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From the Editor

The Spring 2015 issue of VIA was released on April 21, 2015. Just as in our inaugural issue, this second issue of VIA features a range of contributors, from freshmen to seniors, who submitted work from both the St. Louis and Madrid campuses of Saint Louis University. We were delighted to receive a greater number of submissions this year, from a wider range of disciplines. The themes emerging from this issue are the impact of interpretation, human relationships, guilt, female and gender roles, and exploration of diseases. This year debuts our first PDF of the journal. In addition, this year brought a new email address and Facebook page. These additions helped us create an broader platform for hosting an interdisciplinary dialogue among the students of Saint Louis University.

Thank you again to all that submitted, our audience, and our staff. We are ecstatic about the future of VIA to come.

-Holly Kohn, Editor-in-Chief

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A Small Exploration of the Effects of Language on Interpretation

By Wolfgang Gaidis

Daß die Welt meine Welt ist[,] das zeigt sich
darin[,] daß die Grenzen der Sprache (der Sprache[,] die
allein [allein] ich verstehe) die Grenzen meiner
Welt bedeuten. (Wittgenstein, 186)

In English: “The world is my world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world,” (Wittgenstein, 187). This excerpt written by the nineteenth century German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein takes on the seemingly insurmountable task of defining the “limits”, so to speak, of the language that one uses in order to communicate their ideas. If reduced to layman’s terms, the excerpt basically states that “the borders of my language are the borders of my world”. So... what does that mean? How is it that something as rudimentary as the language that we speak has the ability to limit our world as a whole? It’s due to the fact that individuals alone are able to decide what meaning they will attribute to the words that construct the language in which they choose to communicate. As an example, take the English word “wicked”. Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines it as:

1. wick-ed
 - : morally bad
 - : having or showing slightly bad thoughts in a way that is funny or not serious
 - : very bad or unpleasant

By this definition – and it is the one widely accepted in the English language – wicked is a way in which one describes something negatively, be it an action or an entity. If this and only this definition is true, then why is it that “wicked” is also used to describe actions and entities that produce a sense of awe or amazement in their audiences?¹ Here, the hard, scientific practice of language is morphed into a softer, more philosophical tool that allows for colloquial handlings and interpretations of the word. “Wicked” – and any other word, for that matter, should someone wish to use it in an innovative manner – now has a possible multiplicity of definitions and uses not specified in the dictionary.

Now, what does that have to do with anything? Well, someone decided to bend the definition of a word so that it would better fit his or her intended message, and that has everything to do with everything. When messages in the form of texts and speeches are analyzed and interpreted, especially with regards to ancient and religious texts, the intent is what’s most essential to the understanding of the work. The Bible, for instance, states that one should “love his neighbor as himself,” (King James Bible Online, Mark 12:33). Nobody took that to mean that one should give all of his own things – possessions or earnings or what have you – to his neighbor. No, the intent was that one should realize that humans are all here as subjects of God, and that God expects his subjects to treat each other with the love, respect, and awe that all of His creations deserve. Here, in essence, the Bible communicates the golden rule – that one should treat others as they in turn wish to be treated. The interpreted message reads quite a bit differently than the actual, scriptural text, but they both retain a synonymous intent, and therefore are able to communicate the same message. However, here also lies the possibility for misinterpretation. If the reader is so inclined, he or she could bend the intended meaning of the text in order to satisfy his or her own goals for the excerpt. They could, for example, have read into the fact that the pronouns used in the scripture are male, and used that as a reason for only males to treat one another with respect and love as opposed to both men and women alike. This provides a foundation stone for a structure for a patriarchal society that is supported by seemingly irrefutable scripture, and results in the long-term oppression of women.

The above analysis serves only as a small window into the global condition that results from misinterpreted scripture. The remaining entirety of this essay will be dedicated to exploring how not only differing definitions of Arabic words in the Qur’an supply the basis for a falsely patriarchal interpretation of the

scripture, but also the way in which the actual verses supplied by Allah could (and have been) bent and malformed in order to support a resulting male-dominant Muslim society and cultural identity.

For Muslims throughout history, Islam has been defined as *din al-haqq*, or “the religion of truth”. As put by Rabia Terri Harris in her piece, “Reading the signs Unfolding Truth and the Transformation of Authority”, “Truth is the way things are, as opposed to the way we pretend them to be,” (Windows of Faith, 172). In light of this, it would be natural to suppose that societies and cultures based on the Islamic faith would follow Islamic scripture’s intended truths. However, Muslim societies and governments are arguably the most heavily scrutinized in the world. So why, if Islam truly is *din al-haqq*, is there so much confusion and controversy over the exegesis of the Qur’an? It’s the only religious scripture that still exists in the same language as it did at its time of origin, so one would think that interpretations would be pretty solidified after thousands of years of readings. The most basic answer to the question of varying interpretations is that those who have been considered qualified to interpret the text haven’t agreed upon singular truths that are acceptable to all generations of Muslims. In particular, the definitions of Arabic words and Qur’anic verses, or *ayat*. By definition, “An *ayah* (pl. *ayat*) is ‘a sign’ which indicates something beyond itself,” (Wadud, 17).² Already, Islamic scripture is lending itself to varied interpretations by virtue of the text being qualified as symbolic, and this obviously creates discord.

First, take a look at this verse of the Qur’an that relates to the Islamic story of the origins of humankind: *Wa min ayathi an khalaqa-kum min nafs*

*wahidatin was khalaqa min-ha zawjaha wa
baththa minhuma rijalan kathiran wa nisa’an (4:1)*

Basically it says that Allah created humankind from (min) a single self (*nafs*) and from (min) that self (*nafs*) He created its corresponding part of the pair (*zawj*) and from those two spread countless men and women throughout the earth. In this *ayah* alone there are three words that require exploration in order to completely understand the symbolic meaning of the verse: *min*, *nafs*, and *zawj*.

Nafs is defined as “self, soul, person, cell” (Wadud, xxvi). This is significant because if both men and women are created of the same self, soul, person, or cell, then they are inherently the same at their core. Interestingly, *nafs* is grammatically feminine, even though it’s used to describe both males and females. If anything, that should give a “gender advantage” to the woman, seeing as the basis for all humankind is linguistically related to their sex. However, with the following discussion of *min*, it becomes obvious that neither males nor females have any claim to the self from which all humans were born.

Min is arguably the most important of the three terms. In the biblical representation of Adam and Eve, Eve was created from a piece of Adam – that allows for the interpretation that suggests that women are lesser than men by virtue of the fact that without Adam, Eve could not have existed, but Adam would have existed regardless. In the Qur’anic representation, neither Adam nor Eve is created from the other. They are both created of the same “stuff”, or *nafs*, that is the basis for all humans, men and women alike. This suggests that man and woman were created equal and without gender related favor.

Wadud provides another insightful interpretation of the word *min*. Not only can it mean “from”, as was discussed above, but also “of the same nature as,” (Wadud, 18). In the story of the fall from grace, the biblical version states that it was Eve who tempted Adam, and therefore Eve who incurred original sin and caused humanity’s fall from grace. However, in the Qur’an, both Adam and Eve were tempted equally – blame wasn’t piled on either gender. This further exposes the innately gender-equal nature of Islamic scripture, and helps to strengthen the notion that Adam and Eve – and therefore men and women – are “of the same nature”, as they were both guilty of the same sin for the same reason.

Zawj is the final term to be discussed. Unlike *nafs*, which carries a feminine association, *zawj* is masculine. This is interesting because, unlike in the bible where Eve is created second, the Qur’an lists the masculine creation second. However, just like *nafs*, *zawj* is conceptually non-gendered.

The three terms above are crucial in defining how humankind came into being in Islamic scripture. They are significant though because none of them have a truly clear definition. They serve to show that interpretation is where gender arises, as opposed to the actual scriptural intention that’s supposed to make up the truth behind Islam. They also support the idea that the Qur’an and its *ayat* are sometimes intentionally unclear

in order to remain symbolic in nature.

Wadud also supplies a verse of the Qur'an that really lends itself to misinterpretation. Verse 4:34 basically says that men are in a position to care for and guide women because God has preferred some of them over others and because the man spends his money and property to take care of the woman. Some exegesis take this to mean that man is in charge of woman because God prefers man, and because man is the breadwinner. If one follows this line of thought, the verse basically says that men are given the position of guide and disciplinarian over the woman. However, it's important to realize that man is only given this position if he fulfills the conditions that follow his instatement – that he is preferred because of his faith, and that he provides for the woman monetarily. If this is taken into account, the verse more aptly describes a situation in which the labor is divided in the family. Scholar Riffat Hassan says that the verse is a way to show that the woman doesn't have to be the breadwinner because she is already the mother and has to deal with that entire set of obligations. Basically, the meaning of the verse is turned on its head. It changes from a depiction of men as dominant over women because they are the breadwinners to a delegation of responsibilities in order to assure that neither the man nor woman is overworked.

This verse is perhaps the Qur'anic scripture most easily related to the topic at hand. The intent of the verse, as argued by Hassan, is to delegate labors in order to keep a stable household. However, over the years it has been interpreted as a form of justification for patriarchy in Muslim societies that has provided the structure for an oppressed female population. It's easy to see where the analysis stemmed from, but that doesn't mean that it's an acceptable interpretation, or more importantly an interpretation that aligns itself with the religion of truth. What made it an acceptable understanding was the society and culture at the time of the analysis, and the fact that it supported preexisting patriarchal structures and powers.

The most important takeaway from this piece should be that misinterpretations are what cause gender issues in Islamic culture, not the Qur'anic scripture itself. One of the five basic Islamic principles required for an autonomous individual to make intellectual and moral choices in a just society is "The individual right and obligation to learn and be educated in the teaching/legislation," (Barazangi, 32). This principle is extremely significant because without education, one cannot be expected to interpret the scripture for its intent. Now, one might interpret other scriptural excerpts – such as Surah Nahl, 76 that discusses passivity by ignorance and passivity by oppression (Harris 186) – to read that women are not fit for education. In response to that, it is known that the prophet's wife 'A'isha stated that "Modesty did not prevent the women of Ansar...from learning," (Barazangi, 32). The point is, all scripture must be examined in relation to all other scripture and given guidance. To be narrow-minded is a way to deny Islam, not focus upon it.

Islam is the religion of truth, and it's important that all Muslims – and all people on this earth, for that matter, regardless of religion – strive to acquire the most pure truth that they can in order to grasp the most wholesome and accurate view of the surrounding world available. Only when that wide perspective becomes the collective goal will exegesis center on the most truthful intentions behind the scripture.

Notes

1. i.e. when a professional surfer carves down a seemingly suicide-sized wave, spectators might be know to comment, exclaiming "Whoa, dude! That was totally wicked!"
2. As far as I could find, the definition of ayat is not one of controversy.

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Mapping Reality: Ideology and Ethics in Cartography

By Amy Brabec



If one were to ask an individual in front of a map what they are observing, they would likely respond that they are looking at the world. The omnipresence of maps has allowed them to acquire a nearly transcendental status and this prevents most individuals from questioning what exactly maps represent. Careful analysis reveals that maps are not natural nor are they perfect reflections of the world; maps are theory and maps are propaganda. The maps that communities have access to have the power to shape the way that they conceptualize the actual space and land of earth. Since maps influence beliefs about world territory, it is important to regulate cartography with some ethical notions. These ethics, along with consciousness of the ideology that underlies traditional maps, have inspired creative thinkers to put forth alternative world maps. Just like their predecessors, these maps are imperfect social constructions. However, non-traditional maps have greater potential to challenge unfairly Western-centric perspectives and promote global responsibility beyond the limits of the sovereign state. This paper seeks to assess the validity and usefulness of revisionist maps in light of the Poststructuralist concept of moral cartography.

To begin, maps are analogous to theory because much of the language used in the study of international relations theory can also be applied to maps. Maps in a broad sense seem to play a natural role in the field of political theory. For example, it is common to hear discourse about mapping out theories in relation to one another or placing one's political leanings on some sort of mythical chart of potential viewpoints. Maps can act as general intellectual metaphors through aiding in the arrangement of isolated events into relations of coherence and thus ideological maps make knowledge transmittable (Dodge et al. eds. 2011). The adoption of cartographical language in international relations theory shows that the spatial dimension helps in explaining and comparing theories. Similarly, terminology used and questions considered in the study of international relations can contribute to a deeper understanding of maps. A central concern in IR theory which can also be applied to maps is the question of what exactly theory is and what it does. Positive theory, or theory that provides descriptive, factual explanations, corresponds with the objective depictions of the world that most people

expect from maps (Dunne et al. 2013, 410). However, most political theories attempt to go beyond merely providing an accurate description of events. Constitutive theory examines the makeup of various entities and asserts that the ideas people hold actually constitute the social world (Dunne et al. 2013, 411). When extrapolated to the realm of maps, constitutive theory explains how some individuals very literally construct their world based upon the ideas contained in maps. Another response to the question of what theory is and does is the understanding of theory as a lens through which the world is viewed. Dunne et al. describe the lens metaphor as follows: "If we use one lens, we will see the world in one particular way, perhaps with certain elements highlighted and others hidden from view, or placed on the margins" (2013, 412). Maps too can be seen as lenses because they position certain privileged areas in the center and, as a result, visually establish a periphery. Clearly maps can be analyzed in relation to the responses to the question of what theory is and does. Going deeper into the matter, it is possible to say that maps themselves are theory. If theory's purpose is to make the world more understandable, as Viotti and Kauppi state that it is, then maps are indeed theory (Dunne et al. 2013, 408). Furthermore, maps are decidedly more accessible and less exclusive than the theories of academia because individuals of nearly any level of education can interpret their visual format.

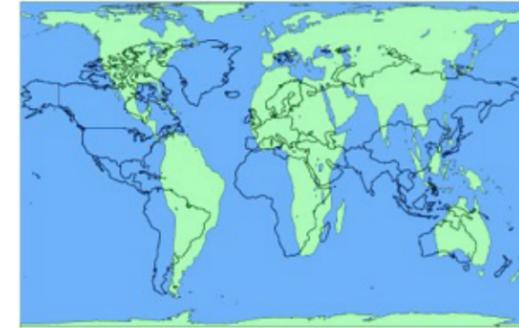
While it is true that maps are a form of political theory that nearly anyone can understand, it cannot be said that maps are free from bias and consequently they must be treated with caution. It is important to establish that, in addition to being a form of theory, maps are also a form of propaganda. The first step in realizing that maps are propaganda is to understand that they are not natural. As Alfred Korzybski once stated, "a map is not the territory it represents;" it is necessary to separate the reality of land on earth from the social construct of maps (quoted in Crampton 2001, 696). Although humans do intuitively conceptualize their world spatially, maps are unnatural constructions that recreate space in accordance with specific political and economic aims. Map-making became systematized with the rise of empires and private land ownership. One of the first uses of geometrical surveying in mapmaking was by the sixteenth century nobles of Venice who sought to mark off all land that could be exploited for profit. Other early modern maps were used for plotting military campaigns, administering provinces, and making sense of overseas colonies (Dalton 2012, 60-61). These historical maps served particular purposes and therefore their representations of space are skewed in favor of the powers by which they were commissioned. Today maps are such common and unquestioned objects that they make the abstract realities they represent, such as international borders, seem as if they were external, immutable truths. All maps reflect countless decisions to include or exclude both physical and geopolitical details, though a good map convinces viewers that its arbitrary representation of the world corresponds with global realities (Chatting 2011, 11). Maps are still instruments for political purposes such as waging war, assessing taxes, and making use of resources (Wood 1992, 43). Monmonier warns that politically motivated maps are necessarily selective and partial and that often the elements of propaganda within maps are cleverly concealed by their appealing and credible design. Therefore it is critical to practice "informed skepticism" towards maps, on both visual and mental levels (Monmonier 1995, 298).

The maps to which people are exposed greatly impact the way in which they perceive global territory. A 1986 study in which first-year university students from around the world were asked to sketch a world map from memory produced troubling results. Predictably, it was a general trend to draw one's home continent in an exaggerated size and with greater detail than the rest of the map. Another outcome was that the majority of those surveyed inflated the size of Europe and diminished the size of Africa. This trend was consistent even when the test was administered to Africans (Saarien et al. 1996, 37). The students tested likely were most familiar with the traditional map projections, like the Mercator map, that magnify the Global North. As this test indicates, biased maps impact not only the way in which powerful countries view marginalized countries, but also the global periphery's own geographical self-perception. The Mercator map, which is widely considered a standard map, distorts the size of the northern continents and gives Europe a central position. This map dates back more than 400 years to the age of European navigation and colonization (Wood and Fels 1992, 60). Considering the historical context in which it was created, it should be no surprise that the Mercator map has been associated with neocolonialism, Eurocentrism, and white supremacy (Klinghoffer 2006, 121). How to size the continents in relation to one another and which continent to depict as the center of the world are not random decisions. In the case of the Mercator map, the disparities regarding the relative size of the continents can be

explained with the argument that the perspective used is the most practical one for seafaring and therefore the map doesn't contain intentional alterations for ideological reasons (Klinghoffer 2006, 121). The problem with the Mercator map is that it continues to be widely used long after the seafaring age. Whether or not this was intended as a tool for asserting European domination, it has become one as it still impacts the way people envision the world's land.

Since maps are objects of propaganda and they have influence over our perception of land, it follows that there should be a system of ethics to attempt to regulate cartography. The problem with evaluating the ethics of mapmaking is that the misrepresentations and inequalities in maps are subtle and are often cleverly hidden by appealing design techniques (Monmonier 1995, 297). Cases of knowingly falsified maps, like the intentionally deceptive maps from formerly communist Eastern European states, are easy to classify as unethical. Michael Peterson makes a broader statement and says that the central values in cartography are accuracy and communication (Peterson 1999, 5). Using Peterson's criteria, maps that serve specific ideological aims can be called doubly unethical because they distort the actual appearance of the world and they do not communicate their intentions in a direct way. Maps can also violate ethical principles when their makers put economic gain above the value of accuracy. Craig Dalton warns about this tendency in his discussion about how some modern-day maps have turned from tools of state ideology into reflections of the interests of businesses like Google (2012, 60). A theory of ethics for maps that varies substantially from Peterson's is the one elaborated by McHaffie, Andrews, and Dobson along with two anonymous United States government employees. In 1990, this group listed product quality management, conflicts of interest, and map plagiarism as issues relevant in cartography. They also claim that map-related values cannot be divorced from the general ethical climate of the society that commissions the maps (Peterson 1999, 5). This group's inclusion of quality control equates maps with other mere commodities, which gives a decidedly commercial tone to cartography. Also, it seems absurd to bring copyright issues into a field that attempts to recreate the external world, but this just shows that McHaffie et al. see cartography more as a trade than as a way of sharing knowledge. Identifying a map as one's intellectual property mirrors on a small scale the tendency to assert power by claiming and exploiting land. Perhaps the most interesting statement from McHaffie et al. is that the values of maps cannot be separated from the values of the society commissioning the map. The flaw in this argument is that maps actually condition the society that views them and so, unless critical reflection takes place, people are likely to commission representations of the world that resemble the maps most familiar to them.

Monmier took his ethical concerns about maps and formulated them into a more concrete call to action. He asserted that each map is one of countless potential maps that could have been created from the same data (Wood and Fels 1992, 71). The final product of the mapmaking process is subjective and incomplete and therefore Monmier warns against the "Single Map Solution." No one map is sufficient for understanding world geography because ulterior motives could have caused deviations from reality in support of the cartographer's preferences and because the cartographer may not have considered more adequate alternative designs (Peterson 1999, 5). If we take heed to Monmier's warning against the "Single Map Solution," the next ethical dilemma is that of deciding which alternative maps we should consider. While there have been many Eurocentric, north-favoring maps following the Mercator projection, including ones that correct some of Mercator's proportional errors, the ideological messages of these maps are similar so it is beneficial to consider more radically different maps. One such map is Arno Peters' equal-area projection map. Before developing his controversial map, Peters wrote a dissertation about film as propaganda, proving that he was familiar with non-academic forms of theory. Peters aimed to create a "counter-cartography based on egalitarian principles" that highlights the gap between rich and poor and challenges European dominance (Klinghoffer 2006, 121). The figure below, in which the Peters' map projection appears in green overlaying a blue Mercator map, dramatically shows the contrast between the two projections. Critics have denounced Peters' project as propaganda, though Peters himself probably would not have considered this much of an insult since he recognized the pervasiveness and multiplicity of forms of propaganda (Wood and Fels 1992, 60).



A more valid critique of Peters' projection is that it still positions Europe in the middle of the map. On top of the linguistic value of being called the center of world, the focus of a map is important because viewers naturally direct their attention to the center of the map due to a phenomenon that Jacob calls the 'Omphalos (navel) syndrome.' Maps with Europe at the center promote the notion that Europe represents the height of human civilization and development (Fotiadis 2009, 42). In 1979, Australian McArthur presented his Universal Corrective Map of the World in which south is at the top and, accordingly, Australia lies in the center. It appears that McArthur found his project amusing as he remarked that traditional maps provoke "down under" jokes, but thanks to his map Australia can claim its rightful place as "ruler of the universe" (Chatting 2011, 15). Humor aside, McArthur was correct in asserting that an inverted map makes the global south more visible while simultaneously stripping Europe and North America of their usual privileged position. The figurative meaning of turning one's world upside-down in the sense of questioning everything that once seemed certain definitely applies to McArthur's map. Fotiadis points out that the very fact that maps such as McArthur's are described as upside-down reveals that traditional maps dominate our thoughts so profoundly that even though it can be argued that objectively there is no top or bottom to the planet, it simply seems wrong to place the south at the top of a map (2009, 41-42). J.B. Harley would commend equal-area projections and inverted maps as examples of ethical cartography because they foster connections between maps and social justice issues while promoting a vision of the world in which a responsible mapmaker would choose to live (Harley 2001, 207). For now alternative maps are judged against the standards of Eurocentric maps and they are yet to reach the level of accessibility and credibility that traditional maps enjoy. Peters and McArthur's projects are by no means the only revisions of conventional maps, but they are notable examples that generated fruitful conversations about the ideology contained in maps.

Poststructuralism is a useful tool in considering the ethical elements of maps. In the 80s and early 90s scholars such as J.B. Harley worked to blend the realms of cartography and poststructuralist theory to better explain how maps transmit knowledge. Harley drew from Foucault's work to develop the idea of maps as sites of power-knowledge (Crampton 2001, 692-694). Additional insight on how maps contribute to global power relations came from Shapiro, who emphasized cartography's role in codifying and judging the "other." The case of the world map being divided into the moral realms of the "Free World" and the "Soviet bloc" during the Cold War clearly illustrates how maps can be used to illustrate ideological us/ them dichotomies. Shapiro also mentions how maps normalize the unit of the nation-state and impose it upon the entirety of the world territory as the basic unit of government (Shapiro 2012, 9-10). Campbell and other 'transversal' thinkers consider the shortcomings of the current system of international relations in which national boundaries decide which entities are legitimate actors. Furthermore, Campbell noted that the emphasis on territorial boundaries produces a 'moral cartography' in which democracy and ethical responsibility are restricted to the limits of the sovereign state. Campbell's hope was that through normalizing sources of identity besides state boundaries it would become easier to promote global, as opposed to bounded, ethics. Finally, poststructuralism identifies that borders are ambiguous historical products and therefore they do not deserve the transcendental status that many individuals subconsciously attribute to them (Devetak 205-208).

While the poststructuralist discussion about 'moral cartography' largely focuses on ideas held about geography rather than on maps as objects, it would be necessary to alter maps in order to achieve poststructuralist aims. Non-traditional maps that express a sense of 'ethical cartography' have more potential to help eradicate 'moral cartography' than do conventional maps. Maps such as those created by Peters and McArthur

presently elicit reactions of surprise or confusion because they don't match expectations about world maps. Thus, national boundaries automatically become secondary to reorienting oneself in light of the novel depiction of the world. Also, in the case of an inverted map viewers from the global north will visually perceive a role reversal with the marginalized south, a geographical realm often considered the "other." Giving centrality to ignored groups could help further the cause of global justice, which Popke cites as a central aim of the collaboration between poststructuralist theory and human geography (2003, 298). Maps that downplay the role of borders through offering new perspectives on territory help to de-normalize bounded ethics. Just as people talk about the need to see situations from another point of view when considering matters of social inequality, it is important to have multiple maps to literally see varying perspectives of the world. Lastly, non-traditional maps do an excellent job of showing how borders are man-made and arbitrary because they challenge cartographical elements that once seemed natural. Realizing that Africa is actually much bigger than Alaska or that there is no objective up or down in the planet makes one wonder what other characteristics of maps reflect social conventions rather than reality.

In synthesis, maps must be understood both as theory and as propaganda. It is dangerous to assume that maps are wholly accurate or neutral chartings of earth's territory because all maps are made by someone for some purpose. The ever-present Mercator map amplifies Europe and places it in the center of the world in both the literal and the ideological senses. The prominence of this map projection has influenced the way in which people from all continents perceive the relative size, and by extension power, of the landmasses. The field of cartography is not devoid of its ethical considerations, but cases like using maps to deliberately mislead citizens about national boundaries are much more clear-cut than the ethics of subtly promoting a Western-centric worldview and thus the ideological underpinnings of maps often go undetected. Poststructuralism has contributed significantly to the conversation about the relationship between territorial boundaries and ethical responsibility by describing the detrimental effects of 'moral cartography' which limits the sphere of moral accountability to the confines of the sovereign state (Devetak 2009, 208). Conventional maps undoubtedly enable moral cartography because they make borders seem like part of the natural order. Various individuals who recognized the injustices of traditional maps have created alternative presentations of the world map that make use of different projections, place continents other than Europe at the center, or even invert the classical notions of north and south. These revisionist maps are more adequate for promoting ethical actions beyond the nation-state because they remove elements of Eurocentric privilege and encourage onlookers to see the interconnectedness of the world in new ways. Non-traditional maps visually put the regions of the world on a more equal level and perhaps if these maps were more widely diffused they would start to cultivate mindsets that reflect global equality. However, Mercator maps and other similar projections still predominate in textbooks, classrooms, news broadcasts, and countless other places. Alternative maps are too often regarded as novelties or even socially critical art. Adopting non-traditional maps would be a positive step for promoting global responsibility, but since certain powerful individuals like to believe that the Mercator map accurately represents the world, it is unlikely that this shift will take place in the near future.

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The Intercultural Spark: An Ethnographic Study of Americans' Tinder Interactions in Spain

By Bracey Hong Parr

Introduction

As a student at an American university abroad, I have had the opportunity to come into contact with a variety of individuals from cultures different from my own and understand their unique way of experiencing the world. This multitude of dissimilarities, in no way stems the tides of love and attraction here on our small campus in Madrid, Spain. Having myself been in several bicultural, multilingual relationships, when a friend suggested I look into the popular new dating application Tinder, I jumped at the chance to meet more Spaniards and explore the possibility of finding love online.

As part of the Pew Research Internet Project, Duggan and Smith (2013), found that 38% of Americans "...who are single and actively looking for a partner have used online dating at one point or another." In Spain, online dating websites and their attendant mobile applications have also seen an increase in membership, and the national Spanish Statistical Office claims that half of single Spaniards have sought or currently seek love online (Ferro, 2012; Muñoz, 2008; Vázquez, 2013). Adding globalization to the mix results in a massive, online, and now international CMC community. This study, then, locates itself in this emerging social forum where love, intercultural interaction, and computer-mediated communication converge. Over the course of this paper, I will first present a review of the literature concerning intercultural relationships and dating while touching on the computer-regulated aspect of this phenomenon, explain the methods used, and discuss the results. Lastly, I will examine the implications of this research and directions for further inquiry in this field.

Intercultural Relationship Formation

Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975; Berger, 1987) introduced a new framework for understanding relationship formation they named uncertainty reduction theory. According to these authors, "Central to the present theory is the assumption that when strangers meet, their primary concern is one of uncertainty reduction or increasing predictability about the behavior of both themselves and others in the interaction" (as cited in Griffin, 2009, p. 125). Soon, other researchers began to apply this paradigm for understanding relationship formation to cross-cultural interactions (Gudykunst, Sodetani, and Sonoda, 1987; Gudykunst, Nishida, and Schmidt, 1989; Gao and Gudykunst, 1995). Most of these studies centered on certain factors that would predict the success of an intracultural relationship, mainly the concepts of attributional confidence or the ability to predict a partner's behavior, perceived similarity, social networks, and social reactions (Gao and Gudykunst, 1995; Gibbs, J.L., Ellison, N.B., and Lai, C., 2011). Although the findings illustrated distinct ways of fomenting relationships across multiple cultures, these inquiries did not take intercultural relationships into consideration, perhaps due to their low statistical occurrence. Nevertheless, several of the factors that Gudykunst and colleagues mention will come into play in participants' accounts later in the paper.

After this generation of uncertainty reduction theorists, a new cohort of researchers, grounding their work in Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory, commenced a new era in the intercultural communication field. During the 2000s, several studies looked into the formation of intercultural relationships on the basis of two degrees of self-disclosure: depth, "the degree of disclosure in a specific area of an individual's life," and breadth, "the range of areas in an individual's life over which disclosure takes place" (Griffin, 2009, pp. 115-116). Gareis' (2000) pioneering study into German-American friendships indicated that, opposing uncertainty reduction theory's assertion that attributional confidence composes the bedrock of a relationship, the six main factors influencing intercultural friendship formation are: culture, personality, homophily, adjustment stage (i.e., stages of intercultural sensitivity and culture shock), communicative competence, and proximity. Answering Gareis' call to "...employ quantitative as well as qualitative methodology and investigate all aspect of intercultural friendship formation," a host of researchers conducted studies in this field with their findings generally mirroring those of Gareis (Kudo and Simkin, 2003; Chen, 2006; Lee, 2006; Sias et al, 2008).

Little investigation, however, has been carried out in examining the formation of intercultural romantic relationships from a qualitative perspective. Although many quantitative studies, such as those mentioned above, have deepened our understanding of these unique relationships by exploring the effects of different cultural, personal, and situational factors in relationship formation, the need for an ethnographic approach to complement and perhaps even challenge these ideas is paramount. Communication studies concerning intercultural interaction have generally yielded lists of "Dos and Don'ts," hardly applicable to the unique nature of interpersonal relationships, and the studies mentioned in the literature review above often fail to explain many of the more idiosyncratic phenomena that arise in multicultural relationships (Hofstede, 1984). Scholars such as Piller (2000) and Parr (2013) have conducted inquiries into the nature of these relationships and facets such as language use and code switching, but overall, a gap exists in the literature that this study will attempt to remediate. A discussion on the ethnography of communication, given it informs the basis of this study, will provide useful.

The Ethnography of Communication

Whereas the functionalist approach adheres to the social-scientific tradition of formulating hypotheses and subsequently testing them, ethnography "...is primarily concerned with the description and analysis of culture" (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 1). Hymes, the father of the field, advocated forays into this new discipline as a way to analyze the interrelationship of language and culture (Saville-Troike, 2003; Hymes, 1962). Culture, according to the definition provided by Philipsen (1992), the developer of speech codes theory,

...refers to a socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meaning, premises, and rules...
A cultural code of speaking, then, consists of a socially constructed and historically transmitted system of symbols and meanings pertaining to communication. (pp. 7-8)

With this groundwork, this paper will attempt to analyze American ways of speaking about their interactions on Tinder with Spaniards based on their reports and an autoethnography conducted by the author. Thus, this study will answer the following questions:

- RQ1: What are Americans' views of Spaniards' communicative behavior in CMC-regulated interactions, specifically those with of a potentially romantic purpose?
- RQ2: What do these views tell us about American speech communities' norms for romantic CMC-regulated interactions?

A Word about Tinder

In this section, I will describe the features of Tinder, the application from which I have collected the data for this investigation. According to the company's website, "Tinder finds out who likes you nearby, and connects you with them if you're also interested." The application employs users' geographical location to show them other singles in the area, and each user, having connected to Tinder via Facebook, can see photos, common interests, and common friends. Based on these criteria, the user may select to swipe left, saying "no" to a possible interaction, or right, saying "yes." Only if both users both swipe right on the other's profile does the application allow the two singles to chat.

It goes without saying that Tinder's nature as a technological medium of communication exerts an effect on all interaction located within the application's sphere. Joseph Walter's (1992) theory of social information processing maintains that due to the absence of cues that participants in face-to-face interactions perceive, communicators online have to rely solely on verbal cues. He even asserts that computer-mediated communication ("CMC") qualifies as "hyperpersonal", that is, through selective self-presentation and overattribution of similarity, CMC can cause partners to develop a relationship more intimate than one developed when the two individuals are physically together (Walter, 1992). These factors often cause online dating application users to become preoccupied with presenting "...an authentic sense of self..." to lie about certain aspects of their personhood whether it be physical or otherwise, and to pick up on small cues related to how others talk and the images they select for their profile (Ellison, N., Heino, R., and Gibbs, J., 2006). Although CMC holds many implications for relationship formation online, in this context, I will make no claims about the effect of the

communication medium on the participants' behavior, but rather focus on their individual reports and, in passing, relate some findings to the existing literature on CMC.

Methods

To begin my investigation into this phenomenon, I myself spent several weeks on Tinder, where the system matched me with well over 100 other users. Of these matches, I spoke to approximately half. During this phase, I engaged in autoethnography, "a form or method of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic field work and writing" (Maréchal, 2010, p. 43). Following the guidelines set out by Maréchal (2010) and Ellis (2004), I immersed myself in the Tinder community, engrossing myself in as many interactions as possible but always intending to act as though I would normally without seeking to alter interlocutors' responses. In one sense, I strove to perform a "complete participant" role in which I concealed my identity as a researcher and partook in all activities that other speakers carried out. (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994, p. 248-249). Throughout these initial weeks, I kept a journal of my reactions to Spaniards' ways of speaking upon which I performed analysis later.

In addition to the method mentioned above, I also conducted ethnographic interviews (Baxter and Babbie, 2004). Since Tinder interactions often take on a romantic, private character, interviews allowed me indirect access to this sensitive data, as well as the opportunity to perform participant checks to see if speakers shared any facet of their account with another (Baxter and Babbie, 2004). I conducted five interviews in total, utilizing snowball sampling as a way to access more speakers (Morgan, 2008). Of the five participants, four males and one female, all were current Tinder users. Four were American nationals, and one speaker, despite his German nationality, felt sufficiently acculturated as an American to participate in the study. Ages of the interlocutors ranged from 20-22, and the dates of their first Tinder interaction ranged from 8 months ago to one month ago. Another important feature to mention is the users' time in Spain: four years in two cases, two years in one case, and less than one year in the two other cases. I myself have lived in Spain for three years.

Data collection was grounded in Spradley's (1979) protocol for ethnographic interviews. I first began by assuring participants of their anonymity, received their verbal consent to participate in the study, and collected several important statistics for demographical purposes. Each conversation typically commenced with a "grand tour" question about the user's experience on Tinder. I asked questions periodically to check my understanding and clarify their meanings, as well as redirecting the dialog at certain points to stay on the topic. To finalize each interview, I asked each of the speakers if they had any further comments on their Tinder interactions. I recorded all of the data acquired via this method in shorthand during the discourse, and, when deemed appropriate, direct quotes were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

In my analysis, I identified American norms and premises about CMC communication in Tinder through the violations of their own expectations that occurred when they interacted with Spaniards. To carry out the analysis of both my own autoethnographical account and the data gathered in the formal, ethnographical interviews, I employed Spradley's (1980) developmental research sequence. First, I unitized my data based on their applicability to research questions one. For RQ1, I identified the semantic relationship "x is an evaluation of Spaniards' communicative behavior on Tinder" (Spradley, 1980, 97-98). A second taxonomic analysis was conducted to see if these adjudications were \pm positive and \pm desired (or neither desired nor undesired [n] desired). Utilizing a theme analysis of the latter stage of DRS, I was then able to answer RQ2 by formulating American premises and rules for CMC-interaction based on the componential analysis of these American meanings of Spanish actions.

Analyses

In examining the first research question, two competing narratives emerged: "Spaniards are different" and "We're all the same". Participants offered up both these phrases during their interviews. In the third subsection, the results for the second research question are discussed, concentrating on American premises and norms for romantic CMC interaction.

"Spaniards are different"

The first narrative that arose in the data could fit under the title "Spaniards are different," an utterance offered by one interviewee, who sought to summarize her experience after three months of utilizing the application. Although some participants, whose data will be treated mainly in the next analysis, stressed time and again that "We're all the same", even they spoke to some striking differences in the communication culture surrounding the Tinder community. The first and foremost marked disparity materialized in Spaniards' cues on the device, integral and necessary components in CMC (Walter, 1992). Overall, the majority of interviewees and I myself noted a certain "forwardness" amongst Spaniards who utilize Tinder. One participant even stated that he was taken aback at the high percentage of men who proposed meeting in person to him, roughly a quarter. Persistence, too, marked Spaniards' interactions on Tinder. In my own experience, some Tinder users, instead of waiting for a response, would "double message", a practice for which other participants in the study showed clear disdain (see Appendix 2, Selection A). Furthermore, the one female in my study declared that she felt "creeped out" by the eagerness Spanish men and the ease with which they gave compliments. Indirectness and concealment of intentions on Spaniards' part came into play as a common theme amongst the American speakers and a strain that emerged in my autoethnography. For instance, several contributors to this study invoked the phrase "DTF" ("Down to Fuck") as a way to signal the directness that Americans typically employ when communicating via an application such as Tinder with a romantic purpose. More than one account mentioned that Spaniards hardly ever revealed their intentions on Tinder, and even those that overtly solicited an answer to the question, "What are you looking for on Tinder?", did so in a way in which their response did not reflect their true intentions, according to several participants (see Appendix 2, Selection B; Ellison, N., Heino, R., and Gibbs, J., 2006). All of these factors combined led some speakers to conclude that Spaniards take Tinder "too seriously".

Interestingly enough, though, a counter-strain appeared within this narrative along gender lines. The two heterosexual males participating in the study both noted that Spanish women seemed more "taciturn" and "had higher standards" than American women. When asked what these standards were, these speakers responded that Spanish women tended to be "more cultured" than American women and expected foreigners to communicate solely in Spanish. One contributor even claimed that he had to exert quite an effort at being "worth talking to". The two homosexual males participating in this study and the one heterosexual female did not comment on this theme.

"We're all the same"

The second narrative that developed in the accounts and my personal autoethnography centered on the concept that despite some superficial discrepancies, "we're all the same", a phrase I took from one speaker who showed obvious disdain for those that highlighted the disparities between Americans and Spaniards. One participant echoed this sentiment by stating that any user can "take it as just seriously" as he or she wishes; that is, a Spaniard's culture does not determine his or her communicative behaviors (Nagayaka and Martin, 2010). Beyond this, 100% of the American speakers, including myself, noted that the Tinder process did not vary between American-American and American-Spanish interactions. As one speaker explained, "First, Tinder. Then, Facebook. Then, Whatsapp [a popular texting app in Europe]. Then, a date" (see Appendix 2, Selection C). Furthermore, Americans bemoaned the redundancy of topics in conversations with Spaniards, other Americans, and other nationalities. Typically, one interlocutor stated, the conversation follows "a set pattern" of the "same basic stuff": origin, age, occupation, and tastes. Another noted characteristic in common proved to be homophily, an aspect that crossed cultural lines (Gareis, 2000). Foreign language practice, both on Spaniards' parts and on that of the American participants in the study, also emerged as a feature in common for Tinder users. Lastly, gender roles, at least as defined by the heterosexual speakers in this study, did not seem to vary in terms of responsibilities of "who sends the first message" or "who asks out who on a date", conventional male duties according to three of the five individuals interviewed.

American CMC Romance Styles

The stark differences in CMC dating styles surfaced as perhaps the most significant theme to emerge in the final analysis of the developmental research sequence. Americans, as researchers have noted in other studies, desire ambiguity in dating as a way to mitigate the relationship and pursue attention from other potential partners (Chornet, 2007). Online, this could translate into a certain attitude of aloofness and non-engagement in a conversation to maintain one's autonomy. Thus, nonchalance reigns as the primary premise for Americans who believe that this application is "just Tinder." Practices of never "double-texting" (not sending a second message without a response to the first), not appearing too persistent in one's quest to get to know the other user, and keeping to a uniform process of gradually moving from the application to Facebook or Whatsapp and eventually to person all qualify as norms for American users of Tinder and other related online dating websites and applications. Based on respondents' account of repetitious conversation, unique and spontaneous conversation also seems to a norm as well for American CMC behavior in order to differentiate one's self from the multitude of other individuals seeking love online.

Implications and Further Directions

For the most part, both American and Spanish ways of speaking via romantic CMC seem similar in their procedural approach, emphasis on homophily, and gender roles (Gareis, 2000; Kudo, and Simkin, 2003; Chen, 2006; Lee, 2006; Sias et al, 2008). Shared interests, and especially the Tinder feature that shows Facebook friends in common, recalls Gao and Gudykunst's (1995) perceived similarity and shared networks, respectively. However, Spaniards' and Americans' communicative behaviors on Tinder diverge in relation to the how each speech community attempts to construct romantic relationships via the application. Americans stress their autonomy in the "dating" scene outside Tinder, and predictably, their online cues follow suit (Chornet, 2007; Walter, 1992).

A further implication of this study involves the process of acculturation, something that Gareis (2000) touched on when she mentioned "adjustment phase". It appeared within the account collected during the interviews that those students who had spent more time in Spain reported less on the differences between American and Spaniard ways of speaking on Tinder and reinforced the idea of "we're all the same." In Gudykunst and Kim's (2003) view, Americans who have interacted more with Spaniards will have most likely "resocialized" themselves and can now recognize their cultural tendencies and feel comfortable when confronted by the "other", the Spanish.

Further direction to be taken in this field is analysis of how CMC communication differs across cultures and if there is, in fact, a CMC culture that transcends national, ethnic, and other forms of cultural groups. As well, it would be profitable to understand how some speech communities adapt CMC more readily while others warily shy away from online applications and websites. In addition, an investigation remains to be made on the culture of shame or embarrassment that Tinder and other similar online dating applications cause for their users, who often lie about where they meet. Even in this study, two participants affirmed they had denied that they met their partner on Tinder for fear of negative judgment. Lastly, and more urgently, the gap in the literature on romantic intercultural relationship formation, given the world's rapid globalization and the increasing occurrence of this type of dyad, requires due attention.

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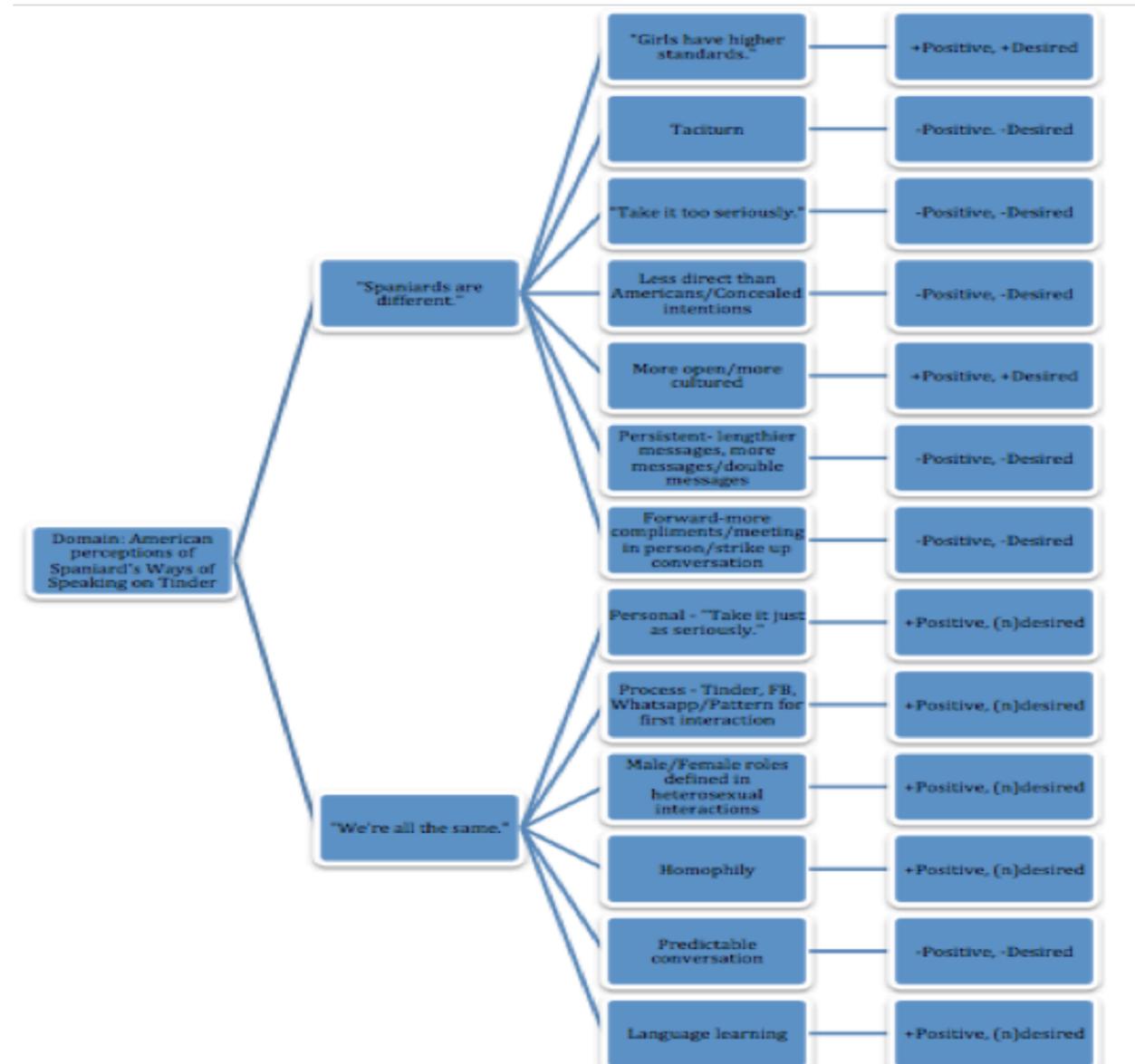
Spradley, J.P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

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Vázquez, K. (2013, June 25). Cúpedo en la red. *El País*. Retrieved from http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/06/25/eps/1372157849_423578.html.

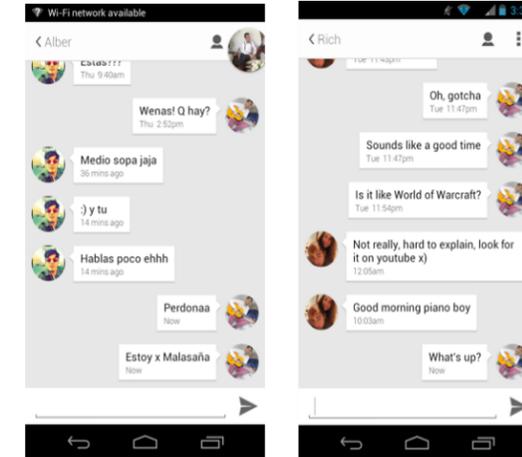
Walther, J.B. (1992). Interpersonal Effects in Computer-Mediated Interaction: A Relational Perspective. *Communication Research*, 19, pp. 52-90.

Appendix 1: Developmental Research Sequence

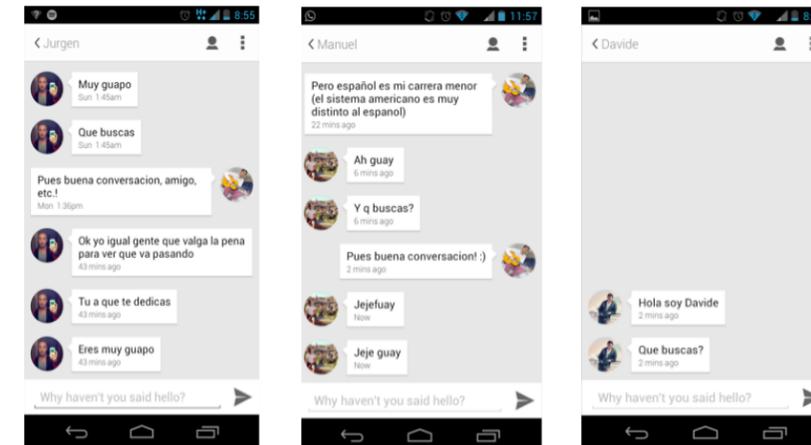


Appendix 2: Selected Photos of Tinder Interactions

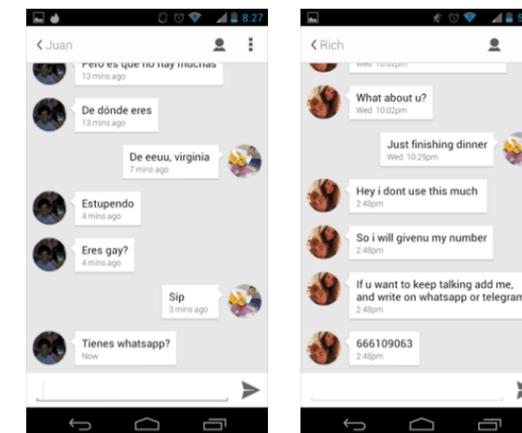
Selection A



Selection B



Selection C



'Til Death Do Us... Together?

By Stephanie Roderick

Over the course of history, cultural influences have altered the definition of marriage in order to accommodate the needs and demands of various societies. Haviland et. al note that a marriage is a union between two or more people who abide by cultural principles regarding spousal, parental, and legal obligations. What constitutes a marriage, however, varies by religion, government, region, and time period (Haviland et. al 2010). Depending on the society, different forms of marriage are acceptable (Schwartz 2010). Marriage can include, but is not limited to, the traditional monogamous relationship between one man and one woman, the less conventional monogamous union between two women or two men, and the polygamous relationship between one man and multiple women or multiple men and one woman. Group marriages between multiple men and multiple women, although rare, exist as well. Additionally, some societies practice a form of marriage where both spouses are already deceased or one spouse is deceased while the other is very much alive (Schwartz 2010). These "ghost marriages" are particularly prevalent in Singapore-Chinese customs in Southeast Asia, the Atuat culture of South Sudan, and certain northern Japanese customs. Although rare on a global scale, the practice of ghost marriage as exemplified in these three cultures continues to challenge the meaning behind and significance of the concept of marriage (Schwartz 2010).

To start, the Singapore-Chinese practice Mingun is the organization of posthumous relationships most commonly between two deceased individuals (DeBarnardi 2011). Although less frequent, marriages between the living and the dead also exist (DeBarnardi 2011). Schwartz (2010) documents possible motives for this practice. One is to appease the spirit of a deceased family member. It is customary in Singapore-Chinese culture that older brothers marry before their younger brother. Should an older brother die before marrying, the family arranges a ghost marriage in order to satisfy his spirit. After this union is complete, the younger brother is free to marry. The family need not fear the wrath of the older deceased brother's disapproval (Schwartz 2010). Another reason some Singapore-Chinese people practice this tradition is to provide families whose sons have died unmarried with daughters-in-law (DeBarnardi 2011). These daughters-in-law will then help their deceased husband's family with day-to-day tasks. The deceased husband's family does expect the daughter-in-law, however, to take a vow of celibacy (DeBarnardi 2011). A final reason Singapore-Chinese people employ ghost marriages is to link families together, forming new kinship groups (Schwartz 2010). This is most frequently seen in the arrangement of marriages between two deceased individuals. In order to finalize the union, the body of the female is exhumed and reburied next to her husband. Occasionally these marriage ceremonies coincide with the funeral of one of the spouses, whether male or female (Schwartz 2010).

Additionally, the Atuat culture of South Sudan practices a similar style of marriage. Unions generally take place between one deceased male spouse and one living female spouse (Burton 1978). This is unlike the tradition of the Singapore-Chinese where marriages often consist of two deceased individuals. (DeBarnardi 2011). One reason behind these unions is the succession of the male's family lineage. Schwartz points out, "If a man died unmarried or without an heir, a ghost marriage was performed for him, and any children the wife might beget were considered the children of the deceased man in name" (Schwartz 2010: 86). That is to say, despite the absence of a biological connection, children born to the wife and the brother of the deceased are considered the children of the deceased (Burton 1978). These children, however, are sometimes negatively viewed as orphans in the Atuat culture as a result of these types of ghost marriage (Burton 1978). Additionally, another reason why the Atuat practice ghost marriages is to acquire and secure property such as cattle (Verdon 2011). When a man dies, his son inherits his cattle. If the man dies without a male heir, his brother inherits his cattle, but the brother must use a portion of the profit earned from the cattle to pay the dowry for his deceased brother's new bride (Verdon 2011). Moreover, given that any son born to a deceased man's wife and her new husband is considered the deceased man's son, the cattle is sure to remain in the deceased man's patrilineal group (Schwartz 2010). Likewise, if the man dies and he only has daughters, the oldest daughter can assume the role of the male and take a wife. The new wife will hopefully produce a male heir with time, and this male

heir will later inherit the cattle (Schwartz 2010). In short, ghost marriages in the Atuat culture play an important role in the continuation of male lineage and the distribution of property.

Unlike the Atuat of South Sudan or Singapore-Chinese customs in Asia, select groups of Japanese people practice a unique form of ghost marriage in which the deceased's spirit is married to a doll (Schwartz 2010). Schattschneider notes that the switch from marrying deceased and living to deceased and doll took place around the 1930s in northeastern Japan. At that time, Japanese men were dying in mass numbers due to wars (Schattschneider 2001). Instead of finding suitable women for the abundance of deceased men, the Japanese began to use dolls (Schwartz 2010). These dolls can still be acquired today in temples or even in department stores (Schwartz 2010). For a one-time fee of somewhere between \$100 and \$400, families can purchase a "bride doll" or "groom doll" for their deceased's spirit (Schattschneider 2001). These dolls symbolize the couple during the ceremony. One represents the spirit of the deceased male or female; while the other represents the spirit of the spouse he or she will be joined to in matrimony. Once the ceremony is complete, a picture of the deceased groom is placed alongside the bride doll in a case. The two objects remain in the case for about thirty years. After thirty years, the Japanese believe that the spirit is ready for rebirth (Schattschneider 2001). This is very much a spiritual practice. Additionally, these "bride doll marriages" serve as a coping mechanism for the deceased's family (Schattschneider 2001:856). Taking part in the exchange between the living and the dead provides the family with comfort. The family also takes comfort in the belief that the dolls are protecting them from misfortunes such as illness. On a final note, the dolls are also believed to promote the growth of a child's soul into adulthood (Schattschneider 2001). Schwartz explains that surviving family members use the dolls as a way to symbolically allow a child's spirit to pass through the stages of life. This prevents the child's spirit from becoming resentful (Schwartz 2010). Similar to their Atuat and Singapore-Chinese counterparts, Japanese ghost marriages bring peace to the deceased and his or her family.

In conclusion, it is evident that the ghost marriage traditions of the Singapore-Chinese, the Atuat of South Sudan, and various Japanese people are both rare and unique examples of the various meanings marriage represents. Across these three cultures, the marital unions similarly focus on pleasing the dead. Nevertheless, each culture has unique motives and reasoning behind their respective traditions. While the Singapore-Chinese and Atuat cultures use marriage to appease the spirits of their older brothers and secure property, the Japanese use ghost marriages as a way to appease any spirit of either sex and no transfer of property is involved whatsoever. Additionally, the Japanese practice is purely spiritual and religious, whereas the Singapore-Chinese and Atuat practices take on a physical importance where family names must be passed down and cattle must be traded. In the context of the global community, however, these are but three examples of the ever-changing, ever-debated concept of marriage.

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Dostoevsky's Theology: Universality of Guilt and Existentialist Thought

By Ajay Chatrath

Life without Religion: A Comparison to Existentialism

Throughout his life, Fyodor Dostoevsky wrestled with the question of God's existence, remaining unable to fully justify his religious beliefs in the presence of the seemingly overwhelming existence of evil and suffering. After publishing *House of the Dead*, Dostoevsky suffered extensively in both his academic and personal life, due to the deterioration of his wife's health, the banning of his journal, and the recent increase in his epileptic fits. In the context of this turmoil, Dostoevsky began to work on *Notes from the Underground*, a novel which many claim to be the first existentialist work. Although existentialist thought did not fully begin to develop until the nineteenth century, Dostoevsky's hyperconscious underground man resembles the challenges Jean-Paul Sartre, a French philosopher, would later attribute to atheistic existentialists' anguish in making and justifying their decisions. In that sense, the underground man's hyperconsciousness results in mental anguish because he rejects rationality as an imperative for decision-making, similar to the atheistic existentialist's rejection of religion.

While Sartre suggests that the atheistic existentialist is free due to his emancipation from religious obligations, the underground man claims that humans value free-will over rationality. In "Existentialism is a Humanism," Sartre argues that Christian theists are not truly free because God envisioned their essence before their creation. However, when describing the beliefs of the atheistic existentialist, Sartre writes, "To begin with he is nothing... man shall attain existence only when he is what he projects himself to be... man is condemned to be free" (Sartre 22 – 23, 29). In other words, because human nature is not defined by God's conception of humanity, humans are truly free to create their individual natures. Although the underground man does not describe human nature as necessarily being free of divine conception, he does suggest that human nature implies preferring free-will over rationality. For example, in part one of *Notes from the Underground*, the underground man challenges the notion of the "crystal palace," a utopian ideal common in contemporary literary and philosophic thought, by writing, "Of course, it is quite impossible to guarantee... that even then people will not be bored to tears" (Notes from the Underground 283). In other words, the underground man suggests that humans would grow to dislike the crystal palace, where all ideal actions have been determined through rationality, because they would lack the opportunity to exercise their free-will. In fact, the underground man goes on to write, "Why... do all those sages assume that man must strive... after some desirable good? All man wants is an absolutely free choice, however dear that freedom may cost him" (Notes from the Underground 284). Clearly, the underground man believes that human nature involves a preference for free-will over rationality. Furthermore, the underground man suggests that human nature will eventually act on this preference to attain free-will by writing, "man will... risk his cakes and ale... he will plan destruction and chaos, he will devise all sorts of sufferings" (Notes from the Underground 288). If forced to live in the crystal palace, man will eventually risk his possessions and attempt to destroy the utopia, in order to make his own decisions (Notes from the Underground 288 - 289). The atheistic existentialist's rejection of moral imperatives and the underground man's rejection of rationality lead to a conception of free-will that is fundamental to understanding human nature.

Despite having free-will, atheistic existentialism and the underground man's hyperconsciousness result in the inability to act. While theists can rely on religious doctrine to justify their decisions, Sartre argues that for the atheistic existentialist, "everything is permissible if God does not exist, and man is consequently abandoned, for he cannot find anything to rely on... We are left alone and without excuse" (Sartre 29). Because atheistic existentialists cannot use religious doctrine to make decisions, humans are forced to choose between a seemingly infinite number of sets of behaviors because "everything is permissible." While reflecting on his own nature, the underground man writes, "the legitimate result of consciousness is to make all the actions impossible, or – to put it differently – consciousness leads to thumb-twiddling" (Notes from the Underground 276). Like Sartre, the underground man suggests that the existence of hyperconsciousness apart from a set of

imperatives, such as rationality, lead to man's inability to act. Afterwards, the underground man begins to differentiate between the "plain man" and the hyperconscious one. While discussing the former, the underground man writes, "All plain men and men of action are active only because they are dull-witted and mentally undeveloped... Owing to their arrested mental development they mistake the nearest and secondary causes for primary causes" (Notes from the Underground 276). In other words, the underground man suggests that "plain men" are able to act solely because they are unable to understand the true reasons for actions. The underground man's description of his own hyperconsciousness resembles the choice overload faced by atheistic existentialists. In fact, the underground man writes, "For to start being active you must first of all be completely composed in mind and never be in doubt... I am constantly exercising my powers of thought and, consequently, every primary cause with me at once draws another one after itself" (Notes from the Underground 276). Like Sartre's atheistic existentialist, the underground man's hyperconsciousness and rejection of rationality prevents him from definitively supporting an argument to justify his actions.

Resembling atheistic existentialist thought, the underground man's hyperconsciousness results in mental anguish. While describing the factors associated with atheistic existentialist anguish, Sartre writes, "There is not a single one of our actions that does not at the same time create an image of man as we think he ought to be. Choosing to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose" (Sartre 24). In other words, Sartre suggests that one's actions reflect that person's beliefs, and, as a result, one's conception of how humanity as a whole should behave. Because the atheistic existentialist is truly free, he is therefore responsible for his conception of humanity. As a result, his conception necessarily results in mental anguish because he is never able to fully justify these beliefs due to his rejection of God. Similarly, the underground man associates consciousness with mental suffering. In fact, while reflecting on his own consciousness, he writes, "I firmly believe that... any sort of consciousness is a disease... The more conscious I became of goodness and all that was 'sublime and beautiful,' the more deeply did I sink into the mire" (Notes from the Underground 267). Although the underground man, like the romantics, may have been able to see the "sublime and beautiful" in ideals and situations deemed to be "perfect" in the past, his hyperconsciousness later in life causes him to see flaws in everything. Furthermore, like the atheistic existentialist, his inability to justify his actions results in mental anguish. For example, while describing his life in the dark cellar, he writes, "in that intensely perceived, but to some extent uncertain, helplessness of one's position – in all that poison of unsatisfied desires that have turned inwards" (Notes from the Underground 271). The underground man's inability to justify his decisions and act on his desires results in a sense of helplessness and mental suffering, which he ultimately directs at himself because he feels that he is responsible for his actions.

The underground man's hyperconsciousness also results in mental suffering due to his own self-reflection. Although "plain men," as the underground man describes them, may easily avenge themselves after being slapped, the underground man feels guilty, even when others attack him. In fact, he writes, "However much I tried to find some excuse for what had happened [being slapped], the conclusion I'd come to would always be that it was my own fault to begin with, and what hurt most of all was that though innocent I was guilty" (Notes from the Underground 269). In other words, the underground man is never able to undoubtedly clear himself of fault, even when others seem to wrong him. Clearly, such a sense of overwhelming responsibility and guilt for all wrong-doing naturally results in mental suffering. In fact, the underground man suggests that his mental anguish does not necessarily require wrong-doing by writing, "I to make offence without rhyme or reason, deliberately; and of course I realized very well that I had taken offence at nothing, that the whole thing was just a piece of play-acting" (Notes from the Underground 275 – 276). In other words, the underground man seemed to often experience the emotions associated with mental suffering, even though he had only imagined being insulted. Finally, the underground man compares his hopeless condition to a mouse's, which relives its suffering for its entire life. In order to do so, he writes, "our hurt, ridiculed, and beaten mouse plunges into cold, venomous, and, above all, unremitting spite. For forty years it will continuously remember its injury to the last and most shameful detail" (Notes from the Underground 271). The underground man's hyperconsciousness results in anguish because he feels at fault even when others appear to wrong him, he imagines being insulted and taking offence, and relives his humiliation and mental agony throughout his life.

Although romantic literature was somewhat prevalent before Dostoevsky's imprisonment, writers and

critics had popularized ideas of Western rationality and ideas of socialist utopias in literature by the time Dostoevsky began writing *Notes from the Underground*. Dostoevsky's underground man responds to these overarching literary themes by rejecting Western thought altogether and emphasizing the importance of free-will to human nature. Although existentialism would not develop extensively until the nineteenth century, the underground man clearly embodies the beliefs of future existentialist thought. Like Sartre's description of atheistic existentialism in "Existentialism is a Humanism," the underground man values free-will, even over social utopias and rationality. However, because the underground man rejects rationality, he is unable to act because he is never able to fully justify his actions. His hyperconsciousness prevents him from definitively clearing himself of fault and forgetting about the actual and imagined mental agony he experienced throughout his life. In that sense, Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground* is still relevant as a literary work and existential text today, as it explores the mental anguish of a character unable to easily make decisions after his rejection of societal values.

The Universality of Guilt

The universality of guilt for the sins of mankind in general is a common theme in *The Brothers Karamazov*. In fact, although Smerdyakov physically killed Fyodor, Alyosha, Dmitri, and Ivan all partly feel responsible for the murder. In that sense, *The Brothers Karamazov* as a whole suggests that the universality of guilt, one's intentions, and one's words can implicate responsibility for another's crime.

Alyosha's guilt stems from his belief that everyone shares responsibility for each other's crimes. While at the monastery, Alyosha embraced and absorbed Zosima's teachings. In fact, during a discussion with Alyosha at the monastery, Zosima said, "Make yourself responsible for... all men... you are to blame for everyone" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 276). In other words, Zosima teaches Alyosha that in order to truly benefit others, Alyosha must recognize that he is even responsible for the crimes that he did not commit. When explaining this concept to Alyosha, Zosima says, "Only through that knowledge, our heart grows soft with... love" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 146). By understanding that people are responsible for each other's sins, Zosima believes that people can truly love each other. This love can allow people to understand each other and reach an understanding that could ultimately prevent crimes, injustices, and suffering. In that sense, Alyosha seems to feel guilty for the crime because he was unable to resolve the underlying tension that ultimately led to the murder.

Dmitri believes that he is partially guilty for the crime due to his intentions, even though he did not actually kill his father. In a conversation with Alyosha several days before Smerdyakov kills Fyodor, Dmitri says, "Perhaps I shall [kill Fyodor]. I'm afraid he'll... be so loathsome to me" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 336). Clearly, Dmitri recognizes that he potentially hated Fyodor enough to kill him, and that, under certain circumstances, may have actually hated him. While talking to Alyosha before the trial, Dmitri says, "I didn't kill father, but I've got to go. I accept it" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 499). Although Smerdyakov was the actual murderer, Dmitri believes that he must serve penance to be purified of the guilt derived from his intentions. In that sense, Dmitri's intentions implicated him as being responsible for the murder.

Ivan's guilt stemmed from developing the ideology that drove Smerdyakov to commit the murder. While developing his philosophy, Ivan suggests if God does not exist, then true, unchallengeable moral imperatives also do not exist. By rejecting God during "Rebellion" and the writing of "The Grand Inquisitor," Ivan rejects God, and, as a result, morality based on theology. Smerdyakov tests Ivan's ideology by murdering Fyodor, causing Ivan to be partially responsible for Fyodor's death. In fact, while talking to Ivan, Smerdyakov says, "You are responsible... since you... charged me to do it" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 527). Clearly, Smerdyakov admits that Ivan's ideology enabled him to commit the crime. While discussing responsibility, Smerdyakov says, "You are the only real murderer... though I did kill him" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 527). Although Smerdyakov admits that he was the one who physically killed Fyodor, he suggests that Ivan killed Fyodor ideologically. Ivan's mental anguish during his third conversation with Smerdyakov, and, later, his mental collapse, suggests that Ivan believes that the development of his theories causes him to be guilty of the murder.

Although Alyosha, Dmitri, and Ivan did not kill Fyodor, they all feel guilty for Fyodor's death. Alyosha's belief that he has the duty to love everyone and use his understanding of others to prevent suffering

causes him to feel responsible for the sins of everyone, including the murder of his father. Because Dmitri's hatred was strong enough to motivate him to kill his father himself, Dmitri's intention implicated him as being partially responsible for the murder. Finally, Ivan's recognition that his ideology drove Smerdyakov's crime leads to Ivan's mental collapse and responsibility for the crime. In that sense, *The Brothers Karamazov* suggests that the university of responsibility, intent, and words can lead to shared guilt for a crime.

Communal Relationships vs. Justice in the Present

Dostoevsky explores the notion of justice in several of his works, including *The Brothers Karamazov*. Although Ivan, Dmitri, and Alyosha all search for justice in the present, they are unable to find it. On the other hand, unlike many other characters in the novel, Zosima is not concerned with the abstract notion of establishing a just society in the here and now. In that sense, *The Brothers Karamazov* suggests that forming relationships with other individuals based on love should be the focus of efforts to improve society, as opposed to the nearly impossible task of finding justice in the present.

Dmitri's trial in *The Brothers Karamazov* questions the ability of legal systems to find justice without religion. Unlike many of the characters in the novel, Alyosha believes that Dmitri is innocent, immediately after Dmitri is arrested. Instead of relying on physical evidence, Alyosha is drawn to this conclusion solely through his loving relationship with his brother, in accordance with Zosima's religious teachings. However, the court reaches the opposite conclusion. At the beginning of Dmitri's trial in court, Kirillovich says, "Let us lay aside psychology... medicine... logic... Let us turn only to the facts" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 595). In theory, the prosecutor's fact-based approach seems theoretically sound. Nevertheless, even though the prosecutor's evidence suggests that Dmitri is the murderer, the physical evidence did not lead the court system to the truth. On one level, the result suggests that approaching the search for justice and truth on the basis of the physical world alone can result in injustice as well. Furthermore, the trial questions the sense of superiority that individuals when convicting others. For example, although the prosecutor claims to only be analyzing the evidence, his interpretation of the evidence is biased due to his concern with his reputation and the generalizations to the entirety of Russia that he attaches to the case. Similarly, when describing the jury, the narrator states that many individuals observing the case asked, "Can such a... complex... case be submitted to... petty officials and... peasants" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 556). While the prosecutor does not seem to be reliable in the search for truth, neither do the peasants. Practically, the interpretation of the physical evidence, the special interests of the prosecutor, and the reliability of the jury suggest that the court system in *The Brothers Karamazov* cannot perfectly find justice.

Alyosha's and Ivan's search for justice suggests that justice cannot be found in the present. For example, when Zosima dies, Alyosha expects that Zosima's body will be associated with miracles, as with other saints. Instead, Zosima's body quickly begins to decay and give off an odor of corruption, which Alyosha perceives as an injustice against Zosima's saintly life. Ultimately, Zosima's death challenges Alyosha's faith and causes him to grow in his beliefs. Eventually, Alyosha realizes that he does not need to depend on miracles to establish justice on earth, and, instead, embraces Zosima's teachings. In his "Rebellion" and "Grand Inquisitor," Ivan rejects God because of the absurd, unjust world that God created. As a result, Ivan isolates himself from the world and its suffering. Clearly, Ivan's abstract focus on the notion of justice prevents him from interacting with and improving the physical world. However, Alyosha's philosophy of love, based on Zosima's teachings, causes Alyosha to focus on building relationships with Dmitri, Grushenka, Ilyusha, Kolya, and the other children, instead of focusing on the unjust suffering present in the world. Ultimately, Alyosha is able to positively impact the lives of the people he interacts with, without discussing the relatively abstract notion of justice. Although Alyosha and Ivan fail to find justice, Alyosha's theological growth enables him to positively impact the people he meets.

Zosima taught Alyosha to build relationships with others based on love, instead of finding reasons to condemn them. While discussing responses to the sins of others, Zosima says, "At the sight of men's sin... Always decide to use humble love" (*The Brothers Karamazov* 275). While legal systems often respond to crime using force, Zosima claims that force can cause dissatisfaction, hate, and, ultimately, more crime. Instead,

Zosima recommends forgiving criminals, responding to crime with humble love, and learning to understand them to prevent future crimes. In his conversation with Alyosha, Zosima strongly warns against judging others in the name of justice by saying, “You cannot be a judge of anyone... If I had been righteous, perhaps there would have been no criminal” (*The Brothers Karamazov* 277). Because Zosima believes that all men are responsible for each other’s crimes, people cannot condemn each other since all are guilty. Alyosha also embodies Zosima’s teachings. For example, instead of philosophically debating the notion of justice depicted in Ivan’s “Grand Inquisitor,” Alyosha instead kisses Ivan in an act of compassion and acknowledgement of his suffering. Although Zosima’s philosophy ties to the notion of justice through the idea that all are guilty, Zosima does not focus on the notion of justice. Instead, Zosima and Alyosha focus on improving the lives of others, regardless of whether or not they are criminals.

The Brothers Karamazov suggests that searching for justice in the present is not the best way to improve people’s lives. Dmitri’s trial, which is supposedly a search for justice, results in an incorrect verdict, due to the biased interpretation of the physical evidence, the prosecutor’s selfish intentions, and the questionable reliability of the jury. Alyosha’s search for justice through Zosima’s sainthood fails when Zosima’s body gives off a strong odor of corruption. Similarly, Ivan’s search for justice fails to improve the people around him, as his philosophy leads him to isolate himself and reject the world. Instead, Zosima’s philosophy suggests that searching for justice is unnecessary because everyone is guilty and everyone is responsible for the crimes in society. As a result, Zosima’s teachings suggest that people should build relationships with each other and focus on improving each others’ lives, instead of condemning others for crimes for which everyone is responsible.

Faith and Compassion: Dostoevsky’s Answer to the Problem of Evil

Throughout his life, Dostoevsky wrestled with the concept of evil and suffering existing in a world that God created. As he investigated the alternative, God not existing, in the Notes from the Underground through what would later develop into existentialist thought, he found the lack of God’s existence to also be psychologically tormenting. However, while writing *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky suggests that the Christian tradition can exist in the presence of evil on Earth, even though Earthly knowledge alone cannot completely answer the questions associated with the existence of evil. The eternal beings and religious symbolism in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* suggest that only faith in combination with compassion for other people in society, and not reliance on reason alone, can address the problem of evil and lead to genuine happiness.

As a representative of God and religious values in *Crime and Punishment*, Sonya saves Raskolnikov from the psychological torment he feels after he abandons religious values and murders the pawnbroker. While attempting to justify his crime, Raskolnikov argues that he is not guilty because the murder would reduce suffering. For a portion of the novel, Raskolnikov suggests that he had the right to murder the pawnbroker because, as an extraordinary man, he had the responsibility to reduce human suffering through murder. However, ultimately, Raskolnikov fails to improve the lives of Dunya and Sonya through his actions. Furthermore, Raskolnikov’s unjustifiable murder of Lizaveta suggests that he had actually increased human suffering and contributed to the problem of evil. Although for the majority of the novel Raskolnikov believes that he can escape prosecution due to his extraordinary status, his mental anguish increases as the novel progresses. Near the end of the novel, Sonya manages to save Raskolnikov from tormenting himself by trying to address the problem of evil through the creation of his own theories by showing Raskolnikov compassion instead of condemning him as a criminal, convincing him to confess his crime and serve penance, and promising to stay with him and help him through his suffering. As a symbol of Christianity, Sonya’s intervention relieves Raskolnikov’s anguish and provides him with the opportunity to enjoy the rest of his life, despite the physical suffering or prosecution he may experience as a result of the murder. In fact, while depicting Sonya’s influence on Raskolnikov, the narrator writes, “He... bowed to... and kissed that filthy earth with delight and happiness” (*Crime and Punishment* 525). In all likelihood, Dostoevsky’s association of Raskolnikov’s genuine happiness with a scene that resembles a religious conversion is not a coincidence. Instead, *Crime and Punishment* suggests that Sonya’s religious values enabled her to address the problem of evil by relieving Raskolnikov’s suffering through compassion.

Compassion and religion have the potential to rejuvenate Ivan’s mental well-being, after his Grand Inquisitor, Christ, and Devil suggest that rejecting God fails to reduce human suffering. During his conversation with Alyosha during “Rebellion,” Ivan tells Alyosha that he rejects God because he cannot accept a God who created a world with suffering. Furthermore, after Ivan’s Grand Inquisitor imprisons Christ, his Grand Inquisitor tells Christ that Christ should have ruled over and controlled human society by giving them bread and miracles, instead of forcing them to make their own decisions and rely on faith. Ultimately, by rejecting God, Ivan decides to reject religious values as well. Although Ivan appears to show signs of uncertainty in the truth of his beliefs during his discussions with Zosima and Alyosha, Ivan clearly mentally collapses when Smerdyakov uses his philosophy to hold him responsible for the death of Fyodor. As a result, Ivan’s reliance on reason apart from God caused him to isolate himself, prevented him from reducing human suffering by loving those around him, and caused him to feel mental anguish. Although Ivan appears very ill by the end of the novel, compassion and religion seem to have the potential to revive his well-being and allow him to live an enjoyable life. During Ivan’s conversation with his devil, his devil reminds Ivan of Ivan’s story about a man who rejected God by sitting outside the gates of heaven for one thousand years to protest human suffering. However, after entering heaven, the devil says that the man “cried out that those two seconds were worth walking... a quadrillion of quadrillions [kilometers]” (*The Brothers Karamazov* 542). In other words, the devil suggests that, after entering heaven, the man’s happiness and, perhaps, understanding of human suffering, increased unimaginably. Alyosha also recognizes Ivan’s search for happiness through God after Ivan’s collapse, by saying, “God... His truth, were gaining mastery over his heart, which still refused to submit” (*The Brothers Karamazov* 551). While praying, Alyosha states that religion has the power to revive Ivan, though Ivan’s reliance on reason to hate humanity could permanently destroy him. Similarly, Katerina’s compassion for Ivan may promote his transformation and recovery. Ivan’s philosophy associated with his rebellion and Grand Inquisitor cause him mental suffering, though Christ’s compassionate response to the Grand Inquisitor reflects the ability of religious values and Katerina’s compassion to save Ivan from permanent mental anguish.

The religious symbols of providence, the Word, and the sun provide the characters in the novels with hope, even in the face of evil and suffering. When Raskolnikov asks Sonya to pick between people’s lives, Sonya responds by saying, “I cannot know divine Providence... who put me to judge who is to live” (*Crime and Punishment* 408). Clearly, Sonya’s belief in God causes her to believe that God will address unsolvable issues, such as evil and suffering. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Zosima echoes this interpretation while talking about the suffering in the book of Job by saying, “But the greatness of it lies just in the fact that it is a great mystery... the eternal truth is accomplished” (*The Brothers Karamazov* 252). In other words, although Zosima acknowledges that he does not fully understand the purpose of Job’s misery and human suffering in general, he believes in God’s providence and God’s purposeful control of Earthly events. Although Raskolnikov criticizes Sonya’s reliance on providence to escape poverty by having her read the story of Lazarus, Sviridgailov miraculously provides Sonya and her family with money before his death, while, despite his will, Raskolnikov is unable to help them through his own philosophy. Similarly, in both novels, Dostoevsky symbolically uses the metaphor of the sun to reflect the hope for happiness Raskolnikov and Dmitri feel around the time of their conversions. While attempting to convince Raskolnikov to admit to his crime, Porfiry says, “Become a sun and everyone will see you” (*Crime and Punishment* 460). In other words, although Raskolnikov’s situation seems hopeless and miserable, Porfiry suggests that rejecting his theory and admitting to the crime provides Raskolnikov with the opportunity to truly be happy and share that happiness with others. Likewise, when Alyosha visits Dmitri after Dmitri is arrested, Dmitri says, “I see the sun... there’s a whole life in that” (*The Brothers Karamazov* 500). Clearly, Dmitri’s Christian-like conversion provides him with the strength to serve penance and find happiness, even though he must unjustly go to trial for a crime that he did not commit. Providence, the Bible, and the sun are symbols of hope for the characters in Dostoevsky’s novels that enable them to find satisfaction.

The philosophies of Alyosha and Zosima suggest that Earthly suffering can lead to salvation, love, and happiness. Having grown as a theologian, Alyosha recognizes that Ilyusha’s suffering united the boys by causing them to bond with each other. After burying Ilyusha, Alyosha acknowledges the importance of creating memories of experiences involving love for others by saying, “If we have only one good memory.... Even that

may serve someday as our salvation” (The Brothers Karamazov 645). In other words, Alyosha suggests that reflecting on the memory of Ilyusha’s death could ultimately prevent future evil and provide the boys with mental and spiritual salvation in the future. During his teachings, Zosima echoes the importance of love that Alyosha emphasizes by saying, “Love to throw yourself on the earth... Love all men, love everything” (The Brothers Karamazov 278). Instead of abstractly considering the problem of evil, Zosima believed that by sharing the responsibility for everyone’s actions, loving others, and building relationships with others, individuals can reduce human suffering by preventing future misfortunes. Nearing his death, Zosima’s brother responds to the problem of suffering by saying, “Life is paradise, and we are all in paradise” (The Brothers Karamazov 249). Like Zosima, Zosima’s brother believed that faith in God provides one with the peace of mind to find paradise, even in the presence of evil. Alyosha’s and Zosima’s philosophies address the problem of evil through faith and love.

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Zosima states that although he does not fully understand why evil exists, he has faith in God’s control and plan. Unlike Zosima, Raskolnikov and Ivan initially attempt to address the problem of evil by rejecting religious values and establishing their own philosophies, though they both ultimately are miserable and unsuccessful in reducing human suffering. In both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, religious symbolism provides the characters in these novels with the hope of truly being happy. Zosima emphasizes the importance of love for others within the Christian faith, suggesting that love can prevent future suffering and allow one to find happiness while on Earth. Dostoevsky ends his final novel with Alyosha’s theology, which suggests that short-term, Earthly suffering enables people to grow as individuals and create memories that could serve as their salvation in the future. In that sense, Dostoevsky relies on the eternal beings in his novels and on religious symbolism to respond to the problem of evil, which had challenged him throughout his life.

Conclusion

While Dostoevsky felt unable to fully justify his beliefs during his lifetime, his arguments in *Notes from the Underground*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* strongly reflect his beliefs in the importance of God and communal relationships. The comparison of Dostoevsky’s *Notes from the Underground* to Sartre’s “Existentialism is a Humanism” highlights the mental anguish that Dostoevsky suggests follows hyperconsciousness unrestrained by religious doctrine. In *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky suggests that community as a whole shares guilt for crimes, that the focus of Earthly life should be establishing loving relationships with others and not on pursuing justice by judging others, and that both faith and compassion are necessary to address evil and find fulfillment. In that sense, despite his uncertainty, Dostoevsky developed a powerful theology within his literary works, which begins to answer many of the philosophical questions that he struggled with during his lifetime.

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Vanity and the Bildungsroman

By Stacey Vandas

Romantic literature is notoriously hard to define due to the plethora of authors, genres, and themes that emerged over a period of several decades. Romantic-era writers were interested in a multitude of subjects, and although it is difficult to find commonalities among every writer in the Romantic category, two recurring themes are introspection and the growth of the self. Both Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Jane Austen’s *Emma*, novels of two highly different genres, explore these concepts in detail through their respective protagonists, Victor Frankenstein and Emma Woodhouse. Whether either work can be considered a bildungsroman has been heavily debated; I align with the traditional viewpoint in the affirmative, yet arguing that the education and growth of the protagonists is a more complicated matter than it initially appears. *Emma* and *Victor* are both educated in the sense that they gain self-awareness by the end of the novel. Through their respective characterizations, narrative structures, and uses of irony, Shelley and Austen achieve this education in different ways, ultimately illustrating that the protagonist’s self-growth is twofold: it requires both a realization of the autonomy and interests of others as well a threat to his or her own interests. This has implications for what it means to be a protagonist or to experience self-growth. However, a comparison of *Emma* and *Victor Frankenstein*, taken together with the novels’ resolutions, reveals *Emma*’s growth to be more complete and effective than *Victor*’s.

To begin a discussion of how *Emma* and *Frankenstein* undergo comparable inner educations, it is necessary to bring together these two seemingly disparate characters. Upon simply a superficial comparison, *Emma* and *Victor* both come from prosperous families and experienced happy, untroubled childhoods. The first sentence of Austen’s work confirms this, for *Emma* is “handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition...and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her” (E 5). *Victor*’s childhood mirrors hers, and he dictates to Robert Walton, “No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself. My parents were possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence” (F 39). Furthermore, as suggested by this last quotation, both protagonists had loving, indulgent parents. *Emma* feels “beloved and important...always first and always right” in her father’s eyes (E 68). Living in worlds of familial harmony and contentment and being doted on by affectionate parents, *Emma* and *Victor* faced few problems in their youth and developed active and intelligent minds. Even though they are grateful for this good fortune, nevertheless their childhoods ultimately result in boredom and vanity as young adults, leading them to undertake ambitious ventures.

Emma and *Victor* are imaginative, ambitious creators with a desire and skill for manipulation—*Victor* in his scientific endeavors and *Emma* in her social ones. This creative impulse is born out of boredom with their employments and self-idealization. *Emma* fears “intellectual solitude” after Miss Taylor marries Mr. Weston and she is left with neither suitable companions for conversation nor an occupation to pass the time with (E 6). She reflects on her “success” in matching the pair, which, feeding on her vanity, induces her to resolve to continue matchmaking with Mr. Elton and Harriet (E 10-11). As Susan Morgan puts it, “*Emma*’s fancies, her manipulations, her imagination, are all those of a creator...*Emma* creates from love of power and love of self” (28). Her egotistic tendencies are made clear when Austen describes her “disposition to think a little too well of herself” immediately in the novel (E 5). This seems to present an obstacle for *Emma* to change at all, for as Knightley points out, “How can *Emma* imagine she has any thing to learn herself, while Harriet is presenting such a delightful inferiority?” (E 31). Notwithstanding this apparent hindrance, Austen will eventually use *Emma*’s vanity as the means of correcting it.

For *Frankenstein*’s part, he expresses his boredom as leading to his scientific pursuits when he describes his “thirst for knowledge” and the night when he lazily picked up a natural philosophy book with “apathy,” only to become immediately enthralled (F 40-42). His vanity surfaces in the same manner as *Emma*’s; he is flattered by his own successes and that drives him to take his experiments even further (F 54). Clearly, conceit and boredom impel the protagonists to ambition beyond the scope of their powers, as the reader later realizes. As for their creations themselves, *Victor*’s is the literal formation of the creature, while *Emma* makes

matches in Highbury. Harriet Smith is Emma's primary "creation," as she ascribes to her a genteel parent-age and designs for her to marry into a higher social milieu. Austen gives us Emma's thoughts toward Harriet, which once again demonstrate her belief in her own superiority: "[S]he would improve her...she would form her opinions and her manners..." (E 19). Thus, Emma and Victor are spurred on by their imaginations and visions of future success. The like elements of vanity and boredom found in both characters is coupled with extreme overconfidence and desire for glory; all of these things together play into the irony which both authors use to bring their protagonists to a state of self-awareness.

Shelley and Austen cast both of their characters' creative pursuits in the light of striving to achieve personal glory. Because of their self-importance, they are ready to reap the benefits of success in the form of a boost to their reputation and self-esteem. For example, Emma revels in the fact that she has been "proved in the right, when so many people said Mr. Weston would never marry again" (E 10). With Harriet and Mr. Elton, she anticipates self-satisfaction and the praise of others for having made a good match once again. In the other novel, Frankenstein declares: "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me" (F 55). Clearly, the sense of being praised and revered by others is echoed in Victor's inner desires, and he even speaks of glory as more attractive than any wealth he would obtain through his discoveries (F 42). In Harry Keyishian's work "Vindictiveness and the Search for Glory in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein," he notes that often this kind of imaginative, relentless quest can suppress our understanding of our own limitations (203). On that ground, Emma's and Frankenstein's self-assurance, which boosts their desire for glory, also gives them a reckless misunderstanding of their limits. In other words, they lack self-awareness because they are overconfident to the point of not recognizing their limitations. Victor remarks, "my imagination was too much exalted to permit me to doubt of my ability" (F 54). Similarly Emma "[cannot] feel a doubt" and is "confident" and "convinced" that Mr. Elton loves Harriet, completely missing all hints at his otherwise-inclined affections. Both protagonists ultimately illustrate "a mind delighted with its own ideas," which is dangerous for Shelley and Austen, because it means self-importance, self-delusion, and an inability to truly understand others (E 20).

Moving on from these preliminary comparisons, a discussion of one major difference between the novels aids in understanding how Shelley and Austen educate their characters separately into self-awareness, and how the reader is to regard that self-awareness. First, the narrative structure of the novels is very different. Frankenstein makes use of first-person narration coming from three different sources: Walton, Frankenstein, and the creature. This unique and fragmented approach to first person allows us to see from multiple perspectives, yet we still feel the full force of each character's individual emotions and thoughts. This is especially helpful in understanding Frankenstein, as his perspective constitutes the majority of the text. From this we can discern that Victor has gained at least some self-awareness by the end of the story, because he confesses it all to Walton in an attempt to curtail his ambition and thirst for glory. Furthermore, Frankenstein reproaches his own conduct throughout the entire narrative. To give an example, Frankenstein instructs Walton by scolding himself, "Learn from me...how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow" (F 54). This illustrates that Victor is capable of introspection and now recognizes the limits of his nature as well as the pitfalls of his former aspirations.

By contrast, in Emma, Austen utilizes free indirect discourse in the third person. The narrative voice is separate from the characters, yet at times enters into their consciousnesses as Rachel Oberman discusses (9). In this way, the narrator and reader are able to distance themselves from the characters' emotions and perceptions, and understand truths that they cannot. They are also able to form objective judgments on the characters, because their flaws are revealed through light mockery in the narration. For example, when Emma reflects on the Cole's party, she thinks, "The Coles were very respectable in their way, but they ought to be taught that it was not for them to arrange the terms on which the superior families would visit them" (E 163). Here the reader sees and chides Emma's haughtiness and snobbery. In each novel, then, the narration shifts perspectives; the difference is that in Frankenstein this is subjective, while in Emma it is objective. In both cases, we recognize that the protagonist has achieved self-awareness by the end of the novel. For Emma, this is displayed in the huge differences in her thoughts and words at the beginning versus the end of the story. At the start, her self-

importance makes her dismissive of others, as in this example with Mr. Knightley: "It was most convenient to Emma not to make a direct reply to this assertion; she chose rather to take up her own line of the subject again" (E 50). At the end, conversely, she overrides her own wishes in order to care for him, resolving that "cost her what it would, she would listen" (E 337). Oberman points out that the use of free indirect discourse is not accidental, and that Austen uses it to emphasize the way in which Emma's education comes about. She writes, "...there is a connection between the ability to recognize and incorporate other people's words into one's thoughts and the level of moral development reached" (12). This is clear from the evidence just given, as well as Oberman's examples of where Emma integrates the other characters' opinions into her own thoughts. Undoubtedly, an other-consciousness, or an awareness of the feelings and a valuation of other people, is a crucial component of individual moral growth and self-awareness.

Even though both Emma and Frankenstein use a narration style that merges perspectives, it remains unclear whether Shelley's protagonist has effectively incorporated any of them into his own. At the end, Victor still exhorts Walton to finish his quest and kill the monster for him, despite the danger involved. Yet, as previously determined, his self-awareness is evident from his reflections. If an awareness of the concerns of others is so central to Emma's growth, how is the apparent lack thereof to be accounted for with Frankenstein? I argue that there is another important element to the education in a bildungsroman: self-interest. If they do not share an integrated understanding of others by the story's resolution, Victor and Emma do share the experienced of a major threat to their interests and their happiness. This major event is the vehicle that the authors use to instruct their protagonists in self-awareness, and irony is the fuel. For Frankenstein, the threat is plainly the creature, who murders almost everyone he cares about. He certainly grieves his brother, Clerval, and Justine, but it is the sudden loss of Elizabeth that truly jeopardizes Victor's future happiness. He reflects, "Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change...A fiend had snatched from me every hope of future happiness" (F 201). His hope of a happy marriage has been dashed, he imagines the creature's further destruction of his family, and he immediately vows to destroy him at all costs (F 200, 206). Ironically, the creature had warned Frankenstein what would happen, but Frankenstein's vanity got in the way, and he could only imagine that his life would be in peril on his wedding night, not his bride's (F 195).

Emma's threatening moment is Harriet's confession of interest in Mr. Knightley and belief that he returns her affections. As soon as Emma realizes that she loves Mr. Knightley, and feels her future happiness menaced by her own creation, Emma is "shocked into self-knowledge" (Morgan 29). Austen writes, "Her own conduct, as well as her own heart, was before her in the same few minutes. She saw it all and with a clearness which had never blessed her before...how indelicate, how irrational, how unfeeling had been her conduct! What blindness, what madness, had led her on!" (E 320-21). Emma finally recognizes that her actions have produced her own unhappiness by her adoption of Harriet as a project, and like Victor, imagines a dreadfully bleak future (E 324-25). Both protagonists, then, feel the sting of irony applied by their authors, and are educated in their own misdeeds by it. They are given a larger perspective of the consequences of their actions; paradoxically, it is their self-interest and vanity that ultimately allows them to overcome that vanity and recognize their own faults. James Murray, writing on the need for and application of balance in Emma, writes, "...irony is measure and balance: it corrects and sets aright and restores order. It puts things and people in a proper perspective" (163). Evidently, irony is a corrective force in the novels; it is also the primary tool of instruction for Austen and Shelley, which they apply through circumstances that wound their protagonists' vanity. It is clear that this threatening use of irony is necessary for growth, because at early points in the novel before their interests are put in peril, both characters vow to stop their actions unsuccessfully. Victor swears off natural philosophy only to return to it again later, and Emma resolves to discontinue matchmaking, yet still works at it with herself and Frank Churchill, and then Harriet and Frank. An additional example of irony at work is the way that Emma's and Victor's creations ultimately take on a life of their own, asserting their own will outside of their creator's. Thus, neither Harriet nor the creature turns out as their creators have expected or wanted. The authors' narration styles also feed into the irony. In Frankenstein, the reader is made aware of the creature's baiting of Victor through his narrations, which Victor never realizes. Emma is rife with many small instances of irony in addition to the pivotal ironic event that changes the main character. We understand these ironies through free indirect discourse, which points out to us when characters have blundered without knowing it.

Left to consider is the degree to which Shelley's and Austen's ironic educations of their protagonists are effective. As mentioned before, Frankenstein does not seem able to incorporate other characters' interests well by the end of the novel, despite his good intentions and his newfound self-awareness. Emma, on the other hand, experiences a more complete change, because both elements of self-growth are present, namely a threat to her happiness and an awareness of others' importance. Enit Steiner argues that Emma learns "self-criticism and self-monitored behaviour" (150). The narrative takes Emma from someone who "could not quarrel with herself" to someone who "ponder[s] the motives and ethical consequences of her actions" as in her reflections on Harriet's admission (E 55; Steiner 150). Her ability to quarrel with herself has grown along with her incorporation of other's consciousnesses. Emma's vanity is also greatly reduced as she now recognizes it in herself and admits that others are superior to her, like Mr. Knightley (E 376). Thus, Emma's education is made more complete because it includes both elements necessary to achieve self-awareness. Murray points out that Emma also had a corrective force in Mr. Knightley (164-65). Speaking of his advice, Emma says, "I doubt whether my own sense would have corrected me without it" (E 363). This could be another reason why Frankenstein does not appear to have learned as much; his self-isolation denied the possibility of outside correction, and ironically leads to a life of isolation.

In conclusion, what Shelley and Austen are ultimately saying about protagonists is that they are far from perfect, and need to be corrected. The bildungsroman must present a character with major personal flaws that they do not recognize. Emma Woodhouse and Victor Frankenstein fit these criteria perfectly because of their self-importance and imaginative desire for personal glory. Both writers employ a narrative structure that allows the reader to view the plot from multiple perspectives, and notice the ways in which the protagonists are committing serious blunders out of vanity and boredom. All of this ultimately feeds into the irony at play in both novels; the authors put their characters' happiness at risk at a pivotal moment, and they must acknowledge that they were the cause of their own misfortunes in order to gain self-awareness. Both an "examination of conscience," as Murray puts it, and an other-integration are vital for self-growth, and only Emma learns how to do both (164). Shelley and Austen maintain in their characterizations of Emma and Victor that major character flaws are necessary in a protagonist, and that it is the writer's task to wound these flaws and raise others' importance. It is this kind of internal education that makes a bildungsroman compelling.

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"Hysteria" and *Jane Eyre*

By Renatta Gorski

In the Victorian era, the term "hysteria" was broad, typically used to label a woman suffering from a wide variety of symptoms. While today the term is used in a more singular sense to describe a fit of madness or a frenzy for either gender, in the nineteenth century female hysteria was a medical diagnosis applied in countless cases in which women were irritable, nervous, suffering fainting spells, having trouble sleeping, or were rejecting food. In his article, "Hysteria," published in 1892, psychologist Horatio Bryan Donkin makes the claim that female hysteria was caused by cultural restraints that women were regularly faced with. In fact, he suggests that any form of stifled desire can cause hysteria. Victorian culture placed a lot of restraints on women, which, supposing Donkin's claim to be accurate, explains the countless hysteria diagnoses. Though Donkin wrote his article in 1892, evidence of his claims can be found earlier in the era. For example, Charlotte Bronte's titular character in her celebrated 1847 novel *Jane Eyre* exhibits symptoms of the Victorian diagnosis of female hysteria, particularly in light of Jane's food refusal, or what would later be described as anorexia nervosa. Because anorexia was not diagnosed until later in the era, it was often considered a symptom of hysteria. Thus, Jane's behavior, including symptoms of anorexia nervosa, would match Donkin's description of hysteria in that it was a result of her stifled desires as well as cultural restraints imposed on her a Victorian woman.

As is consistent with other Victorian psychologists, Donkin notes that puberty and the development of sexual organs are correlated to the occurrence of female hysteria. In "Hysteria," he suggests that after puberty, the female's nervous system is unbalanced, which was commonly thought to be linked to hysterical symptoms. Donkin builds on this claim by noting that, although girls undergoing puberty naturally begin to develop sexual desires, they are unable to satisfy these inclinations due to societal constraints. Thus, he observes that many other Victorian psychologists "regard unsatisfied sexual desire as one of the leading causes of hysteria" (Donkin 197). Evidently, the popular belief was that prohibiting the body from gratifying its natural needs greatly affected the nervous system, which would consequently affect the mental state.

While Donkin clearly supported this widely held theory, he developed it further by suggesting that severe cases of hysteria occur in cases of "enforced abstinence from the gratification of any of the inherent and primitive desires" (Donkin 198). He later notes that, "There are clearly other stresses which render women especially liable to hysteria," but he is primarily focused on the denial of satisfying one's needs.

Although refusing gratification would afflict anybody, Donkin does posit that women are most frequently impacted, due both to their bodily constitutions, specifically the assumed weakness of the reproduction system, and to the Victorian expectations placed upon them. He points out that "'Thou shalt not' meets a girl at almost every turn" (Donkin 197). According to A.K. Silver, author of *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, this observation is supported by the fact that the ideal Victorian woman was "one who submits her physical appetites... to her will" (Silver 27). Women who strove to meet the societal standards were undoubtedly focused not on what they did but rather on what they did not do. Donkin connects this cultural phenomenon by suggesting that abstaining from acting freely ultimately led women to exhibit certain behaviors that were at the time considered hysterical, such as refusing to eat or even an increase in sexual desire.

In his article, Donkin does not list specific behaviors but instead generalizes the typical attitudes that would be considered hysterical, thus leaving the definition of hysteria broad. He claims that, "the hysteric is pre-eminently an individualist, an unsocial unit, and fails in adaptation to organic surroundings" (Donkin 198). Moreover, he notes that the hysterical female has either a deficiency or an excess of energy, which is "the result of the passion for sympathy or notoriety." According to Donkin, many of the hysterical female's abnormal actions, while being a result of repressed desires, are motivated by their want of attention. Though this cry for attention can be manifested through committing a crime, he notes that the hysterical woman may merely exaggerate her suffering in order to be noticed.

Although Donkin does not necessarily list distinct aspects of hysteria in his article, other Victorian psychologists believed that a wide number of symptoms fit under the scope of hysterical behavior. However, in

his book *From Fasting Saints to Anorexic Girls*, Ron van Deth points out that the “unknown German physician Von Rein... described a case of hysteria in which food abstinence was one of the most prominent symptoms” (van Deth 130). Likewise, throughout the nineteenth century many people were “linking food abstinence to hysteria.” Although anorexia nervosa, or the act of starving oneself, was not medically established as a disease until 1873 by Sir William Gull, indications of anorexia were undoubtedly prevalent before and during the Victorian era. Because the actual term was not established until later in the century, physicians regarded self-starvation as “one of the manifold forms of hysteria” (van Deth 130).

Despite the lack of details in Donkin’s article, he would surely agree with the connection between abstinence from food and hysteria. Van Deth writes that “the motive of food refusal in these hysterical females can undoubtedly be attributed to their craving for attention from those around them,” which resonates with Donkin’s belief that hysterical actions were often influenced by the desire for notoriety (“Food Refusal” 396). More significantly, the fact that refusing food would be denying the body of an “inherent or primitive desire” certainly suggests that Donkin would consider anorexia as evidence of hysteria.

As aforementioned, anorexia nervosa was not officially termed until later in the century, though the disorder had certainly been exhibited well before that. In fact, *Jane Eyre*, the eponymous heroine of Charlotte Brontë’s 1847 novel, can be considered an anorectic in light of both Donkin’s and Gull’s theories: Jane was evidently subject to Victorian cultural restraints regarding female behavior and expectations, which can explain her negative relationship with food as a manifestation of hysteria.

Jane’s mental illness, however, may not have been entirely intentional, for Brontë’s own life certainly had a great deal of influence on her beloved character. Because the text of *Jane Eyre* indicates some evidence of Brontë’s biographical information, it is plausible that both the author and her character faced societal constraints that could have led to anorexia. Firstly, Jane’s physical appearance and attitude towards it closely resembles Brontë’s. For example, at the age of fifteen, Brontë was extremely small and described herself as “stunted” (Gaskall 76). Likewise, Jane and Rochester’s descriptions of herself are frequently preceded by the words “small” or “little.” Moreover, as described in a biography of the Brontë sisters by Charlotte Maurat, just prior to writing *Jane Eyre*, Brontë told her sisters, “I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself” (Maurat 170). This declaration clearly shows that Brontë’s view of herself was echoed in her creation of Jane, which is significant for a number of reasons: while it justifies connecting Brontë’s own life story with Jane’s, it also further indicates that the Victorian woman was persuaded to deny herself of indulgence or frivolities, or to be “plain” and “small.”

Notably, Brontë and her sisters were primarily raised by their father following the death of their mother at a young age. In her biography of Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskall describes Mr. Brontë’s parenting style as stoic and strict, for he “wished to make his children hardy, and indifferent to the pleasures of eating and dress” (Gaskall 44). In addition, communal meals that took place in typical Victorian bourgeois homes, much like the Brontës’, often reflected the rigid societal norms: the meal “exuded discipline and control, decency and moderation. As never before self-control was the bourgeois adage: everything in moderation, including eating and weight” (Van Deth 210). This doctrine was evidently constantly being instilled in the mind of a Victorian such as Brontë.

Furthermore, an aversion to bodily pleasures and to excess was surely reiterated during Brontë’s boarding school days at Cowan Bridge School and later Roe Head. Brontë’s experiences inevitably influenced her character Jane’s indifference to worldly pleasures, as was indoctrinated in her at Lowood. In fact, as headmaster, Mr. Brocklehurst clearly states his plan for the Lowood girls is “not to accustom them to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient, self-denying” (Brontë 59). It seems plausible to claim that such an approach to bringing the fictional girls up was inspired by Brontë’s own childhood discipline under both her father and at boarding school.

Finally, Brontë’s attitude toward food certainly shows itself in Jane’s character. One of Brontë’s school friends from Roe Head recalled that Brontë “always showed physical feebleness in everything. She ate no animal food at school” (Gaskall 82). Similarly, Jane ate very little during her first quarter at Lowood: she and the other pupils “had scarcely sufficient to keep alive a delicate invalid” (Brontë 56). Also, despite not eating on her long journey to Lowood, Jane “did not touch the food” on her first night at Lowood (Brontë 40). Although

the scarcity of food during this time period naturally had some influence on this aspect of the story, Brontë’s own perspective surely did as well.

In fact, Brontë allegedly ultimately passed away from tuberculosis. However, “This disease may be attended with decreased food intake and emaciation and has a historical relationship with self-starvation” (Van Deth 396). If Brontë had been an anorectic, it would be understandable that a character so similar to herself would also suffer from anorexia. While this evidence is difficult to prove, it bears mentioning as a parallel between the author and her heroine. Because a lot of Brontë is found throughout *Jane Eyre*, it is conceivable that many of the restraints that Jane is faced with are true of the Victorian era. These restraints plausibly would have influenced Jane to illustrate the symptoms of hysteria as described by Donkin.

While Brontë’s biographical influence on her novel is suggestive of Jane’s potential hysteria, or anorexia, other indications in the text also provide evidence for the heroine’s affliction. It is important to note that Jane’s acts of self-denial are brought about by outside influences that are representative of the Victorian era, such as the belief that a smaller body is more spiritual; as Donkin stated, “all kinds of... barriers to the free play of [the Victorian woman’s] powers are set up by ordinary social and ethical customs” (Donkin 197). While she, like other Victorian women, exhibits self-control, this virtue was not an act of self-improvement for her own sake, but rather because she was expected to do so by society.

Outside influence that led to Jane’s denial to self, or stifling of desires, is evident early on in the novel while Jane is still living with the Reeds at Gateshead. Upon acting out passionately against John, she is immediately punished by way of confinement in the “red-room” because she showed a lack of self-control over her emotions. Jane considers this punishment to be “unjust,” which “instigated some strange expedient to achieve escape from insupportable oppression—as running away, or, if that not be effected, never eating or drinking more, and letting myself die” (Brontë 10). This scene adequately introduces the Victorian expectation that a woman show willpower over her appetites, for Mrs. Reed promptly punishes Jane’s outburst, or lack of self-restraint.

Ironically, young Jane believes the best way to escape such a suppression of emotion would be through an act of abstinence that, according to the standards of the era, would actually be considered a “symbol of self-control over her potentially dangerous nature,” thus giving way to that oppression (Dominguez-Rue 299). At any rate, she feels compelled to take action against her punishment, which was not an uncommon sentiment. While the hunger strike did not originate until around 1910, perhaps “anorexia itself [had] been an expression of silent protest within the walls of the Victorian bourgeois home” (Van Deth 200). In Jane’s case, she considers self-starvation as a protest against her punishment and the Reeds.

This scene in the red-room, though, bears even more significance than introducing Victorian expectations for women and subsequent reactions. It also shows that the heroine uses food, or more specifically, the refusal of it, as a way to portray her emotions. While she had been expressing her outrage at her confinement, she thought to use the rejection of food as a way of expressing herself, or, in other words, as a way to gain attention. Evidently, Jane’s behavior in the red-room would suggest to a Victorian psychologist like Donkin that she was hysterical, as showed by abstaining from eating or drinking.

The cultural restraints that Donkin believed to be the basis of hysteria and that are reflected by Mrs. Reed’s punishment are again present at Lowood through Mr. Brocklehurst. One morning, the pupils’ breakfast is inedible because it is so overdone. As a result, Miss Temple orders a lunch of bread and cheese for the hungry girls (Brontë 44). However, this seemingly innocent act is greatly reprimanded by Mr. Brocklehurst several weeks later, for it violates his mission for the young women. In front of all the students at Lowood, he tells Miss Temple, “when you put bread and cheese, instead of burnt porridge, into these children’s mouths, you may indeed feed their vile bodies, but you little think how you starve their immortal souls!” (Brontë 60). The man’s statement clearly embodies the ever-present theory that the “slender body corporealizes... self-mastery and/or spirituality” (Silver 27). Essentially, the thinner a Lowood student is, the more religious she seems. At a young age, Jane is convinced to stifle her inherent wants and needs, which materializes as a refusal of food in spite of hunger.

Despite eventually gaining freedom from the confines of Lowood, Jane continues to be confronted with constraints during her employment at Thornfield. Though the suppression that Jane finds as a governess are in

large part due to Mr. Rochester, it is important to note Jane's age when she accepts the position of governess. At "barely eighteen," Jane is certainly either undergoing puberty or has nearly finished with the development of her sex organs (Bronte 85). As Donkin notes, "The subjects of hysteria are, in a very large proportion, of the female sex, the symptoms most often appearing at or soon after puberty" (Donkin 197). It would come as no surprise then to Donkin or to the majority of Victorians that Jane would display signs of hysterical behavior simply because of her age.

While Jane's age is of significance, Rochester and her feelings for him are far more noteworthy in regards to Jane's potential hysteria or anorexia. Jane's passionate, and somewhat forbidden, love for Rochester results in the stifling of her newfound sexual and romantic desires. At the same time, Rochester's attitude toward Jane reinstates the Victorian restraints and the emphasis of self-control over the body, not unlike Mr. Brocklehurst at Lowood.

Shortly after meeting Rochester, Jane develops feelings for him. Despite his faults, Jane is so taken with the gentleman that "his presence in a room was more cheering than the brightest fire" (Bronte 147). However, the factors of Jane's age, her social position, and societal norms all prevent her from being able to fully express her passionate feelings. Though at first she may ignore these factors, she is fully faced with them upon hearing about Blanche Ingram; after Mrs. Fairfax informs her of Miss Ingram, Jane internally berates herself as a fool and fantastic idiot. Because it "does no good" for her to be infatuated with "her superior, who cannot possibly intend to marry her," Jane adopts the Victorian doctrine of self-denial and self-discipline (Bronte 161). Instead of allowing herself to divulge in such frivolous fantasies, she gives herself a sentence: to create a faithful self-portrait captioned "disconnected, poor, and plain." Upon completing her self-governed task, Jane reflects, "I had reason to congratulate myself on the course of wholesome discipline to which I had thus forced my feelings to submit" (Bronte 162). Here, Jane replaces Mrs. Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst's roles as dealer of punishment for bodily—that is, not spiritual—emotions or desires. Her quintessentially Victorian upbringing rears its head as she forces control over her body to both punish herself and to demonstrate self-mastery. Although this instance does not involve food, Jane's behavior is synonymous with that of the Victorian hysterical anorectic because the latter would demonstrate self-mastery by refusing food and remaining thin.

As time passes at Thornfield, Jane's feelings for Rochester continue to grow, yet she continually attempts to quell her desire for her master. She remarks, "I had not intended to love him: the reader knows I have wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected" (Bronte 176). In addition to stifling her romantic desires, Jane tries to deny herself of other emotions as well: upon her joyful return to Thornfield, she "strangled a new-born agony" at the thought that Mr. Rochester would shortly cease to be her master (Bronte 248). Evidently, Jane is constantly at war with her emotions, rarely allowing herself to simply feel what she is feeling without checking herself.

At the same time as Jane is regularly suppressing her emotions, Rochester is further influencing her behavior by subtly enforcing societal restraints and the Victorian celebration of the small body. According to Thomas Laycock, a Victorian psychologist, a young girl at the age of eighteen is likely to develop a form of hysteria and so, "It is to such that marriage [...] is so useful" (Laycock 189). Rochester's choice to marry Jane can therefore be viewed as a way to control or suppress Jane's passionate—and thus hysterical—emotions. In fact, shortly after asking Jane to marry him, Rochester tells his soon-to-be bride, "I will myself put the diamond chain round your neck, and the circlet on your forehead" (Bronte 264). Both of these accessories serve a very symbolic purpose, for each implies a constraint on Jane put on by Rochester and the act of marriage. Marrying Jane is both an acknowledgement of her hysterical actions, because it could be seen partially as an attempt to quell her "sthenic form of hysteria," and at the same time a reinstatement of a cultural restraint on the Victorian woman.

Rochester's actions toward Jane certainly imply a restraint that could cause Jane to act hysterically, but importantly, they also celebrate Jane's small, thin body. Nearly every time Rochester addresses Jane, he uses the adjectives "small" or "little" with a positive tone. Before asking her to marry him, he regularly refers to the governess as "my little friend" (Bronte 206). Jane would then subconsciously associate being small with something positive: Rochester's affection. As Rochester evidently agrees with the Victorian notion that a true woman was "petite and fragile," he subtly persuades Jane to think the same (Dominguez-Rue 298). Jane would

therefore be motivated to exercise self-control and potentially refuse food in order to remain thin and be a woman worthy of Rochester's attention.

Furthermore, Rochester's choice in marrying Jane rather than Blanche Ingram implies a celebration of Jane's small figure. Unlike her sister Mary who is "too slim for her height," Blanche is "moulded like a Dian" (Bronte 173). With her "noble bust," it is evident that Miss Ingram's body would be a great deal larger than Jane's small one, yet Rochester ultimately chooses to make Jane his wife instead of Miss Ingram. This choice demonstrates Rochester's preference for a small, slim woman, which is a representation of some Victorian men's preferences.

His preference is further demonstrated when his secret wife, Bertha, is introduced to the story. Each mention of Bertha indicates that she is large: when Jane is telling Rochester that her room was invaded, she mentions the culprit is "a woman, tall and large" (Bronte 290). Then, when Rochester is forced to introduce Jane to Bertha, Jane observes, "She was a big woman, in stature almost equaling her husband, and corpulent besides" (Bronte 300). After a violent scene, Rochester addresses the group and explains his wish to have Jane instead of Bertha. While laying his hand on Jane's shoulder, he commands the group to "Compare... this form with that bulk, then judge me" (Bronte 301). Not only does Rochester implicitly prefer a smaller woman, but he even explicitly says so. When he implores the others to find fault in his preference, he implies that anyone would choose the small girl in favor of the larger. This choice was of course not uncommon for the Victorian, for one popular piece of Victorian conduct literature entitled *Beauty of Form and Grave of Vesture* stated, "Corpulence destroys the beauty of form and grace of motion... beauty of form is destroyed when fat accumulates" (Silver 34). Considering that Bertha was corpulent, it is no wonder that she was viewed as horrific and unlovable. Not only does the larger body suggest a distinct lack of beauty, but it also suggests a lack of control over the appetite. Bertha is likened to a "beast," "wild animal," and a "demon" (Bronte 300). Whereas a human being has the rational ability to control oneself, an animal or creature most certainly does not. By describing her as such, Rochester insinuates that she is resistant to Victorian constraints and is therefore undesirable. While such an insinuation yet again represents the high opinion of self-control over the body during the nineteenth century, it would also have an impression on Jane and her view of her own body because of her feelings for the older man. If she is made to understand that her smaller body is more desirable than Bertha's large one, she would be motivated to continue to practice self-restraint when it comes to eating.

Assuming Donkin's theory on hysteria is factual and that stifled desires motivate hysterical behavior, Jane Eyre could certainly be considered a hysteric, in light of the strict standards Victorian women were inclined to meet that were constantly presented in her life. Further, considering the theory that hysterical behavior could be manifested as food refusal, one could suppose that Jane Eyre was an anorectic, particularly because of the Victorian obsession with self-control and the thin body. However, it is difficult to draw more specific evidence from the text in order to suggest that Jane was actively abstaining from eating on a regular basis, as would be an indication of anorexia in modern-day standards. In his article "Food Refusal and Insanity," Ron van Deth outlines specific criteria that must be met in order to retroactively diagnose someone with anorexia nervosa. Among these criteria, van Deth notes that the subject must have endured "dramatic weight loss" with "No other physical illness or psychiatric disorders that would account for the weight loss" (Van Deth 396). He also notes that the subject would display "striking hyperactivity," which is unlike other illnesses with "a comparable degree of emaciation or malnutrition." Finally, the subject would have to deny her affliction, typically showed as a refusal to get help.

It is complicated to apply these criteria to Jane; though she is evidently small in stature, this does not necessarily mean she has endured "dramatic weight loss." When Jane meets Hannah and Diana for the first time, they exclaim about how thin she appears. Hannah asks her sister, "Is she ill, or only famished?" and Diana responds, "Famished, I think" (Bronte 345). Certainly part of the reason that Jane is so thin is because she has gone a few days without food upon her departure from Thornfield, but her long recovery suggests that she had gone more than a mere three or four days on little food. Furthermore, Hannah and Diana attribute her weight to lack of food, not some other "physical illness or psychiatric disorder."

The latter two criteria, however, are even more difficult to apply in Jane's case. While she certainly does not seem to be exhausted due to malnutrition, it is hard to make the claim that she exhibits the opposite, or

“striking hyperactivity.” There are no cases in which relatives or friends are urging Jane to eat more or to gain weight, other than at Lowood where all the girls were likely underweight. Therefore, it seems as though Jane does not fit all of the criteria for diagnosing anorexia as laid out by van Deth. Of course, a modern-day diagnosis and a Victorian diagnosis of anorexia would not be completely identical. Dr. Kathleen Renk notes that in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, anorexic women “restrict their food intake to conform to [...] standards of slimness and to demonstrate their spiritual rather than carnal natures” (Renk 9). On the other hand, it is more likely that women suffering from anorexia in the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries would be more concerned with meeting standards of slimness rather than the demonstration of their spiritual natures, as the latter is a primarily Victorian notion.

Despite the fact that one could not confidently label Jane as an anorectic according to present day standards—particularly due to a lack of information, as she is a fictional character—it remains that Donkin or another Victorian psychologist might have considered Jane hysterical. As noted in the introduction, a hysterical diagnosis was not at all uncommon. Similar to Jane, many women were motivated to exhibit self-control over their desires and over their bodies. This notion is supported by the popularity of the corset, which was advertised as self-discipline and remains a prevalent icon of the Victorian era. Therefore, it is perhaps not so surprising that Donkin would link the regularly diagnosed hysteria with excessive self-restraint, for he was undoubtedly confronted with both of these facts on a regular basis.

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Effects of Maladaptive Cognition on the Onset and Development of Anorexia Nervosa

By Yeonhee Jenny Kang

Various studies have been conducted on the causative factors for anorexia nervosa (AN) as well as on the factors that influence its development, with many references to terms such as “body image”, “self-schemas”, and “self-concept”; however, these terms are loosely used and rarely clearly defined within the studies. The newly updated Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) defines one of the three diagnostic criteria for AN as a “disturbance in the way in which one’s body weight or shape is experienced, undue influence of body weight or shape on self-evaluation, or persistent lack of recognition of the seriousness of the current low body weight” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), in which the perception of body weight and shape by the individual are distorted; AN individuals tend to overestimate their own body size in images (Madsen, Bohon & Feusner, 2013). The onset and development of AN is heavily affected by maladaptive self-schemas and body image disturbances. Because this maladaptive cognition is crucially important in the diagnosis of AN as well as the predisposal and risk for AN, it is necessary to place greater emphasis on these factors during research for the potential improvement in treatment and prevention of AN.

Self-schemas as Predictors of Disordered Eating Behaviors

In Stein & Corte’s (2008) Identity Impairment Model research study, an individual’s identity is defined as a compilation of memory structures concerning the self that can alternatively be referred to as the “self-concept”. Similarly, the self-concept is defined as a complex cognitive structure that consists of various self-schemas, which are referred to as “individual organizations of knowledge about the self in specific domains of emotional and behavioral commitment” (Stein & Corte, 2008, p. 182). This longitudinal study aimed to observe the effects of fat body weight self-schemas and other negative weight-related self-schemas as predictors of disordered eating behaviors (DEB) in a group of college women at risk for an eating disorder transitioning from their first to second year of university (Stein & Corte, 2008). Compared to the baseline data measurements of DEB (t=0 months), data collected at the 6 month and 12 month intervals indicated that individuals with negatively valenced self-schemas had increases in their DEB, and the results suggested that these schemas were predictive of increases in DEB (Stein & Corte, 2008); this finding is substantiated by a previous finding that self-schemas motivate and regulate behavior (Stein & Corte, 2003).

This study was conducted over a period of 12 months on a population of 118 college freshman women, with the DEB group consisting of 77 women who had subthreshold levels of DEB and exhibited at least one eating disorder (ED) behavior (restricting, fasting, bingeing, purging, etc.), and the control group consisting of 41 women with no weight concerns. Both research groups had no history of DEB/ED treatment, and both groups of women were in the normal range for body mass index (Stein & Corte, 2008). Valenced self-schemas were collected through a questionnaire and self-recorded observations of attributes of self on index cards, and body weight self-schemas were recorded through closed-ended self-report measures in which participants had to identify to self-descriptive adjectives by answering “Me/Not me” when exposed to the descriptions (Stein & Corte, 2008).

Results showed that the DEB group reported more negatively valenced self-schemas as well as more “fat words” being attributed as self-descriptive in comparison to the control group (Stein & Corte, 2008). Comparably, the Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI) taken at the end of the 12 month survey indicated that, at the end of the study, all members of the DEB group had EDI-BD (EDI-Body Dissatisfaction) scores and EDI-DFT (EDI-Drive For Thinness) scores in the clinical range for ED (Stein & Corte, 2008). These results suggest the possibility of fat self-schemas and negative attributions to the body as indicators of or direct contributors to the onset and development of DEB. Negatively valenced self-schemas lead to negative affect, inhibition, and behavioral avoidance, and valence and organization of self-schemas influence emotional and behavioral self-

regulation; self-concept that is comprised of few positive and many negative self-schemas contributes to the formation of a fat self-schema, which in turn leads to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating (Stein & Corte, 2003). Stein & Corte's findings support the hypothesis that cognition directly affects and contributes to DEB, with a possibility of being a precursor to the onset of AN; disturbances in self-cognitions appear to contribute to the development of DEBs as well as to the onset of diagnosable levels of ED (Stein & Corte, 2008).

One of the limitations of this study was that the population surveyed was solely from one single age group, college freshmen, and this age group is known to be in the peak period of the onset of ED symptoms as well as the period when these symptoms begin to consolidate into a diagnosable, stable disorder (Stein & Corte, 2008). This brings up the question of external confounding factors that may influence results or trigger diathesis in that time specific frame. In addition, only 19.5% of the surveyed population was non-White, which might have accounted for an inaccurate population sample due to the small number of participants selected to survey from one single background (the same university). Finally, only 73% (56) and 72% (55) of the initial 77 women in the DEB group completed data for the 6 and 12 month follow up data collections, respectively, which indicates a possibility for skewed and inflated percentages in the concluding data in relation to the initial data collected and calculated (Stein & Corte, 2008). For possible future research methods, a longer longitudinal study that extended the time period studied could be helpful in determining the effect on maladaptive self-schemas with respect to the prediction of a diagnosis of AN as well as the escalation of DEB over time.

Cultural Body Shape Ideals and Eating Disorder Symptoms

Gordon, Sitnikov, Castro and Holm-Denoma (2010) conducted a study that added another variable that may influence the effects of body ideals and self-images on ED: culture. By introducing this new variable, researchers strengthened support that maladaptive cognition does have a significant effect on AN, even across multicultural backgrounds in populations. In order to measure the differences of body image ideals and its effects on ED symptoms, acculturation was also taken into consideration; the researchers hypothesized that if levels of acculturation, defined as the extent to which an individual embraces mainstream society values, were higher, the effects of mainstream U.S. body ideals on ED symptoms would be the same cross-culturally (Gordon et al., 2010).

This study was conducted at a university, drawing a sample population of 276 women from an introductory psychology class; 29% (n=79) of the surveyed population were White, 44% (n=122) were Black, and 27% (n=75) were Latina (Gordon et al., 2010). This imbalance in ethnic group samples was purposefully done to oversample women of minority groups in order to maintain the focus on this variable (Gordon et al., 2010). The measures used to collect data over the course of three semesters were: the Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI), to test for Drive for Thinness (EDI-DFT) and Body Dissatisfaction (EDI-BD), the Stunkard Body Figure Scale (BFS), to test for: 1) the individual's ethnic group's ideal body shape, 2) the perceived U.S. mainstream cultural ideal body shape, 3) personal ideal body shape, and 4) perceived body shape, the Stephenson Multi-group Acculturation Scale (SMAS), to determine levels of acculturation, the Societal, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale (SAFE), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), to measure and assess self-reported levels of self-esteem because "[self-esteem] is a well-established correlate of ED symptoms" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 138).

Results of this study showed that for the EDI-DFT and EDI-BD scores, no significant difference was found between White, Black, and Latino group scores; similarly, reported personal ideal body shape, mainstream body ideals, and perceived current body shape for all ethnic groups showed no group differences, but all self-reported groups displayed high BD and DFT scores, as well as an overestimation of perceived current body shape (Gordon et al., 2010). Perceived ideal body sizes for one's ethnic group showed minute differences throughout the ethnic groups, and "self-esteem scores were predictive of all [two] EDI subscales for both the Latino and Black participant groups" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 139). Body size estimation requires a construction or activation of a memory of the physical self, and this inability to estimate size accurately may be an indicator that, rather than a perceptual deficit or issue, "cognitive representations of the physical self are inaccurate or are cognitive products based on comparison to unrealistic standards" (Stein & Corte, 2003, p. 59).

The findings of this study show that all ethnic backgrounds are vulnerable to the onset of AN when exposed to U.S. thin ideals and experience dissatisfaction as well as an overestimation of one's body type in conjunction with slimmer perceived mainstream ideal body shape and personal ideal body shape (Gordon et al., 2010); this did not support the stereotype that "only white American women develop [ED] and... ethnic minority groups report lower rates of body dissatisfaction" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 135). These discrepancies between perceived body shape and perceived mainstream ideal body shape, along with the correlation of low self-esteem and high body dissatisfaction, seem to suggest a predictive indicator of AN symptoms. High levels of acculturation and acculturative stress were also correlated with higher levels of DFT among the women surveyed and maladaptive coping strategies were used in an attempt to "fit into the mainstream through attainment of the thin ideal" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 141), suggesting a causative relationship.

Limitations of this study were that the sample population was drawn from a single socioeconomic class in a predominately White, American university, where acculturation scores were all high and there were no members of the mentioned ethnic groups to serve as a less acculturated example to serve for comparison. Similarly, a control group was not utilized at all in this study, which causes difficulty in comparison of results. In addition, three semesters of data were collected with collection at the end of each semester; however, the White ethnic group's data was solely collected in the first semester, leaving the data sheets empty for the second and third semesters.

This deliberate exclusion of data collection in the second and third semesters for the predominately White group, in addition to the population oversampling of the other two minority ethnic groups, causes more difficulty in comparison of data, as well as potential inaccuracy when comparing final data from the two minority ethnic groups to the first semester data collected from the White ethnic group. Future research could explore the effects of body shape ideals and dissatisfactions on a longitudinal base with a complete set of data collected from all ethnic groups, to accurately compare the predictors of ED symptoms observed in this study to DEB and/or ED symptoms that develop to a clinical level of severity.

Relationships between Body Esteem and Risk for Anorexia Nervosa

"Research suggests that impulsivity... and [b]ody dissatisfaction [are] consistently linked to heightened risk for disordered eating patterns and [are] considered a robust and consistent predictor of eating disorder pathology" (Lilienthal & Weatherly, 2013, p. 558); however, an important distinction from the formerly prevalent views should be made, because "[c]ontrary to the popular view that conceptions of the self as fat are normative, results... suggest that only a subset of young adult women have an elaborated and stable cognitive structure of the self as fat, and those who do demonstrate patterns of DEB behavior" (Stein & Corte, 2008, p. 189). In this study on cognition and AN, Lilienthal and Weatherly (2013) explore the relationship between the risk for AN and low body esteem, while incorporating a different type of maladaptive cognition: impulsivity.

Methods for this survey included a population sample of 139 female students from a single university, many of whom (94.2%, n=131) were Caucasian, with 60% (n=84) of the participants attempting to lose weight at the time of the study (Lilienthal & Weatherly, 2013). Data measures were recorded using: the Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA), to record body image and esteem, the EAT-16 scale, to measure risk for AN, and a multiple-choice questionnaire, to measure discounting behavior in gaining/losing weight and improving/worsening complexion in order to determine levels of impulsivity in different situations.

Results of this study showed that a sign effect occurred within the tested population, showing differences in discounting behaviors depending on whether theoretical outcomes were presented as gains or losses. The majority of students showed reduced discounting for a hypothetical delayed monetary loss; this implies that their behaviors could be predictive for ED behaviors because AN patients' behaviors are "strongly controlled by avoiding negative outcomes... individuals with [AN]... cope with stress using primarily avoidance-based strategies" (Lilienthal & Weatherly, 2013, p. 559). This result is significant because the discounting tasks were primarily focused on body weight and appearance, two crucial aspects of AN, and yielded important information on possible traits, specifically to do with cognition, that could be likely to "trigger problematic... disrupted eating/weight-control problems" (Lilienthal & Weatherly, 2013, p. 560).

Another finding of the study was the suggestion that higher body esteem is directly related to a lower risk for developing AN, due to higher levels of reduced impulsive avoidant behavior in the discounting task data collections. Conversely, those who reported lower levels of body esteem showed “lower impulsive responding regarding opportunities to lose weight” and demonstrated a greater risk for AN (Lilienthal & Weatherly, 2013, p. 562).

The limitations for this study were that, out of the 139 participants, 131 were Caucasian and not many other ethnic groups were represented equally; this predominately yields results applicable solely to Caucasians, and cannot accurately be applied to other ethnic groups. Additionally, risk for AN was solely determined by a single factor, the EAT-16 self-reporting scale meant to detect likelihood for developing AN; however, unlike Bulimia nervosa, because of the characteristics of AN patients and those at risk for AN often being in denial and refusing to admit habits and symptoms honestly, a single 16 item questionnaire might not be enough to solely determine the risk factors for AN on an individual. If more methods such as the Eating Disorder Inventory were to be implemented in addition to these tests, the results determining risk for AN would be more accurate and less prone to miscalculation with more data available.

Conclusion and Potential Future Direction

Although negative cognition and terms such as “thin ideal”, “body image”, and “self-schemas” have often been used in conjunction with the topic of AN, not much research exists on the direct effects that these factors can have on the onset as well as the development of AN. In the Lilienthal & Weatherly study, the usage of avoidance-based strategies to cope with stress as well as the suggestion that higher body esteem is directly related to a lower risk for developing AN was seen as variables strongly correlated with AN. Gordon et al. found that dissatisfaction and overestimation of body shape were risk factors for developing AN, and Stein & Corte found that negatively valenced self-schemas and negative attributions to the body were predictors for disordered eating behaviors. All of these findings have one thing in common: cognition. These associations have been clearly established, but the direct effects of these variables have not been studied in detail.

If research implementing cognitive-behavioral therapy to adjust coping strategies, body esteem, dissatisfaction and overestimation of body shape, and negative self-schemas in individuals diagnosed with AN or at risk for AN is conducted, prevention and treatment for AN could make great headway. Because maladaptive cognition can affect and exacerbate the restricting and obsessive behaviors that characterize AN, findings from the aforementioned studies should be utilized to conduct more longitudinal research, in order to understand what types of cognition affect a diathesis or predisposition for developing AN. Additionally, treatment time should more specifically be devoted to cognition, because this information could also be used to enhance preventative therapy for at-risk patients, as well as to enhance current treatment methods following diagnosis of AN. In the future, the prevention and treatment of AN should have a stronger focus on cognitive therapy with respect to altering schemas and body image disturbances to represent a more accurate image of the patients’ selves and to advance existing literature and knowledge on the subject.

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The increase of molecular chaperones and prevention of protein misfolding in treating neurodegeneration

By Sarah Temple

Introduction

There is an urgent need for productive therapeutic strategies that could halt or reverse neuronal cell death and deterioration in neurodegenerative disorders. Scientists' focus on treatment has previously addressed disease symptoms, attempting to increase macro- and micronutrients in diet because these nutrients reduce the numerous genetic, environmental, and endogenous mechanisms that begin the process of neurodegeneration. These mechanisms include "defective protein degradation and aggregation, many related to the ubiquitin-proteasomal system, oxidative stress and free radical formation, impaired bioenergetics and mitochondrial dysfunctions, and 'neuroinflammatory' processes"¹(101). Modification of lifestyle factors like diet is aimed at increasing specific micronutrients directly related to the health of neuronal cells². Focus on treating with appropriate nutrients has been attractive to researchers because it is based on the information that these diseases progress with age and the effects that macro- and micronutrients have on neuronal health, information already well understood by researchers. Because many other components impact neurodegeneration, this treatment is not fully effective².

Scientists have previously focused on attempting to treat neurodegeneration with the consumption of nutrients necessary to maintain brain health. Since increase of micronutrients (group B vitamins related to homo-cysteine metabolism, anti-oxidant vitamins C and E, flavonoids, polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D) and macronutrients (fish) is simply a lifestyle change, it would be extremely easy to treat neurodegeneration using these nutrients because they can prevent cognitive decline and dementia¹. Experts are aware that oxidative stress is a common cause of neurodegeneration, causing dementia and cognitive decline in patients. Oxidative stress participates in very early stages of diseases such as Alzheimer's and also plays a significant role in triggering lesion and toxic substance formation creating neuron and glial cell death. Antioxidant vitamins C and E protect against oxidation, and these vitamins decrease toxicity of the beta-amyloid protein and reduce cell damage². Caloric restriction may also have significant benefits on brain aging and health; Some studies show that "higher adiposity at mid-life is associated with a higher risk for dementia or AD in epidemiologic studies"³(1360). But intake of specific nutrients has been much more accepted as a possible way of treatment because other studies have shown that there is no correlation between caloric restriction and brain health, making it difficult to use this information towards a successful prevention method for neurodegeneration.

Although antioxidant vitamins protect against oxidation, studies related to the consumption of foods with antioxidants have produced inconsistent results, some showing an increase of cognitive function in patients and others showing that the intake of antioxidants had no impact on the patient at all³. Other micronutrient intake such as group B vitamins related to homo-cysteine metabolism, flavonoids, polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamin D has proven to have the same inconsistent results as studies focusing on antioxidants. Since both antioxidant and group B vitamin intake have not been proven fully effective in symptom decline, it is impossible to accept the uptake of micro and macro nutrients as an effective treatment method for neurodegeneration.

Treating neurodegeneration with the intake of nutrients has also been proven ineffective because of the many factors related to the beginning of the cycle of neuronal and glial cell death. Nutrient intake attempts to attack neurodegenerative diseases from the beginning; the endogenous, genetic and environmental factors that begin the process of neurodegeneration. Since these factors are so numerous and attack the neuronal system as the organism ages, it is impossible to prevent neurodegeneration from this stance⁴. It is also impossible to be sure which specific factor(s) are starting this degenerative process in each patient, so scientists must target secondary causes for possible treatment.

Targeting secondary causes and processes present in most neurodegenerative diseases has shown potential in future treatment. These causes involve similar systemic and cellular properties that suggest

common deterioration processes. In many neurodegenerative diseases, protein misfolding begins the cycle of cell deterioration and death. Because protein misfolding is the common factor related to most neurodegenerative diseases, it would be most effective to target treatment from this angle, even though it is less understood. Protein folding is the process which converts newly synthesized proteins into functional molecules. In patients with neurodegenerative disease, this process becomes disrupted, causing protein misfolding and the subsequent aggregation, which increases as one becomes older. High numbers of misfolded and aggregated proteins produce toxic activity, triggering vicious cycles leading to dysfunction and death of neuronal and glial cells⁴. Toxic activity and disfunction damage cell networks are damaged over time, creating symptoms like dementia, one of the main symptoms of most neurodegenerative diseases. The brain utilizes molecular chaperones, which recognize and refold misfolded proteins, as well as intracellular proteases to prevent protein misfolding, but these defense mechanisms are compromised by the age-related factors that trigger neurodegenerative diseases⁴. There is still much to be researched about the process and causes of neuronal degeneration and death, but if protein misfolding can be prevented by strengthening molecular chaperones, we may be able to deter or prevent these neurodegenerative diseases.

Process of protein misfolding and protein aggregation

By treating protein misfolding, the secondary cause of neurodegeneration, scientists can prevent cell deterioration and death most effectively. Protein misfolding occurs in every human body, but when numerous proteins misfold and form aggregates, the cycle of cell death begins. Protein folding is a normal process that "converts newly synthesized proteins to physiologically functional molecules"⁴(460). In patients with neurodegenerative diseases, genetic mutations or environmental factors can instigate protein misfolding and aggregation of specific types of proteins that cause disease. Since similar factors can instigate protein misfolding, "similar pathological mechanisms may underlie the pathogenesis of the different neurodegenerative disorders"⁵(1). Although we still do not fully understand which exact underlying mechanisms of protein misfolding cause each specific neurodegenerative disease, researchers are beginning to focus on the prevention of protein misfolding and abnormal aggregation as the common factor that could prevent neurodegeneration.

"The long term health of the cell is inextricably linked to protein quality control"⁵(1427). Researchers have discovered that about 30% of newly synthesized proteins are incorrectly folded and degraded in a healthy organism⁶. The protein quality control system used to handle misfolded proteins and maintain protein homeostasis is normally able to control all of these misfolded proteins. However, in a situation where the number of misfolded and aggregated proteins increases significantly, it becomes difficult for molecular chaperones to refold all of them. Further, as the capacity of the protein quality control system declines with aging, cells lose their ability to efficiently deal with misfolded proteins⁵. Deterioration of the protein quality control system over time furthers accumulation of dead neuronal cells caused by misfolding.

The misfolding and aggregation of specific proteins results from genetic mutations causing neurodegeneration. Although the proteins causing each disease are structurally unrelated, the process of misfolding remains the same for all proteins, making it possible to target all neurodegenerative diseases resulting from any type of misfolded protein. Although these proteins are structurally and functionally unrelated, most tend to adopt a highly stable β -sheet structure that causes aggregation and toxic activity. After the β -sheet structures form, misfolded proteins form "intermediate-sized soluble oligomers, which are thought to promote oxidative stress, disrupt calcium homeostasis, titrate chaperone proteins away from other essential cellular functions and engage in other processes that are disruptive to cellular health"⁷(930), leading to extreme toxic activity, cell death, and neurodegenerative disease. Scientists are looking for chaperone genes that create healthy proteins and decrease abnormal protein aggregation in the entire proteome in an attempt to deter or prevent all types of proteopathies.

Molecular chaperones and the "heat-shock" process of cell protection

Molecular chaperones are crucial to the functionality and protection of proteins to ensure the long term health of the cell. The system is controlled by molecular chaperones that balance and protect protein

homeostasis. These chaperones involved in the cellular protein quality control systems “recognize misfolded proteins, assist in their refolding, prevent their aggregation, and help to repair the damaged proteins”⁸(324). Lack of chaperones or their inability to fully protect homeostasis can severely damage the neuronal system. Experts are aware that organisms have an abundance of molecular chaperones to restore the folding equilibrium of proteins. Numerous chaperones should be able to provide the system with the ability to adapt to proteotoxic stress, but there are still not enough chaperones produced to handle a situation of excessive stress (e.g. neurodegenerative disease).

The system should be able to produce more chaperones to refold increasing numbers of misfolded proteins in an excessive-stress situation. But experts are currently unable to explain why the protein quality control system does not react to excessive stress. By researching cells’ most effective stress response process, the heat-shock process of cell protection, scientists are understanding more about what triggers the production of more molecular chaperones and what can be done to trigger and increase chaperones in the case of neurodegenerative disease. In a situation of increased stress (heat, cold, or lack of oxygen), some molecular chaperones are activated to better protect cells. The heat shock response triggers the over-expression of genes that function to protect against proteotoxic stress in every cell. The increase of genes then induces a regulatory domino-effect that recovers and adapts the cell⁹(11). The heat shock response exemplifies the ability for these type of chaperones to detect stress and react appropriately to it. But experts have observed that in many situations this response is incompletely activated, for example in an instance of whole-body stress. These observations bring up the question of whether chaperones affected by the heat-shock process can be activated by a pharmacological induction of heat or cold, or oxygen deprivation to increase molecular chaperones needed in a situation where a high level of protein misfolding takes place¹⁰.

Recent studies in cell culture, fruitfly, worm, and mouse models of protein misfolding-based neurodegenerative diseases have focused on pharmacologically enhancing the protein-folding capacity of cells via elevated expression of chaperone proteins. These studies have shown therapeutic potential in relation to treating neurodegenerative disease in humans. Advances have been made in chemically activating the heat shock response, proven to be currently the most promising method of activating molecular chaperones to treat neurodegenerative diseases⁷. Heat shock transcription factors (HSFs) mediate the inducible transcriptional response of genes that encode heat shock proteins. There are various types of chaperone proteins in the human protein quality control system, including α B-crystallin, heat shock protein 27 (HSP27), HSP40, HSP70 and HSP90, along with class I and class II chaperonins. HSP27 is the only chaperone protein that is naturally elevated by the human heat shock factor HSF1 but it has been discovered that all chaperones function individually and as part of larger heterocomplexes to prevent protein misfolding and protein aggregation⁷. Since these chaperones function as a whole, activation of the heat-shock response HSF1 in the heat shock protein HSP27 could be productive in increasing overall cell protection.

Future research and conclusion

Millions of people suffer from neurodegenerative disease and there is currently no cure or effective way of prevention. The further study of protein misfolding, protein aggregation, and molecular chaperones is crucial in the process of understanding and preventing the cycle of neuronal dysfunction and death. Strengthening molecular chaperones to better defend the protein quality control system could be the most effective way to treat or cure neurodegeneration.

Experts have discovered that, in diseases caused by misfolding, chaperones are either insufficiently triggered by the increase of misfolded proteins so cannot fully protect against aggregation, toxic activity, and cell death. It is possible that the cell has little extra chaperone capacity, implying that the folding process is delicate with little room for error³. We are still trying to find out if this is in fact true and what can be done to help trigger the stress-response of the chaperones to protect more efficiently against an increased production of misfolded proteins. Research must be continued regarding chaperone function and mechanics to address and attempt to solve the aggregation of misfolded proteins, the key to treating patients affected by neurodegenerative disease.

There is a huge global research field dedicated to identifying possible therapies and treatments for neurodegenerative diseases. Experts are currently exploring the process of heat-shock as a possible way of treatment if it can be possible to trigger the increase of chaperones this way. Although many molecules that activate the heat-shock factor HSF1 have been identified, the majority are activated only by causing cellular stress, which has too much negative impact on cell health. To prevent such stress, scientists are searching for a direct pharmacological activator of HSF1. The discovery of this activator molecule(s) will be groundbreaking in the neurodegeneration research field. Scientists believe that the ideal activator of HSF1 would be a small molecule that could directly bind to HSF1 and promote its transition from a monomer to a homotrimer. As the ideal HSF1 activator would not cause proteotoxic stress, such a molecule would “stimulate modest but chronic expression of chaperone proteins, resulting in the amelioration of neurodegenerative disease phenotypes”⁷(940). But, if this activator is discovered, bringing it to clinical trial would be a lengthy process. Researching and understanding more about how the process of misfolding and protein defense mechanisms works, along with searching for a functional activator of the protein HSF1 without causing toxic activity, is crucial in advancing the process of finding a cure for neurodegenerative disease.

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Body Hair: From Ancient Depilatories to Modern Feminist Practices

By Carly Spurlock

There is a major misconception that the practice of body hair removal began in the early 1900s. This idea is completely false. The practice of hair removal is “neither... modern nor purely Western” (Toerien, Wilkinson, and Choi 399). Humans have been removing their hair since the caveman era. This paper will explore the ideas of shaving, depilatories, when in history these practices began, and how they relate to feminism. Some major misconceptions related to hair will be abolished by proving that: hair removal began long before it became popular in America in the 1900s, hair and hairstyles have different meanings in different cultures and races, hair removal can actually feed into pedophilia, and feminists began boycotting shaving in the second wave of feminism.

Prehistoric Times

Reflecting all the way to the beginnings of human beings, we can see that cavemen were the first to start the practice of body hair removal. Their reasoning for it did not, however, have anything to do with fashion or appearance. Cavemen removed their facial hair to keep mites off of their bodies as much as possible, and they removed their head hair to keep other men from grabbing and pulling on it during fights (Knight 1). These men did not use razors or depilatories (agents, usually liquids or creams, used to remove hair) like we have now in modern culture. They instead used rocks to scrape their hair off, often taking more than just hair (Knight 1). Ancient Egyptians had similar practices. Egyptians “associated hairlessness with cleanliness... [for] both men and women” (Bondy 26). They, however, had better technology than the cavemen. Egyptians used flint or bronze “razors” and what is called “sugaring”- a process much like modern waxing. Sugaring involved using sticky paste (most often beeswax), rubbing it on the hair, pressing a cloth to it, and ripping the cloth off, taking the hair with it (Knight 1). Egyptian, Greek, and Middle Eastern women removed all of their body hair, only leaving their eyebrows intact. Women weren’t the only ones removing hair though. It was unacceptable for men to have facial hair; only the lower classes (usually slaves and servants) had facial hair (Knight 1). Women in the Roman Empire used pumice stones, razors, tweezers, depilatory creams, and a process called “threading” to remove their hair. Threading involved taking a piece of string or yarn between two hands and rubbing the string across the hair quickly to rip the hair out of the skin (Knight 1).

The misbelief that hair removal began in the early 1900s has its roots in the fact that European women never removed their armpit, leg, or pubic hair. Instead, the first time European women were recorded removing body hair was in the middle ages when it was fashionable to have very long brows. To achieve the look of a long brow line, European women would remove their eyebrows completely and even take off the hair from their foreheads (Knight 1). This look was so fashionable that women would often rub walnut oil on their babies’ foreheads to prevent hair growth (Knight 1). The reason many Americans believe that the practice of hair removal began in the early 1900s is because Americans’ origins are rooted in Europe where hair removal was largely not happening. American women did not start shaving until the 1900s, but hair removal had been happening long before then.

Recent History

The first modern razor was invented in France in the 1760s by a barber named Jean Jacques Perret (Knight 1). The razor was named the Perret razor, after its creator, and was much safer than any previous form of hair removal. In the 1880s, however, a man named King Gillette invented an even safer razor, marking the beginning of the reigning franchise still thriving today: Gillette razors (Knight 1). The first women’s razor was designed in 1915. Within the same year, the magazine Harpers Bazaar published an issue displaying a model in a sleeveless dress with cleanly shaved armpits (Knight 1). Because of events such as these, 1915 is often considered the beginning of body hair removal for American women. Gillette Razor Company can be thanked

for playing a large role in making shaving a societal norm for women. The company began targeting women specifically. Women began wearing sleeveless, shorter-length dresses and with the new revelations of skin, women began shaving their armpits and legs. Swimming started becoming a recreational sport in the early to mid 1900s and swimwear became more of a fashion statement. This is when women began removing their pubic hair as well (Friebur 38). Beginning in the 1920s, in North America, “women were pressured towards having a hairless, childlike body” while men were viewed as physically and sexually mature if they had body hair (Bondy 26).

Hair Removal Today: Race, Culture, Pedophilia, and Feminism

In a book called *Recovering the Black Female Body*, Michael Bennett and Vanessa Dickerson ask readers why hair has to have the same meaning to everyone and why it has to have meaning at all (Bennett and Dickerson 279). These authors are first and foremost referring to head hair in this article. They focus on African American hair and how it is being compared to Caucasian hair in modern America, especially among women. African American women are expected by society to straighten and “tame” their hair so that their hairstyles are the same as white women’s. Bennett and Dickerson go on to say that “there have been consequences both within and outside of African American communities for wearing one’s race wrong” (Bennett and Dickerson 280). They also make it clear that the human body is a “battlefield,” not a “playground.” By this they mean that the body should not be discussed without factoring in considerations of race, gender, and class (Bennett and Dickerson 282). In 1996, Meghan Smith, a nine year old African American girl, went into her third grade class one day with her hair cornrowed. She was immediately sent to the principal who then sent her home. The principal and school administrators claimed that Meghan’s hairstyle was “extreme,” distracting and disruptive, and a violation of the school’s dress code. The administrators claimed that the braided hairstyle “clashed with the spiritual and educational mission of the school” and she would not be allowed to come back to school until she changed the style (Bennett and Dickerson 284).

Unfortunately, Meghan Smith’s is only one of many stories where African American women, in particular, are forced to change their hairstyles in order to be deemed acceptable. What people like the school administrators do not understand is that African American hair is different than white people’s and holds different cultural meaning. Braided hairstyles have great significance in African American culture; African Americans celebrate their history and ancestry through braided hairstyles, and these styles are symbolic of their community (Bennett and Dickerson 286). White women such as Madonna and Christina Aguilera are known for cornrowing their hair in the past. These women are praised for having “‘discovered’ a whole new world of beauty” (Bennett and Dickerson 290). The problem with this is that, first of all, white women did not discover this hairstyle; African Americans have been braiding their hair for centuries. Second, when white women began cornrowing their hair, they turned it into a fashion statement, erasing all of the cultural significance of the hairstyle. These white women felt no repercussions for wearing their hair in such a fashion; they were praised for being so bold and creative. However, African American women are being ostracized daily for wearing their hair the same exact way. For example, employers are legally able to prohibit employees from wearing their hair in braided hairstyles. In 1991, one airline employer fired an African American flight attendant with cornrows because he thought that the passengers would be frightened by the hairstyle (Bennett and Dickerson 289). The woman took her case to federal court and the court ruled on the employer’s side.

From article to article, story to story, the word “acceptable” is continually brought up. Many of the employers that have fired African American women for wearing their hair in cornrows believe that the hairstyle is unacceptable. The problem with this is that the standards for what is considered acceptable or not are solely based on white people and their hairstyles. White and black hair are not the same and do not carry the same cultural meaning. So, going back to Bennett’s and Dickerson’s proposed question, why does society expect hair to have the same meaning through all cultures? The idea that all hair should be the same, look the same, and feel the same is oppressive to people outside of the Caucasian race. The oppression does not stop with Caucasian people forcing expectations on other race’s hairstyles, though. Even African American women are targeting other women of color by marketing beauty products to them, telling them that they should all play into this idea that their hairstyles should resemble white women’s hairstyles. This is a subconscious reinforcement of the

oppression facing women of color (Bennett and Dickerson 283). This dilemma does not only apply to head hair though. There are standards for body hair just as much as for head hair. Our society is not accepting of women with armpit, leg, or pubic hair. These standards are extremely oppressive to women socially and economically. It is expensive to continually remove body hair or to continually get African American hair done so that it matches white women's hair.

Adding onto the standards for women in the American society is the expectation that women's bodies should be pure, smooth, and hairless. These characteristics all match the characteristics of a preadolescent girl. Adolescent and adult females are infantilized and taught by society to be submissive. It has become apparent that there are serious consequences to society valuing childlike traits in women. When women remove their body hair, including pubic hair, their bodies revert to looking preadolescent, inadvertently training men to be attracted to preadolescent female bodies. Robin Friebur bluntly states that there is a "link between hair removal and pedophilia" because "a man who is socialized to become erotically aroused by an infantilized woman may be primed to also become erotically aroused by children" (Friebur 38). This idea of the "ideal woman" being hairless is solidified by contemporary pornography (Bondy 27). Pornography is extremely accessible today and is widely accepted. Women are able to compare their own bodies to the women's bodies in the pornography, and then emulate what they see: a hairless, childlike body (Bondy 27).

Beginning in the second wave of feminism, feminists started to boycott hair removal. Along with "bra burning" and the "Freedom Trashcan", feminists fought back against the idea that women must shave. Feminists are often stereotyped as being fat, ugly, hairy lesbians. The second wave feminists are the reason "hairy" is added onto that stereotype. Ever since second wave feminists started growing their hair out, many other feminists have been inspired to do the same. Renee Bondy wrote an article called "Rhymes with Cubic Pear" and in it she said that she chose to grow her hair out for the purpose of the article. She said that "it's hard to explain, but with hair on my body I felt stronger, bolder and bigger- like I took up a bit more space" (Bondy 29). Bondy has taken up the fight to defy the picture of the "ideal woman" that our society currently holds, that women must be small, take up little space, and be submissive.

There is a recurring theme among women who choose to boycott shaving for a specific reason, like how Bondy chose to stop shaving for her article or women who do it for a class or experiment. Most of these women go back to removing their hair as soon as the article is written and the class is over. If women want to prove that body hair removal should not be a social norm, then more women need to stand by it, permanently, because right now, it is easy to perceive women boycotting shaving as a one-time social experiment that's just for fun. Tracy Moore sums this up in an article called "400 Years of Women Removing their Body Hair." She says:

"Like so many aspects of maintaining supposed femininity... I think it all comes down to doing what you feel comfortable doing... Although with stuff like this that's so steeped in our very notion of femaleness, it becomes increasingly harder to pretend this is a choice ever made free of an utter barrage of influence in one (hairless) direction. And I think it's really important to know that, and to empower women to move toward a definition of femininity that is less harmful to our psyche. And our actual vaginas" (Moore 4).

Within the past year, a trend has broken out among feminists. It all started when a hairstylist, Roxie Hunt, wanted to see if armpit hair could be dyed different colors. She convinced a friend to let her armpit hair be used for the experiment. Roxie posted a blog on a website called Offbeat Home about the entire experience. She explained in detail how she bleached and dyed her friend's armpit hair blue. Roxie admitted that she didn't believe the dye would actually stick to armpit hair, but she was pleasantly surprised when it did. In her blog she said "I felt a major win for body hair" (Hunt 1). After posting the experience on her blog, women all across the country began dyeing their armpit hair extravagant colors, too, sparking a trend.

As you can see, the practice of hair removal has been around for many thousands of years, contrary to American belief. It is also much more complicated than most people think. Many people argue that hair removal is no longer sexist, in America at least, because many men are being expected to remove their hair as well. However, this trend affects a much smaller portion of men, while virtually all women are expected to remove their hair. As reported in the article "Body Hair Removal," the practice of depilatories and shaving reinforce the idea that the "woman's body is unacceptable if left unaltered" (Toerien, Wilkinson, and Choi 400). Once again,

the word unacceptable is presented, a common theme in the topic of hair. The American society places excessive standards on its women today. These standards are sexist and oppressive because not all women place the same value or meaning on their hair; some women place no meaning on it- and why should they? Hair is a natural occurrence on the male and female bodies. Women should not all be forced into one very small and restrictive box of hairlessness in order to be accepted. Women's bodies, natural and unique, should be celebrated, not stripped and broken.

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