thugs. Niles' Register in 1818 reported about pirates who robbed defenseless women and children[59] and others who, at knife point, stole money and spoons from male passengers.[60] (Pirate "treasure," reported in the 1820s would have been hardly worth burying; American products "but recently taken," included hats from New York, shoes, flour, rice, cheese and butter.[61]) A pirate described in 1827 poisoned sailors' eggs to gain control of a ship, and he was cowardly enough to blame an innocent cook for the deed, watching in silence as the cook was hanged.[62] An article in 1821 argued for capital punishment for pirates and spoke of acts of cowardice and cruelty when pirates shut all passengers, male and female, under the deck of a ship and then sank it to elude detection.[63] And rather than standing and fighting to the death when under siege from authorities, these early

pirates instead jumped ship and hid in the bushes to escape detection.[64] They were not invincible. Many were either slain at sea, or captured and then hanged.[65]

However, by the 1830s, when articles about pirates began looking to "history," not to any current misdeeds, the pirates became more fearless, romantic and stereotypical. In 1834, the Museum of Foreign Literature, recalled the pirates of 80 B.C., who began "the horrible custom which has been maintained among pirates till the latest times -- that now called 'walking a plank.'"[66] Far from being cowards, these buccaneers of history, portrayed in the 1830s, "would attack the largest vessels, overpowering them with a desperate bravery which nothing could withstand. Thus they fought their way to riches and power."[67] Articles featured lengthy accounts of attacks and exploits, when pirates displayed "recklessness of danger, that fearlessness of death,"[68] and described unimaginable treasures. For example, the value of just the pearls stolen in one prize was estimated at 100,000 pieces of eight.[69] In 1851, DeBow's teased readers, telling them that gold bars of great value, concealed by the infamous Lafitte, had been discovered among the islands of Barataria. Likely there were plenty more. As the article noted: "Lafitte is said to have spent sixty thousand dollars in fashionable society during a short stay at Washington City."[70] And the loot became more and more impressive as the century progressed. According to Harper's New Monthly in 1887: "The buccaneers thought no more of a doubloon than of a Lima bean."[71] The magazine computed a "reasonable figure" of the various prizes won by Henry Morgan in the East Indies at $3,650,000.[72] Gold was important, as the Atlantic Monthly illustrated in the only fictional account of piracy in the articles examined: "For pirates like good broad pieces, fit to skim flat-spun across the waves, or play pitch-and-toss with for men's lives or women's loves."[73]

To what uses did pirates put their treasures? Magazines in the 1830s began describing the

remarkable antics of freebooters, fresh from their voyages of plunder:

> Immediately on their landing, tables covered with delicacies, strong liquors, play, music, and dancing, occupied all their time. Depraved women of all nations, and of all colours, induced by avarice and dissoluteness, constituted the principal charm, as well as the chief danger of the tumultuous orgies.[74]

Thus it was not surprising that Morgan's immense treasure, divided among his followers, lasted but a short time. "The seamen, in the course of a few weeks, were utterly destitute."[75] Yet other pirates "retired with great wealth, amalgamated with dusky daughters... imitated the habits of eastern princes in erected walled palaces... and raised a hybrid progeny."[76] When Lafitte's men returned from a cruise, "there were taverns, billiard rooms and 'groggeries' for their enjoyment; and gambling was a favorite amusement with them."[77] Thus, by 1893, Littell's Living Age in the article "Byways to Fortune -- By Sea," was able to describe rather wistfully the pirate's life on land:

> By night as well as by day is a more or less subdued roar of mad revelry. Old friends, animated by the memories of common dangers and common crimes, come together in unexpected meetings... Kegs of rum are ever on tap, and strong punch is simmering in steaming caldrons... The dens are filled with troops of black and coffee-colored Delilahs; and the more strong-headed of the revelers are thumbing greasy cards or casting the dice on the tables or the top of a spirit-cask.[78]

The "work" of the pirate was difficult and dangerous, but to the magazine reader at the end of the nineteenth-century, the freedom and rewards of a sea-robber's life just might have seemed worth the sacrifice.

Over time the descriptions of pirate cruelties also became more and more vivid. Prisoners

might have pled for their lives, but to no avail.[79] For example, the French pirate L'Olonoise "cut open the breast of a Spaniard, and, tearing out the heart, actually gnawed it between his teeth with the savage ferocity of a wolf" according to the Museum of Foreign Literature in 1837 and Littell's Living Age in 1891.[80] Henry Morgan's followers tortured a poor Englishman who lived on alms and slept at a hospital: "So they lit a fire of palm-leaves, tossed the poor idiot into it, and burnt him to death."[81] Unfortunate prisoners who would not tell where treasures were hidden were hoisted by their arms and beaten,[82] or were choked with slender cords until "their eyes burst from their sockets."[83] One English merchant skipper had his ears lopped off and was made to eat them "with pepper and salt."[84] Captain Kidd ran a sword through a child who had been left by his mother.[85] And "old men and young children and maidens, were hacked and hewed, stretched on the rack, crushed, mutilated, hanged, roasted, tormented by every devise of human cruelty."[86] Performing such acts only made the pirates stronger, less fearful that they themselves might meet a violent end. According to Littell's Living Age in 1848: "They habituated themselves to look on wounds, and blood, and torture, and the miseries of captivity, without the least emotion; and when their turn came to suffer or to die, they went through the ceremony with complete indifference."[87]

Despite such acts of wanton cruelty and mad revelry, pirates portrayed in mid- to late-century American periodicals were not without discipline or organizational skills, the same skills valued by the industrial-age magazine readers. Such descriptions also began as early as the 1830s, when articles began listing the pirates' binding customs. For example, it was a crime in the pirate community to bring a woman or young lad on board ship, or to desert an assigned post -- these infractions were punishable by death.[88] Articles included lengthy descriptions of the rules for dividing spoils, including saving a dead pirate's portion for his family, "or if they knew nothing of

his relatives, it was distributed among the poor and to the churches."[89] Such articles likened the pirates to businessmen and these actions to paying "debts of honor -- such as the brokers of Wall street would note as 'confidential.' Their intercourse with each other was marked with civility and kindness."[90] In fact, the pirates were said to be friends to the legitimate businessmen of southern Louisiana or Carolina who lived near the hideouts. They scattered "their gold and silver about with so generous a hand that their appearance soon came to be welcomed by the trading classes."[91] The Continental Monthly in 1863 assured readers that the pirates were Christians who "never partook of a repast without solemnly acknowledging their dependence upon the Giver of all good."[92] The pirate Morgan might have "abandoned himself to debauchery," but he would not defile a "pious woman."[93] Pirates assembled in bodies and framed codes of laws to regulate their conduct towards each other.[94] And mid-century recollections of captains such as Lafitte, L'Olonoise or Morgan said they displayed enviable leadership skills -- they were powerful orators[95] who sustained undisputed authority by terrible example.[96] By 1892, Littell's Living Age described the pirate community as nothing less than a floating republic, with a complex set of rules, "perfect equality" and "remarkable brotherhood."[97] The magazine warned: "The spirit of adventure when uncontrolled by law is certain to run to riotous excess and unrestrained passion."[98] Thus, in an era when the value of association was rising, and the skills of the captains of industry in demand, these pirate captains were true leaders. And their followers were members of communities that were raucous but decidedly unchaotic.

PIRATE ATTRIBUTES

What attributes of pirates were portrayed in these nineteenth-century magazine articles? Both physical descriptions and traits of character became more sensational, romantic and even

mythical as the century progressed.

Articles published from 1800 through the 1820s described the pirates as villains, "sea banditti," violent, wretches, cold-blooded, cautious, fugitives, shrewd, wicked, vile rabble, and the scourge and disgrace of humanity.[99] These criminals had lost their habits of industry, their hearts hardened by "habitual depravity."[100] Only one article used a non-human descriptor; the pirate Tardy was said to be "cool as a demon."[101]

Yet beginning in the 1830s, new descriptors began appearing. Articles spoke of the "spirit and hardihood" of pirates, "a courage that defied all danger."[102] While they were still savages, desperados, lawless ravagers and "water-rats," they also were "full of justice and honour to each other."[103] In the 1840s, they were "distinguished... for skill and bravery" and noted for "Spartan heroism."[104] Magazines of the 1850s described the American pirate Lafitte as commanding, firm, courageous, magnanimous, professional, chivalric, restless, hardy, famous, able, courageous, daring, a good swordsman, an unerring shot, a gentleman, adventurous, and a patriot.[105] Other pirates, too, were "wild rovers in search of adventure," hearty and merry men.[106] Harper's New Monthly Magazine painted them as almost super-human: "The buccaneers had brought their bodies into such a healthy condition, that their flesh closed on a wound like an elastic substance, and diseases were unknown among them."[107] During the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, articles continued to mix traits both admirable and despicable, describing the pirates as heroes and fiends, and they portrayed them as being apart from human. "They were like a band of monkeys," "blood-stained, powder-grimed devils," with "blood never moved by one single pulse of human warmth."[108] By the last decade of the century, some historical pirates were described as able businessmen and keen traders.[109] Still the pirates were a mixture of good and evil, described as delightful fellows and as

bloody parasites, as blasphemous men who maintained a sense of decency and discipline.[110] And they, too, were portrayed in non-human terms, as "ocean wolves."[111]

Likewise, the physical descriptions of pirates changed as the century progressed. In the first two decades, pirates were not particularly colorful. Two named Courro and Pepe were described in Niles' Register in 1827: "The former has nothing striking in his countenance except the length and monotony of the face... Pepe is short of stature."[112] The pirate Tardy wore a blue frock coat, carried a small cane, and was said to have "a genteel appearance and a good address."[113] Yet pirates portrayed in magazine articles in later decades were quite picturesque. According to various accounts, they dressed in shirts and drawers dipped in the blood of animals, wore shoes without stockings and leather girdles upon which their knives and sabers were suspended, [114] and they "dispensed with the use of brush and comb, as if pledged... to the preservation of vermin."[115] They were "a rough-and-tumble dare-devil bushy-bearded set of men."[116] Indeed, the infamous Blackbeard had:

> ...that large quantity of hair which, like a frightful meteor, covered his whole face, and frightened America more than any comet that appeared... in a long time. He was accustomed to twist it with ribbons into small tails...and turn them about his ears. In time of action he wore a sling over his shoulders, with three braces of pistols, hanging in holsters like bandoleers; he struck lighted matches under his hat which, appearing on each side of his face, and his eyes naturally looking fierce and wild, made him altogether such a figure that imagination cannot form an idea of a Fury from hell to look more frightful.[117]

Magazines in the latter two decades, especially Harper's New Monthly, began including

illustrations, artist renderings, with these articles, perhaps further cementing the image of the pirate in the minds of readers. And as magazines relied on history and memory to tell stories of piracy, and as the pirates' actions and attributes became more fierce and fiendish, these characters "of history and romance" began more and more to look the part of legends.

PIRATE DEATHS

But the pirates were mortals, and the reporting of their deaths also changed as the century progressed -- the earlier pirates typically died at the hands of authorities while later ones met their fate in the heat of battle.

Niles' Register in 1823 argued that acts of piracy should be punishable by death and spoke out against a senate resolution to modify the sentence: "The punishment of death is inflicted upon pirates by all civilized nations; notwithstanding which (piracy) is a growing evil."[118] The Register also reported on the continuing executions of twenty-eight pirates who had been captured in South America. "Those already executed have been beheaded and quartered, and their parts sent to all the small ports... to be exhibited."[119] Yet the Register seemed to admit a grudging respect for the death of the leader of this gang : "The celebrated Cofrecinas refused to be blindfolded, saying, that he himself had murdered at least three or four hundred persons, and it would be strange if, by this time, he should not know how to die."[120]

Articles published in the 1830s and beyond told how pirate communities executed their own for breaking the codes or rules of the group. Some were killed instantly, while others were "beached," or left on desert islands without clothing or sustenance.[121] The pirates who lost their lives in battle or who were executed by government authorities were fearless and even displayed "coolness and jocularity in the extremity of a fearful death." As Littell's Living Age explained: "Brave men... Always die in much the same manner when their passions are excited, or when the

necessity comes for meeting their fate. The consciousness of a life of blood does not appear to daunt them."[122] But it was best for the pirate to die "in the fight."[123] And most met violent ends, as one article explained in 1891: "Not one noted pirate in a hundred died betwixt the sheets."[124]

Of particular interest were the deaths of famous pirate leaders. The execution of Captain Kidd by hanging in England was well documented,[125] but the fate of others was not as certain. The treacherous Morgan was said to have "passed his latter days in undeserved peace and tranquility;" yet another article reported that he died after he was imprisoned in the Tower of London.[126] Several articles told of L'Olonoise's fate at the hands of Indians -- The Museum of Foreign Literature in 1837 said he was "burnt alive" while Harper's New Monthly Magazine in 1855 offered an even more gruesome account: "(L'Olonoise) fell with all his men, into the hands of that horrible race, the Darien Indians... was instantly killed, chopped up, and eaten as a hash. A fit end for such a hero!"[127] Littell's Living Age reported that Lafitte died following an illness in Yucatan,[128] while DeBow's Southern and Western Review gave the pirate-smuggler a more fitting end, in the heat of battle:

> Lafitte fell back exhausted to the deck. Again reviving with the convulsive grasp of death he essayed again to plunge the dagger into the heart of the foe, but as he held it over his breast, the effort to strike burst asunder the slender ligament of life, and Lafitte was no more.[129]

And Blackbeard, according to an account published in 1887, displayed almost superhuman strength when he died at sea:

> Blackbeard had been shot through the body, but he was not for giving up for that -- not he. As said before, he was one of the true roaring, raging breed of pirates, and stood up to it until he received twenty more cutlass cuts and five additional shots,

and then fell dead while trying to fire off an empty pistol.[130]

As Blackbeard illustrates, not only did the lives and the attributes of remembered pirates become more romantic and sensational as the century progressed, so too did their deaths. And as these differing accounts of the deaths of Morgan, Lafitte, and L'Olonoise indicate, historical accuracy in these nineteenth-century articles, which were presented as truth, was less important than the telling of a good tale.

CONCLUSION

The persona of the pirate did change as did the American press in the nineteenth century. An examination of these articles about piracy published in periodicals listed in Poole's Index and Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature points to the 1830s, a decade scholars have traditionally designated as the beginning of a more sensationalist press in the United States, as the turning point. And by the end of the century, just as Gorn noted, these stories were presented as melodrama, replete with titillating events and atrocities. However, as this study shows, this post-penny shift in press content (from idea to event centered) tells only part of the story. When these periodicals began looking to "history and memory" as fodder for their articles, the pirates became more sensational and mythical, both in person and action. Many articles reassured readers about the historical accuracy of the content, yet were these articles credible? Scholars who have written about the emerging historical profession in the United States note that although American universities had turned out more than 200 doctorates in history by 1900, the training those historians received "was usually not very impressive."[131] Even era scholars conceded that the work was "second-class."[132] In addition, by the 1840s American historical writing had entered a classic phase, when history was regarded as a branch of literature.[133] Thus it is not surprising that, even if the articles in these magazines were written by either professional or amateur historians

(rather than journalists), they still tended, much like news content of the era, more toward "story or drama."

There were likely strong cultural reasons for the changing nature of the pirate as well. As Joel L. Dubbert writes: "Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the masculine power structure had been assaulted by the women's rights movement, the problems of an intensely competitive individualistic economic system, and the emergence of a technological urban civilization."[134] He notes that the old paradigm of masculine dominance was vanishing by 1900, fostering social tension, and the old ideas about differences in men and women, their separate spheres, only added to men's frustrations. "In the 1890s it was claimed, women were socializers, but the male's peculiar sense of destiny left him with a 'wandering, capricious disposition.' Men preferred to be alone, with other men, or best of all, 'out in the open air, as it were, roughing it among the rough as a mental tonic'... American men seemed bewildered by the home and the women in it."[135] While woman was the moral center of the home, man was a "ravaging beast,"[136] who, as bread the winner, "struggled against his fellow man and natural forces."[137] Yet by the end of the century, with rapid industrialism pushing America to the brink of a reform era, it was difficult for a man to achieve satisfaction merely as a breadwinner. As Filene notes: "The unchecked lust of robber barons had impaired the Victorian definition of public manhood."[138] The divorce rate, too, increased between 1880 and 1916, from one per twenty-one marriages to one per nine. Dubbert says: "The rate rose most sharply during the 1880s."[139] Thus, it is not surprising that the storied pirates lived among men, and by men's rules, conquering with ease the dusky women of exotic locales and gathering riches through unfettered brutality.

Indeed, by the final decades of the century magazine articles had moved pirates into the genre of legend, presenting these riotous tales as "truth" despite worries about historical accuracy.

The pirates became practically invincible, almost non-human. Pirates of later decades were portrayed as more daring, better leaders and more organized, belonging to utopian communities that were "floating republics." Their loot of spoons, cheese and butter in the 1820s became massive treasures of jewels, doubloons and pieces of eight by the 1890s. Their activities became more riotous as they drank casks of rum, plundered, gambled and cavorted, and they began to look more and more ferocious, with great twisted beards and clothing stained with blood. They committed horrible acts of cruelty, but lived in perfect harmony with each other. And most died in battle, not one in a hundred "betwixt the sheets." In short, they were perfect anti-heroes in an increasingly industrial age, when Americans began working in factories and moving to urban centers. As middle-class Americans began losing their autonomy, they might have longed for the free and adventurous life of the pirate at sea. And as those late nineteenth-century readers perhaps chafed under the constraints of Victorian-era rules of moral conduct and racial association, they just might have envied the mad revelry of the pirate's lair.

As Gillis suggested, collective consciousness is not fixed, but is subjective; such romantic stories could have served collective needs of the era, the legends a type of metaphor for the age. And post-Civil War America was changing, not just politically and economically, but culturally as well. Morone has noted that Americans began replacing a sense of individualism with one of community, and these pirate stories do reflect the tensions between the two.[140] The pirates embodied good and evil, were described as delightful, heroic fellows and as bloody parasites, as blasphemous yet disciplined members of a brotherhood. Historian T.J. Jackson Lears has written about the transformation of American culture at the end of the nineteenth century, and notes that Americans began to feel as if they were secret victims of modern culture, recoiling from an "overcivilized" existence. "Antimodernism," he notes, "was not simply escapism; it was ambivalent, often coexisting with enthusiasm for material progress."[141] The pirates were happily

uncivilized, yet their stories did reflect such an enthusiasm for material progress -- both in the descriptions of riches, in the notion that pirates were friends of the trading classes, and in the ruthless business and leadership skills embodied by the pirate leaders.

Articles sometimes referred to the pirates of literature, of the "blood-and-thunder novels." And era novels and published historical biographies likely helped contribute to an American collective notion of pirates. But magazines were a pervasive part of middle-class American culture, especially at the end of the century, and thus they also would have contributed to the building of the mythology of the pirate for a national audience. As Slotkin notes, the media influences culture, competing with more traditional folkore "from a position of ubiquitous and overwhelming strength."[142] These pirates never reached the pinnacle of the Western outlaws as icons of the American imagination, perhaps because many were not Americans nor were they portrayed as champions of the poor. Yet their stories, amplified and legitimized in the American mass media, do offer insight into a changing culture and the fascinating evolution of collective thought. Thus, as these nineteenth-century magazine articles illustrate, the pirates of romance might indeed be preferred to the pirates of history.

ENDNOTES

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6.For a discussion of the historical significance of privateering, see Gary M. Anderson and Adam Gifford Jr., "Privateering and the Private Production of Naval Power," Cato Journal 11:1 (Spring/Summer 1991): 99-122.

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11.Hazel Dicken-Garcia, Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth Century America (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 63.

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28. Timothy R. Tangherlini, "'It Happened Not Too Far From Here...': A Survey of Legend Theory and Characterization," Western Folklore 49 (October 1990): 379.

29. Slotkin, 16.

30.See, for example, Simon Smith, "Piracy in early British America," History Today 46:5 (May 1996): 29-37.

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32. According to numerous articles, the name "buccaneer" originally referred to hunters of wild boars in St. Domingo. These outdoorsmen, who dried or smoked the flesh in the manner of the Indians to sell to people in neighboring settlements, lived in huts called "buccans" and were so terrorized by the Spaniards that they eventually took to the sea to earn a living and to seek revenge on their tormentors. As an example of this explanation, see "Pirates and Piracy from the Earliest Ages, The Filibusteers and Buccaneers," Museum of Foreign Literature 26 (March 1835): 266-272.

33. "Privateering," North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal 11:166 (July 1820): 181.

34. "A History of American Privateers," Littell's Living Age 50 (23 August 1856): 506.

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38. "The Piracy of Captain Kidd," Hunt's Merchants Magazine 14:1 (January 1846): 50.

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57. "Early Piracy and Colonial Commerce, " The Sewanee Review 1:1 (November 1892): 52.

58. Ibid., 53.

59. See "South America," Niles' Register (1 August 1818): 392.

60. "South American Affairs," Niles' Register (11 July 1818): 242.

61."Capture of Pirates, & c.," Niles' Register (30 April 1825): 139.

62. "Piracy and Murder," Niles' Register (30 June 1827): 303.

63. "Punishment of Piracy," Niles' Register (24 March 1821): 59-60.

64. "Capture of Pirates, & c.," 139.

65. See "South American Affairs," 242; "Capture of Pirates, & c.," 138-142; and "The Pirates of Cuba," Niles' Register (7 December 1822): 211-212.

66. "Pirates and Piracy from the Earliest Ages," Museum of Foreign Literature, Science & Art 25 (October 1834): 330.

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68. "The History of the Bucaniers," Museum of Foreign Literature, Science and Art 31 (January 1837): 4.

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77. "Life of Jean Lafitte, The Pirate of the Mexican Gulf," 441.

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100. See "Privateering," North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal 11 (July 1820): 188.

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102. "Pirates and Piracy from the Earliest Ages," Museum of Foreign Literature, Science and Art

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103."The History of the Bucaniers," 1-11.

104. "The Piracy of Captain Kidd," 41-42; and "Piracy in the Oriental Archipelago," 312.

105. See "Life and Times of Lafitte," 372-387; "Life of Jean Lafitte, the Pirate of the Mexican Gulf," 433-446; "LaFitte, 'The Pirate' -- Early Times in the Southwest," 145-157.

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117. Pyle, "The Buccaneers and Marooners of the Spanish Main," 506.

118. "Punishment of Piracy," 60.

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121. "Pirates and Piracy from the Earliest Ages," Museum of Foreign Literature 26 (March 1835): 267.

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125. See, for example, "The Piracy of Captain Kidd," 48.

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127. Bonner, "The Buccaneers of the Spanish Main," 520.

128. "Life of Jean Lafitte, The Pirate of the Mexican Gulf," 445.

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LOOKING THE PART: U.S. ANCHORWOMEN AS 'OTHER'

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LOOKING THE PART: U.S. ANCHORWOMEN AS 'OTHER'

No one could have guessed in the early days of broadcast journalism where the industry would be at the dawn of a new century. Technology has taken us places we never would have dreamed possible. Satellites can let us talk live to someone half way around the world. Videotape allows us to get images broadcast seconds after they were recorded. And anchormen and anchorwomen are increasingly concerned about which shade of foundation they should wear. Appearance has become an overwhelming force in television news. Increasingly, we hear the news from handsome young studs with equally studly names, like "Stone," and former beauty queens who just a few years ago were concerned with how to walk down a runway in high heels while keeping their bathing suits from creeping. This is not to say these individuals are not highly qualified journalists. But would they have gotten in the door had their faces not been quite so pleasing?

And no one can deny, in this society, youth equals beauty. Older journalists are often forced to retire to make room for the new crop of lovelies. The problem is much worse for women than men. Consider this fact: Barbara Walters and Dan Rather are approximately the same age. In 1981, when Rather took over as anchorman of the CBS Evening News, he was deemed the "handsome young successor" to the grandfatherly Walter Cronkite. At this same time, and at the same age, Walters was being called the "grand dame" of television news. She was 52 years old.

Age is a dirty word in this culture, especially for women. It is no wonder many American women fear aging; after all, to many of us beautiful, old women just do not exist. In Naomi Wolf's book *The Beauty Myth*, Bob Ciano, a former art director for *Life* magazine, said, "no picture of a woman goes unretouched....even a well-known older woman who doesn't want to be retouched....We still persist in trying to make her look like she's in her fifties" (Wolf, 1991, p.82).

Turning on many local newscasts will add credence to the argument. Many times, the viewer will find an anchor team consisting of an older man and his young, pretty co-anchor. The viewer may see the team as a favorite

uncle and his pleasant niece. You would seldom find the situation reversed; a favorite old aunt sharing the news with her handsome, young nephew. In her 1988 book, *Too Old, Too Ugly, And Not Deferential To Men; An Anchorwoman's Courageous Battle against Sex Discrimination,* anchorwoman Christine Craft writes that of television anchors over the age of 40 in this country, 97% are men and 3% are fortyish women who do not look their age. Wolf says the operating procedures of media consulting firms confirm Craft's allegation. She says by the 1980's consultants "filed their test tapes under categories such as 'Male Anchors 40-50,' with no corresponding category for women, and ranked women anchors' physical appearance above their delivery skills or their experience" (Wolf, 1991, p. 34). Law theorist Suzanne Levitt, citing employer guidelines, says male anchors are supposed to remember their "professional image" while female anchors are supposed to remember their "professional elegance" (Wolf, 1991, p. 49). Clearly, a double standard is alive and well in television news.

Women are socialized to try and meet acceptable standards of appearance throughout their lifetimes (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Freedman, 1986; Jacobi & Cash, 1994; Posavac, 1998; Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson and Kelly, 1986.) And women who do not or cannot adhere to appearance standards are penalized economically and personally (Laabs, 1995).

Researchers have also noted the media's role in imposing certain standards of beauty. Women are portrayed in the media according to their sexual attractiveness or lack thereof (Kitch, 1997). Adult women, after years of bombardment of the feminine ideal, are desensitized to the appearance pressures placed upon them by society, but nonetheless seek to achieve society's definition of beauty (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997).

Research on the role of appearance and the television news anchor suggests the anchor's appearance and voice are of primary importance to the viewer (Houlberg & Dimmick, 1980). Further studies suggest the emphasis on appearance is greater for the female anchor versus the male anchor. Female news anchors questioned in a 1986 study indicate an overemphasis placed on appearance. They felt judged primarily on their appearance while they believed their male co-workers were judged on their work skills (Ferri & Keller, 1986).

But how do these double standards and appearance pressures affect news anchorwomen? This study examined whether television anchorwomen face pressure over their appearance as well as the perceived origins and effects of those pressures. Data were collected via in-depth telephone interviews with twenty anchorwomen

representing a variety of ages, ethnic backgrounds, years in broadcasting, and market sizes and locations.* The formal interviews were conducted by telephone between February and August 2000. They included open-ended questions derived from literature and pre-interviews. Once the interviews were conducted, data were analyzed for themes and patterns, using Beauvoir's theory of woman as other as a guide.

Woman as Other

If we are to understand the relationship between appearance pressure and the television anchorwoman it is most helpful to start with a foundation laid by feminist theory. It provides the framework in understanding not just the *anchor*woman's role in society, but the *woman's* role in society. Simone de Beauvoir is most helpful in this regard.

Beauvoir's work is considered revolutionary in the establishment of feminist theory. Originally published in 1949 and translated to English in 1952, The Second Sex is now considered a classic in feminist theory. The book created a huge stir from the start, selling more than 20,000 copies within a week of its publication (Chanter, 2000). It laid the groundwork for future scholars in their endeavors to understand the human condition through the eyes of the female. Influential feminists such as Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett, and Betty Friedan all admitted that Beauvoir's writings started them "on the road" (Dijkstra, 1980).

In The Second Sex, Beauvoir outlined how women have come to occupy a secondary role in society because of social conditions placed upon them. Society looks upon males and females in a very different light. He is the norm; she is the exception. He is a doctor; she is a woman doctor. It is assumed something is male until a qualifier is placed upon it, making it female.

Beauvoir wrote, "What peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she—a free and autonomous being like all human creatures—nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of Other" (Beauvoir, 1989, p.xxxv). Beauvoir asserted that societies have always been compelled to create

* The women included 14 white, 2 black, 2 Asian, 1 Hispanic, and 1 multi-ethnic individuals. Five were age 20-29, 13 were 30-39, and there was 1 each from the 40-49 and 50-59 age categories. Seven were from the Midwest, 5 from the South, 4 were from the West and 4 were from the East. Ten were from large media markets, 4 from medium, and 6 from small.

such a hierarchy. "In most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality – that of Self and the Other" (Beauvoir, 1989, p. xxii).

Beauvoir drew upon the Hegelian concept of the master-slave dialectic to further explain the relationship between men and women. She believed woman, while not a slave to man, is subordinated by becoming man's Other (Olsen, 2000). But later researchers found that Beauvoir, in fact, strayed from the Hegelian master-slave dialectic in principle. "In The Second Sex...woman must be seen as outside the classic Hegelian master-slave dialectic because she is defined as the inessential Other, and therefore located outside the dialectic altogether as the Absolute Other" (Fullbrook and Fullbrook, 1998, par. 4).

Whether Beauvoir truly saw woman's relationship to man as slave to master or not, she clearly saw woman as occupying the Other role and doing so largely for economic reasons. "To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal- would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste" (Beauvoir, 1989, p. xxvii).

Beauvoir's theory of woman as other is built around assumptions about the relationship between man, woman and society, including, first, "men are the norm; women are different," and second, "women are made, not born." The theory is not solely defined by these assumptions; however, they provide some explanation regarding the peculiar status of anchorwoman.

Men are the norm. Women are different

Beauvoir's first assumption permeates society. Something or someone is male until proven otherwise. Beauvoir stated that society has defined nothing peculiar in being a man; however, society has forced the woman, as Other, to occupy the peculiar. She writes, " Man represents the positive and neutral indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity" (Beauvoir, 1989, p. xxi).

Beauvoir states that it is the male who is defined as the absolute human type; however, she is simply building upon a concept first held by ancient scholars - woman is the imperfect man. Aristotle said, "The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities, we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness" (quoted in Beauvoir, 1989, p. xxii).

In modern times, this natural imperfection of woman is evident in society's emphasis on trying to change woman. One of the easiest ways to change woman is to assert influence over her appearance. Society emphasizes women's appearance in many ways—through individual socialization, through the media, and so on. Focus is often on weight, hair, general beauty, and clothing. For example, Dellinger and Williams found women claimed makeup gave them the confidence they needed to feel credible in the workplace (Dellinger & Williams, 1997). Research suggests despite their willingness to comply with appearance standards women bear the brunt of appearance standards in the workplace both economically and personally (Laabs, 1995). Therefore, if a woman fails to meet society's expectation her status as the "imperfect man" is accentuated and society finds a way in which to punish her.

In the field of broadcast journalism, this discrepancy is most evident in the double standards that exist regarding aging and weight gain in male versus female anchors. Aging is a natural and normal part of life and for many people gaining weight is a part of aging. However, many female anchors have not been granted the same permission to age or gain weight given their male counterparts. Not allowing the woman to experience the normalness of aging or weight gain is not the fault of one entity. It is a combination of forces from television media consultants to employers to viewers to the women themselves.

Television stations hire media consultants to help them raise their news ratings. Using audience research, consultants help news operations attract the greatest number of viewers. Consultants advise anchors, reporters and photographers on particulars such as writing, editing and producing the best show possible. They also work with anchors on the aesthetics of good television. Typically, this means working with anchors on issues such as makeup, hair and clothing. However, many television anchorwomen notice a difference in the advice offered to the male versus female anchors.

A 32-year-old White anchor working in a large Eastern market noticed a lack of concern by the consultants for male anchors and an abundance of advice for the female anchors:

> The image consultants almost 100 percent of the time have dealt with the women in the newsroom and not the men. And sometimes I think the men need it more. But I don't think the men are judged on their appearance or what they wear nearly to the degree that women are.
>
> I've always said a man could wear the same suit for two weeks in a row… change the tie and no one would notice.

A 33-year-old White anchor from a small Midwestern market said consultants seem to perpetuate the idea that men can age more gracefully on television by forcing fewer changes upon them: "I think the biggest criticism they get is 'don't wear a blue shirt with a gray suit. Always wear a white shirt.' I think that's as much criticism as they ever get probably."

A 34-year-old multi-ethnic anchor in a large Western market noted that her male co-anchor only wears navy blue. She said she jokes with him about it, but there is never any real criticism from the consultants or management, and she said even if there were she doubts he would change his ways. Other anchors said on an average visit it is typical for the consultants to spend a couple of minutes visiting with the male anchor about the nicest ties and suits for on-air work, then turn around and spend hours with the females talking hair, makeup and clothing.

A 31-year-old White anchor in a medium Southern market said she works with a toupee-wearing male co-anchor nearly twice her age, but it is she who receives most of the time and attention of the image consultants:

> You know I just think everyone is easier on men. Like if I have a ton of wrinkles I need a facelift. For a man...it's just a sign of maturity. They can get away with it more than women. . . .With women it's a sign of 'Oh, my God she's getting old. I want some other cute, pretty thing to look at.'

But it isn't just advancing age and the appearance of wrinkles that are excused with the male anchor. The women noted a tendency to excuse anchormen for being overweight, while condemning female anchors who gain a few pounds. A 33-year-old White anchor working in a small Midwestern market said at her station, it was management and viewers who were particularly unforgiving of female anchor weight gain. She relayed the cruelty she witnessed when another female at the station started gaining weight:

> She had gotten pretty big. It just got cemented in my head people are just really turned off by what they consider obesity. I had taken phone calls from people who said, "she looks like a Goddamned flower shop with that big flower dress on...tell her to lose weight." And I couldn't tell them at the time that she was pregnant.

The anchor said that experience had a profound effect on how she viewed her own weight. After taking cruel viewer complaint calls about her co-worker's weight, she said she started to feel paranoid about her own on-air look. Her paranoia was compounded when management drew attention to weight issues:

> One time (the news director) called and said, "(the station manager) had said 'don't wear that purple dress with the big white collar...it makes you look fat.'" I know that (the other female anchor) used to wear outfits like that and she used to get a lot of phone calls about her appearance.

This anchor admitted her self-esteem was very low and that she was her own worst critic about her appearance, most notably her weight:

> I just notice every little thing like hair and make up, I see the wrinkles, I see the hair not always working. But mostly it's a weight issue. I can't seem to shed those pounds the way I used to. I am not terribly confident in my abilities. I'm always looking to improve. I'm always comparing myself to others and think that I could do better. I really hate the way I look. I don't know if it's the lights or what. But I think, "God, do I really look this bad in person?"

This same anchor notes that viewers seem comfortable talking to her about her weight:

> One woman said to me, "Oh, I hate that picture of you at the start of the news. You look fat and cross-eyed." Another viewer, a guy, came up to me and said, "I didn't know that was you over here – you look so much heavier on TV."

A 25-year-old White small-Midwestern market anchor noted that weight has been an issue for her; however, she has not witnessed cruelty from viewers, consultants or management. Rather, she says it was presented to her as a means of being helpful:

> I remember the first consultant we had…I asked her, " Well do you think I can make it as an anchor?" And she said, "Well…yeah…" But she was really evasive…so I asked her again, "Do I have what it takes?" She said then, "I want to be honest with you, but I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I think you're going to need to lose a little weight."

While the advice stung a little, the anchor said it is what she needed to hear. She said she started going to the gym and dropped a few pounds, although she said the consultant probably thinks she needs to lose even more weight. This anchor and many others said they appreciate the consultants for dishing out the tough, but necessary advice.

Media consultants base their opinions on market research conducted throughout the United States. If they tell an anchor to cut her hair, it is because research shows viewers feel more comfortable and are thus more compelled to watch a woman with that length or style of hair. Many of the women felt it was within their best economic interests to comply with the consultant's suggestions.

However, it is not just suggestions from consultants, management and viewers that compel these women to make changes related to aging and weight gain. Several of the women stated they are critical both of themselves and other anchorwomen. A 32-year-old Asian anchor from a large Midwestern market said she gets angry at the criticism leveled against female anchors over issues of weight and appearance, but sometimes she finds herself joining right in:

> Let's face it, whenever you turn on the TV you're much more critical of the women you see. Even me. I'll admit it. I'll watch a newscast and I'll think "What does she have on?" And I kick myself because I think "Oh, my

> God, people are doing that to me." And you're just not as critical of the guy. The guy can be a little heavier, whatever.

While many of the anchors admit to directing criticism toward other female anchors, the majority stated the harshest criticism regarding weight and aging issues is directed inward. Some of the women called themselves "my own worst critic." Most of the women noted that on occasion they review videotapes of their news programs and sometimes are surprised by how much weight the camera adds. A 25-year-old anchor at a small Southern market found her level of awareness changed after regularly watching her broadcasts, "Now I'm really self-conscious about my weight. That's the hardest part of watching myself...Looking at my chubby cheeks...and some jackets make me look bigger. It's hard sometimes."

A 26-year-old White anchor at a small Southern market said there is pressure at her station to keep her weight in line:

> I'm probably the fattest one here. Everyone around me is anorexic...and I'm just normal sized. I tell you standing beside some of the girls here, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I'm plump" although I'm not. Like I've decided when I anchor I need short-waisted jackets because anything else with our set makes me look like I have these huge rolls.

For some of the anchors, the self-imposed pressure to be the right size multiplied with every jump in market size of employment. A 32-year-old White anchor from a large Eastern market admitted to joining a gym and hiring a personal trainer upon moving from her job in a small Midwestern market to her job in a medium Southern market. She claims to hate working out but feels it a necessary evil if she is to advance her career:

> Probably if I were in any other field I'd look differently than I do because I feel the pressure now that I'm 32 I don't want to look 42, don't want to look frumpy, don't want to look fat. I'm probably down about 15 pounds from (her small market job). Nobody told me to lose the weight. It was the pressure in my own mind. If I want to go farther in this career and if I want to be taken seriously in a larger market, I needed to look more the part. Because the people on the network or in larger markets...you don't see many frumpy overweight people who don't care about their appearance.

A 34-year-old multi-ethnic anchor from a large Western market said she learned early on that the camera adds weight and if she hoped to keep her job she better lose it:

> I lost a little bit of weight...actually about two dress sizes...because I realized how your appearance changed with less weight, more weight. Cause already the camera makes you look bigger. Everybody thought I was a "big girl"... and I'm kind of like a pencil.

However, a 28-year-old White anchor in a medium Midwestern market said she has been pleasantly surprised by the diversity of her newsroom in recent years:

> Actually, we have a variety of ages and sizes. We have anchors who are size twos and size 14's. It's really reflective of America. It's the Midwest so maybe people are more accepting of real-size people. Really our skinniest people are the reporters, those just starting out in the business. It's the older people, the anchors, who tend to be a little bit bigger. We definitely have more emphasis on personality and not appearance.

The anchors noted what is particularly frustrating is that as female anchors they never quite seem to be the right age. Many stated when they started their careers, they were asked to look older and seemingly just a couple of years later they felt compelled to try and appear younger. A 27-year-old White anchor in a medium Eastern market said: "I spent all of my 20's trying to look older, now I'm trying to slow it down a bit. I kind of always feel like if I'm not in a bigger market by the time I'm in my mid-30's I may never get there."

One anchor in her mid-30's said she lives with the realization that very soon she may be too old to anchor at her station because it is affiliated with a network that is geared to younger viewers:

> I know they (station management) really value youth...the young hip things. I know I won't always fit the station's image...like maybe one day I'd see myself going to PBS where they have more mature anchors. Do I think I'll keep my job as the (her current network) anchor forever? Not likely.

Whether it is consultants, management, viewers or the women themselves who perpetuate the compulsion for female anchors to stay thin and young, it generates negative emotions within the anchors. Many felt a sense of injustice that men were allowed to age – grow old gracefully – in a sense to be normal. A 32-year-old White anchor in a small Western market notices the inequity of the situation, "Males just have a longer time in this business. I don't see them panicking as much as I've seen women panicking."

Other anchors expressed anger that men were allowed to go about the business of their life – getting fat, growing old – and not much is said about it. But if women make the mistake of showing their age or putting on a few pounds they run the risk of encountering intense criticism. One anchor stated it is what she hates most about the business.

As society seeks to conform woman (including anchorwoman) to a young, thin ideal it perpetuates the concept of woman as imperfect man. No amount of criticism leveled against woman will make her man, but society cannot seem to help itself.

Women are made not born

Beauvoir wrote, "In truth, society shapes me from the day of my birth and it is within society, and through my close relationship with it, that I decide who I am to be" (Beauvoir, 1989, p. 456). This statement forms the very heart of her second assumption, "Women are made not born." And although she formed this assumption long before women would break into the field of broadcast journalism, she could just as well have tailor-made the assumption for the station in life occupied by the television anchorwoman.

A true woman is defined less by biology and more by behavior.. A true woman, according to Beauvoir's analysis, must possess the following four qualities: purity, piety, domesticity and submissiveness (Welter, 1976). Beauvoir concluded that society forces the female to make herself into this kind of woman. She said, ... "her presumed 'instincts' for coquetry, docility, are indoctrinated as is phallic pride in man... the 'true woman' is an artificial product that civilization makes, as formerly eunuchs were made" (Beauvoir, 1989, p. 408). Thus, the process of socialization constructs the feminine self, rather than biology shaping it upon birth.

Additionally, it is difficult for females to ignore their appearance because they are especially socialized to try and meet the culture's ideals of attractiveness (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Freedman, 1986; Jacobi & Cash, 1994; Posavac, 1998; Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson and Kelly, 1986). Further, because men stress attractiveness in women more than women do in men, women face more pressure to conform to beauty standards to achieve status in the male-dominated world (Jackson, 1992; Mazur, 1986; Wolf, 1991). In fact, research indicates women possess higher dissatisfaction than men with their bodies and overall appearance (Cash & Henry, 1995), although a difference surfaced in the appearance evaluations given by Black women and White women (both Anglos and Hispanics). The Black women "reported significantly more favorable appearance evaluations, more body satisfaction, and less overweight concern" (Cash & Henry, 1995, p. 26).

Further research illustrates why individuals would strive to achieve the ideal appearance. Studies have shown people believe good-looking people to be more sociable, outgoing, interesting, poised and sexually responsive than their plainer peers (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972). Attractive people are considered more honest and responsible. (Berry & McArthur, 1985) and attractive females are rated higher in leadership and dominance. (Weisfeld, Block & Ivers, 1984). Given society's definition of what is beautiful and the female's

predisposition to pay attention to cultural expectations, the power then continues to lie with society in defining the female self rather than allowing the individual the power to define herself.

Researchers have noted how little girls are shaped and molded to grow into the kind of women society desires. While anchorwomen have long since grown up, for them the socialization process continues. As they enter their career, once again, as in childhood, society is shaping and molding them.

A 32-year-old White anchor from a small Western market noted how quickly the socialization process for anchorwomen begins:

> We have one new girl here; she'll be anchoring the weekends. After her first broadcast she was called into the news director's office. She said, "Here's the name of my hairdresser, you need to go to her. You need to get an anchor 'do.'" And she said, "What do you mean, what am I supposed to do?" And our news director said, "Just go in...they'll know exactly what to do to you."

And many industry hairstylists would know exactly what to do. One anchor called it "the industry look – conservative, short, polished hair, a nice conservative news look." Another anchor put it in a less flattering light, "the perfect hair, the perfect makeup...the helmet head." It seems television stations are willing to pay for perfection, offering the anchors money for clothing and hairstylists. The following comments from a 24-year-old White anchor from a small Southern market were typical:

> When I got the job at this station they did hire a fashion consultant. And we went shopping and they gave me money to use and I had to buy certain suits. They have a certain hairdresser they want me to use and they have special instructions and how to color my hair and all that stuff. The sales department has an account with the hairdresser. They specifically spoke with the owner of the salon to find out which hairdresser was best with color and things like that. And then they told me who I had to go to. The station is pretty particular about it.

Many of the women said they felt a loss of freedom in determining their own appearance. Some stated they would not comply with the "industry look" if they switched jobs. They might, for example, grow their hair long and wear trendier clothes. Worse yet, many of the women noted that it did not feel natural to make themselves over the way the consultants and bosses wanted them too. A 26-year-old White anchor in a small Southern market rated herself fairly comfortable with her appearance on the air, but noted that she feels more natural with her off-the-air look, "Off the air...on my days off, I'm most comfortable in T-shirts and jeans and no makeup...I'm the most comfortable with myself on those days."

It is understandable to some anchors why consultants and management feel they can dictate what the females should look like. One anchor said she felt like "public property" – management has the right to tell her what to do and viewers have free rein to tell what they think.

A 27-year-old White anchor working in a medium Eastern market first noticed a loss of freedom and identity about determining her own appearance when she had an accident at the hair salon. The anchor had recently started a new job and went to the salon to get a trim on her standard anchor bob:

> She (the hairdresser) was trying to texturize it, but instead she ended up cutting a huge chunk of my hair off. Well then to even it out she had to cut it quite a bit shorter all the way around. It didn't look bad. But, I remember walking into the news director's office the next day and him saying, "I could fire you right now." I was like, "What!?" And he said, "We essentially own your appearance. You cannot change yourself that dramatically." I told him what happened and that I didn't know what I was supposed to do about it.
> He was pretty upset initially. He didn't fire me, but he said I should remember in the future that my appearance was part of the package and that I needed, before I made any drastic changes, I needed to consult who I worked for. As time went on he got used to it. And like I said, it turned out to be a good move.

While this anchor was rudely awakened to just how much appearance power she would surrender in pursuing a career in broadcast journalism, she and many of the anchors in the study were well aware of the expectations they would face. And many were well aware of the expectations from a very early age.

Some remember thinking an anchorwoman need only be "prim and proper" or "formal looking." Many of the anchors said they do not consciously remember thinking, "If I am to go into this career, I must be beautiful." However, many of the women these anchors grew up watching were beautiful. A 34-year-old large-market anchor from the West noted she grew up watching a woman whose features were quite different from her own. She described herself as multi-ethnic, with dark hair and eyes. Her favorite anchorwoman looked more like a Barbie doll, "I don't know about expectations but I definitely had a favorite. She was a beautiful blonde-haired woman who was a Miss Georgia. And she was the person I loved to watch."

This anchor remembers never even imagining that one day she would hold a job similar to her Miss Georgia heroine. She thought her looks were too different – only beautiful blondes were allowed to be on television. But times changed and she found herself accepted as a television anchorwoman. Still she says at times she feels inadequate about her appearance – that she still does not look the way she should. Her expectations, based upon what she saw as a child, are still deeply ingrained.

A 25-year-old White anchor from a small Midwestern anchor has clear childhood memories of what the anchorwomen in her hometown were like: "I remember watching a lot of news...The women I guess were always prim and proper, nothing too flamboyant, not particularly thin, pleasant to look at, nothing too distracting. The girl next door but sophisticated, too."

This anchor's expectation for what a television anchorwoman should be falls closely in line with what Beauvoir determined society wanted all women to be. A "true woman" possesses four characteristics: purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness. Based on this statement describing what she saw as a child, we can deduce this anchorwoman grew up watching "true women." They anchors possessed a purity evident in their prim and proper appearance. They piety is hinted at by their girl-next-door looks, their non-flamboyant air. They appear submissive in their willingness to be pleasant and not distracting. The anchor who grew up watching these women noted that she decided to pursue her own broadcasting career while in elementary school. With these "true women" as her role models it seems nearly pre-determined that she too, would mold herself into a "true woman." To her, becoming a "true woman" like her hometown anchors equaled success.

So while Beauvoir noted mothers mold their daughters into "true women," in this age of media saturation mothers are getting some help. In addition to watching their mothers, grandmothers and sisters for direction in how to become a woman, young girls can now spend hours each day with other women, on television, molding and shaping them. But in an ironic twist, these television role models themselves are still being molded and shaped. But this shaping comes with an emotional cost. The woman pays a price with stress, sadness, anger, fear, self-criticism, approval seeking and narcissism.

Earlier it was noted Ferri and Keller found appearance the number one career barrier in a study of 136 anchorwomen. Appearance, while not the utmost of importance at all times for all women, seems a common denominator in rating anchor stress. A 31-year-old White anchor from a medium Southern market described one boss of hers as a "total nightmare," because of his emphasis on her appearance. But, at the same time, she has a clear idea that looks matter:

> I've been an assistant news director before. I know that appearance is important. I've been there when other news directors popped in a tape and you had about ten seconds to impress somebody and they hit the eject button. That's the reality.

It should be noted that some of the small-market anchors said they comply with suggestions about their appearance because it will help advance their careers. One described the process as "playing the game, jumping the hoops." The implication is that once you jump those hoops a more lucrative job offer will follow and the hoop-jumping and game-playing is over. However, this is where the irony is greatest. Most of the large-market anchors in the study noted the game never ends. A 30-year-old White anchor from the South said, in fact, the game intensifies at the large-market level:

> The emphasis I've seen on appearance definitely comes with the growth in market size. When I was in (her previous job in a small market) I could do anything and nobody would say anything. In fact I used to anchor there with that big 80's hair. Nobody said anything. They loved you because you were on TV. There was no criticism. Well then I went to (her current job in a large market) and it hit me like a ton of bricks.

The anchor said her adjustment period between the small and large was long and difficult. She said she spent many hours crying on a co-worker's shoulder. She said management was unhappy about her look and they let her know:

> My news director came down on me so hard about specifically my hair, but also my makeup…I was wearing too much because I didn't know how to wear it. I thought more was more. One of the hardest times in my career was when I was going through that. I was in a new market. I was about to get married. I was getting criticized left and right about my appearance. And he didn't know how to do it, either. He would just call me in…and say, "Okay, what's going on with your hair?" And at the same time, I was about to get married so I was trying to grow it out a little because I wanted it the way I wanted it. I was in this really bad place. All this pressure! It was awful.

She said she got the message loud and clear. Her desires for having long hair on her wedding day finished second to the station's desire for her to fit the mold they set for her when she was hired.

At times the pressure to look the part drives the women to bouts of sadness and depression. The women commented that the most hurtful statements often come from viewers, who might not realize how their words can sting. Here is a sample of some of the statements from the anchors about viewer comments:

- A guy came up to me in a bar and said, "Did you lose a bet or something, having to wear that ugly brown jacket on TV? (33 year-old White, small Midwestern market anchor)
- I did a live shot once outside. It was windy so I had to wear a clip in my hair. A guy called and said my ears were too big and I shouldn't ever wear my hair like that again. (24-year-old White, small Southern market anchor)

- I remember one time getting a letter from a woman who said, " I really like you, but that ugly brown lipstick you wear...." It went on and on and on and people will literally write you scathing letters about the colors you wear, the outfits you wear. (27-year-old White medium Eastern market anchor)
- I've only gotten two really ugly letters from viewers...and they were basically about my hair. They didn't like my hair. I think someone referred to it as a rat's nest. My hair's really short now. (31-year-old White medium Southern market anchor)

Some of the anchors said they have developed a thick skin about appearance criticism. A 27-year-old White anchor from the East said it is part of the price she pays for working in this business:

> I think there are obstacles we all face...right or wrong. I've had people say rather bluntly, that if people don't want to worry about their appearance they should be working in radio. This is a visual medium...people will be looking at you...and your looks can't be distracting to your message.

Many anchors said they understand the reality that television is a visual medium so appearance counts; even so, a 32-year-old White anchor from a large Eastern market said she gets tired of reality:

> Sometimes I just fantasize about what it would be like not to have to look nice every day. Like last weekend, I didn't even shower on Saturday. I know that sounds gross. But it's like if I didn't have to wash my hair and put on all this makeup everyday I'd be so much happier. 'Cuz after 10 years you get tired having to meet expectations every day. And I know I can't come in looking rough because people will say, "She doesn't look like an anchor."

Other anchors said they are tired of being told what not to wear on television. A 24-year-old White anchor from the South said she was offended when the consultant she worked with told her she should not wear one of her favorite suits:

> She (the consultant) told us weird things like we couldn't wear wool suits on the set. I don't see what difference the material is. So I asked my news director and he liked the wool suit I'm not allowed to wear. So if he doesn't know she didn't like it, I'm going to wear it.

The anchor's rebellion against her wardrobe constraints almost seems childlike - a naughty girl playing one parent against the other. Instead, however, it is a grown woman trying to sneak permission to wear what she wants to wear. In this way, as in many ways defined by Beauvoir, society has compelled this woman, a free and autonomous being, to occupy the role of rebellious child.

Many anchors spend too much time worried about not measuring up -- leveling intense scrutiny upon themselves regardless of the positive feedback they receive from others. Like the anchors in Houlberg and Dimmick's 1980 study, many anchors in this studied qualified themselves as "my own worst critic." Several report

videotaping their news performances and later viewing them to judge themselves over issues of appearance. A 32-year-old White anchor from the East noted how surprised she was when a consultant told her she was attractive because she said she never viewed herself that way:

> Most of the time I'd like to shave my head and get rid of my hair. It's the biggest thorn in my side. I would say I'm highly critical of myself. I would say it's really rare for me to go back and look at a show and go, "Oh, I looked good that day!" I think it makes me uneasy cause I'm always looking and finding a flaw, unfortunately. It's that kind of business.

Even women who said they were comfortable with their on-air look expressed self-critical comments. A 26-year-old White anchor from the South records her newscasts, but winces when she watches them: "When I go back and look at show tapes I feel like I could use a new nose...little things like that. Sometimes I just think my face is like somehow distorted...But I think I'm comfortable with my appearance on the air."

We could speculate that anchorwomen - being both women and individuals who make their living on the air - are keenly aware of the importance of adhering to societal expectations of beauty, and that they internalize the importance of maintaining an attractive appearance in order to keep their jobs. Research shows that appearance is an important factor in the success of news anchors (Houlberg & Dimmick, 1980; Shosteck, 1973-74) and that anchorwomen believe appearance expectations are more stringently imposed upon them than on their male colleagues (Ferri & Keller, 1986). But we are left to wonder how great the awareness and internalization of societal expectations of beauty is on the anchorwoman and how they are reflected in her self-view.

It appears one way in which it is reflected is the high degree of approval seeking exhibited in many of these women. A 32-year-old large market anchor from the East reported that despite her career success she seeks out approval:

> I'd say overall I'm a pretty confident person, but underneath it all there's always self-esteem issues, always the need for approval from others. I'm not the kind of person who can go along for two years and not have someone say, "Oh, I liked that story you did." I need that approval. My husband says that all the time. He says some people just need that pat on the back and I'm one of 'em.

Some of the anchors said they went out of their way to ask for feedback from employers. A 27-year-old White anchor now working in a medium market said early in her career she was employed to anchor 22-second updates during an overnight shift. She was barely on-air, nonetheless she craved feedback from the boss, "I would come in every Friday and wait him for him to have the time to talk to me. He was always really good about it...telling me if a particular color wasn't my color...what he liked and what he didn't."

But for many of the anchors performance is negatively affected even if the boss does not say a word. Often, it is how the anchor feels about herself that influences that day's newscast delivery. As one large-market anchor put it, "To be perfectly honest ...a good hair day often turns into a good anchoring day."

Many of the women said they have had days when they think they look bad or ugly. A 28-year-old anchor said the worst part about it is knowing thousands of people are out there, "When I look particularly bad, it's depressing. It's knowing not only did you have a bad day, but that how many thousands of people tuned in watched you have a bad day."

A 31-year-old Black anchor from a large market considers herself easily distracted by appearance, "It can be as simple as a necklace is crooked, or a scarf is giving me trouble or something is too tight or too loose or too short...it does affect my ability to concentrate, feel comfortable."

The fact that women are easily distracted by appearance, according to Beauvoir's theory, is a substantial roadblock toward feminine liberation. Beauvoir said women become narcissistic and self-obsessed, over-valuing themselves because men so under-value them. It is only upon forgetting oneself that true liberation can be achieved. However, Mitchell (2000) noted how difficult it is for a woman to forget herself because she has never really found herself.

Anchorwomen seem caught in the same conflict. They seek out employment in man's world, but because they have grown up in a society that continues to define them based upon their beauty, or lack thereof, they are left wondering how else they can relate. They know no other way to measure their own success in the world, but by seeking out the approval of others in areas that have been traditionally deemed of great importance for the female. Instead of obsessing on ways in which to become better journalists they seek out feedback on ways to look better. Rather than forming new paths toward feminine success they rely upon old roads that lead to a traditional definition of what it means to be a successful woman.

Conclusion

More than fifty years ago, Simone de Beauvoir wrote The Second Sex to explain how women have come to occupy a secondary role in society because of the social constraints placed upon them. This study examined whether Beauvoir's observations on women in general applied to women in television news. The male and female anchors on

the set are representations of what society envisions as the male and female ideal. The social constraints on woman in society defined by Beauvoir are therefore present within the smaller world of the television news set.

Like woman as a whole, the anchorwoman has been compelled to take on the role of Other. On the news set, the male anchor is the norm, while the female anchor is different. He is allowed to undergo the normal life processes of aging and weight gain. The woman, as different, is forced to fight nature, unable to age or gain weight she strives to overcome her position as the imperfect male. Society accepts him in all his flaws; Society undermines her for all her faults.

The anchorwoman is made and not born. Shaped and molded from the time of her arrival in the business, she abandons her realness for a new-found role as "pseudo real woman." She now occupies the role society has defined for her. But the role amounts to more than "the look" described above. "The look" paves the way toward altering the woman's perceived station in life. The anchorwoman is compelled to take on the qualities of true womanhood if she is to succeed in the business. The successful anchorwoman demonstrates piety and purity through a girl-next-door quality. She is non-threatening and, as one anchor described it, "prim and proper."

Regarding the anchorwomen in this study—some old, some young, some black, some white, some rich, others barely making minimum wage—the similarities far outweighed the differences. They told similar stories of appearance pressures, from a young anchor in the West barely making $20,000 to an older anchor in the East making more than $100,000.

The anchorwomen in this study report feeling pressured to look the way society has deemed appropriate. Many of the women take it in stride, realizing it is just a part of their chosen profession. Others have suffered depression, panic attacks and lowered self-esteem trying to change themselves to fit another's desire.
The pressures come from everywhere. For some of the women it is outside forces causing the greatest stress – bosses telling them they could be fired for changing their look, or consultants who tell them to surrender their freedom of choice over appearance in favor of station profits. However, the stresses also come from inside the women. After years of socialization and exposure to ideal feminine imagery, many of the anchors believe they will never be attractive enough. They strive to live up to a societal ideal that is virtually unattainable. And in so doing, they surrender years of happiness in pursuit of that goal.

What seems clearly evident in these observations is something Simone de Beauvoir noted years ago. In defining herself she wrote, "I must first of all say: 'I am woman'; on this truth must be based all further discussion"(Beauvoir, 1989, p. xxi). Each anchor's womanhood defines her daily existence. The appearance pressures each faces are unique to woman and it is through seeking out other women that they will find the greatest sense of understanding and togetherness. However, it is a silent, non-threatening solidarity. The bottom line is anchorwomen are still complying with societal expectations – most never challenging the status quo. If they were truly bound together through solidarity, the status quo would be toppled, in favor of a social structure in which the anchorwoman is allowed greater freedom over her appearance. But this public solidarity is too great a threat. As Beauvoir noted a half-century ago, women chose to maintain their alliance with patriarchal norms because it is within their economic best interests to do so. The same can be said for the anchorwoman. She maintains the status quo, looking the way society wishes her to look, as a means toward economic security, all the while suffering in silence over the frustrations imposed upon her because of her birth as woman.

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"Don't Want No Short People 'Round Here":

Disrupting Heterosexual Ideology in the Comic Narratives of *Ally McBeal*

Abstract

To illustrate how media narratives challenge normative heterosexuality, this study analyzes an episode of the television's dramedy Ally McBeal *in which the life and murder of a young transsexual are situated within the comedic context of Randy Newman's bitingly satirical song, "Short People." Employing strategies associated with women's subversive use of humor to dismantle patriarchy, the narratives juxtapose comic and absurd scenarios with dramatic and tragic events, with the effect of disrupting heterosexual ideology and, in turn, opening a safe space for spectators to experience issues of gender fluidity and the consequences of the intolerance inherent in society's hegemonic heterosexuality.*

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"Don't Want No Short People 'Round Here": Disrupting Heterosexual Ideology in the Comic Narratives of *Ally McBeal*

Although the mass media have historically offered images that explore, expand and sometimes explode societal gender boundaries, the majority of such images reaffirm heterosexuality (Gross, 2001; Williams, 1996). From Milton Berle's early drag performances and the cross-dressing Max Klinger in *M*A*S*H*, to films such as *Some Like It Hot*, *Tootsie*, and *Mrs. Doubtfire*, Hollywood productions allowed their stars and their spectators to experience vicariously the "possibility of transgressing gender norms" (Williams, p. 273). But, these possibilities are presented within the safe confines of comic contexts whereby a heterosexual outcome is implied as inevitable (Roof, 1996), and spectators are reassured that "heterosexual identity is never really in jeopardy" (Williams, p. 273). In other words, audiences never doubt that Jamie Farr or Dustin Hoffman or Robin Williams are *real* men simply pretending to be women to achieve some goal.

During the 1990s, images of gay and lesbian characters became more common in the popular media, but as Larry Gross (2001) explained, "they are still the odd men and women out in a straight world. . . . confined to stereotypical characterizations" (p. 117) that ultimately reaffirm "narrative's heteroideology" (Roof, 1996, p. xxvii). One 1990s television series that has challenged such stereotypical representations of transgressive sexuality is David E. Kelley's *Ally McBeal*. Starring Calista Flockhart as Ally, a Generation X attorney, the series portrays a successful Boston law firm employing a variety of odd characters. Because this series has received much attention, both positive and negative, for its gender depictions and its perceived pro- or anti-feminist stance (Bellefante, 1998; Cooper, in press; Vavrus, 2000), *Ally McBeal* may seem an unlikely challenger to normative heterosexuality. But in fact, *Ally McBeal* is one of the few places in network television that has introduced transsexuality in ways that subvert heterosexual standards. To illustrate how *Ally McBeal's* narratives serve to dismantle hegemonic norms of heterosexuality, we analyze

an episode from the series' first season, "Boy to the World" (Kelley, 1997). In this episode, Ally's courtroom defense of a young transsexual client arrested for solicitation is juxtaposed against the comedic subtext of Randy Newman's satirical song "Short People"—who've "got no reason to live" (Newman, 1977). By employing narrative strategies associated with women's subversive use of humor, we argue that the overlapping narratives indict bigotry and intolerance, effectively disrupting heteronormative culture and opening a safe space for spectators to experience the inevitable limitations and consequences of the dominant discourses of heterosexual ideology.

Normative Heterosexuality and Comedic Narratives

Social critique often is "articulated in a comedic context" (Gilbert, 1997, p. 317), whereby hegemonic ideals are questioned by lampooning them, because the humorous context allows audience members to participate in the mockery without feeling threatened or alienated by the social critique. As Kathleen Rowe (1990) argued, virtually "all comedic forms . . . attempt a liberation from authority" (p. 44). In particular in this context, female comedians employ strategies that ridicule a "society that creates ideals for appearance and behavior as well as individuals who subscribe to those standards" (Gilbert, p. 319), permitting the women simultaneously to advance subversive agendas while disavowing their "own rhetorical potency" (Gilbert, p. 328). Thus, the potential power of comedy to challenge dominant ideologies lies in its paradoxical nature (Fry, 1987), in narratives that are simultaneously " subversive and conservative, offensive and inoffensive, serious and ridiculous" (Palmer, 1987, p. 182). As, Yvonne Tasker (1998) observed, "comedy provides a space in which taboos can be addressed, made visible and also contained, negotiated" (p. 163).

Kimberly Golombisky (1999) wrote that feminist humor "begins with a marginal perspective on culture and society" (p. 4) that offers both an expression for women's anger and a demand for "changes in the system that treats women unfairly" (Franzini, cited in Golombisky, p. 4). Further, because "heterosexism drives most of our cultural definition of

binary gender," women's use of comic narratives invariably represents a kind of "subversive marginal humor" that spoofs normative heterosexuality (Golombisky, p. 4). For example, the use of feminist gender reversals—positioning males in stereotypical female roles or women in men's stereotypical roles—mocks gender stereotypes by "pointing out how little they have to do with reality" (Golombisky, p. 5). Such reversals of gender norms ultimately serve to "equalize gender relations into no hierarchy at all" (Golombisky, p. 5). This type of subversive humor encourages audiences to join in the joke and to identify with the point of view presented by the joke-teller: "When an audience laughs along with the lampoon, it also laughs at the system, a process that subverts the dominant culture even while appearing to enforce it" (Golombisky, p. 5).

This has been particularly true in the comedy of out-groups—such as women, people of color, and sexual minorities. "Whether explicitly 'political' or not," Tasker (1998) wrote, "comedy operates partly through an inversion of cultural assumptions which render them absurd, a foregrounding and transgression of conventions" (p. 170). Queer theory scholars have demonstrated how narratives that include "non-, contra, or contra-straight" (Doty. 1993, p. 3) characteristics work to "resist, dismantle, or circumnavigate hegemonic systems of sexual oppression and normalization" (Hanson, 1999, p. 4) by making "heterosexuality strange" (Nataf, 1995, p. 9). Thus, when lesbian comic Suzanne Westenhoffer jokes, "I like straight people—I do. I just don't want them teaching our children," she is inverting the "tried and tested bigotry" inherent in normative heterosexuality (Tasker, pp. 170-171). Similarly, by appropriating "men's images of women" and reflecting these images "back to men in magnified proportions," media narratives can mimic and mock the "patriarchal definition of woman in order to subvert it" (Irigaray, cited in Tong, 1998, p. 204). In fact, women comics "frequently present themselves as cynical survivors of heterosexuality," mocking the "shortcomings of conventional behaviours and structures," says Tasker (p. 167).

We find such examples in Golombisky's (1999) analysis of the strategies used by columnists Susan Estrich, Mary McGrory and Pulitzer Prize-winner Maureen Dowd to integrate humor into their articles on the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal. For instance, Dowd and McGrory used "wacky role reversals" to position "male scandal figures into unflatteringly female stereotypes" such as a "stereotypical widow or spinster" (p. 7). Such images, Golombisky argued, demonstrate how "formerly sexist metaphors denigrate women less than they denigrate the stereotype as well as the male targets to which they've been applied" (p. 7). Golombisky related these narrative strategies to Burke's (1984) concept of perspective by incongruity. She asserted that the women columnists' use of strategic incongruities—gender role reversals, or the political alignment of anti-pornography feminists and the Christian right, for instance—presented readers with an outrageous and provocative new perspective that could stimulate a "great leap in thinking" (p. 6). In such contexts, humor derives its strategic power to advance social change primarily through the "surprise, shock, dislocation, or sudden reversal of expectations" (Walker & Dresner, 1998, pp., 173-174) surrounding the contradictions underlying the narratives' comic incongruity. In other words, by using humorous narratives, what at first may seem a stereotypical representation can be read instead as a "thinly veiled indictment" of patriarchal society (Walker, cited in Barreca, 1991, p. 185), a strategy that can subvert the dominant codes of patriarchy (Mellencamp, 1992). Thus, as John Fiske (1986) suggested, a character's seemingly sexist comment "can be read as part of a traditional chauvinist discourse of gender" or as part of the "strategies of resistance or modification that change, subvert or reject the authoritatively proposed meanings" (p. 394). Similarly, in her study of the three women columnists, Golombisky concluded that their "witty columns equate a woman's point of view with intelligence, reason, and a sense of humor that becomes the reader's point of view,regardless of sex" (p. 9).[1]

Comedy thus works to subvert authority safely (Tasker, 1998). And in *Ally McBeal's* "Boy to the World" episode, the authority being subverted is normative heterosexuality,

and its inherent hegemonic masculinity that demands heterosexual relationships, rejection of effeminate behavior or appearance, (Herek, 1987), and the "marginalization of gay men" (Connell, 1990, p. 94). While most television narratives serve to support these hegemonic norms and "express and reaffirm heteromasculine prerogatives, obsessions, and pleasures" (Hanke, 1998, p. 87), "Boy to the World" does the opposite, disrupting heteronormativity within a comic framework. Kelley's narratives juxtapose comic scenarios with tragic events to explore issues of gender diversity as well as the bigotry against those who reject the binary gender categories of normative heterosexuality. This study argues that such narratives provide fertile sites to challenge heterosexual ideology and its "claim to a naturalized or essentialized gender identity" (Butler, 1990, p. 138).

Comedy, Subversive Narratives & Confronting Intolerance

The narratives of "Boy to the World" disrupt heteronormativity through the juxtaposition of comic and dramatic plotlines in three key areas: 1) Ally McBeal and her client's subversive campaign for gender diversity tolerance; 2) ridiculous intolerance articulated through the character of Richard Fish, the law firm's senior partner; and, 3) the juxtaposition of comic hatred of "short people" and society's often deadly intolerance of sexual minorities. The result is overlapping narratives embedded in "subversive marginal humor" (Golombisky, 1999, p. 4) that call into question heterosexual ideals by spoofing and lampooning bigotry and intolerance (Gilbert, 1997; Golombisky). Thus, the *Ally* narratives work to open a safe space to consider the need to "change, subvert or reject" (Fiske, 1986, p. 394) the norms of hegemonic heterosexuality.

Ally, Stephanie & Subversive Tolerance

Throughout this episode, Ally McBeal is busy building a defense to keep an 18-year-old male-to-female transsexual[2] out of prison. Stephanie Grant (Wilson Cruz) is an indigent assigned to Ally on a third arrest for solicitation. Ally points out her new client—a young, attractive woman in a provocative dress—to her roommate, district attorney Reneé Radick (Lisa Nicole Carson), who recognizes her client from previous arrests. "It's his third

offense," Reneé says. "He's [prosecutor] going to be asking that he do some time." Ally is confused: "He? He who?" Reneé explains, "She's a boy, Ally. Stephanie is *Stephen.* "

After meeting with Stephanie, Ally is desperate to keep her client from serving jail time, and asks Reneé to "lose" the files from Stephanie's previous arrests. Reneé refuses, of course. Ally argues: "This boy needs help. He's—can you imagine? He's the most fragile of human beings, living in the harshest of worlds. He's obviously not well."[3] In saying that, Ally realizes that she might be able to build some type of insanity defense. After some research, Ally decides Stephanie's best chance is to claim that she suffers from a psychological disorder—"transvestite fetishism."? [4] In the next scene, Stephanie is shown in her apartment—without her wig and wearing a satiny, feminine robe—sitting at a sewing machine making another dress. Ally knocks, but before Stephanie will let her in, she hastily puts on her wig. The first thing Ally notices when she enters is the beautiful dresses hanging on a rack, including a wedding gown. "Yes," Stephanie says. "Won't I make a beautiful bride? Now if I could only latch onto a husband." Ally quips, "If you go to prison you'll have plenty of time to be a wife." Embarrassed, Ally apologizes and explains that she has a problem with "Freudian slips." Sensing her sincerity, Stephanie smiles and replies, "So do I. I'm wearing one."

After Ally recovers from her *faux pas*, she explains that an insanity defense based on "transvestite fetishism" may be the only way to keep Stephanie from prison. Stephanie is stricken: "You mean like I'm sick? I don't want to say I'm sick. The reason I left home is because everyone called me sick. That's why I left Ohio." Ally assures her that an insanity defense is just a legal strategy: "I'm not here suggesting that you are insane. The goal here has to be to avoid jail." Ally asks Stephanie to "at least think it over. It's all we have." "Sure," she says as she throws a feather boa over her shoulder. "I'm open-minded." The irony of Stephanie agreeing to consider an insanity plea based on "transvestite fetishism" because she's "open-minded" metaphorically juxtaposes her open-mindedness with the narrow-mindedness and limited boundaries of a heterosexist society and its inherent

aversion and bigotry toward people like Stephanie. This is graphically illustrated later by the tragic conclusion of the episode—Stephanie's murder on a Boston street by a man she has picked up.

These exchanges between Ally and Stephanie function to establish early in the narrative that neither Stephanie nor her transgressive gender identity is aberrant. Stephanie and her transsexuality thus disrupt what Judith Roof (1996) referred to as "narrative's heteroideology" (p. xxvii), the ways narrative and sexuality "jointly engender and reproduce a heterosexual ideology" in culture and media (p. xiv). As this discussion will illustrate, the narratives in "Boy to the World" do the opposite, demonstrating the potential of television texts to "ruin certain representations" (Kruger, 1993, p. 220) and to effect a "fissure in the representation" of Hollywood's hegemonic power structure (Gamman, 1989, p. 15)—in this case, dismantling the heteroideology underlying mainstream media narratives.

To "save" Stephanie from prison and what would surely happen to her there, Ally must argue that her transsexuality is a mental disorder. Following the advice of a colleague, Ally finds a psychologist willing to testify in court that Stephanie suffers from a mental dysfunction. After interviewing Stephanie, the psychologist agrees to support Ally's fetishism argument, but she tells Ally that she thinks Stephanie really suffers from "gender dysphoria. . . . psychologically and emotionally he's more like a woman, or thinks he is." But there's no evidence of any legal insanity, the doctor says: "He's knows what he was doing out there on the streets." As Ally prepares her insanity defense, however, Stephanie has second thoughts and adamantly protests: "I'm not going to walk in there saying I'm a freak," she yells. Grabbing her dress and yanking off her wig, Stephanie cries, "I'm not sick! This does not make me sick. This doesn't make me a freak!"

But it's that or prison and Stephanie reluctantly agrees to the insanity plea. Ally and the psychologist present their arguments to the judge. The doctor explains that Stephanie exhibits symptoms associated with "transvestite fetishism," including "intense sexual

urges involving cross-dressing" that started in childhood. When the judge reminds Ally that this is Stephanie's third arrest for prostitution, Ally argues that the only reason Stephanie has been working the streets is because she doesn't have a job. She needs support, Ally argues, not jail time:

Ally: "We all know what happens to kids like this in jail. . . . Your Honor, this kid doesn't want to turn tricks. He needs a job. He needs a fresh start. . . . This kid needs a break."

Doctor: "This is not somebody who has joined another world, your Honor. Nobody's welcomed him in. Right now, I think he's just looking to survive. He's not really part of any society at the moment. He needs counseling."

Ally: "Jail can *not* be the answer!"

Ally offers to provide a job at her law firm, and the judge reluctantly agrees to continue the case for a year with no finding. To celebrate, Ally takes Stephanie to the bar frequented by her colleagues, where her boss Richard Fish agrees to hire Stephanie. "'He' wants to be 'she' as far as the rest of the personnel goes," Ally says. And the other employees accept Stephanie without reservations. For instance, Ally's secretary welcomes Stephanie to the firm and apologetically explains that, "For insurance purposes, I had to list you as male. It's not a slight. I just don't want them denying coverage."

These scenes work to disrupt the ways media narratives are "bound by the heterosexual contract" (de Lauretis, 1987, p. 25). Neither Stephanie nor any of the other characters even suggest that transsexuality is an abnormality that needs to be "cured," a representation that would have conformed to narrative's "heterosexual contract" (de Lauretis, p. 25). Everyone agrees that Stephanie needs practical help, but help to *survive* in a homophobic and transphobic society, not "help" to change who she is. Indeed, Stephanie remains adamantly unapologetic about her gender identity, as do Ally and the other characters. Framing "transvestite fetishism" as a mental dysfunction for the court is solely a legal strategy that represents a subversive device serving two functions in the narrative structure of "Boy to

the World." First and most obvious, it is a means for Stephanie to avoid jail and what would surely befall her there. But second, and perhaps more significant, the insanity defense underlines the fact that the only way society will tolerate transgressive gender is as an aberration, some kind of mental dysfunction. Despite Stephanie's self-definition as a woman and her determination to actualize her feminine identity, she will ever remain a male in a heterosexist society; in other words, she is trapped and marginalized as a "Boy to the World." The episode's title thus emphasizes the strict limitations of normative heterosexuality and its "gender as sex ideology" (Sloop, 2000, p. 181) that categorizes gender as if "genitals always, inevitably outweigh agency" (Hale, 1998, p. 316), and that disciplines those who transgresses the binary male-female gender norms (Sloop).

Rather than close off "other potential ways of thinking about gender and gender identity" as mainstream media typically do (Sloop, 2000, p. 171), Kelley's narratives open a safe space for audience members to consider gender and sexuality as performative[5] and, hence, as transcending rigidly defined sexual norms. Spectators are encouraged to perceive Stephanie as female throughout this episode, despite Renée's early revelation that "Stephanie is *Stephen.*" The narratives are structured to encourage sympathy for Stephanie's defiant rejection of her biologically assigned gender role, and for her choice to leave the family that rejected her and to live her life unapologetically as a female. And Stephanie *looks* like a woman, perfectly comfortable in her feminine dresses, and proud of her femininity. In contrast to typical media narratives that make a joke of transgressive gender identities—*Tootsie* and *Mrs. Doubtfire,* for instance—whose characters reaffirm heterosexual ideology by revealing "correct gender with a flourishing costume change" (Gaines & Herzog, 1990, p. 26)—*Ally* viewers see only hints of Stephanie's biological identity, and then only because under her wig is a short, masculine-typed haircut.[6] Indeed, Stephanie so clearly enacts her feminine identity that Ally and other characters can't believe that she is biologically a male. Thus, the narratives challenge and dismantle heterosexual

ideology by situating the problems Stephanie faces within heteronormative hegemony, not with Stephanie or her transsexuality.

The narrative structure never falters in its depiction of Stephanie's own certainty and comfort about her self-actualization as female. She *is* a woman, a perspective the narratives encourage viewers to share. As Tasker (1998) argued, "Popular texts offer both the powerful and the disempowered (though on quite different terms) a relatively risk-free identification with an other or series of others" (p. 22). Comedy in particular, she wrote, "provides a space in which taboos can be addressed, made visible and also contained, negotiated" (p. 163). Every time Stephanie appears, her depiction encourages viewers to suspend disbelief and ignore sexual taboos, and see Stephanie as she does—as a woman. Significantly, Stephanie's transsexuality works to confirm the constructive nature of gender (Garber, 1992); because Stephanie so clearly performs her female identity despite her biologically assigned sex, the binary male-female system of heteronormativity is disrupted. In so doing, the point of view of Ally and her colleagues' unconditional perception of Stephanie as female is equated with "intelligence, reason, and a sense of humor" (Golombisky, 1999, p. 9). Importantly, this has the potential also to become the spectators' "point of view,regardless of sex" (Golombisky, p. 9).[7]

The next section discusses the second plotline involving Richard Fish and his absurd obsession to celebrate his dead uncle's bigotry toward short people. Our discussion illustrates how the uncle's ridiculous intolerance is comically juxtaposed with the strategic endorsement of gender diversity articulated through the characters of Ally and Stephanie. This juxtaposition ultimately functions to challenge hegemonic heterosexuality.

Richard Fish & Ridiculous Intolerance

In the opening scenes of "Boy to the Word," Richard Fish (Greg Germann) adjourns his morning staff meeting by announcing that his uncle has died. When his co-workers offer their condolences, Richard says, "No biggie. He'd been ill. It was probably a blessing." But, he explains, he is having a problem with the minister at his uncle's church,

who refuses to allow Richard to memorialize his uncle's bigotry in the funeral service. Richard's uncle "had a distaste for short people," he explains. "At 6 years old he was bitten by one. It resonated. What can I say?" Richard's enlists an associate, Billy Thomas (Gil Bellows), to help him convince the minister that his uncle's " distaste" for short people should be permitted as part of his eulogy.

The two men meet with Mark Newman, the black minister of the predominately African American church Richard's uncle had attended. Despite their arguments, however, the minister is adamant that he will not allow Richard to "unload on short people" in his church. When the minister explains that his congregation includes a number of "short-statured congregates," Richard reminds him that his uncle's bigotry against short people "helped build half this church":

Richard: "Mark, remember when my uncle came here?"

Mark: "Of course I do."

Richard: "Switched from being a Lutheran to a Baptist just to come to this church, did he not? And why did he come to you?"

Mark: "Because he didn't like the minister at the other place."

Richard: "And what specifically did he object to?"

Mark: "He was tiny."

Richard: "And as a result of that other minister being tiny, your church received a lot of money."

The deceased uncle's generosity is not enough to change Mark's mind. "I won't allow you to get up there at the podium and talk about your uncle hating short people. It's bigotry," the minister says.

The absurdity of celebrating a bias against short people is obvious, and reaffirmed when Richard and Billy file a suit to force Reverend Newman to comply. In court, Billy argues that the case is not about "endorsing his uncle's bigotry;" rather, it's about free speech, and Richard's right to honor his uncle's life as he chooses. A skeptical judge replies that

civil rights laws are designed to protect *against* discrimination. "I'm all for free speech," the judge says. "He [Richard] can say whatever he wants. But why should I force the church to be a forum for it?" Billy next argues that the uncle's life was "marked by several experiences with short people, that affected not just his life, but who he became," and further, there are no laws designed to protect short people from discrimination: "Civil rights laws identify suspect classes. First it was race, then came religion. Next it was gender. Now we're up to sexual orientation. But there's no special protection for short people." At this point, the church's attorney asks the judge, "What if he [the uncle] hated blacks?" Would the court force his client to allow Richard to celebrate a racial bigotry during his uncle's memorial service? Billy counters: "What if? This whole political correctness thing is out of control. First we say you can't act with prejudice. That's fine. And then we say you can't have prejudices. Now we're saying you can't even talk about somebody else's prejudices. This isn't civil rights, your honor, it's censorship!"

After taking the case under advisement, the judge rules in Richard's favor, and orders Reverend Newman to allow Richard to celebrate his uncle's irrational prejudice against short people as part of his eulogy. The judge explains his ruling:

> As a person who was never offered a basketball scholarship, I'm a little salty about assisting anybody who wants to take a smack at the vertically challenged. That's what we call short people sometimes—vertically challenged. That's politically correct, isn't it? Part of living in a free country, people should be free. And though laws should exist to prevent discrimination and though they should exist to prevent people from acting on prejudices, nevertheless, people are entitled to their bigotries. And if somebody is stupid or believed stupid things, it has to be permissible at that person's funeral for somebody to get up and say, hey, he believed these stupid things. This totem pole of political correctness thing, that's stupid. . . . Go ahead, Mr. Fish. Get up at that podium and take your uncle's shot.

At first reading, these court scenes, the judge's ruling, and Richard's insistence about voicing his uncle's prejudice may seem to represent a discourse of intolerance, but we argue it is just the opposite. It is the absurdity of ranting against people because of their "vertical challenges" that opens a safe space for later addressing the much more controversial issue of discrimination based on sexual orientation. As Fry (1987) argued, the paradoxical nature of comedy provides a narrative context to challenge dominant ideologies and, in turn, the prejudices inherent in those ideologies. In the same way that Norman Lear used Archie Bunker's absurd and ridiculous bigotries to expose racial prejudices, Kelley's narratives in "Boy to the World" satirize and lay bare other intolerance within a safe and silly context—short people. Without the comedic safety valve, neither Archie Bunker nor the "short people" episode could have been as effective. Kelley's comic narratives thus provide the necessary context to critique heterosexism, just as comedy gave *All in the Family* its power to challenge dominant racial ideologies. As Jackson (1999) observed about Archie Bunker:

> We were confronted by the rantings of the ignorant and racist Bunker. The laughter didn't come from a belief that prejudice is amusing; we laughed because the slurs and misconceptions spouted by Archie were so patently ludicrous the only response was to laugh. And reject him as a role model. (p. K3810)

Kelly employs a similar process—prejudice based on "vertical challenge" is ludicrous, and laughter is the only logical response. As a result, bigotry can be exposed as absurd. As Golombisky (1999) observed, when an "audience laughs along with the lampoon, it also laughs at the system, a process that subverts the dominant culture even while appearing to enforce it" (p. 5). Finally, the fact that the deceased uncle's minister and church are African American functions as a narrative device to further foreground issues of discrimination; it's an implicit reminder to audiences of America's history of racism and the reason civil rights laws are necessary.

The final section illustrates how the narratives disrupt heteronormative hegemony in the episode's climactic scenes. By juxtaposing two incongruent narratives—Stephanie's

murder and the absurd "short people" funeral—intolerance in all its forms is revealed as unsupportable. Like women's strategic use of "subversive marginal humor" and its inherent spoofs of normative heterosexuality (Golombisky, 1999, p. 4), Kelley's narratives in "Boy to the World" subvert gender boundaries, attacking the privileged position of heteroideology.

An Absurd Funeral and A Tragic Death

In the final scenes of "Boy to the World," normative heterosexuality is dismantled through overlapping narratives that ultimately function, as women's subversive humor does, as a "thinly veiled indictment" (Walker, cited in Barreca, 1991, p. 185) of heterosexual ideology. The comedy surrounding the memorial service for Richard Fish's short-bigoted uncle works strategically to open a non-threatening space for spectators to consider the potential effects of a gender code that deems any deviation from heterosexuality as abnormal and perverse. Further, Richard's comic determination to celebrate his dead uncle's eccentricities, including his hated of short people, metaphorically represents all forms of prejudices. In this context, the uncle's aversion to the "vertically challenged" is aligned against prejudice toward sexual minorities like Stephanie.

As Richard faces the funeral congregation, his friends nervously wait to hear what he will say to celebrate his uncle's absurd bigotry. But Richard doesn't mention short people. "He liked some people for silly reasons, disliked others for sillier reasons," Richard says. "He said life's just a stupid game. It doesn't matter what you do or what you have. If you're loved in the end, the you win. He wins." The church choir rises to sing. But instead of the usual funereal fare, the choir belts out Randy Newman's song, "Short People" (1977):

Short people got no reason,
Short people got no reason,
Short people got no reason to live.
They got little hands, little eyes.
They walk around tellin' great big lies.
They got little noses and tiny little teeth.
They wear platform shoes on their nasty little feet.
They got grubby little fingers

And dirty little minds.
They're gonna get you every time

Well, I don't want no short people,
Don't want no short people,
Don't want no short people 'round here.

The entire congregation, including the minister, are unable to resist laughing at the comic absurdity of the song and join in, clapping, dancing and singing along with the choir that turns the satirical bigotry of "Short People" into a black gospel spiritual. By situating "short people" in the position of marginalized groups of people like transsexuals, this scene illustrates the absurdity of such unreasoning prejudices and, in turn, inverts the "tried and tested bigotry" (Tasker, 1998, pp. 170-171) inherent in heterosexist ideology, or any other unblinking bias.

The show's high hilarity comes to an abrupt end when Ally and Reneé return to their apartment and receive a telephone call from the police; Reneé is needed to identify a murder victim. Horrified, we all know who the victim must be. When they arrive at the crime scene, Ally and Reneé see Stephanie's body in an alley, bloody and beaten, legs sprawled. Her wig is gone and one of her high heels is missing. "Best we can tell," the officer explains, "the 'John' went crazy when he found out his 'Jane' was a guy. . . . I called the parents. They live in Ohio. They said they won't even come to make an ID." Stricken, Ally kneels to the ground and hugs Stephanie's bleeding body.

Later, Reneé holds Ally as she weeps, trying to provide comfort: because of Ally, Stephanie had a friend and was not alone at the end, she says. The final scene is in the morgue. Stephanie lies on a slab, an array of cosmetics spread over the white sheet that covers her. Ally has replaced Stephanie's wig and meticulously applies Stephanie's lipstick. Earlier, Stephanie had told Ally and Reneé that she had loved wearing make-up since childhood: "You know how most people wear clean underwear, in case they get run over by a car? They don't want people to think they're dirty. With me, all I cared about was my face. I used to pray, Lord, if I get hit by a bus, please don't let it be without make-up. I gotta go to my grave pretty." When Ally applies Stephanie's make-up, she endorses Stephanie's

right to live her life and her gender as she chose, her right to equality regardless of her sexual orientation. Ally makes sure Stephanie goes to her grave pretty.

The two funeral rituals—one an absurd service featuring a revival version of "Short People," the other a bleak morgue where two women mourn a transsexual's murder—offer a powerful juxtaposition that can be related to Burke's (1984) concept of perspective by incongruity. As Golombisky (1999) pointed out, unlikely narrative alignments derive their power to advance social change precisely because the comic incongruity of linking contradictory events, groups or ideas results in "surprise, shock, dislocation, or sudden reversal of expectations" (Walker & Dresner, 1998, pp., 173-174). In the context of "Boy to the World," television viewers, like the people gathered to mourn Richard's uncle, are shocked when the choir begins singing "Short People." The juxtaposition of this comic surprise with Stephanie's brutal murder provides a safe space for viewers to consider the consequences of bigotry and heterosexist ideology. Ultimately, structuring this plotline around intolerance against "short people" reinforces the subversive nature of the narratives and recruits spectators in rejecting the true target—larger areas of societal bigotry and prejudice. While typical viewers may not have much tolerance for transsexuals like Stephanie Grant, when that bias is juxtaposed with an absurd prejudice like hatred of "short people," the incongruity makes a new perspective possible (Burke, 1984). In the process of rejecting one prejudice, viewers are encouraged to realize they must also reject the other. The dead uncle's prejudices elicit laughter, but other social prejudices toward marginalized groups are less comic, but just as wrong. Such people apparently "got no reason to live,"[8] The overlapping narratives thus open a space for viewers to make a "great leap" (Golombisky, 1999, p. 6) in how to think about the rigidity of heteronormativity: Stephanie's murder is not comic, but tragic.

The arguments made earlier in courtroom scenes—that political correctness has gone too far—are strategically placed in the narratives precisely in order to later mock and ridicule such attitudes, and to demonstrate "how little they have to do with reality"

(Golombisky, 1999, p. 5). Such strategies encourage spectators to join in the mockery and, in turn, to laugh "at the system," a narrative device that "subverts the dominant culture even while appearing to enforce it" (Golombisky, p. 5). The underlying message is that, while it could be argued that some aspects of political correctness may have gone too far—referring to short people as "vertically challenged," for instance—civil rights laws designed to protect people from discrimination and bigotry because of their sexual orientation clearly have not gone far enough. The consequences of such attitudes are with us in news reports every day.

Media Narratives and the Politics of Social Advocacy

"You can entertain people and make them think and feel at the same time."
Rob Reiner[9]

In America and in Hollywood, what it means to be male or female is offered in a very limited frame. These heterosexist conventions have consequences, of course. Monique Wittig (1980) asserted that "discourses of heterosexuality oppress us in the sense that they prevent us from speaking unless we speak in their terms" (p. 105). The invisibility in U.S. mass media of voices that fail to conform to heterosexual norms and discourses is not the only form of oppression, as Nancy Nangeroni argued (1999):

> [L]anguage influences thought, and the stigma against transgender people is maintained by the media's denigration and disrespect. . . . Crossdressers and transsexuals have long been the butt of jokes, regularly depicted as something other than 'normal,' not worthy of respect or even protection under the law. (p. 17)

The potential of such biased representations is apparent. As Linda Williams explained (1996), people "acquire and maintain beliefs about what it means to be male or female at least partially through cultural products such as film and television" (p. 275); thus, media images of sexual minorities can become "important sources of information" (Fejes & Petrich, 1993, p. 396) for the public. Unfortunately, what the public primarily sees in mainstream media's depiction of transgressive sexuality are characters that are either weak,

comic or evil (Dyer, 1999; Fejes & Petrich; Gross, 1996; Russo, 1986). As Dyer explained, the "amount of hatred, fear, ridicule and disgust packed into those images is unmistakable" (p. 297), and result in "politically indefensible and aesthetically revolting" images (Russo, p. 32).

Media narratives may, however, "conflict with the dominant" discourses (Fiske, 1987, p. 14) inscribed in both culture and media. As Fiske explained, "[H]egemony characterizes social relations as a series of struggles for power"; thus, cultural critics view media texts "as a site of the series of struggles for meaning" (Fiske, p. 41). "[S]ocial change must have its roots in material social existence," Fiske argued, but "television can be, must be, part of that change, and its effectivity will either hasten or delay it" (p. 45). Larry Gross (1996) reminds us that it is the mass media that often set a social agenda, that "tell most of the stories to most of the people most of the time" (p. 159). Thus, the mass media can either reinforce or contradict dominant discourses (Fiske). Television discourse, Fiske said, is a "language or system of representation that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings about an important topic area" (p. 14). Thus, media narratives have the potential to further one of the goals of advocates of gender diversity—the "breakdown of gender stereotyping and so too the socially constructed 'need'" (Jeffreys, 1997, p. 56) for categories that label heterosexuality as "normal" and any deviations as "abnormal." As Gross observed, "The honest portrayal of lesbian and gay people in the media does have the potential to reach the hearts and minds of many Americans. This is reason enough to continue the struggle to transform the media" (p. 159). This has long been the argument of critics regarding media representations of women and people of color. The same is true for images of sexual minorities. In this regard, Kelley's tale of prejudice and the brutal death of someone who was "different" offers important lessons.

By foregrounding and transgressing sexual conventions, popular media that use comedy to advocate tolerance and diversity—whether intended to be specifically political or not—therefore have the potential to help disrupt the gender boundaries necessary for the

maintenance of heterosexist ideology by representing such cultural assumptions as absurd indefensible (Tasker, 1998). In the process, the potential also exists for popular media to dismantle the inherent bigotry underlying hegemonic heterosexuality that too often manifests itself in the kind of hate crimes that ended the life of the fictional Stephanie Grant—or the real life of Brandon Teena. Rather than reassure spectators that "heterosexual identity is never really in jeopardy" (Williams, 1996, p. 273) and that a heterosexual outcome is always inevitable (Roof, 1996), Kelley's *Ally McBeal* narratives resist heteronormative practices by suggesting the opposite. As we have argued, such narratives offer an alternative perspective of transsexuality and the issues of gender fluidity, blurring the lines of traditional boundaries of sexual identity and mocking the "shortcomings" of such "conventional behaviours and structures" (Tasker, p. 167). Kelley's narratives simultaneously mock and educate us.

Mediated challenges to hegemonic masculinity can be read in terms of what Stephen Cohan and Ian Hark (1993) refer to as "disturbances" and "slippages" (p. 3) in Hollywood narratives' heteroideology. Clearly, the narratives of "Boy to the World" use humor to confront spectators with such gender "disturbances" and "slippages": "[I]n the same way that 'M*A*S*H' could only deal with Vietnam by moving the war to Korea and tempering the drama with wisecrack humor, 'Ally McBeal' couches its serious questions . . . in exaggerated fantasies, oddball characters, and silly scenarios" (Stark, 1997, p. 13). Kelley's use of comedy and mockery foregrounds prejudice and its consequences in American society and attacks "hegemonic power and privilege" (Gilbert, 1997, p. 328). The underlying message is that the power and privilege of heteronormativity can serve to perpetuate deadly prejudice in society.[10]

At the first Matthew Shepard Memorial Lecture sponsored by Brown University, commemorating the young Wyoming man brutally murdered in a 1998 hate crime, Jeffrey Montgomery, executive director of The Triangle Foundation, graphically summarized the problems facing individuals who do not conform to normative heterosexuality in America:

"[G]ay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are at risk every day of their lives. Not only are we the group most at risk of violence, we are most at risk of job discrimination, losing our families; homophobia retains its title as the last socially acceptable form of bigotry" (2000, p. 443). This is the message underlying "Boy to the World." When the choir at the funeral of Richard Fish's uncle sings "short people got no reason to live," the song is not about celebrating his uncle's bigotries, of course, but a reminder of the consequences of intolerance and bigotry in all of their forms.

Notes

[1] For additional research on women comics' subversive use of humor as social commentary, also see: Auslander (1993); Barreca (1991; 1992); Dudden (1987); Landay (1998); Mellencamp (1997); Rowe (1995); and, Walker (1987; 1988).

[2] Our study does not attempt to explore transgender or transsexual subjectivity. Rather, following Jacob Hale's (1997) rules for non-transsexed individuals writing about transsexuals, we've attempted to focus on what dominant cultural narratives tell us about heteroideology and its consequences. Thus, our study is limited to how issues of gender fluidity are depicted in this episode of *Ally McBeal*, and how the narratives disrupt or contain hegemonic heterosexuality.

[3] Throughout this episode, each time the masculine pronoun "he" is used to refer to Stephanie, it represents a strategic narrative device to gain support and empathy for Stephanie and her chosen gender identity, and in turn, to subvert rather than to affirm normative heterosexuality. Although Judith Halberstam (1998) cautioned that misusing pronouns—referring to a FTM transsexual as a "she" or a MTF transsexual as a "he"—insidiously marginalizes transsexuals, Fiske (1986) demonstrated that what at first reading may seem to represent a perpetuation of an unliberated "discourse of gender" may instead be read oppositionally as representing "strategies of resistance or modification that change, subvert or reject the authoritatively proposed meanings" (p. 394). As one example, when Ally says, "He's the most fragile of human beings, living in the harshest of worlds" or the

psychologist explains—"No one's welcomed him in. . . . he's just looking to survive"—they are constructions that foreground the vulnerability and disenfranchisement of individuals like Stephanie who are deemed abnormal because of their transgressive sexuality, thus emphasizing the precarious position of a transsexual living in a heterosexual society.

[4] Although "transvestite fetishism" is presented as legal strategy, Stephanie's character is represented as a transsexual throughout the episode. According to Nancy Nangeroni (1999), most people do not understand the difference between these terms. Neither cross-dresser nor transvestite implies "any specific behavior" Nangeroni explained; such individuals identify "primarily as the gender to which they were originally assigned" (p. 16). In contrast, transsexuality is "opposite of transvestism" (Roof, 1996, p. 89): a transsexual identifies "his or her gender identity with that of the 'opposite' gender" (Stone, 1991, p. 281) and enacts "cross-living full time, or the intention to do so, and at least some degree of sex-role reversal (or intention)" (Nangeroni, p. 16). Throughout "Boy to the World," Stephanie is depicted as "cross-living full time" in her chosen feminine gender identity. Therefore, we will the female pronoun to refer to Stephanie unless citing direct dialogue from the episode that uses the male pronoun.

[5] Many scholars argue that gender is socially and culturally constructed and performed (e.g., Butler, 1987; 1990; 1993; Condit, 1997; Doane, 1982; Moi, 1985) and thus, gender is produced through discourse (Condit), including media discourses. For example, Fiske (1987) asserted that "[m]asculinity is performance" (p. 209); similarly, de Lauretis (1987) concluded that femininity was a "product and process of representation" (p. 5), both of which may be redefined and negotiated in media.

[6] Stephanie is seen without her wig only three times, and then only in ways that serve to reaffirm rather than contradict her chosen gender identity: in the privacy of her apartment while she's sewing dresses, when she yanks off her wig in Ally's office to assert that she's not "a freak," and after she is murdered.

[7] Kelley's narratives may be situated within what Alexander Doty termed a "queer space" (1993, p. 148): "[C]ultural 'queer space' recognizes the possibility that various and fluctuating queer positions might be occupied whenever *anyone* produces or responds to culture. . . . the queer often operates within the nonqueer, as the nonqueer does within the queer" (p. 3). David Halperin explained that queerness is best understood as a flexible strategy of positioning to resist heteronormative practices (cited in Scheman, 1997, p. 148). In other words, queer readings and narratives are possible "regardless of the self-identity of a viewer or the socially recognized gayness of the object viewed" (Erhart, 1999, p. 175), or the "sexuality of its director" (Hanson, 1999, p. 11). Ultimately, Doty said, texts that "challenge and confuse our understanding and uses of sexual and gender categories" (p. xvii) represent a queer space.

[8] In the year between Matthew Shepard's murder and the trial of Aaron McKinney for that crime, 35 sexual minorities were known to have been killed in America (Montgomery, 2000). Post-verdict interviews with jury members in some of those trials indicated that many of these jurors believed that if the murdered person had "made a homosexual advance," then that person "deserved to die" and the killer "should be let off easy" (p. 443).

[9] Reiner made this statement on the *Today Show* discussing the impact of Archie Bunker's character and *All in the Family* on the morning after Carroll O'Connor's death (June 22, 2001). Reiner also told *NBC Nightly News* that O'Connor loved playing Archie because, "It allowed him to expose the ignorance of bigotry" (June 22, 2001). This is precisely what the comic narratives in "Boy to the World" accomplish.

[10] Other episodes of *Ally McBeal* have used Richard Fish's admitted homophobia in the narratives to mock such unenlightened and prejudicial attitudes, just as Archie Bunker's racism was employed to mock bigotry (Jackson, 1999). Unfortunately, later depictions of transsexuals on *Ally McBeal* reinscribed rather than challenged heterosexual ideology. For instance, during its fourth season (2000-2001), four episodes featured another male-to-female transsexual, but in contrast to "Boy to the World," the character is played by a

woman (Lisa Edelstein) pretending to be a man passing as a woman. This character's transsexuality is depicted primarily as a source of comedy and curiosity and even ridicule. Hence, unlike "Boy to the World," these four episodes primarily leave normative "heterosexuality untroubled" (Sloop, 2000, p. 178). (Cooper, in press, illustrates how Richard Fish also is frequently depicted as an Unenlightened Neanderthal in the narratives of *Ally McBeal* specifically to mock and ridicule sexism and men's objectification of women).

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Running Head: COMMUNICATING A RE-DISCOVERED CULTURAL IDENTITY

Communicating A Re-discovered Cultural Identity Through the Ethnic Museum: The Japanese American National Museum

by

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Abstract

Communicating A Re-discovered Cultural Identity

Through the Ethnic Museum:

The Japanese American National Museum

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Ethnic groups within the United States often relinquish their identity, willingly or unwillingly, in order to gain acceptance within society. Their contributions are often overlooked in American museums where history is communicated from a distinctly European perspective. This study examines how the Japanese American National Museum, as an ethnic museum, recovers and re-discovers identity for Japanese-Americans through the messages communicated in their exhibits and displays.

Communicating A Re-discovered Cultural Identity Through the Ethnic Museum: The Japanese American National Museum

Identity plays an important role for non-European groups within the United States who have mainly lived on the margins of American society. These groups often relinquish their identity, willingly or unwillingly, in order to gain acceptance within mainstream society, and their contributions largely remain overlooked within the institutions that communicate our public history.

Museums tell and preserve our aesthetic, cultured history, and in that sense communicate to us a part of our identity. Traditionally this identity has come from an elite European perspective (Gaither, 1992). Karp (1992) contends that cultural displays unconsciously exert great influence over their audiences. In the early 1900s, England recognized the educational potential of museums to guide and control public views (Kreamer, 1992). Furthermore, the members of the dominant classes (Whites) constructed American museums which "embodied interpretations that supported their sponsors' privileged positions" (Wallace, 1986, p. 137). Wallace asserts museums allowed the American bourgeoisie to control and create a new identity:

> Convinced that immigrant aliens with subversive ideologies were destroying the Republic (United States), elites fashioned a new collective identity for themselves that had at its core the belief that there was such a thing as the American inheritance, and they were its legitimate custodians. (p. 140)

The museum essentially serves as a rhetorical arena with a select few often deciding what and how cultural artifacts should be presented to others. Displays reflect judgments of power and authority that have shaped a nation and how we should relate to one another (Lavine & Karp, 1991).

Until very recently, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC have displayed the products of humans in keeping with the traditionally elite ideas about museums; both have included displays about US ethnic groups only since the early 1980s. Despite the efforts of these institutions, the displays still reflected the histories of ethnic groups from a European perspective and lacked the viewpoints of these groups.

This exclusion from mainstream museums became evident to Japanese-Americans. Bruce Kaji, founding president of the Japanese American National Museum, notes, "Japanese-Americans helped develop part of the West, suffered discrimination, incarceration. But we have never had a place to tell our story" (Chavez, 1992, p. B1). The Japanese-American story now can be told. In 1992, the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) opened and became the first museum dedicated to tell the story of Japanese immigrants and Japanese-Americans in the US. The establishment of ethnic museums like the JANM have allowed groups to reclaim their identity.

Studying the Japanese American National Museum is important for several reasons. First, the popularity of ethnic museums has grown extensively in the last few years, yielding to further research in this area: "Although their experiences as minorities in the United States differ drastically, ethnic communities... are preserving and celebrating their distinct cultures in a similar way: by building multimillion-dollar museums" (Gordon, 1998, A1). Museums no longer distinguish themselves as a forum for just "white" Americans; ethnic groups have made significant contributions and sacrifices in building the United States. Furthermore, these museums become the vehicle for legitimizing the identities of these groups who have been marginalized.

Second, the JANM also endeavors to communicate a story all US citizens with immigrant descendants can relate to, a purpose embodied in its mission statement: "We strive as a world-class museum to provide a voice for Japanese-Americans and a forum that enables all people to explore their own heritage and culture" (JANM: Mission, 2000). This exploration encourages ethnic groups to retain, recover, and re-discover their identity and therefore validate their contributions to American society.

Finally, studying the JANM will add to the literature of communication, in that museums have become a way of passing stories and traditions about other cultures as well as aid ethnic groups in recovering their cultural identity. The museum will become increasingly important with the influx of groups such as southeast Asians and people from the Middle East who continue to come to the United States. Museums will help us to understand those immigrants as well as ourselves and fill in major segments missing in American civil society and world cultures

correcting the messages they communicate (Lavine & Karp, 1991). These American institutions will help to establish their place within US history.

This study aims to examine how the Japanese American National Museum serves the function of recovering and re-discovering erased ethnic identity by educating about the Japanese-American experience and reinforcing cultural identity for Japanese-Americans.

Cultural Identity and Image

Martin and Nakayama (2000) identify three contemporary perspectives on cultural identity: social psychological, communication, and critical. In the social psychological perspective, identity is developed through group membership, while communication develops identity through the use of symbols, labels and norms. However, the third perspective, critical, develops identity within sociohistorical contexts such as history, economics, politics, and discourse. Identity is determined socially and politically, and cultural identity resides in this area.

Hall (1994) suggests at least two different ways of defining cultural identity. In the first definition, cultural identity is "one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (p. 393). Cultural identity emanates from the sharing of histories and experiences that provide us with stability despite the fact that our actual history is constantly changing.

The second definition of cultural identity is much more dynamic. According to Hall (1994), while there may be many similarities, these don't last long enough for the "one experience, one identity" because there are "critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has intervened - 'what we have become'" (p. 394). Instead of being static, cultural identity constantly changes and the future is just as important as the past: "Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (p. 394).

Many other definitions of cultural identity exist. Collier and Thomas (1988) see cultural identity as cultural competence. A person becomes a member of a culture only when he or she

articulates and understands the symbols or follow the norms of that culture. Therefore, they define identity by comparing similarities and differences between people within the culture or group. Collier and Thomas base their idea of cultural identity on a person's ability to form an identity and sustain membership within a group.

In subsequent research, Collier (1998) reflects and critiques her earlier works about cultural identity theory (CIT). She concludes cultural identity is not contained within one particular definition but encompasses a range of interpretations. Collier discusses definitions already mentioned here but also includes the notions of "insider vs. outsider" and privilege and power. She concludes:

> . . . identities are multiple, overlapping, and contextually constituted and negotiated. Sociopolitical power and group histories constrain options for identity enactment, and relational dialogue may change impressions of norms and contested issues. The salience of the identity depends on such processes as avowal and ascription, as well as interaction with other in-group members and interaction with and discourse from out-group members. A dialectic tension between me or us and you or them is apparent as individuals negotiate their individual, group, and relational identities. (p. 134)

Hence, the cultural identity theory embodies not only the being of culture but also the doing of culture, and acceptance within that cultural group. The idea of acceptance is more than just the sharing of experiences, it is about the understanding and even the empathy of those experiences.

Drzewiecka's (2000) utilization of ethnic immigrant identities offers another definition of cultural identity. Here the researcher suggests that "ethnicity becomes cultural capital" within the immigrant context. Drzewiecka incorporates the notion of "habitus" which "views the social world as social space, a topology which consists of multiple fields and their relations to one another" (p. 246). Thus, this concept "provides one with an embodied sense of one's place in the midst of power struggles over cultural expressions and over the definition of ethnicity itself" (p. 246).

Martin and Nakayama (2000) indicates ethnic group members tend to develop both their racial and ethnic identity much earlier than Whites who may only develop their ethnic identity:

> ... minority group members in the United States tend to develop a sense of racial and ethnic identity much earlier than majority group members. Whites tend to take their culture for granted; although they may develop strong ethnic identity, they often do not really think about their racial identity. (p. 130)

Cultural identity is more than just the "knowing" and the "being"; it is also the doing and the "becoming." Cultural identity incorporates both ethnic and racial identity, and minority groups are better able to "do" and "become" their culture. Furthermore, groups develop a deep sense of cultural identity when they become marginalized. Cultural identity becomes a way for groups to gain power and privilege— and to empower the powerless. It can bring forth from within a group a sense of community, pride, shared experiences to build upon, and understanding, and, at the same time, teach others outside of the group.

Communicating Identity through Museums

Museums developed first as a hobby of the elite who displayed collected objects to other elites in palaces, temples, churches, and their residences (Kaplan, 1996). Ownership was often private or restricted to limited access by the public. According to Walsh (1992), in 1594 Francis Bacon believed that "no learned gentleman" should be without a collection (p. 18). Therefore, the first "museums" belonged exclusively to the powerful and educated aristocracy.

These so-called "cabinets" of collections were attempts to represent the world as perceived by their elite owners (Walsh, 1992). The first museums developed during the late 17th and early 18th centuries; they would not become accessible to the public until the 19th century when people realized collections were more easily maintained in institutions rather than in private collections.

Museum collections and exhibitions unconsciously exert a greater influence over their audiences. This is not a new concept; studies reveal "as early as 1902, England's museums acknowledged their educational potential and their mandate to serve diverse audiences ... exhibition strategies were clearly intended to control the educational process and to guide the public to desired

conclusions that served political ends" (Kreamer, 1992, p. 368). Instead of merely leisure enjoyment, museum collections became a type of propaganda with specific messages intended for their audiences.

Museum exhibits help audiences draw conclusions about a group of people or a culture; it serves as a rhetorical arena for those who develop and eventually construct displays about US society, and it persuades viewing audiences to draw certain conclusions either based on their own background or to simply postulate about a culture. This invariably has consequences for a group or culture displayed by the museum; assumptions without proof are made about a culture and its people that may or may not be true. These presumptions only help to develop or add fuel to stereotypes:

> Every museum exhibition, whatever its overt subject, inevitably draws on cultural assumptions and resources of the people who make it. Decisions are made to emphasize one element and to downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others. The assumptions underpinning these decisions vary according to culture and over time, place, and type of museum or exhibit. (Lavine & Karp, 1991, p. 1)

Thus, museums that present US history from a European standpoint force visitors to view it from only that perspective. However, the US is made up of more than just "white" people. In 1990, the US Census reported almost 50 million people stated their ethnic background was either "Black," "Aleut," "Asian & Pacific," or "other races" (US Census Bureau, 1999, p. 34). While "whites" still make up 80 percent of the US population, almost one-fifth was reportedly non-white, with the number still growing: "Currently, a full one-quarter of the annual growth of the US population is the result of immigration, and the vast majority of these immigrants are both nonwhite and non-European" (Gaither, 1992, p. 56). Thus, ethnic groups have taken the helm and developed their own museums to share their perspective.

Museums dedicated to one ethnic minority have been termed "ethnic museums." Their popularity has grown throughout the US with museums devoted to groups such as Latinos, Korean-Americans, African-Americans, and American Jewish communities. While speculation

that these museums develop out of "fears about losing ethnic identity through assimilation," they are more about creating something "permanent, public and expensive (that) represents a coming of age" (Gordon, 1998, p. A1). The University of Southern California's director of museum studies, Selma Holo, points out, "The trend is almost a cry of Americanness, saying 'We belong here too. We can make a museum'" (Gordon, 1998, p. A1).

These "ethnic museums" not only provide a story for their own people and culture, but also invite others to relate to these stories. Though each ethnic group faces their own unique struggle, such as African-Americans with slavery, or Japanese-Americans with internment, they have an underlying similarity: denial of identity through denial of human rights. Many cultural groups "that previously have been rendered invisible in our population no longer accept that status" (Gaither, 1992, p. 56). Ethnic museums allow these groups to gain authority over how their history is told and to essentially re-discover and celebrate their identity.

The Japanese American National Museum

> *The mission of the Japanese American National Museum is to promote understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by preserving, interpreting and sharing the experiences of Japanese-Americans.*
> (JANM: Mission, 2000)

The Japanese American National Museum (JANM), as an ethnic museum, preserves and communicates identity. A traditional museum with displays that educate the public about the Japanese-American experience in US, the JANM serves a much more important purpose. The museum has become the arena for a traditionally reticent group to recover and take control of their identity. Kinshasha Holman Conwill, director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, explains:

> For Japanese-Americans, the museum is significant in that it represents people taking the initiative to tell their own story. The dialogue on our country's cultural diversity has too often been defensive. White people ask, "What's so wrong with Western civilization?" Well, the question should be: "Why don't we have a more complete history of this country?" or "Why is it that Western history serves to submerge your identity when you are a person of color?" It is significant when a

> group of people take the step to tell their own story. In the end, it enriches everyone. (Lee, 1991, p. B1)

Hence, the Museum's efforts not only benefit the Japanese-American community, but also other ethnic communities in their quest for rediscovering and retaining their identity within American society.

In larger, well-established museums, the space available for ethnic groups is often limited. This limitation symbolizes the struggles ethnic groups face within the US. Ethnic museums fill in the missing pieces and become a wake up call for the larger institutions. As Roger Kennedy, Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History director, notes:

> The Japanese-American story is of importance to all Americans. At the Smithsonian, we are starting to talk in terms of "us," rather than "them," when we discuss the histories of different ethnic groups. The tone we would like to take is, "Hey! Did you ever think of your neighbor's story this way?" (Lee, ,1991 p. B).

The JANM preserves the identity of Japanese-Americans that has passed from earlier generations and the loss of oral history (JANM: History, 2001). The Museum has made a conscious effort to collect artifacts and other materials that were not destroyed or lost during the World War II Japanese-American internment. These items legitimize Japanese-Americans and their identity.

The JANM provides a foundation for visitors of all ethnic backgrounds to build upon their own experiences. For example, this idea was represented during its inaugural exhibit in 1992, *Issei Pioneers: Hawaii and the Mainland, 1885-1924*. Photographs, clothing, immigration documents, and some of the first Japanese home movies tell the tale of a group of people who left their country of birth for the promise of a better life in the United States. This is not a new story; it is one told over and over by European and non-European immigrants coming into the country. Unfortunately the experiences of the very first Japanese immigrants are being lost with their passing, as Henry Y. Ota, chairman of the museum board of trustees points out, "There are very few Issei still alive who can tell their stories. If we don't preserve that now and talk to these people, we will never recover their experience" (Chavez, 1992, p. B1). A loss of identity occurs

with the loss of immigrant stories; preservation of these experiences reinforces the cultural identity of Japanese-Americans.

Two adjacent structures in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district comprise the Museum: an abandoned Buddhist temple originally built in 1925, and a modern glass and steel Pavilion opened in 1999. The Buddhist temple became the historic building of the Museum after its interior was converted into galleries while keeping the structure intact. However, its limited space and the need to "tell" more of the Japanese-American story led the way to planning, building, and opening the Pavilion in 1999. According the JANM Executive Director and President Irene Hirano, the new Pavilion would serve several purposes:

> For Japanese Americans we hope it will be a place of pride. For others we hope it will be a place to explore, to learn, and to find themselves through our common experiences. For our leadership, volunteers, staff, members, and donors, it represents a new beginning and the opportunity to develop and present many new and exciting programs to expanded audiences worldwide. (Japanese American National Museum, 1999, p.1)

The two buildings house collections celebrating the past, present, and future of Japanese-Americans in the United States that comes to life for its visitors.

The JANM: Communicating Cultural Identity

An exhibit on the Pavilion's second floor chronicles the past 130 years of Japanese-American history in the United States. Employing the theme of "community," the exhibit vividly tell their story of traveling to America and establishing roots through personal accounts, photographs and family heirlooms. Here the stories are not about being Japanese but about coming to a new country and becoming an American; the Japanese American National Museum is an institution communicating the American dream of a new beginning. The following exhibits detail specific aspects of the story of Japanese-Americans.

Common Ground: The Heart of Community

Common Ground: The Heart of Community, in the first gallery of the exhibit, depicts the story of the first Japanese traveling to Hawaii as plantation laborers and the first Japanese to the US Mainland who often came as scholars. Photos of laborers displayed together with a sickle, cane knife, washboard, tin lunch pail, oil lamp, and metal identification tags reveal the life of the Japanese workers on Hawaiian plantations. In contrast, wicker baskets carrying a passport, woven pipe case, a brown and black striped jacket, and a family photo imparts the story of Japanese immigrants bound for the Mainland. Luggage of picture brides who came to marry the Japanese immigrants are also included in these exhibits and contain a passport, kimono, photos of their "fiancé," a bamboo comb, calligraphy book, and a textbook, *English for Coming Citizens*. These artifacts tell a story not exclusive to Japanese immigrants, but a story of all immigrants, both European and non-Europeans, who came to America in search of a better life. For Japanese-Americans, this reinforces their identity and signifies their part in the American story.

Moving Walls: A Community Project

Adjacent to the first gallery, though almost out-of-place, stands an original internment barrack from the Heart Mountain, Wyoming camp brought to the Museum by volunteers. Entitled *Moving Walls: A Community Project*, the structure reminds Museum visitors of a dark period in American history. Mounted within the barrack itself hangs a photo display of the *Moving Walls* project. As visitors view these photos, the reality of being inside the structure is barely noticeable until one looks up to see knotted, uneven boards and hazy window panes, the same ones Japanese-American internees peered through more than 50 years before. Only part of the original flooring and roof remains intact, with pieces of tarpaper still on the outside of the building; one can feel the emptiness of the abandoned structure similar to the abandonment felt by the Japanese-Americans when their country denied them their civil rights. A placard on the exhibit reads, "Even though the US Constitution guarantees all citizens equal protection and due process, it failed to protect Japanese Americans. This failure affects all Americans."

Growing Roots: Japanese American Community Settlement

The settlement of Japanese-Americans in the United States prior to World War II was no different than other ethnic immigrant groups. *Growing Roots: Japanese American Community Settlement* spans the years between 1908 until World War II. In this gallery, visitors hear whimsical music of the 1920s and 1930s while the collection itself reveals the endeavor of Japanese immigrants to keep their culture in a new country and raise families. Sushi presses, a *keizuribushi* (bonita shaver), an *usu* (mortar used to make Japanese confections), and a *Butsudan* (family altar) are integrated among a Santa Claus suit, a Montgomery Ward and Co. catalog, a 1906 University of Southern California College of Law diploma of Sejiro Shibuya, and US territory marriage certificate of Keitaro Nagai and Kise Yoshiko. Similar to many immigrants, the Japanese struggled to embrace their new country while still trying to retain their identity and culture.

Looking Like the Enemy: December 7, 1941

Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 called into question the citizenship and loyalty of Japanese-Americans and Japanese aliens living in the United States. Japanese immigrants had already settled in America and raised families who were citizens by birth; ethnicity overshadowed their contributions in the wake of the US entry into World War II. They quickly destroyed items such as personal letters, treasured family photographs, Japanese music records, *kimonos* (Japanese clothing), or anything that might hint they were "un-American":

> That night Papa burned the flag he had brought with him from Hiroshima thirty-five years earlier. It was such a beautiful piece of material, I couldn't believe he was doing that. He burned a lot of papers too, documents, anything that might suggest he still had some connection with Japan. (Houston, 1974, p. 5)

Other Japanese-American families encouraged their children to speak English instead of Japanese and participate in American activities such as Boy and Girl Scouts and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. Nakayama (2000) recalls:

> My mother's family, for example, switched from being a primarily Japanese-speaking household to an English-speaking one during their internment in a US concentration camp during World War II. I think they felt it was better to demonstrate their commitment to the US during a time of crisis in which, based on ancestry, their loyalty was questioned. (p. 15)

By February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 that eventually authorized the incarceration of more than 120,000 West Coast Japanese-Americans in camps throughout the US. Besides leaving behind their homes, businesses, and possessions, the Japanese-Americans also left behind a part of their identity. The camp internments lasted until 1945, but the experience of internment followed internees, many of whom were no longer welcomed back into their communities although none were ever found disloyal.

The former internees worked hard to rebuild lives for themselves and their children, and to put the internment behind them. Many refused to speak about their camp experiences:

> Silence about the camps, for most *Nisei*, (second generation Japanese-Americans) represented a way to repress the experience and, later, to protect their children from the past. Others responded by cognitively framing their exclusion as 'a test of character' rather than an unjust act; thus the exclusion provided an opportunity to prove their worthiness for greater inclusion into American society. (Nagata, 1990, p. 137)

Their silence symbolized not only their loyalty to America but also a suppression of their cultural identity. The children of former internees could not understand their parents' silence or passiveness about the internment. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, efforts toward redress and reparation began, and eventually, former internees began to speak about their experiences.

The exhibit, *Looking Like the Enemy: December 7, 1941*, resides in a gallery separated by glass walls and doors. Within these confines, the displays captures the story of internment through photographs, maps, letters, and other artifacts, and helps to preserve the past and recover identity for future generations. Barely noticeable is an American flag, which flew over the Justice

Department internment camp in Crystal City, Texas, behind a "wall" of photos from the camps and captures the attention of visitors entering the room. The American flag, a symbol of freedom for American citizens, shows the irony of the incarceration of American citizens during World War II.

Artist Kristine Yuki Aono created a 72-square foot memory "box" within the Museum's floor. The sectioned-off cubicles each represent the 11 camps and the Justice Department internment camp at Crystal City. Aono traveled to each site, gathering the soil and artifacts found in the area or from former internees of each camp to complete the collage. In the exhibit one sees broken dishes, a child's doll, pieces of barbed wire fence, and wood from the barracks. A Museum placard reads, "this installation is both Aono's interpretation of the suppressed Japanese American past, as well as a means for former inmates to tell their stories." The internment became a suppression of identity and culture for Japanese-Americans as photos illustrated "American" activities the internees participated in: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, school children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and, perhaps the greatest display of being an "American," photos of young Japanese-American men enlisting in the US military.

Guests can pick up creations of personal letters and telegrams kept by internees and their friends in the cubbyholes. These letters, written by internees to friends outside of the camps, bring the reality of internment into the hands of visitors and almost transports them back to that period through their words. These pieces remind visitors of the sacrifices made by former internees and helps younger generations of Japanese-Americans discover their identity.

Soldiers Speak with their Lives

A section entitled *Soldiers Speak with their Lives* completes the internment section gallery. It honors the Japanese American soldiers who fought and sacrificed their lives in World War II. This area of the exhibit centers around the Saito family, Kiichi and Setsu, their four sons, Kazuo, Shozo, George, and Calvin, and their daughter, Mary. In 1943, their youngest sons, George and Calvin volunteered for the 442 Regimental Combat Team, and were shipped to the European theater. Calvin was killed in action in July of 1944 with George following thereafter in October of

the same year. After Calvin's death, George wrote a letter to his father expressing his feelings about the war. An excerpt from George's letter on display reads:

> Dad - This is no time to be preaching to you but I have something on my chest which I want you to hear. In spite of Cal's supreme sacrifice don't let anyone tell you that he was foolish or made a mistake to volunteer. Of what I've seen in my travels on our missions I am more than convinced that we've done the right thing in spite of what happened in the past. America is a damn good country and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Both George's and Calvin's medals, coffin tags, and flags given to their parents at their funerals are included in the display, along with pictures, letters, and a tiny Italian vase sent to Mary with the inscription "Sis" at the bottom. Despite their incarceration and the loss of thousands of their sons, the *Nisei* soldiers who died in battle, Japanese-Americans continued to believe in their country and their rights as American citizens.

Resettlement: Forced Assimilation

After World War II, Japanese-Americans tried to return to the lives they had before the war. *Resettlement: Forced Assimilation* looks at life after the camps focusing mainly upon citizenship and the constitution. Along with the push to become citizens, a number of Japanese-Americans were encouraged to enter the political arena. Among the most prominent were Daniel Inouye and Sparky Matsunaga, two senators from Hawaii who served with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Battalion, respectively. Their patriotic red, white, and blue-colored political flyers, buttons, and other paraphernalia adorn a display case next to books about citizenship. Also included here: a movie bill and posters advertising the only Hollywood film about Japanese-American soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Battalion, the most highly decorated of its size during World War II. Premiered in 1951, *Go for Broke!* was produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and reminded "the nation that Americans of Japanese descent also had a part in winning World War II" (Nishie & Engstrom, 2000, p. 17).

During the resettlement years, Japanese-Americans chose to "forget" their ethnic identity and focused on becoming and being "American." Their ethnic and cultural identity served as the catalyst for incarceration during World War II; the former internees refused to talk about the camps and, instead, gave up their identity to become "American."

However, Black civil rights struggles of the 1960s and 1970s ushered in a renewal of cultural identity for not only African-Americans but other ethnic groups. With the growing political success of Japanese-Americans, a younger *Sansei* (third-generation) group became involved with the civil rights struggles. A *Life* magazine on display featuring a photo of the assassinated Malcolm X with a Japanese-American friend, Yuri Kochiyama, next to the dying civil rights leader testifies to their involvement. The Asian American movement grew and was coined "yellow power." With this empowerment, several civil groups in the Japanese-American community began the road to redress. Their efforts were rewarded when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which offered a formal apology and reparations to each surviving internee. The Museum chronicles these efforts with photographs and a timeline of the events leading to the passage of the bill, including the Presidential letter of apology. For Japanese-Americans, these displays shed new light upon their identity by breaking the stereotype of the "passive Oriental," as stereotypes often dictate what our identity should be instead of what it is.

In the final section of the exhibit, a multimedia visual display panel comprised of several smaller screens bombard visitors with video images from the past to the present coupled together with the jazz-infused music of the group Hiroshima. Karen L. Ishizuka produced the video presentation entitled *J-Town Rhapsody* in conjunction with executive producer Robert A. Nakamura, and director/editor Justin Lin. In the span of 15 minutes, a montage of video stills reaffirms the identity of Japanese-Americans throughout US history: family picnics, family reunions, picture brides, bridegrooms, children, parents, grandparents, and the *Issei* (first generation immigrants). These photos lay claim that Japanese-Americans are a part of this nation as a display placard explains the display's theme: "As we reinvent America, from monolithic to

multicultural, to include all of us in our magnificent diversity, we forever re-envision the American experience."

Japanese-Americans in Sports

The museum also includes revolving exhibits that further reinforce identity and culture for Japanese-Americans. The current exhibit, *Crossover, More Than a Game: Sport in the Japanese American Community*, traces Japanese-Americans in sports through several periods: before World War II, at internment camps, during resettlement, and the present. Identity plays a vital role in explaining the connection between sports and Japanese-American history. Prior to World War II, sport was used to debate subjects such as identity, racism, "Americanization," and nationalism. A display placard explains that during internment, "sport provided an outlet for the frustrations of an incarcerated people" and after the war, it became a way of rebuilding community ties broken when they left their homes and also "reflected the American dreams of the Nisei and Sansei." Today, the placard reads, Japanese-American sport leagues struggle with "the issue of who is and who is not Japanese American, much as a community as a whole does."

The *More Than a Game* exhibit relies on the universal language of sport to include Japanese-Americans as part of society. It also transcends the typical physical stereotype of athletes by dispelling the image of the "non-athletic" Japanese-American. An exhibit specifically highlighting several prominent Japanese-American athletes recently ended. It included Olympic gold medalist Kristi Yamaguchi and football players Johnnie and Chad Morton, brothers who have a Japanese-American mother and an African-American father. These images break down discrimination and stereotypes while reinforcing identity for Japanese-Americans.

For a Greener Tomorrow: Japanese American Gardeners

In the Legacy Center of the Historic Building, another revolving exhibit celebrates the identity of Japanese-Americans. *For a Greener Tomorrow: Japanese American Gardeners in Southern California* honors the profession of gardening that provided for a better life for former internees after World War II. This display chronicles the more than 100 years of contributions by

Japanese-American gardeners who essentially created "'a greener tomorrow' for all Japanese Americans and the larger Southern California community" (JANM: Legacy, 2001).

This exhibit is co-sponsored by the Southern California Gardeners' Federation and includes a number of photographs of Japanese-American gardeners in the gardens they cultivated. The photos convey the pride these professionals took in their work evident in the gardens themselves. In addition, many tools used by these gardeners are also on display. The historical importance of the Japanese-American gardener reminds Museum visitors, especially Japanese-Americans, the contributions they made in the development of America.

Impact of JANM: Recovering and Rediscovering Cultural Identity

The JANM has helped to build up its surrounding community by improving and restoring the area. LA's Little Tokyo was the hub of the Japanese-American community until World War II. After the war, many of the surrounding buildings, including the church where the JANM originally opened, became dilapidated. Like many areas predominantly occupied by one ethnic group, others have shied away. The JANM has invited groups such as schoolchildren and senior citizens to learn about Japanese-Americans and their community; stereotypes are destroyed and cultural identity becomes stronger. Furthermore, explanations of the exhibits are not only written in English but also in Spanish and Japanese.

This community strengthening has gone beyond the boundaries of Little Tokyo as the JANM puts on traveling exhibits in areas densely populated by Americans of Japanese ancestry, such as Hawaii. When in such locations, the JANM invites local Japanese-Americans to help enhance the presentation of the exhibits, thus empowering the community further and helping the younger generation to learn about their own identity.

The JANM has become important to Japanese-American communities that have forgotten many aspects of their cultural identity. This loss of identity became apparent after World War II; parents encouraged their children to become more "American" by abandoning the Japanese language and rituals, Japanese music, Japanese religions, and even Japanese friends. Recognizing this deprivation, the Museum provides demonstrations of Japanese culture such as presenting

Boy's Day and Girl's Day festivals or the making of *mochi* (sweet rice cakes) during the New Year holiday. There are also many ongoing cultural activities sponsored such as *shamisen* (Japanese musical instrument) and *taiko* (drums) lessons.

In the Legacy Center Gallery of the Museum's Historic Building, volunteers demonstrate traditional Japanese arts and crafts such as *origami* (Japanese paper folding) and invite visitors to participate. This is especially important for Japanese-Americans who are able to be a part of cultural activities they may not have experienced growing up. These arts and crafts instill ethnic pride and allow the re-discovering of cultural identity.

LA Times reporter Susan Moffat (1993) describes the Museum and its building as "helping take the search for identity -- and outreach to other ethnic groups -- to a new stage, beyond the quest for old-country roots. Instead of inventing Far Eastern atmosphere or dogmatically imitating Japanese architecture, the expansion will evoke the deep American roots of the community" (p. B1). It is these American roots that bring a sense of inclusion and identity to Japanese-Americans and their community.

Yoo (1996) examined the JANM's "America's Concentration Camps" exhibit by discussing issues of memory and how shifting politics have influenced how the camps were presented by the Museum. Describing the exhibit in-depth, Yoo points out that this presentation by the JANM of the camps gives it control over how history is presented from the standpoint of a "racial-ethnic community that is telling its own stories" (p. 695). Moreover, the JANM uses a "community-based effort to reclaim a history, to educate broadly, and to work for positive social change" (p. 695) and places power back in the hands of the minority group:

> While nothing can erase the suffering borne by Japanese-Americans, exhibits such as "America's Concentration Camps" and institutions such as the Japanese American National Museum testify to the compelling need for an inclusive and critical exploration of our collective past (Yoo, 1996, p. 697).

Exhibits like the "America's Concentration Camps" provide for exploration which "recognizes failures as well as triumphs" (p. 696) using individual stories, therefore helping to strengthen the community within.

Conclusion

The growth of ethnic museums has increased considerably in the last few years. As the US continues to become more and more diverse with the increased flow of immigrants into this country, ethnic museums have become a place to understand other cultures and encourage tolerance among groups. The museum is no longer an arena for just "white" Americans to remember this nation's history, but becomes a way for ethnic groups to come in from the margins and rediscover their identity.

The Japanese American National Museum has become a way of empowering Japanese-Americans with their exhibits and displays. It also allows them to communicate their image and identity where other museums have left gaps. Within the realms of the exhibits, the JANM reinforces and legitimizes the Japanese-American identity; Japanese-Americans are not longer left on the margins of society but instead are brought in. The museum as an American institution brings civility to groups that were not considered civilized in the past. For ethnic groups, ethnic museums allow a kind of freedom to celebrate and maintain their cultural identity within the larger, Euro-American society. For Japanese-Americans, these exhibits shed a new light on their identity and are a powerful reminder that they do belong in American society and are a part of this nation.

The JANM has become an example for other groups to take the initiative to tell their stories. This is especially important for Asian and Pacific Islander groups whose culture seems to remain an exotic mystery. With museums, the mystery is dissolved, leaving the audience with a greater understanding of these cultures and their peoples.

As the dynamics of race change in the US, so do the dynamics of museums that have the job to educate and tell the story of our country. Ethnic groups are learning the importance of communicating their story and establishing their identity from their own viewpoint. This has allowed groups to create, root, and ultimately maintain a place in society:

> Groups attempting to establish and maintain a sense of community and to assert their social, political, and economic claims in the larger world challenge the right of established institutions to control the presentation of their cultures. They challenge exhibitions that overlap with their concerns, demand real power within existing institutions, and establish alternative institutions (Lavine & Karp, 1991, p. 1-2).

Realizing the important contribution of ethnic groups in US history, established museums have begun moving away from an exclusive "white" perspective. However, these museums can only dedicate a limited amount of resources and space to other groups; their exhibits are still largely from a European perspective.

Thus, ethnic groups have taken the initiative to develop museums of their own as a bold declaration that they "do" belong in American society. So in a way, the museum develops to reinforce cultural identity and to create a place for ethnic groups in society. Ethnic museums allow groups to gain authority over how their history is told and, in turn, legitimize their identity within US history. For Japanese-Americans, the Japanese American National Museum communicates their cultural identity and has become that venue to discover, recover, and re-discover this identity, and, in turn, will educate other ethnic groups in their quest to establish their own place within America.

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Arab-Americans in a Nation's Imagined Community: How News Constructed Arab-American Reactions to the Gulf War

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Arab-Americans in a Nation's "Imagined Community":
How News Constructed Arab-American Reactions to the Gulf War

Abstract

This study sought to investigate how "alternative" discourses about the Gulf War were presented in the news media at that time through the case of the Arab-American community. The central point of this paper is that although Arab-American concerns were articulated through some news media, these discourses were constructed in ways that ultimately maintained and reinforced the hegemonic notion of America as an imagined community deserving of citizens' sentimental attachments and loyalties.

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ARAB-AMERICANS[1] IN A NATION'S "IMAGINED COMMUNITY": HOW NEWS CONSTRUCTED ARAB-AMERICAN REACTIONS TO THE GULF WAR

The rally-round-the-flag phenomenon presented by the media during wartime is the nation as an "imagined community"[2] par excellence. The news media, during the Persian Gulf War, for example, repeatedly showed images of yellow ribbons tied around trees in neighborhoods across America symbolizing how citizens were members of a "unified whole" and "patriotic community" (Kellner, 1995, p. 217). However, oppositional, contradictory or alternative discourses surrounding wars are expected and necessary if the contemporary democratic nation-state is to maintain its sense of legitimacy.

This study sought to investigate how "alternative" discourses about the Gulf War were presented in the news media at that time through the case of the Arab-American community. Some people of Arab descent had different and unique concerns related to the war because of their national and cultural heritage. As a result, news attention to Arab-American reactions to the war would be one way to examine how the news media presented "different" discourses. This paper was guided by the following research question: how did the news media construct Arab-American concerns during the Gulf War and how was this cultural community's relationship to the larger nation as an imagined community portrayed?

The central point of this paper is that although Arab-American concerns were articulated through some news media, these discourses were constructed in ways that ultimately maintained and reinforced the hegemonic notion of America as an "imagined community" deserving of citizens' sentimental attachments and loyalties. This argument is based on evidence from a

[1] I chose this term to describe people of Arab descent, recognizing the difficulties implicit in this label. So, I will use this term after acknowledging two important points. Some Americans of Arab descent prefer the term Arab-Americans because it is a way to gain more political strength by uniting under a broader label. This label became especially common among Arab-Americans after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. It is also clear, however, that the term lumps together many diverse people in a way that can be oversimplifying and stereotypical.

[2] The notion of "imagined community" comes from Benedict Anderson's work and the definition and theoretical implications of this term is discussed in the next section.

critical textual analysis of "national" newspaper stories featuring Arab-American reactions to the Gulf War during that time.

This paper's theoretical assumption is that the media articulate "different" or "diverse" ideological discourses in relation to the nation as part of the hegemonic process of nationbuilding. It is through this hegemonic process of nationbuilding that multicultural nation-states are constructed as imagined communities. Like other multicultural nation-states, the U.S. relies on a consensus built upon a limited set of hegemonic values or beliefs about what it means to be American that is abstract enough to accommodate differences and yet specific enough for the nation-states' elites to be seen as the most legitimate power holders. The ideological and cultural power of the news media, in constructing discourses about the nation, is implicit in this hegemonic process.

Theoretical Context

Nations as Imagined Communities

After about the mid-eighteenth century, geographical spaces began to be defined as nation-states. The world has geographically been, to borrow Stuart Hall's (1982, p. 67) phrase, "*made to mean*" through these particular political units. Nation-states came into our imagination and continue to be socially constructed through many cultural forms, particularly mass media. How the nation-state is socially constructed is conveyed powerfully in Anderson's (1991) work on the origins of nations.

Anderson's work shows how the interplay of economic and cultural forces in the 18th century led to the rise of the imagined community. The historical context leading to the ability to think the nation, according to Anderson, was the decline of religious or sacred modes of thinking and the growth of print capitalism. During this period, the religious sense of time changed to the secular idea of "homogeneous, empty time" that measured time rationally "by clock and calendar" (p. 24).[3] As printing presses became profitable businesses, this sense of time along with the communication developments of the novel and the

[3] The idea of "homogeneous, empty time" is also a concept Anderson borrowed from Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 263.

newspaper "provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation" (p. 25). The daily newspaper made it possible for reported arbitrary, random news events to seem related by the imagined linkages of time. Simultaneously, the nation became to imagined in a geographic sense because newspaper readers would begin to associate events and market information about the colony to the colony itself (p. 62). In this way, print capitalism was able to conceptualize the nation as a form in terms of time and space and to develop a national consciousness.

Once national consciousness was brought into being through communication and commerce, the "imagined community" was in place. Thus, Anderson defines the nation as:

> imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members...yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion ....imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as deep, horizontal comradeship. (Pp. 4, 7)

Nationbuilding as a Hegemonic Process

Anderson's thesis makes clear that nation-states came into being as socially constructed imagined communities. However, what is not emphasized is the issue of *who* holds the power to imagine the nation and, further, to imagine the nation in particular ways. Although Anderson may not have made this issue of power centrally explicit in how the nation-state was initially constructed, it is certainly implied. By describing how the forces of print capitalism played a major role in creating an imagined community, it is clear that elite classes and intellectuals of the time led those economic, political and cultural forces that made it possible to "think" the nation.

Critiquing Anderson's work, Schlessinger (1991) suggests contrasting Anderson's almost too communal perspective of nation with a "refreshingly sceptical measure of attention to the socially located sources of division, and the place of contending views of what properly make up the field of national imagery" (p. 165). He states that what is left out of Anderson's argument is a "view of culture as a site of contestations," a view that "*problematizes* 'national culture' and interrogates the strategies and

mechanisms whereby it is maintained and its role in securing dominance of given groups in society" (p. 160).

To understand how an imagined community is constructed in particular ways that serve the interests of certain groups, we need to consider the relationship between social constructions of reality and social relations of power. We thus turn to key concepts of ideology and hegemony. Hall (1977b, 1982) elaborates on how ideology serves to maintain power relations whereby certain classes and their ideas dominate as in the case of the nation-state and what it symbolizes. Those in power (or in a strictly Marxist deterministic view, the ruling class) influence how certain ways of defining things or events become credible and legitimized and others are excluded or are portrayed as subordinate or deviant.

The dominant ideology thesis is problematic, however, as Hall (1977b) suggests, when considering modern liberal-pluralist democratic capitalist nation-states. Such societies function through consensus among diverse groups of people even as the nation-state's interests often reflect limited elite interests. How is it then that nation-states are able to attain the consent of the governed in multiethnic nations with varying classes whose interests are not represented by the power elite's interests? To answer this question, Hall (1982) turns to, as he appropriately characterizes it, Gramsci's revolutionary notion of hegemony (p. 335). Hall presents Gramsci's notion as an improvement over Marxist ruling class ideology thesis because it introduces the notion of *struggle* for hegemony through a complex relationship between ruling and subordinate ideologies. Hegemony is attained through struggle between subordinate and ruling interests in which the ruling power must, to some degree, "articulate" subordinate interests to retain legitimate authority and maintain the status quo. In understanding the multiethnic nation-state, with its diverse groups and interests, the concept of hegemony is central.

To elaborate, it is important to see that those interests not represented by the dominant culture, such as minority cultural groups, may not passively accept the hegemonic construction of the nation. Thus, how a nation as an imagined community is defined by elite interests is continuously negotiated in the presence of competing ideologies and differences among minority cultural groups. It is a hegemonic

process, simply put, in which the dominant national ideology incorporates subordinate ideologies as part of the process of legitimation, as a way to maintain consensus. It is a process, states Bennett (1995), in which "the bourgeois ideology is able to accommodate, to find some space for, opposing class cultures and values. A bourgeois hegemony is secured not via the obliteration of working class culture, but via its *articulation* to bourgeois culture and ideology so that, in being associated and expressed in the forms of the latter, its political affiliations are altered in the process" (p. 351).

Nations as imagined communities then are continuously negotiated nationbuilding projects. As Schlessinger (1991) points out, the nation is not static and should be studied as a "process of continual reconstruction than to an accomplished fact" (p. 165). The concept of hegemony is central to understanding societies because, as Newbold (1995) notes, it allows "for the dimension of struggle and opposition, of confrontation between differing cultures, where hegemony has to be negotiated and won" (p. 329). Other scholars agree that the cultural construction of nations needs to be studied as dynamic hegemonic processes. Ang (1990) writes:

> what counts as part of a national identity is often a site of intense struggles between a plurality of cultural groupings and interests inside a nation, and that therefore national identity is...fundamentally a dynamic, conflictive, unstable and impure phenomenon. (p. 252)

As a result, unity can only be achieved through differences in modern societies. As Hall (1977a) suggests "most societies with complex social structures achieve their 'unity' via the relations of domination/subordination between culturally different and differentiated strata" (p. 158). In fact, one has to define unity through difference (much like other meanings in a structuralist sense). We need to look "for that which secures the unity, cohesion and stability of this social order in and through (not despite) its differences," states Hall (p. 158). To study this "complexity-and-unity requires us to concentrate on the mechanisms of power, legitimation, and domination: of *hegemony*" (Hall, p. 158).

Using Hall's work, I would like to add the theoretical concept of hegemony to Anderson's notion of imagined communities to conclude that nation-states as imagined communities in the world today are *hegemonic constructions*. To elaborate, the nation-state is far from being "always conceived as a deep,

horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 1991, p. 7) because of inequality and diverse interests among various groups. However, it is still the *possibility* of this imagined community that remains powerful. It is this imagined community that many still strive to belong to and are willing to die for even if "horizontal comradeship" does not exist. Power struggles may move us closer or farther from the ideal of "horizontal comradeship" as part of the hegemonic process of nationbuilding but the hegemonic construct of the nation itself has withstood civil wars and civil rights movements. This is not to say that nation-states are permanent and could not be replaced by other forms of imagined communities (supranational states, global organizations perhaps? -- the debate over the decline of the nation-state at a time of globalization is one sign of its instability). However, the nation-state still remains a powerful construct.

Today, the mass media, and their proliferation in various forms and the numbers of people who attend to them, are powerful signifiers of this hegemonic process of nationbuilding. As Anderson's study of the newspaper's role in creating a sense of nation powerfully demonstrated, communication played an important role in constructing nations. The media's constructions of meaning are not "a functional reproduction of the world in language, but of a social struggle – a struggle for mastery in discourse – over which kind of social accenting is to prevail, and to win credibility" (Hall, 1977, p. 77). As such, the media in modern societies are an important site of ideological struggles, the site in which the definition of nation as an imagined community is negotiated, and the site in which the hegemonic notion of America as an imagined community is reinforced.

America as an Imagined Community – A Historical Context of Nationbuilding as a Hegemonic Process

To explore the hegemonic process of nationbuilding in the U.S. specifically, we can consider this nation's history of ideological discourses about what it means to be American "in and through" differences (Hall, 1977a, p. 158). What it means to be an American is a hegemonic process of negotiating changing political, economic and cultural circumstances between an elite group (historically, those of Anglo-Saxon origin) in relation to other groups.

Because America was a diverse nation from the start, with no common culture, a national identity had to socially constructed.[4] During the time of the American Revolution, Anglo-Saxon political elites had to unite diverse groups politically and "rhetorically to a new kind of nationhood" promoting the promise of a new nation that would grant freedom and equality for all (Mann, 1998, p. 93). Mann defines the Revolutionary War as an "ideological movement" and, in fact, suggests that what resulted was the radical breaking of "the century-and-a-half-old hyphen in the Anglo-American identity, thereby releasing the full force of American nationalism" (p. 93). Once the war was won through a unity based on these political ideals, what resulted was a nation that was defined in terms of Anglo cultural dominance, privileging the "customs and values of established British and Protestant strands in the American social fabric."(p. 93).

Thus, America was and continues to be defined variously through two main ideological constructions. Summarizing the theses of various scholars (Mann, 1998; Katkin et. al., 1998; Gleason, 1998), America as an imagined community reflects (a) the values of the white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture and (b) embodies the political ideals of freedom, democracy, equality, liberal-pluralism and capitalism. Katkin et. al. (1998) suggest that the Anglo-cultural definition of America dominates ideologically during periods of xenophobia and racism and the definition of America through its political ideals of freedom an democracy dominate during more liberal times. And, as Dinnerstein and Reimers (1999) note, "[e]very succeeding immigrant group that came to the English colonies, and later to the United States, had to absorb these aspects of the dominant culture to be accepted as Americans" (p. 5). Thus the political ideals and the dominant culture were made to seem universal. The power of this is

[4] Some argue that America was ethnically homogeneous, consisting of mostly the English, in its early settlement days. Mann (1998) suggests that even as early as the 1700s, the English "were outnumbered by the combined arrivals from Ireland, Germany, Scotland, Wales, France, Switzerland, and Africa"(p. 90). See also Dinnerstein and Reimers' (1999) numbers on early settlers. They write that "[b]etween 1680 and 1760 dramatic growth occurred in the British mainland colonies as the population soared from approximately 250,000 to over 2 million" and these settlers included 250,000 Scott-Irish, 125,000 Germans, as well as untold numbers of Scots, Dutch and Swedes (pp. 1-2).

captured by Anderson (1991) when he notes, "the son of an Italian immigrant to New York will find ancestors in the Pilgrim Fathers" (p. 145).

It is an understatement that this Anglo-centric political, cultural and economic interpretation of American nationalism did not reflect the interests or experiences of groups who were excluded from the imagined community through slavery and discrimination. As a result, the rhetorical discourse about equality for all promoted by political elites has been in effect practiced in an inconsistent, contradictory manner to serve elite interests. However, America as a nation has been and is continuously defined by its political ideals of freedom, democracy, equality for all and in general, the fulfillment of the American Dream.

The theme of the United States as a nation of immigrants striving for the American Dream has evolved as dominant national historiography (Gabaccia, 1999). What this historical paradigm ignores, however, is the history of native and African Americans. Gabaccia's thesis is that the immigrant paradigm serves to exclude African and native Americans while also distorting and excluding immigrants' real experiences in the U.S. (p. 1122). In addition, America as a nation welcoming to immigrants is contradictory when considering the nation's history of immigration restrictions and exclusions, for both people of color and for people who are today have come to be considered "white."

To elaborate, nearly each wave of non-English immigrant groups starting with the Germans and the Scots-Irish in the eighteenth century were often not tolerated. Dinnerstein and Reimers (1999) note that the English elite, especially in Pennsylvania, viewed the Germans "as dangerous elements" (p. 7). They quote Benjamin Franklin expressing his dislike for Germans: "Why should *Pennsylvania*, founded by the English, become a Colony of *Aliens*, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them?" (p. 7). Regarding the early Scots-Irish settlers, New Englanders perceived them as "uncleanly, unwholesome and disgusting" (p. 8). The German and the Irish, who today are considered assimilated, are a good example of how the hegemonic process of continuously negotiating the membership of an imagined community is accomplished.

Importantly too is the hegemonic process of defining America as an imagined community through race, specifically the construction of America as a "white" nation. This process, notes Basch et. al. (1994), "has served to justify and perpetuate the subordination of the African-American population as well as to assimilate certain immigrant populations and exclude others" (p. 40). Thus, dominant political, economic and cultural groups in the U.S. have continuously used the ideological constructions of "race" and "ethnic" or immigrant groups in a hegemonic process of defining America as a nation to serve changing political, economic and cultural circumstances.

It is important to understand then that although certain versions of national identity were and are simultaneously and continuously accepted and contested throughout America's history, the construction of America as an imagined community was and is not simply a process defined by powerful elites. So, for example, while assimilation efforts are undertaken, immigrant groups also empower themselves. They have always created their own institutions such as churches, schools, newspapers and organizations. Particularly during the 1960s civil rights era, many groups became more empowered and began to take pride in their identities, modeling the African-American struggle. As a result, cultural pluralism became another competing way to define the imagined community. Defined in this way, America was a nation of many diverse groups of people competing equally (Basch et. al., 1994, p. 43). By the 1990s, multiculturalism has become yet another contested way to define America as an imagined community in which previously ignored groups sought more cultural power and inclusion within mainstream political, cultural and economic institutions.

From this discussion we can see that this hegemonic process of changing national discourses about who belongs to the nation has been continuously negotiated. There are competing struggles between the dominant group and the diversity of ethnic groups to define themselves and the nation. Generally, these struggles have been historically characterized in the form of various labels.

Arab-Americans

To see how Arab-Americans fit into the nation as an imagined community, it is important to set a historical context. While Arab-American immigration is unique in many respects, it is important to keep in mind that their history also fits the pattern of other immigrant groups and their relationship to the nation.

Most scholars of Arab-American history define Arab immigration as occurring in two waves – before and after World War II. From the 1870s until World War II, most Arab-Americans came from the Greater Syria region or present-day Lebanon and were mostly Christians (Suleiman, 1999, p. 1). The Lebanese Christians, in particular, had fled the Ottoman regime. Many worked as peddlers and were not so quick to assimilate, thinking they would return home eventually (Suleiman, p. 4). Earlier in their immigration, they did not identify themselves by national origin but rather by village of origin like many ethnic groups before them. With stringent immigration restrictions after World War I, few new Arab-Americans came. Consequently the Syrians and Lebanese that were here were mostly assimilated by World War II.

After World War II through the present, Arab-Americans came from all parts of the world, but most were from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and Yemen. Also, post-War Arab-Americans were largely Muslims, with Muslim Sunnis as the majority (Suleiman, p. 1). Like many ethnic groups, they came for economic, political, or religious reasons. After World War II, Arab immigrants who came were highly educated professionals or college students who stayed (Suleiman, p. 9). They came for economic reasons and to escape regional conflicts. Especially in the 1990s, many educated Arabs came as political refugees (p. 9). Many Iraqi-Americans also fled Iraq because of their opposition to Saddam Hussein's oppressive dictatorship. They settled in many different places, however the greater Detroit area has been known for having one of the largest concentrations of people with Arab descent, about 200,000 (Shyrock and Abraham, 2000, p. 18).

Like other minority cultural groups, Arab-Americans' struggle to belong to the nation centered around racism. Arab-American history in the U.S. reflects a recurring racial theme of "not quite white" as

immigration officials early on struggled over how to classify this group (Samhan, 1999, p. 210). Stereotyped images of Arab-Americans have been prevalent and have been documented in a number of books.[5] Scholars, such as Said (1979), have analyzed the representation of Arabs in general in relation to the West, suggesting that the Western world has created Arabs as a racial "other" in which Arabs are portrayed as dangerous, emotionally volatile, and backwards. In addition, Joseph (1999) suggests that political and religious representations about Arabs are distorted:

> The Western discourse on the Arab world represents politics in terms of the predominance of despotism, dictatorships, authoritarian regimes, the lack of civil society, democracy, citizens' political participation....In popular representations, the image is that the area produces terrorists, suicide bombers, hijackers, and fanatics. (p. 263)

Joseph points out "that Islam is the West's new evil empire...represented as a militaristic religion bent on jihad (holy war), inherently and historically hostile to the democratic, capitalist, Christian West" (p. 261) and counters that Islam is rather a "highly complex and diverse religion that has many different sects, legal systems, beliefs, and practices" (p. 261).

By the late 1960s, a growing pan-Arab-American identity was developing, despite the many national, political, religious and cultural differences within this group, because of the growing need for political solidarity. Arab-American identity came to be known as such after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war (Shain, 1999). According to Shain, "before the war, Arab-American identity was amorphous and dormant" (p. 96). Shain attributes this move towards pan-ethnic Arab solidarity as a way to counter the strong Israeli lobby in the U.S. as well as the "ethnopolitical awakening" that resulted from the civil rights movement in the late 1960s (pp. 96-97). Today, many in both the larger culture as well as Arab-Americans themselves see people from Arab countries as part of a larger Arab-American community (although this does not mean that the Arab-American community considers itself united internally). After the Arab-Israeli War, earlier generations of Arab Americans as well as newer immigrants became

[5] See Michael W. Suleiman's *The Arabs in the Mind of America* (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1988); Edmund Ghareeb's (Ed.), *Split Vision: the Portrayal of Arabs in the American Media* (Washington, D.C.: American-Arab Affairs Council, 1983);

mobilized and formed such political organizations as the National Association of Arab-American Americans (NAAA) in 1972; the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in 1980, and the Arab American Institute (AAI) in 1985.

In particular, many Arab-Americans felt the increased tension as a community in the face of U.S. war against Iraq. While many Iraqi-Americans opposed Saddam Hussein, they were still not eager to see the U.S. bombing their native land. Furthermore, many Arab-Americans were targets of discrimination and harassment, despite the fact that the U.S. was engaged in war against Iraq with the support of some Arab allies in the Middle East. Examples of the threats and harm against this community include: FBI questioning of Arab-Americans; the vandalizing of Arab-American owned businesses; the beating of an Arab-American by a white supremacist mob in Toledo; death threats; and the banning by Pan American Airlines of Arab passengers (Kellner, 1995, p. 218).

Method

This research project sought to apply these theoretical premises to the particular case of Arab-Americans during the Gulf War. As indicated earlier, my main research question is: how did the news media articulate Arab-American community's concerns about the Gulf War and how were Arab-Americans imagined or constructed in relation to the nation.

To address this research question, I conducted a critical textual analysis on newspaper feature stories that focused on Arab-American community concerns about the Gulf War. The time period I chose for news stories were those published during the Gulf War, which began on January 17, 1991 and ending on February 27.[6]

To assess how an Arab-American community was constructed more concretely, I decided to examine stories tied to a geographical sense of Arab-American community. Thus, I chose news features

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and, Janice J. Terry's *Mistaken Identity: Arab Stereotypes in Popular Writing* (Washington, D.C.: American-Arab Affairs Council, 1985).

[6] I used the official Bush administration dates to determine the beginning and end of the Gulf War, keeping in mind that U.S. bombings on Iraq continue sporadically.

that had a Detroit or Dearborn, Michigan (an area just outside of Detroit) dateline. The Detroit/Dearborn area was chosen because that area has the largest concentration of Arab-Americans in the U.S. If journalists were eager to get "Arab-Americans' side of the story" then they would likely seek stories from that region.

I also chose to analyze stories from what would be considered "national" newspapers. Although the U.S. does not have a tradition of national newspapers per se, there are "local" newspapers known for having a national reputation and readership concerning national politics. Such papers include *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. The other newspaper, striving for a national audience that I studied was *USA Today*, though relatively new and less elite-oriented. Because of their national orientation, these three newspapers are more likely to do in depth stories that originate from various parts of the United States, other than their home bases of Washington, D.C. or New York City, having less of a need to tailor stories in terms of their "local" angles or relevance. As such, these newspapers would, and did indeed, write individual stories focusing solely on the large Arab-American community in the Detroit/Dearborn area.

Furthermore, because I wanted to examine how an Arab-American community was constructed in feature stories in national newspapers, I excluded news stories about the Gulf War in general that may have included Arab-American reactions as a subtopic; local angle stories about Arab-Americans in various "local" newspapers around the country; as well as brief news items about Arab-Americans.

By doing a Nexis search using the keyword terms "Arab-Americans," the dates of the Gulf War, and "Detroit or Dearborn," I found five feature stories that fit my criteria: two from the *New York Times*, two from *USA Today*, and one from the *Washington Post*. Although the *New York Times* and *USA Today* did two stories each, I chose at random one exemplar from each national paper since, upon analysis, the themes were so similar in these additional stories and were, in fact, written by the same journalists. Following are the three stories selected for analysis:

- *USA Today.* Mimi Hall, (January 25, 1991). "Arab-Americans Feel Torn, Threatened."

- *The New York Times.* Peter Applebome, (February 20, 1991). "War in the Gulf: The Home Front; Arab-Americans Fear a Land War's Backlash."
- *The Washington Post.* Paul Hendrickson, (February 15, 1991). "Caught in the Middle: Detroit's Arab Americans: Fighting Stereotypes, Torn by Conflicting Loyalties."

I analyzed these newspaper feature stories using a critical textual analysis approach. The first step involved multiple readings of the text to gain a general understanding of the stories, making notes as I read (by text here I mean the three national stories as a whole). Then, I read in a more detailed manner recognizing certain recurring topics or categories and labeling the text with these categories. To better work with the categories and the related textual examples, I inputted these into my word processor. As a next step, I began interpreting my topic categories and analyzing how they are related, looking for finer distinctions within them and/or broader connections among them (this process ended up in my collapsing five categories into three). All the while, I was interpreting the evidence keeping my research question in mind. Finally, I identified a broader overarching theme or conclusion concerning how the news coverage was constructed in relation to the theoretical assumptions of this paper.

Discussion

Three main topic categories emerged from the text. They were: "Feelings about the War"; "Feeling Threatened/Misrepresented/Misunderstood"; and, "Descriptions of the Arab-American Community." These three categories worked to construct a particular narrative of Arab-American concerns during the war. This narrative was one of ultimate reaffirmation of loyalty to the nation's imagined community. Arab-Americans were shown to be feeling much anguish over the loss of lives or harm to their fellow Arabs while at the same time they reaffirmed their love and loyalty to the U.S. The emphasis on emotionally evocative personal stories of Arab-American suffering served to depoliticize this community. The articulation of tragedy constructed Arab-Americans as passive apolitical actors in this political drama. Also, when discussing the community as a whole, the news text also tapped into the nation's broader imagined community historical narratives about immigrants. The discourse demonstrated Arab-Americans

as similar to other groups' experiences in the U.S. Following is a detailed discussion of the three topic categories with textual examples for each from which these findings are drawn. After this discussion, the conclusion presents the findings in relation to the broader theoretical premises of this paper. Lastly, the paper concludes with a discussion of this study's implications for news and society in general.

Feelings about the War

The most prominent discourse in the news coverage focused on feelings about the war. It is important to note that all three stories were similar in beginning with and generally focusing on descriptions of the intense emotions Arab-Americans felt during this trying time. This is evident in the headlines themselves: "Arab-Americans *feel torn, threatened*" (*USA Today;* emphasis added); "Arab-Americans *Fear* a Land War's Backlash" (*New York Times;*emphasis added); and, "*Caught in the Middle*: Detroit's Arab-Americans Fighting Stereotypes, *Torn by Conflicting Loyalties" (Washington Post;* emphasis added). The stories' leads begin with a similar emphasis on emotional concerns.

The most prominent discourse and emotionally evocative images in the news coverage showed that Arab-Americans were suffering anguish and despair at the thought of their relatives, friends, or fellow Arabs might dying because of U.S. bombing. The most poignantly conveyed Arab-American profile symbolizing this anguish was reported in the *Washington Post* story, which was the longest feature story of the three. The *Washington Post* delved deeply into the personal story of Intissar Ann Alkafaji, a criminal lawyer living in a Detroit suburb, describing her incredible distress over the war:

> Her name is Intissar Ann Alkafaji, and the night the bombing started, she never went to sleep, barely let her eyes go off the TV screen. That was her birthplace by the Tigris lighting up like a pinball machine. Her 64-year-old mother, seven of her brothers and sisters, her cousins, her nephews and nieces, old teachers, childhood friends – they were all there in Baghdad, and she was here, 6,200 miles away, safe in her rich suburban Michigan home, and were any of them breathing now? She pictured them trying to get out from under burning rubble. (*Washington Post*)

The *USA Today* also conveyed a sense of despair in the following passage:

> Arkan Naman's days are consumed by desperate – and so far futile – calls to Baghdad to see if his brothers and sisters have survived the relentless allied bombing of Iraq. (*USA Today*)

The text elaborated on this sense of despair and described how Arab-Americans were feeling torn between concern for "their people" who might be hurt in the war and a continuing sense of loyalty to the U.S. The logic of these recurring sentiments can be generally summarized as follows: a continual reaffirmation of loyalty to the U.S., while simultaneously feeling distressed about the war and its consequences for their fellow Arabs. For example, *U SA Today* reported on Abdallah Elachi, a Lebanese-born Arab fruit market owner's reaction as:

> "I'm a U.S. citizen as much as you are and I probably love this country more than anyone...But you're torn because you have relatives over there. (*USA Today*)

Similarly, the *Washington Post's* in-depth personal story of Intissar Alkafaji included an account of her visit to Iraq in the past and her recollection of a discussion with her Iraqi nephew in which she affirms her love for America: "Tomorrow, Haider. I have to leave you. For my beautiful home sweet home America." She concludes with her painfully torn feelings by stating: "Part of my taxes are killing my own people. It's an irony that's so hard to bear" (*Washington Post*).

Writing another profile, the *Washington Post* focuses on Joe Borrajo, a second generation Arab-American. Borrajo "was born here, loves Detroit." He is portrayed as an active and responsible citizen in the community: He is a member of New Detroit Inc., a Dearborn City Beautiful Commissioner, and the chairman of the Arab-American Voter Registration and Education Committee" (*Washington Post*). The discussion about his feelings towards the war affirms his loyalty to the U.S. -- "I served honorably in the armed forces" -- while at the same time highlighting his opposition to all wars as destructive and this war, in particular, for its Arab death. He is quoted as stating:

> Even if it wasn't a Middle Eastern war involving my heritage, I'd still be against it. War is an outdated means of trying to solve a problem. It's primitive. This line of reasoning, "If you attack policy, you're not supporting our boys over there,' that's junk. I will not allow my loyalty to be questioned. I served honorably in the armed forces of this country. I am an American...This country was founded on the idea of honest dissent. I see the armies of the United States killing my people, I want to scream, 'My God, stop it!.' (*Washington Post*)

Following are more textual examples that show this theme:

> This is the anguish of the nation's 3.5 million Arab-Americans. Fiercely loyal to this country yet nostalgic for their homelands, many feel torn – and threatened. For even as they affirm their allegiance to the USA, many quietly question its decision to attack Iraq. (*USA Today*)
>
> Says Naman, an Iraqi Christian who moved here 10 years ago and works in an Arabic meat market: "I like both countries. We don't want war. It's sad. We think about it all day." (*USA Today*)

Even when the editor of *The Arab American News*, was reported to be "infuriated" that Arab-Americans were made to feel intimidated because of U.S. jingoism he was "quick to say" that: "If Iraq attacked the United States, Arab-Americans would stand and fight harder than any other Americans" (*USA Today*).

It is clear from these recurring sentiments that are emphasized in the news that Arab-Americans are depoliticized in their reactions to the war. They were against the war because all wars were bad, war is bad in general because it results in death. Interestingly enough, there was not one Arab-American who mentioned the most common criticism of the war expressed in most media, that the war was being fought for oil interests, and that their fellow Arabs might have to die for oil. The articulated angst over Arab lives is interesting in the context of what is disarticulated.

There were a few passages in the text in which Arab-Americans are shown to be more politically explicit, but in many instances, these political expressions were ambivalent regarding the U.S. For example, the following passage from the text indicates opposition to Hussein and feeling torn about U.S. policy because of its cost in Arab lives.

> For more recent immigrants, like Mr. Sitto and for a group of six people from five Arab countries who met recently to discuss the war with a reporter, there is a uniform opposition to the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. But there is also a feeling that the United States is using excessive force in Iraq, an anger at the loss of lives and a fear of what it will mean for Arabs in this country. (*New York Times*)

For many Iraqi-Americans, Iraq's oppressive government was a reason for leaving that country, and so there were political reasons for opposition to Hussein. However, even these political reasons were not explored other than in the above passage. In another case, even when there was Arab-American criticism of the U.S. it was in the context of critiquing both U.S. and Arab politics and culture:

> Although loath to criticize fellow Arabs, some of those at the discussion said the turmoil in the Middle East not only reflected what they saw as Western arrogance and blunders but also some tragic flaws in the Arab world itself. "When I look at the Arab world, I see societies which have in a sense, forsaken tolerance, pluralism and democracy," Professor Abraham said. "In the U.S., even though there is this jingoism that's

> all over the place in a flood, you still hear people say others have the right to a different opinion." (*New York Times*)

This last passage clearly affirms the U.S. as a democracy representing ideals of freedom and Arab-Americans as part of America's imagined community of democracy, even in this time of crisis.

In contrast to these feelings of being torn and the few ambivalent political statements, the news coverage also portrayed three Arab-Americans who were unequivocally pro-U.S. and anti-Iraq or anti-Arab. For example:

> For those whose families have been here longer, there is substantial support for the war and less anxiety about what the war will mean for Arab-Americans. "I fully support the President," said George Bashara, a prominent lawyer who is vice president and general counsel for Federal Mogul Corporation, a manufacturer of auto parts. His grandfather emigrated from Lebanon in 1897. "I'm absolutely convinced of the rightness of our cause. I believe Mr. Hussein is nothing more than an international thug." (*New York Times*)

Also, Fred Motney, a 65-year-old car salesman and second generation Syrian, was quoted as stating he does not even like Arab people. He stated:

> "I'm totally 100 percent American.... I love this country, though like anybody else, at times I don't always agree with what we do. If there's a misperception of Arabs, I think it's our fault. It's not the WASP's fault. I think it's the Arab-Americans of today who, some of them, can be awfully obnoxious. I don't even like them, and they're my people." (*New York Times*)

Another man, an Egyptian doctor, is even more blunt about his anti-Iraq feelings:

> "You have to flatten them ... that's all," he says. He means Iraqis. "This is the greatest country on Earth. ... Something will have to be sacrificed for something else. It's always the way. This man, Hussein, he is a madman. There are many fundamentalists over there. He may stampede them into some kind of panic. I think you have to go in and finish it quickly. It's sad but necessary. The problem, you see, is the American armies are being too kind." (*Washington Post*)

As one can see the dominant discourse about the war involved feelings of either ambivalence or strong affirmation of loyalty and support for the U.S. There were only about two people quoted who expressed frustration concerning U.S. policy and support for the Arab world in Middle East affairs. One comment was by an Arab-American business owner, who came to the United States in 1973 from Bint Jbail, a town in southern Lebanon that is now occupied by Israel.

> "But the lack of respect is due to the U.S. historically aligning itself with a country that calls itself Israel that has committed so many atrocities against the Palestinian people, and the Arab people in general." (*New York Times*)

By preceding this quote with the information that this man comes from an area now occupied by Israel, the story makes it clear why he would be anti-Israel, and by implication anti-U.S. policy.

Another person quoted was a 34-year-old graduate student whose family immigrated from Lebanon about 40 years ago. She suggested that:

> The Jordanian leader "said it best when he said that the attack on Iraq is an attack on all Arab people." (*New York Times*)

Feeling Threatened/Misrepresented/Misunderstood

Another area of discourse highlighted in the news coverage was Arab-American feelings of being threatened and misrepresented during the Gulf War because of their Arab heritage. Arab-Americans are described as feeling fearful of U.S. jingoism. This discourse in the text constructed Arab-Americans as a minority community that is suffering because of harassment, stereotypes and misunderstandings stemming from the larger imagined community. What is ignored however is the history of Arab-American stereotyping throughout U.S. history and especially prominent in the 1980s. Instead, the threats and stereotypes are shown to be in relation to the Gulf War and, even though these incidences are upsetting, they are portrayed as expected or as a natural consequence of the War.

In the text, for example, an Arab-American professor of archeology was quoted as stating:

> If it gets really ugly there, you will see more and more negative consequences for Arab-Americans here. If too many soldiers are killed and you see the body bags, that's what will really create difficulties for Arab-Americans. (New York Times)

Others expressed fear to go outside of their homes, especially if they are conspicuously Muslim. On young woman states that her aunts and mother who are "scarved," i.e., who wear traditional Muslim head coverings are scared to go out of the house. Another Arab-American professor suggested that Arab-Americans will go into hiding. He stated:

> I think most of them are going to head for the hills," Professor Abraham said. "That is to say that they 're going to retreat into a cocoon of family and denial of ethnic identity. You can see it in the store owners, who have these huge flags because they're worried they're a potential target." (*New York Times*)

These passages show that the fear of growing anti-Arab sentiment in the U.S. during the war was palpable among the Arab-American community. These feelings seem justified as the news coverage reports on an increase in threats and incidences against Arab-Americans. Citing reports from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the *New York Times* reported that there were less than five harassment incidents before the war and more than 60 since the war began. The *American Arab News* offices had received bomb threats, according to *USA Today*. In addition, *USA Today* reported other bomb threats in the Detroit community against residents and businesses and also reported that a high school, with mostly Arab-American students had to post guards at the doors. The *Washington Post* cited the "torching of a Jordanian American party store" in Detroit.

In addition to anonymous threats and harassment, it was reported that *The American Arab News* editor, Osama Sibliani, was critical over FBI questioning of the Arab American community, according to the *Washington Post*. He said that: "it comes close to "harassment" (*Washington Post*). His wife was also quoted as stating: "I think it's been done to try to silence the community, to keep the community from voicing its dissent against public policy" (*Washington Post*). Sibliani also suggests in the following comment that Arab-Americans are intimidated to express opposition to U.S. policy, but that he is cited as stating that his paper's toll-free hot line "set up to give the community a place to voice fears and frustrations" has received 700 calls opposing U.S. involvement in Middle East affairs.

The number of calls received by this editor opposing U.S. involvement in the Middle East is in sharp contrast to the preponderance of pro-U.S. sentiments found in the news coverage, as indicated earlier. What is interesting about these Arab-American reactions to the larger imagined community's sense of hostility towards them is that they, as discussed before, still remain committed and loyal to the abstract concept of America as a nation of freedom and opportunity.

Even when broadening the discourse to larger discussions of racism, Arab-Americans were constructed as passive, misunderstood victims, instead of focusing on those who were taking action on behalf of Arab-Americans. For example, the *New York Times*, quoting Mr. Sitto, an Arab-American

businessman, wrote: "Already you can hear people say, "Hey, Arab; hey, camel jockey.'" Another Arab-American, quoted in the *New York Times*, Mrs. Daher, attributed "lack of respect for the peoples of these areas" as the reason for Arab-American community problems. The *Washington Post* story cited an Arab-American's frustration with racism:

> "The social dimensions of skin tone, okay" (he is holding out his arms with the sleeves of his sweater shoved up), "the heredity of big bugged eyes, okay" (he is bugging his eyes), "well, all of this, things we were born with, things we can't help, made us feel somehow, just growing up here that we were inferior." (*Washington Post*)

The text also highlighted the following blunt examples of actual Arab-American stereotyping from outside the larger community: For example, the *Washington Post* wrote: "these days in Detroit you see a certain poster flapping from telephone poles, from bulletin boards in laundromats. The poster says: "I'd Fly 10,000 Miles to Smoke a Camel. The *Washington Post* also reported on the racist remarks of a "young woman of Mexican descent" stating that Arab-Americans are: "obnoxious, they stink, they're dirty. They own all these gas stations, they come over here and make money off us, take our jobs. I hate them. I hated them before this war." This last passage suggests a larger story of racism concerning this community that is mentioned, but not elaborated or emphasized within a larger historical context of racism in America.

Descriptions of the Arab-American Community

The third topic category of the news coverage focused on descriptions of the Arab-American community and its diversity and its pattern of immigration to the U.S. All of the news stories highlighted the Detroit/Dearborn area as the largest concentration of Arab-Americans in the U.S. early in their stories. The news coverage was detailed in its descriptions of the diversity within the Arab-American community. The news coverage highlighted the diversity of Arab national origins. The *New York Times*, for example, described the pre World II and post World War II differences in Arab immigration to the U.S. indicating that the first wave of immigrants were Christians such as the Iraqi Chaldeans, Yemenis, Lebanese, Syrians, Jordanians, Palestinians and Egyptians and the second wave included a mix of Christians and

Muslims. The *Washington Post* also noted the diverse national origins of the Arab-American community including Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrian, Yemeni, Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudi and Iraq.

In a sense, the news coverage followed the dominant historiographical immigration narratives. For example, the *New York Times*, reported that "for those whose families have been here longer, there is substantial support for the war and less anxiety about what the war will mean for Arab-Americans" This suggests an assimilation narrative common to immigration historiographies, in which immigrants over generations become less attached to their country of origin and more attached to their new homelands. This is contradicted in the same *New York Times* story, however, when a source who is a 36-year-old third-generation Syrian is represented as active in Arab political organizing.

The *Washington Post*, in particular with its longer feature piece, taps into common immigration narratives to construct the Arab-American community. They tapped into stories about immigrants coming to America for economic opportunity.

> The Iraqis, like the Palestinians or Yemenis or Syrians, didn't come to Detroit dreaming of taking over convenience stores or gas stations. They came -- like Germans and Poles and Italians and Czechoslovaks; like every other nationality who ever arrived at the shores of this 18th-century French fur outpost -- dreaming of getting on, getting rich, at Chevy Gear and Axle, at Chrysler Assembly, at the Rouge. That's the history of Detroit in the 20th century.

This passage also equates Detroit history to the story of immigration, a typical historical narrative, in which America is portrayed as a nation of immigrants, a beacon of hope for the world. In another passage, Detroit was seen as the place that Arab immigrants sought out early in the 20th century because of the "phenomenal $5-a-day wage Henry Ford was willing to pay any hard-working man with a a back and two arms."

Indeed, it seems that the Detroit/Dearborn area are portrayed as a symbolic microcosm of America. For example, the *Washington Post* describes Dearborn as the "Ellis Island of the Arab world," updating the geographical center for immigration to accommodate the Arab-American community's story in the 20th century. However, the contemporary problems of urban American including racism and industrial decline was shown to effect this community as well as the general Detroit area, and

symbolically America as a whole. This discourse constructs discrimination and racism against Arab-Americans as an inevitable part of American immigrant historiography. Racism is shown to be an unresolvable fact of American life, a fact that serves to close off potential alternative realities for a future multicultural America.

> One of the paradoxes about Detroit is that the thing that makes it so rich -- its amazing ethnicity -- is also the thing that seems to conspire to keep it down, keep it fractured and forever polarized. (*Washington Post*)

Conclusion

It was proposed that the news media are primary sources for defining multiculturally diverse nation-states as an imagined community through a hegemonic process of nationbuilding. This study seems to support this theoretical perspective. News about Arab-Americans as a minority cultural group with "different reactions" to the War were articulated in ways that ultimately re-presented Arab-Americans as part of the imagined community. The news coverage both accentuated their differences while emphatically reaffirming their allegiance and loyalty to the U.S. Thus a hegemonic construction of a united multicultural nation -- the U.S. as an imagined community -- prevailed. This is the hegemonic process of nationbuilding in action through the news media as unity is accomplished "in and through (not despite) differences" (Hall, 1977a, p. 158).

Specifically, this was accomplished by constructing apolitical stories of personal tragedy, individualizing stories and disarticulating these discourses from macropolitical concerns and interests. Thus, this "different" cultural group reinforced and did not threaten the dominant U.S. national interests during the war. Their dual national identities and political-cultural "differences" resulted in emotional consequences of sadness and fear, as the themes of the stores indicated. The emphasis on the emotional consequences of the war eclipses macropolitical concerns or perspectives from this cultural group that might question the legitimacy of the nation-state's actions during this time.

The news stories presented these passive tales of Arab-American suffering as circumstances of fate that must be endured or survived. Arab-Americans were shown to discuss their tragic situation

among themselves in coffee shops, they wrote poetry, they prayed for the war's quick end. That Arab-Americans faced the loss of their mothers, uncles, cousins or other relatives constructs an emotional resonance of sympathy that allows for Arab-Americans to speak of "my people" in terms of family and friends without it being constructed as a threat to their association with the people of the United States.

In addition, as the findings showed, the reactions to the war articulated in the news media were not based on political opposition or rationales, but ambivalence and ultimately reaffirmation of their loyalty to the U.S. Expressions of anger over the war or U.S. policy was depoliticized – war, any war, is bad or immoral, because of the loss of lives.

It should be considered that, because of U.S. alliance with some Arab nations during the war, the pro-U.S. attitude articulated among Arab-Americans would not have been unusual. However, the complexity of Arab-American support for U.S. foreign policy was not articulated. Rather, this support was presented simply as patriotic expressions of loyalty.

Whether the prominent reaffirmations of loyalty to the nation in the news stories could be explained in terms of actual Arab-American support for U.S. policy or whether Arab-Americans simply felt too afraid to speak out as some Arab-Americans suggested is not clear from the news stories. However, it is important to note that the political and economic motives raised freely in other news stories and indeed in popular opinion about the war were not raised in any of these Arab-American stories (e.g., that the war was being fought simply to protect U.S. supplies of oil and not the more lofty goal of liberating Kuwait). Deemphasizing these issues contributed to the depoliticized nature of the news coverage of the Arab-American community during the Gulf War.

To conclude, the news stories did indeed portray Arab-Americans as part of America's diverse imagined community. The overall meaning of these stories is that Arab-Americans were loyal, good Americans, who, because of their Arab origins were unfortunately *suffering under the seemingly tragic inevitable circumstances* of the Persian Gulf War. By articulating their particular circumstances and struggles through apolitical personal stories of tragedy, the news stories effectively disarticulated the

macro political and cultural concerns that the Arab-American group as a whole represented and limited the range of political debate about the war. This is how -- to reiterate what was stated at the beginning of this discussion -- the hegemonic process of nationbuilding is accomplished "in and through (not despite) differences" (Hall, 1977a, p. 158). Through the news media, the multicultural nation-state of the U.S. is imagined as maintaining a sense of national unity through differences.

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Reagan-Era Hollywood

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Abstract

Reagan-Era Hollywood

Reagan-era cinema is a period in filmmaking history during which a U.S. president served as a causal agent of intersecting trends in Hollywood's political economic structure, mode of production, and construction of the success ethic in popular movies. Concentrations of ownership that occurred under Reaganomics and deregulation promoted a tent-pole strategy of blockbuster production that privileged movies about white hegemony, nuclear family self-sufficiency, and conspicuous consumption associated with mall multiplex culture, suburbia, and the 1980s neoconservative movement.

Reagan-Era Hollywood

Defining Reagan-Era Cinema

In 1993, Sylvester Stallone reflected on the confluence between movie fantasy and political reality that occurred during President Ronald Reagan's two terms in office from 1981 and 1988. "I ended up becoming very defensive. Remember when Reagan bombed Quaddafi? He said 'After seeing Rambo, I know what to do.' And then Saddam used it in his bunker. He said 'This is not Rambo.' Can you imagine? It became synonymous with a mindset. I became a...symbol. I was always worried when I traveled abroad. There were always a lot of threats. When I went to Cannes they said I'd be dead. When I would go to third world countries, it was not so pretty."[1]

Stallone's amazement stemmed from how a character he invented while working in the dream factory of Hollywood – avenging Vietnam veteran John Rambo – became a worldwide symbol of the Reagan administration's hawkish military initiatives in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and Central America. Like the character of Rambo, Reagan-era cinema is an overdetermined product of intersecting changes in presidential policymaking, Hollywood movie form and content, and American culture that cannot solely be attributed to one man's influence.

Nonetheless, Ronald Reagan's election to the presidency in 1980 made him a causal agent of an intersection between government policy, changes in Hollywood's patterns of ownership and structure, the movies' construction of the success ethic, and prevailing trends in American economic and cultural relations. While the exploration of the Protestant success ethic is a hallmark of American cinema, the movies' inflection of this theme has not always coincided with prevailing economic and ideological trends in the filmed entertainment industry's patterns of ownership and mode of production. Nor has Hollywood's construction of the success ethic in conservative fashion always been in synchronization with political, economic, and social trends in American culture. However,

Reagan's construction of the Protestant success ethic forged an intersection between these elements.

The first section of this paper analyzes how free-market economic and neoconservative cultural reforms that reshaped Hollywood and its cinematic construction of the success ethic during the 1980s were initiated during the 1970s. It argues that the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 1972 Report and Order on Cable Television served as a catalyst for Reagan-era deregulatory measures that facilitated the integration of satellite, cable television, and videocassette into existing structures of filmed entertainment industry ownership. It contends that the neoconservative backlash against countercultural reform that achieves fruition in 1980s movies begins with Rocky (1976) and other movies of the late 1970s.

The second section explains how the reorganization of the filmed entertainment industry into a vertically and horizontally integrated cluster of tightly diversified conglomerates accelerated after Reagan's election, resulting in the resurrection of a "studio system" run by a global capitalist class of business investors. It contends that the blockbuster mode of production that coalesced amidst this integration of Hollywood's major studios into conglomerates with interlocking media subsidiaries narrowed the ideological diversity of 1980s movies by institutionalizing a "tent pole" strategy of marketing and promoting a handful of lavishly budgeted annual releases.

The third section contends that Hollywood's most popular releases mediated discrepancies between the Reagan administration's philosophy of economic and social self-help and widening gaps between rich and poor which emerged amidst Reaganomics' upward redistribution of wealth and opportunity. The final section explores the reasons for Reagan-era cinema's ongoing popularity during the 1990s.

The Protestant success ethic historically has rationalized corporate practices of consolidation and conglomeration as a means of improving business efficiency and the availability of goods. Proponents of Reaganomics and deregulation during the 1980s

proclaimed that these measures would free business of cumbersome restrictions on cross-industry forms of ownership and provide consumers with greater choice by promoting the cultivation of new communications technologies, including videocassette, cable television, and satellite. Liberal political economists refute this contention, arguing that concentrations of ownership in the communications industry that took place during the 1980s were driven by an agenda of serving a capitalist class's shared interests. Thomas Guback contends that a few individuals and small groups own and control the filmed entertainment industry and that they share a "class interest that shapes their posture towards social resources: how they are used, by whom, for what purpose and in whose interest."[2] After exploring the ownership of US media companies involved in the production and distribution of news, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky conclude that the families and individuals who own the major media institutions have a "special stake in the status quo" that they exercise by determining the central policy aims of their companies.[3] Finally, Vincent Mosco asserts that the state becomes a "vehicle for maintaining class power, without appearing to do so," because of its structural bias towards capital institutions that are integrally interwoven into economic processes of commodity production, distribution, and consumption.[4]

Sut Jhally argues that this focus on shared class interests results in a mode of communications production in which investment in the media is undertaken for purposes of maximizing profitability rather than ideological control. The pursuit of profit leads to "the extraction of the necessary surplus for the maintenance of cultural production and reproduction through the commodity and exchange form." The profitability of the mass media form is dependent upon its success in attracting a large audience that includes those demographics that advertisers most wish to reach. The content of media production reflects this targeting by specific audiences and delivering them in the "right" frame of mind.[5]

Hollywood movies of the 1980s were shaped by their purpose as multi-media urtexts designed to harness the tightly diversified structures of the media conglomerates that arose under Reaganomics and deregulation in order to tap new markets and better mobilize a core youth audience. Justin Wyatt argues that the corporate consolidation that occurred in Hollywood over the 1980s engendered a mode of "high concept" movie production shaped by marketing and advertising.[6] This high concept mode of production, summarized by Steven Spielberg's observation that the best movie ideas are those that "you can hold in your hand," proved the perfect complement for an emerging era of blockbuster movie making in which escalating budgets required movies to have immediate appeal to the largest possible audience. The graphically bold and stylish qualities of the ad campaigns used to familiarize audiences with the high concept movie's pre-sold premise reflected the content of the actual films, which used style as a basis for defining a utopian way of life. High concept's attunement to the marketplace also resulted in its reflection of Reagan's dichotomous distinction between a pre-countercultural order of white hegemony, nuclear family values, and economic autonomy and a world of liberal reform gone wrong.[7]

Cultural studies scholars such as Stuart Hall recognize race, gender, and class as principal points of intersecting ideological tension in studio era genres such as the western, the screwball comedy, and the family melodrama. Robin Wood maintains that all film genres can be examined in terms of ideological oppositions between white/other, man/woman, and individual/community that order the definition of ideals like capitalism, the work ethic, marriage, and success and wealth.[8] Reagan's resurrection of a pre-countercultural mythology of success proved very popular with a public weary of a Watergate and Vietnam-era culture of moral and economic malaise. However, implicit in this mythology was an attempt to restore symbolic boundaries between races, genders, and classes during a period of backlash against government-imposed economic and social collectivism. Neoconservative ideologues pushed aside the spiritual malaise induced by

the Vietnam War, Watergate, and the cyclical recession of the 1970s amidst President Reagan's sunny reassurance that it was possible to recover a mythical past in which conspicuous wealth was an outward sign of moral rectitude.

This philosophy was exemplified by three movie cycles of the Reagan era: the biracial buddy movie, the MTV music-video movie, and the yuppie movie. The biracial buddy movie, designed to cast blacks in crossover vehicles with proven appeal to white audiences, was typified by blockbuster movies such as Beverly Hills Cop (1984) and Lethal Weapon (1987) and by A-list releases including An Officer and a Gentleman (1982) and Trading Places (1983). These movies characterize America as a colorblind society by celebrating the begrudging respect that develops between black and white men as they recognize the similarities beneath their differing race and class identities. The formula's construction in Reagan-era terms coalesced with Rocky III (1981), in which lines are clearly drawn between blacks who are assimilable into a white, middle-class world of suburban family life and hostile racial and ethnic "others" who threaten the family's safety and moral stability.

The MTV music-video movie was also anticipated by Saturday Night Fever (1977) and Grease's (1978) promotion of marketplace synergies between television, fashion, and the Hollywood musical. However, the advent of MTV in 1981 and a Reagan-era backlash against disco androgyny resulted in the open ridicule of gay culture and the romanticization of white male leads as moral redeemers of the American family who transform lonely women into lovers and wives in Fame (1980) and Flashdance (1983). Footloose (1984) and Dirty Dancing (1987) celebrate a pre-countercultural era in which the family is free of the tainting influences of abortion and casual sex.

Kramer vs. Kramer (1979) signals a backlash against the feminist movement in its suggestion that wives and mothers who work outside the home threaten the nuclear family's moral and economic stability. In doing so, it inaugurated a movie cycle about young urban professionals with children. Risky Business (1983) launched a cycle of

yuppie movies that conflates a young entrepreneur's redemption of a white-collar success ethic based on enterprise and ambition with the restoration of class boundaries between the middle class, the idle rich, and the immoral poor. The Big Chill (1983) similarly initiated a cycle of movies that characterized suburban leisure culture as an earned reprieve from the dehumanizing influences of the white-collar workplace.

While Reagan's two-term tenure revitalized and stabilized the filmed entertainment industry's profitability, it also compromised the movies' role as a forum for robust debate of success ideology. Narrative texts shaped by Hollywood's bottom-line attempt to match movie form and content with marketplace demand flattened out genres into representations of the success ethic which drew upon the mythical construction of American identity promoted by the media-savvy Reagan presidency. However, critiques of the Protestant success ethic that could not be fit into a narrow range of themes were relegated to the margins of popular representation in Hollywood.

The 1970s: The Rise of Blockbuster Moviemaking and the Retrenchment of Liberalism

The political economic, industrial, and cultural forces that shaped Reagan era cinema are rooted in the 1970s. Amidst conditions of stagflation (a combination of stagnant economic growth and inflation), conservative lobbyists within the communications industry contended that Hollywood's recovery from an extended period of box-office recession was contingent upon the deregulation of the television industry. They argued that deregulation would sever a bedfellow relationship between the FCC and the major television networks that prevented the cultivation of satellite, cable, and videocassette as alternatives to CBS, NBC, and ABC.

The integration of these media into existing pathways of filmed entertainment distribution set the stage for Hollywood's adoption of a blockbuster mode of production which privileged movies with multi-media potential and appeal to multiple audiences. The record-setting domestic grosses of Jaws (1975; $260 million), Star Wars (1977; $461

million), and Saturday Night Fever (1977; $139 million) made blockbuster movies the driving force behind the filmed entertainment industry's economic recovery.

Thomas Schatz is correct in noting that the rise of the blockbuster is rooted in the New Hollywood's adoption of a system of movie packaging that freed Steven Spielberg to develop a directorial style of narrative structure, camera movement, and editing in Jaws (1975) that was replicated industry wide as filmmakers and audiences alike became familiar with it.[9] Coined by ABC programming executive Barry Diller during the early 1970s, the term "high concept" refers to a mode of movie production that favors projects that can be summarized in a 30-second television spot and sold in a single sentence. The condensability and immediate familiarity of the high concept movie's premise appealed to studio executives and the public because it provided a "misunderstanding proof" strategy of movie production and marketing.[10]

Jaws provided a template for this highly adaptable style of storytelling by integrating the premise of Peter Benchley's best-selling novel into a remake of Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954) that combined horror, the buddy movie, and the family melodrama into a suspense-filled spectacle of dazzling visual complexity. Producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer parlayed this high concept style into a hit-making mode of production that provided Paramount studios with some of the most profitable movies in Hollywood history, including Flashdance ($95 million), Top Gun (1986; $176 million), and Days of Thunder (1990; $82 million). High concept moviemaking involves the resituation of a hit movie's plotline in an altered generic context in order to pre-sell it on the basis of audience familiarity.[11] These movies focused on utopian fantasies of characters struggling to realize a dream, a theme that neatly summarized the Reagan era's widely shared conviction that a post-countercultural era of redemptive conservatism had arisen.

The astronomical salaries demanded by Spielberg, Bruckheimer and Simpson, and other Hollywood talent with proven track records of commercial popularity contributed

nationwide basis over a single weekend with saturation TV advertising. The film's release across theaters, cable television, videocassette, and network television mobilized parent company MCA's tightly diversified, multi-media structure, institutionalizing a blockbuster production strategy of building franchises that engaged the horizontally and vertically integrated studio's various subsidiaries.[16]

Cable television proved integral to the success of Jaws by promoting marketplace synergies between media and offering a new and highly lucrative revenue stream. Cable television's growth over the 1970s was nurtured by the Nixon administration in order to foster greater marketplace competition and choice for viewers than offered by the networks. Under this rationale, the FCC's 1972 Report and Order on Cable Television liberalized conditions of ownership of technologies like cable television, which had existed since the 1940s, positioning cable to ultimately challenge the three major networks' domination of television. The 1975 launch of the SATCOM I telecommunications satellite made pay-cable a major player in ancillary movie distribution by giving rise to Home Box Office (HBO), the nation's first nationwide "movie channel."[17]

Sony's 1975 introduction of the Betamax videotape recorder and Matsushita's release of the video home system (VHS) also launched a home video-revolution. Matsushita's VHS format prevailed because it was less expensive (though technically inferior), more flexible, and offered efficient off-the-air recording. Matsushita was also more successful in acquiring the rights to popular movie titles, providing it with the means of pushing its VHS format. Video rental stores also licensed the VHS format over Sony's Betamax format, prompting the Japanese conglomerate to attempt to establish an alternative hardware/software alliance by later purchasing CBS Records and Columbia Pictures.

The Carter administration further liberalized laws governing ownership of new communications technologies in order to promote satellite, cable, and videocassette as alternatives to network TV. During Carter-appointed FCC Chairman Charles Ferris'

to the drastic increases in moviemaking costs that accompanied the industry's adoption of a blockbuster mode of production. Paramount justified Eddie Murphy's six-picture, $25 million contract by observing in 1988 that virtually all of its recent $100 million blockbusters (Top Gun, Fatal Attraction (1987), Coming to America (1988)) involved exclusive or semi-exclusive ties with stars, directors, and producers.[12] A self-described "bottom fisherman," Disney's Jeffrey Katzenberg signed down-on-their-luck actors Bette Midler and Richard Dreyfuss and revived their careers in Down and Out in Beverly Hills (1986).[13]

Hollywood's shift from making countercultural movies such as Bonnie and Clyde (1967), The Graduate (1967), Easy Rider (1969), and McCabe and Mrs. Miller (1972) to conservative blockbuster spectacles such as The Godfather (1972; $134.9 million), The Exorcist (1973; $165 million), and Jaws was due in part to a 1969 box-office recession during which several of the major studios almost went bankrupt. Hollywood learned from the recession that movie attendance had stabilized in size, that a handful of annual releases garnered the majority of box-office receipts, and that defensive production and marketing tactics were necessary to maximize these movies' box-office potential.[14] Under these conditions, bankers and financiers forced the major studios to streamline their operations and reduce overhead. Guback observed that this shift marked the investment community's effort to impose accountability on the process of moviemaking.[15]

The cultivation of cable, videocassette, and satellite as ancillary modes of movie distribution and exhibition in the mid-1970s provided a means of spreading the financial risk of filmmaking by facilitating a conservative blockbuster mode of movie production. Applying the lessons learned from its recent recession, Hollywood adopted a strategy of recouping production costs as quickly as possible by "front loading" audience appeal. This put increasing emphasis on promotion as a movie industry practice and led to dramatic increases in movie budgets. Jaws was based on a best-selling novel, promoted on the basis of massive publicity and tie-ins with other media forms, and released on a

tenure from 1977 to 1981, the commission deregulated cable television and initiated efforts to foster new broadcast services including direct broadcast satellite, multi-point distribution services, and low-power television in order to provide alternatives to CBS, NBC, and ABC.[18] While this initiative was intended to promote greater participatory democracy and programming diversity in broadcast culture, it actually set the stage for cable's maturation into a handful of national franchises over the 1980s designed to serve as a pipeline for the major studios' new releases.

With the development of cable television and videocassette as new release windows for Hollywood movies, the filmed entertainment industry adopted a tent pole strategy of movie production in which it invested huge sums of money in a handful of annual blockbuster releases. "Kidult" franchises such as Star Wars, marketed to both adults and children, became the driving force behind Hollywood's box-office recovery during the late 1970s. Robin Wood contends that the ideological function of this style of filmmaking was to defuse social threats to patriarchal, bourgeois society remaining from the 1960s.[19] These influences resulted in a ritualized quality that embodied an ideological agenda of reassurance, especially in contrast to the self-conscious treatment of ideological tensions in McCabe and Mrs. Miller (1971), Taxi Driver (1976), and Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1976), which stretched the parameters of generic form to near-disintegration and revealed a crisis of faith in genres as symbolic mediators of the success ethic.[20]

The industry's reascendant profits were also attributable to its successful mobilization of an emerging spirit of neoconservatism. The runaway box-office popularity of the modestly budgeted Rocky (1976; $117.2 million) is traceable to its celebration of a bicentennial culture of national renewal associated with conservative principals of individual moral and economic accountability. Budgeted at $1 million, the darkhorse movie's commercial popularity was attributable to Sylvester Stallone's canny exploitation of a culture of bicentennial pride, white backlash against the civil rights initiatives of the 1960s, and humble economic expectations associated with Carter's

emphasis on resource conservation. Stallone effectively intertwined his own story of rags-to-riches struggle in Hollywood with Rocky's second-chance shot at self-respect and economic mobility.[21] Rocky anticipated an emerging culture of Reagan era racial conservatism by romanticizing its working-class hero as a symbol of traditional American values that had been left behind by a leftward-leaning counterculture.[22] Inherent in this inflection of race relations was the suggestion that black economic and cultural mobility stems from minority self-help and marketplace talent rather than affirmative action or welfare.

Stallone's vow to make movies with happy endings about underdog heroes became an industry mantra as Rocky's feel-good spirit replaced the pessimism of disaster epics, countercultural road movies, corporate conspiracy movies, and generic deconstructions of western and detective movies. Resituating Rocky's theme of triumph over oppressive class circumstances in a high-concept movie about disco culture, Saturday Night Fever demonstrated that a film musical could be successfully marketed as an event movie on the basis of a 25-word premise reducible to a single, striking image that encapsulated disco's role as a fantasy-driven escape from the economic recession and cultural malaise of the 1970s. While Saturday Night Fever disassociates disco culture from its countercultural origins in New York's gay underground club scene, it simultaneously condemns traditional working-class masculinity as a form of familial dysfunctionality fed by the pressures of a recessionary job market. When Tony (John Travolta) gets a raise, his laid-off construction worker father vents his frustration as a breadwinner by belittling him. Only in his relationship with his dance partner Stephanie does Tony find a sense of freedom that liberates him from the constrictions imposed by working-class definitions of what it means to be a "man." Saturday Night Fever also predicates Tony's relocation from Brooklyn to Manhattan on his adoption of a more pragmatic white-collar lifestyle of sobriety and professional responsibility, romanticizing a 1970s culture of feminism-

inspired sexual liberation while simultaneously anticipating the Reagan era's conflation of moral self-discipline and class mobility.

During the late 1970s, comic book fantasies like Superman (1978), conservative recuperations of the Vietnam War such as The Deer Hunter (1978), and sports success stories like Rocky II (1979) proliferated as conservative reappraisals of the Carter administration characterized it as weak, indecisive, and ineffectual. Carter's failure to revive a stagnant American economy and his vacillation as a foreign policy leader led Richard Nixon to lambast him in his 1980 assessment of the presidency. Carter's agreement to return control of the Panama Canal to the Panamanians, the Soviets' invasion of Afghanistan almost immediately after his concessionary neogotiation of the SALT II arms limitation agreement, and the president's failure to win the freedom of Americans held hostage in Iran resulted in widespread criticism.

The Reagan administration attempted to position itself as an antidote to this culture of moral malaise. In contrast to Carter, Reagan declared that it was "morning again in America" and mobilized an emerging spirit of neoconservative, free-market reform. Reaganomics' promotion of a flurry of corporate mergers and acquisitions auguered a shift towards cross-ownerships and concentrations of ownership in the filmed entertainment and TV industries in the 1980s. Hollywood's focus amidst these conditions on a handful of annual blockbusters led to a curtailment of the diversity of its output.

This conservatism was encouraged by the persistence of economic recession into the early 1980s. Carter's belated decision to make fighting inflation a priority resulted in a tightening of fiscal and monetary policies that threw the U.S. economy into recession in 1980. However, inflation dropped from 12 percent in 1980 to about 4 percent four years later, facilitating a non-inflationary economic recovery that helped re-elect Reagan in 1984.[23] Hollywood's reascendant economic fortunes throughout the 1980s under the stabilizing influence of Reaganomics and deregulation became a symbolic validation of

America's resurgent economic prosperity as domestic box-office grosses ballooned from $3 billion to over $5 billion during the decade.[24]

The 1980s: The Reagan Era and Conservative Backlash

Conservative lobbying efforts to deregulate the communications industry during the 1970s intensified under the Reagan administration. The loosening of regulations governing patterns of ownership by the FCC complemented Reagan's implementation of investment-friendly tax policies. Together, these initiatives sparked successive waves of mergers and acquisitions over the 1980s that enabled a capitalist class of international business investors to expand into new markets and utilize their economic and political power to gain control over them. In the filmed entertainment sector, vertical structures of ownership promote market control through the integration of production, distribution, and exhibition, guaranteeing that profits from each of these activities flow into a single company's coffers. The merger of Time, Inc. and Warner Bros. in 1989, for example, created a media conglomerate with interlocking interests in filmed entertainment, cable television distribution and programming, music recording and publishing, and books and magazines.[25]

Consolidation of political and economic power also occurs through the concentration of stock ownership of such companies in the hands of banks and interlocking boards of directors. Vertical integration and consolidated political and economic power were utilized as part of a broader policy making apparatus and were employed by the core filmed entertainment firms to capture new technologies such as satellite communications and cable television.[26]

Cast as a candidate who would return government to the people, Ronald Reagan was heavily backed in his bid for the presidency by political action committees (PACs) formed to battle the regulatory restraints placed on corporate America over the post-war era.[27] Richard Slotkin defines the 1980s as an era during which Reagan drew upon a longstanding frontier success mythology by enthusiastically proclaiming that the rogue

entrepreneur would create new wealth that would benefit all if government merely retreated from regulating the marketplace. Reagan similarly argued that the rise of new technologies such as cable television promised to end spectrum scarcity by democratizing access to the broadcast airwaves. Upon being elected president, Reagan pitched his program of tax cuts and deregulation as a means of making industry rather than government the engine of economic prosperity. Reagan argued that the future of capitalism itself was at stake unless the United States halted Soviet aggression through investment in military buildup. Business Week noted in 1981 that then presidential candidate Reagan's campaign platform of free-market economics, tax cuts, and aggressive military expenditure offered a "sharp contrast with Carter's economics."[28]

Praising conservative economic reform as the key to restoring U.S. industry's stability and growth, Reagan facilitated Hollywood's return to a state of sustained economic stability and profitability that had evaded it since the breakup of the studio system in 1948. Hollywood's metamorphosis into a vertically and horizontally integrated cluster of tightly diversified entertainment conglomerates under Reaganomics and deregulation provides an instructive example of how the former movie actor used this success mythology to garner support for programs that enabled an international investment class to consolidate its ownership over Hollywood. Accompanying the assimilation of Hollywood's major studios into an increasingly global entertainment cartel was a return to principles of bottom-line conservatism in movie production practices and record-setting profits for the filmed entertainment industry.

The orchestration of huge deals involving corporate mergers and acquisitions became a source of fascination within Reagan-era culture, reflecting a perception of the businessman entrepreneur as a brazen upstart renewing an American dream of prosperity. Cable magnate Ted Turner, News Corporation owner Rupert Murdoch, Viacom owner Sumner Redstone, and others burst onto Forbes magazine's annual listing of the 400 richest individuals in the United States, accompanying other media entrepreneurs whose

ranks so swelled over the 1980s that approximately 25 percent of the magazine's 1992 list consisted of individuals who owed all or part of their wealth to media ownership.[29]

Tax reforms that Reagan argued would promote new opportunities in the communications industry actually enabled international investors to generate the capital necessary to consolidate their ownership over filmed entertainment production, distribution, and exhibition. The 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act, passed by a surprisingly cooperative Congress, promoted greater short term banking investment in the entertainment industry by lowering corporate tax rates. The measure initiated successive waves of mergers and acquisitions that accelerated Hollywood's transformation into a cluster of huge, vertically and horizontally integrated communications conglomerates.

The horizontally and vertically integrated structures of Hollywood's major studios was complemented by the concentration of control over their operations in the hands of chief executives and board members. Guback found that while shares in media companies are widely dispersed among public stockholders, power over as little as 5 or 10 percent of their stock can provide working control over their operations. He observed that in 1985 the officers and members of the boards of directors of Warner Communications held 2.5% of its stock; Coca-Cola Company (Columbia), 7.9%; Walt Disney Productions, 7.5%; MCA (Universal), 10.6%; and Gulf & Western (Paramount), 6.2%.[30] Consolidation of political and economic power occurred through the concentration of stock ownership of large companies in the hands of banks and interlocking boards of directors. Concentrations of ownership enabled these executives to act in unison in developing and colonizing new communications media.

As a former producer and host of the TV show "General Electric Theater," Reagan had long advocated Hollywood's transformation of television into an ancillary source of revenues for the studios.[31] As president, Reagan aggressively pursued this agenda by encouraging Hollywood's reversion to a studio system of ownership. The unprecedented integration of the film and television industries that occurred throughout the 1980s amidst

Hollywood's reversion to a studio system of organization raised barriers of entry to the filmed entertainment industry. While a handful of major studios (MCA/Universal, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century Fox, Columbia, United Artists, Paramount) historically have controlled film production and distribution, these companies were absorbed over the 1980s into tightly diversified multinational conglomerates with interlocking interests in multiplex theaters, videocassette distribution, and cable and network television. The profitability of the media conglomerates that emerged during the 1980s resulted in their integration into the ranks of Fortune 500 companies.[32]

Gulf & Western sold off all but its media holdings over the 1980s and renamed itself Paramount Communications. Warner Communications downsized during the early 1980s only to expand through a marriage with Time in 1989 that created Time Warner, a model of tight diversification with holdings in movies, TV production, cable, records, and book and magazine publishing. Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation also purchased Twentieth Century Fox in 1985. Murdoch's makeover of Fox was facilitated by the Reagan administration FCC's introduction of "Must-Carry Rules" which required cable franchises to carry the station and gave Fox immediate coverage of more than 18 percent of all homes with television sets in the US in 1986.[33] News Corporation's Fox channel ultimately became a "fourth" national network by using Twentieth Century Fox's film library and ongoing movie and television productions as a cost-efficient source of programming.[34]

Other studios underwent less successful mergers in the 1980s. United Artists collapsed after the flop of several big-budget releases, including Heaven's Gate (1980), and merged with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1981. Coca-Cola purchased Columbia Pictures in 1982 and formed Tri-Star Pictures in partnership with CBS and Home Box Office (HBO). Tri-Star's failure as an integrated theatrical, pay-TV, and network television distribution company and Columbia's relatively flat performance as a movie production company led the soft drink company to sell the troubled venture to Sony

Corporation in 1989. The hardware-software alliance created by Sony's purchase of Columbia was reinforced by the Japanese giant's purchase of CBS Records. International investment in Hollywood increased with Pathe Communications' purchase of MGM in 1985 and Matsushita's acquisition of MCA/Universal in 1990.

Lax anti-trust law enforcement also encouraged the reintegration of the major movie studios' production and distribution activities with movie exhibition. The Justice Department challenged only 0.7 percent of the mergers between 1982 and 1986 in which the parties were required to file for antitrust approval. The Carter administration maintained a 2.5 percent rate of challenge.[35] The major studios complemented their ownership of movie distribution networks with their purchase of first-run exhibition chains in large urban areas. This trend reconnected the profitable link between filmed entertainment production, distribution, and exhibition severed by the studio's forced sale of their exhibition sites under the 1948 Paramount decree. As mall multiplexes replaced older downtown auditoriums, Hollywood focused on movies with pre-sold, crossover appeal to suburban audiences. The purchase of multiplexes in densely populated areas resurrected the studio system's run-zone-clearance strategy of constructing movie theaters in key urban locations.

The FCC's repeal of regulations prohibiting cross-ownerships between media also enabled the major conglomerates to release blockbuster and A-list titles in theaters and on cable television by negotiating partnerships with cable networks. The Reagan administration's implementation of the Cable Franchise Policy and the Communications Act of 1984 provided multiple system operators (MSOs) with a wish list of provisions that allowed them tremendous discretion over every program and service they carried. The Cable Act of 1984 promoted horizontal integration by taking all power over the granting of franchises from municipalities and giving it to cable oligopolies like ATC and TCI.[36] Power shifted away from the public and cities and towards cable operations. The

bill dramatically curbed cities' rights after 1987 to regulate rights and programming or to influence franchise renewal.[37]

The Reagan administration FCC also loosened restrictions on the number of television stations any one firm could own in 1984, raising the limit from 7 to 12. All three television networks changed hands in 1985-86 under this relaxation of ownership regulations. ABC was bought by Capital Cities, a group of ABC affiliate stations which had grown rich during network television's salad days and successfully invested in publishing and cable. Real estate investor Laurence Tisch took over CBS. General Electric acquired NBC's parent company, RCA. Antitrust concerns ultimately led the FCC to block several takeovers. ITT's proposed takeover of ABC was blocked because ITT's political activities threatened the network's news integrity.[38]

The cost of launching movies across these multiple release windows led the major studios to base their annual revenues on the runaway success of a few costly blockbusters. The New York Times observed in 1987 that the cost of a movie made by a major studio rose from $2.3 million in 1975, to $8 million in 1980, to $17.5 million in 1986, with marketing expenses averaging $7.5 million. Under these conditions, the average movie didn't turn a profit until it earned $30 million in theatrical film rentals.[39]

The amount spent on marketing and promoting a handful of annual releases ultimately proved to be a highly effective means of generating even greater box-office receipts. Variety's compilation in 1989 of every instance in which a movie grossed more than $10 million in a single weekend sheds light on this trend. It concluded that there had been 125 weekends between 1978 and 1989 during which an individual Hollywood movie achieved a minimum gross of $10 million. In contrast, the summer of 1989 alone saw 20 separate $10-million-plus opening weekends. Twenty of the top 25 weekends boasting box-office receipts of $10 million or more belonged to sequels.[40] A movie's opening weekend success depended on shrewd marketing tactics designed to appeal to multiple audiences.

The ability to subsequently coordinate the release of movies across multiple distribution windows placed a premium on market control. While critics predicted that new technologies such as cable television and home video would erode theater attendance, they instead increased it on the basis of synergistic cross-marketing. The efficiency created by the cross-promotion of movies resulted in unprecedented profits for the major studios as growth in secondary markets, particularly pay-cable and home video, outstripped revenues from Hollywood's domestic theatrical revenues over the 1980s.

The distribution of movies across windows in turn enabled conglomerates to maximize the revenue from each market through price tiering. Rooted in the studio system's run-zone-clearance concept, the strategy aligned price with demand by lowering the cost of viewing a movie as it was moved from theatrical release to network television over time. Called "price discrimination," the distribution of a movie in this fashion enabled the studios to tap every segment of the market in a systematic fashion at a price commensurate with demand.[41] Paramount, for example, claimed the three top movies of 1987 (Beverly Hills Cop II, $153.6 million; Fatal Attraction, $136.1 million; and The Untouchables, $76.2 million) and a 20 percent share of the U.S. market.[42]

The cost of branding franchises, along with the opportunities afforded by industry consolidation and the rise of new avenues of ancillary distribution and merchandising, led to a greater reliance on pre-sales deals with consumer goods manufacturers. The shopping mall multiplex's replacement of the downtown movie theater also exerted a reshaping influence on movies. By 1987, the number of shopping malls in the U.S. exceeded the number of post offices or secondary schools at 30,600 nationwide.[43] Like the downtown movie theater, the mall multiplex represented a gathering place for family and youth audiences that Hollywood increasingly focused upon in its attempt to appeal to multiple, demographically preferable audience segments.

In contrast to the public space of the shopping center, the mall is a highly-controlled, privately-owned space in which security cameras and indoor design encourage

shoppers rather than the general public to enter and stroll. Herbert Schiller observed that while the mall is often perceived as a publicly-owned site of free assembly and discourse it is actually a privately-owned space completely devoted to the promotion of a shopping mood.[44] Mallwide promotions held on a single day across the country became a means of targeting this demographic and garnering free television news publicity for multiplex movies. Paramount promoted Staying Alive (1983) at selected malls by giving prerelease screening passes to the first fifty people who asked for them at a certain mall store after being alerted by a radio announcement.[45]

The major studios' integration of movie theater chains with cable television franchises and videocassette distribution arms complemented this focus on family and youth audiences. Cable television primarily served suburban family residences in which parents and children could be effectively targeted by movies that had opened successfully during their theatrical runs. Movies which celebrated the reestablishment of boundaries between the family and hostile others who threatened its self-sufficiency proved most popular in these class-circumscribed settings of family and suburban affluence. In The Big Chill, for example, countercultural holdover Nick (William Hurt) chastises Harold (Kevin Kline) for cajoling a policeman into letting Nick go after he is apprehended for speeding. When Nick accuses Harold of "selling out" to the establishment, Harold responds that he is a homeowner and a member of the local community. "I'm dug in. And that cop has kept his house from getting ripped off."

This emphasis on consumption and lifestyle operated in ideologically recuperative fashion by promoting a construction of the Protestant success ethic that underscored themes of leisure-culture fantasy and escape for young audiences. The influence of advertising was evident in Hollywood's high concept fetishization of the pumped-up male body as an emblem of Reagan-era masculine heroism. Advertising of the 1980s capitalized on a cultural zeitgeist that equated fitness and moral regeneration by constructing the sculpted male body as an embodiment of living in a state of balance with

nature untainted by the corrupting effects of indolence, sloth, and polluting substances. This iconography proved highly adaptable to the high concept motif of the crusading white avenger who, with the help of a noble savage sidekick, promotes the spread of civilized values through their physical mastery of the frontier, a theme that proved readily adaptable to the action-adventure movie's emphasis on violence and spectacle. Displays of violence became connotative extensions of the hero's physical power and mastery of his surroundings.

These visual conventions encouraged repeated viewing of movies, enabling movies such as 48 Hrs. (1982) and Lethal Weapon (1987) to push Hollywood movies into secondary markets such as cable and videocassette. The success of blockbuster movies with multi-media potential amidst the rise of the conglomerate culture of moviemaking was the driving force behind Hollywood's ballooning profitability during the 1980s. The Lethal Weapon series, for example, grossed almost $800 million in domestic box-office revenues over the course of four releases between 1987 and 1998. Lethal Weapon also became the second highest-selling video in Warner Home Video history, selling 38 million units in 23 months.[46] The cultivation of a global audience in turn provided revenue streams which stabilized fluctuations in the industry's domestic primary and secondary markets.

This focus on fitness, moral redemption, and physical spectacle shaped multiple movie genres. Tony Williams, citing Lance Henrikson, draws a direct parallel between the violent choreography of the action-adventure movie and dance movement in the Hollywood musical, noting that Hong Kong director John Woo's earliest cinematic influences were West Side Story (1961) and musicals starring Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire.[47] Sylvester Stallone establishes a parallel between song and dance performances in the musical and macho violence in action-adventure movies by proclaiming in The Official Rocky Scrapbook that he and Carl Weathers (Apollo Creed) strove to "become

the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers of the pugilistic world" during their choreographed fight scenes.[48]

While action-adventure movies fetishized the male body as a symbol of masculine agency, the MTV music-video movie conflated women's economic and cultural mobility with their physical makeover on the basis of class cues of style and fashion. While Stallone's sculpted body in Rocky III illustrates high concept's practice of defining characters on the basis of the Reagan-era cultural trend of physical fitness, a loose-fitting sweatshirt and baggy sweats, standard aerobics fashion accessories during the 1980s, serve as integral aspects of Flashdance's characterization of Alex as a fashion icon. "Flashdancing," a combination of urban hip-hop and aerobic dance, defines Alex as a street-smart breakdancer/stripper who distinguishes herself as a natural aristocrat by using her talent rather than her boss Michael's (Michael Nouri) contacts to break into the world of legitimate dance.[49] Similarly, Ren McCormick's (Kevin Bacon) penchant for vintage 1950s-looking new wave clothing aligns him in Footloose with androgynous MTV musical icons such as David Bowie, to whom his mother playfully compares him as he peruses his look in the mirror in "feminine" fashion before leaving for school. While Footloose in this way recognizes the musical's fetishization of the male body in female terms, it nonetheless distinguishes between men and women's roles when Ren physically defends Lori from her abusive former boyfriend, anticipating their integration into a well-adjusted heterosexual couple, and ultimately, a family.

The music-video movie's focus on fashion enabled Hollywood to coordinate the release of a movie in mall multiplexes with its cross-promotion over the Music Television channel (MTV). The MTV music-video movie proved an effective means of creating marketplace synergies between movies, fashion styles, and music soundtracks and mobilizing suburban adolescent audiences. Shaped by the classical Hollywood musical while also departing from it, Flashdance, Footloose, and Dirty Dancing combined the American film musical's style of direct address and its focus on rites of heterosexual

coupling with a post-classical visual style that facilitated the extraction of song-and-dance sequences for re-presentation on MTV and in malls and nightclubs.

In retaining the musical's focus on adolescent rites of courtship and marriage, Fame, Flashdance, Footloose, and Dirty Dancing conflated the purchase of soundtrack albums and fashion styles with fantasies of romantic fulfillment. Incumbent in this focus on norms of heterosexual romance was a simultaneous backlash against the self-conscious critiques of courtship and marriage that had typified Cabaret (1974) and All That Jazz (1980). The Urban Cowboy (1980) soundtrack's focus on Southern California country-rock artists such as Joe Walsh and The Eagles also represented a gravitation away from disco music and its androgynous associations.

Movie studios often coordinated promotional campaigns with independent stations by distributing "electronic press kits" to them for airing. Vestron sent out 150 Dirty Dancing electronic press kits to major television markets and stations. Research reports indicated that 40 percent of the kits were used upon the movie's release and that subsequent airings occurred as the film became a box-office hit.[50] Paramount's co-production of "Entertainment Tonight" and "Solid Gold" similarly enabled it to cross-promote new movies and hit soundtrack songs from its movies on network television.[51]

The growing importance of shareability between television and movies created by this trend resulted in Hollywood's focus on pre-sold television stars with proven appeal to audiences valued by advertisers. Eddie Murphy's familiarity to television audiences as a cast member of the otherwise all-white "Saturday Night Live" resulted in his makeover into a movie star carefully situated in comedy roles in which his abbreviated standup routines were extended into two-hour stories in which he was cast in white cultural settings. MTV music-video movies were a modular series of montages inspired by TV commercials in which chic lifestyle trends were sold on the basis of carefully coordinated interludes that matched music and image. Yuppie movies also invited viewers to indulge in

fantasies of suburban utopia contextualized in terms of advertising-inspired lifestyle trends.

The pleasure audiences derive from specific movies must also be recognized as it functions in a specific social and historical context. Sociocultural conditions exemplified by the New Right's rise to power influenced Reagan-era movies' construction of race, gender, and class relations and the ways in which 1980s audiences consumed these themes. A rightward ideological shift among audiences -- which also led to President Reagan's election -- encouraged Hollywood's focus on themes of racial self-help, gender conservatism, and conspicuous consumption championed by the administration.

Reagan Era Movie Genres and Audiences

The record-setting revenues earned by Hollywood movies over the course of the 1980s must be framed within the context of film's role as a mediator of cultural trends. Box-office popularity is an important indicator of a genre or star's cultural relevance because the audience participates in the construction and refinement of Hollywood's construction of race, gender, and class relations through their choice of which movies to attend. Popular movies are thus a site of ideological struggle between competing groups to define the meaning of success. Genres and stars alter the dominant definitions of race, gender, and class over time on the basis of evolving cultural and historical conditions and audiences' responses to their construction of these ideals.[52]

The Reagan presidency promoted the popularity of crusading white male heroes and genres that celebrated the restoration of conservative success ideals. Reagan's training as a Hollywood actor provided him with a repertoire of television personalities grounded in a Cold War success ideology that submerged differences of class, gender, and race beneath a norm of white suburban prosperity. As a post-war spokesman for an American way of life based on material plentitude, Reagan conflated middle-class affluence with an agenda of preserving the individual's right to freely participate in an emerging suburban lifestyle of conspicuous consumption.

In the wake of the recessionary economic conditions and anemic cultural morale of the 1970s, Reagan's praise of America as a land of second chances and fluid individual economic and cultural mobility struck a chord with voters weary of economic recession, post-Watergate political disillusionment, and post-countercultural moral confusion. The popularity of stories about crusading white males who redeem ideals of colorblind class mobility, gender conservatism, and earned economic privilege was thus attributable to the role these narratives played in mediating contradictions within the success ethic which widened during the Reagan presidency. A dramatic upward redistribution of wealth occurred under Reaganomics, even as Reagan claimed to be restoring an economy in which individual reward was commensurate with effort. A U.S. Federal Reserve study indicated that the share of wealth held by the richest 1 percent of U.S. households increased under Reagan-Bush monetarist policies, from 31 percent in 1983 to 37 percent in 1989.[53]

In championing the ideal of a colorblind society, Rocky III (1982; $125 million), Beverly Hills Cop (1984; $234.7 million), and Lethal Weapon (1987; $65.2 million) celebrate a post-civil rights era philosophy of blacks and whites teaming up to overthrow inner-city criminals, government and economic elites, and international terrorists which Reagan identified as threats to a meritocratic society. This action-adventure formula's inflection of the buddy movie is traceable to Silver Streak (1977), which pairs Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor in a murder-mystery/road movie that skillfully interwove comedy, action stunts, and shootouts into a story about men of opposing races uniting to overthrow a criminal organization that threatens the ideal of a colorblind society of open class mobility. As Ed Guerrerro notes, these celebrations of a black or ethnic co-star's assimilation into a dominant white society had widespread appeal because they were able to attract a demographically broad audience by dramatizing or rendering humorous issues of racial integration and mobility in ways that allow them to be easily resolved.[54]

These movies incorporate the Reagan administration's emphasis on stricter law enforcement and the militant defense of the family and the nation from street criminals,

drug dealers, foreign terrorists, and Communist infiltrators. Simultaneously, they reject government, police, and military bureaucracies as too unwieldy or simply inept to successfully combat these forces, especially in the wake of the government's failure to eradicate these threats through social reform at home and intervention in Vietnam.

Hollywood's strategy of cross-marketing movies on MTV also led to the truncation of the musical's carefully integrated treatment of music, performance, and narrative. In the classical Hollywood musical, these conventions are carefully interwoven as stars directly address the camera and perform complex song and dance routines that magnify the audience's perception of them as stars.[55] The music-video movie, in contrast, draws upon a television advertising-inspired style that carefully matches sound and image into lifestyle montages designed to equate product purchases with emotional satisfactions. Hollywood's adoption of the musical as a loose generic template for the music-video movie was motivated by the fit between the goal of selling male and female lifestyle accessories to young moviegoers and the musical's focus on rites of courtship and leisure.

The influence of market research and television advertising style on the music-video movie also resulted in its focus on youth audiences. A study of teens across the Western United States demonstrated that television was by far the most important source of information for their movie and entertainment choices.[56] The music video movie's function of cross-marketing movies and music soundtracks across both theaters and television made the American film musical an appropriate template for its narrative and visual styles. The film musical's focus on the relationship between song and dance and rituals of courtship and marriage historically has made it an apt genre for the exploration of American adolescent gender relations. While musicals such as Saturday Night Fever and All That Jazz revealed traditional gender roles to be in a state of flux amidst shifting definitions of masculinity and femininity, Fame (1980) and Staying Alive (1983; $63.8

million) reestablished rigid dichotomies between men's and women's respective roles in courtship and marriage.

In doing so, both movies conflate the consummation of youthful rituals of courtship and the achievement of success with the principal male and female characters' adoption of proper gender roles, symbolically reaffirming the Reagan administration's contention that women's return to the home was a prerequisite for the nuclear family's happiness and economic self-sufficiency. Flashdance (1983; $94.9 million) constructs its heroine as a nightclub dancer who achieves upward mobility by mesmerizing her boss during one of her striptease performances. In doing so, it constructs her as a subordinate object of his possessive "gaze" and predicates her achievement of middle-class economic affluence on her success in luring him into marriage. In the wake of Flashdance's commercial success, Footloose ($80 million) and Dirty Dancing (1987; $63.9 million) affirmed the box-office popularity of high concept music-video movies that conflate women's integration into the middle class with their conformity to proper gender roles by linking career autonomy and abortion with the contamination of women's bodies and class mobility with female characters' adoption of roles as wives and mothers.

The characterization of women operating outside the structure of the nuclear family as lonely, infertile, and unfulfilled became a means of discrediting the feminist movement by blurring its ideology into a post-feminist discourse which argued that so much ground had been won that there was no longer any need for social activism.[57] Inherent in this argument was the conflation of right-wing economic and moral concerns. Allegations that big government was to blame for shackling big business's profit potential and the middle class's discretionary control over its income dovetailed with the New Right's conservative agenda of moral reform. Reagan's opposition to the ERA was based on a class-biased rationale of familial organization. A man's fidelity to a woman, conservatives argued, could only be guaranteed through the enforcement of his obligation to be a breadwinner. Independent women, it was argued, were responsible for

skyrocketing divorce rates because they undermined a natural scheme of familial organization.[58] Welfare was believed to have created single-parent families through monthly assistance to women.

Similarly, Staying Alive, Flashdance, and Dirty Dancing portray women who engage in casual sex or fail to couple with a man as immoral libertines or old maids and exclude them from the utopian dream of marriage and affluence which the film musical's principal couple presumably enjoys after their final embrace. Incumbent in this plotline are clear-cut distinctions between "good" and "bad" women contextualized on the basis of class and gender dichotomies

Kramer vs. Kramer's (1979; $106.2 million) conformity to the family melodrama similarly resulted in Reagan-era cinema's focus on the reestablishment of economic and moral boundaries between gender roles and classes. A symbolic condemnation of the feminist movement, Kramer vs. Kramer blames the Kramer family's breakup on a housewife's desire to work outside the home. It also suggests that the all-male father and son family that is formed in the wake of her departure is a healthy alternative to one tainted by the presence of a self-serving feminist mother. Risky Business (1983; $63.5 million), The Big Chill (1983; $56.4 million) and Three Men and a Baby (1987; $167.7 million) similarly celebrate the assertion of patriarchal authority in the workplace and the home as the basis for the middle-class family's moral stability. In conflating the male-headed household with economic and moral stability, these movies echo neoconservative George Gilder's contention that married men are more economically productive because of the breadwinning duties imposed by marriage and children.[59]

The yuppie movie's focus on lifestyle and consumption habits reveals the influence of televisual style in its glamorization of the suburban home and corporate workplace as a showcase for consumer goods. The term "yuppie" was coined in 1983 to describe an emerging class of young professionals that cut across gender and race lines in its embrace of values of conspicuous consumption.[60] The yuppie plot thus typically

focuses on the class politics of success and is situated in a gentrified urban or suburban setting. Given its primary focus on the white middle class, its principal characters are generally either college-bound adolescents or college-educated single or married adults. Its iconography includes lifestyle merchandise such as sports cars and consumer electronic goods, making it an apt vehicle for product plugs and capitalizing on fleeting consumption trends.[61]

The yuppie movie's definition of the hero as a redeemer of class relations suggests that the genre served as a symbolic mediator of class tensions which arose as neoconservatives targeted career mothers, government bureaucrats, and weak fathers as the causes of middle-class downward mobility over the 1980s. Strains of the yuppie movie can also be found in the biracial buddy movie in which the overthrow of political terrorists and economic elites signifies the restoration of a culture of open class mobility. Rocky III's conflation of conspicuous wealth with physical strength and athleticism also orders yuppie movies, in which fitness becomes a signifier of competitive superiority and earned affluence.

These themes continued to dominate Hollywood movies in the wake of the Reagan presidency as sequels based on some of the most popular franchises of the 1980s topped box-office rankings in the 1990s. In 1989, for example, Variety's annual list of box-office champs included Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (#2; $115.5 million), Lethal Weapon 2 (#3; $79.5 million), Back to the Future, Part II (#6; $63 million), and The Karate Kid III (#29; $19.2 million). The overwhelming commercial success of Time Warner's Batman (1989; $251.1 million) in the wake of the giant conglomerate's formation also revealed the ongoing viability of the Reagan era's blockbuster filmmaking strategy.[62]

The Legacy of the Reagan Era

The ongoing popularity of Reagan-era cinema exemplifies how the concerns of moviemakers whose work doesn't conform to narrow, stereotypical representations of the success ethic with maximum domestic and overseas crossover appeal continue to be

marginalized amidst Hollywood's quest for the largest possible audiences. This trend intensified during the early 1990s as independent companies specializing in made-for-cable and straight-to-video productions either failed or were absorbed into Hollywood's major studios. While Cinecom and Cannon cut production, Island, Alive, FilmDallas, Skouras, Vestron, Atlantic Releasing, Avenue, and DEG exited the market altogether. Miramax and New Line Cinema survived this shakeout by developing movies with the potential to cross over beyond the art house market.[63]

The major studios' aggressive expansion into Eastern Europe in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 intensified concerns about the curtailment of ideological diversity in Hollywood movies. While the nation-state remained a critical icon for mobilizing ideological sentiment, multinational conglomerates such as Time Warner eclipsed national governments in their economic and cultural influence. Overseas theater and videocassette markets enabled the major media conglomerates to further spread risk by developing lucrative revenue streams, particularly in Europe. Cable television's global expansion also provided multinational manufacturers of goods and services with highly efficient means of creating new overseas markets for their products.

Hollywood's reorganization into a global entertainment juggernaut over the 1980s under the investment climate promoted by the Reagan administration raises concerns about the growing convergence of economic, cultural, and political objectives in the communications industry. Increasingly, consumption of stories about crusading white redeemers of the American way united worldwide audiences in an affirmation of Reagan-era success values even as economic and cultural relations were increasingly governed by a handful of transnational corporations. Hollywood's explosive global expansion since the late 1980s also poses the threat of weakening national political and economic sovereignty and eroding indigenous forms of cultural expression.

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(1990; $117.5 million), Three Men and a Little Lady (1990; $71.6 million), Home Alone (1990; $285.7 million), Look Who's Talking, Too (1990; $47.5 million), The Last Boy Scout (1991; $), Home Alone 2 (1992; $173.5 million), Lethal Weapon 3 (1992; $144.7 million), Look Who's Talking Now (1993; $10.3 million), Beverly Hills Cop III (1994; $42.6 million), Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995; $100 million), Men in Black (1997; $250 million), reissues of Star Wars (1997; $460.9 million), The Empire Strikes Back (1997; $290.2 million), Return of the Jedi (1997; $309.2 million), and Lethal Weapon 4 (1998; $130.4 million).

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Paper Title:
Media Literacy and the Alternative Media: A Comparison of KAZI and KNLE Alternative Radio Stations in Austin

Abstract

I will critically analyze media literacy theories. My study criticizes the active audience media literacy model for isolating the communication process from the larger social contexts. I will provide the alternative media as the solution to provoke the active citizen participation in the political life. After offering theoretical rationale for the existence of alternative media, I will compare two alternative radio stations in Austin, KAZI and KNLE concerning their operation, history, funding, and role.

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Introduction

Media literacy is defined as the ability of the audience "to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms" (Aufderheide, 1993, p. xx), as well as the ability to acquire knowledge structures about media industries, general content patterns, and a broad view of effects (Potter, 1998). This media literacy movement in the United States began in the early seventies with its concentration on visual communication as well as on television literacy. This media literacy has usually concentrated on studying with media content instead of studying about the media organization. Such a focus on media content precluded the formation of media education about the impact of media organizations on weakening the citizenship role of the audience.

The commercial logic of television programming is an influential one in this society. Television, as a powerful medium, has been encouraging the "high-consumption way of life," as it "helped teach Americans how to talk, look, and behave" (Gitlin, 1995, p. 64). Given the huge quantity of Americans' exposure to TV and its commercial influence, Steven Goodman asserts that the goal of media education

efforts should lie in changing the audience "from being passive viewers to questioning consumers" (Goodman, 1993, p. 1). However, Goodman's views of media education are limited because Goodman views the goal of media education in educating the audience as discerning consumers rather than active citizens in political issues. As Ang (1991) says, the audience - as - public does not consist of consumers, but of citizens who must be reformed, educated, and informed to enable them to better perform their democratic rights and duties (p. 28-29).

How can media literacy contribute to having audiences make a social and political difference in this society of rampant commercialism of television programming? According to Livingstone and Lunt (1994, p. 91), we can only say that "critical response positions viewers as public citizens rather than private consumers, and so may result in a critical public opinion, with consequences for the involvement of ordinary people in public argument and public policy making." To help audiences play a role as the citizenry in a democratic society, media literacy should help empower audiences to "deepen and refine the capacity for significant response" (Williams, 1983, p. 62) and help them make "coherent sense of the broader social

forces that affect the conditions of audiences' everyday lives" (Gamson. et al., 1992, p. 391).

Media literacy should empower audiences to raise questions about the ideological role of the media in constructing common sense for the people. Media literacy education should help audiences question the political and economic implications of mass media in society. Such an understanding of media ownership and economics is important in producing an effective media literacy program. As Lewis and Jhally (1998, p. 112) state, "media education in the United States will flounder if it cannot locate media texts in a broad set of social realities."

The purpose of my study is to study the theoretical foundations of media literacy, as well as to examine recent developments in the theories of media literacy. I will critically analyze the theories of media literacy, which range from the content-oriented model through the uses and gratifications model, to the process-oriented model.

One of the important transformations in recent media literacy is the emphasis on the audience's oppositional interpretations of media products. John Fiske is the main figure who emphasizes on the audience's oppositional decoding powers in the interpretation of media products. I will criticize Fiske's active audience model for isolating

communication between television and the audience from the broader social contexts. As Brown (1998, p. 50) says, the larger social, economic, political, and ideological aspects of the media should be explored in the media literacy movement.

Additionally, I will offer my ideas about what such media literacy studies should take into account in explaining the political activity of the audience. However, where is media education most productively located in explaining people's collective political action? I think that media education should educate the audience "to develop their own 'micro-mass media' such as small-circulation newspapers and local cable channels and other forms of interchange not beholden to or limited by established 'macro-mass media' systems (Brown, p. 31). In this sense, the alternative media should promote people's collective political action to influence media products. Such political action should be a step toward a larger goal of influencing public policy.

Finally after offering theoretical rationale for the existence of alternative media by using Jurgen Habermas's public sphere concept, I will compare two alternative radio stations in Austin, KAZI and KNLE concerning their operation, history, funding, and role in the local area.

In particular, I will focus on examining how these radio stations serve as an instrument of public education, especially for the children, as well as how such radio stations secure the space for autonomy by being "independent of the state and its formal corporate structures" (Esteva & Prakash, 1998, p. 11). The selection of these local radio stations stems from the fact that we should beware of gigantism in the analysis of radical media, of dismissing the local as weightless (Downing, 2000).

I argue that media literacy should aim at educating the audience as citizens rather than discriminating consumers. In this sense, media literacy should aim at increasing people's awareness of the market-driven media structure. In other words, media literacy should help the audience understand the purposes behind the media messages produced by a commercial media industry. This, in turn, can lead to the formation of "organized audiences" who can make their collective impact on the media. In this process, the role of alternative media should not be ignored in promoting people's collective political action to influence media products since the alternative media, non-institutional, committed media favor horizontal patterns of interaction between senders and receivers

(McQuail, 1994). Second, As Hobb(1989, p. 5) states, it is incumbent upon alternative local media to unmask the commercial media system since "the commercial media system is unlikely to be an agent of its own unmasking." Furthermore, the alternative media should serve as a catalyst in provoking the citizen's active participation in the political life. In other words, the alternative media should link their activities to the local communities to bring about the public's participation in social issues which concern the public's interests. For it is at the local level that media education and political action are most likely to have consequences.

Scope of the Study

Television, as a powerful medium, has been encouraging the consumption way of life which discourages politically effective actions. To produce changes in the media industry, citizens must have a knowledgeable voice in the negotiation process that shapes media products. In this respect, media education can significantly contribute to increasing meaningful citizen participation in that the media literate public can be invaluable in producing changes in the media industry. To provoke meaningful citizen participation in the political life, media educators should go beyond training in aesthetic

sensitivity and beyond protecting the audience from kitsch culture, to teaching informed and competent role-taking in the country's media processes (Brown, 1991, p. 31).

However, in this process the role of alternative media should not be ignored in producing citizens' participation in political life because the alternative media, not a part of the administrative and commercial system, can have a political impact by making the people participate directly in public communication (Habermas, 1997, p. 454). By alternative media, I mean the media which cover the news events that are not reported in the mainstream media. In this sense, alternative media function as a conduit through which the community lives of ordinary people are reported. In addition, it is important to note that alternative media serve a specialized readership, listeners, or viewers.

It is important to know that the practical possibilities of alternative media programming are for a group of audience members not simply to broadcast, but to broadcast what they want to communicate, both within their own ranks and to a wider audience (Downing, 2000, p. 327-328).

The audience participation in media production process can help them alter "their entrenched and normalized notions of what is socially acceptable as a media text and

what is not" (Rodriguez, 2000, p. 123). In this sense, "alternative media spins transformative processes that alter people's senses of self, their subjective positionings, and therefore their access to power" (Rodriguez, 2000, p. 18).

Most studies on alternative media focus on local access television. As a result, there are not many studies about the role of alternative radio stations in a local community. Furthermore, studies are rare about community radio stations which air "views not heard over commercial stations" (Soley, 1999, p. 40).

This study examined two noncommercial community radio stations in Austin, KAZI and KNLE. I examined the operation of radio stations, their history, program topics, and funding. I conducted in-depth interviews with the general managers of KAZI and KNLE to study their history and operation since they are familiar with the history of radio stations, as well as the operation of stations. I asked general managers their thoughts about operating alternative community radio stations. In the next section I will introduce the concept of media literacy, as well as its theoretical foundations.

The Theoretical Lineage of Media Literacy

The media literacy movement has concentrated on reducing the negative influence of television violence on viewers, as well as analyzing misrepresentation of images and representation of stereotypes. One important area in media literacy discourse is the influence of television violence on audiences' beliefs about the world. Television violence studies have investigated how television viewing affects people's estimation of real-world situations and their beliefs about the level of danger in the world.

The cultivation approach, especially, has moved research interest to the investigation of such influence of television on viewers' cognitive structure. The cultivation analysis also investigated the effects of sex-role stereotypes on the audience. Those studies show that television programs influence our social definition of sex-roles and induce the viewers to internalize the traditional stereotyped images of gender represented in television programs.

Accordingly, educators have become concerned about the harmful influence of television violence and gender stereotypes on audiences. Consequently, media literacy has focused on reducing this negative impact of television violence and gender stereotypes on viewers. This has led

to content-oriented media literacy model, which emphasizes viewers' ability to discriminate among the various media contents. What is important in this model is that the audience can understand what is distinctive about each medium - how television is different from cinema or radio - and understand how the media influence the audience (Piette & Giroux, 1997, p. 126).

Media literacy encompasses both content-oriented and process-oriented perspectives of media. The content-oriented perspective is that viewers should inoculate themselves against the harmful effects of the media. In addition, this perspective emphasizes viewers' understanding of how the media influence us. Media literacy model, such as the stimulus-response, is content-oriented in their theoretical approaches to media literacy.

A content-oriented perspective on media literacy assumes that audiences absorb the information intended by media organizations. The content-oriented approach to media addresses the negative impact of mass media and employs media literacy education to teach viewers to discriminate among media, "looking for the best and avoiding the worst" (Aufderheide, 1992, p. 15-16). It is important to note that the content-oriented model suggests a passive role for the audience in the process of inferring

the effects of media messages from an analysis of media contents.

However, the content-oriented model has been criticized as being largely oversimplified. It has been found that "the effects of mass communication on people depend on a number of intervening variables, including personalities [and] personal characteristics" (Severin & Tankard, 1988, p. 116-117). The study of such "conditioning factors" mediating between sender and receiver is represented in the uses and gratifications study.

Katz (1959) writes, "This is the research tradition which asks not what the media do to people, but what people do with media" (p. 2). The concept of selectivity is central to the uses and gratifications theory. It derives from the finding that, according to Katz (1979), selective exposure, selective perception, and selective recall intercept the flow of influence (p. 75). By invoking the concept of selectivity in the study of mass communication, researchers began to give the audience some of the power that previously had been attributed exclusively to the media.

The uses and gratifications model in media literacy produced "a transformation in the role of the audience from

being a passive recipient of already formulated textual meanings to an active maker of meaning" (Masterman, 1988, p. 9). In this model, media content is a poor predictor of the consequences of viewing, and is important only insofar as it helps the attainment of certain goals. In addition, "individual uses and gratifications set the agenda for media behavior, and that behavior can be interpreted and evaluated only when the goal agenda is known (Anderson, 1980, p. 66). As Aufderheide (1992, p. 17) states, this model is designed to help the audience develop their own criteria for viewing and listening. However, "the limitation is that the uses and gratifications perspective remains individualistic, insofar as differences of response or interpretation are ultimately attributed to individual differences of personality or psychology" (Morley, 1989, p. 17). As a result, this approach does not address the complex social relations and structures mediating between sender and receiver.

Theories of media literacy have developed into the process-oriented model which includes the cultural studies model. This model helps viewers acquire information concerning the roles that the mass media play in the social system (Piette & Giroux, 1997, p. 127). The cultural studies model investigates how the media exercise

ideological influence on audiences, and how audiences interact with media messages. This model "positions media education as necessary for political awareness and, therefore, democracy" (Aufderheide, 1993, p. 19). In addition, the cultural studies model conceptualizes the audience as active in the communication process. Stuart Hall's "Encoding/Decoding" model influenced this conceptualization of the active audience.

In his article, "Encoding/Decoding," Hall argued that even though the mass media are clearly ideological and present a structured preferred reading, audiences can still maintain a degree of freedom in interpreting media messages. As Hall (1994) states, "Production and reception of the television message are not identical, but they are related; they are differentiated moments within the totality formed by the communication process as a whole" (p. 29). This encoding/decoding model influenced the conceptualization of the audience as active in the communication process. Moreover, this model defined media texts as moments when the larger social and political structures within the culture are exposed for analysis, implying that this "totality formed by the communication process as a whole" places the communication process within a larger social and political context. Hall's

encoding/decoding model was especially influential in laying a foundation for John Fiske's active audience model which stresses the audiences' ability to decode media messages over the producers of media texts. In the following section, I will criticize John Fiske's active audience concept.

A Critique of the Active Audience Model

In the 1970s the media literacy began with the text-centered in investigating such mass media as television, newspapers, cinema, and radio. This approach emphasizes the deconstruction of media texts to detect elements that are potentially harmful to children and thereby to protect them from negative influences of the mass media. This "impact mediation" approach to media literacy organizes media content studies around problem areas like violence, bias in reporting, and racial, class, gender, or sexual identity stereotyping (Anderson, 1983). This text-centered approach continued until the early 1980s.

Media literacy theories have developed into the process-oriented approach to studying the media, which includes the cultural studies model. In the cultural studies model, the emphasis of media literacy is on demystifying the ideological role of the media in sustaining the social status quo.

One of the important developments in recent theories of media literacy centers upon media reception by the audience in the context of the audience's everyday lives. This important transformation in theories of media literacy was affected by the work of John Fiske, who stresses the falsity of the assumption that culture industries automatically dominate and incorporate the mind and mass behavior of people. Fiske (1987, 1989) argues that audiences do not passively receive, but either resist or evade the purpose of the culture industries. He emphasizes the viewer's ability to resist and negotiate the television text beyond the influence of the producers of the media.

Turning away from the transmission process models which emphasize the sending of a message, Fiske (1982) adds what he terms "a different approach" to the communication process: "Here the emphasis is not so much on communication as a process, but on communication as the generation of meaning" (p. 42). In this new approach, "It, too, sees popular culture as a site of struggle, but, while accepting the power of the forces of dominance, it focuses rather upon the popular tactics by which these forces are coped with, are evaded or resisted" (Fiske, 1989, p. 20).

However, Fiske's overemphasis on audience competence tends to isolate communication between the television and

the audience from the broader contexts in which both are shaped. This emphasis on audience competence is not only an overstatement of an active audience engaged in alternative or oppositional readings, but it also overlooks the fact that such audience decodings have not been channelled into producing progressive political ends. As Brown (1991, p. 50) says, this active audience literacy model does not deal with the role of media education in helping the viewers question the structure of media industries. In its attempt to empower the audience, this active audience model romanticizes and sentimentalizes the role of the audiences in constructing the work they engage in (Schudson, 1991, p. 63) and does not analyze "how each media institution has its own specific way of positioning the viewer, regulating central aspects of the production of meaning" (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1992, p. 82). Douglas Kellner criticizes Fiske's view of audience competence and argues that "the media are tremendously powerful forces and underestimating their power does not benefit critical projects of social transformation" (1990, p. 108).

The active audience model in media literacy should go beyond conceptualizing the audience as active, to enabling audiences to raise questions about the ideological impact of the media's construction of common sense. The active

audience media literacy model should empower viewers to question the ideological role of the media in sustaining the social status quo, as well as to advocate alternatives to this conventional media system.

In addition, the problem with the active audience model lies in its weakness in developing a means for assessing the political effectiveness of individuals' oppositional decodings of media texts. This active audience model strongly emphasizes the power of the audience to resist the hegemonic meanings offered by the mass media, as well as the ability of the audience to denounce the contradictions of society. However, this model in the process, tries to resolve these social contradictions without moving people to action (Martin-Barbero, 1993, p. 32). As a result, this model does not develop a means of assessing political effectiveness of media education in achieving progressive political ends. This model, which emphasizes individuals' active interpretations of media products, discounts the collective political action of the audience to influence media products. As Rustin (1989, p. 68) expresses, this active audience model in media literacy endorses the goals of greater individual freedom to choose between cultural commodities or services but does not deal with the need to

recover the idea of a more dense and participatory culture. This active audience model stresses individualized oppositional decodings of media message and discounts the important role of citizens in taking control, becoming effective change makers, making rational decisions in a democratic society (Masterman, 1997, p. 60). What can we do to help audiences be an active citizen in the political process? I support that alternative media such as public access television, non-commercial radio stations, and other print press can significantly contribute to mobilizing people for progressive political projects. In the next section I will justify the existence of alternative media by using Jurgen Habermas's public sphere concept.

Theoretical Rationale for the Existence of Alternative Media

Why do we need alternative media and what theoretical rationale is necessary to support the existence of the alternative media? I think that Jurgen Habermas's concept of a public sphere provides a strong theoretical support for the existence of alternative media (Habermas, 1989).

Habermas's notion of the public sphere, which mediates between the state and society, presupposes open access to all, no limitation on debate topic, and temporary suspension of status. Public opinion, which

is formed in the public sphere, acts as a counterweight to absolutist state activities. Information about state activities is accessible to the public so that state activities are subject to critical scrutiny. Private individuals behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion about matters of general interest.

However, Habermas's liberal public sphere undergoes a structural transformation by the influx of the laws of the market into the sphere reserved for private individuals. A clear separation between the public realm and private realm blurs because of the interweaving of the public realm and the private realm. Since the rise of the public sphere depends on a clear separation between the private realm and the public realm, their mutual interpenetration inevitably destroys (or corrupts) it. In a large public body, communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Since the scale of modern society does not allow more

than a relatively small number of citizens to be physically co-present, the mass media have become the chief institutions of the public sphere.

However, the increasing prevalence of the mass media, especially where the commercial logic transforms much of public communication into advertising and entertainment, weakens the critical functions of the media. The public now becomes consuming entities whose participation in political matters is minimized. Instead of critical reason among citizens, we have a spectacle before the masses. The public changed from a culture-debating to a culture-consuming public, a process in which he does not find much of an emancipatory potential.

Habermas uses his analysis of public sphere as a decisive opportunity to explore the prospects of a politics based on critical and reflective discourse. Habermas aims to clarify the possibility of rational discourse in modern society. The utility of the public sphere concept has its basis on the powerful articulation of the media's potential role in contributing to the public dialogue that is an essential component of a democratic society. The central question, from this perspective, is whether

the mass media can contribute to public life by presenting diverse values and perspectives in programs.

What is the alternative way of providing facts to the public? As Downing (2000, p. 16) states, radical media "have a mission not only to provide facts to a public denied them, but to explore fresh ways of developing a questioning perspective on the hegemonic process and increasing the public's sense of confidence in its power to engineer constructive change." Alternative media can play a significant role in leading to a constructive change. Alternative media can stimulate social movements or can be stimulated by social movements (Downing, 2000, p. 23). We should consider how the relationship between media and social movements progresses at times of social upsurges. Researchers should study how social movements can increase the subjective experiences of participants in the movements. In this respect, the alternative media's "capacity to articulate the local constitutes a crucial component of the citizens' political potential" (Rodriguez, 2000, p. 155).

As Downing (2000, p. 19) notes,

> Resistance, in other words, is resistance to multiple sources of oppression, but in turn, it requires dialogue across the varying sectors--by gender; by race, ethnicity, and nationality; by age; by occupational grouping--to take effective shape. Radical alternative media are central to that process.

This research examines one aspect of resistances to the sources of oppression, in particular to the intrusion of commercial media into the public life. My research investigates the role of community radio stations, KAZI and KNLE, in reaching and providing educational programming and information with the local community in Austin. This study can contribute to enhancing our understanding of how community radio stations operate and serve their audience by providing the audience with facts invisible in the mainstream media. I will analyze the origin of these radio stations, their funding sources, their role in community areas, and their programming. This study can be expanded in terms of its validity if other community radio stations similar in nature are to be compared in terms of their development, funding sources, and types of programming.

Research Method

The first community radio station began in 1949 when the Pacifica Foundation received the license to run KPFA in Berkeley. Since then, many community radio stations

developed. These stations rely mostly on "listener donations for their economic livelihood and have tailored organizational structures and program formats to meet the particular social and cultural needs of their communities" (Barlow, 1999, p. 286).

Noncommercial radio stations in Austin transmit from the left end of the FM spectrum, between 88.1 mHz and 91.9 mHz and serve the specialized audience. My research investigates the role of community radio stations, KAZI and KNLE in the community area in Austin. KAZI 88.7 FM is a non-profit community-owned and operated radio station. KAZI's format includes news, public affairs programming, public service information, black history, and a diverse array of music.

KNLE is also a noncommercial radio station which specializes in Christian music. KNLE 88.1 FM is operated by listener donations. Supported by underwriting similar to a Public Broadcasting System station, KNLE does fundraisers. The nonprofit business has sponsors for programming and gets donation. No advertising is sold. In addition to Christian music, the station offers CNN news, traffic and weather reports. This station which began with call letters KHSC in 1979, changed its call letter to KNLE

in 1985. KNLE has three staff members and four volunteers. This 6000 watt radio station covers the whole Austin area.

I conducted in-depth interviews with managers of KAZI and KNLE radio stations in Austin, respectively. This in-depth interview is preferred to surveys which ignore the expressive richness of respondents' own language and do not allow the interviewer and respondent to explore and negotiate mutually the meaning of the objects of inquiry (Lindlof, 1995). The in-depth interview provides natural contexts of meaning production between the interviewer and the respondent. In particular, the in-depth interview is a preferred research method in avoiding the social desirability effect in a research. In surveys and experiments, the social desirability effect can predispose the subjects to detect the researcher's purpose. In addition, the subjects are likely to play the role of a good subject to validate the research hypothesis.

I interviewed general managers of KAZI and KNLE to ask their thoughts about operating alternative community radio stations. With the permission of the interviewee, I tape-recorded and transcribed the interview. After the interview, I was careful about privacy issues of the respondents and told the interviewees that I would provide them with copies of my report.

I asked the following questions: (1) When did you join radio station? How and why did you become involved? (2) What do you know of the history of radio station? (3) What type of work do you do and (have you done) with radio station? (4) How do radio stations operate? (please describe the process by which radio stations produce their programs?) (5) How does the radio station select the topics for its program? And what are the popular programs? (6) How would you characterize the philosophy of your radio station? (7) How would you characterize the work of your radio station and its significance? (8) How large is the audience for your radio station? How would you characterize that audience? (9) How is your radio station funded? (10) Does your radio station initiate local social activities that it can connect with such as literacy program, program for children, and anti-discrimination project? (11) What do you see in the future for your radio station? The following section provides the results of the interview with the respondents.

Results

I interviewed general managers of KAZI and KNLE on November 3 of 2000 and March 21 of 2001 to compare the role of these two noncommercial radio stations in the community area. I interviewed general managers of KAZI and KNLE

radio stations in their offices. The respondents include general managers, Steve Savage at KAZI and Sherland Priest at KNLE.

First I asked their reasons for joining radio stations, Savage responded,

I joined KAZI August 14, 1988. It is community's radio station and the community needs some help. I can volunteer my service. And I am also responsible for the operation of radio station. Yes I am.

Priest responded,

I joined KNLE in 1979 with the suggestion of his company manager, Randall Thomas to build a community noncommercial radio station. Sherland is responsible for taking care of the engineering capacity of the radio station.

Asked about the history of radio stations, Savage stated,

KAZI was founded in 1975 by some board members. It took them seven years to get us on the air from 1975 to 1982. KAZI came on board. So we have been in operation for eighteen years. And our goal is to educate the public. We have educational license. Even though we play music, we have a lot of special program. We have shows like, Street Soldiers… It deals with our trying to keep kids off the street, keep getting them out of trouble.

Priest stated,

This radio station first launched in 1981 with the call letter, KHCS and served the Round Rock area. In 1985, this radio station changed its call letter to KNLE and with the 6,000 wattage covered the whole Austin area.

About the operation of the radio station, Savage stated,

We are non-profit organization and how we operate. We are listener-supported radio station. What listener-supported means, I mean, you listen, if you want to help us keep on the air, you contribute your money. Also we go out and get

sponsors, advertisers to underwrite certain programs. They donate money to help keep us on the air.

Priest stated,

The primary product is music. We incorporate satellite feed for our news product which is CNN radio news.

When asked about the program selection, Savage stated,

We tried to give some educational stuff like we have a show called Educating Our Children…Two professors, Dr. D. J. Johnson and Dr. Crystal Cam. They come on every Wednesday and they talk about different educational theories how to educate children, make them smarter, what task you can do. All different types of stuff, you know. They encourage them to learn several words a day, to speak better English, you know get a better vocabulary whatever. Other things. People give us proposals. They say for instance if you do want to do a show on mathematics of something. You give me a written proposal. We have a program committee. They are submitted to us and we look them over and see whether it makes sense. And see if something the public can use like that.

Priest said,

Programming is music-oriented. If we select something for air, it has pretty got to go along with the theme of the station. And that is to share a message of faith to people without being political or and without regard to pressure from moneyed interest. We don't want money to control the programming. That is one reason that our funding relies upon many individuals not on any large single donor or organization. That is the only way we can express our freedom to programming without that kind of pressure.

About the philosophy of the radio station, Savage stated,

The philosophy of KAZI. We consider ourself as people station. We are here for the community to gear forward. We concern for our listeners. As mostly, our philosophy is to educate in the form of a black community.

Priest stated,

We provide music, message of faith presented through entertainment. We like to offer non-biased news or opinion. We don't like to offer programs that support bigotry. Although the programming is generally delivering a Christian message, we try not to persecute or to be bigoted toward other people's faith, beliefs. And through solid biblical principles, we are able to use this to avoid being sectarian within a Christian framework.

When asked about the significance of the radio station in the community, Savage responded,

Significance. I think we play a good role in here because I said earlier we fill a void. Because the reason why the station was built, because there was no voice. There was no voice for the black community, black and Latin community. So that is why we are here to fill that voice.

Priest answered,

For many people, it is a source of hope and encouragement.

Asked about the audience size in each radio station, Savage responded,

Someone paid for it. I think it was Austin-American Statesmen. It cost 30,000 dollars, you know, to pay for it. Which we got a 2.5 share. And what that means that 25,00 people listen to us for half an hour.

Priest answered,

The audience is 45,000. Including 55,000 on the world wide web, the number is 100,000. We have absolutely reached our target demographic which is 18 to 39 housewife. The baby boomer generation was a large demographic piece of the pie and the women are considered to be the people who are sought after by the merchandisers and we thought, if these are the people sought out by the advertisers, this must be an important group to reach and so decided to go for a big piece of the pie, go for the women demographic.

When I asked them about the funding for the radio station,

Savage responded,

We are funded several different ways. We are sponsored by underwriter sponsors. We have a big event that we do every year. That is called "Summer Fest." That is where we make the biggest money there. We might sell t-shirts, mugs stuff like that also.

Priest answered,

Generally, KNLE is funded by donations from the public. It is voluntary. People are encouraged if they like programming. And if they like to give an ongoing gift every month, they can sign up and receive a monthly reminder. It is not based on large organizations but a lot of people giving little bit of money.

When I asked the radio station's involvement in local activities, Savage responded,

We don't carry kids' program that we used to. Educating our children will be of course our key program because everybody needs education. We used to have a show Wrap-it-Up. It was funded by the government. And I guess the funds ran out so we don't have that show anymore. Still we like to get more back into that. People come here on a volunteered time. We teach them how to learn about radio. We teach them how to do production, how to become a radio DJ which is basic. So we have a lot of jocks who left here do well at other radio stations.

Priest stated,

We do have tours, most of the homeschoolers in the areas tour here as one of their activities. Local boy scouts and girl scouts come through and regular public schools bring their kids through on tour. We recently did fundraiser that helped Children's Advocacy Center in Austin. They are an organization that helps children who are either victims of crimes or in the families of violent crimes that need non-scary place to be talked and questioned whatever. We also participate with the Travis county mentorship program and we have had several teen age first-time offenders, working closely with the county and having giving them tasks to do at the station to work after public service time.

When I asked about the future of the radio station, Savage responded,

Right now we are in low wattage. We are probably the lowest wattage station in the city…Well what I would like to see in the future is to increase our wattage and go stereo because we are not stereo. We broadcast on mono. And be able to just reach the masses of people. For the KAZI, as I said, increase our wattage. Increase our wattage so that we reach more people. And go stereo. And be more in the community.

Priest answered,

I think that we are going to continue to move toward webcasting. In the future, we'll be involved in different methods of delivery of programming. We will also probably be leaning more in the syndicated programming which can be produced here and in a moment over the Internet, put on another facilities. And so I think, if we have a direction, it is going to develop locally developing national programming.

This interview shows how such radio stations operate, how they are funded, and what types of programs are run. I think that KAZI plays an important role in capturing the voices of African-American community. In my view, this radio station plays the role of alternative media since it covers the black community's events, which are invisible to the mainstream news publications. In my opinion, this radio station can serve as the medium which can challenge the stereotypical perceptions of the black community. As shown in the interview, this radio station aims at educating the black community. In addition, this radio station performs a literacy program for the children so

that they can have a more literacy ability in terms of writing and computing. This station also runs several programs for children to help them grow in a violent-free world. Actually, such programs are important tools which connect this radio station with the black community activity. In addition, the audience includes other minorities. Especially, this radio station is free of control by moneyed interests because radio station is supported by the listener donation. I wish that I had asked more about the station's involvement in community activities. I think that the respondent answered my questions honestly during his busy schedule.

KNLE also serves the local community by providing Christian music to the people. One important character of this radio station is that it provides the CNN radio news to the audience through the web site. This radio station tries to survive by securing new target audiences such as housewives while maintaining the theme of the station to provide hope and encouragement to the people through music. In addition, this radio station is free of any control by commercial interests since this radio station is supported by individual donations from the listeners. Especially, it is important to know that this radio station has conducted a survey to know the audience interests in the programming.

This effort is one of the strategies that this radio station uses to survive in the commercially oriented radio markets in Austin. This radio station is very active in participating in community activities. In this respect, it serves as a conduit through which the voices of the community members can be heard. Such characteristics as financial independence and participation in the local activities are the most important distinguishing characters of these noncommercial radio stations.

I hope that I can analyze more about each radio station's involvement in local community activities. The interplay between the alternative radio station and the local community activity is significant in producing the public's active participation in community issues that concern the public.

Summary and Conclusion

Current media literacy studies have developed a conception of an active audience which has featured oppositional reading. This audience empowerment model challenges the conception of media texts as "transparent bearers of meaning" and willingly accepts a more active notion of the audience. Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model has influenced the conception of an active audience.

John Fiske is a main advocate of the resistive power of the popular audience. However, his overemphasis on the audiences' decoding power tends to isolate communication between television and its audience from the broader contexts in which both are shaped. In a desire to give the audience considerable power over media texts, Fiske's studies tend to obscure the special features of texts in the shaping of audience activities. We should develop a critical interpretation of media products and analyze how meaning serves to secure power. As Thompson (1984) states,

> Ideology is essentially linked to the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power--that is, to the process of maintaining domination. To study ideology, I propose, is to study the ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations of domination (p. 4).

Media literacy should look beyond media content and entail an understanding of the relationships between language and power together with a practical knowledge of how to use language for self-realization, social critique, and cultural transformation (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993, p. 152). Media literacy education should help audiences question the political and economic implications of mass media in the society. Such questioning is important in producing an effective media literacy program.

In my view, the success of the media literacy education movement depends upon the use of alternative local community media since the interplay between media literacy movement and the alternative media can produce a significant impact on provoking meaningful citizen participation in social issues. I argue that the audience participation in media practice can help the audience develop critical viewing skills, as well as learn how to read and produce media products.

I also argue that the public access movement should consider the interaction between individual actions and collective activity, rather than focusing on the unified conception of radical political activity. Alternative media should serve as a catalyst in this process. More research should be done about how the alternative media stimulate the community activities. Such studies can show that the alternative media and community activities are linked in stimulating local community movements.

However, supposing that publics coalesce around issues, or interests, and that there are publics at multiple levels from the local to the national or even global, clearly some problems (national and international) require larger-level attacks. Future studies should examine the interplay between the public and its social

formations at the national and global level by considering the multiple levels of analysis in this process. Additionally more studies should compare community radio stations similar in character to produce more generalized research results.

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My Grandmother's Black-Market Birth Control:

"Subjugated Knowledges" in the History of Contraceptive Discourse

a paper submitted to the Cultural and Critical Studies Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference, Washington, D.C. August 5-8, 2001

by

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Abstract

This paper explores the historical context for a 1933 brochure advertising contraceptives. Using Foucault's theory of "subjugated knowledges," the paper looks at both public discourse about contraception and the discreet, coded one often used by women. Semiotic and textual analysis of the 1933 brochure illustrate a clumsy attempt to create a female consumer in a way that addresses public discourse and intuits the existence of private discourse as well.

My Grandmother's Black-Market Birth Control: "Subjugated Knowledges" in the History of Contraceptive Discourse

The brochure for black-market birth control was in my grandmother's box of old letters, tucked away in the attic for decades between Christmas cards and birth announcements and letters penned in the loopy downhill scrawl of a long-dead great aunt. It was in the same box as the postcards my grandparents had mailed to each other during their courtship in 1910, in which my grandfather had been more effusively sentimental than the man I would know in his late 80s, and my grandmother's response had been succinctly demure: "Ditto what you said about your feelings." The brochure was dated 1933, twenty-three years after the postcards. By that time, my grandmother was forty-two. She had had seven children, at least one miscarriage, and she was a grandmother. Moreover, she was living on a farm in Oklahoma during the Great Depression. Of course she wanted to avoid pregnancy, perhaps even if it meant breaking the law. Until I saw the brochure, I had thought about none of this. I didn't even know my grandparents had an *attic.*

This paper explores the historical context for brochures like my grandmother's by looking at Western discourse[1] about birth control before and during the Great Depression, a period when, I argue, major factors converged to change the way the topic was dealt with publicly. First, there were more liberal attitudes about sex in the first three decades of the twentieth century, followed by the extreme poverty of the 1930s. Second, there was increased dependence on both doctors and commercial products rather than information and remedies passed from woman to woman. Historically, I will argue, there has always been tension between what one might call public discourse on the topic, played out in terms of political control over women's bodies, and

[1]"Discourse" in the paper refers to the social process of meaning-making. As John Hartley writes, "Discourses are the products of social, historical and institutional formations, and meanings are produced by these institutional discourses" (O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montomery and Fiske 93-94).

women's more clandestine communications on the topic. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this tension increased. Responding to the first wave of the feminist movement, the federal Comstock Act of 1873 made it illegal to send "obscene" material through the U.S. Mail,[2] but by 1930 the laws had been "relaxed" (Riddle 4). In addition, residual Victorian sensibilities, religious beliefs and mores against artificially preventing conception made the topic a delicate one, for it was during the nineteenth century, some feminists believe, that "Women learned to hate their own bodies" (Gordon 22).

After a historical look at discourse concerning birth control and how it fits into the Foucauldian concept of "subjugated knowledges," the paper focuses on textual and semiotic analyses of the brochure itself, looking at how the subject-position created for the female consumer is heir to a whole history of discourse--overt and covert--about contraception. As analysis of the brochure illustrates, producers of commercial contraceptives found a way to market their products anyway, skirting the obscenity laws with flimsily veiled euphemisms and a curious juxtaposition of discourses--irrelevant to each other in any other context--that worked together to avoid the Comstock laws, confront mores, and begin to construct a female consumer who is with us today.

A Short History of Early Discourse about Contraception

That knowledge of contraceptive methods existed long ago is no secret. It is evident in the writings of Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and others, who framed the discourse surrounding it in terms of population needs. If the city-state were too large, Plato wrote, there were "many devices available; if too many children are being born, there are measures to check propagation" (Plato,

[2]The Act was named for Anthony Comstock, leader of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, who lobbied for its passage (Riddle 245). Although focused on "vice" and sexual immorality, the Act was believed to have been a direct response to the feminist movement that began in the 1840s (Gordon 24).

Laws 5.740, cited in Riddle 14). By contrast, Musonius Rufus, a Roman writer who lived from 30-101 A.C.E., urged lawmakers who wanted to increase population size to forbid "women to abort...and to use contraceptives" (Musonius, *Fragments,* 15a, cited in Riddle 14). Finally, most early Christian writings forbade abortion, and many church patriarchs interpreted God's instructions to Salome not to eat bitter plants as a prohibition on birth control, since contraceptive herbs such as willow bark were bitter (Riddle 83).

Though they seem to hold opposing points of view, Plato and Rufus have more in common than not, for both urge women's bodies to be what Michel Foucault might call sites of domination, controlled to meet the perceived needs of those in power. Running counter to this discourse, there is evidence of a quieter, subversive discourse that is more difficult to document. For no matter what lawmakers and men of the Church happened to be thinking at any particular time, an underground knowledge of pomegranates, pennyroyal, artemisia, sylphium, rue, Queen Anne's lace, myrrh, juniper, aloe and other herbs was almost certainly passed orally among women. As John M. Riddle writes, use of Queen Anne's lace (for example) as a contraceptive has been found not only in the writings of Pliny, but more recently in use by women in such geographically remote sites as modern rural India, parts of China and remote areas of Appalachia, where its users are unlikely to have read Pliny (Riddle 50-51) . The history of discourse about birth control, then, might be seen in terms of the musical terms point and counterpoint. The "point" is the discourse that was public, political (in terms of its ability to control women's bodies) and, in the modern era, scientistic. The subversive counterpoint was characterized before the twentieth century by knowledge of contraceptive methods passed on as folklore and discussed euphemistically, not only by women but by sympathetic men, such as physicians and pharmacists.

No matter what other conceptual shifts took place, this tension between point and counterpoint seems consistent in the history of discourse about contraception.

Another way to view the difference between the two discourses is through use of Foucault's concept of "subjugated knowledges." In a January 1976 lecture, Foucault referred to subjugated knowledges as "the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemisation. ... Subjugated knowledges are ... those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematising theory and which criticism ... has been able to reveal." They are also, he continues, "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (Foucault 81-82).

The tension between folkloric discourse and the official discourse about contraception that took place in the ecclesiastical-medical-legal world dominated by men was prevalent throughout the Middle Ages. The Catholic Church hardened its stance against preventing pregnancy in the thirteenth century (Riddle 92) and medieval women were routinely asked during confession whether they had taken any herbs to prevent conception (Riddle 88); this was clearly a power play to discover and further subjugate subversive knowledge. Also, around this time, "Medical writings by physicians had information less explicit about birth control than did the writings of people like Marbode and Hildegard, [women] who were not themselves physicians. ... One reason the use of effective pre-modern birth control escaped detection is that, by and large, it was a woman's secret" (Riddle 88-89).

Information was passed down by women and men in an oblique code--a characteristic of birth control discourse that persisted into the twentieth century. Nicholas Culpeper, an English

apothecary-turned-physician who lived in the seventeenth century, published an English translation of the *London Dispensatory*, a guide to drugs that was written in Latin. He said certain herbs were"dangerous" for pregnant women due to their likelihood to "provoke the termes" (Riddle 187). Phrased as a warning, this passage was covertly instructive. At least once, Culpeper was more overt. For example, of sweet basil he wrote that it "helps the deficiency of Venus in one kind, so that it spoils all her actions in another. ... I dare write no more" (Nicholas Culpeper, *Culpeper's Complete Herbal, and the English Physician,* cited in Riddle 188).

The Enlightenment, industrialization, and women's increased dependence upon physicians as experts were connected. During this era, according to Riddle, women began to lose the knowledge that had been passed among them, but not so much because doctors knew more about preventing pregnancy but because sex was viewed differently. As Riddle writes "...the impulse for change arose with the new industrial social order and was quite independent of changes occurring about reproductive theory in the natural sciences. The new sexuality was epitomized by the new expression 'the opposite sex'--women were opposite, separate, unequal..." (Riddle 215). Thomas Laqueur, author of *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, writes that, concomitant with industrialization, medical science imposed a way of seeing sex and gender that was different from the way they had been seen before the Enlightenment, when there was, he argues, a "one-sex" model of human beings.

> ...what we call sex and gender were in the "one-sex model" explicitly bound up in a circle of meanings from which escape to a supposed biological substrate--the strategy of the Enlightenment--was impossible. In the world of one sex, it was precisely when talk seemed to be most directly about the biology of the two sexes that it was most embedded in the politics of gender, in culture.

> To be a man or a woman was to hold a social rank, a place in society, to assume a cultural role, not to *be* organically one or the other of two incommensurable sexes. Sex before the seventeenth century, in other words, was still a sociological and not an ontological category (Laqueur 8, his italics).

One effect of this shift in discourse is that a woman's reproductive capacity was divorced from her capacity to be fully present as a sexual being during conception. Before the Enlightenment, Laqueur argues, it was thought that conception could not take place unless the woman as well as the man enjoyed the process. The shift in thinking made reproduction little more than women's *work,* in the industrial sense of the word. Procreation was devalued, perhaps because valuing it would acknowledge women's inevitable control over human "capital." Citing Esther Fischer-Homberger, a theorist who writes in German, Laqueur writes of procreation that "Its status declined as it became, so to speak, exclusively women's work. Thus, one might argue, new discoveries in reproductive biology came just in the nick of time; science seemed nicely in tune with the demands of culture" (Laqueur 8). In the real lives of women, this meant, for example, that physicians took over the power of determining, through newly developed tests, when a woman was pregnant--a privilege previously afforded to the woman herself (Riddle 218). Thus the womb became public property in a way that it had not been, and women lost some of their capacity to name what they experienced in their bodies. What Foucault called the medical gaze was not mere theory. It was theory made manifest in the lives of real women. This is tied to what Foucault called a "hygienist interpretation of political and medical questions" with a "'surplus of power'" bestowed on doctors during the eighteenth century:

> Medicine, as a general technique of health even more than as a service to the sick or an art of cures, assumes as increasingly important place in the

> administrative system and the machinery of power, a role which is constantly widened and strengthened throughout the eighteenth century. The doctor wins a footing within the instances of social power.... A 'medico-administrative' knowledge begins to develop concerning society, its health and sickness, its conditions of life, housing and habits, which serves as the basic core for the 'social economy' and sociology of the nineteenth century (Foucault 176).

It is not surprising, then, that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Western nations began to outlaw abortion. France did so (ironically) during the French Revolution, in 1791, and Britain did so in 1803. The first American state to outlaw abortion was Connecticut in 1821, and other states followed during the first half of the nineteenth century (Riddle 208-210). While these laws did not apply specifically to birth control, they made information about it much more secretive. "A guide to drugs published by physicians in the United States of America in 1836, when there *were* laws against abortion, had less information about birth control [than an earlier guide]. No birth control uses were named for a number of traditional contraceptive and abortifacient drugs, despite their inclusion in the list of approved drugs" (Riddle 212). With the increase of "medico-adminstrative" knowledge, knowledge was further subjugated.

So it was the convergence of the new views of women's bodies following the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, more repressive social attitudes about sex, stricter laws governing abortion, and "progress" in modern medical science (and the suppression of medical folk knowledge) coupled with rhetoric giving women less control over their own "labor" that made it possible, even inevitable, for the discourse surrounding contraception that was prevalent in the nineteenth century and that was inherited by the twentieth to have the characteristics that will be evident in the 1930s advertising brochure: stilted language, deferential acknowledgement

of religion, and a peculiar combination of language about the body--on the one hand oblique and euphemistic, and on the other clinical, scientistic and focused on "hygiene." These characteristics are evident in nineteenth-century booklets published to give advice to the newly married. So is the growing struggle over subjugated knowledge. For example, *The Book of Nature Containing Information for Young People Who Think of Getting Married* by Dr. James Ashton, published in 1865, discusses reproduction more clinically than religiously, and offers scientific explanations for what were clearly beliefs based in folklore. "When both parties to a marriage are constitutionally the same, there will probably be no children," he writes (50) and "A healthy, well-developed, and naturally intelligent woman will have smart and intellectual children, even though her husband may be a ninny" (48). Ashton offers a number of methods to prevent conception, mostly involving scientific methods such as chemical compounds such as alum, sulphate of zinc, and chloride of zinc (39-40). Methods for abortion are also given, though with the admonition that they are "in collision with Nature's laws" (63). While he does not recommend such methods, Ashton does point out that both abortions and miscarriages are brought about by "irregularities of conduct, such as too eager gratification of sexual desires, remaining too long in a warm bath, lacing the corsets too tight, violent exercise, such as dancing, riding a hard trotting horse, romping, jumping long distances..." (61). (Like Culpepper's advice, this is covertly instructive.) Meanwhile, Dr. E.B. Foote Jr.'s booklet, *The Radical Remedy in Social Science or Borning Better Babies Through Regulating Reproduction Through Controlling Conception: An Earnest Essay on Pressing Problems,* published in 1886, begins by advocating science: "... *the scientific method is now the art of civilization,*" he writes (4, his italics). Foote discusses the ideas of Thomas Malthus on overpopulation in this context, along with the "waste of human life" brought on by infanticide and women's shortened mortality as a result of too much

childbearing, the wrongheadedness of the Catholic Church's prohibition on birth control, and Comstock's idea that birth control is immoral.

The knowledge of birth control methods that had long been subjugated was becoming louder. As feminist historian Linda Gordon, author of *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America,* writes, "The factors making birth control immoral were intensifying for the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. Although the rights of women were in many respects greater in the nineteenth century than they had been before in the Western world, the prohibition on birth control and on any open discussion of sexual matters had never been more severe" (Gordon 24),[3] for although women were finally organizing for such changes as the right to vote and dress reform, industrialization and professional medicine had robbed them of control they had quietly taken for granted for centuries. Going on to name the 1873 Comstock law as the most overt sign of that prohibition, Gordon writes that

> Religious and political leaders denounced sexual immorality increasingly after mid-century. The greater sexual repression was primarily a response to growing rebellion against the Victorian sexual system. That rebellion, as we shall see, was closely connected to the feminist movement that arose in the 1840s--and the two rebellions had common causes. The two rebellions were related as the two forms of repression--the repression of sex and the subjugation of women--were related.
>
> None of this repression would have been necessary if birth control

[3]Abortion, however, was discussed openly in an effort to repress it. According to Gordon, in 1871 *The New York Times* called abortion "The Evil of the Age." Reporting on a campaign of anti-abortion propaganda, "*The New York Times* estimated that there were two hundred full-time abortionists in New York City." The Michigan Board of Health estimated in 1881 that there were one hundred thousand abortions a year in the United States, with a six percent mortality rate" (Gordon 53).

> technology had been unknown. There is a prevalent myth, in our technological society, that birth-control technology came to us with modern medicine. This is far from the truth, as modern medicine did almost nothing, until the last twenty years, to improve on birth-control devices that were literally more than a millenium old. It is important to look at this heritage of birth control if we are going to understand the birth-control movement, for that movement took its strength from women's understanding of the suppression of actual possibilities" (Gordon 24-25).

The Early Twentieth Century: Social Reform, Professionalism, Morality and Meritocracy

The history of the birth control movement from the late-1800s to the 1930s is interwoven with stories about war, love, Freud, science, social revolution, morality, the "New Woman," free sex, bohemian lifestyles and, finally, poverty. The term "birth control" itself was invented by Margaret Sanger, its most famous advocate, in 1915 (Gordon 203). Gordon uses the word "coalesced" to describe the relationship between the movement and the phrase "birth control"--as if the name was something that emerged to describe an awareness of reality that had slowly come into being. Freud's work made discussion about the process of sexual repression possible, while sex researchers like Havelock Ellis, Edward Carpenter and Ellen Key combined a scientistic view of sex with advocacy of a "new morality" for women, including greater sexual freedom and more independence, generally, in their lives (Gordon 184). By the early twentieth century, Gordon writes,

> Free love was no longer a utopian idea as it had been in the nineteenth century. It was being practiced among intellectuals, radicals, bohemians, professionals, and even office workers in big cities. Unmarried people spent nights together,

> even lived together; unmarried women took lovers whom they were not even engaged to, often many consecutively, sometimes more than one at a time; a few experimented with drugs such as peyote, and many women drank and smoked with men; sex was discussed in mixed groups; and all these things were done without disguise, even with bravado (Gordon 187).

Young women were working in greater numbers. In 1870, according to Gordon,[4] 1,900,000 women were employed; by 1890 that number had increased to 4,000,000 and by 1910 that number had doubled. Single women with jobs had the means to live independent of their parents, and that meant privacy to do as they pleased.

Women working, the labor and Socialist movements, and suffrage all intersected to affect discourse about birth control. Although the Socialist movement never openly advocated legalized birth control, Sanger worked for the Socialist party and was secretary of the Harlem Socialist Suffrage Society. During the same period (1910s) she was active in support of a textile workers' strike in Massachusetts, and she wrote a column in the *New York Call* that was first titled "What Every Mother Should Know" and then "What Every Girl Should Know." The original column provided information for mothers who wanted to explain sex and reproduction to their children "largely through analogy to flowers and animals." The later column explained sexual issues more openly to young women themselves (Gordon 210). Always radical, feminism and Socialism were marginalized by the increased patriotism that came with World War I. Suffrage (the main issue that had mobilized feminists) was achieved in 1920, just two years after the war's end, and Socialists turned their focus to other issues.

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[4]She cites Alba M. Edwards, *Comparative Occupational Statistics for the U.S. 1870-1940* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1943), Table 21.

One of the more interesting turns in the birth-control movement occurred during the 1920s, when it was doctors and other professionals, rather than feminists and other social reformers, who advocated legalized contraception. On the surface it might seem that physicians advocating birth control were motivated by concern for the well-being of their female patients, although motives and consequences are not always in concert. According to Gordon (247) the doctors *were* somewhat concerned with women, but another motivation was professional identity. Doctors were increasingly dependent on "funds, research direction, and political priorities set by the capitalist class through its corporate foundations and its influence on government" (Gordon 249)--along with an increasing belief in such things as standardized intelligence tests[5] and the rightness of meritocracy, a system that made some people more valuable than others. With their new professional identities, physicians could enjoy great social power if they could position themselves as almost godlike arbiters of procreation. As Gordon writes,

> Professionals also saw themselves as social benefactors, eager not just to legalize birth control for themselves and their wives, but also to install it as a social policy. Their commitment to individual liberty was tempered by their recognition that some people were wiser than others, that good social policy would not necessarily result from allowing each individual to make private decisions about such matters as birth control. ....Accepting meritocratic political views, they naturally taught them to others (Gordon 250).

[5]The Stanford-Binet classified intelligence in terms of what was needed for different occupational groupings, with professions considered the highest and unskilled labor the lowest (Gordon 248).

Looking back at the original idea of this paper--that discourse about birth control has been characterized by a dominant concern with controlling women's bodies and a subversive, contrapuntal position that is concerned with women's needs--it seems that the birth control movement of the 1910s had been about empowering the subjugated position but was taken over by the dominant discourse, concerned with social control, by the 1920s. As Gordon writes, "The only check on professional influence would have been a broader-based, popular birth-control movement. No social group of equal size could contest the power of the professionals; only a much larger group could have done that, either a working-class movement or a feminist one" (Gordon 294).

The Great Depression: Poverty, Eugenics and Women's Bodies

The Great Depression brought increased acceptance of birth control. According to Gordon, middle and upper-class people who had previously objected to birth control on moral grounds began to practice it, but there was no grassroots movement for less restrictive laws among the working class. The movement was run mostly, Gordon notes, by "professional men, wealthy women and middle-class reformers" (297) whose focus, primarily, was on poor people. By 1933, 4,445,338 families were receiving money from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the agency set up to help the unemployed. Because studies showed families on relief had a birth rate that was fifty to sixty percent higher than middle-class families, and because of America's deep ideological beliefs that to be American was to be able to help yourself,[6] government support of "relief babies" was a scandal. Birth control, which had been immoral, became, under the circumstances, more acceptable to the middle-class. The issue was reframed as one of public health management.

[6]Alice Kessler-Harris. "In the Nation's Image: The Gendered Limits of Social Citizenship in the Depression Era." *The Journal of American History* 86 (1999): 1251-1279.

Still, deciding what discursive strategy to use in their argument for legalized birth control was problematic for reformers during this period. The eugenics argument had been somewhat convincing in the past, since many white middle-class professionals truly thought that poor people were inferior. But as Nazi propaganda, with its discourse about superior Aryans, became louder and more problematic (Gordon 299), the eugenics argument grew less successful. Trying to make birth control part of the New Deal programs and following the ideas of social scientific theories of the 1920s and early 1930s, birth control advocates focused on the environment of poor people. Birth control advocacy became part of an overall program to help the poor

> by increasing their individual ability to compete for jobs through education, socialization to middle-class norms of propriety, and reduction of family size.
>
> The goal was to move individuals up the class structure. By not acknowledging the existence of a class structure, the social planners who offered these recommendations ignored the fact that moving some individuals up would merely leave others on the bottom. They did not face the structural problem that the society always produced a bottom (Gordon 298).

What is missing from this discourse is any talk of choice or empowerment for women. This was not entirely a movement about women deciding when and whether to have children. It was in many ways a movement about the dominant class to paternalistically decide what is best for the state. In that regard, it echoes the words of Plato and Rufus, cited earlier, more than it does any feminist point of view. Even Margaret Sanger used the argument that birth control would cut public costs: "We are a nation of business men and women," she had said in the 1920s (Gordon 300). And some thought birth control was pointless for poor people, who were too "feeble-minded" to use it, and who had more babies, some people believed, to get more relief.

Dr. T.R. Robie remarked after a talk on birth control that "There has been nothing said tonight about a way to stop the undesirables from over-running us.... We talk about education, yet how can we educate feeble-minded mothers not to have children?" (cited in Gordon 304). Still others opposed birth control altogether, fearing "race-suicide" and Communism. "The country which has birth control in its most radical form is Russia, where it is connected with a great deal of sexual promiscuity," eugenicist Henry Osborn said during a conference of the Third International Congress of Eugenics in New York in 1932 (cited in Gordon 302). Clearly, in a world trying to cope with modern ideas about women, a Depression, and the threat of Communism, intellectuals were trying to determine which larger societal discourse birth control might belong to.

Meanwhile, what was happening in the lives of young girls and women? According to Joan Jacobs Brumberg, whose book *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* focuses on Western adolescent girls' concerns with their bodies over a 170-year period, during the early twentieth century "doctors and marketers took over important educational functions that were once the special domain of female relatives and mentors," especially those concerning sex (Brumberg xxv). While Brumberg's focus is on adolescence and on menstruation, it seems logical to extend her argument to issues of birth control, given that increased trust in science and industry permeated society. The point here is that it was during this period that a shift in women's thinking took place. Issues that had previously been discussed only among women or in private conversations with physicians were now a part of the discourse of marketing and *increased* dependence on doctors. For example, Brumberg writes,

> The medicalization of menarche meant that, in the twentieth century, doctors shared with women the important job of socializing adolescent girls about their bodies. What physicians did not acknowledge, of course, was their

> own self-interest: by establishing themselves as experts..., they enlarged their constituency for their services and filled their waiting rooms with women of a larger age range than before (Brumberg 34).

Similarly, Brumberg writes later: "In an effort to sell products, menstruation finally burst out of the closet in the 1920s when popular magazines, such as the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping,* began to run ads for Kotex. These advertisements constituted the first real public acknowledgment of menstruation" (46).

One major difference between menstruation and birth control, of course, was that the former had no legal restrictions attached to it and the latter did. But by the time birth control began to be legalized--slowly, under certain circumstances and in some states--after World War II, women had long been socialized to look to medical experts and industry to provide their contraceptives needs.

Birth Control Advertising in the 1930s: One Example

All of the above seems somewhat academic until one looks at a primary source, such as a brochure for birth control during this period. While there were no doubt many variations of such brochures and while it is impossible to draw conclusions about all based on one example, a close reading of one brochure can provide not just an illustration of the theories outlined by Gordon, Riddle and others, but a sort of test of whether the validity of these theories might be evident in one primary source.

My grandmother's brochure is for a product called "Colagyn," marketed by The Smith Laboratories, Corp. of Kansas City, Missouri. That I knew nothing of my grandmother's real experience concerning reproduction is not just personally relevant for me as the writer of this paper; it illustrates the gap in communication between the master narrative or dominant public

discourse about women's lives and the often silent subtext. Finding the brochure provided evidence of what was never said--knowledge that was subjugated even within the privacy of the family.

At first glance, a reader who did not know that birth control was once illegal might think that this brochure had been erroneously assembled at the printer's shop. The front cover features a drawing of a rather elegant woman seated at a dressing table, holding a powder puff and peering into a mirror. Inside there is a "foreword" that discusses "a dependable marriage hygiene" but it is followed by the seemingly irrelevant story of "Jimmy," an unwanted child who dies of malnutrition soon after his birth:

> Nobody wanted Jimmy but he was born anyway.... His mother didn't want him because she already had six little stair-steps to care for and she thought that was enough. His father didn't want him because he had been without work for nearly a year and the thought of another mouth to feed was not a very pleasing prospect to look forward to.
>
> ....
>
> The city was already taking care of a full quota and certainly did not welcome Jimmy and the state was in the same position.
>
> ...
>
> Some very good people said it was God's will that Jimmy be born. Surely God would not be so cruel to poor little Jimmy
>
> ...
>
> We will leave it to you to decide why Jimmy was born (Smith 3).

The page on "Jimmy" is followed by "The Parable of the Flower," which says nothing of Jimmy or "hygiene" but discusses, instead, gardening[7]:

> When we decide to plant a flower in our yard, we would not think of taking the seed out in the winter and planting it in a heavy snow. We would wait for spring and sunshine, for warm weather and the right temperature
>
> ....
>
> What a pity that we do not show the same consideration for the seed of life. If we are so careful in the planning of our flowers, should we not be even more careful when we plan the coming of our children?
>
> ....
>
> Our children deserve it, but they do not get the consideration we give to the growing things in our garden. There is no humane law to protect an unborn child... (Smith 4).

Having dealt with her doubts from several angles--religious, practical, economic and maternal, the brochure focuses directly on the woman who might buy the product. "Colagyn's Gift to Women" this section is titled, and it begins with "woman's prayer":

> Please teach me to care for myself so that I may bring my babies into the world after I have had time to prepare a place for them, and make that care safe and harmless, so that I may always be healthy and happy (Smith 5).

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[7]Gardening analogies were, apparently, common when discussing reproduction. Brumberg discusses a 1913 pamphlet put out by the American Medical Association and intended to help parents teach their daughters about menstruation. The pamphlet features a fictitious family, the Dawsons. "In the cozy serenity of her sewing room, on a beautiful April day, Mrs. Dawson used the example of the lilacs outside her window to talk with Margaret about blooming and fading foliage." Cycles in nature, she explained, mirrored cycles in women (Brumberg 39). Similarly, Dr. T.R. Robie, the eugenicist who opposed contraception for "feeble-minded" poor women, argued, "I feel that I come from a very superior community because there one has the privilege of owning a garden. But from having this garden, I know how much faster weeds grow than roses" (cited in Gordon 304).

Moving from religion to a combination of discourses that weave together ideas about a "normal life" and medical-scientific expertise, the brochure next discusses how "health, beauty and happy married life" are "essential to a woman's well being." Unfortunately, many women lose the "bloom of youth too early in life and find themselves afflicted with constant headaches, general fatigue, serious disorders of feminine organs and irritable dispositions" (Smith 5). The solution is the use of a product made using the "most scientific principle of a safe marriage hygiene...recommended by physicians everywhere." If the woman is truly ill, the brochure recommends that she see a doctor, but "...to the healthy normal woman, Col-A-Gyn[8] offers and insures a safeguard and prevention against disorders through abolute cleanliness and protection against all forms of germ life" (Smith 5). The words "birth control" and "contraception" are not used even once in this brochure, yet the juxtaposition of "Jimmy," "The Parable of the Flower" and a page that begins with a prayer and ends with the phrase "protection against all forms of germ life" could not be more clear.

According to Gordon, brochures like this were common during the Depression, when the Comstock Act created black-market conditions similar to those used to sell bootleg whiskey (315). The contraceptive industry, she writes, was "an extreme, if inevitable, example of commercial exploitation of popular ignorance. ... euphemisms such as 'feminine hygiene' ...made possible the advertisement of products that were not only ineffective, but potentially dangerous" (Gordon 313). At times, she writes, peddlars even went door to door selling ill-fitting diaphragms to desperate women. Absurd as that sounds, the fact that it could have taken place reinforces the relevance of Foucauldian concepts about the dominance of "medico-administrative knowledge" and subjugated knowledges. Unable to access the information that had been clandestinely passed

[8]The brochure spells the name of the product two ways: Colagyn (without hyphens) and Col-A-Gyn (with hyphens).

from woman to woman throughout the ages, women during the Depression were dependent on those with power to help them. That dependence made them vulnerable to marketers who feigned medical expertise to sell women knowledge their foremothers had had. Folk knowledge subjugated, discourse about birth control during the Depression can be seen as existing on a curious grid made up, first, of medico-administrative knowledge/power that had been increasingly prevalent since the Enlightenment and, second, the somewhat newer power of marketing, made possible by women's dependence.

As a test, then, the brochure illustrates the theories of Gordon, Riddle and Laqueur, but it does more. What interests me as much as anything about this brochure is the way it creates, rather clumsily, a female consumer. To begin with, the brochure is addressed directly *to* women, who could apparently order this product through the mail without discussing personal issues with a doctor. It must have seemed, then, a subversive act just to have the brochure, much less the product--a marketing strategy that rests on an intuitive understanding of women's subjugated knowledge. Women had always taken care of these things; now, women could do so again. The coded, euphemistic language necessary to skirt the Comstock Act then may have served as a marketer's dream. Just as power and knowledge were joined, for Foucault, almost as one word ("power/knowledge"), so, perhaps, were independence and euphemism ("independence/ euphemism") for women, at least when it came to claiming power over their bodies.

That the poverty and desperation of the Depression made the marketing of products possible is ironic, and that irony is transparent in the brochure, for in creating a female consumer, the marketer had to assuage women's doubts and help them rationalize the product's use. Rationalization, I believe, is the purpose of "Jimmy," the unfortunate infant born to a mother with "six little stair-steps to care for" and the father who had not worked in a year. That Jimmy dies of

malnutrition in this fiction would seem, at first, an odd marketing ploy, but in fact it plays on a mother's fear and maternal instincts, positioning the prevention of Jimmy's conception as an act of maternal love. However, a focus on poverty and the selling of a product are incompatible, so once the discussion of poverty has served its purpose, it is dropped. Everything else in the brochure, including the elegant, somewhat complex tone of the prose and, especially, the drawing on the cover, create a subject-position for a consumer who sees herself as middle-class and refined. She is a "lady," even if she is enough of a rebel to buy black-market contraceptives. The creation of one subject-position, of course, creates the absence of others. Nothing in this brochure indicates that it is intended for unmarried women (despite the documented increase in sex outside marriage during the 1920s), couples who choose *never* to have children,[9] or anyone too poor to buy the product. Moreover, the consumer for this product is presumed to be white. That she undoubtedly both white and married is confirmed by ethnographic research done by Marianne Leung, whose paper "Making the Radical Respectable: Little Rock Clubwomen and the Cause of Birth Control During the 1930s" is based partly on interviews with several educated white women active in the Little Rock Birth Control Clinic during this period. The clinic served married white women only, and one former worker interviewed by Leung said she did not discuss birth control with her own African-American servants because "she considered the women in her home too ignorant to benefit from such information" (Leung 31).

I would argue that the female consumer created by and for this brochure reinforces what Roland Barthes referred to as "myth"[10]--in this case, the myth of the modern, middle-class wife

[9]As noted earlier, the obsequious "woman's prayer" is voiced by a hypothetical woman who asks to "bring my babies into the world after I have had time to prepare a place for them." Also, the brochure states that "happy married life ... [is] essential to a woman's well-being" (Smith 5).

[10]In "Myth Today," Barthes describes myth as "a type of speech defined by its intention." It has, he says, "an imperative, buttonholing character: stemming from a historical concept, directly springing from contingency" (Barthes 110).

and mother. At the same time, she is *also* heir to what might be called an absence of myth, an "unmyth" of sorts, the woman who has never been, in history, publicly named but who has been the bearer of women's subjugated knowledges of such things as birth control. Moreover, the brochure as a marketing device would not work if it were not for the presence of this "unmyth." Nowhere is this more evident than on the front cover, where a black and white line drawing depicts a woman seated at her boudoir. The viewer is positioned at her back, and she is turned slightly to reveal one shoulder from which her flowered shawl or robe has fallen. Her hair is pulled back into an elegant roll and pinned at the nape of her neck, and she appears to have long eyelashes, earrings and manicured fingernails. The ruffles around her dressing table, the gilding on an oval wall mirror, and the painting of ladies dancing in long dresses, perhaps at a royal court, all indicate refined, middle-class elegance. Applying Barthes' process for semiotic analysis, as explained by Stuart Hall (Hall 39), the signifiers and the signified unite here to give us the denotative meaning of a woman seated at a boudoir. At the second stage of analysis, though, the picture carries the meaning of white, middle-class ideology. This woman is a *lady* who lives in an elegant home and symbolizes everything that might be connoted by the mainstream, middle-class lifestyle during this period: marriage to a breadwinner who can provide a safe, comfortable home and nice things, a concern with her appearance (she holds a powder puff, which implies that she is applying makeup), and a sense of historical connection (as symbolized by the picture of ladies dancing) with the ruling classes who danced at court or at balls.

It might be as simple as that, were it not for the presence in this picture of two mirrors--a large, oval, gilded mirror on the wall and a small hand-mirror that the woman is holding. By looking at the picture in terms of both of these mirrors, we can interpret the picture as signifying

not only the middle-class, refined discourse--which might parallel the dominant, overt discourse of political power discussed throughout this paper--but the subversive, contrapuntal, unspoken or at least private discourse of women's subjugated knowledge, also discussed throughout the paper. The large mirror, hanging on the wall, is literally held up by the house, itself a symbol and a space of everything middle-class and dominant. (In the ideology of middle-class marriage predominant in the 1930s, the house was paid for and probably even legally owned by the husband.) Were the woman looking into this mirror, it could be argued that she was "seeing herself" in terms of her role in the dominant ideology. Moreover, since this mirror is facing the viewer, we would be able to see the woman's face openly, reinforcing the notion that the dominant discourse is open to public view. As it is, however, she looks to the side, into the smaller mirror held in her own right hand. She can see her face, but it is secret to us--secret to the public--and thus not available for public scrutiny. Looking away from the mirror of the dominant ideology, she rejects its reflection of her identity in favor of a reflection that is admittedly smaller, but that she controls vis-a-vis her ability to hold the hand mirror. As Renee Curry said of Miss Emily Grierson in an article about patriarchally constructed women in William Faulkner's fiction, this woman exists "in the white space beneath the eyes of the patriarchy" (Curry 399). This is a middle-class lady making a subversive, independent choice about her body; in that sense she is a free woman--heir to a feminine--and arguably feminist--history of subjugated knowledge.

And the marketer knows that.

We would like to believe, of course, that we are now past the time when efforts to suppress knowledge of birth control were possible. Modern advertisements like the one for Depo-Provera in a recent issue of *Cosmopolitan* certainly involve no discussion of God, poverty, or "hygiene." The young woman pictured looks happy and free. She may even be single, for the

ring on her hand is ambiguous. However, even here the middle-class white motherhood myth is invoked, and homage is paid to it: "Sure I'd like to have kids. *Eventually.* Until then, it's *Depo-Provera.*" Surrounding the woman, the large type reads, "Birth control I only have to think about 4 times a year? TERRIFIC." Convenient as modern contraception may be, and as welcome as it certainly would have been for my grandmother and other women of her era, it still must be acknowledged that freedom comes in the form of regulation of the body at the hands of science, and that what makes the woman in the ad happy is not having to think about the cycles of her body. If this is the trend, what happens to the tradition of woman-centered, subjugated knowledge that women of the distant past used, and that women of the Depression certainly *could have used* to make themselves less vulnerable to such people as door-to-door peddlars of ill-fitting diaphragms?

It is important to remember that public discourse controlled by those in power can change, depending on *their* needs. A blatant example of this possible change is evident, again, in the 1933 brochure, which contains the phrase "There is no humane law to protect an unborn child." Any reader who is reasonably aware of American culture and politics of the last thirty years would no doubt think, immediately, of anti-abortion rhetoric upon reading that sentence. Phrases and slogans about protecting unborn children have become so familiar that one who had not heard them in another context would be unlikely to guess that they had been used very differently in the past. That they were used during the Great Depression in a brochure advertising birth control speaks volumes about the mutability of discourse and how, ironically, the same words can be used in different eras to describe discourses that are not only radically different but philosophically and politically opposed. The way a word or phrase is used has less to do with its denotative meaning than with its usefulness in the struggle for power.

Subjugated knowledge, then, can be a means out of oppression. Without a doubt, modern contraception, which comes by way of science, is more reliable than the folk wisdom relied on for hundreds of years. But if women believe that regulation of their bodies by science equals freedom, then subjugation of knowledge seems no longer necessary. It is complete.

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Local Culture in Global Media: Excavating Colonial and Material Discourses in the National Geographic

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Local Culture in Global Media: Excavating Colonial and Material Discourses in the National Geographic

Cultural criticism, as I discovered in the process of examining the National Geographic's August 1999 issue, manifests in two forms in the lives of academics. In one form, we carefully craft projects and select the cultural texts and rituals we wish to critique. In another form, when research "happens to us," the objects of our analyses are thrust upon us and forcefully demand our attention. My analysis of the National Geographic's Millennium features, "Global Culture" and "A World Together," in this essay is an example of the second kind of project. Within days and weeks of its appearance in August 1999, students, friends, and family in near and distant locations, aware of my interests in gender, postcolonial studies, and global media, urged me to read the magazine. Numerous e-mail messages from women friends animatedly inquired about my opinions of the magazine's cover, a dramatic and colorful photograph of two East Indian women. Copies of the magazine arrived in my mail with a range of scribbled comments: "Women rule in global culture! "Amazing photos of Asia?," and "Unpack this!" This essay, which gradually unfolded as I began responding to colleagues' and students' questions, interrogates the discursive construction of globalization at one particular site in the popular domain. In deconstructing the cover stories on global culture in the National Geographic, a magazine that occupies a high brow position in the hierarchy of status for popular print media, I dispute the cultural legitimacy of its particular vision of global modernity.

Given the National Geographic's intimate affiliation with the disciplines of anthropology, geography, and sociology, which have all witnessed an unprecedented surge of interest in globalization in the past decade, it is not surprising that the magazine devoted a millennium cover story to global culture in 1999. Numerous scholars have documented, critiqued, and theorized the impact of global culture on diverse societies and nations; however, such academic writings rarely percolate to audiences beyond the narrow confines of academia (Appadurai, 1996; Ferguson, 1992; Giddens, 1990; King, 1997; Robertson, 1994). The Geographic's brief references to new circuits of global culture originating in Asia and its acknowledgment of non-Western consumers as active participants in global culture reflect cultural studies critics' recent arguments for more complex models of globalization that can challenge conceptions of the United States as the only producer of global culture or of non-Western audiences as passive adopters of Westernization (Ang, 1996; Hannerz, 1997; Tomlinson, 1996). Critiques of texts such as the National Geographic magazine, an artifact that straddles simultaneously the worlds of

academia, art, and popular imagination, thus address the media's role in translating scholarly discourses for a broader spectrum of middle- and upper-class reading publics.

How do the National Geographic's writers and photographers portray the impact of globalization on diverse cultures? What representations of femininity, masculinity, race, and nation become alloyed with global culture in the magazine's arresting photographs? What troubling aspects of globalization does this magazine, which purports to be an authoritative window on the world, ignore and disavow? Drawing from the insights of postcolonial critiques of gender, nationalism, and Orientalism, my analysis of the National Geographic focuses attention on the intricate, hierarchical structures of gender, race, and class inequality that become entangled with the magazine's rendering of global culture. I disturb the fragile boundaries that separate reputable print media from their more commodified counterparts like People or Cosmopolitan by revealing the subtle ways in which the Geographic's editorial practices intersected with the representational strategies of commercial imagery. This essay undermines the Geographic's articulation of global culture as a uni-dimensional, ahistoric phenomenon that addresses Asians as only modern consumers of global commodities by questioning the invisibility of colonial history, labor, and global production in its narrative. I argue that postcolonial theories enable media research on the representations of race, gender, and globalization to go beyond the limited concepts of "stereotypes" and multiculturalism. Finally, I challenge discourses that cast postcolonial theory as an inaccessible, esoteric body of knowledge that is irrelevant for the "real" world of journalistic practices.

My textual analysis of the August 1999 Geographic magazine's editorial content, photos, and captions is based in the insights of semiotic, feminist, and Marxist critiques of media representations and commodity culture. A sample of the methodological questions that guided my evaluation of the Geographic's stories were: How were objects and individuals coded within a particular photograph? How did the individual images of global culture interact and mutually shape the parameters of the meanings they generated? How did the editorial and visual images of a particular ethnic group in the Geographic's 1999 issue relate to other images of the same group that have appeared in the magazine over a period of time? In what specific ways did the Geographic's images and editorial text recall the texts produced by newsmedia and corporations? Who gained cultural capital and economic power as experts on and producers of global culture? Whose viewpoints did the language of the text and captions privilege in terms of according space, providing details, and crafting context and ambience?

As a key inhabitant of the global mediascape, the National Geographic magazine is itself today a significant player in the very burgeoning global culture that it chose to comment upon in the August 1999 issue. With a worldwide readership of thirty-seven million, the National Geographic magazine's subscriber rate is the third largest for magazines in the United States, behind TV Guide and Reader's Digest (Fannin, 1999, p. 29). Since the founding of the magazine in 1888 by a select group of geographers, military officers, meteorologists, cartographers, naturalists, biologists, and engineers (Bryan, 1997, pp. 24-27), the National Geographic Society's presence in the global media landscape has expanded far beyond the magazine. Capitalizing on the potential brand recognition promised by the Geographic magazine's reputation and credibility among global middle- and upper class audiences, the Society has launched other media ventures: the National Geographic Traveler magazine, the television series National Geographic Explorer, and National Geographic Cable Channels Worldwide. These recent Geographic electronic media products have been successful in reaching out to audiences more interested in travel as a cosmopolitan experience than in quasi-scientific analyses of human and cultural geography. For instance, within six weeks of its launch in Australia, the National Geographic cable channel was hailed as the third most popular channel in that country (Donohue, 1998).

With the recent spate in cultural studies work on popular media, often framed by scholars as a protest against the earlier celebration of high culture, artifacts of middle-brow culture that circulate among educated and elite audiences have escaped critical analysis. With regard to print culture, cultural studies research on the vibrant magazine industry in the United States has largely addressed consumer publications targeted towards women. Concerned about the patriarchally coded messages that magazines convey to teenage girls, feminist scholars in particular have analyzed the representations of ideal femininity in the advertisements and editorial content of Seventeen, Cosmopolitan, and YM (Duffy & Gotcher, 1996; Durham, 1998; McCracken, 1993; Pierce, 1993). Other feminists have taken such concerns over magazines' representations one step further by conducting ethnographic research among young girls of different races and ethnicities to gain insights into their interpretations of consumer culture (Duke, 2000; Duke & Kreshel, 1998; McRobbie, 1990). However, scholars in cultural studies have rarely examined news and educational magazines such as Time, Newsweek, New Yorker, The New Republic, or the National Geographic. Policing the boundaries of discourse in the public sphere, these middle-brow print media influence the worldviews of their elite and largely male audience members, who wield power in the global commercial and political arenas. Actively promoting its reading audience as a

highly desirable market to potential advertisers, the online version of the Geographic claimed that its readers were among the most "overwhelmingly well-educated and affluent" consumers in the world.

Cultural anthropologists have been far ahead of media scholars in scrutinizing the National Geographic's pivotal role in disseminating representations of the non-Western world among Euroamerican readers (Lutz & Collins, 1993; O'Barr, 1994). While William O'Barr analyzed consumer culture in the advertisements that appeared in the National Geographic in 1929, to date, Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins' book Reading National Geographic is the only major work that has closely examined the editorial images and content of the magazine. Lutz and Collins' cultural studies approach to the Geographic addressed the three components of commodity culture--production, text, and audience--which together accounted for a comprehensive portrait of the magazine as a cultural institution and media artifact. They interviewed editors, writers, and photographers at the Geographic, evaluated the magazine's coverage of non-Western nations and cultures, and finally, they explored readers' responses to the Geographic's social construction of the non-Western world. Surprised and puzzled by media critics' neglect of the Geographic as an object of study, Lutz and Collins noted in their introduction that the "special cultural niche occupied by the Geographic is indexed by the degree to which the magazine has been ignored by academics and writers on the subject of photography, mass media, or culture in general" (pp. 7-8). My own entry into the debate over the National Geographic builds upon and continues the critical interrogation of the magazine that was initiated by anthropologists O'Barr, Lutz, and Collins. My essay's textual analysis of the Geographic magazine in 1999, a decade after Lutz and Collins' research, contributes an in-depth case study of the magazine's gendered, racialized, and consumerist discourse on globalization.

The essay begins by providing background details on the Geographic's stories on global culture. In the next two sections, I examine the representations of femininity and masculinity, embedded within particular configurations of race and class, that shaped the magazine's interpretation of global culture. In the following section, I deconstruct the aura of marketable consumer diversity that permeated the magazine's kaleidoscopic textual and visual collage of "colorful" ethnicity and gender. In conclusion, I consider the contributions of postcolonial studies to media research and pedagogy, and discuss the commodification of social issues in the media.

Architects of Globalization in the National Geographic

In the National Geographic's August 1999 issue, an assistant editor on the magazine's staff, Joel Swerdlow, produced the photographs for the first brief pictorial cover feature on "Global Culture." A much longer story on the global village "A World Together" immediately followed the story on global culture. Erla Zwingle, a former editor at the magazine, researched and wrote the text of the story "A World Together" and Joe McNally, a frequent freelance contributor to the Geographic, produced the photographs within the second story on the global village. The Geographic informed readers that Zwingle, an American woman, lived in Italy and traveled to parts of the world like Shanghai, where she had the opportunity to participate in authentic local Chinese practices like tai chi. The small picture illustrating the brief introduction to Zwingle showed a casually dressed woman with short, blond hair (anywhere from 30 to 50 years old) performing a classic tai chi pose on an expanse of paved area in an urban setting in China. There were a series of small features and columns on unnumbered pages that preceded the cover stories; these sections Millennium Moments, Geographica, Point of View, Forum (Letters to the Editor), On Screen, and Earth Almanac had small photographs that were accompanied by extended captions.

The stories "Global Culture" and "A World Together" were 33 pages long and included twenty-one photographs including the cover image framed by Geographic's well-known bright yellow border. The three regions spanned by Erla Zwingle's story "A World Together" were the United States (Los Angeles), China (Shanghai), and India (Bangalore, Mumbai, and New Delhi). Seven of the twenty-one photographs were large two-page spreads and the remaining were smaller images, with a few spanning half to one-third of the page. The four other major stories in the August 1999 issue covered the history of three major cities in the world, the vanishing cultures of indigenous peoples, Italy's endangered art, and the invention & spread of writing. Unlike consumer magazines where the advertising that is scattered throughout interrupts the editorial content, most of the August 1999 Geographic magazine's twenty advertisements appeared at the beginning and end. The predominance of commodity advertisements for luxury cars, Sports utility vehicles, mini-vans, Viagra, life insurance, and high-quality cameras indicated that advertisers were eager to target the older, middle- and upper class readers of National Geographic.

Gender, Tradition, and Global Modernity

In an increasingly competitive media market, the covers of magazines, displayed in large bookstores, grocery stores, and airport bookstalls seek to instantly capture the roving eyes of new readers. The August 1999 National Geographic's striking cover, with its contrasting patches of bright yellow, red, and black colors, carried full shots of two East Indian women sitting close together, in front of a stone building, on a raised marble platform that resembled a bench. The light gray colored building that formed a spotlessly clean background in the cover photograph of the two women accentuated the bold red and black colors of their clothes. The words "Global Culture" appeared in large yellow type at the bottom of the cover. Unknown to many readers, the unusual August 1999 cover of the magazine was part of a milestone event in the economic history of the National Geographic. Although the Geographic, which has repeatedly staked claim to the status of "journal" on its covers, was historically available only to those readers who were members of the National Geographic Society, the magazine "went newsstand" in 1999 in an effort to boost readership. As a product that was circulating in its new distribution mode, the August 1999 "newsstand-reincarnated" cover thus marked a subtle shift in the Geographic's marketing outlook--away from "journal' and towards "magazine."

The Geographic's August 1999 cover dramatically deployed the bodies and faces of women as detailed blueprints, maps that busy readers could use to instantly trace the passage of non-Western cultures from tradition to global modernity. In the magazine's sharply polarized, binary rendering of the "new and hip" as radically different from the "old and outmoded," one woman symbolized ethnic tradition and the other global modernity (see Fig. 1). The Geographic's semiotic coding of the past and future, which invoked the cultural politics of age, class, motherhood, and feminine fitness, ensured that readers could instantly differentiate the inertness of tradition from the vigor and vitality of the modern. The non-Western women on the cover also narrated a linearly defined tale of progress; as the Geographic magazine's readers' eyes moved from left to right, they would travel from tradition, positioned on the left side of the cover, closest to the spine, to modernity on the right side.

An older middle-aged Indian woman with streams of white and orange flowers pinned to her hair at the base of her neck symbolized tradition. The flowers cascaded over her right shoulder down to the middle of her chest. The woman was dressed in a deep red Kancheepuram (a region in South India) silk sari with a black and gold border. The flowers in her hair, the silk sari, the chunky gold necklaces around her neck, and the thick gold bangles on her wrists clearly marked her as a traditional upper-class woman,

who could easily afford these luxury commodities. The older Indian woman's body and posture also announced her alignment with tradition. She was plump with a slightly bulging stomach and her sari demurely covered her large breasts. Her feet were placed moderately close together and her folded hands rested in her lap. Avoiding the direct eye of the camera, her face with the trademark dot of Hindu tradition etched between her eyes, was turned sideways as she bestowed a tender maternal gaze on the young woman sitting beside her. The traditional Indian woman's maternal gaze rescued her from becoming an alienating object that was too exotic or different, and hence remote from Western readers' experiences. Emulating other images of Third World women in the Geographic that have celebrated the mother-child relationship (Lutz & Collins, 1993, pp. 168-169), the traditional Indian woman's nurturing gaze reinscribed her subjectivity into the familiar format of the maternal image; by reaffirming the timeless universality of motherhood, such a cultural portrait enabled empathetic identification among Geographic readers.

In contrast to the gentle/contented passivity and the middle-aged slack body that indexed tradition, bold assertiveness, feminine youthfulness, and an androgynous firm body became ideological emblems of cosmopolitan modernity in the cover image. These biological and emotional transformations in the modern, non-Western woman's physical appearance and personal demeanor appeared to be wrought by Westernization. The young, slender Indian woman sitting next to the middle-aged woman had short, shoulder length hair framing her face. The marked absence of the dot on her forehead and her clothing instantly heralded her identity as a modern woman; she was dressed in a black, shiny PVC catsuit with sharply pointed black boots. The stiff, turned up black collar of her suit formed a fan-like backdrop to her face. Her suit was unzipped down to the middle of her chest to display her small, almost flat breasts. She claimed her personal space with arrogant confidence; her legs and feet, unlike the older women's feet, were splayed wide apart, and her knees pointed in opposite directions. Disdaining the gaze of the older woman directed towards her, she defiantly stared at the camera. Her left arm was poised in akimbo style and her left palm gripped her hip in a strong, masculine gesture. Using the older woman's body as a mere prop, she rested her right elbow on the traditional woman's shoulder. Because the cover had no captions, the location of the photograph and the identities of the two women remained a mystery until readers came upon the same image reproduced inside the magazine within the story on global culture.

The cover photograph's projection of a dyadic, but unequal relationship between tradition/older woman and modernity/young woman resonated with another gendered image of global culture inside the magazine. Displaying modernity as an emotive state that was filled with youthful exuberance, a slender, 17-year old Chinese girl, Zhou Die-Die, dressed in form-fitting, black athletic clothing, danced in a narrow Shanghai street. Her supple body's posture--outstretched arms, flung-back head, curved right leg, and arched right foot--and her oblivious immersion in her dance of modernity drew attention to her experience of passionate abandonment. In a diametrically opposed mood, several older women (with not so slender bodies) surrounding Zhou Die-Die, stood stiffly in solemn silence while they watched her performance with rapt attention. Reiterating the ideological chain of meanings released by the cover, which conflated older women with motherhood and tradition, another photo of Zhou Die-Die showed her hugging her mother, who, according to the caption was "too critical of fads like midriff-baring shirts."

In the Geographic's staged crafting of authentic tradition on the cover, the older Indian woman wore her sari unlike middle-class South Indian Telugu women from her own ethnic community. The South Indian style of draping the sari across the chest and over the left shoulder has evolved into the more modern, pan-Indian fashion style widely adopted by urban Indian woman as a convenient, practical, and modest style of sari fashion. In this posed photograph, the older woman draped her sari around her upper torso in the more uncommon, "exotic" style of women from the coastal region in Southwest India. The older woman's "borrowed" traditional clothing and the younger woman's ultra-modern catsuit suggested a degree of self-conscious irony in the Geographic photographer's exaggerated rendering of modernity's impact on non-Western cultures. However, the assumptions underlying the Geographic's portrait indicated that cultural representations of womanhood--women's bodies, roles, clothing, and behavior--crystallize and refract constructions of modernity and tradition in the popular domain.

The Geographic's use of women's imagined subjectivity as indices of national tradition or global modernity does not signal the creation of a new representational strategy that vividly captures Western culture's liberating effect on the non-Western world. Predating the Geographic's cover, nineteenth century debates over modernity and tradition that were waged in Europe's colonies in Asia and Africa also harnessed womanhood as an ideological vehicle to advocate for and argue against the progress promised by Western imperialism (Grewal, 1996; Jayawardena, 1986; Kandiyoti, 1991; Mani, 1991; Moghadam, 1994). On the one hand, British architects (administrators and Orientalist scholars) of

colonial modernity in India claimed that they could liberate Hindu women from the oppressive practices of their highly patriarchal cultures; accordingly, the colonial administration sought the support of elite Indian males to enact legislation that would outlaw a few upper-caste rituals that victimized a small section of Hindu women. Expressions of support in colonial discourse for a select group of Hindu women's liberation from "barbaric" traditions also justified and buttressed the modernizing mission of British imperialism in India. On the other hand, Indian male nationalists, who sought to counter these charges of barbarism, began to construct Hindu womanhood as the symbol of India's superior morality and rich traditions. Positioning Indian women as the locus of India's authentic moral essence, nationalist ideology glorified Indian women as devoted wives and mothers (Chatterjee, 1989). In fact, if the Geographic's cover is read against the patriarchal fabric of contemporary Hindu nationalism in India, the iconic image of the modern young woman would only reinforce and support regressive nationalist discourses on gender and global culture. As these religious nationalists would argue, the radically transformed, Westernized Indian woman "flaunting" her body and "rejecting" her mother's love would prove that the purity of traditional Indian culture (read Indian women) and the strength of the family (read motherhood) is dangerously threatened by the contaminating influences of global culture.

A postcolonial feminist reading could also suggest potential possibilities for reversing the Geographic cover's conjoining of middle-aged woman in saris with docile tradition and young women in catsuits with robust liberation, women whom the magazine indicated in the contents page were "seemingly a world apart." In the two-page reproduction of the same picture within the story, the caption informed readers that the older woman Nakshatra Reddy was a biochemist married to a prosperous businessman and the younger woman, her daughter Meghana was a model and former host on the music video channel VTV. On reviewing the professional lives of the two women, one might argue that it may be easier for young women like Meghana to gain entry and success in the commodified arenas of global fashion, television entertainment, and modeling, which create a constant demand for women's thin bodies. As numerous feminists have argued, the pervasiveness of a certain brand of "empowered" modern femininity in consumer culture represents the subtle repackaging of patriarchy for capitalism; far from promoting liberation, such imagery continues the "ancient" tradition of devaluing women through the sexist glorification of a certain brand of physical attractiveness. Negating her metaphorical association with tradition, the older woman biochemist working in a "hard science" field that is still dominated by men worldwide could conceivably serve as a positive, global role model for

women's liberation; she could represent the tremendous progress middle-class Indian women have made since the doors of education were first opened to admit girls into the public sphere in the nineteenth century. Portraits of women in saris, when counterposed against discourses of liberation, also preclude the possibility that some non-Western women wearing traditional clothing may be vocal advocates of progressive modernity and cultural change. Numerous feminists in India, who have consistently protested against the conservative sexual politics of religious fundamentalists (calling for restoring women to their traditional roles), dress only in saris and campaign for women's liberation; however, their models of women's autonomy are not necessarily tethered to catsuits or thin bodies.

Although the disturbing gender politics in the Geographic's cover photo invented oversimplified binary distintctions between tradition and modernity, the cover's assertive and sophisticated young Indian woman also generated a new and unusual representational space for India in Western popular consciousness. As Lutz and Collins (1993) point out, unlike the caricatured and stereotyped representations of "Third Worldness" in mainstream news media and Hollywood films, some of the Geographic's most memorable images have strived to narrate the complexity and diversity of non-Western cultures. In the case of India, mainstream Western media have for the most part ignored urban India's vibrant, cosmopolitan culture (Mankekar, 1999). Apart from the few media images that have deviated from the mold, coverage of India in newspapers, talk shows, and magazines has inevitably recycled a routine catalog of stories on exotic customs, ancient traditions, caste, natural disasters, poverty, or the oppression of Indian women (Cecil, Jani, and Takacs, 1994). The Dallas Observer's first cover story on Indian culture investigated bride burning and domestic violence (Sherman, 1993). The Fort Worth Star Telegram's longest photo feature on Indian immigrants in Texas chronicled the colorful rituals in a traditional Hindu wedding (Rogers, 1998). An entire program of the Oprah Winfrey Show, which aired in 1997, attempted to demystify the baffling popularity of "loveless" arranged marriages among Indians. The New Yorker's first article on Indian immigrants in New York scrutinized a young woman's struggles with arranged marriage (Gourevitch, 1998) and Marie Claire's first feature story on India lamented the fate of all Indian women, who, according to the story's headline could only expect to be "revered or raped" within a rigid caste system (McGirk, 1997),

The young Indian woman costumed in Western clothing on the Geographic's cover highlighted the culmination of a newly emerging representation of cosmopolitan India and Indian women within the magazine itself. With the exception of one small image of an upscale shopping mall in Banaglore, three

images of India in the August 1999 Geographic's story on the global village starkly reproduced mainstream newsmedia's representations of poverty in India. The largest of these images was a two-page spread that aimed to document the pervasiveness of global culture in even the most economically adverse conditions. Recording the cramped living conditions of the urban poor living in a streetside Mumbai slum, this photo showed women watching a flickering television screen inside a small one-room dwelling while men surrounded by darkness huddled outside on the street to play cards. The Geographic's cover images of India have also for the most part emphasized overlapping themes of nature and travel, religion, endangered lifestyles, and ancient history. Over a forty-year period, from 1960 to 1999, excluding the August 1999 issue, India and Indians appeared on the National Geographic's cover eleven times. Of the eleven covers, three portrayed wildlife (snake, monkey, and a tiger), one image of a woman kneeling beside the Taj Mahal invited readers to sample adventures along the river Ganges, one image of a poor man wading through water captured the impact of the monsoon, and one cover image anticipating a story on India's trains showed men in a crowded train. Two other covers showed images of a religious festival and a female member of a small religious sect. Of the remaining three cover illustrations, two showed members of nomadic communities (Rabari boy on camel and a Lambada woman) and one image of a woman playing a musical instrument promised a story on the history of the Moghul empire in India.

The confident energy radiated by the cover's elite and modern young woman also contrasted with the poor, remote, gentle, and mysterious Indian women who have frequently peppered the Geographic's visual imagery on India. Photographs of cosmopolitan urban Indian women have only recently crept into the magazine; for example, in the most elaborate story on India in the May 1997 Geographic that marked 50 years of Indian independence, only one photograph of three middle-class women allowed readers a glimpse of the Mumbai fashion world. The six other photographs of urban women showcased religion, illiteracy, motherhood in adversity, and poverty. Four Geographic covers, which have appeared in the last forty years (1985, 1971, 1963, and 1960), featured full-length images of Indian women functioning as metaphors for tradition, pastoral life, religion, and the mysterious ancient past. For instance, the April 1985 Geographic's lavish cover photo of an Indian woman Tahira Sayyad dramatically recalled nineteenth century Orientalist imagery of the forbidden, erotic world of docile female courtesans and harems. Clothed in a gauzy, embroidered lavender and purple silk churidhar and kameez, a young and attractive Sayyad played the sitar, a stringed musical instrument. Ornate gold and silver jewelry embedded with stones adorned her hair, ears, neck, wrists, and fingers. Her darkly outlined eyes looked

away from the camera as she seemed absorbed in her task of playing the sitar. Similar colorful images of Turkish, Arab, Indian, and Moroccan women performing and serving food & wine in their elaborate clothing and jewelry appeared on early European tradecards and postcards. As Lalvani (1995) notes, these proliferating Orientalist images of the exotic feminine were central to a Western politics of imperial and sexual desire; they fueled the libidinal emerging economy of European consumerism and fascinated nineteenth century European travelers, historians, and anthropologists. Inside the story on the Mughal empire in the April 1985 Geographic issue, the most arresting photograph was the close up image of a traditional Indian bride's face serenely looking at the camera and captioned as a "beguiling reflection" of her ancient history.

Beyond the cover, other striking photographs inside the magazine also amalgamated the aura of glamorous femininity with the energy and mobility of the globally modern. The first image of global culture inside the magazine showed two men inside a New York advertising agency holding a conversation in a darkened room. Ten glowing television screens in the background beamed an identical image of a smiling Marilyn Monroe, an icon of modernity symbolizing global culture as a space of male sexual fantasy. Signaling the ability of global culture to transcend geographic boundaries, Monroe's face reappeared in a remote jungle on the T-shirt of a male Penan nomad. Conflating the allure of feminine celebrity with the exhilarating quality of global culture, another image positioned Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh (co-star of the 1998 Bond film Tomorrow Never Dies) next to the well-known Hollywood sign in Los Angeles while she held a rope and precariously swung in mid-air. Using a spectacular technique of visual display, the photograph compelled the reader to trace the entire length of her upraised, slim naked right leg from thigh to foot. Like the trendy young Indian woman on the cover, Yeoh is slender, beautiful, and glamorous. Clothed in a silky grayish feminine dress with her feet encased in strappy, spike-heeled sandals, she clearly reproduced current Western ideals of beauty.

Michelle Yeoh's image of global culture displaying her "fearlessness and athletic grace," as the caption informed readers, recuperated the ambivalent gender politics that shadows the modern female hero of popular culture whose masculine power is subtly cocooned by the vestiges of patriarchal femininity. Exemplifying a new configuration of liberal feminism, Peta Wilson in La Femme Nikita, Pamela Andersen in Baywatch, and Lara Croft in the Tomb Raider vidogames fight, kill, and overpower evil even as they entice audiences with their blond hair, large breasts, thin bodies, and staged moments of feminine vulnerability. Although Yeoh's body performed a reckless feat of physical courage that is

typically coded as the essence of heroic masculinity, her face narrated a story of sexuality for the male gaze. Her slightly open mouth, partly closed eyes, windswept hair, and her gently raised left hand touching her neck mirrored numerous images of women's sensual "bedroom" faces advertising perfume, cosmetics, and lingerie; Yeoh's face could be smoothly superimposed on the body of models advertising Victoria's Secret underwear.

The Western male gaze also forcefully patrolled Yeoh's attempts to transgress her historically conscripted gender role as the docile Asian woman who regularly graced the Geographic's advertising imagery in 1929 (O'Barr, 1994). Another small photograph of global culture showed Michelle Yeoh and Joe McNally, the Geographic photographer, suspended from a helicopter. Reproducing gender and race hierarchies, the photograph showed McNally, dressed in a sober tan professional aviation suit that covered his entire body, situated on a higher level than Yeoh. Sitting in a relaxed and comfortable posture, he held his camera and looked down on the Asian actor while Yeoh looked up at him and offered herself to his gaze. Clothed in a silky feminine dress, she manipulated her body into a carefully crafted unnatural pose; her naked leg stretched towards him while her right hand, carefully placed over her stomach, pointed toward her crotch. The accompanying caption argued that the current popularity of Asian actors in Tinseltown illustrated how "local cultures are spreading globally." The Geographic's visual sketch of an Asian woman's exciting aerial adventure and the caption's optimistic tone neutralized the reality of race on the ground in the United States' mainstream entertainment industry where there are few Asian actors performing serious dramatic roles or commanding the same billings as Caucasian actors (Ferguson, 2000). For instance, Yeoh herself has never appeared in a major Hollywood production since her debut in the 1998 James Bond film.

A final image of global culture in the story "A World Together" was thickly implicated within multilayered regimes of representation related to feminine material culture, the ambivalent politics of sexuality and reproduction, and Othered tropes of the Oriental woman emdedded in colonial discourses. In this lavish photograph bursting with rich color, Los Angeles artist Nicole Baum, dressed in a deep pink hippie robe and chunky silver jewelry, drew an intricate East Indian pattern with henna paste on the eight-month pregnant stomach of Dara Poprock Brown (See Fig. 2). Baum and Poprock Brown were shown on a small daybed covered with a delicately textured woven ivory bedspread and pillows encased in lacy ivory covers were placed against one corner. An ornate ivory wicker backboard twisted into a pattern of curved shapes framed the entire background. Brown's slender White pregnant body was

spread out horizontally across the bed while a translucent strip of pale fabric wound around her body barely concealed her breasts, hips, and upper thighs. The photograph vividly captured the sharing of an intimate moment between two women in a dream-like, feminine sepia-colored setting. In an interesting reversal of diversity practices in news and popular culure that are based in the inclusion of non-Western women, Poprock's Brown's partially clothed White body denoted a representational milestone for the Geographic magazine, which has historically excluded White women from its displays of female nudity (Lutz & Collins, 1993).

For the ideal imagined female reader of the Geographic, the ambience of the material culture--quilt, pillows, curtain--in this contrived photograph would interpellate images of objects in the catalogs of Pier1 Imports, Pottery Barn, Martha Stewart, and other bed & furniture retailers. On another level, the warm and tender, yet daring image of a pregnant White woman's stomach stamped by a dark and exotic "ethnic" pattern also meshed with Benetton's controversial, stark advertising images that have consistently defied the boundaries of social conventions in visual culture. Beyond its shock value, sensual displays of enlarged pregnant stomachs in Western popular culture, on the one hand, initiate the gradual process of delinking women's pregnant bodies from its dominant moorings in the discourses of science and medicine. Poprock Brown's pregnant body exhibited in the Geographic's 1999 issue followed in the wake of other bare pregnant stomachs exposed by celebrities Demi Moore and Cindy Crawford on the covers of women's magazines and by participants in recent "Ms Beautiful Pregnant" swimsuit contests. These recent representations of pregnancy in the United States challenge genteel middle-class notions of women's swollen stomachs as deviant bodily artifacts that have to be concealed from the public gaze. On the other hand, dramatic popular culture images of women's pregnancy also mask a more insidious semiotic subtext; such images celebrating the biology of motherhood have begun appearing at a specific moment in the history of women's reproductive rights in the United States when the voice of the pro-life movement with its own representations of pregnant stomachs and foetuses has become increasingly strident and violent.

If the Mehndi pattern on Brown's body is critically scrutinized through the semiotic lens of postcolonial theory, it begins to suggest the limits of progressive diversity promised by the incorporation of non-Western culture within the new age practices of subjects in First World nations. In the caption to this image, we are told that "borrowed culture" often serves personal ends because Brown, who wanted to feel beautiful during her pregnancy, sought out the novel experience of decorating her stomach with

Mehndi (p. 32). The popularity of Indian-inspired feminine fashion--Mehndi, nose rings, bindis (mark on the forehead between the eyes), and toe rings--was sparked and promoted by the appearance of these exotic adornments on the bodies of White women celebrities. In the late nineties, singers Madonna, Gwen Stefani of the pop group No Doubt, and Sting and his wife Trudi, and actresses Nicole Kidman, Liv Tyler, and Lucy Lawless (Xena, Warrior Princess) have worn East Indian jewelry and sported ethnic body art/markings. Like the National Geographic, although in a much more blatantly exultant tone, the Sunday Telegraph hailed the wave of cross-cultural dressing by celebrities as a symptom of the "rich decorative mood sweeping through fashion" (Campbell, 1998, p. 5).

However, such celebratory media images and reports of New Age culture in Euramerican contexts camouflage the historical context of such racialized appropriations of ethnic body art, markings, and artifacts to signify the natural, mystical, and raw qualities of the non-Western Other's sexuality. Advocating more nuanced interpretations of Orientalism as a mobile and heterogenous discourse, Suren Lalvani (1995) argues that proliferating Turkish, Asian, and Middle-Eastern motifs--turbans, head-dresses, carpets, fabrics--in nineteenth century European consumer culture animated the sensual pleasures of consumption and structured the imaginary economy of desire and fantasy. Lalvani writes that these incomplete and fragmented Orientalist motifs, stripped from their original contexts and deployed in arbitrary fashion, signified contradictory impulses in colonial discourse--to contain the threat posed by the colonized and reinvent the Western Self through consumption of the non-Western Other. Extending postcolonial theories of Otherness to the current fascination for Mehndi and other ethnic fashion in the United States, Gigi Durham (1999) asks an intriguing question: "How does the dislocation of the symbols of Indian femininity contribute to the discourse of Orientalism that remains part of Western culture?" (p. 4). Interrogating "hip" consumer practices, which delink Indian feminine markings from the "actual bodies and cultural histories of Indian women," she writes that the erasure of Indian women as carriers of their own ethnic markings represents a new and pernicious form of exploiting Asian women as intangible, disembodied signifiers of exoticism. According to Durham, the inscription of "empty and expendable" ethnic markings on White women's bodies as signs of difference in progressive fashion reproduces Orientalist ideologies of Asian women's sexuality (mute/passive and wild/uncontrolled) and dissipates the troubled politics of immigration and racism.

Fortifying the visual image's hegemonic packaging of Mehndi as a benign feminine artifact of global culture, the text's narrative details, tone, and language glossed over the inequalities of race, gender,

and class and glamorized the exploitative manufacturing of ethnic culture for profit (p. 16). In the story's commentary on body art in Los Angeles, the writer Erla Zwingle's description of her interview on a "sunny, September afternoon" with French artist Pascal Giacomini in his "spacious frame house in West Hollywood" warmly invoked his upper-class identity. In a tone inflected with language that manufactured Otherness, the writer divulged that Giacomini drew Mehndi "swirls down the bare arm of a Hispanic girl" and that he took the writer's left hand and "drew a sinuous uncoiling circle" while he informed her that even his "Guatemalan maid" was a Mehndi artist. We learn later on that Pascal developed a "Mehndi kit" that he had sold successfully at hundreds of outlets because Americans, who were "incorrigibly curious and ravenous for novelty, love to experiment with ethnic food, clothes, words" (pp. 16-17. The Geographic's upbeat lifestyle account of Mehndi production by a French man in the United States, juxtaposed alongside casual references to Guatemalan maids, contributed further to the accommodationist celebration of racial diversity as aesthetic practice and experience (p. 16).

The Geographic posited that the path to liberation for Asian women, who desired a shift from accommodation to revolution in their lives, was located in their willingness to embrace the active agency global culture awarded its loyal female audiences. Sharing a vignette from Shanghai, the writer narrated the story of Dr. Li Ping, a cardiologist, who, along with other Chinese women, had discovered the profits of selling Amway cosmetics door-to-door, an entrepreneurial route to fulfilling the doctor's dream of building her own clinic. The writer accompanied Dr. Ping on one of her sales visits to a friend/client's home. The narrative revealed that while applying cosmetics to her woman friend's face, Dr. Ping first lectured her friend with the words, "Age will destroy our skin." The doctor then offered her friend skin advice prefaced by the statement "I'm a doctor so I have knowledge of beauty," immediately after which the client, who declared her faith in the high-priced cosmetics recommended by a medical expert, ordered several items. The Geographic writer described the modern ritual of the cosmetics sale in Shanghai as a morning that passed quickly and "seemed so unremarkable that I had to remind myself how revolutionary it all really was" (p. 26). The Geographic's story telling technique persuasively marketed the geographic/cultural mobility and global success of the American dream in China to echo the fictional tales of cosmetic advertising where the regressive politics of gender, beauty, and age recede into the shadows of the nether world. Dr. Ping's sales strategy of first arousing anxiety and then offering expert scientific reassurance resembled the persuasive pitch embedded in advertising stories that aim to create new markets. Cosmetics' commercials based on the logic of the "fear appeal" first depict aging as an

irreversible, antagonistic force that targets women and then extol the marvels of science, carefully distilled in skin care products as magically capable of delaying nature's attack on youthful feminine beauty.

While Asian women's representations infused global culture with the ambience of glamour, happiness, and freedom, the Geographic opportunistically mined Othered tropes of Black femininity drawn from mainstream news images to underscore the global economic power of the U.S. film industry. In a two-page photo, a Black woman sitting on a Los Angeles bus stop bench appeared to be a few feet away from a large poster advertising the film Armageddon. Surrounded by darkness, she was positioned on a much lower level than the lighted poster, which loomed above her head. Dressed in soiled clothing, the Black woman had dirty socks on her feet with no shoes and she gazed sideways at the film poster. The poster displayed the face of a young White woman, actress Liv Tyler, with the word "Grace" inscribed in large white type above her head while fiery flames raged below and behind her face. The caption lyrically explained that "A life in which socks make do for shoes is far more than a Los Angeles bus stop bench away from the deep pockets of U.S. movie studios." After this brief acknowledgment of the wide gulf between the rich and poor in Los Angeles, the rest of the caption detailed production costs and ticket sales of the film Armageddon to convey the global dominance of the United States film industry. In the Geographic's sole image of a poor Black woman, the politics of race and class were transformed into poetic and aesthetic practices that enabled the photographer to vividly code the seductive appeal of global culture. The catalog of symbols that indexed her marginalization--dark skin, shabby casual clothing, grimy socks, shoeless feet, and her presence in the racialized space of inner city America--intensified the iridescent glow of the film poster and reinforced the classic (read upper-class) beauty of White actress Liv Tyler. Tyler's luminescent visage (clean wide-eyed face, thin nose, pink lips, and dark shiny hair), her aura of celebrity stardom, and her history of economic privilege as daughter of well-known rock singer Steve Tyler were magnified as the poster dialectically interacted with the blurred image of the disenfranchised Black woman. The text provided no commentary about those left behind in the economic periphery by the sweep of global culture, which permitted all its consumers easy entry into its fantasy world, but allowed only a few the privilege of profiting from its dreams of material wealth.

Ultimately, in the absence of text or images that endowed women with power, the Geographic's facile accounts of women as symbols, consumers, peddlers, and mute victims of global culture became the dominant narratives of femininity. Investing male voices early on with cultural capital and authority, the writer quoted British sociologist Mike Featherstone on the first page of the story "A World

Together" in the caption to the photo of Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh. Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, briefly cited in one caption, was the only woman among the eight authors and intellectuals who provided expert knowledge on global culture. Apart from Featherstone, six other male experts and intellectuals were discussed within the text of the story, with references to their voices ranging from two to three sentences to five paragraphs devoted to Alvin Toffler's futuristic views on global economic and cultural changes.

Masculinity, Hypervisibility, and Marginality

Due to ingrained assumptions that only girls and women possess and perform gender, scholars have only recently begun analyzing cultural representations and experiences of masculinity. For instance, in the case of the National Geographic, Lutz & Collins (1993) devoted an entire chapter on gender to the magazine's visual portraits of non-Western women, but do not accord the same attention to non-Western men's images. The representational terrain of masculinity in the Geographic's vision of global culture, as the following analysis shows, resonated with the hierarchical economic and cultural relations of race and nation that were historically articulated in Euroamerican colonial discourses.

The United States of America, tightly wrapped within the intertextual fabric of vigorous, confident, and hyper-patriotic White masculinity greeted readers in the first editorial photograph of the August 1999 issue. The signature red, white, and blue colors of the American flag appeared on the painted face of a young White male Mardi Gras celebrator. Vertical strips of red and white paint criss-crossed the entire lower half of his face, blue paint covered the upper half, and a large white star graced the central part of his forehead. The man's slightly upraised face, firmly closed lips, and direct solemn gaze recaptured popular culture and news images of heroic military masculinity to signal patriotic pride and loyalty to the nation. His straw cowboy hat and the casually knotted scarf around his strong neck metaphorically linked the vitality of American nationalism to pervasive cultural myths of rugged frontier masculinity (brave, reckless men subduing nature). The text of the caption reiterated the visual image's construction of hyper-patriotic American masculinity. When interviewed by the photographer, the young man eloquently dismissed his personal identity as inconsequential because self and nation converged at the site of the flag, an artifact that celebrated the glory of his identity as national citizen: "My name doesn't matter, I'm just an American . . . I love my flag and I'm proud of it."

In yet another Geographic photograph that deployed the trope of masculinity as a representational strategy, the figure of the rich, visionary, and disciplined White male operated as a

perceptual filter to convey the power of Western media in the global cultural landscape. The first photograph in the story "A World Together" showed American filmmaker George Lucas standing in front of a cinema theater. The smorgasbord of iconic popular culture symbols from the film Star Wars in the background coalesced to surround his image with an aura of confidence and authority. The words "Star Wars" in bold red appeared at the top of entrance to the theater building and products of his fertile imagination--numerous characters in the form of toy figures from the 1999 Star Wars film--that were scattered in front of the theater titillated fans purchasing tickets to view the film. George Lucas' clothing, posture, and external appearance captured the qualities of remote assertiveness and quiet control that define ideal Euroamerican masculinity. Wearing a simple checked shirt, blue jeans, and a deep brown leather jacket, he stood with his shoulders squared, his legs planted apart, his arms close to his body, and his hands stuffed into the front pockets of his jeans. Uninvolved in the busy scene of his own modern mythmaking, his sober and serious face, which had no hint of an obedient smile and his dispassionate direct gaze subtly signaled his unwillingness to perform for the camera and his ability to control his own representation. Fusing the story of Lucas' global success into the stirring fables of empire and Greek mythology, the caption noted that he (the emperor-subject) stood among "denizens of his elaborate galactic saga" and compared him to the Greek epic hero Homer. Informing readers that Star Wars had "earned more than 4.5 billion dollars in profits since 1977," the caption celebrated the filmmaker's impressive economic power (p. 13).

Details in the text of the story "A World Together" reasserted the productive energy of Western masculinity to imbue Euroamerican men with the qualities of cultural dexterity, skillful mastery over Asian rituals and practices, and innovative entrepreneurial creativity. The writer introduced readers to Tom Sloper in Los Angeles, a "computer geek" and a "mah-jongg fanatic," who ingeniously merged his passion for technology with his deep fascination for "ancient" Chinese games by designing a software program called Shanghai: Dynasty that enabled players to enjoy virtual mah-jongg on the Internet. Conveying a sense of awe that valorized Sloper's wondrous ability to constitute transnational communities in the cybersphere, a lengthy passage of text detailed his charged and lively interaction with mah-jongg players from Germany, Wales, Ohio, and Minnesota. Readers also quickly learned that Sloper was no dilettante dabbler in Eastern culture; he could play eleven different styles of mah-jongg including the most challenging of all, the Japanese style. Similarly, the writer molded French artist Pascal Giacomini, the creator and developer of the Mehndi kit, into the carefully orchestrated role of an

imaginative, cultural trendsetter, whose enthusiastic embrace of Asian culture transcended the mundane to hone his keen appreciation for the offbeat and unusual.

By contrast, the Geographic's narratives of global culture and non-Western masculinity displayed an array of visual and textual representational strategies that hierarchically indexed the fragile vulnerability and feminized positionality of Asian manhood to heighten the status and power differentials between Western and Eastern cultures. An intriguing photograph that followed the first editorial image of the patriotic American man was visibly intended to provoke sympathy for multiply marginalized non-Western peoples living in the cultural, economic, and geographic peripheries of global culture. Recuperating binary popular culture techniques of "David versus Goliath" that oppositionally cast weak victims against formidable enemies, the Geographic drew upon the calculated image of a hapless male child to communicate the notion of uncorrupted culture buckling under the immense power of American global commodities. The photograph showed a young, brown-skinned boy with black hair, a descendant of the Olmec people, who lived on the coastal plains in Mexico (See Fig. 3). The photographer's camera captured the boy in the process of submitting his body to ritual preparation for worship of the jaguar, the powerful lord of the Olmec spirit world. Simulating the fear-inspiring imagery of gun victimhood that proliferates in hypermasculine violent films, the mouth of an empty Coca-Cola bottle, held by an adult hand and inclined downwards, made contact with the boy's nude upper body at the base of his neck between the collar bones. The boy's torso smeared with clay, full pouting lips, pensive eyes pointing sideways, and slender arms awkwardly held at a distance from his hips, compellingly coded his innocent docility. Ostensibly, as the caption informed readers, the open mouth of the bottle, dipped in ashes, imprinted round circles on the boy's body so that his skin would resemble the coat of a jaguar. For the casual reader, however, the threat of global culture manifested in the form of a Coca Cola bottle menacingly extinguished indigenous culture constructed as a defenseless boy lacking the will and strength to push away the bottle. Reinforcing the visual image's construction of the struggling, ingenuous native, the caption read "the ritual shows that in an age of globalization the cultural practices of the past tenuously live on among the descendants of indigenous peoples."

Other photographs of Asian boys also purveyed poignant representations of life under threat and emphasized the qualities of passivity and powerlessness. One image headlined in the language of feminized violence, "Malaria Ravages the Yanomami" (maidens also get ravaged), revealed a thin Yanomami boy (cut off below his chest) from Venezuela receiving a malaria shot. Using the nude male

body as a signifier to harness difference and "natural" submissiveness, the unclothed image of the Yanomami boy foregrounded his thin brown-skinned chest. His bowed down head held by an adult hand, his right arm firmly clasped by the woman injecting him, and the depression in his skin caused by the piercing needle reinforced his subordinate status as a compliant subject needing authority and control. Another wide-eyed cherubic Indian boy in a New Delhi slum, captured in a photograph within the story on the global village, held a toy space gun, not in the potently masculinized firing position, but more casually at his hips. Elaborating a feminine aesthetic of symbols, the boy was dressed in a pink coat, his eyes were outlined with dark eyeliner, and he sported the "bindi" mark on his forehead, body art that is usually linked in the West with East Indian girls and women. Couching his life within the metaphors of imminent danger and volatile political space, the caption claimed that the Indian boy's future was threatened by the specter of nuclear war in the region. In two other images we see young Chinese boys performing in a school under the watchful eyes of their teachers and poor Indian village boys receiving free samples of Colgate toothpaste from an adult Indian whose head was cut off by the photographer .

The most spectacular image of adult Asian men in the story "A World Together," a two-page photograph testified to the Geographic's undisputed professional skills in the sphere of photojournalism. The photographer endeavored to illustrate the collaborative production of global culture through the representation of an artistic project crafted by Chinese and Italian artists. The inviting visual feast of brilliant patches of gold and exuberant smiling faces scattered in the photograph was subtly undermined by the relentless deployment of the trope of the feminine to infantilize and emasculate Asian men. Eight Chinese male acrobats stood in a backstage setting at the Shanghai Grant Theater while they prepared for an operatic performance with singers from Italy. Echoing a popular culture representational style that proliferates in the enclave of femininity, the Chinese men unselfconsciously displayed their partially nude bodies (chests, stomachs, arms, and hands), and on a close scrutiny the reader would discover that their thighs and legs were encased in flesh-colored tights. The men's skimpy traditional Egyptian costumes--a piece of ribbed, gold cloth tied around their waists with a strip dangling between their thighs--firmly inserted these Asian men into the cultural fabric of womanhood. The elaborate pieces of jewelry--ornate gold-colored anklets, arm bands, wristbands, headbands with attached gold and black tassels, and a circular flat necklace--that adorned these men's bodies drew attention to their decorated nudity to produce a feminized positionality and affirm their status as the colorful ethnic Other. Unlike the

fully clothed Western men who radiated self-contained pride, dignity, and sober confidence, all the Asian men in this photograph smiled widely for the camera while two men on the far right simulated exaggerated grins with their mouths stretched and teeth bared. Invoking the pure joy and spontaneity of childhood, all the men in the foreground appeared playful with their arms and elbows raised in mid-air while their hands balled into fists beckoned readers to join them in a mock fight. The caption's semantic framing reinforced the link to childhood by explaining in the first sentence that the Chinese acrobats were "gleefully ready to swell an operatic procession."

Another prominent image of global culture associated Asian male subjectivity with exotic religious traditions, sacrifice, simplicity, and other worldliness, not the aggressive masculine power and prestige acquired by conquering the material world. In the first image of a group of men that appeared after the photograph of filmmaker George Lucas, Asian monks dressed in saffron robes were depicted while they ate breakfast at a Denny's restaurant in California. Although the semiotic packaging of the Buddhist monks was not disturbing in isolation, when placed in tandem with the Geographic's representations of physically strong and economically powerful White men, it irrevocably meshed with the other images of vulnerable and infantile non-Western masculinity to quietly smuggle in yet another Othered and feminized narrative on Asian male subjectivity. Embedded in the magazine's wider discursive field of Asian masculinity, the Theravada Buddhist monks in their colorful deep orange "feminine" clothing (loose robes) interpellated readers as nurturing, gentle, and submissive men who had renounced the dominant narratives of male success because they lacked the drive and yearning to transcend the limits of collective identity and achieve physical power or global fame and visibility. Excluding the monks from the grand narratives of patriotism or material progress, the first sentence of the caption observed that the breakfasting monks "excite no particular curiosity" to benignly celebrate the tolerance of Californians evan as it simultaneously repressed Asians' historical and contemporary experiences with racism in the United States. Moreover, the statement also disavowed the less than tolerant, anti-diversity politics of recent anti-affirmative action campaigns launched by conservatives in California (Mukherji, 2000).

The Geographic magazine's half-page photograph of a muscular Chinese teenage boy frozen in the act of gazing upward at a basketball suspended in mid-air ruptured its otherwise associated network of dominant accounts that manufactured powerless Asian masculinity. However, this image's representational techniques also surreptitiously recuperated a gendered positionality for Asian men in

relation to national identity and agency in the global public sphere. Paying deferential homage to the power of America, the teenage Chinese male playing basketball in Shanghai was fixed on a lower level than a cardboard cutout of American basketball star Michael Jordan, an iconic symbol of the United States. The cutout of Jordan stood in the empty space of the stadium like a revered idol being worshipped by a crowd of Asian devotee spectators lining the periphery of the court. Relegated to the idiom of fanhood, the young Asian men were symbolically subsumed within the more passive and compliant role of global commodity consumption, not the superior status-infused sectors of global production or celebrity stardom. Although readers briefly encountered four educated and entrepreneurial Asian men--a Chinese drama director, an Indian lawyer/cable entrepreneur, a retired Indian professor, and a Japanese author--in the text, none of these men or other Asian men bestowed with power and prestige appeared in any photographs. In fact, one representation of an Asian man in the text strategically circumscribed his role to consolidate and valorize the authoritative aura of America as messenger of modernity. The writer introduced readers to "energetic" and "brash" Rajan Bakshi, a lawyer and cable entrepreneur in New Delhi, who enthusiastically praised the initiatives of American multinationals, but concrete details portraying Bakshi and other Indian cable entrepreneurs as recent players in the global mediascape were conspicuously absent. Ultimately, despite the colorful hypervisibility of Asian boys and men in the Geographic, the first portrait of George Lucas scripted a chasm of difference between East and West and connected White masculinity to discourses of global power, wealth, and historical agency.

Postcolonial approaches to race, nation, and cultural representation reveal that the intricately layered hierarchical alignment of Asian men with a feminized positionality in the Geographic is anchored to the troubled historical and contemporary discourses of Euroamerican colonial modernity. In her pioneering work on the ideological underpinnings of British imperialism, historian Mrinalini Sinha (1995) unearths the deeply implicated politics of gender, race, and religion, particularly one specific construction of colonial masculinity, that affirmed and reproduced discourses of European racial superiority. Closely examining a range of historical documents and taking into account the political-economic context of European imperialism, she argues that the subtext of the perverted, unnatural, and effeminately feeble Bengali man (sometimes generalized to all middle-class Indian men), which underscored the manliness--strong, assertive, and logical qualities--of the upper-class Englishman, was a cultural response of the colonial elite to counter the threat of "native" men's mutinies and uprisings. In the case of the Theravada Buddhist monks, the mapping of religious asceticism and austerity onto the

bodies of Asian men also reproduced the gendered asymmetry of Orientalist representations of the East in colonial accounts. In the binary oppositional narrative of East/West as spiritual/material, the spiritual, conjoined with fatalism, submissiveness, mysteriousness, and mute acceptance of nature, was gendered feminine, and the material, constituted by logic, aggressive questioning of destiny, and the desire to conquer, was sketched as masculine (Prakash, 1990, Said, 1978).

The Geographic's configuration of Asian masculinity in global culture is also consonant with New World narratives on Asian men, discourses of Othering that challenge the separation of race and gender oppression in theorizing marginality; femininity in these colonial images became a critical hinge in the process of articulating racial difference and distinction (Chen, 1996; Dicker, 1979; Lim, 1994; Mark & Chih, 1993; Pan, 2000; Stone, 1995; Wong, 1993). For example, a nineteenth century song sheet cover in the United States showed a Chinese man, dressed in a loose feminine gown, bowing down obsequiously as he demurely clasped his hands; in Lim's analysis of such racialized images, he proposes that Asian men stigmatized as feminine were perceived to be incapable of achieving the maturity and authority associated with the subject position of male adulthood (Lim, 1994). Dicker (1979) analyzes a cartoon from Wild West imagery in which two caricatured Chinese men, caught in the web of servile domestic femininity, were dressed in gowns as they ironed and mended clothes. The 1993 film A Ballad of Little Jo excavated the female signifier as an exotic visual and dramatic technique to narrate the story of a male Chinese protagonist, Tinman Wong. Enacting a form of gender reversal, Tinman Wong assumed the role of a "wife" in his intimate relationship with a Caucasian woman, Josephine Monaghan, who masqueraded throughout the film as a man. As Josephine's housekeeper, Wong performed a subordinate domestic role traditionally reserved for women and he inhabited the erotic filmic space of physically alluring, but objectified femininity--the camera lingered on his long black hair and smooth, hairless body to sexualize him for the consumption of the male gaze that was transposed onto Josephine (Chen, 1996).

Unlike the images of Asian men, the Geographic solicitously attempted to suture its representation of Black masculinity to narratives of global celebrity and prestige, but its only photograph of a Black man constrained the boundaries of his subjectivity and revived limited accounts of Black male empowerment that mainstream media routinely celebrate. In the photograph of Michael Jordan, his ghostly presence in China was captured on inanimate cardboard, not in flesh and blood; a life-size cutout of the basketball star stood upright in a Shanghai stadium in Chicago Bulls' clothing. While the caption

to filmmaker George Lucas' image, which supplied details about his earnings in the invisible third-person voice of the Geographic, assumed the reified status of objective news, in the caption to Jordan's photo, the magazine enlisted Nike corporation to become the architect of Jordan's success. A Nike spokesperson testified to Michael Jordan's popularity in China and the magazine divulged no facts or numbers to objectively document the extent of Jordan's economic power and global visibility.

The circuit of Black masculinity as athletic success in the Geographic's interpretation of global culture capitulates to the discursive construction of African masculinity in colonial accounts, which projected physical aggression and natural "raw" hypermasculinity onto African men, qualities that supposedly transmute into productive energy when tamed by the rigors of modern sport. However, the semiotic coding of the Geographic's lone image of Michael Jordan within the logic of unintended, inferential racism acquires significance only when it is inserted into the abundant, constant flow of media images that perpetuate uni-dimensional images of Black men as inherently capable of conquering combative, physically demanding sports (Hall, 1990, p. 13). The Geographic's image of Michael Jordan in Shanghai, acting in concert with other images designed for popular consumption, reinscribed sport as one of the few entry points into the "global" Horatio Alger Myth for Black men. As Carol Stabile (2000) argues, such narratives of athletic fame have troubled implications for perceptions of Black men's potential: "African-Americans possess bodily capital rather than the entrepreneurial cunning of an Andrew Carnegie or Ted Turner. Their impulsiveness, or excess energy, must find an appropriate physical outlet--it must be disciplined--or else it runs the risk of turning into senseless, undisciplined violence" (p. 32). Echoing Stabile, Campbell (1996) proposes that news representations of Black Americans as athletes and entertainers, when combined with the absence of Black scholars, entrepreneurs, or professional experts, deny Black subjectivity association with intellectual power .

Furthermore, the Geographic's representation of Black masculinity also intersected with and re-articulated dominant mass media images of Black Americans that oscillate between the twin poles of spectacular success in athletics/entertainment and abject failure related to crime/poverty. The only other image of the Black community in the Geographic, besides the cutout of Michael Jordan, was a two-page photograph of a poor Black Los Angeles woman saturated with semiotic signs of dark urban "inner-city" poverty, imagery that vigorously reconstituted popular culture and news discourses on the pathology of violent Black crime and welfare queens. Dressed in shabby, athletic clothing with her feet encased in soiled white socks, a Black woman sat on a bus stop bench surrounded by the darkness of the

night. Rising above her feminized poverty, Jordan's Black masculinity, which interpellated readers as the trademark for individual/individualized routes to class mobility, deflected and denied histories of racial oppression and the obstacles that institutional racism places in the paths of many Black Americans. In the Geographic's ironic, interlocked crafting of Black empowerment versus marginality, Jordan's celebrity endorsement of Nike, intended to encapsulate the rugged, high-quality craftsmanship of Nike's shoes, vividly marked the "shoeless" poverty of the Black woman in Los Angeles.

Consumption over Production, Capital over Labor

Global consumption, framed in the language and epistemology of touristic yearnings, travel discourses, and "hip" lifestyle narratives, ignited and fueled the Geographic's interpretation of global culture. The leading paragraph simulated the writer's personal voyage of discovery filled with a sense of breathless wonder over the incongruity of contemporary cross-cultural consumption practices: "Once I started looking for them, these moments were everywhere . . ." Describing the mobile traffic of "exotic" global commodities, the writer Erla Zwingle described Italian pasta in Denmark, Lebanese cuisine in India, Italian espresso in London, and flamenco in Japan. Claiming that globalization had effected a powerful transformation in the lives of global communities, Zwingle argued that contemporary life was in the "throes of a worldwide reformation of cultures, a tectonic shift of habits and dreams" (p. 12). Tracing globalization's origins to a linear narrative of cumulative technological inventions beginning with the postal service and ending with electronic media, the Geographic's linear historical narrative projected a genealogy of technological determinism for global modernity.

The Geographic's representation of global consumption practices as exciting, revolutionary phenomena propelled by the historical genius of Western technology suppressed another historical subtext, one that was instrumental in creating the teleology for modern globalization--the colonial history of Western economic expansion and imperialism. The Geographic writer's fascination for global consumption conjoined to images of "tectonic shifts" did not account for the histories of European--British, French, Portuguese, and Dutch--colonialisms that facilitated the political, economic, and imaginary conditions of possibility for the proliferation of current global economies. Although major transformations have occurred in the manifestations and scale of modern globality, traces of the capitalist business principles that stoked the global economies of colonialism--movement of raw materials, human resources, and labor across and within geographic borders and the creation of markets for manufactured goods--strongly linger in the strategies of modern multinationals. Furthermore, transnational elite

consumers' appetites for authentic objects and experiences from distant lands, which the writer claimed was a characteristic of contemporary global culture, pervaded the imaginary realm of European material culture during the era of colonial modernity. As Suren Lalvani (1995) notes, in the nineteenth century, when Europe was beginning to experience the order, discipline, and mechanical rhythms of the industrial revolution, the sphere of Orientalized consumption saturated with the signifiers of exotic Asian and African colonies became an alternative space of fantasy and unleashed desire. Similarly, Jackson Lears (1989), who charts the historical contours of cosmopolitan culture, argues that the material economy in Europe was fused with libidinal desire for the forbidden enticement of colonized cultures: "the nineteenth century market was a liminal space linking East with West in a profusion of exotic images that surrounded consumer goods in an aura of sensuous mystery and possibility" (p. 77).

Reviewing the impact of globalization on cultural diversity, Erla Zwingle optimistically argued that "resourceful, resilient, and unpredictable" cultures in different locales challenged the homogenizing impulses of Western popular culture and commodities. Zwingle's comments about "actively resistant" non-Western consumers surviving the steady onslaught of Western global culture responded to recent arguments of cultural studies theorists who have advocated against envisioning consumers in Asia and Africa as passively adopting Western culture (Ang, 1996; Hannerz, 1997). However, the evidence the Geographic writer marshaled to support her thesis of lively local resistance in Asia invigorated corporate notions of consumerism as an effective mode of opposition against global cultural homogenization.

Crafting a story that transmuted into a triumphal celebration of the market, Zwingle drew from corporate discourses on diversity to inventory multinationals' tolerant, accommodating attempts to customize their products in order to appeal to diverse communities of global consumers. Hence, the writer described McDonald's discovery of Indian consumers' resistance to beef through market research that eventually led the corporation to abandon their standard fare in India and instead serve mutton and vegetarian fast food. Similarly, when Mattel learned that its blond Barbie doll could not mesmerize children equally across the world, the corporation decided that the doll had to undergo a series of cosmetic transformations—dark skin, black hair, and colorful ethnic costumes—to stimulate sales; hence, we now have 30 national varieties of Barbie including the latest ones, Austrian and Moroccan. Readers were informed that in India, Revlon acquiesced to change the chemical composition of its cosmetics to suit the hot climate and cater to different skin colors and that a failing MTV had to add an India dedicated network to compete successfully with local cultural productions. Attesting to these local efforts of

multinationals' "going native" as conciliatory practices that coded subservience to the powerful wishes of non-Western consumers, the writer argued that ethnic marketing actively countered the charges of "imperialist cultural pollution" that conservative Indian politicians levy against foreign companies.

Postcolonial critic Indrepal Grewal (1999) urges scholars of globalization and material culture to be vigilant of and cautious about the progressive implications of the transnationalization of multiculturalism through the ethnic marketing practices of global corporations:

> Multiculturalism, as it has been understood in the context of the United States, is no longer a claim on civil rights, but also circulates globally as consumer culture in which ethnic immigrant and White consumers create negotiated lifestyles from the American lifestyle that is so much a part of late twentieth-century U.S. capitalism. (p. 802)

Drawing on materialist critiques of transnationalism to analyze consumption practices in postcolonial cultures, she warns consumers and scholars in First World nations against capitulating to the progressive patina of corporate discourses that have appropriated the activist slogan "Think globally, act locally" to further their image as socially responsible "local" partners in a global economy. In her critique of the multicultural marketing of the Indian Barbie doll in a sari, Grewal argues that Mattel's recuperation of national diversity for profit, far from revealing Indian consumers' active local resistance to a global "America," illustrates the creation of new consuming subjects in Asia experiencing their transformation into lucrative global "niche" markets, carved up by the demographics of gender, class, and age. Similarly, the Geographic's examples of modifications in global commodities demonstrated that global consumption practices are mediated by ethnic, racial, and national differences; however, multinational corporations' localization strategies to increase sales in world markets do not offer evidence of the cultural resilience of Indian or Chinese citizens. On the contrary, as many corporations have begun to experience saturation in their sales in the United States, the middle-classes in East Europe and Asia have become new, unconquered subjects awaiting their training as American style consumers. Masquerading as mannequins for global diversity, product modifications--changes in the aesthetics of consumer culture--have been touted by corporations as public testimonials that confirm their commitment to local cultural diversity.

Quoting from The Communist Manifesto on the first page of the text in the story "A World Together," the writer claimed that globalization heralded Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' prophecies about the demise of national economies that would be replaced by global industries, much better equipped to fulfill world markets' desires for novel experiences and products (p. 12). Curiously enough

for a text that invoked the prescience of Karl Marx, whose scathing critiques of capitalism have inspired numerous studies on the manipulative techniques of corporate imagery and the exploitation of labor, the Geographic's narrative carefully disavowed critical commentary on the less than savory practices of "efficiency" that shape global production. Instead, the reader encountered benign signifiers and representations of corporate America floating throughout the text and the visual images of globalization. The Hollywood sign on the hill dominated the background to Michelle Yeoh's image and a United Colors of Benetton plastic sack in yellow and green, placed on a desk in the background scene of the Chinese acrobats, innocently beckoned the reader. Coca Cola's logos, painted in red, claimed the entire lower half of a corrugated metal wall in Mumbai. Coca Cola signs decorated the umbrella of a fast food vendor in Shanghai and appeared on a table surrounded by Asian monks at a Denny's restaurant in California. Several boxes of Colgate toothpaste in bright red and white packages captured the reader's eye in the photo of rural children in an Indian village.

The photograph of a dancing Zhou Die Die in a Shanghai street, the most celebratory visual image of corporate America, elaborated a hegemonic story of Western democracy, freedom, and individualism (See Fig. 4). This image suggested that with the advent of global culture in Asia, symbolized by Nike, Chinese citizens, previously repressed by communism, scarcity in consumer commodities, and the traditional constraints of Confucianism, were now able to luxuriate in the personal liberty forged by their allegiance to capitalism. Drawing attention to Zhou Die Die's chest, the hard to escape corporate logo of Nike, the ubiquitous swoosh sign, was inscribed in white on her black sports bra. Her flung back head and her eyes looking upward at the sky announced her abandonment and joy, and evoked nostalgic associations with the pure, undiluted happiness of childhood while "Nikeless" older Chinese women quietly watched her. Nike's corporate logo also visibly reappeared on Zhou Die Die's T-shirt in another photo where she was shown hugging her mother. The Geographic's prominent editorial display of the swoosh sign on Zhou Die-Die's clothing performed the function of subsidizing Nike's advertising expenses; for example, the financial savings that accrued to Nike when golfer Tiger Woods displayed the swoosh sign on his T-shirt and hat for sixteen minutes during the televised final round of the Master's tournament amounted to $1, 685, 000 of purchased air time (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998, p. 26). The swoosh sign on the body of a young, physically and emotionally liberated Chinese girl also coincided with Nike's mission marketing campaign that manufactured a reputation for the corporation as furthering girls' and women's mental and physical development, a strategy designed to

establish its shoes as a leading product in the market of middle-class White women in the United States. Aligning its commitment to women's progress with the goals of liberal feminism, Nike's use of a protofeminist pitch in its advertising has suggested that playing sports (obviously while wearing Nike shoes) can empower girls by liberating them from the gender oppression that awaited them as adult women--lack of self esteem, vulnerability to sexual assault, teenage pregnancy, and domestic violence.

Why were the Geographic's images of global consumer culture so strongly reminiscent of corporate imagery? The increasing sophistication in postmodern advertising techniques that no longer employ blatantly persuasive images or hard selling advertising copy in order to appeal to younger, visually savvy consumers, implied that the Geographic's editorial images of Denny's restaurants, Nike, Coca Cola, Benetton, or Colgate traveled from photojournalism into the murkier terrain of corporate promotion. These photographs documented the success of "product insertion" tactics pursued by corporations that aggressively seek out advertising within the surreptitious and seamless context of news and popular culture. Also, in the professional world of global advertising, images of consumer products, when subtly inserted into vivid portraits of everyday life in the non-Western world, are lauded as examples of highly creative and effective techniques of persuasion. Relying on the combined appeal of exoticism and humor, IBM's global advertising images, for example, show us shepherds, nuns, and monks in remote locations casually discussing the merits of modern technology.

In an even more radical move, some corporate leaders and advertising professionals have dared to violate the traditional conventions of product advertising by producing images in which their products have completely disappeared (Tinic, 1997). These ambiguously coded advertisements have sometimes deployed controversial social issues (racism, AIDS, terrorism) drawn from the arenas of news, public journalism, and public service announcements to secure the attention of the visually fatigued consumer. For instance, Benetton's advertisements have transcended ideological boundaries by consistently borrowing from socially progressive discourses on race, gender, and sexual orientation to promote their products (Tinic, 1997). The reality of shrinking advertising budgets has also forced corporations to seek creative and highly credible news and editorial outlets to showcase their products. The invisibility of visual images in the Geographic that recorded the problems of globalization and the text's silence on the politics of overseas labor, when situated within the context of advertising images that blur the boundaries between editorial and corporate communication, compounded the magazine's complicity with the promotional goals of multinationals.

The Geographic's story on global culture also replenished dominant ideologies of Western democracy and capitalism that echo colonial discourses in portraying corporate America as a benevolent participant in the economic and cultural development of the non-Western world. The text detailed the active role of multinationals in facilitating cultural change and economic growth in China and India: General Motors' 1.5 billion dollar investment in a new plant in Shanghai; urban development in Shanghai as a result of foreign investment amounting to 15 billion dollars; the popularity of Cosmopolitan and Elle in China; Gucci's surprisingly booming sales in Shanghai; and door to door sales of Amway, Avon, Tupperware, and Mary Kay as new routes for Chinese women to gain prosperity. The caption to the image of a Chinese teenager playing basketball informed readers that Nike sponsored the tournament in Shanghai. Nike's official spokesperson testified to Michael Jordan's popularity in China and Zhou Die Die's dance in a Shanghai street, according to the Geographic, was a rehearsal for her appearances on Nike's dance team.

In the Geographic's brief and sanitized discussion of labor, multinationals, excised from the "profitable" conditions of exploitation that the developing world has presented, became exciting sources of rapid class mobility for workers in the Third World. An Indian entrepreneur in New Delhi, Rajan Bakshi, animatedly reported that foreign companies had increased professional opportunities for Indian workers. Praising the initiatives of multinationals in accelerating the visibility of Indian women in the global public sphere, he proposed that foreign companies offered new options for young Indian women, whose only other alternative would have been to suffer gender discrimination in domestic companies. The changes wrought by multinationals in the lives of Indian workers were also constructed as antidotes to outdated, static notions of cultural purity and nationalism that have hindered India's incorporation into global modernity. Zahida Khatoon, a woman who lived in a slum in New Delhi, reportedly told the writer that the negative impact of Coke and Pepsi on Indian culture did not concern her as long as she could barely afford to feed her children or send them to school. On the Geographic's website, accessible to a wider global audience than its readers, McDonald's was hailed as a haven for Indian consumers seeking sanitary food, clean bathrooms and as a safe refuge of secular modernity for women in "traditional cultures," who feared the social taboos of being seen alone in public spaces.

If the Geographic's visual images of Nike, Benetton and Coca Cola merged with the subtle promotional tactics of postmodern advertising, Erla Zwingle's positive textual references to multinational companies' contributions to prosperity and cultural revitalization in Asia announced the success of

corporate public relations techniques. Charitable images of corporations, subsumed within the editorial content of educational magazines like the Geographic, for example, are considered to be much more credible promotion than advertising, which is after all commercial space that is bought outright by a self-serving corporation. Securing favorable editorial coverage or neutral "Third Party Endorsement" in non-advertising media content that carries the bylines of "objective" writers affiliated with reputable media organizations is one of the primary tasks of corporate media relations programs that endeavor to enhance their organization's identity. Moreover, positive or factual references in news, feature stories, and photojournalistic images are highly sought after as cost-effective publicity because corporations do not have to pay for such editorial coverage.

Disavowing the standpoint of global production, the Geographic's narrative on global culture, which privileged the consumerist platform of consumption, concealed the very practices and realities of labor that multinationals' propaganda routinely attempts to keep out of sight. Far before they were interpellated as target markets of global culture, many Asian citizens, particularly those not included in the elite consumerist caste, encountered globalization as workers being sought after by corporations in the United States that were in hot pursuit of plentiful and cheap labor. For example, young Chinese teenagers in the Geographic's 1999 issue were assiduously stitched into a seamless narrative of global consumer happiness and enthusiasm as participants in Nike's dance teams and basketball tournaments, however, when Nike entered mainland China in 1978 to open its first overseas factory, Chinese citizens were first and foremost regarded as sources of cheap labor. Nike has since then opened factories in Korea and Taiwan, and currently more than a third of Nike products are produced in Indonesia and Vietnam, where the daily wage for workers is a meager $1.50. In Indonesia, a "friendly" government, eagerly seeking the investments of global corporations and their offers of employment, actually set the minimum wage below the poverty line (Katz, 19994). Other global corporations in the United States including Walmart, Gifford, Kentucky Fried Chicken, J.C. Penney, and the Disney Store have also been documented as less than perfect global citizens in their overseas labor practices in Asia (Stabile, 2000). Reports of corporate abuses of labor in Asia have documented unsafe work conditions, low health and safety standards, lack of benefits, medical leave, and overtime wages, exploitation of child labor, and harsh management tactics.

In the Geographic's canvas on global culture, multinationals, represented by the more elite high-tech computer industry in India (not the garment industry), were conjoined to progressive agendas of

non-Western women's empowerment. The logic underlying Geographic's uni-dimensional presentation of corporate America as agents of Asian women's liberation from their oppression by domestic Indian corporations morphed into a modern manifestation of colonial discourses that also projected the ideology of Western culture as the savior of non-Western women from the oppression of their "barbaric" indigenous cultures (as Gayatri Spivak has succinctly summarized, this is the colonial paradigm of "white men saving brown women from brown men"). Although the magazine suggested that multinationals were spaces of professional opportunity that enabled Indian women workers to increase their economic power, the more pervasive experiences of Asian women in global corporations have been far from exciting or equitable. At the Yue-Yuen factory in mainland China, for example, ninety percent of the workers were women who had to "obey a long list of rules concerning fraternization with men and curfews" (Katz, 1994, pp. 179-180). Malaysian women in the electronics industry, considered prized workers because Asian women were believed to be more docile and nimble than men, have repeatedly suffered emotional and physical abuses from their supervisors (Ong, 1987).

The Geographic's resounding silence on global labor practices became a tremendously productive representational strategy that perpetuated the neocolonial ideology of American corporations as magnanimous global citizens that empower developing countries to modernize and "catch up" with developed nations. As Carol Stabile (2000) argues in her case study of Nike, the disappearance of labor exploitation in their media imagery is critical for transnational corporations that strive to persuade their consumers that consumption is an ideal means to experience their identities as liberal, multicultural citizens. It becomes easier for multinationals to suppress the contradictions between their commercial images as philanthropic institutions and their less than equitable labor practices overseas when respected high brow magazines like the Geographic assist in maintaining the benevolent veneer of global capitalism. Ultimately, the Geographic's narrative on global culture, which embraced consumption and distanced labor, reasserted the methodology of commercial media imagery that fosters commodity fetishism by suppressing the social relations of production: "The fetishism of commodities consists in the first place of emptying them of meaning, of hiding the real solid relations objectified in them through human labor, to make it possible for the imaginary/symbolic social relations to be injected into the construction of meaning at a secondary level" (Jhally, 1989, pp. 221-222).

Postcolonial Theory, Pedagogy, and Commodified Globalization

In his chilling critique that pierces the shrill exuberance of those who stand to benefit the most from the new pace and mobility of global modernity, Zygmant Bauman (1998) felicitously points to the mechanisms that reify and lend an aura of authority to modern myths of progress:

> Globalization is on everybody's lips; a fad word fast turning into a shibboleth, a magic incantation, a pass-key meant to unlock the gates to all present and future mysteries . . . All vogue words tend to share a similar fate: the more experiences they pretend to make transparent, the more they themselves become opaque. The more numerous are the orthodox truths they elbow out and supplant, the faster they turn into no-questions-asked canons . . . Globalization is no exception to that rule (p. 1)

The media are key sites where the misty smog enveloping globalization is repeatedly manufactured and distributed. In popular culture, globalization has become associated with the positive energy and potency of interconnectedness, community-building, empowerment, and vibrant individualism combined with the solidarity of progressive collectivism, qualities that corporations harness to sell commodities. The Geographic's accounts of globalization, as my analysis demonstrated, joined numerous multicultural lifestyle accounts in the popular media that traffic in the production of the vacuous "peoples of the world merrily co-existing" template, which promotes superficial notions of diversity as an aesthetic, culinary, travel, or consumer experience. Although the Geographic is only one site in the larger discursive field where globalization is crafted for popular ingestion, as a credible window of science on the world, it is a trusted voice in the myriad moments of popular reiteration that give the prevailing order of globalization its cloak of inevitability and normativity.

How can postcolonial theories of representation, with their rich and subtle insights into the complex mechanisms of racial Othering that suffused colonial imagery, disperse the thick mist of innocent, multicultural realism that surrounded the Geographic's rendering of global culture? From the vantage point of many traditional studies of race and gender in media content that are based on unearthing negative "stereotypes," the modern Indian woman daring the camera, the young Chinese girl dancing with abandon, the Malaysian actress suspended in mid-air, laughing/spiritual Asian men, and athletic Black men, would be diagnosed as positive images of success and happiness that challenge the invisibility and passivity of non-Western subjects in popular culture. However, when refracted through the critical lens of postcolonial theory, these "positive images" begin to narrate another story. With regard to women's fate in the fabric of globalization woven by the Geographic, a postcolonial feminist approach reveals that only young, slender non-Western women wholeheartedly devouring Western

culture can gain individual freedom and rebellious pleasure, not older women who endure traditional costumes, inflexible bodies, and the burdens of "native" motherhood. For non-Western men in the Geographic, postcolonial history indicates that their hypervisibility, not invisibility, reasserted their mute and vulnerable positionality; in an interesting display of marginality, the colorful, feminized smorgasbord of non-Western men's images verified and reversed postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak's notion of subalternity that hinges upon the quality of being silent and unheard (Spivak, 1990, p. 91).

In attempting to detect stereotypes in individual images, media critics may also miss the implications of the Geographic's associational network of mutually interactive racial images of Asia and Africa that were woven into its narrative on global modenity. The representational order of the Geographic's images subtly articulated the hierarchical ladder of human evolution designed by European scientists and anthropologists at the height of colonial empire and expansion. Consolidating the modern European self, the colonial paradigm of the evolutionary continuum positioned Africa at the bottom rung, Asia in the middle rung, and Europe at the top. While languorous White women in the Geographic luxuriated in the freedom of pursuing ethnic culture and attractive Asian women expressed independence and glamour, Black women became the canvas on which the magazine etched dark poverty and disenfranchisement. Encapsulating colonial models of racial status, an e-mail message from a relative in Mumbai, a devoted "local" fan of the National Geographic, encouraged me to read the August 1999 issue: "Great story on globalization. Make sure you read it. Shows Asia as willing to change and progress. But it is not surprising the writer did not include Africa--still backward, always at war, and resisting modern technology. See the pictures that follow the stories on global culture." The Geographic's editorial staff may not have intended the exclusion of Africa in their stories on global culture to evoke such disturbing responses among their local readers. However, the absence of Africa from the magazine's stories on global modernity symbiotically interacted with the spectacular visual presence of Africans in the story "Vanishing Cultures," which followed a few pages after the story on global culture. The two-page opening photograph of Africans in the story on vanishing cultures indexed Africa as a an ancient, "natural" space that was still inexorably trapped in the past. The photograph showed two Ariaal warriors in Kenya in colorful, traditional costumes while the caption informed readers that " . . . age old cultures are besieged by modern pressures. In Kenya, Ariaal warriors cling to a nomadic existence" (p. 63). As the casual reader browsed the magazine, Asia became aligned with the

vitality of progress and the dynamic visibility of global culture while Africa was anchored to the amorphous state of extinction and the ephemerality of a culture that could be vanquished by modernity.

Such discourses of Othering from a reader in India also suggest that colonialist and racist representations of non-Western cultures are not perpetuated among Euroamerican audiences alone; as the National Geographic continues to expand, its images of global culture that carry traces of racism, ethnocentrism, and sexism also circulate on a global scale. Although scholars in audience studies have demonstrated that readers can interpret popular culture in creative and even subversive ways, recent critiques of media reception research have urged cultural studies scholars to pay serious attention to the ideological and semiotic limits of the polysemic meanings promised by media texts. Global media such as the Geographic can facilitate a better understanding of ethnic, national, and gender difference in today's world where local readers and viewers move and live across borders. For example, in the United States, among the most racially diverse nations of the world, print media such as the Geographic, along with other forms of global media, shape middle-class East Indian immigrants' views about Africans and African-Americans far before they arrive at New York or Los Angeles.

One site where postcolonial media critics have the opportunity to crack the ideological surface of media representations of globalization is in the classroom; my goal in sharing this essay's critiques of the National Geographic with journalism students was to enable future writers and photojournalists to link theory with practice and to become sensitive to the subtle nuances of the stories they craft. While students readily acknowledge the problems with the fictional stories of fantasy spun by advertising, a practice they perceive as being contaminated by capitalism, they are reluctant to question editorial texts produced by cultural institutions such as the National Geographic, which they admire and aspire to work for. Analyses of globalization in journalistic texts, which claim to represent reality and circulate among readers as powerful indices of cultural capital, can promote critical media literacy and encourage alternative methodologies of producing narratives on globalization. Moreover, in many traditional journalism and media programs, postcolonial theories and approaches, usually linked to the work of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, are perceived as dense, impenetrable discourses of jargon that are relevant only for esoteric analyses of literary texts and historical documents; for instance, in 1998, Homi Bhabha along with two other prominent postcolonial critics received the worst writers of the year award from The New York Times. Such discourses that marginalize the relevance of postcolonial theory for critiques of contemporary media culture, on the one hand, fail to recognize the importance of the

foundational ideas (hybridity or subalternity) that drive the high theory of some postcolonial critics. On the other hand, discourses that dismiss postcolonial theory as jargon also ignore the work of numerous other postcolonial theorists whose work is invaluable in deconstructing global diversity and commodity culture in the media. As pedagogical tools, postcolonial media critics' textual analyses of elite print media, especially those that strive to represent the most important economic developments of our time--globalization--can effectively illustrate the ways in which contemporary media culture reproduces the legacies of colonialism.

I argue that the Geographic's photographs of global culture, which celebrate global consumption and the differences (racial, ethnic, gender) generated and commodified by the market, merge and overlap with commercial imagery originating in global capitalism. Stuart Hall's comments shed light on the impact of the reiteration of difference at various sites in the global economy, "I have always understood hegemony as operating through difference, rather than overcoming difference . . . hegemony is an authority which can be constructed only by consenting to recognise difference" (Hall, 1995, p. 69). On the level of media practices, the intersections between the Geographic's representations and the racial/gendered images of consumer advertising could be a consequence of the magazine's high production quality and specific editorial policies. It is not surprising that the Geographic's glossy paper and the visual character of its photographic images--the boldness of the colors that bleed into the edges, the large photographs that span centerfolds, and the professional qualities of the photographs created by some of the world's highest paid photojournalists--evoke associations with the world of advertising. The Geographic's practice of embedding photographs that are not anchored to the text through references or discussion also contributes to the ambiguous quality of its images. When gripping images of human subjects are inserted into feature stories in a "floating" and disembodied fashion, they begin to resemble the imagery of magazine advertisements that interrupt the flow of editorial text. On the institutional level, as the Geographic seeks out global audiences for its range of media products including its television programming, it may not be surprising that its editorial interpretation of globalization emphasizes the pleasures of consumerism and the benevolence of global corporations.

Finally, in critiquing the commodification of globalization in the Geographic's editorial coverage, it is important to remember that it may be futile to blame one media institution alone for its indulgent celebration of consumer culture. In an era when the subtleties of capitalism's ideological processes have increased, there is a need for subtle visions of the media as the one of the central symbolic and economic

structures that support the global expansion of multinationals. In our deeply entrenched current phase of global consumerism, initially transmitted as a mode of colonial modernity, the politics of global social and economic inequalities also become transitory and fickle commodities. As corporations and media organizations mutually transgress promotional and editorial borders, it might be unrealistic to lament a bygone era when educational magazines such as the National Geographic were capable of producing pure and unpolluted representations of the realities of life in the non-Western world. In the words of Armand Matellart (1991), "Like it or not, commoditised space has become so pervasive that it becomes impossible to continue thinking of culture as a reserved and uncontaminated terrain" (p. 216).

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