

Interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research

# AUSPEX

Interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research

## **Volume Four**

Addie Burton-Walsh | Global Studies

Camilla Cannon | Philosophy

Caroline Duble | Sociology and Anthropology

Eden May | Environmental Chemistry

Gabriel Setright | Philosophy

Micah Wilkins | History and Political Science

**Warren Wilson College  
Swannanoa, North Carolina  
Spring 2015**

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Published by Ingram Spark with financial support from Academic Affairs and the Work Program Office.

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## Editorial: The Revolution Starts Now

Emmy Wade

2014 has been a year of revolutions. From Hong Kong to Mexico to Ferguson, Missouri, the people have been rising and declaring that they are fed up with mistreatment and disenfranchisement at the hands of the authority that is supposed to be in place for their protection. Most of those leading these uprisings, as well as those in the past, are young people and students. Often, college is the time when we as individuals become more socially aware, and more passionate about social change. The Warren Wilson student body was particularly affected by the events in Ferguson. Students marched across campus under a banner with the words “Black Lives Matter.” Later on, some students actually made the trip to Ferguson and, on their return, led a panel on current conditions in the town. The statement was made: we are here to challenge power structures that oppress us and others. That is part of the college experience - learning enough about the world to challenge it.

The pieces in this journal exemplify what it means to be revolutionary. We begin with Camilla Cannon’s piece on power discourses in our consumer culture. Cannon uses Michel Foucault’s definitions of power to explore paths of resistance to exploitative capitalism. Then we go briefly back in time with Micah Wilkins, who discusses the process of racial integration at Black Mountain College, showing that institutions of higher education in our region have been on the forefront of social change for decades. We then propel forward to another, more recent, civil rights issue with Caroline Duple, who explores the experiences of transgender men in the workplace. Duple’s thesis is an insightful portrayal of the daily lives of trans men and is an illuminating call to action for the civil rights of trans people.

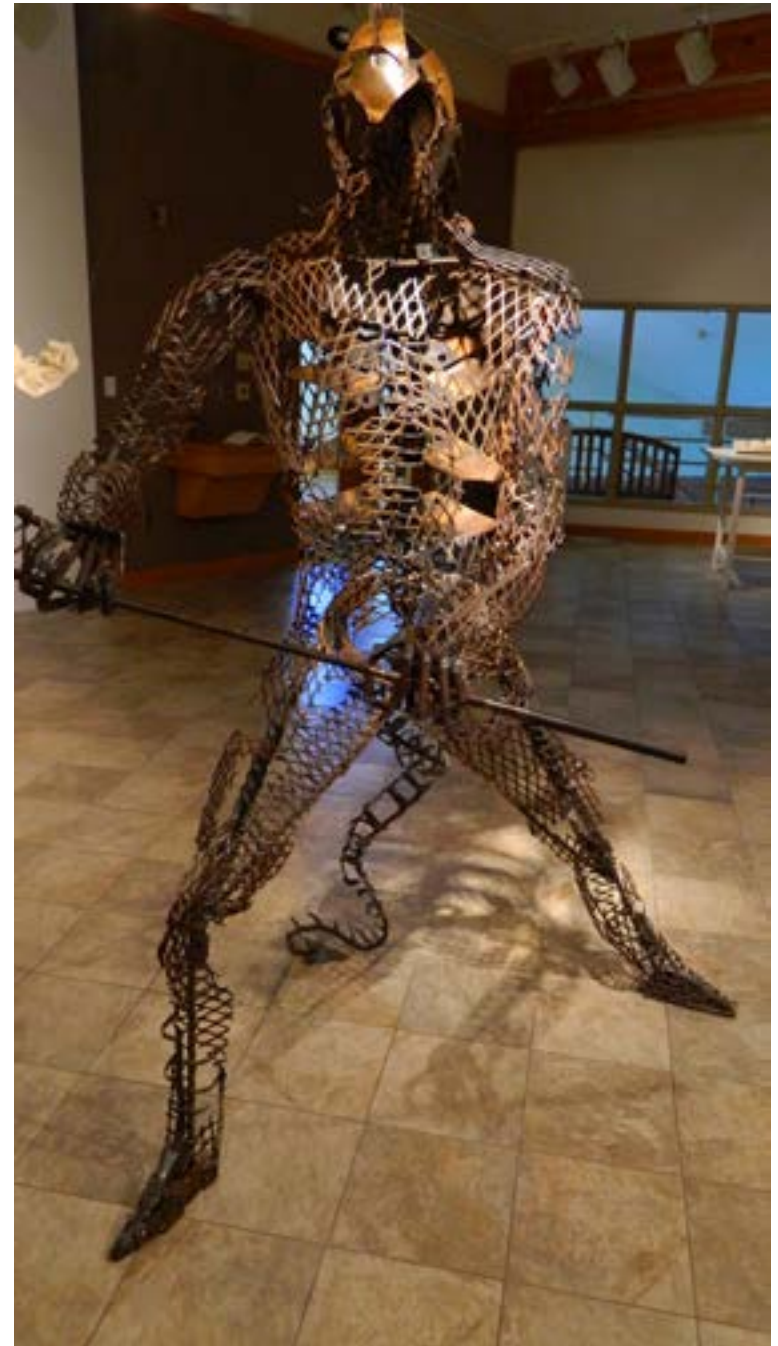
Nestled amidst all the history and social theory is Eden May’s scientific account of her experiments addressing the presence of arsenic in holy basil, an herb most commonly used in Ayurvedic healing. May has found that the plant can absorb arsenic through groundwater, which gives grim implications for not only South Asian healers who use the herb, but those who consume it world-

wide. Her study calls for an examination of the toxins we put into our planet's groundwater and how we can prevent the rise of chemical toxicity in essential plants like holy basil.

On an even larger global scale is Addie Burton-Walsh's piece about the growing popularity of South Korean media around the world, known as the "Korean Wave." Burton-Walsh discusses the importance of soft power--the ability to persuade others through cultural appeal rather than political or military might. Soft power is what defines the Korean Wave and is usurping Western cultural imperialism.

The journal ends on another philosophical meditation, by Gabriel Setright. In his piece, Setright offers a critique of anthropocentrism - the anthropological machine that places human beings above other animals. Setright calls us to reconsider how we view ourselves in relation to the rest of the planet, and asks us to radically change our perspective.

Each of these writers will go on to make their mark in the world in the issue areas they are studying. It is our hope that the reader comes away from these pieces with the drive to start a revolution of their own.



*Warrior* by Carsyn McGregor-Short, 2013-2014. Scrap metal.

## The Commodification of Anti-Capitalist Sentiment and Possible Paths of Resistance

### Abstract:

In this paper, I will examine the relationship between the commodification of rebellious sentiment (specifically anti-capitalist sentiment) in contemporary American capitalist culture and two modes of understanding power described by Michel Foucault: the juridico-discursive theory of power and the diffuse-productive theory of power. Specifically, I will argue that the over-simplification of power as primarily no-saying, centralized, and uniformly deployed—as posited by the juridico-discursive framework—generates simplified notions of “rebellion,” which are easily co-opted by consumer capitalism because A.) such sentiments tend to focus more on symbolism than on direct action and B.) despite the fact that such rebellious sentiments are perceived as being “against power,” they do not actually represent a threat to contemporary America’s dominant economic (consumer capitalist) systems of power. Finally, I will address the question of which forms of resistance (if any) can transcend the threat of commodification and actualize social change. I conclude that a true “spirit of rebellion” against consumer capitalist culture would be one that emphasized decreased and thoughtful consumption, valued actualization over symbolism, and recognized that, since power is diffuse and productive rather than prohibitive and centralized, effective acts of resistance will be diverse and situational and require critical problem-solving.

### Camilla Cannon | Philosophy



Camilla Cannon graduated from Warren Wilson College in the Spring of 2015 with a B.A. in Philosophy and a minor in History and Political Science. She hopes to one day continue her studies at the graduate level, but until then will enjoy the peace and quiet of non-school life. She is very grateful for her time on the commune.

## I. JURIDICO-DISCURSIVE POWER VS. DIFFUSE-PRODUCTIVE POWER

Foucault contends that the mechanics of power have been popularly misunderstood throughout Western history. Specifically, Foucault identifies a mode of understanding power and refers to it as the juridico-discursive theory. He contends that this mode is frequently encountered in political analyses of power and is “deeply rooted in the history of the West.”<sup>1</sup> The juridico-discursive understanding of power is marked by three main assumptions regarding the mechanics of power:

1. Power is a primarily “no saying” force; specifically, power says “no” to pleasure. In this sense, power is understood to operate mainly through the issuing of prohibitions: “Thou shalt not steal,” “Thou shalt not be promiscuous,” “Thou shalt not dress like a ‘freak,’” etc. Importantly, power thus understood is a negative force rather than a productive one. In this framework, systems of power do not strive to tell you what to do so much as what *not* to do.

2. Power exercises “the logic of censorship.” The juridico-discursive theory posits that systems of power engage in censorship in order to “banish from reality” undesirable sentiments or behaviors. When particular words or concepts are censored (i.e. those dealing with homosexuality, pleasure, anti-government hostility, etc.) these concepts are scrubbed from the symbolic order and consequentially denied the right to exist. Importantly, this aspect suggests that power has a substantial stake in the content of the symbolic universe.

3. Power operates in a uniform manner, or “in the same way at all levels.” This feature of the juridico-discursive understanding of power suggests that power is top-down, centralized, and legislative. In Foucault’s words, “it operates according to the simple and endlessly reproduced mechanisms of law, taboo, and censorship: from state to family, from prince to father...” If the uniform nature of power is to be believed, then power is indeed comprehensive and pervasive; however, it is also centralized, predictable, and primarily

<sup>1</sup>Foucault, Michel, and Robert Hurley. *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction: Volume 1*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988

prohibitive.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to emphasize that Foucault believes that the juridico-discursive theory is an insufficient and downright misleading mode of understanding the mechanics of power. Foucault argues that contemporary power is not negative and centralized, as the juridico-discursive theory posits, but rather diffuse and productive. Two central tenets of Foucault's understanding of power are as follows:

1. Power is diffuse (exercised from innumerable points).<sup>2</sup>

This feature of diffuse-productive power is a direct response to the juridico-discursive contention that power is centralized or emanating from a single place. In Foucault's vision, there are many "powers." In fact, "power" itself is not a substance or an institution; rather, it is a relationship between social entities. For instance, throughout the course of a day, an individual is both the subject of and wielder of numerous power relationships. For example, at 9 A.M. Linda is the subject of her schoolteacher's power; when Mrs. Smith tells her to sit down in homeroom, she is compelled to do so as a consequence of her subjected position. At 6 P.M., however, Linda exercises her power as assistant manager at the pet store by telling her subordinate employees that their smoke break is over. In more Foucauldian terms, power is "the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society."<sup>3</sup>

2. Power is productive. Foucault rejects the idea that power operates solely as an exterior, prohibitive force. Rather, relations of power are imbued within social interactions, and often serve to "construct" particular kinds of individuals.<sup>4</sup> Foucault explains this aspect of power in depth in *Discipline and Punish*. In it, he contends that the various nodes of power by which an individual is subjected over a lifetime (schools, hospitals, the military) employ discipline

in order to achieve what Foucault calls "body docility,"<sup>5</sup> which is the condition in which a body may be "subjected, used, transformed and improved."<sup>6</sup> In this context, "discipline" refers to repetitive, signal-based tasks designed to maximize an individual's utility within a given social context. For instance, a schoolchild trained to open her textbook every time the teacher rings a bell has become a maximally obedient subject as a result of the bell-textbook-opening disciplinary sequence.<sup>7</sup> The sum of disciplinary subjection experienced by a subject transforms the subject into a docile body—that is, a body which can be counted on to respond predictably and efficiently to particular learned stimuli. As Joseph Rouse states in his article "Power/Knowledge," regarding the strategic efficiency of diffuse-productive power, "other ways of exercising force can only coerce or destroy their target. Discipline and training can reconstruct it to produce new gestures, actions, habits and skills, and ultimately new kinds of people."<sup>8</sup>

To summarize, the juridico-discursive theory portrays power as prohibitive, centralized, and predictable. The diffuse-productive theory portrays power as productive, decentralized, and diversely exercised. Importantly, while the juridico-discursive understanding of power implies that there is "one power" operating at numerous levels of society with uniform intentions, the diffuse-productive understanding of power acknowledges that social life is constituted by numerous and often competing power systems that subject individuals in diverse and contradictory ways. For the remainder of this paper, I will be operating on the assumption that the diffuse-productive model of power is, as Foucault contends, a more fruitful mode for analyzing and contextualizing power relations in contemporary society.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 83-85

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 94

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 93

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 94

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<sup>5</sup>Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, 136

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 152

<sup>8</sup>Rouse, Joseph. "Power/Knowledge." *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005

## II. CONSUMPTION-BASED CAPITALISM AS A MAJOR NODE OF DIFFUSE-PRODUCTIVE POWER

As discussed in the previous section, social life is not constituted by a single “power”; rather, individuals exist within a matrix of competing and diverse power systems. However, some power systems are more individually formative than others, and the efficacy of various power systems differs across time and social context. For instance, considering the recent decline of religiosity in American life<sup>1</sup>, it follows that the power system of organized religion has less an impact now than it did when the majority of Americans belonged to a particular organized religion and presumably strove to follow the mandates of such. For the purposes of my paper, I must prove that consumption-based capitalism is one of the most individually formative and universally pervasive power systems operating in contemporary American culture. I will attempt to justify this claim by highlighting the ways in which the mechanisms of consumption-based capitalism coincide with Foucault’s description of disciplinary power.

**In contemporary American culture, one of an individual’s prime “utilities” is the rate at which they consume.** Foucault argued that disciplinary power strove to maximize each individual’s utility as determined by the greater social system of which each individual was a part. For example, disciplinary power as inscribed upon a factory worker was designed to encourage maximal speed, minimal error, and group cohesiveness. Disciplinary power as inscribed upon the soldier was designed to encourage maximal individual obedience, maximal individual handling of weaponry, and maximal efficiency of individuals within a group.<sup>2</sup> To summarize, the power system “factory” sought to maximize the utility of “efficiency,” and the power system “military” sought to maximize the utility of “obedience.”

In 2013, individual consumption accounted for 71% of the

nation’s GDP.<sup>3</sup> This fact suggests that the current economic nodes of power have stakes in ensuring that each individual continues to consume at a high rate. Since the majority of the country’s economy is dependent upon consumption, it follows that an individual’s prime economic utility is the rate at which they consume. The disciplinary power exercised for the furtherance of this goal is the ubiquitous subjection of individuals to advertising.

**Incitements to consume have radiated into almost every aspect of an individual’s life.** Foucault described disciplinary power as operating across two dimensions: space and time. Spatial power manifested itself in the careful assignment of individuals in space: the school child in her desk, the soldier in her barrack, the worker in her cubicle. Temporal power manifested itself in the implementation of time tables: every second of every day—for the schoolchild, the soldier, and the factory worker—was assigned a specific task to discourage moments of idleness.<sup>4</sup> Together, spatial and temporal control construct a reality in which the influence of a given power system is never not present; in this sense, power constructs reality.

Temporally, contemporary Americans spend much of their time either shuffling between advertising-imbued spaces or directly consuming advertising. A 2010 Kaiser Family Foundation report concluded that the average American between the ages of 8 and 18 spends, on average, 7 hours and 38 minutes a day consuming some form of entertainment, strung across platforms such as television, radio, and smartphones.<sup>5</sup> In 2013, the University of California’s San Diego Supercomputer Center concluded that by 2015, the average American would spend 15 hours a day consuming media via mobile devices and home systems.<sup>6</sup> Considering that most free Inter-

<sup>3</sup>Saint Louis Federal Reserve GDP Report <<http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/graph/?g=hh3>> Accessed February 21, 2014.

<sup>4</sup>Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. 151

<sup>5</sup>Kaiser Family Foundation. *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds*. 2010.

<sup>6</sup>Institution for Communication Technology Management. *How Much Media?* 2013 <<http://www.marshall.usc.edu/faculty/centers/ctm/research/how-much-media>> Accessed 4/14/14

<sup>1</sup>Pew Research Center. *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*. 2008

<sup>2</sup>Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. 138

net content is ad-supported, even when individuals are not consuming traditional advertising platforms such as television or radio, they are most likely consuming advertising in the form of banner ads, product placement, or sponsored content. Consequentially, the daily “advertising timetable” of an average American might look something like this: 7:45: watch the news (commercials) as she gets ready for work; 8:30: listen to the radio (commercials) on her way to work; 10:30: browse the Internet (banner ads and commercials); 12:00: watch a television show on Hulu (commercials) or Netflix (product placements) on her lunch break; 5:00: watch television (commercials) with the family; 7:00: browse the Internet or watch television until sleep; play games and browse social media on her smartphone all day. In this scenario, a non-advertising temporal window is never opened up.

One mode by which spatial consumptive control manifests is the literal ubiquity of advertising messages in public spaces. A 2007 New York Times article quoted a market research expert who estimated that “a person living in a city 30 years ago saw up to 2,000 ad messages a day, compared with up to 5,000 today.”<sup>1</sup> These ads appear on billboards, on the sides of buildings, in and on public transportation, and even on the inside of bathroom stalls. Importantly, the formative social arena in which millions of Americans spend the bulk of every day—the public school—is also becoming increasingly imbued with advertising in the form of “posters, billboards, corporate-sponsored educational materials, and product placements in textbooks.”<sup>2</sup> This intrusion of advertising upon formerly “neutral” public spaces has the effect of turning these spaces into platforms for the implicit imperative of all advertising: *consume*.

Incitements to consume have also expanded their reach into formerly private spatial domains such as the house, the bed-

room, and even the school desk or the bus seat. According to a 2013 report from the Pew Research Center, 55% of Americans own smartphones, 61% own laptop computers, and 42% own tablet computers.<sup>3</sup> Each of these entertainment platforms encourage highly individualized media consumption; because of this, many Americans are watching television or browsing the Internet in bed, surreptitiously under their school desk, or in their cars. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault speaks of a religious boys’ school in which the private cells of each student were adorned with the words ‘God sees you’ on the walls.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this design feature was to ensure that the ideology of the power structure reached the boys even when they were alone. In this sense, the introduction of advertising messages into private individual spaces ensures that the agenda of advertising—*consume*—continues to reach individuals even once they exit the also given-over public sphere.

**The ubiquity of incitements to consume has succeeded in producing consumptive individuals.** The purpose of disciplinary power is two-fold: to elicit predictable responses to learned stimuli from subjected individuals and to produce “new” kinds of individuals who are constituted by traits and behavioral patterns which are beneficial to the functioning of an existing power structure.<sup>5</sup> In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault provides an example of signal-based response in the form of a French schoolhouse in which schoolchildren are trained to perform certain tasks based on the number of bell-strokes made by the teacher. For instance, when the teacher wishes to end a lesson and direct the children towards a new reading, he will strike the signal once. In order to get a child to repeat a mispronounced word, the teacher strikes the signal twice in rapid succession. The purpose of this training was both to “place the bodies in a little world of signals to each of which is attached a single, obligatory response”<sup>6</sup> and to produce constitutionally obedi-

<sup>1</sup>Louise Story, “Anywhere the Eye Can See, It’s Likely to See an Ad” New York Times. January 15, 2007

<sup>2</sup>American Psychological Association. *APA Task Force on Advertising and Children: Psychological Issues in the Increasing Commercialization of Childhood* 2004. pg 4

<sup>3</sup>Pew Research Center, “Device Ownership” <<http://www.pewresearch.org/data-trend/media-and-technology/device-ownership/>> Accessed April 4, 2014.

<sup>4</sup>Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 170

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, 167



ent subjects.

The ubiquity of advertising has similarly succeeding in creating individuals who both respond to a learned stimuli (advertising) with a predictable response (consumption) and also internalize the mandates of consumerism until those mandates become a constituent part of their personality. For instance, a 2004 APA report found that both product recall and brand preference can be strongly imbued in children after viewing a single ad for a particular product. Since the advertisements these children are constantly exposed to utilize such psychological techniques as “unique sound effects and auditory changes, rapidly moving images, and audiovisual gimmicks,” when children encounter the highly stylized brand packaging of products for which they have already been instilled with a preference for, they encourage their parents to purchase said product.<sup>1</sup> The same APA report also concluded that the ubiquity of advertising led children to “develop the mindset that ‘you are what you buy.’ Material possessions become the source of judgment by others as well as the source of one’s own self-evaluation.”<sup>2</sup> This trend was identified by the critical theorist Herbert Marcuse in 1965; he writes, “The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment.”<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this summary of the disciplinary effects of a consumption-based economic system is to present consumption-based capitalism as a highly formative and pervasive power system in contemporary American society. While consumption-based capitalism is by no means the “only power,” I believe it is the most individually formative and universally inescapable power system operating in contemporary American society. I will be operating on this assumption for the remainder of my paper.

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<sup>1</sup>APA report, pg 9

<sup>2</sup>APA Report, pg 11

<sup>3</sup>Marcuse, Herbert. *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964. pg 9

### III. JURIDICO-DISCURSIVE NOTIONS OF REBELLION

Consumption-based capitalism as I have described it above does not fit into a juridico-discursive understanding of power. Juridico-discursive theory contends that power is a primarily negative force; consumption-based capitalism seeks to positively produce consumptive individuals. Juridico-discursive theory contends that power originates from a centralized location and operates in the same way at all levels and with the same “goal”; incitements to consume reach individuals through a diversity of decentralized platforms and carry essentially competing messages (*Buy Pepsi* as opposed to *Buy Coke*). Finally, the logic of censorship suggests that power deals primarily in symbolism, seeking to scrub dissenting sentiments from language and culture so as to “annihilate” the opposition. However, consumption-based capitalism deals primarily with the generation of capital through the purchase of consumer goods; the symbolic content of such goods is of subordinate importance to the economic value created by the sale of physical products.<sup>4</sup>

If the juridico-discursive understanding of power is accepted as truth, then finding ways to rebel against power is easy. If power is understood as saying only “Thou shalt not,” rebellion is as easy as saying, “I will anyway.” If the main operation of power is prohibition, rebellion can be defined as engaging in prohibited activities (premarital sex, “non-traditional appearance,” anti-government sloganeering.) If power is understood as having a large stake in the regulation of the symbolic universe, then the mere act of promoting dissident symbolism can be understood as a profound blow to power. However, if the mechanisms of diffuse-productive power (particularly its consumptive capitalist manifestation) are accepted as the primary mode by which power is exercised, then such notions of rebellion run the risk of essentially “missing the point,” and indeed dealing zero damage to the power systems which most thoroughly construct social life.

In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault writes that the uniform aspect of the juridico-discursive understanding of power implied

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<sup>4</sup>Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish*. pg 84

a centralized legislator (monarch, parent, teacher) from which prohibitions were issued.<sup>1</sup> American cultural history has known two major legislators, or issuers of law: the Church and the State. Thus, juridico-discursive prohibitions as perceived in contemporary American culture pertain to those behaviors which both the state and the church either at one point condemned or continue to condemn: sexual freedom, drug/alcohol use, and individualistic expression. However, consumption-based capitalism issues only one prohibition: *do not disengage from the consumptive apparatus*. In this sense, it is easy to understand why the largest music corporation in the world, Universal Music Group, is responsible for some of the Billboard Hot 100's most sexually explicit drug-use-encouraging anthems.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the increasing sexualization of children's toys<sup>3</sup>, the use of blatant sexuality in advertising<sup>4</sup>, and the implementation of "stoner aesthetic" into mainstream television and film can be understood through the lens of a general corporate indifference towards juridico standards of modesty and behavioral conformity. Simply put, economic power wants you to buy things, and does not care if the symbolic content of those things align with the prohibitive mandates of other power systems. The CEO of Universal Music Group does not care if you purchase a pop song about anonymous sex or a Christian rock song about abstinence, so long as each song cost the same amount to produce and the same amount to purchase.

This isn't to say that declarations of sexual freedom or celebrations of drug use aren't blows to very real and still-functioning power systems; they are. However, in keeping with Foucault's

description of power systems being multiple and competing, it is possible to rebel against one power system in a way which will benefit another power system. In his 2007 article "Why Jonny Can't Dissent," Thomas Frank pointed out that American corporations are not only unafraid of expressions of non-conformity but indeed have begun to incorporate such sentiment into advertising slogans: Burger King had "Sometimes You Gotta Break the Rules," Toyota had "The Line Has Been Crossed," and Arby's made use of the slogan "This is Different. Different is Good."<sup>5</sup> In the case of commercialized anti-juridico sentiment, symbolic expressions of individuality/dissent are not only irrelevant to the consumptive-capitalist system; they're profitable. And, as I attempted to demonstrate earlier in my paper, there are very few Americans who are not largely shaped by and almost always in contact with said power system.

#### IV. COMMODIFYING ANTI-COMMERCIAL SENTIMENT

It is easy to see why and how consumption-based capitalism is able to commodify anti-juridical expressions of dissent. However, my focus in this paper is somewhat different: how do those same power systems manage to commodify anti-commercialist sentiment itself? In other words, it is easy to profit from individuals expressing disdain for someone else, but how do you profit from individuals expressing disdain towards you?

I argue that consumption-based capitalism is able to commodify anti-commercialist sentiment for two primary reasons: A.) such expressions of discontent do not pose a threat to the power system of consumption-based capitalism because of the extraordinary difficulty of actualizing social (specifically economic) change in contemporary American society and B.) symbolic expressions of discontent are easily co-opted because they generally lack explicit calls to specific action and tend to remain in the cultural landscape long after the organizations in which said symbolism originated cease to be viable social forces. I will use two primary examples to illustrate these claims: the retailing of goods with explicitly anti-cor-

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 85

<sup>2</sup>Billboard Hot 100. <<http://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100>> Accessed March 29, 2014

Universal Music Group. <<http://www.universalmusic.com/artists>> Accessed March 29, 2014

<sup>3</sup>American Psychological Association. *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*. 2010.

<sup>4</sup>Reichert, Tom. "Cheesecake and Beefcake: No Matter How You Slice It, Sexual Explicitness in Advertising Continues to Increase." *Journal of Mass Communication*. Vol 76: 1. 1999.

<sup>5</sup>Frank, Thomas. "Why Johnny Can't Dissent." *Commodities, Co-Optation, and Culture Jamming*. New York: Verso. 2002.

porate sentiment (such as Che Guevara t-shirts at The Gap and “Fuck Capitalism” prints at Walmart) and the recent introduction of an Occupy Wall Street Visa Card.<sup>1</sup>

In his 1964 essay “The Closing of the Political Universe,” Herbert Marcuse argues that the advent of the consumptive age brought about a nullification and invalidation of dissident political ideologies. The increased affordability and availability of consumer comforts such as televisions and automobiles conspired to “make servitude palatable and perhaps even unnoticeable.” Additionally, the automation of formerly drudging work (particularly manufacturing) and the assimilation of blue and white collar jobs made obsolete the Marxian vision of a dramatically exploited proletariat who could easily be viewed as “a living denial of his society.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, the clear class opposition of former historical periods—in which a small percentage of the population enjoyed lifestyles of leisure while the majority toiled in undeniably grueling conditions—had been replaced with a less easily distinguishable social order in which a larger amount of the population than ever before was able to experience leisure and comparatively non-drudgerous work conditions. With the absence of clear class opposition, the possibility and appeal of systemic economic rebellion was obscured.

What is particularly salient about Marcuse’s observation in the context of today’s society is that the psychological effects of this shift are still evident despite the drastic increase of income inequality which has occurred since the essay’s publication. Between 1979 and 2007, income grew by 275% for the top 1 percent of American households, and just under 40% for the largest 60 percent of American households.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the Council on Foreign Relations reports that, “in 1965, a typical corporate CEO earned more than

twenty times a typical worker; by 2011, the ratio was 383:1.”<sup>4</sup> Income inequality is also exacerbated by the fact that, since 1965, the federal minimum wage has increased by a mere 580%<sup>5</sup> (from \$1.25/hr to \$7.25/hr) while inflation has risen by 2287%<sup>6</sup>, meaning that it has become increasingly difficult over this time period for minimum-wage workers to afford goods and services. Although it is possible to speculate that this dramatic increase in income inequality may result in a future pushback against capitalism, the fact that income inequality was able to worsen so substantially over a 50-year period without widespread public counteraction is a testament to the efficacy of the process of the psychological obfuscation of the possibility of social change described by Marcuse. In other words, despite the rapid proliferation of income inequality, a subversion of the economic order which facilitated such inequality remained unimaginable.

Contemporary American society is also marked by a narrowing of the possibility of substantive political change through traditional legislative channels. In 2010, it was determined that the Democratic and Republican parties shared 48 top donors, 45 of which were corporations. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, “the majority of these corporations donate about the same amount of money to both sides with five corporations giving exactly 50%.”<sup>7</sup> In the context of a political climate in which prospective elected officials must rely on large infusions of capital in order to

<sup>1</sup>Farnham, Alan. “Coming Soon: Occupy Wall Street Visa Card” ABC News. <<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/occupy-wall-street-plans-offer-debit-card/story?id=20434580>> Accessed March 28, 2014

<sup>2</sup>Marcuse, H. *One-Dimensional Man*. pg 24

<sup>3</sup>Congressional Budget Office. *Trends in the Distribution of Household Income Between 1979 and 2007*. October 25, 2011. <<https://www.cbo.gov/publication/42729>> Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>4</sup>Markovich, Stephen J. “The Income Inequality Debate.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. February 3, 2014. <<http://www.cfr.org/united-states/income-inequality-debate/p29052>> Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>5</sup>United States Department of Labor. *History of Federal Minimum Wage Rates Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 1938-2009*. <<http://www.dol.gov/whd/min-wage/chart.htm>> Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>6</sup>US Inflation Calculator. *Historical Inflation Rates: 1914-2014*. <<http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/historical-inflation-rates/>> Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>7</sup>MacColl, Spencer. “Democrats and Republicans Sharing Big-Dollar Donors, DCCC’s Million-Dollar Payoff and More in Capital Eye Opener.” *Center for Responsive Politics*. November 10, 2010. <<https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2010/11/democrats-and-republicans-sharing-b.html>> Accessed March 17, 2014.

compete in elections, it follows that officials dependent upon corporate contributions would be loathe to pass or propose legislation which would threaten said donors once in office for fear of losing re-election support. With the passage of such Supreme Court decisions as *Citizens United v. FEC*<sup>1</sup> and *McCutcheon v. FEC*<sup>2</sup>, which reinforced the rights of unlimited and anonymous corporate electoral contributions, the role of big money in politics seems set only to increase. Thus, while the Democratic and Republican parties may differ on social issues such as gay marriage or immigration, each party has a similar track record of failing to pass legislation which would address economic issues such as income inequality, caps on executive pay, and greater corporate transparency.<sup>3</sup>

The cumulative effect of the psychological obfuscation of the appeal and possibility of rebellion described by Marcuse and the literal narrowing of options in American politics is that the horizon of possibility for the average contemporary American citizen does not include a subversion of the consumer capitalist order. In other words, the citizens can't imagine it and the politicians can't actualize it. This pervasive improbability of substantive economic change helps to explain why corporations are unthreatened by the dissemination of explicitly anti-commercial sentiment via consumer goods. Most individuals exposed to such symbolism will neither be able to imagine nor desire a subversion of the current capitalist order. Even if these individuals were moved by such symbolism to pursue a modification of the capitalist order, they would discover that the nation's political system is currently largely incapable of actualizing such change.

A good example of such commodification of anti-capitalist sentiment is the sale of Che Guevara t-shirts at the Gap. Che Guevara was an Argentine Marxist revolutionary who advocated for,

amongst many other things, the redistribution of wealth, a violent overthrow of the ruling economic classes, and the implementation of a communist economic order.<sup>4</sup> The Gap is a multinational, billion-dollar corporation which paid its CEO \$18 million<sup>5</sup> in 2013 and operates a number of sweatshops around the world where its workers, many of whom are children, are paid roughly \$100 a month.<sup>6</sup> Gap, Incorporated is dependent upon the maintenance of an economic order which is largely the opposite of the kind Guevara advocated for, and yet featured t-shirts displaying Che Guevara's face in its stores for many years.

This disparity clearly stems from the fact that the symbolic content of the goods sold by The Gap is of subordinate importance to the monetary value generated by the sale of such goods. If the CEO of the Gap thought that the dissemination of Che Guevara's likeness would lead to the violent overthrow of the ruling classes and the implementation of a communist economic order, she presumably would not have consented to sell such shirts. In a similar example, in 2013, Walmart's online store was selling faux-Banksy "Fuck Capitalism" prints. Although the prints were eventually removed from the website, the willingness of the company to promote such anti-capitalist sentiment illustrates the fact that the mere dissemination of anti-corporate sentiment is not considered a threat to corporate power by corporate power. The true value of the Che Guevara t-shirt or the "Fuck Capitalism" print is not the symbolic message contained within, but the profit gleaned from the sale of such a product. Furthermore, the mere fact that individuals are purchasing such goods demonstrates that the objectives of consumption-based capitalism (increased individual consumption) have been achieved.

The commodification of anti-corporate sentiment is also

<sup>1</sup>Sullivan, Kristin. "Summary of Citizens United v. Federal Election Committee" <<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/rpt/2010-R-0124.htm>> Accessed March 29, 2014

<sup>2</sup>Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, "McCutcheon v. FEC" April 2, 2014. <<https://www.brennancenter.org/legal-work/mccutcheon-v-fec>> Accessed March 19, 2014.

<sup>3</sup>Corporate Accountability Coalition. *2012 Congressional Report Card*. 2012.

<sup>4</sup>Sinclair, Andrew. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Internet. "Che Guevara" Accessed March 29, 2014.

<sup>5</sup>Forbes Magazine. "Glenn Murphy." 2013. <<http://www.forbes.com/profile/glenn-murphy/>> Accessed March 29, 2014

<sup>6</sup>Cisneros, Noel. "Gap Sweatshop Videos Cause Uproar." ABC News. November 1, 2007. <<http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/business&id=5732845>> Accessed March 29, 2014.

facilitated by the easily co-optable nature of dissident symbolism. Juridico-discursive power gives the impression of dealing in symbolism; however, as we have established, the currency of diffuse-productive capitalist power is not symbolism but capital, and symbolic content is largely interchangeable and irrelevant so long as it is attached to a marketable object. Because of the difficulty of actualizing social change, symbolic representations of discontent are often the initial and longest-lasting cultural contribution of a given dissident group. Additionally, such symbolic representations often lack explicit grievances or directives, erring more on the side of piquing interest and articulating an aesthetic of resistance. For instance, the Occupy Wall Street movement did not succeed in alleviating American income inequality, changing the structure of the financial industry, or bringing about greater corporate transparency. However, long after the abandonment of Zuccotti Park, there is a wide variety of Occupy Wall Street merch available for purchase in stores and online, ranging from hats to coffee mugs to bumper stickers. Emblazoned with mottos such as “We are the 99%,” or “Thought Criminal,” these products reference a horizon of new social and economic possibility, but the products themselves do nothing to summon such a horizon. The business which manufactured the Occupy Wall Street mug presumably makes its money by installing diverse symbolic content on identical mugs: “We are the 99%” one week, “What Would Jesus Do?” the next week, “Springfield High Boosters Club” the week after that. This is of course not to say that the substantially positive gains made by the Occupy Wall Street movement are moot; rather, the application of slogans originating in the OWS community to highly marketable consumer goods demonstrates the ease with which anti-commercialist sentiment is co-opted for the ultimate continuation of consumption-based culture.

A prime example of the pliability of symbolic expressions of dissent is the introduction of an Occupy Wall Street Visa Card. The Occupy Wall Street Visa Card was envisioned by the Occupy Money Cooperative, an organization with roots in the original protests which seeks to “provide fairly-priced, member-managed, and

non-predatory financial products to the 99%.”<sup>1</sup> In order to actualize this goal, the Cooperative believed that it would be necessary to partner with an existing and well-established finance company. According to the group’s directors, “The Occupy Card will be on an innovative platform that is integrated with the Visa platform. Your Occupy Card will be accepted everywhere Visa is.”<sup>2</sup> Importantly, this card (which is still in development) would display both the Visa logo and a representation of one of Occupy Wall Street’s logos, in addition to the word “Occupy.”

Now, it is important not to oversimplify the OWS Visa Card as a blatant attempt on the part of a few of the original protestors to cash in on their association with the movement. This card would offer some features that traditional debit cards do not; for instance, there would be no upfront cost for obtaining the card, and ATM withdrawal fees would be slightly lower than with other traditional cards.<sup>3</sup> However, my focus is not on the relative merits of the card, but rather the implications such a card holds for the relationship between dissident symbolism and the power system of consumption-based capitalism.

The OWS card presents an opportunity for Visa, a multinational financial industry firm, to expand its brandscape by integrating the symbolic language of a dissident group founded largely in an attempt to check the power and influence of multinational financial industry firms. The comparative “improvements” of the OWS card over traditional debit cards allows Visa to claim to be “part of the solution” to the problems of widespread inequality and corruption which the Occupy Wall Street movement originally accused Visa and their fellow financial firms of being a part of. More importantly, however, the integration of OWS symbolism into the Visa brand marks a subsumption of anti-capitalist

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<sup>1</sup>Occupy Money Cooperative. “Values” <<http://www.occupycooperative.com/ourvalues>> Accessed March 28, 2014

<sup>2</sup>Morrison, David. “Occupy Wall Street Intends to Step Out With Visa.” *Credit Union Times*. <<http://www.cutimes.com/2013/07/26/occupy-wall-street-intends-to-step-out-with-visa>> Accessed March 28, 2014

<sup>3</sup>Farnham, Alan. “Coming Soon: Occupy Wall Street Visa Card” ABC News.

sentiment into the capitalist order. In his book *One-Dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse observes that “[s]uch modes of protest and transcendence are no longer contradictory to the status quo and no longer negative. They are rather the ceremonial part of practical behaviorism, its harmless negation, and are quickly digested by the status quo as part of its healthy diet.”<sup>1</sup> By bringing symbolic expressions of anti-capitalist sentiment “inside” itself, consumption-based capitalism further narrows the horizon of possibility in contemporary American life by eradicating the “outside” towards which such expressions were hinting, thereby nullifying the revolutionary potential of said symbolism.

## V. THE OBFUSCATION OF DIFFUSE-PRODUCTIVE POWER

The most dangerous aspect of a juridico-discursive understanding of power is not that it facilitates the co-optation and ultimate nullification of dissident sentiment, but more primarily that it distracts from the true nature of diffuse-productive power. In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault states, “Power is tolerable only on the condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.”<sup>2</sup> By promoting a juridico-discursive understanding of the nature of power (think back to that “Sometimes You Gotta Break the Rules” Toyota slogan from earlier), the diffuse-productive mechanisms of consumption-based capitalism obscure their true nature as instruments of power and constrain the individual’s ability to conceptualize a different mode in which power would be exercised. If an individual is unable to recognize the nature of the power by which she is subjected, the ability to resist such power is stifled.

Additionally, the co-optation of anti-capitalist sentiment facilitated by the juridico-discursive understanding of power closes off the possibility of a life outside of consumptive capitalism. In an essay discussing the ways in which “higher culture” had become subsumed by “material culture,” thereby narrowing the imaginative

range of the contemporary industrial subject, Herbert Marcuse remarked, “The vamp, the beatnik, the gangster...perform a function very different from...that of their cultural predecessors. They are no longer images of another way of life but rather freaks or types of the same life, serving as an affirmation rather than negation of the established order.”<sup>3</sup> If consumption-based capitalism succeeds in attaching all symbolic expressions of dissent which hint towards the possibility of a life outside capitalism to marketable goods, then the symbolic outside towards which those expressions were hinting will cease to exist.

The obfuscation of diffuse-productive power is not only relevant for individuals wishing to subvert the current capitalist order, however. Between 1975 and 2013, the percentage of disposable personal income taken up by household debt for the average American rose by 61%. In that same amount of time, the percentage of the nation’s GDP taken up by individual consumption rose by 10%.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that the disciplinary mechanisms employed by the power system of consumption-based capitalism (subjection to ubiquitous advertising) have succeeded in producing individuals so constructively consumptive that they continue to consume at increasing rates despite their corresponding increasing indebtedness. In this sense, it is important to understand the ways in which the diffuse-productive mechanisms of consumptive capitalism operate upon each of us as an individual in order to interrogate the motivations behind our own consumptive habits and hopefully avoid placing ourselves in a position of financial precariousness as a result of them.

## VI. POSSIBLE PATHS OF RESISTANCE TO CONSUMPTION-BASED CAPITALISM

In order to effectively resist a given power structure, an in-

<sup>1</sup>Marcuse, H. *One-Dimensional Man*. 14

<sup>2</sup>Foucault, M. *History of Sexuality*. pg 86

<sup>3</sup>Marcuse, H. *One-Dimensional Man*. pg 59

<sup>4</sup>Stewart, Hale. “Consumer Spending and the Economy.” New York Times, September 19, 2010 <[http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/consumer-spending-and-the-economy/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=0](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/consumer-spending-and-the-economy/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0)> Accessed March 15, 2014

dividual must understand the nature and predominant mechanisms of said power system. Throughout this paper, consumption-based capitalism has been shown to rely on the maintenance of high individual rates of consumption, operate across a variety of platforms in diverse ways, and exploit dissident symbolism in the context of a narrow political universe. Thus, a true “spirit of rebellion” against consumption-based capitalism would be one which emphasized decreased and thoughtful consumption, encouraged diverse and situational problem-solving, and valued actualization over symbolism.

In his book *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, the American sociologist Daniel Bell states, “The one thing that would utterly destroy this new capitalism is the serious practice of deferred gratification.”<sup>1</sup> I agree with the gist of Bell’s argument; capitalism as it is practiced in our country today is sustained by individual consumption, much of which is geared towards the gratification of specific desires. Thus, a serious decrease in the rate of individual consumption would be the main pillar upon which a true movement of rebellion against consumption-based capitalism would be built. However, because of the distinctively non-juridico-discursive nature of consumption-based capitalism, effectively resisting said system is not always as simple as “don’t consume.”

For instance, let’s say an individual named A develops a craving for a chocolate cake. The cheapest chocolate cake in A’s area is at Wal-mart; thus, this is the first place she considers purchasing her cake from. However, A is aware of the productive capacity of consumption-based capitalism, and consequently decides that her desire for chocolate cake has been constructed as a result of her life-long exposure to ubiquitous incitements to consume. Thus, A decides to resist such a system by not purchasing a chocolate cake. However, if the power system that this individual seeks to resist is “consumption-based capitalism,” which employs the disciplinary technique “ubiquitous advertising,” then it would be important for her to consider that the majority of advertisements which most

American are subjected to are advertisements for corporate goods or services<sup>2</sup>, and that this prevalence of corporate advertising makes it more difficult for small business to stay afloat. Thus, in this case, buying a more expensive chocolate cake at a local business which has been struggling to survive in the corporate-dominated landscape would be a more substantive act of resistance against consumer capitalism than choosing not to buy any chocolate cake at all.

Of course, there are many different aspects of consumption-based capitalism which an individual may find troubling, and wishing to resist a particular power mechanism of the system does not mean that an individual deems it necessary or even desirable to resist every power mechanism employed by that system. In my last example, A was particularly troubled by the production of constructively consumptive individuals through the disciplinary process of advertising. However, it is perfectly possible (and probable) that there exists another individual (let’s call her B) who is untroubled by this aspect of consumption-based capitalism because she believes herself immune to the effects of ubiquitous advertising. However, B is troubled by the possibility of her consumptive habits supporting a company that pays their workers a minimum, non-living wage, something a majority of major U.S. retailers are guilty of.<sup>3</sup> B decides she wants a chocolate cake. Her particular moral dilemma in this situation is not whether or not to consume, nor is it whether to not to spend her money at a corporately-owned location. Rather, B’s personal moral dilemma is finding a place to buy a chocolate cake that also pays its employees a living wage.

Upon doing some research, B discovers that the struggling-in-a-corporate landscape shop endorsed by A pays its workers minimum wage. She also discovers that Costco pays all of its employees a living wage and is also the second-largest retailer in

<sup>1</sup>Bell, Daniel. *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1996. pg 83

<sup>2</sup>Ad Age. “Infographic: Meet America’s 25 Biggest Advertisers.” July 2013. <<http://adage.com/article/news/meet-america-s-25-biggest-advertisers/242969/>> Accessed May 9, 2014.

<sup>3</sup>National Employment Law Project. *Big Business, Corporate Profits, and the Minimum Wage*. July 2012. <[http://nelp.3cdn.net/e555b2e361f8f734f4\\_sim6btdzo.pdf](http://nelp.3cdn.net/e555b2e361f8f734f4_sim6btdzo.pdf)> Accessed May 9, 2014.

the United States.<sup>1</sup> Untroubled by the company's substantial market share and pleased with the way it treats its employees, B purchases a chocolate cake at Costco. In these respective scenarios, both A and B have committed to their own forms of resistance against consumption-based capitalism.

Of course, concern over the productive potential of advertising and whether employees are paid a living wage are only two examples of the numerous reasons an individual may want to resist the power mechanisms of consumption-based capitalism. A few additional examples are negative environmental impact, corporate irresponsibility in the form of tax evasion or undue access to politicians, and the proliferation of individual debt. A given individual may feel it necessary to resist one, any, or all of these concerns. The differentiated forms of resistance taken up by A and B demonstrate the need for critical thinking and situational problem-solving given the diffuse manifestations and diverse mechanisms of consumption-based capitalism.

Finally, resisting consumption-based capitalism would require both dissident groups and specific individuals to value actualization of social change over symbolism. This is not to say that dissident symbolism has no place in the cultural landscape; of course, symbolism is a necessary kind of shorthand for the communication and introduction of complex and critical ideas. However, actualization of social change must be valued over the dissemination of symbolism for two reasons. First, the commercial dissemination of dissident symbolism is made possible by the continuation of a narrow political universe; thus, an organization which has more success in finding commercial platforms for its symbolic content than actualizing its social mission is not challenging the status quo, but rather contributing to it. Additionally, the pliability of symbolic content, as demonstrated throughout this paper, necessitates both a loose relationship on the part of dissident groups

to specific symbolic representations and a willingness to denounce a given symbolic representation once said symbolic representation has been successfully co-opted as a third-party marketing tool. This willingness to "let go" of particular dissident symbolism should not be read as an acquiescence on the part of dissident culture to the co-optive abilities of consumption-based capitalism; rather, a stark valuation of actualization over symbolic particulars should be read as an affirmation of the existence of a realm outside of consumption-based capitalism. Were this re-valuation of actualization to be accomplished, the theoretical benefits would be two-fold: the narrow political universe which facilitates the co-optation of dissident symbolism would be subverted, and an alternative, non-symbolic, and ultimately more formidable currency of dissidence would emerge outside the domain of the co-optable.

In conclusion, the juridico-discursive theory presents power as centralized, prohibitive, and essentially predictable. As a result, juridico-discursive notions of rebellion are uniform, positive, and easily defined. However, an examination of the ways in which an individual is subjected by various power relations reveals that these exercises of power are diverse, complex, and often unexpected. Thus, a strategy of resistance to consumption-based capitalism would be one which embraced the difficult task of vigilance, flexibility of approach, and the valuation of economic action over symbolism.

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<sup>1</sup>Stone, Brad. "Costco CEO Craig Jelinek Leads the Cheapest, Happiest Company in the World." *Bloomberg Businessweek*. June 6, 2013. <<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-06-06/costco-ceo-craig-jelinek-leads-the-cheapest-happiest-company-in-the-world>> Accessed May 9, 2014.



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## Acknowledgments

First of all, I'd like to thank Emmy Wade for being a fantastic Auspex editor, Julie Wilson for being the best boss ever, and the rest of the Writing Center crew for not only putting this journal together but also being the coolest crew on campus. Keep it up, friends.

This thesis would never have come together if not for the instruction and questioning of my Philosophy professors John Casey, Sally Fischer, Jay Miller, and Matt Whitt. Special thanks goes to my advisor Sally, whose wealth of knowledge and level head has enabled myself and many others to exceed our own expectations while also remaining miraculously sane.

Finally, I'd like to thank my Philosophy thesis-mates George Perilstein, Marie Gouldsbury, Evan Waksler, and Gabe Setright for being the best batch of brains anyone could ask for. I'm glad we went down the rabbit hole together.

## Black Mountain College's Experiment in Education: The Recruitment of African American Students and Faculty Members at a Southern Arts School in the 1940s

Abstract:

Black Mountain College, an institution known widely throughout the art world, is recognized today for its experimental teaching methods and the famed artists who came out of the school. From 1933 to 1956 Black Mountain College led a bold existence, challenging the conservative climate of its neighboring communities in Western North Carolina. But one component of its experimental nature which is less well known is the school's willingness to transgress Southern racial customs. Black Mountain College invited African Americans to its campus—first as guests, then as teachers, students and community members— in an era of segregation and open bigotry against the black race. This thesis explores the African American artists and musicians who passed through the Black Mountain campus and the legacy that they left.

### Micah Wilkins | History and Political Science



Micah Wilkins graduated from Warren Wilson in 2013 with a B.A. in History. There, she developed and pursued her interest in African American history, which inspired the topic of this paper. She currently lives in Kansas City, Missouri working as a freelance writer and pizza monger and she hopes to continue her studies at the graduate level by 2016, God willing. A version of this paper was also published in the Black

Mountain College Studies Journal in the summer of 2014.

The faculty members at Black Mountain College were a daring bunch. They implemented novel teaching methods and practices; class attendance was optional; letter grades were not distributed. At this unaccredited Southern arts institution, there was room for innovation, for experimentation. According to Black Mountain College scholar Mary Emma Harris, the college “was an idealistic, fragile, modest adventure in American education. . . it was more organism than institution, changing, volatile, evolving, intense.”<sup>1</sup>

Between 1933 and 1956, Black Mountain College led a bold existence. Though only 1,200 students attended the school throughout its two decades, the college, nestled in the mountains of Western North Carolina, has a lasting legacy in the art world and among post-secondary educational institutions. Black Mountain College is most well known for the students and faculty members who passed through the campus: Buckminster Fuller, Charles Olson, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and many others. These talented and famous artists, attracted to the college’s unique teaching methods and atmosphere, participated wholeheartedly in the various experiments of this unparalleled community. However, in many written histories of the college, certain individuals are left out, and one experiment put on by this community is understated. Black Mountain College was one of the first white post-secondary institutions in the old Confederacy to admit African American students.

Beginning with the admittance of Alma Stone Williams for the college’s 1944 summer institute, the college recruited African American students and faculty members throughout the remainder of the decade. This early integration initiative successfully brought several black students and faculty members to the college. Both the campus and the surrounding community were exposed to and influenced by the minds of African American students and teachers, at a time and place when these perspectives were often undervalued. Given the college’s location in the South, and the Jim Crow era

in which it existed, integration efforts at Black Mountain are worthy of more exploration and research.

Black Mountain College began after a group of students and faculty members left Rollins College, a liberal arts school in Winter Park, Florida. In an ideological disagreement with the college, John Andrew Rice, who taught Greek and Latin, was fired from his teaching position at Rollins, and was followed by several other faculty members and students in solidarity. Rice found and purchased property near Black Mountain, North Carolina, and despite the hardships posed by the Great Depression, decided to start a college of his own.

Black Mountain grew quickly following its founding in 1933. Two months after it opened, the college granted Josef and Anni Albers life-saving visas and the couple was able to flee Nazi Germany to teach art classes at Black Mountain.<sup>2</sup> Rice was not only the founder and first rector of the college, but he also taught a classics course which was required for all students. Under Rice, Black Mountain became an innovative and experimental educational community.

In its early years, Black Mountain’s teaching and education styles were unlike those of most other colleges. Students entered in the Junior Division and had to pass an exam in order to move up into the Senior Division. Students graduated if they passed oral and written exams in their field of specialization (teachers only distributed grades for transfer purposes). Learning took place not just in the classroom, but also on the college’s farm and in the work program.<sup>3</sup> An article published in Time magazine in 1939 describes the college’s unconventionality:

Black Mountain resembles no other college in the U.S. It requires no attendance at classes, grants no degrees, has no president, no fraternities, no football team. . . Classes are informal, are often held out-

<sup>1</sup>Mary Emma Harris, “Experience and Experiment in American Education,” in *Starting at Zero: Black Mountain College 1933-1957*, no ed. (Cambridge, MA: Kettle’s Yard, 2006), 21.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, *Starting at Zero*, 13.

<sup>3</sup>Mary Emma Harris, *Remembering Black Mountain College* (Black Mountain, NC: The Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center, 1996), 6.

doors. Boys and girls wear shorts or jeans, smoke, call their teachers by their first names.<sup>1</sup>



*In 1940, students and faculty began building the Studies Building, pictured here. Black Mountain College Collection.*

*New York Times* reporter Roger Sessions visited Black Mountain in its early years and observed that the college, formed by “idealists,” believed in collaboration and communication between individuals of differing backgrounds. He wrote: “In practice this results...in an amazing freedom of discussion.”<sup>2</sup> With its progressive nature, its unique and diverse faculty, and its innovative teaching methods, it is no wonder that Black Mountain College became one of the first Southern schools to experiment with integration.

Even in the college’s first year, the issue of inviting African Americans to campus was raised. In 1933, English and dramatics teacher Peggy Loram’s father, Charles Tempelman Loram, who was from South Africa and who taught at Yale University, traveled to North Carolina with a group of students to observe African American life and education in the South. At least one of Loram’s students was black, which prompted a discussion over sleeping arrangements.<sup>3</sup> Should the all-white college invite an African American

student to spend the night on campus, despite the segregationist values of the surrounding community?

While the faculty agreed that the rules surrounding racial segregation were discriminatory and unjust, many were unwilling to upset the local community by inviting African Americans to stay on campus. Black Mountain College already had very ambitious goals throughout its first year. Some faculty argued that, so early in its career, the college should focus on its own survival instead of advancing yet another fringe cause.<sup>4</sup> To put an end to the discussion, Jack and Rubye Lipsey, black cooks at the college and prominent members of the community, explained that the college’s and the students’ safety would be in jeopardy if Black Mountain housed African American students on campus overnight.<sup>5</sup>

If anyone at Black Mountain felt hesitant about breaching Southern customs in the 1930s—and fully understood the conse-



*Jack Lipsey, Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center Collection*

quences an act like this would provoke—it was its black staff members. In 1935, the heating system in the building where the black staff slept had broken, but they refused to be housed in Lee Hall, where white students lived. They would rather endure the cold than prompt a negative, maybe even violent response from the local community by sleeping under the same roof as whites.<sup>6</sup> The African American staff members at the college had reason to be fearful of upsetting Southern customs. Violence committed by whites

against African Americans was rampant throughout the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to records gathered by the Tuskegee Institute, from 1882 to 1968

<sup>1</sup>“Buncombe County’s Eden,” *Time* 33, no. 25 (1939): 47.

<sup>4</sup>Roger Sessions, “Report on Black Mountain,” *New York Times*, September 24, 1944.

<sup>3</sup>Glenis Redmond, *Gwendolyn Knight: Discovering Powerful Images* (Black Mountain, NC: Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center, 2001), 3.

<sup>4</sup>Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972), 174.

<sup>5</sup>Redmond, *Gwendolyn Knight*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

approximately 86 African Americans were killed by lynch mobs in North Carolina. Throughout the rest of the South, thousands more were lynched during this time.<sup>1</sup>

Violence against African Americans is one thing that characterizes the South during this period. Racial segregation is another. In the Jim Crow South, blacks and whites attended different schools, rode in separate train cars, and were similarly segregated in all other public spaces. Certain businesses and areas were altogether off-limits to African Americans. Some of these practices were based in law; others were simply Southern customs.<sup>2</sup>

School segregation was a common practice in the South before the groundbreaking 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. In the South, while there were some grade schools for African Americans, there were fewer high schools and even fewer colleges. The few schools that did exist for black students were often underfunded and under-supported by the community. In North Carolina in particular, black schools had shorter academic years than white schools because, according to school superintendents in 1930, black students had to get back to working in the field.<sup>3</sup>

In its Southern, rural setting, Black Mountain College was already shunned for its alternative teaching styles and the community members' ways of life. Some thought of Black Mountain as a nudist camp. Others considered it communistic.<sup>4</sup> And even before the college talked about admitting African American students, it had a reputation as a haven for white people who sought equality with blacks.<sup>5</sup> Though located in the South, Black Mountain Col-

lege was made up largely of Northern faculty members and some Northern students, giving the college a reputation as "a Yankee island in a Southern sea," wrote Duberman.<sup>6</sup> This reputation did not sit well with the locals. Theodore Dreier, a college administrator and one of its founders, wrote to the school's lawyer, R.R. Williams, "I was once told by one of our neighbors that he was twenty years old before he 'learned that damn and Yankee were two separate words.'" <sup>7</sup>

Some faculty members expressed concerns that the school was not embracing the Southern culture around it. African American culture in particular interested some students and faculty members, including Edward Lowinsky, a music teacher who joined the college in 1942. During a faculty meeting in 1944, Lowinsky claimed that the college was missing out by not having students or faculty members encounter "Negro Spiritual Music."<sup>8</sup>

In the early 1940s, Black Mountain College began to focus on African American culture and race relations, especially in the school's Southern context. In 1943, the college celebrated Negro History Week with talks on black life given by faculty members, a showing of a film by the Harmon Foundation, and a guest lecture "The Negro in the present world crisis and his hopes for the post-war world" by W.A. Robinson, director of the Negro Secondary School Study.<sup>9</sup>

Robinson's colleague, Robert Wunsch, who was white, worked extensively with the Negro Secondary School Study in the early 1940s and served on the board of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, which worked toward better-

<sup>1</sup>"Lynchings: By State and Race, 1882-1968" accessed Nov. 26, 2013, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/shipp/lynchingsstate.html>

<sup>2</sup>Melissa Walker, "Shifting Boundaries: Race Relations in the Rural Jim Crow South," in *African American Life in the Rural South 1900-1950*, ed. R. Douglas Hurt (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 83-84.

<sup>3</sup>George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 268-269.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Alice Rondthaler to John Privette, April 30, 1974, Vol II, Box 4, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>5</sup>Duberman, *An Exploration in Community*, 174.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Letter from Theodore Dreier to R.R. Williams, Sept. 28, 1945, General Correspondence Dreier BMC Williams, R.R., 1933-1948, Private Collection Theodore and Barbara Dreier 1925-1988, Black Mountain College Collection (BMCC), Western Regional Archives (WRA).

<sup>8</sup>Regular faculty meeting minutes, April 5, 1944, Edward Lowinsky faculty files, Vol. II, Box. 22, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>9</sup>Duberman, *Exploration in Community*, 174. The Harmon Foundation served as a large-scale patron of African American art from 1922 until the foundation's end in 1967.

ing educational opportunities for African Americans. Wunsch had been at Rollins College and left with John Rice. In 1935, he became a drama teacher at Black Mountain College. A native of North Carolina, Wunsch was one of the few Southern faculty members. He understood the racial climate of the region and built relationships regardless of race.<sup>1</sup> His unique perspective later proved beneficial to the college's commitment to integration.

Black Mountain College would eventually gain another Southern perspective. Clark Foreman worked for the Julius Rosenwald Fund helping the philanthropic organization's president Edwin Embree allocate money for projects to enhance opportunities for African Americans. In 1942 he met students and faculty from Black Mountain College at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Nashville.<sup>2</sup> They were impressed with his experience and, when they returned to Black Mountain after the conference, brought Foreman with them.<sup>3</sup> He made quite an impression, as Wunsch wrote in a letter to Foreman after his visit:

Your enthusiasm for doing something about the problems of the South was definitely contagious. . . I have wanted for a long time now to have someone on the staff to acquaint both students and teachers with the ways and the mind of the South, then to inspire these same people to intelligent action toward solving these problems.<sup>4</sup>

The following year Foreman was hired as a teacher of political science at Black Mountain. However, when he arrived in 1943, it was not his intention to integrate the college. In a 1974 inter-

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from W. A. Robinson, Director Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, to BMC Board of Fellows, Nov. 7, 1941, Robert Wunsch faculty files, Vol. III, Box 7, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>2</sup>The Southern Conference for Human Welfare was an organization devoted to improving race relations in the U.S.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Robert Wunsch to Clark Foreman, May 5, 1942, Clark Foreman faculty files, Vol. III, Box 3, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

view Foreman remembered: "It was only when I got down there and faced the situation that I saw that it wasn't living up to what it should be that I felt we ought to do something about it."<sup>5</sup>

These early faculty members were instrumental in bringing to the forefront the issue of integration. In the spring of 1944, the "Negro question" raged on at Black Mountain College. The conversation dominated faculty meetings, as some faculty were initially resistant to integration. People like Josef Albers were not opposed to the idea itself, but rather its timing. Some were skeptical about whether the college should take on yet another far-reaching goal which would likely upset the local community.<sup>6</sup>

Despite trepidation from certain faculty members, most Black Mountain community members hoped to move forward with integration. In April 1944, Theodore Dreier sent a letter to the college's lawyer, R. R. Williams, inquiring about segregation laws in North Carolina. The faculty thought integration at colleges and universities in Southern states was illegal because they had not heard of any other Southern institution admitting African American students. In addition, de jure segregation laws were in place in nearly every other Southern institution. However, according to Williams, no law barred private educational institutions from admitting black students, but he continued his letter by stressing the customs of North Carolinians:

This policy [of separate accommodations for whites and African Americans] is of long standing and is deeply imbedded in the habits of the people of North Carolina so much so that there is a strong feeling relative to it. . . Matters of policy, I recognize, are matters for you to determine but I feel that I would not be doing my full duty without warning you of the explosive subject with which you are

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<sup>5</sup>Clark Foreman, interview by Jacquelyn Hall, Nov. 16 1974, interview B-0003, Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), transcript.

<sup>6</sup>Duberman, *An Exploration in Community*, 178-182.

dealing.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this discouragement, the determination of several faculty members led to the final agreement, by the end of April, to integrate the college. For “practical reasons,” the college decided to admit just one “qualified” African American woman for the college’s first summer music institute.<sup>2</sup> In compromise, it was agreed that this black student would attend the summer program not as a regular student, but rather as a “member of the institute.”<sup>3</sup>

Foreman held the responsibility of finding this one student, and he decided to get in touch with Spelman College, an all-black women’s college in Atlanta. A faculty member recommended Alma Stone Williams, who had already graduated from Spelman as valedictorian in 1940. In fact, she had already begun her teaching career. However, when she was invited to the 1944 summer music institute at Black Mountain College, she wanted to take advantage of the opportunity before applying to the Juilliard School of Music.<sup>4</sup>

After the faculty decided to invite Williams to Black Mountain College, they also decided to “inform all people who give their names as patrons or sponsors for the Summer institutes, that the college plans to have a negro member in these institutes.”<sup>5</sup> The college hoped to be transparent about its intentions to integrate; unsurprisingly, the announcement was met with some backlash. One student and the college’s assistant treasurer Erwin Straus both left as a result of Williams’s arrival.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Theodore Dreier to R.R. Williams, April 14, 1944, General Correspondence Dreier BMC Williams, R.R., 1933-1948, Private Collection Theodore and Barbara Dreier 1925-1988, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes, special meeting of the faculty, April 24, 1944, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>3</sup>Sebastian Matthews, “Opening Doors: Alma Stone Williams’ 1944 Integration of Black Mountain College,” *The Urban News*, accessed Oct. 20, 2013, <http://theurbannews.com/our-town/2008/opening-doors-alma-stone-williams-1944-integration-of-black-mountain-college/>.

<sup>4</sup>Alma Stone Williams, interview with Connie Bostic, Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center (BMCM), April 20 2001.

<sup>5</sup>Minutes, regular meeting of the faculty, May 10, 1944, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>6</sup>Duberman, *Experiment in Community*, 178.

However, the rest of the students and faculty members at Black Mountain welcomed Williams. During the summer institute, she felt “instant acceptance from everybody.” And, as Lowinsky and others had hoped, she had brought new, important perspectives to the college. During a class taught by Lowinsky titled *New Roads in Music Education*, he asked students to bring in “folk materials.” Williams was the only student, even among the Southerners, who had any songs to offer.<sup>7</sup>

According to Williams, her presence on campus did not cause a “fuss,” and on the last day of the institute, faculty member Nell Rice said to her, “Alma, there’s no way you could possibly get from Black Mountain as much as you gave.”<sup>8</sup> In her book *Opening Black Doors at Black Mountain College*, Williams wrote that the college “was ready for me.”<sup>9</sup> After the 1944 summer institute, many students and faculty agreed that the experiment was a success, and 38 out of the 50 Black Mountain students signed a petition urging the college to admit more than one black student at a time.<sup>10</sup>

However, the college would not have any African Americans on campus until the following summer, during the 1945 summer institute. Because the 1944 summer institute went over smoothly, and the college dodged any potential backlash or protests with Williams’s presence, the faculty thought they would try it once more, this time with two African American guest teachers. Dreier, Lowinsky and other faculty members had in mind two famous African American singers, Roland Hayes and Carol Brice. According to Dreier, they would both be interested in coming to Black Mountain because “it is perhaps the only place in the south where [they] would be accepted completely as a member of the College community without any discrimination.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Williams, interview with Connie Bostic, BMCM, April 20 2001.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Camille Clark, “Black Mountain College: A Pioneer in Southern Racial Integration,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 54 (Winter 2006): 47.

<sup>10</sup>Duberman, *Experiment in Community*, 183.

<sup>11</sup>Letter from Theodore Dreier to John Carr, April 5 1945, Institute, Music, Summer: Correspondence, publicity 1945, Vol. II, Box 18, BMCC, WRA.



In addition to being welcomed by the students and faculty, Hayes and Brice drew positive responses from the local community as well. Virtually no “incidents” or “embarrassment” took place as a result of integrated events and performances, which were attended by many outside community members.

In fact, one of the summer’s most memorable moments was when Roland Hayes held a concert on one of the last evenings of his stay. He attracted one of the largest crowds Black Mountain had ever seen, with more than 300 outside guests, including 30 to 40 African Americans. The audience filled the dining hall, with integrated seating arrangements.<sup>1</sup> Julia Feininger, wife of Lyonel Feininger, the 1945 summer session’s artist-in-residence, remembers Hayes’s combination of classical songs and Afro-American folk ballads:

His concert last Saturday was beautiful beyond words. . . It is not the voice alone; it is the whole man, the musician, the artist. . . And the astonishing thing is, that he sings Bach and negro spirituals equally. . . with equal fervor and religious feeling, understanding, deep conviction.<sup>2</sup>



Afrika, Helen and Roland Hayes. Western Regional Archives.

Accompanied by his wife Helen and their daughter Afrika, Hayes was influential in other ways at Black Mountain. During his visit, which lasted just a few weeks, he made deep impressions on many students and faculty members. Through his storytelling, Hayes “held the community spellbound with the tales of his struggle to break from the barriers of racial prejudice.” The son of a Georgia slave, Hayes was recognized for his talent only when he moved to Europe, where

he faced less discrimination for his skin color.<sup>3</sup>

Carol Brice also made a great impression on Black Mountain community members with her “exceptionally moving” concerts, remembers 1945 summer institute student Angelica Bodky Lee.<sup>4</sup> Originally from nearby Sedalia, North Carolina, where she attended the Palmer Memorial Institute, Brice received a fellowship to attend the Juilliard Graduate School of Music in New York City from 1939 to 1943.<sup>5</sup> In the summer of 1945, Brice brought along her baby and her mother for her stay at the college, and her father also came for a short time. These visits were approved by the faculty, indicating the college’s broader openness toward African Americans, not simply the specific guest teachers they invited.<sup>6</sup> Carol Brice would return to Black Mountain College again in the summer of 1947 for four weeks of recitals, this time with her husband and their small son.<sup>7</sup>

Black Mountain College was able to pay the salaries and tuition of African American students and teachers thanks to help from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The college struggled financially throughout its existence, and faculty members took lower salaries at Black Mountain than they would be offered at other schools. They were sometimes paid just \$25 a week, in addition to being provided with room and board. Students paid anywhere from \$300 to \$1,200 for a year’s tuition, based on their means, and were expected to participate in the work program.<sup>8</sup> However, with support from the Rosenwald Fund, an influential philanthropic organization which helped improve opportunities for African Americans, the college was able to help fund their integration efforts. Inspired by Afri-

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Angelica (Bodky) Lee, “A Flautist’s View,” in *Black Mountain College Sprouted Seeds: An Anthology of Personal Accounts*, ed. Mervin Lane (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 165.

<sup>5</sup>BMC Community Bulletin, “Second July Bulletin 1945,” Vol. I, Box 28, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>6</sup>“Minutes of the Faculty and Board of Fellows of the Corporation of Black Mountain College,” June 27, 1945. Vol. I Box 4, pg. 274, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>7</sup>Harris, *The Arts*, 144.

<sup>8</sup>“Buncombe County’s Eden,” *Time*: 46.

<sup>1</sup>Duberman, *An Exploration in Community*, 211.

<sup>2</sup>Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1987), 101-104.

can American educator and advocate for the black race Booker T. Washington, the Rosenwald Fund helped start over 5,000 schools in the rural South for black children and funded hundreds of other projects from 1928 to 1948.<sup>1</sup> The Rosenwald Fund allocated \$3,400 to Black Mountain College to be put toward the salaries of “Negro scholars.”<sup>2</sup> According to Daryl Pinckney in *A Force for Change*, “instead of supporting university research in the manner of the Carnegie or Rockefeller foundations, the Rosenwald Fund thought to concentrate on individuals who could turn their talents and resources to institution building.”<sup>3</sup> Black Mountain College thought along these same lines.



Vesta Martin. *Western Regional Archives.*

The Rosenwald Fund enabled Black Mountain to have its first full-time black student in the 1945-1946 academic year. Sylvesta Martin, also known as Vesta, had attended the 1945 summer institute and was urged by Roland Hayes to stay on for the fall semester. She would learn and grow musically at Black Mountain much more than she ever could at Fisk, her previous university, or anywhere else in the South, Hayes had assured her. Once accepted, she was not labeled as simply a guest or a visitor, as had been done in the past with other African Americans, but rather as a regular student.<sup>4</sup>

When the college's lawyer R. R. Williams learned that Black Mountain would admit an African Amer-

ican as a full-time student, he threatened to resign from his role. In a letter to Dreier, Williams wrote: “I do not think that I should be a member of an Advisory council of an institution which runs counter to such enlightened public opinion in NC at the present time.” Williams warned that the next few years for the college “may be explosive in nature” as a result of Black Mountain's early integration efforts which “disturbed” North Carolina's segregation customs.<sup>5</sup> Williams was perhaps not entirely wrong in his assessment. Indeed, Dreier and other faculty members suspected that fires were set in the woods on campus by locals who disagreed with their admittance of African American students.<sup>6</sup> However, Dreier assured Williams “we realize that we have to move carefully. . . We have tried to proceed very slowly, quietly, and with great caution.”<sup>7</sup> Despite his initial resistance, Williams agreed to continue handling the legal matters of the college.

Vesta Martin became a successful student at Black Mountain, performing in concerts in front of large, mostly white audiences and establishing friendships with her white peers. In a letter from the college's treasurer to a representative from the Rosenwald Fund, Theodore Rondthaler wrote:

Sylvesta has distinguished herself as a student through her unusual diligence and achievement in her music courses, and as a member of our community through her friendliness and all' round wholesomeness of character. Her success at Black Mountain seems to point the way toward a useful enlargement of our sphere of usefulness in the South.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Daniel Schulman, “Introduction” in *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund* ed. Daniel Schulman (Chicago, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 13.

<sup>2</sup>Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949), 276.

<sup>3</sup>Darryl Pinckney, “Writers and the Julius Rosenwald Fund” in *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, ed. Daniel Schulman (Chicago, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 39.

<sup>4</sup>Dreier to Williams, Sept. 7, 1945, PC 1956.62 General Correspondence Dreier BMC Williams, R.R., 1933-1948, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>5</sup>Williams to Dreier, Sept. 11, 1945, PC 1956.62 General Correspondence Dreier BMC Williams, R.R., 1933-1948, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>6</sup>Harris, *The Arts*, 111.

<sup>7</sup>Dreier to Williams, Sept. 28, 1945, PC 1956.62 General Correspondence Dreier BMC Williams, R.R., 1933-1948, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>8</sup>Letter from Theodore Rondthaler to Dorothy Elvidge of the Rosenwald Fund, Nov. 30, 1945, Percy Baker faculty files Vol. III, Box 1, BMCC, WRA.

The same year that the school admitted Martin, it also hired its first full-time African American faculty member. Percy H. Baker took a leave of absence from Virginia State College for Negroes in Ettrick to teach Biology at Black Mountain for the Fall 1945 term. The students and faculty quickly grew attached to Baker's presence and personality.<sup>1</sup> Vera Baker Williams, a student at the college, wrote to Betty Schmidt, one of her fellow classmates, in the fall of 1945:

Mr. Baker who teaches Biology, he is the negro teacher and seems somewhat shy about the whole situation (understandable). Dehn and I are sort of adopting him. I consult him on Mushrooms and have him to supper. Sunday, Dehn drags him for hikes over the Seven Sisters.<sup>2</sup>

The community grew so attached to Baker, in fact, that they wanted his teaching position to become permanent. In a letter addressed to the president of Virginia State College, Herbert A. Miller from the Black Mountain registrar's office asked for Baker's leave of absence to be extended. "He fitted into the community perfectly," Miller wrote. "Percy Baker would be of inestimable value in establishing the precedent of both faculty and students."<sup>3</sup> However, the president of Virginia State College, refused to extend Baker's leave of absence. In a letter to Baker after he left the college, Miller wrote: "We are so greatly disappointed by the decision which President Foster sent me. Where are we now? No bridge player - no good botanist - no solution to the great problem. We are all disappointed."<sup>4</sup>

Later in the academic year, the college hired another Af-

rican American faculty member. Mark Oakland Fax, from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, came to teach at Black Mountain for the Spring 1946 quarter.<sup>5</sup> A young composer, Fax taught music classes and composed several songs during his stay, including "Cycle of Three Songs," with words written by Mary Leo, a white student. Fax, accompanied by Vesta Martin and other students, also gave regular concerts on campus which were well-attended by outside visitors. These integrated performances caused no incidents or confrontations among the locals.<sup>6</sup>



Mark Oakland Fax. *Western Regional Archives.*

The college community grew attached to Fax, but again they were disappointed when he declined the college's offer to become a permanent member of Black Mountain College. His reasoning, was family-oriented: his wife, who had stayed home while her husband traveled to North Carolina to teach at Black Mountain, insisted that they raise their son in a black community.<sup>7</sup>



Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence. *Western Regional Archives*

In 1946 the college invited additional African Americans as students and faculty members for the summer session. Harlem Renaissance artist Jacob Lawrence accepted Josef Albers's invitation to be an art instructor during the 1946 summer art institute. Lawrence, accompanied by his wife Gwendolyn Knight, came from New York City to stay for ten weeks.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Vera Baker Williams to Betty Schmidt, Fall 1945, Jennerjahn papers, correspondence files, unprocessed collection, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Herbert A. Miller to President Foster, president of Virginia State College, March 30, 1946, Percy Baker faculty files, Vol. III, Box 1, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Herbert A. Miller to Percy Baker, May 23, 1946, Percy Baker faculty files, Vol. III, Box 1, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>5</sup>Letter from Mark Fax to Mary Gregory, April 19, 1946, Faculty Files, Mark Fax Vol. III, Box 3, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>6</sup>Harris, *The Arts*, 118.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

Upon their arrival in Asheville Lawrence and Knight, who had only been to the South once before, were transported to Black Mountain in a private car so that they could avoid segregation on the train.<sup>1</sup> Jacob Lawrence only worked two and a half days a week during the summer institute,<sup>2</sup> but throughout the summer, he and his wife never left the boundaries of the college. Knight remembers: "Albers got us a room when we came so we could avoid the segregation. . . We were protected. The students and the faculty were very welcoming so we just stayed on campus."<sup>3</sup>

Lawrence, who had already begun to gain some national prominence for his work, would become one of the first celebrated black artists in a predominantly white art world. His time at Black Mountain, especially his involvement with Albers, significantly



Ora Marie Williams, in the middle with the white headband. Western Regional Archives.

altered his later work as both an artist and as a teacher.<sup>4</sup> Gwendolyn Knight, a painter herself, was not hired as an instructor for the summer institute, but spent a good deal of her time engaging with students and even taught informal dance lessons.<sup>5</sup>

Lawrence and Knight

were not the only African Americans on campus that summer. Students Mary Parks Washington of Georgia and Ora Marie Williams of Michigan had also been invited to attend the summer

institute. Washington received a scholarship from the Rosenwald Fund which covered all of her tuition. She, like Alma Stone Williams, had just graduated from Spelman College, where her professor Hale Woodruff encouraged her to attend Black Mountain and told her about its uniqueness: "He told me I would have to have a pair of dungarees [blue jeans]," Washington remembered. The atmosphere of Black Mountain was much less formal and more relaxed compared to the atmosphere of Spelman, which opened after the Civil War as a school for young black women. Most of its teachers and all of its presidents (until 1953) were white, however. The summer of 1946 was Washington's first experience being in an integrated group of students. However, she said, "I blended in. It didn't seem to matter."<sup>6</sup>

Off campus, however, it was another story. In one of her two visits to the town of nearby Asheville, Washington was asked to go "to the back [of the bus] because that's where Negroes went." Her white classmate wanted to accompany her, but Washington warned her against it.<sup>7</sup>

Though her time at Black Mountain was short-lived, the experience was long-lasting, and perhaps even life-changing, as she would realize later:

It seems like the string started at Black Mountain and as time went by, something would hook on, like working in the yard, the different things I would do would reflect back on Black Mountain. I didn't think it would affect me, but it has. That's what makes it



Mary Parks Washington.  
Western Regional Archives.

<sup>1</sup>Sheryl Conkelton and Barbara Earl Thomas, *Never Late for Heaven: The Art of Gwen Knight* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 14-15.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Josef Albers to Jacob Lawrence, April 9, 1946, Faculty Files, Jacob Lawrence, Vol. III, Box 4, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>3</sup>Conkelton, *Never Late for Heaven*, 28.

<sup>4</sup>Holland Cotter, "Jacob Lawrence is Dead at 82; Vivid Painter Who Chronicled Odyssey of Black Americans," *New York Times*, June 10, 2000.

<sup>5</sup>Conkelton, *Never Late for Heaven*, 15.

<sup>6</sup>Mary Parks Washington, interview by Connie Bostic, Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center, April 29 2000.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



Black Mountain. It's still living.<sup>1</sup>

Washington went on to maintain her friendships with Jacob Lawrence, Gwendolyn Knight and other students and faculty members of the college, and to realize the influences the teachers had on her as an artist.<sup>2</sup>

Despite their recruitment efforts, the college was only able to attain one black student, Jeanne Belcher, in the Fall term of 1946. In a letter written to Lowinsky, Percy Baker explained that it was hard to persuade black students to join a college without being able to offer them a degree.<sup>3</sup> According to Washington, "Being an African American, you had to have a degree. You had to be a little better." One of the reasons why Washington chose to attend was because she already had her degree from Spelman.<sup>4</sup>

Though Black Mountain did not offer a degree, it did begin partnerships with LeMoyne College in Memphis, Tennessee and Virginia State College, two historically black colleges. These partnerships enabled African American students to attend Black Mountain College for a summer or one or more semesters and transfer their credits to their respective schools so that they could work toward earning a degree.<sup>5</sup> Tuition was also often an obstacle for black students in particular, but many scholarships were available to them, especially by way of the Rosenwald Fund.<sup>6</sup>

Seeing that the campus only had one or two black students at a time by 1946, the other students demanded that Black Mountain work more quickly and deliberately toward integration. That fall, Black Mountain students passed a resolution which demanded that "as many Negro students as our capacity would permit be admitted immediately, that our campaign to get Negro students to

apply be conducted on a broader basis."<sup>7</sup>

That winter the students also held a fundraising campaign for potential black students who were unable to pay the minimum fee to attend the college. In addition, the students and the faculty wanted to extend the invitation of enrollment to black male students.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps as a result of these efforts, Black Mountain enrolled a total of five African American students in the Spring of 1947, the largest black population the college had ever seen at one time. Three female and two male African American students were admitted, with a total student population of less than 100. In this postwar period, the college was larger and more diverse than in years past. There were people from cities and small towns, high school graduates, World War II veterans (with the help of the GI Bill), children of refugees, and now, several African Americans.<sup>9</sup> Louise C. Cole and Louis H. Selders were both students from LeMoyne College

who transferred back after one semester at Black Mountain. Delores Fullman stayed on for two years.

Among this small group of black students was Luther Porter Jackson Jr., the son of Luther Porter Jackson, Sr., a historian, professor at Virginia State College, and an important civil rights activist. While Luther Porter Jackson Sr. was busy advocating for integrated educational opportunities for African Americans, his son was acting on his father's aspirations.

While African American students and faculty members were treated as equals on Black Mountain's campus, they nonetheless dealt with Jim Crow customs elsewhere. "There



Luther Porter Jackson, Jr. Western Regional Archives.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Duberman, *Experiment in Art*, 212.

<sup>4</sup>Washington, interview by Connie Bostic, BMCM, April 29 2000.

<sup>5</sup>Letter from Alice Rondthaler to John Privette, April 30, 1974, BMC papers, Vol II, Box 4, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>6</sup>Clark, *Pioneer in Souther Racial Integration*, 48.

<sup>7</sup>Lowinsky, Edward, letter from Lowinsky to Wale, Dec. 17, 1946, quoted in Duberman, *Experiment in Art*, 212-213.

<sup>8</sup>Duberman, *Experiment in Art*, 213.

<sup>9</sup>Harris, *The Arts*, 110.

is no attempt to 'hide' our activities in race relationship, nor do we foist them on the local communities," Alice Rondthaler wrote to an inquiring student in 1947. "Our Negro students obey the transportation, eating, etc. laws when they are in public. They realize, with us, that the progress forward must necessarily be slow."<sup>1</sup> Andy Oates, who was a student from 1948-1950, remembers going to Asheville to see a movie with Delores Fullman, who was asked to sit in the balcony of the theater because she was an African American. In solidarity, Oates and a few other white students from Black Mountain sat with her.<sup>2</sup>

The school became involved with the issue of integration and combating Jim Crow on a national scale, and even hosted conferences and supported the early Civil Rights movement.<sup>3</sup> On April 16, 1947, a group of activists from the Congress of Racial Equality came through Asheville and stayed at Black Mountain College for the night. These activists were young Freedom Riders on their "Journey of Reconciliation" through the South. The group travelled from Washington, D.C. using public transportation and challenging the segregationist Jim Crow laws which were still enforced, despite a recent Supreme Court decision which found them unconstitutional.<sup>4</sup> Classes were cancelled so that Black Mountain faculty and students could attend meetings with these visitors and learn about their objectives.<sup>5</sup>

One student, Janet Heling Robert, remembered the visit fondly: "How admirable that the College could be that brave, that caring, that committed. In those years, this was a very daring thing

to do."<sup>6</sup> The Freedom Riders were not bothered on their journey to Asheville and were welcomed on the Black Mountain College campus, but their next day was not as peaceful. On their way out of Asheville, two Freedom Riders, one black and one white, were arrested for not moving from their seats after being asked by the bus driver. In court the next day, the Asheville judge said he had never heard of the Supreme Court decision they used to argue their case, and the two were sentenced to 30 days working on a road gang, for breaking an unconstitutional law.<sup>7</sup>

The summer after the Freedom Riders stopped by the college, Black Mountain admitted two more African American students for its 1947 summer institute. The students were a married couple from North Carolina, Doris Harris Miller and Quentin Kyles Miller. Before sending in their applications, Quentin sent a letter to Black Mountain's registrar: "I did not return the application because I feel that I should inform you that my wife and I are Negroes. If this has no bearing on our entering the College as special students, please let me hear from you so that I may send in the applications without further delay." The registrar replied: "Applicants for admission are considered on basis of personal qualifications, regardless of color."<sup>8</sup>

Black Mountain continued hosting international students, but by 1947, the college saw fewer black students, which disappointed Edward Lowinsky in particular. In a letter to Dreier, Lowinsky wrote: "If Black Mountain College wants to have Negro students, it will have them; if it does not find them, it is because it does not really want them. This may seem a hard statement—I nevertheless am convinced of it."<sup>9</sup> Two years later, Lowinsky left the college, as did Dreier. With most of the college's first integration proponents gone, admitting black students to Black Mountain College seemed

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Alice Rondthaler to John Privette, April 30, 1974, BMC papers, Vol II, Box 4, BMCC, WRA.

<sup>2</sup>Andy Oates, "A Photographer Looks Back," in *Black Mountain College Sprouted Seeds: An Anthology of Personal Accounts*, ed. Mervin Lane (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 258.

<sup>3</sup>In 1944, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare held their annual conference on Black Mountain's campus, Duberman, *Exploration in Community*, 175.

<sup>4</sup>*Morgan v. Virginia* (1946) declared segregation on interstate transportation unconstitutional.

<sup>5</sup>Faculty meeting minutes, April 15, 1947, BMCC, WRA.

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<sup>6</sup>Janet Heling Robert, "Over All These Forty-five Years!" in *Black Mountain College Sprouted Seeds: An Anthology of Personal Accounts*, ed. Mervin Lane (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 129.

<sup>7</sup>Catsman, *Freedom's Main Line*, 32-33.

<sup>8</sup>Notes from the student files, accessed by Heather South.

<sup>9</sup>Duberman, *Exploration in Community*, 214.

to be no longer a priority. Lowinsky continued in his letter to Dreier: "Our efforts to contribute in a small way to better interracial living may not be just another one of those fads of which we were so often accused. It must be an effort as hard and consistent as the problem to the solution of which it wants to contribute."<sup>1</sup> However, after Lowinsky left in 1949, the integration efforts largely stopped. No other faculty member was willing to take the extra time and effort to recruit additional students.<sup>2</sup>

What concerned the faculty most during the late 40s and early 50s was not its integration policy, but rather its funding. The college had always struggled financially, but money posed more of a problem in later years. Faculty members left and the number of students dwindled, taking their tuition dollars with them. Finally, in 1956, with only two faculty members and a handful of students, Black Mountain College announced that it would close due to unmanageable debt.<sup>3</sup>

Buckminster Fuller, Josef Albers, M.C. Richards, John Cage, Willem de Kooning and many other names are often associated with this legendary, short-lived college. But alongside these names should also be the names of the first courageous African American students and faculty members who chose to attend and work at a predominantly white college in the segregated South: Alma Stone Williams, Roland Hayes, Carol Brice, Sylvesta Martin, Percy Baker, Mark Fax, Jacob Lawrence, Mary Parks Washington, Ora Marie Williams, Jeanne Belcher, Luther Porter Jackson Jr., Louise C. Cole, Delores Fullman, Louis Selders, Doris Harris Miller, Quentin Kyles Miller...

"We take great risks," Lowinsky wrote in 1945. "The success of our endeavors might possibly mean that the long-awaited opening in Southern educational institutions would be made."<sup>4</sup> But Lowinsky and the rest of the South would have to wait another

decade before this "opening" occurred, with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954.

In the five years that Black Mountain College adopted the effort to integrate, it committed wholeheartedly to this goal. Given its means, the college was fairly successful in this endeavor. Despite financial and social obstacles, the college managed to recruit at least eleven black students, five black faculty members and numerous other African American guests from 1944 until its closing. Lowinsky wrote: "It is our great hope that we will be able to succeed in carrying out our artistic ideas and our carefully planned and developed bi-racial program."<sup>5</sup> Black Mountain College not only succeeded in bringing these African American perspectives to campus, but it also exposed white students, faculty and the greater community to folk music and spirituals, moving concerts performed by black singers and composers, and impressive art exhibits by black artists. It enabled friendships to be established between the white and black students and faculty members. Black Mountain provided a progressive, open community for these sorts of friendships, and fostered communication, idea-sharing and understanding between blacks and whites in this progressive enclave of the Jim Crow South.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, *The Arts*, 111.

<sup>3</sup>Clark, *Pioneer in Southern Racial Integration*, 48.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Lowinsky to Dr. Mac Kinley Helm, May 28, 1945, Institute, Music, Summer: Correspondence, publicity 1945, Vol. II, Box 18, BMCC, WRA.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

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## Bringin' Home the Bacon: Transgender Men's Experiences in the Workplace

### Abstract:

This research surveys transgender men in an attempt to identify the variables and elucidate the patterns that negatively or positively affect their workplace experiences. It draws from a variety of historical and theoretical information—including the history of transgender Americans, gender role socialization, transgender theory, the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and the history of workplace discrimination—and employs quantitative and qualitative survey methods to collect data. Unlike other research, this study examines the contextual factors that affect trans men in the professional setting, moving away from the common misconception that all transgender people have similar experiences. This study reveals the unique positions that trans men have from which to observe their own workplace interactions and behavioral expectations, and provides information about this marginalized population in order to destabilize popular conceptions of “normal” gender behavior. Moreover, dismantling cultural assumptions about masculinity is not only beneficial for trans men. All people experience gender socialization in a way in a way that can be limiting and harmful. This study begins to deconstruct the societal pressure to conform to society's gender-based standards, and thus, benefits all people.

### Caroline Duble | Sociology and Anthropology

Caroline Duble graduated in 2014. She currently resides in Black Mountain, NC and works at Spirit in Action, a national network of community organizers. As a queer person and long-time social justice activist, she has always been drawn to topics of gender and sexuality. Her love of analyzing macrolevel systematic inequality through individual lived experiences inspired her to write this thesis. Caroline hopes to continue sharing her findings and has submitted this paper to several conferences nationwide. She is currently weighing her options for her next steps and is considering either working towards a future in community organizing or continuing to pursue her love of research in graduate school.



*Visibility* by Ghensiri Rosson, 2013. Oil.



## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the thoughtful faculty members of Warren Wilson who inspired this thesis topic and supported me throughout the research and writing process. The idea for this topic came about after my curiosity for Black Mountain College was piqued in Julie Caro's Harlem Renaissance Art class. Professor Philip Otterness was my number one cheerleader and talked me through my doubts and hesitations, helping me carry this paper to fruition. And Professor Melissa Blair laid the ground work for it all, teaching me almost everything I know about American history.

I would also like to thank the Western Branch of the North Carolina State Archives, where I spent countless hours scouring documents with the help of the fabulous archivist Heather South. And finally, thank you to Marshall McCollum, my rock, my comfort blanket, and my best friend at Warren Wilson.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Transgender Americans are more educated than the general population on average—47% have college or graduate degrees, compared to 27% of general population—and yet, unemployment and underemployment rates for transgender Americans are twice as high: 14% unemployed, compared to 7% of all Americans (Movement Advancement Project 2013). This information strongly suggests that trans people in the United States are being discriminated against during the hiring process and within the workplace. Because discrimination is fueled by misunderstanding and stigma, academic research has the potential to shift cultural perception of transgender people towards understanding in order to reduce discrimination (Schilt 2010, Bender-Baird 2011).

This study surveys female-to-male transgender people (who I will refer to as trans men from this point forward) about their workplace experiences, paying specific attention to contextual variables that may or may not contribute to workplace satisfaction, including support systems outside of work, legislative protection from discrimination based on gender identity, and perceived masculinity. Through survey data collection and a theoretical framework encompassing history, theory, and statistical data about trans men, I portray both individual lived experiences and macrolevel social patterns affecting respondents. This research brings the experiences of my respondents into the light in order to de-marginalize all trans men, particularly in their places of work. In order to identify the variables that reduce or increase workplace satisfaction, I seek to answer the following questions:

- (1) Do trans men with emotionally supportive communities have higher workplace satisfaction?
- (2) Is conforming to standards of hegemonic masculinity at work important for trans men?
- (3) Are trans men who perceive themselves as masculine typically more satisfied with their work?
- (4) Do trans men living in states with legislation protecting gender identity from discrimination have better workplace experiences?

I hypothesize that certain variables have a positive impact on work-

place experiences, including having a support system outside of work, living in a state with effective protection laws, and perception of oneself as masculine. I examine these hypotheses throughout this study. I will begin by explaining my theoretical framework, move into a brief history of trans Americans, explain my methodology, and then analyze my data and summarize my findings.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I approach this research through a framework shaped by several basic principles:

- (1) Cultural norms connected to gender are socially constructed.
- (2) Hegemonic masculinity is limiting and harmful.
- (3) Transgender people are an incredibly diverse demographic who do not have one singular experience.

Through all of these perspectives, I approach my data with the belief that destabilizing normalcy and popular conception of gender is beneficial not only for transgender men but also for society as a whole. In this section, I explore the existing theory that led me to this framework.

### *Social Construction of Gender*

Early gender theorists used the terms *masculinity* and *femininity* to define the standard behavioral expectations for women and men in their day-to-day lives. Overtime, sociologists began to research, debate, and develop these terms as part of the formation of the sociology of gender. Concern regarding the patriarchal values that prioritize, naturalize, and value heterosexual men above women and homosexual men became hot topics in feminist and gender studies. Feminist theorists were (and still are) working to dispel myths of an essential gender binary as a reaction to the oppression and devaluation of women. In this process, feminists theorized countless different definitions of gender, ranging from definitions of gender as totally socially constructed (Butler 1990) to gender as a totally essential binary using the female body and maternity as foundational and symbolic sources of women's psychic and sexual difference (Irigaray 1991, Kristeva 1986). Gender theorist Judith Butler, whose performance theory has been highly influential, dis-

mantles the assumption that a "central self" exists and explains that presentations of one's sex are defined by the cultural assumption that gender underlies the psyche of all people (Nagoshi and Brzuzy 2010).

Although gender is still debated often within academia, almost all gender theorists agree that there is some level of socialization and social construction involved in one's gender identity and presentation. Statistical evidence of male-dominated and female-dominated occupational fields reveals the persistence of sociohistorical gender roles that have been taught and reinforced through socialization, education, hiring processes, promotions, and firings (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012). This evidence of the persistence of gender roles and the developmental history of gender sociology directly correlates with my research; specifically, the growth of feminist understandings of gender led to greater acceptance of gender role nonconformity and to the development of queer theories. I rely on the assertion that gender is socially constructed in this research because I am seeking correlations between gender identity, the social setting of the workplace, and behavioral expectations.

Hegemonic masculinity, a theory that developed as a result of social construction theories, is defined as the culturally idealized behaviors, ideologies, interests, and physical presentations that male-identified individuals are expected to embody throughout their lives (Connell, Carrigan, and Lee 1985). The mere existence of a hegemonic understanding of what masculinity is and should be reveals that dominance and oppression are built into the structure of American society. Despite the fact that this culturally exalted form of masculinity only represents a minority of male-identified individuals, hegemony is maintained by the accidental or purposeful complicity of most men. The gap between the archetype and reality creates "a distance, and a tension, between [the] collective ideal and [their] actual lives" (Carrigan et al., 1985:592), which can cause social discomfort and feelings of inadequacy. Nonetheless, all male-identified people benefit from certain aspects of male dominance and patriarchy, such as the subordination of women (Carrigan et al., 1985:592). Thus, despite the fact that most men do not live

up to society's ideal image of masculinity, all men gain some advantage and privilege in society. Although conforming to masculine standards may not be important to all trans men, they encounter hegemonic masculinity in American society to some degree simply by identifying as male.

### *Transgender Theory*

Emerging out of gender and feminist theories is queer theory. Queer theorists attempt to destabilize norms and binaries within society by providing alternatives and contradictions. However, this has not always been done in a way that encompasses the diversity within the trans community. Queer theory established a collective identity for queer people, but at the expense of an understanding of the individual lived experience (Sullivan 2003). Queer theorists began to discuss the theoretically complex issues of what it is like to be transgender, but often homogenized the experience and failed to address or acknowledge the many diverse opinions within the trans community (Nagoshi and Brzuzy 2010:434). A theory that will adequately sum up the experiences of the transgender community will neither consider gender identity as solely essential, which would endorse an understanding of all identities as natural, or as completely socially constructed, which would destabilize one's individual identity within the group. All transgender people do not agree on the degree of fluidity of gender identity. Many trans individuals understand being transgender as swapping two otherwise essential gender categories (Roen 2001), while others see embodied gender identity as highly malleable (Nagoshi and Brzuzy 2010). Because of this, Lane (2009) expresses concern that some people may not be acknowledged under the umbrella of the word *transgender*. A theory that will sufficiently address the needs and lived experiences of transgender people will necessarily contradict itself by finding comfort in the fluidity between lived experiences of individuals and the theoretical construction of identity.

My research naturally incorporates transgender and queer theories. Because I am surveying the lived experiences of self-identified trans men, I must allow for contradictions in the collected data in order to accommodate and validate all experiences. In both the construction of my survey and in data analysis, I acknowledge

the full spectrum of experiences. I did not ask participants to verify whether or not they have or plan to undergo sexual reassignment surgery at any point in this research because it is my understanding that many trans men will never be able to afford such surgery and that many trans men have absolutely no desire for this surgery; therefore, I want to respect the liminality that individual transgender experience embodies. Additionally, I asked participants to define their own sexual orientation in order to acknowledge that transitioning into a masculine identity does not imply or require heterosexuality.

### III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF TRANSGENDER AMERICANS

Health professionals did not use the word *transgender* until the mid-1960s; before then, the word *transsexual* was used to describe those who transition from one gender to another. Distinguishing transgender from transsexuality was an important shift for the trans population, simply because it removed the stigma associated with the word "sex" (Schilt 2010:13). Only 5.6% of my respondents use the word *transsexual* to describe their gender identity. Today, many other terms are more popular; 34.7% of my respondents use the term *trans man*, 18.1% use FTM (female-to-male), 11.1% *trans guy*, 5.6% *transgender*, and 8.3% use *trans\**.<sup>1</sup> An additional 16.7% use a variety of other terms. This shift away from the word *transsexual* places an emphasis on the social construction of gender, rather than the rigidity of unchangeable physical characteristics.

Because transitioning or transgressing genders challenges deeply held cultural norms, theoretical debates about treatment of transgender people still exist. Trans Americans are still subjected to questioning, pathology, discrimination, and doubt. As recently as 2003, Collette Chiland, famous French psychoanalyst, argued that transgender identity is "deeply pathological" and denies the funda-

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<sup>1</sup>The asterisk following *trans* signifies variation among gender non-conforming identities. *Trans\** is used by many as an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum. People often choose to include the asterisk as a way to acknowledge that vast diversity or identify their gender identity as more flexible than simply *transgender man*.

mental differences between the sexes (Gardiner 2013:117-118). Fortunately, today, the majority of health professionals, psychologists, sociologists, and transgender people do not see gender dysphoria as pathological. Health professionals still have to diagnose patients with a disorder in order for their patients to receive hormones or surgical operations, but the relative accessibility to trans positive health professionals marks the beginning of a shift in cultural understanding and medical treatment.

Many trans people consider their mental and physical healthcare providers an integral part of their community. In fact, 48.6% respondents included healthcare providers in their immediate community. I would argue that the majority of cisgender<sup>1</sup> Americans view healthcare as a task or a necessity, but due to the physical and mental transformation that transgender people undergo, healthcare professionals become an integral part of daily life and so having a trans positive doctor and therapist is crucial.

This evolution of the medical analysis of trans people can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, there are simply more out trans people living their lives today: in 2011, 0.3% of American adults, or 700,000 Americans, identified as transgender (Herman 2011). Secondly, public support for the LGBTQ rights movement is increasing rapidly, as shown by an increase in LGBTQ figures in mainstream media and the recent addition of state-wide employment non-discrimination laws and marriage equality victories. Thirdly, support systems for trans people have increased: in most big cities, there are a plethora of resources, information, and support groups designated solely for trans individuals. Changes in technology and an increase in social media sites have also allowed for trans people to share experiences, ask questions, and find support.

Despite these recent improvements, there are still many obstacles facing transgender Americans. The Movement Advancement Project (2013) reports that many trans Americans do not have access to adequate health care and often resort to dangerous self-treatments and drug and alcohol abuse. Transgender people

also face explicit discrimination: 60%-88% of transgender people in the United States receive verbal abuse and 13-59% are sexually assaulted in public. Transgender students often experience hostility from classmates and do not feel safe at school (Movement Advancement Project 2013). Additionally, trans Americans typically face difficulties in the legal system when trying to secure appropriate identity documents, marriage licenses, and parenting rights. The effects of inequality are amplified for transgender people of color and trans people living in poverty. While 14% of trans Americans overall are unemployed, these rates are higher when you look into marginalized racial identities: 28% Black trans men and women are unemployed, 24% Native American, 18% Latin@, and 18% multi-racial transgender Americans are unemployed. Additionally, the percentages of people who have been fired for being transgender are higher for trans people of color, and the percentage of trans Americans of color covered by healthcare is lower (Movement Advancement Project 2009:2-6). I explore the intersections of transgender identity and racial identity with my participants in my survey, and will share the results of this exploration later in this study.

The history of transgender Americans contains countless tragic stories of discrimination and misunderstanding, as well as innumerable stories of great courage and strength. I draw from this complex history to illustrate that there is a profound necessity to radically shift cultural perception of trans people in order to cease discrimination. This research will delve into some of the specific variables about one major aspect of trans men's lives—their workplace experiences—in an attempt to improve overall quality of life.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

##### *Basics*

Surveying trans men's encounters with hegemonic masculinity in the workplace is tricky, due to the subjective nature of both gender identity and people's experiences with standardized gender roles. The nature of the information surveyed is sensitive because it is connected to a marginalized aspect of respondents' personal identity; thus, I was incredibly careful in adapting existing instru-

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<sup>1</sup> defined as people whose gender identity aligns with their biological sex, or "not transgender"

ments and creating my own. As a cisgender researcher, I took great precaution not to overstep my boundaries and make generalized assumptions about trans men's workplace experiences. I distributed a 100-question survey to 154 trans men, receiving 72 complete responses through SurveyMonkey.com. I gathered participants through snowball sampling and social media. I began by creating a blog on Tumblr.com ([www.carolinecapstone.tumblr.com](http://www.carolinecapstone.tumblr.com)) that provides a description of my project, contact information, a link to the survey, relevant news articles and regular updates about my research. Additionally, there is a page where other Tumblr users can ask me questions about my project anonymously. Facebook groups were integral to gaining respondents. I posted my blog and a link to the survey to over 25 trans male specific Facebook groups. Outside of social media, I reached out to potential participants through personal contacts in both the Asheville and Houston areas. I attended the National Conference on LGBT Equality in January 2014 and made several more contacts there as a volunteer in the Trans\* Hospitality Suite. All of my original contacts led me to additional contacts that were able to promote my survey in some way, either through support groups, conferences, or on their personal websites. To analyze quantitative data, I entered all responses into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) and ran frequencies and correlation tests; to analyze qualitative data, I read through all responses to open-ended questions and coded and analyzed all major themes.

#### Participants

The demographic of this research is American trans men, currently or recently employed, above the age of 18. Of this demographic, I had 72 complete responses from a diverse group of trans men: the majority, 66.7% respondents identified as white or Caucasian, 9.7% identified as multiracial (which included black/white, Latino/white, Native American/black, and Hispanic/Japanese), 6.9% Native American, 5.6% black or African American, 2.8% Jewish, 2.8% Asian, 1.4% Latino, and 4.2% identified as something outside of these categories (which included Scandinavian, Greek, and Turkish).

In addition to racial and ethnic identity, I gathered demo-

graphic information about participants' geographic location, education level, and age. I had respondents from 27 states and Washington DC. I had the highest number of respondents from North Carolina and Texas, due to my personal contacts in those areas. Most of my participants have high levels of education: 4.2% have professional degrees, 6.9% have master's degrees, 33.3% have bachelor's degrees, 6.94% have associate degrees, and 40.28% have at least some college credit under their belts. Only 4.2% have never attended college, and another 4.2% have not completed high school. This closely reflects national data collected about transgender Americans' education levels: nationally, 47% have undergraduate or higher degrees (Movement Advancement Project 2013), and of my respondents, 40.4% have college or higher levels. Over 80% of my respondents have at least some college credit. This could be attributed to a number of trends: firstly, college is often a place where theories about gender and social constructionism are accessible; secondly, college is a liminal space in which gender and sexual identity experimentation is common. Further research should be done to fully determine the effect that college experiences might have on people that are transitioning genders.

In addition to demographic information, I collected data about respondents' current or most recent employment: 79.2% of respondents were currently employed when they took the survey, 43.1% of them full-time and 36.1% part time. That leaves 20.8% unemployed at the time of taking the survey; but of those 15 respondents, only one had never been employed since beginning their transition. I asked respondents to describe their role and field at their most recent or current job. Because I received so many varied responses, I coded the responses to this section so that I could report some of the trends among my respondents. The majority of respondents, 59.2%, were employees at their most recent or current job, while 19.7% were supervisors or managers, 5.6% reported

self-employment, and 12.5% I categorized as other.<sup>1</sup>

I also labeled each response by field: 5.6% of respondents work in administrative positions, 4.2% work in manufacturing/ factory jobs, 7% work in technology-based jobs, 5.6% work in academic jobs, 2.8% are artists, 42.3% work in the service industry (26% as managers or supervisors and 73% as employees), 2.8% are chefs or in the food industry, 1.4% are engineers, 4.2% do physical labor (such as construction, logging, or farm work), and 9.7 work in activist organizations.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that my highest percentage of respondents are employees (59.2%) in the service industry (42.3%). This could be attributed to the young age of most participants: 54.2% of participants are between 18-25 years of age, and an additional 23.6% are under 35 years old. Only 11.1% of respondents are over the age of 45 and my oldest respondent is 61. Moving forward, I will address the major themes of this research with all these demographic variables in mind.

## VI. DATA ANALYSIS

I will begin discussion of my findings by analyzing workplace satisfaction, then I will discuss support system, relationship with coworkers, legal atmosphere, perceived masculinity, and additional findings; finally, I will close by summarizing this research and providing suggestions to better the workplace experiences of trans men.

### *Workplace Satisfaction*

Workplace satisfaction is a key component of my data analysis because I measure almost every other variable against it. In order to accurately measure this variable, I developed a scoring system in which I coded responses to several open-ended questions in order to quantify qualitative responses. The score is made up of

<sup>1</sup>The responses that I categorized as other were typically positions like paralegal, counselor, or lab technician, because these are jobs in which respondents are doing work that is largely self-directed but are not self-employed, not supervising or managing other employees, and not employees having to be supervised in the traditional sense.

<sup>2</sup>The remaining responses were unclear and so I could not categorize them.

responses from the following 4 questions:

- (1) Please explain how you felt/feel about your role in your most recent or current job (i.e. positive, negative, apathetic, etc.)?
- (2) Please use the space below to describe your overall SATISFACTION with your current or most recent job.
- (3) Please use the space below to describe your overall COMFORT LEVEL with your current or most recent job.
- (4) Please use the space below to describe your overall HAPPINESS with your current or most recent job.

From the qualitative data gathered in these questions, I read each response for individual participants and scored their answers. For each of these questions,

A very negative response=0

A somewhat negative response=1

A neutral response=2

A somewhat positive response=3

A very positive response=4

After scoring each response, I added each participant's 4 scores to create a cumulative score that represents participants' overall workplace satisfaction. Scoring all 72 participants made data analysis much clearer and more efficient. In this scale of 0-16, higher scores signify better workplace satisfaction. I used similar scoring systems throughout this research, to measure each of my variables against each other.

The majority of my respondents, 45.8%, scored in the highest tier (13-16 points) of workplace satisfaction. However, in qualitative responses, many participants expressed that although they are satisfied with their job, they base that satisfaction on the assumption that they will be discriminated against. Respondents stated a number of reasons for this trend, primarily that they have to accommodate barriers associated with their trans identity. This quote cites costs associated with trans-related health care as a barrier:

I enjoy my job for what it is. I work with amazing people. Although, I am at a point in my life where I feel a bit stuck. I



haven't quite figured out how to do what I want to be doing, make money, and be me. Surgery is one thing in the way of that. Saving money for medical costs, even working a living wage job, is difficult when insurance doesn't cover many trans\* related expenses.

This response illustrates one of the extra barriers to workplace satisfaction that trans men face. Because health costs are so outlandishly expensive and very few health care providers will cover it, transgender people are disproportionately disadvantaged by the health-care system. This reflects inequality in the workplace because trans people have to consider extra expenses (i.e. additional medical care, therapy required by DSM, and/or legal protection) that cisgender people do not. Wages often go towards these extra expenses, instead of towards self-care, hobbies, good food, and shelter.

In addition to expressing concerns about health costs, many of my respondents expressed that they have to work in fields in which transgender people are typically more accepted or in positions that are not as high up, regardless of what they would like to do, because of their gender identity:

It's ok. I'm kind of burnt out in my field, but it is also one of the more 'safe' fields for trans/GNC/queer people to be out.

I am satisfied except for the fact that I know I could handle more responsibility and sometimes I shy away from taking that on because I am shy and somewhat reserved about my identity.

Moderate. I sometimes feel trapped in this position because I don't know if I feel safe finding work elsewhere, and the overall benefits/pay for the amount of work I do is not very good.

This notion—of not being able to follow one's passions in the workplace—is reiterated throughout survey responses by multiple participants. Even when respondents enjoy their jobs and are sat-

isfied with their position, they seem to base that satisfaction taking gender identity discrimination into account:

My last "official" place of employment was very progressive and accepting, with other trans and LGBTQ folk, and I still found it very difficult to navigate those career waters. I think of that workplace as mostly extraordinarily positive (for the kind of world we live in) but looking back it was still nearly daily filled with anxieties and occasionally weird or inappropriate incidents regarding my perceived gender.

It's so hard to say... Compared to most jobs out there, I would give it a 95%. But realistically, in comparison to, say, a job where I only worked for my friends or people who already know and accept me or were also gender-variant, the same job would score more like 78%.

These responses reveal that, regardless of overall satisfaction, there is a nagging sense that their gender identity creates pressure in the workplace, either because of financial burdens, shyness, or the fear of discrimination. When these trans employees describe their workplace, they consciously admit that their satisfaction is relative to how satisfied they would be without the extra burdens created by widespread misperception of transgender people. Due to stigma connected to their trans identity, participants do not have equal access to job opportunities and fulfillment.

### *Support System*

Although this study seeks to analyze experiences within the workplace, I chose to add a section to the survey that specifically looks into contextual factors outside of the workplace. Transgender Americans, as stated before, have many extra barriers to finding stable work than cisgender people do, and thus, I hypothesized that trans men who have a steady support system would be more satisfied with their work. This section looks into the responses I received for questions about support system outside of work; specifically, I look into support from family, friends, partners, and

involvement in community organizations.

Typically, being part of a supportive community has a positive impact on an individual; however, community is not an easy thing to define because it holds different meanings for everyone. In order to gain a better understanding of each respondents' sense of community, I asked them to define their own community and rate how supported they feel based on their own definition. Interestingly, 95.8% respondents included "friends" in their community, but only 75% included "family." This can be for a number of reasons including stigma about trans people, religion, and geographic location. In qualitative responses, several respondents explained why their relationship with their family is not good:

Most of my family is not a part of my life. Mother disowned me prior to coming out as male for being a lesbian and not feminine.

I have a very religious family, and most of them would have an issue with this.

Since coming out to my family, I communicate to and see my family far less than I did before. I'm coming to realize that my gender identity is what has plagued my relationship with my family for a long time.

My dad gave me a dress for Christmas this year. No one uses my name or my pronouns. Most of my family members have expressed concern that I am possibly either mentally ill or that this is a grave sin. It's not good.

I was kicked out when I came out as gay when I was 18 so I don't really talk to my parents anymore. I just don't want to cause any more trouble.

My family members live geographically quite a distance away. My parents are 92 and 88 and rather disconnected from my life. Brothers the same. At first there was a need to

have their acceptance but ultimately, they are not involved with my life.

All of these responses point to a critical lack of understanding about transgender people; there is a wide range of reasons that transgender people do not include family in their community, including religion, misunderstanding, and physical distance. Without financial support from the family for things like college, housing, and healthcare, many trans youth are left to fend for themselves and thus, face a great barrier to entering the workplace. Additionally, the lack of emotional support from family may deplete confidence levels and motivation. Much more research should be done to determine the negative effects of an unsupportive family, and both activist and academic work needs to be done to dismantle stigma to reduce this trend. Many described their families as trying to be supportive, or that they felt loved but not understood:

I view my family as "accepting" but not as "understanding." At first, they were very confused and my mother was in denial about my identity, but they have come to accept it for the most part. My father still acts like my trans identity doesn't exist. My sisters and mother call me the right pronouns most of the time and are aware that I am on hormones -- but they have done no personal research despite my requests for them to.

I only came out to my family a few months ago, it's been hard, they don't understand it but they're trying. They try to use my chosen name, and have recently left their church for the way I was treated due to coming out.

They don't understand, but they love me anyway. They have hesitance and ambivalent feelings about the gender-affirming medical and legal steps I've taken, and aren't who I turn to for support around that stuff, but are supportive of me as a person in general.

If an individual's family tries to understand, or at the very least is not actively discriminatory in the home, respondents experience a positive emotional reaction. While 25% of participants did not include family in their community, 75% did; this quote illustrates some of the benefits of having a supportive family:

My mother has been extremely supportive, to the point of attending my name change court hearing with me and picking up my prescriptions while I was out of town.

Receiving familial acceptance helps trans people navigate the discriminatory environment, especially if parents are supportive enough to help with trans related appointments, such as described above.

In addition to friends and family, respondents included a variety of other groups in their community, including their co-workers, healthcare providers (both physical and mental), activist organizations, neighbors, academic groups, acquaintances, religious communities, cities, and states. Additionally, 6 respondents included "other" in their community, with descriptions ranging from "None, I don't feel like I have a community at all" to "Chosen kink and dyke communities" to "all other LGBTQ people" to "email list-serves and internet groups." The range of definitions of community was so diverse that I chose to create a scoring system, similar to the workplace satisfaction scores, in order to accurately measure this variable against others. In this scoring system, higher numbers represent a more positive support system:

- (1) Supportive family, rated on a scale of 1-5
- (2) Supportive friends, rated on a scale of 1-5
- (3) Being in a relationship=2, no relationship=1
- (4) Involvement in local/national trans-organizations, rated on a scale of 1-4

Once I had one variable that represented general support system, I was able to measure this variable against workplace satisfaction scores. I administered a Pearson's correlation and found that a marginally significant correlation exists between higher workplace satisfaction scores and having a good support system. Because the correlation is only moderate, I chose to look deeper into the spec-

ificities of my support systems score. I looked into each separate variable included in the general support system scores (family, friend, and partner support) and ran one-way T-tests with workplace satisfaction scores.

I did not find a significant difference in work satisfaction scores for people who reported higher family or friends' support. It is probable that I did not find a significant correlation between having supportive friends and work satisfaction score because over 95% of my participants reported having supportive friends, which reveals a bias in my data. However, qualitatively, respondents emphasize their friends' support as essential:

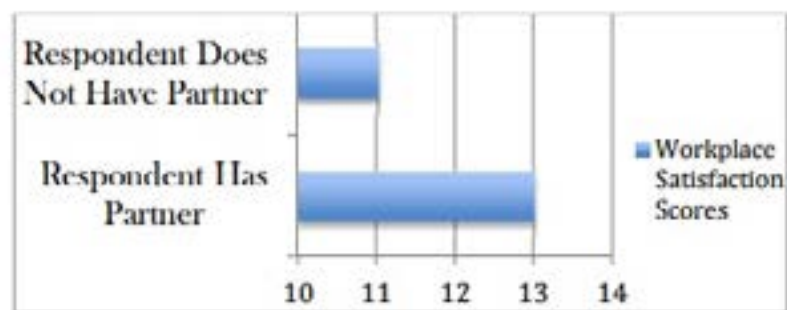
In general, my friends are very supportive of me, gender me correctly, and treat me as being fully male while also accepting any quirks or queer gender that is also a part of my identity. I do occasionally have friends who have moments of "ally fail," but I recognize that they are trying.

Many of my friends are trans\* and therefore are familiar with what I am going through. Other friends are very accepting and knowledgeable about the trans\* community and have continued to support me by using proper pronouns and name and by correcting other people who use anything other than my preferred pronouns and name.

My friends are the first group of people I started telling. They have always been there for me. Some of them have even helped me with my hormone injections. They have always been supportive of who I am and some had always wondered if transitioning would be something I would end up doing.

My friends have been a wonderful support system for me. While at times they might say or do things that aren't 100 percent what I want, they always ask and check in with me to see if things are okay, respect my pronouns, and generally treat me the way I want to be treated. I came out to my friends before I came out to my family.

Clearly, having supportive friends means a lot to my respondents and plays a huge role in improving support systems outside of work. Thus, despite that there is no significant correlation between friends' support scores and workplace satisfaction, the majority of participants express that supportive friends are a huge benefit. The most significant impact on workplace satisfaction scores, in terms of support system variables, is with respondents who have a partner. As shown below, respondents who do have a partner scored higher in workplace satisfaction than those who do not:

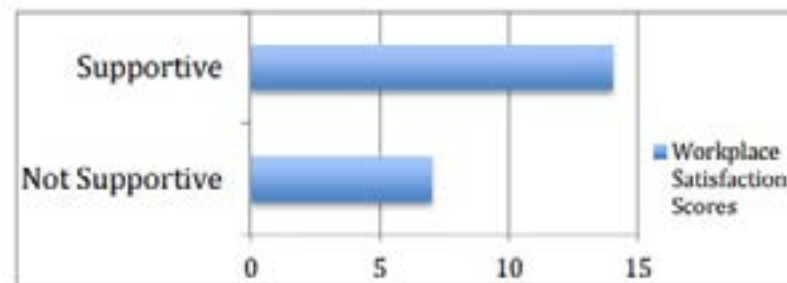


It is not surprising that having a supportive partner indicates higher workplace satisfaction scores. For a trans person, a partner could mean support for every aspect of daily life and transition: validation for a changing body, administering hormone shots, someone to talk to after a long day at work, etc. More research should be done to fully evaluate the positive impact that a supportive partner can be for a transgender person.

#### *Relationship with Coworkers*

In addition to support outside of work, I looked into support systems inside the workplace, specifically, respondents' relationship with their coworkers. I asked several quantitative and qualitative questions in order to measure this variable. I found that 44.8% feel that their coworkers are very supportive and an additional 20.7% feel that they are somewhat supportive. Only 5% said that their coworkers are somewhat unsupportive or actively unsup-

portive. I coded these responses as generally "supportive coworkers" or "unsupportive coworkers" in order to run a one-way T-test:



As shown above, respondents who have good relationship with their coworkers have higher workplace satisfaction scores. Qualitative responses reflect this trend:

I am very close to many of my coworkers. Though I always find friends at my jobs, I usually feel like an outcast. When I hung out with the guys a lot of the things they said frustrated me and when I hung out with women they wouldn't feel that comfortable around me. At my current job I haven't experienced it. I hang out with both the men and the women and I feel very comfortable. We hang out after work, go to each other's houses for dinner, and go out drinking.

They ask questions so they can grasp the basics of what I'm going through. They all use male pronouns. My transition is not really mentioned any more which I am happy with. I am treated like any other guy.

As these quotes illustrate, having a good relationship with coworkers improves their day-to-day experiences and reduces work-related stress. Additionally, there was a particular emphasis on the benefits of having a supportive employer, supervisor, or administration:

I work at a small bank, there are only 8 or 9 of us total, the

managers were on board with me transitioning on the job and did a great job of stepping up and leading when it came time to switching to my chosen name and they ordered me a new name badge even though legally I haven't changed my name yet. My co-workers struggle at times with the name/pronoun thing but overall they are trying. I haven't had a negative reaction from any of them.

When I told the priests at my church about my gender identity, they weren't at all surprised and were very supportive. They offered to help me transition socially at the church by announcing it in the bulletins, even (which I didn't take them up on but was still a nice offer). They are very big on making sure everybody knows to use my name and pronouns, and the one time somebody had an issue with me using the bathroom they totally settled it.

I had to come out to my boss when I started medically transitioning, and he was very helpful. He talked to all of the other coworkers about it, and they all call me the correct name/use the correct pronouns. No one has said anything inappropriate to me so far.

As demonstrated, having supportive leadership at a job can set a precedent for other employees to follow suit. On the flip side of this, not having supportive supervisors has a clearly negative impact on work satisfaction scores for my respondents:

I really struggled with my supervisor getting my pronouns correct. I wasn't comfortable correcting her in the moment so I'd have to wait until after my shift to email her about it, while in that time my coworkers had already picked up the female pronouns.

As this respondent states, having supportive supervisors is imperative for influencing the level of acceptance and support at work. I suggest that trans positive legislation, which I will later discuss in

detail, will have the power to ensure that supervisors and employers model support for their employees.

Additionally, I looked into the gender makeup of my respondents' coworkers. I found that 45.8% of participants work with a combinations of both male and female-identified individuals, but that of the remaining half of responses, 26.4% work with mostly or all male-identified coworkers (leaving 19.4% who work in jobs with mostly female-identified people). I compared workplace satisfaction scores for respondents who work with mostly male-identified or female-identified people. Interestingly, I found that respondents who have mostly male-identified coworkers are more likely to have high workplace satisfaction scores (see Appendix A). This could imply that my respondents simply feel more comfortable working with other male-identified people, but much more research should be done to confidently defend that claim.

### *Legal Atmosphere*

The current legal situation for transgender American workers is incredibly confusing because there is no federal policy. Every state has a different law that lists the various groups protected from workplace discrimination, and even the states that do include gender identity have varied policies. Of my respondents, 31.3% live in states that have a law protecting gender identity from workplace discrimination, 43.3% live in states that do not, and 25.8% reported that they are not sure whether or not their state has this sort of legislation. Only 17 states and Washington DC have laws protecting gender identity from workplace satisfaction. That leaves 63% of transgender Americans unprotected nationally (Movement Advancement Project 2013), meaning that they can get fired at any moment for no others reason but for being trans.

Transgender Americans typically have three options to fight against discrimination:

- (1) To resort to state and local judicial arguments that require them to refer to their gender identity as a disability.
- (2) To attempt to navigate the sticky legal battle of challenging Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.
- (3) To work towards gender identity inclusion in the Em-

ployment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which has never passed (Bender-Baird 2011).

All of these options are expensive and require a level of determination and empowerment that many trans people do not have access to at this point. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)—the federal agency in charge of enforcing employment discrimination laws—declared unanimously that anti-trans bias *is* sex discrimination under Title VII in April of 2012. However, most people in the wider transgender community are unaware of this decision. Despite the movement around this issue and the new EEOC decision, there is still a desperate need for widespread, clear, and consistent federal protection against workplace discrimination. In November of 2013, a trans inclusive ENDA was passed in the Senate, but has been stagnant in the House ever since (as of October 2014). If the House could vote on and pass this bill, then it could be signed into law, which would put an end to the confusing legal situation for trans workers.

In qualitative responses, participants explain that the absence of protection legislation makes the workplace incredibly stressful and unsafe:

I work in a state with no protections for transgender people in a workplace where a local bathroom ordinance is relevant. I feel like I am more at risk of losing my livelihood than my colleagues in a lot of areas.

The fear of losing one's livelihood on a daily basis is an incredible barrier to workplace satisfaction.

However, the fight for ending discrimination does not end with enacting legislation. I asked respondents that live in states with specific laws protecting gender identity from workplace discrimination rate the effectiveness of their state's law: Of the 31.3% of my respondents living in protected states, 35.7% reported that feel as if their state's law is ineffective. This implies that the fight for ending workplace discrimination against trans Americans is much more complicated than making sure that laws are put in place nation-wide. Many respondents say that there are easy ways around

these law:

There are a lot of ways to be discrete about discrimination. It also seems difficult to actually take action that would be immediately helpful... assuming you have extremely obvious and documented proof of discrimination, plus the time, money and willingness to out yourself in public in front of a potentially unsupportive legal system.

Some ass is always going to find a way around the law to fire you or make you quit. A popular method I saw at my previous employer that I disagree with, was overloading a person to the point of enormous stress, making them quit, or to the point of overloading them to show they weren't reaching quotas or goals, thus requiring termination.

These two quotes illuminate some of the complications in enforcing anti-discrimination laws. The mere existence of a law does not ensure protection because discrimination is not easy to prove. Both of these respondents (who live in states protecting them from workplace discrimination), feel as if their employers could get around the law if necessary. However, some respondents noted that the law has been useful in certain situations:

I know friends who have had to use the law in order to show that they were wrongfully fired from a job or that have filed suits pertaining to being discriminated against because of their trans\* status.

Past experiences demonstrate that people respond to people. If they want to discriminate people will find an alternative "reason" to do so. However, the law forces companies to take a stance on equality, which has led to training of staff, which does have an impact on people's thoughts and behaviors.

These quotes show that despite complications, the law is at least

available for people to refer to if they are knowledgeable of the law and feel safe enough to act. Additionally, the last quote emphasizes my earlier statement, that laws have the potential to improve workplaces by encouraging trainings and new policies.

Similarly to how I measured support system and workplace satisfaction scores, I came up with a system to score respondents' legislative atmosphere. I looked at three of the primary questions asking respondents about their state's laws and designated a points system:

- (1) State has a protection law=2
- (2) Respondent felt law is effective=2
- (3) Respondent aware of actions being taken to improve/  
add law=1
- (4) State does not have law=0
- (5) Respondent felt law is not effective=0
- (6) Respondent not aware of any actions being taken=0

This system resulted in scores that reflected the complexity of legal atmosphere because it includes existence of laws, law effectiveness, and current activism in their state. I did not find a significant correlation between workplace satisfaction and legal atmosphere based on this scoring system. This could indicate that my respondents have high enough workplace satisfaction that the absence of or ineffectiveness of protection laws may not make a difference, or this could indicate that the existing laws are not making a big enough difference and that they need to be improved or better enforced.

#### *Masculinity*

In my survey, there are two sections designed to gather quantitative data about respondents' understanding of their own masculinity, and several qualitative opportunities for participants to elaborate. Although not explicitly measured in my survey, I found a recurring theme while coding qualitative responses; many of my respondents describe experiencing a tension between masculine and feminine roles:

The only discomfort I experience at work is when the men on the crew make racist, homophobic or sexist comments. I am still trying to figure how to be assertive in these situ-

ations because I now have male privilege, but it is hard to break the habit of keeping my head down.

I am uncomfortable at my current job because everyone knows I am trans and focuses on it. I am also uncomfortable with the gender expectations. I do not want to be noticed for being transgender, and want to get ahead. I also do not want to be an overtly masculine person who gets ahead simply because he is a manly man in a boys' club.

In the area that I work in, it is most male predominant and after coming out and identifying as male, I have seen a change in how people treat me. When I was reffing as a female, male players would always question my calls and think that I was incompetent to ref because of my gender. When I started working as a male, the players didn't question me as much and respected me a lot more.

In these quotes, it is clear that my respondents are trying to find a balance between seeking comfort as men and respecting their own experiences before coming out as trans. These participants demonstrate a clear awareness of the reality that they may be treated differently as men. This understanding and acknowledgement of male privilege may be more difficult to come across in cisgender men, because they do not have the life experience that leads to this unique perspective. This is a fascinating finding, and further research looking specifically into the emotional process that accompanies gender transition is necessary to determine the impact this might have on social relations.

To measure masculinity, I adapted several survey questions from an existing instrument called the Perceived Masculinity Scale (Chesebro and Fuse 2001). In order to accurately measure perceived masculinity in the workplace, I shifted the focus of the questions from general characteristics defined by hegemonic masculinity theory to workplace masculine characteristics. I created a scoring system based off of responses to these questions in which higher scores signify that a respondent feels as if they are perceived

as masculine in the workplace. I administered a Pearson's test between this score and workplace satisfaction score, but did not find a significant correlation between these variables (see Appendix B). Statistically, this means that being perceived as masculine at work does not seem to impact work satisfaction for my respondents. Although interestingly, I did find a surprising amount of qualitative data that points to the importance of passing as male for many of my respondents:

The friends who are aware are ones who knew me before I socially or physically transitioned. I "pass" completely now and prefer for people not to know unless I desire to be intimate with them. The other exception to this would be a close, platonic friendship with someone whose life and personal history I know well. I do not want special attention for being trans, nor do I want to be the trans\*cyclopedia of Britannica. I just want to live my life as the person I should have been all along.

My friends that I made before my transition all know, but some friends that I made after I could pass I chose not to tell because I don't need. I haven't told them because I'm not that close with them yet. Also, I want to be seen first as a man because to me being transgender is a consequence of being born in the wrong body at birth.

I was satisfied at my job, but it was because I passed and was not questioned by staff or customers. I witnessed other gender nonconforming individuals experience discrimination and rude behavior from staff, management, and customers though.

Some people know and some don't - I never had the freedom to be something outside my transition experience before, and I enjoy that freedom to be just me, not me with an addendum. I'm not ashamed, but I'm more than my chromosomes.

Thus, while being perceived as masculine does not seem to make a difference for respondents, simply being acknowledged as male-identified does have an effect. This is incredibly interesting to my research because it implies that hegemonic masculinity might not be the greatest barrier to fitting in and finding fulfillment at work, and that conforming to standards of hegemonic masculinity may not be very important to many trans men. Instead, this shows that simply being accepted as male-identified could greatly improve workplace experiences, and overall quality of life.

### *Race and Ethnicity*

Although I did not originally hypothesize that demographic variables, such as race, age, and education level, would have a significant impact on workplace experiences, after gathering data, I found significant differences in every variable between white participants and participants of color. Even after removing all outliers, white respondents are much more likely to have higher scores in workplace satisfaction, support system, and legislative atmosphere (see Appendix C). This implies that trans men of color face additional barriers in the workplace. As cited earlier in this research, the Movement Advancement Project reports that trans Americans of color are much more likely to be unemployed and to experience worse treatment, including harassment, violence, and discrimination (2013). I suggest that qualitative research be conducted in order to illuminate these experiences, and thus, de-marginalize trans men of color by bringing their voices to the surface of society.

## VII. LIMITATIONS

Due to the scope of this research, I was limited to finding participants through social media. If this work were to be replicated, I would suggest more intentional random sampling methods in order to diversify responses in terms of race and ethnicity, education level, and geographic location. While I would seek to diversify these categories, I would also seek to narrow the age range; my respondents represent a wide range of age groups (18-61), which



certainly created contradictions in data because of changing cultural attitudes and resources for transgender Americans. With all of that said, the limitations of this research have only opened more doors; this research draws attention to the need for policy, activism, and research.

### VIII. SIGNIFICANCE

This research points to several cultural paradigms that could be shifted through microlevel interactions and macrolevel policy and institutional shifts, specifically, attitudes regarding gender norms. Gender norms are so persistent in American culture that they are unavoidable social realities we must face. Transgender people may or may not personally seek to threaten the gender binary, but the act of transgressing biological sex causes a rift in the way that normalcy is constructed. History can be slow moving, but it is pertinent to make room in society for all gender identities, and the workplace could be one site that promotes absorbing trans identities into popular culture. By dismantling stigma associated with trans\* and gender non-conforming people, we reduce the stress associated with tying specific roles to biological sex. So, trans positive activism and research will not only benefit transgender people, but all people who feel stress associated with expectations and limitations associated with their gender. By dismantling stigma associated with trans\* and gender non-conforming people, we reduce the stress associated with tying specific roles to biological gender. Thus, trans positive activism and research will not only benefit transgender Americans, but all people who feel tension and stress associated with expectations and limitations based solely on gender.

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## Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank the faculty of the Sociology/Anthropology Department: Laura Vance, Ben Feinberg, Christey Carwile, Siti Kusujarti, and Susan Ortiz. Without their guidance, patience, and encouragement, I never would have blossomed into the total nerd that I am today. Secondly, I would like to extend my apologies to my friends, who sat through countless mental breakdowns over the course of my senior year. In no particular order: Lia Kaz, Lily Kline, Dean Schlesinger, Lewis Pullman, and Nora White. Zack Wintz gets a special shout out for listening to me whine since 2008. And finally, I would like to acknowledge my family: my parents, Elaine Eichelberger and Steven Duple, for their undying support and persistent belief in me; my grandparents, for their wisdom; and my siblings, for shaping my development in irreversible, quirky ways.

Arsenite (As III) and arsenate (As V), the inorganic forms of arsenic available to plants, generally occur in water as a mixture



*Untitled 3 (Self Portrait)* by Jessica Self, 2013. Needle felted wool.

## The Phytoaccumulation of Arsenic in Holy Basil (Tulsi), *Ocimum sanctum*

### Abstract:

Holy Basil (*Ocimum sanctum*) is regarded as a sacred plant in India and has been used by practitioners of Ayurveda, an Indian traditional system of medicine, for thousands of years. In recent decades, the use of Ayurvedic herbal medicine products has expanded in the United States. Herbal medicine produced in industrialized areas poses a risk due to persistent heavy metal contamination and subsequent uptake into plant tissue. Regions of South Asia, specifically in the Gangetic River Alluvial Plain, exhibit high concentrations of arsenic in the groundwater and soil; therefore, plants from these regions need to be tested for potential toxicity. In this study, holy basil plants (n=51) were divided into four groups to be watered with arsenic-containing treatments [Control (0 ppb), Low (10 ppb), Medium (100 ppb), and High (1000 ppb)], which were diluted from a concentrated arsenic solution. Leaf and root samples from plants were analyzed using nitric acid digestion and Inductively Coupled Plasma – Optical Emission Spectroscopy (ICP-OES) instrumentation. Results show there was significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between all treatment groups except Control and Low. The highest mean concentrations of arsenic were  $89.27 \pm 0.02$  ppm in roots and  $30.88 \pm 0.02$  ppm in leaves for the High treatment group. The study indicates that the threshold for safe consumption of holy basil watered with arsenic-contamination can be found between 100 ppb and 1000 ppb in water. Based on the mean concentration found in the high concentration group, an average 70 kg adult would ingest  $0.88 \mu\text{g/kg/day}$  of arsenic if the recommended consumption of 2 grams of leaf material was consumed directly, which is about three times higher than the EPA reference dose ( $0.3 \mu\text{g/kg body weight/day}$ ). Arsenic levels of an equivalent dose from the medium concentration group would fall just under the EPA reference dose.

### Eden May | Environmental Chemistry



While living at Warren Wilson College, Eden studied Environmental Chemistry with interests in phytochemistry, geology, and toxicology. She also worked on the Wellness Crew for the majority of her three years at the college to raise awareness of healing foods, herbal medicine, and seasonal health. With the Wellness program she practiced massage, yoga, and Reiki

as well. Her time studying abroad in South-central Alaska deepened her interest in ecology, sustainable harvesting, and land conservation with respect to native peoples. In addition, Eden was a member of the WWC Mountain Bike team for three seasons and was two classes short of an Art Minor. Following her time at Warren Wilson, Eden plans to continue experiential learning of herb and food gardening, holistic health, and land preservation.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian traditional system of medicine, relies heavily on herbal products and preparations. More than half of Indian citizens use Ayurvedic remedies and guidelines for health (Saper et al 2004). The popularity of Ayurvedic medicine has increased in the West and many products are now available in health food stores and online as dietary supplements. In Ayurveda, formulas and singular herbs are often recommended for regular consumption to promote health and longevity. Preparations using Holy Basil (*Ocimum sanctum*) play an important role because of its wide range of medicinal actions.

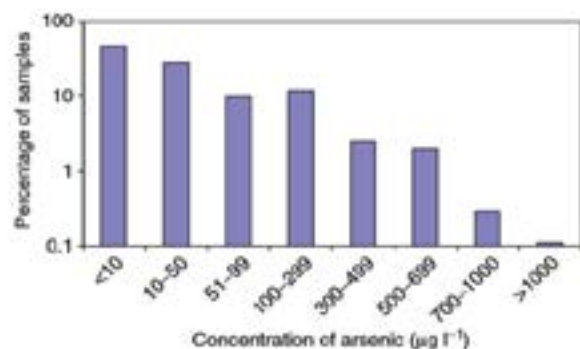
Holy Basil is endearingly called Tulsi, which translates to “the incomparable one,” and has been widely used in Asia and now in Western nations due to its historical, religious and medicinal value. Traditionally, Tulsi is spiritually valued for its adaptogenic properties, acting to balance stress hormones in the body and promoting longevity by increasing physical and mental endurance (Pattanayak et al 2010). The herb grows annually in tropical and subtropical regions and likely originated in the Indian subcontinent (Mahajan et al 2012). The traditional use of this herb has sparked scientific interest to investigate its medicinal compounds and benefits.

Studies show many pharmacological actions of Holy Basil include anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, antistress and antidiabetic effects. Eugenol, the essential oil of Holy Basil, is the main biologically active phenolic compound, existing alongside eugenol methyl ether, carvacrol, cirsilineol, isothymosin, rosmarinic acid and other active compounds. Eugenol accounts for roughly 70% of the medicinal compounds within the leaves, yet the complex chemical composition of Holy Basil leaves results in a high index of medicinal activities. Low concentrations of trace metals and minerals such as copper, zinc, manganese, and iron within herbal medicine products are foundational to many medicinal functions (Mahajan et al 2012).

However, toxic heavy metals, such as lead, cadmium, and arsenic accumulate in plant tissues and produce toxic effects in consumers (Tokalioğlu 2012). Cultivators of medicinal plants must

take into consideration location, level of air pollution, soil, water, and pesticide and herbicide use in order to produce medicine that is free of contamination. Unfortunately, many regions in Asia contain accumulated levels of toxic metals that naturally occur or have resulted from industrial activity. China and India have dealt with a higher prevalence of toxic metals in the environment and also produce and use the majority of herbal medicine products (Zhang et al 2012).

Many states in India along the Gangetic River floodplain have been found to contain severe arsenic contamination in the groundwater. As the second most populated country in the world, India faces high water demands for drinking and agricultural needs. The natural presence of arsenic in the groundwater of northeastern and eastern states of India, including the majority of the state of West Bengal, has been recognized since the late 1970's. During this period, millions of wells were installed for drinking water and irrigation to meet the rising population's needs. Recently, arsenic concentrations ranged from 1  $\mu\text{g/L}$  to over 1000  $\mu\text{g/L}$  (ppb) throughout the northern and eastern parts of the subcontinent (Bhattacharya et al 2011, see map & graph below).



**Figure 4** Range of arsenic concentration in the groundwater in nine districts of West Bengal based on a regional-scale sampling ( $n = 58166$ ) by SOES, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. From Chowdhury UK, Biswas BK, Roy Chowdhury T, et al. (2000) Groundwater arsenic contamination in Bangladesh and West Bengal, India. *Environmental Health Perspectives* 106(5): 393-397.

(Above & below: Bhattacharya et al 2011)



under aerobic conditions. Both forms are highly toxic to plants. Arsenic (V) exists as the predominant form in water. When absorbed by plants, arsenate generally reduces to arsenite. Arsenic has similar electronic properties to phosphorus, which acts as an analog, allowing arsenic to enter plant tissue through water (Ozturk et al 2010). The distribution of absorbed arsenic in plant tissue can vary among species. For example, Zheljazkov et al (2008) grew various medicinal herb crops in soil contaminated by a lead-zinc smelter under the hypothesis that the desired plant material could still be marketable under toxic metal standards. For instance, the roots of a certain plant can accumulate an unsafe level of metals, while the leaves contain safe levels for consumption, allowing the leaves to be safely cultivated for medicinal purposes.

The popular use and cultivation of Holy Basil in India may have consequences due to the high occurrence of natural and industrial arsenic found in water and soil. The historical and religious values of the plant further emphasize its importance, especially in India where it can be found in almost every household (Mahajan et al 2012; Kaur 2013). The leaves of Holy Basil are tra-



ditionally used, as they contain the desired medicinal compounds, while the roots are not regarded as medicinal. The objective of this study is to observe the accumulation of arsenic in Holy Basil through water treatments containing concentrations consistent with those found in the groundwater of the previously mentioned regions in India. The concentration of arsenic in the leaves and roots will be compared and concentrations will be used to estimate a potentially safe level of arsenic in the water for Holy Basil.

## METHODS

Organic holy basil seeds (200, *Ocimum sanctum*, Kapoor variety) were purchased from Horizon Herbs, LLC. All seeds were germinated directly in potting soil in the Morse greenhouse at Warren Wilson College in March, 2013. Sprouts were transplanted in early May into individual quart-sized plastic pots for the duration of their growth. Potting soil mixture was made with the following ratios: 2 peat: 1 vermiculite: 1 perlite, 1 tablespoon lime and supplemented with Plant Tone fertilizer (5N:3P:3K). Approximately seventy plants were grown for four months to ensure an adequate sample size and health.

A total of 51 of the original plants were used due to plant death and space available in the greenhouse. These plants were randomized and labeled into three treatment groups (High, 1000 ppb (n=12); Medium, 100 ppb (n=12); Low, 10 ppb (n=12)) and one control group (n=15). Arsenic solutions were prepared by diluting a concentrated stock solution (1000 ppm in 5% concentrated nitric acid) to desired concentrations for the three treatment groups. Batches of 15 liters were prepared each week in 5-gallon sized plastic buckets. Each plant was watered with approximately 300 mL of arsenic-laden water four times per week for four weeks beginning in early September, 2013. Plants in the control group were watered with the same amount of water at the same frequency. Each plant also sat on top of a non-permeable plastic tray for water catchment. Roots and leaves of each surviving plant were collected and stored in labeled, freezer-safe plastic bags until all samples were obtained.

Root samples were cleaned and rinsed with water to remove any soil material. Frozen samples were then dried at about 110°C in

laboratory oven for about 24 hours on clean watch glasses. Samples were weighed on an analytical balance and transferred into nitric acid-washed ceramic crucibles. All samples were fired in a muffle furnace at 425°C for 8-10 hours with lids loosely fit to allow some air flow for combustion.

Each combusted leaf sample was digested in 3 mL of concentrated nitric acid and combusted root samples were digested in 1 mL of concentrated nitric acid for approximately 48 hours. Each digested sample was filtered by gravity filtration (12.5 cm filter paper) with deionized water and diluted to 50 mL in centrifuge tubes. Filtered samples were filtered again by syringe filtration (0.45  $\mu$  filter paper) and deposited into 15 mL glass sample vials for analysis. All glassware, centrifuge tubes, funnels and syringes were washed with nitric acid or soaked in 5% nitric acid. The Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectrometer (ICP-OES) owned by Warren Wilson College was used for analysis. Analytical sample data can be found in the Appendix.



Above: randomized arrangement of plants





Above: Plant setting within greenhouse

## RESULTS

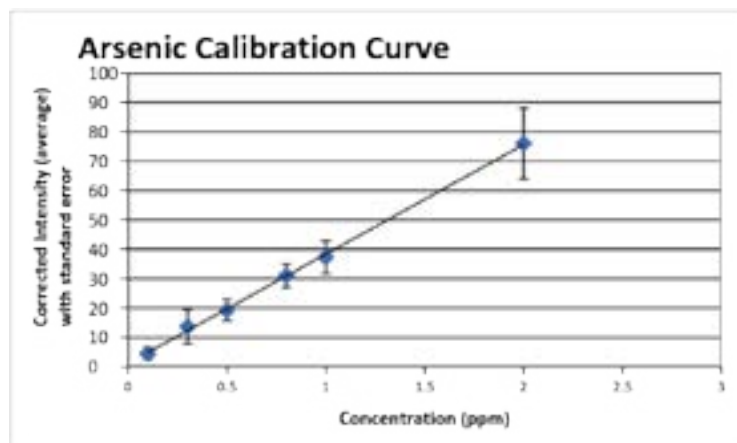


Figure 1. Calibration Curve derived from three sets of standards averaged together.

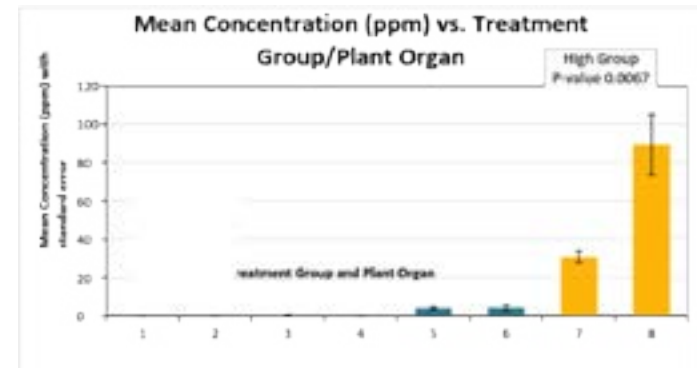


Figure 2. Overview of mean concentrations of arsenic in plant tissue. P-value associated with difference between concentrations of leaves and roots of high group.

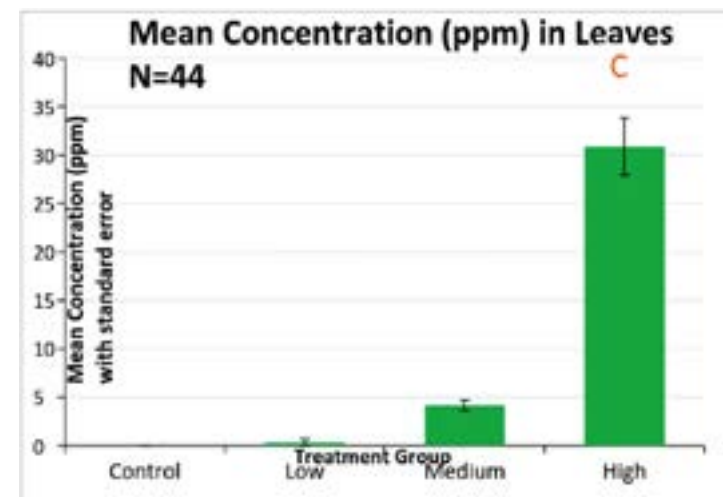


Figure 3. Mean concentrations of arsenic in leaves. Colored letters denote statistical significance between treatment groups. A, B, and C are statistically significantly different ( $P < 0.05$ ) from one another. (See Table 1b in Appendix for p-values)

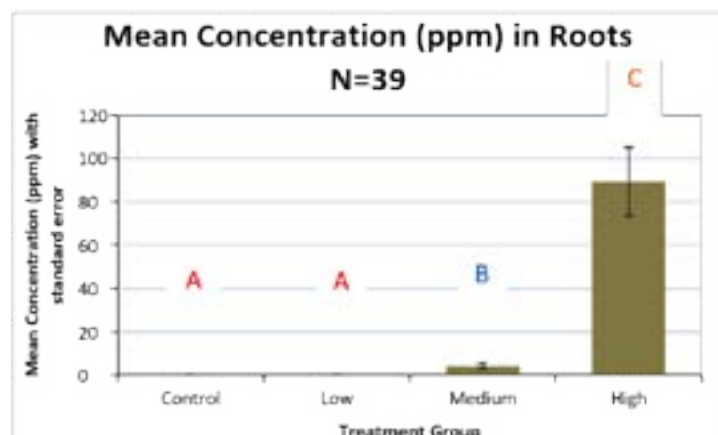


Figure 4. Mean concentrations of arsenic in roots. Statistical significance denote by letter A, B, and C. (See Table 1b in Appendix for p-values)

Plant samples were analyzed using ICP-OES ran under standard conditions. Results can be viewed in the Appendix Tables 2 and 3. The study began with 51 plants, yet fewer samples were collected at the end of the growing season (see Table 1a in Appendix) due to death, damage, or incorrectly processed samples. Among the three treatment groups and control group, mean arsenic concentrations were significantly higher in the roots than leaves (see Fig. 3 and 4). The lowest level of detection (LLOD) for this study is 0.301 ppm, less than all reported mean concentrations for analytical standards.

Significant differences between plant organ groups within each treatment group were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis test, a non-parametric test for data that does not conform to a normal distribution. The High group had significantly higher mean concentrations of arsenic in both the leaves and roots compared to the other three groups ( $P = 0.0067$ ; see Fig. 2). The Kruskal-Wallis test was also used to compare treatment groups among the leaf and root samples. The significant difference among treatment groups within the leaf and root sample concentrations followed the same trend; Control and Low groups were not significantly different from each other. Medium and High groups were significantly different from

each other and to the Control and Low groups (see Fig. 3, Fig. 4 and Table 1).

## DISCUSSION

### *Arsenic phytoaccumulation by O. sanctum*

The results of this study indicate that the most significant differences in mean concentrations of arsenic in both roots and leaves of *O. sanctum* occurred between the medium and high group. Between the range of 100 ppb and 1000 ppb of arsenic in water for holy basil, these findings suggest that there is a threshold where the concentration of arsenic becomes high enough to be significantly accumulated by the plants. In turn, that unknown concentration of arsenic in the water would mark a level considered unsafe for consumption of the plant. There had also been a significant difference in arsenic concentrations between the roots and leaves of the high group, where the roots absorbed more arsenic than the leaves. The difference between arsenic concentrations between roots and leaves within the medium, low and control groups were not enough to be statistically significant (see Table 1 in Appendix). The highest concentration of arsenic within root samples was  $148.62 \pm 0.02$  ppm and  $43.41 \pm 0.02$  ppm in leaf samples.

In groundwater analyses of locations within the Gangetic Plain in India of the Ghazipur district, all samples contained arsenate (As (V)) and most contained arsenate and arsenite (As (III)) together (Kumar et al 2010). As both inorganic forms were found in the groundwater, either form could be absorbed by *O. sanctum* and provides this study enough ground to use arsenic in the treatments diluted from an analytical standard in its +5 oxidation state.

### *Medicinal plants and metal accumulation*

A study of arsenic uptake in watercress, an edible and medicinal plant, by Ozturk et al (2010) explained that arsenic is most often found in the form of As (V) in natural waters and efficiently converts to arsenite (As (III)) in plants. A similar study by Yan et al (2012) grew *P. notoginseng*, a rare medicinal Chinese herb that is harvested for its roots, in arsenic contaminated soils from a smelter separated into low (18 mg/kg) and high (517 mg/kg) soil groups. In

that study, the low group plants contained lower arsenic concentrations in the roots than leaves, and the high group contained lower arsenic concentrations in the leaves than roots. Interestingly, the low group only contained As (III) while the high group contained both As (III) and (V). Arsenic speciation was determined through liquid chromatography coupled with atomic fluorescence spectroscopy. The information presented in both of these studies (Ozturk et al 2010; Yan et al 2012) suggests both forms of inorganic arsenic are toxic to plants and that either form will be converted into arsenite unless the concentration is so high that not all arsenate may efficiently be converted. The arsenic interactions observed by these two studies also depend on the plant species analyzed (*Panax notoginseng* and *Nasturtium officinale*), which differs from the *Ocimum* plant genus and family (*Lamiaceae*).

In contrast, goals of this study did not include arsenic speciation or measurement of plant growth due to lack of time and adequate instrumentation to detect arsenic speciation. The ICP-OES detection method used was the only quantification method necessary and available to observe the presence of arsenic within the samples. The main purpose of the study was to simply quantify the amount of arsenic within the leaves and roots of *O. sanctum* in order to understand if the plants absorb the element at various concentrations.

Holy basil (*O. sanctum*) and culinary basil (*O. basilicum*) had been shown in the study by Tokaloğlu (2012) to absorb various other metals from their environment, such as Cr, Mn, Fe and Pb detected by ICP-MS. Those herbs had been purchased from marketplaces in Turkey, not grown in a controlled environment such as a greenhouse with potted plants. Although their findings did not specifically test for the presence of arsenic, they indicated that basil plants could absorb various metals. The difference in their study from the present study depends on the lack of information on original concentrations of metals within the soil or water in which the plants were grown since the seeds were purchased from various growers in different locations. The most important finding of their study relevant to the present study was the presence of various metals, some in higher concentrations than others, in both species

of basil (Tokaloğlu 2012).

Another study by Saper et al (2004) indicated that various Ayurvedic herbal medicine products made in South Asia intended for oral use collected from the Boston, MA area contained varying levels of toxic metals. Metal concentrations were determined using x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy in an EPA laboratory. From the 70 herbal medicine products tested, 9% contained arsenic with a median concentration of 430 µg/g (ppm). Among the arsenic-containing herbal medicine products, 4 out of 5 were calculated to deliver daily intakes 1 to 3 orders of magnitude higher than the EPA reference dose (RfD) (0.3 µg/kg body weight/day). Their study further emphasizes the risk of consuming these products and potentially other herbal products from similar regions.

#### ***Dosage of holy basil extract and arsenic***

The recommended dosage of holy basil leaf as medicine is 2-4 g/day depending on the desired beneficial health effects. The dosage is most often prepared as an infusion (water extract) (Chevallier 44, 167). The following table demonstrates calculations using the recommended amount of leaf material to consume and mean concentrations of arsenic found in my study's samples to estimate the maximum amount of arsenic that could be ingested. (See Table 1 in Appendix for mean concentrations). The EPA RfD to compare the daily dosage per body weight to is 0.3 µg/kg body weight/day (Saper et al 2004). These calculations were performed under the assumption that the total amount of arsenic within the leaves would be transferred into the water extract. This assumption was made primarily because water extracts of samples in this study were not performed due to lack of time and because most of the sample was needed for extraction in nitric acid. Analyzing leaf extracts in water (as tea/infusion), alcohol (tincture) or both media is strongly recommended for future research in order to make more realistic health precautions.

Figure 5. Arsenic ingestion levels based on recommended dosages of holy basil compared to EPA RfD (0.3  $\mu\text{g/kg}$  body weight/day)

Treatment Group	Mean Concentration in Leaves ( $\mu\text{g/g}$ (ppm))	Standard Error of Mean ( $\mu\text{g/g}$ (ppm))	Mass of leaf material (g)	Dosage ( $\mu\text{g}$ )	Daily dosage per body weight of a 70 kg adult ( $\mu\text{g/kg/day}$ )
High	30.9	$\pm 2.9$	4	123.6	1.76
High	30.9	$\pm 2.9$	2	61.8	0.88
Medium	4.15	$\pm 0.5$	4	16.6	0.24

### *Arsenic Toxicity*

Several negative health effects can occur from ingesting arsenic. At acute doses ( $>2$  mg/kg/day) inflammation and necrosis of stomach and intestinal mucosa as well as hepatic necrosis can result. Peripheral neuropathy concentrated at the hands and feet is another common result of acute ingestion. In some cases, spontaneous abortions in pregnant women have also occurred. Chronic ingestion of arsenic (0.03 – 0.1 mg/kg/day) often results in skin lesions and hyperkeratosis which can lead to skin cancer. Cancer of the lungs, kidney and bladder has also been reported with chronic ingestion. Increased arsenite uptake has also been correlated with nutritional deficiencies (i.e. diets lacking protein) that can alter methylation of arsenic in the body (Ahamed et al 2006), an unfortunate circumstance for those living in poor communities near arsenic-contaminated water sources.

### *Future Research*

This study has revealed information regarding the uptake of arsenic in holy basil and the potential health risks of consuming holy basil from contaminated sources. Increasing arsenic concentration in the water influenced increased arsenic concentrations in holy basil samples. Time limitations on this study prevented several other investigations of the plant material. Aqueous and ethanol extracts of the holy basil leaves from each group would have been performed and tested for arsenic since these are common forms of extraction for medicinal purposes. The determination of arsenic speciation within the plant and water would also allow more clarification of how holy basil and similar species may convert arsenate and arsenite within plant tissue. Arsenic speciation would also determine toxicity to the plant and consumer. Monitoring of plant growth rates during the experiment could have also provided more information on how arsenic affects biological processes within the plant.

Other time-affected factors of the experiment include the initial administration of the treatments and the length of time the treatments were applied. The treatments were administered during the later period of growth, which may have influenced the transportation of arsenic from roots to leaves. Arsenic treatments could have been applied earlier in the growth stage and at higher concentrations, specifically within the range of 100 ppb – 1000 ppb, where there were significant differences in plant uptake of arsenic. As a result, the insights gained throughout the experiment serve as suggestions for future studies.

Other studies, such as those by Zheljazkov et al (2008) and Yan et al (2012) used contaminated soil that contained multiple toxic metals rather than water contaminated with one metal. Multiple metals could have been analyzed within this study, but for the sake of simplicity and to reflect a naturally occurring contaminant, only arsenic was examined. Arsenic uptake can also be studied in relation to phosphorus application in the form of fertilizer or as a function of soil pH. The phosphorus uptake mechanism within plants is the same route in which arsenate is absorbed, interfering with phosphorus nutrition. In a 2002 study, potted plants were

watered with the addition of phosphorus which increased the mobilization and plant uptake of arsenate. In regard to soil pH, arsenate absorption generally increases within ranges of 3-8 pH, while arsenite follows an opposite trend (Fitz and Wenzel).

### CONCLUSIONS

As determined by this study, holy basil (*O. sanctum*) plants can absorb arsenic from water and accumulate the element within a period of four weeks during their mature growth stage. Mature growth was indicated by plant size and the presence of flowers, although this variety of holy basil has been known to quickly flower as indicated by the seed provider, Horizon Herbs. The methods and analyses used in this experiment have shown to be effective. A more accurate depiction of arsenic accumulation in holy basil could be studied by growing plants in arsenic-contaminated soil, arsenic-contaminated water from naturally occurring sources, or the use of real soil, not potting mix, with arsenic-treated water.

The high medicinal value of holy basil in Eastern and Western cultures indicates the importance of researching the environment in which the plant grows. The spiritual value of the plant in India has influenced its vast consumption within that region and other parts of the world. The accumulation of arsenic and other potential toxic metals in medicinal plants has been a concern, especially in the counties that produce and distribute medicinal herbal products on a large scale. Consuming holy basil leaves at recommended dosages exposed to water containing more than 100 ppb ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ) of arsenic could result in arsenic toxicity based on the assumption that the user is directly consuming leaves or that all arsenic within the plant can be transferred to the extract media. Further research must take place to analyze the health risks of consuming holy basil or other medicinal plants from areas affected by toxic metal contamination in the water sources.

### APPENDIX

Table 1a: Statistical data (produced by JMP software):

Treatment Group	N	Mean Concentration (ppm)	Standard Error (ppm)
Control	22	0	0
Low	21	0.174133276	0.174133276
Medium	22	4.223240392	0.736274354
High	18	56.8373264	9.907013815

Group	Plant Organ	N	Mean Concentration (ppm)	Standard Error (ppm)
Control	Leaves	12	0	0
Control	Roots	10	0	0
Low	Leaves	11	Treatment 0.332436253	0.332436253
Low	Roots	10	0	0
Medium	Leaves	11	4.153034389	0.542675381
Medium	Roots	11	4.293446396	1.407599849
High	Leaves	10	30.88841167	2.944354446
High	Roots	8	89.27346982	15.86947391

Table 1b: Nonparametric Analysis (Kruskal-Wallis) Results (Produced by JMP software)

Nonparametric Comparisons for each pair using Wilcoxon (Kruskal-Wallis) Method	LEAVES		ROOTS	
	Z	P-Value	Z	P-Value
Control/Low	0.96	0.3384	N/A	N/A
Control/Medium	4.4	<0.0001	3.2	0.0015
Control/High	4.3	<0.0001	3.8	0.0001
Low/Medium	3.7	0.0002	3.2	0.0015
Low/High	-4.1	<0.0001	-3.8	0.0001
Medium/High	-3.8	0.0001	-3.6	0.0003

Table 2: ICP-OES Sample Results (Sample ID code indicates sample (plant) number (#), leaf (L) or root (R), and treatment group (H, M, L, C)):

Sample ID	Date	Intensity	Int (Corr)
Blank1	12/19/2013	-0.2918435	
3LL	12/19/2013	3.95734912	<b>4.249192601</b>
4RM	12/19/2013	0.7984948	<b>1.090338276</b>
4LM	12/19/2013	12.9959732	<b>13.28781666</b>
5RH	12/19/2013	6.95355618	<b>7.245399663</b>
5LH	12/19/2013	23.8774066	<b>24.16925012</b>
6RM	12/19/2013	5.18668431	<b>5.478527785</b>
6LM	12/19/2013	7.32333367	<b>7.615177146</b>
7RM	12/19/2013	4.51710584	<b>4.808949316</b>
Blank2	12/19/2013	4.33266156	
7LM	12/19/2013	15.1773585	<b>10.84469698</b>
8RM	12/19/2013	10.05265	<b>5.719988407</b>
8LM	12/19/2013	13.4862463	<b>9.153584727</b>
9RL	12/19/2013	-0.5391871	<b>-4.87184865</b>
9LL	12/19/2013	-1.9941251	<b>-6.32678666</b>
10RL	12/19/2013	-3.3819775	<b>-7.71463908</b>
10LL	12/19/2013	0.12751824	<b>-4.20514332</b>
11RC	12/19/2013	-0.5531873	<b>-4.88584886</b>
11LC	12/19/2013	0.69002926	<b>-3.6426323</b>
12RH	12/19/2013	92.0692075	<b>87.73654594</b>
12LH	12/19/2013	102.825705	<b>98.49304364</b>
14RL	12/19/2013	-2.9656225	<b>-7.29828402</b>
14LL	12/19/2013	-0.6952234	<b>-5.02788499</b>
16RH	12/19/2013	31.1963262	<b>26.86366459</b>
Blank3	12/19/2013	0.53383871	
16LH	12/19/2013	88.7197838	<b>88.18594509</b>
17LC	12/19/2013	-2.8827612	<b>-3.41659989</b>

18LH	12/19/2013	37.7950717	<b>37.26123301</b>
19RH	12/19/2013	25.3821275	<b>24.84828883</b>
19LH	12/19/2013	67.9524115	<b>67.41857282</b>
20RC	12/19/2013	-2.5137983	<b>-3.04763699</b>
20LC	12/19/2013	1.26610815	<b>0.732269442</b>
21RM	12/19/2013	-1.4825931	<b>-2.01643177</b>
21LM	12/19/2013	5.51480309	<b>4.980964379</b>
22RM	12/19/2013	1.85027378	<b>1.31643507</b>
22LM	12/19/2013	9.34181099	<b>8.80797228</b>
23RC	12/19/2013	-3.8474192	<b>-4.38125795</b>
25RC	12/19/2013	-0.3359557	<b>-0.86979441</b>
25LC	12/19/2013	-3.3271272	<b>-3.86096594</b>
26LC	12/19/2013	-2.3277971	<b>-2.86163585</b>
Blank4	12/19/2013	2.44582819	
27RC	12/19/2013	-1.5686648	<b>-4.01449299</b>
27LC	12/19/2013	-5.476264	<b>-7.92209222</b>
28RL	12/19/2013	-3.847101	<b>-6.29292923</b>
28LL	12/19/2013	2.16486232	<b>-0.28096587</b>
29RC	12/19/2013	-3.1746375	<b>-5.62046569</b>
29LC	12/19/2013	-3.7424365	<b>-6.18826464</b>
30RL	12/19/2013	-1.0956645	<b>-3.54149271</b>
30LL	12/19/2013	0.00413979	<b>-2.4416884</b>
31RH	12/19/2013	50.3787545	<b>47.93292629</b>
31LH	12/19/2013	39.1902754	<b>36.74444716</b>
32RH	12/19/2013	87.216357	<b>84.7705288</b>
32LH	12/19/2013	81.1750059	<b>78.72917775</b>
33RC	12/19/2013	-4.9593311	<b>-7.40515924</b>
33LC	12/19/2013	-0.6683674	<b>-3.1141956</b>
Blank5	12/19/2013	-0.780085	
34RM	12/19/2013	-2.5132975	<b>-1.73321252</b>
34LM	12/19/2013	5.19790976	<b>5.977994733</b>
36RL	12/19/2013	-1.0956072	<b>-0.31552224</b>
36LL	12/19/2013	-9.8957931	<b>-9.11570814</b>

<b>37LH</b>	12/19/2013	78.813861	<b>79.59394593</b>
<b>38RM</b>	12/19/2013	5.18181185	<b>5.96189683</b>
<b>38LM</b>	12/19/2013	13.8722232	<b>14.65230821</b>
<b>39RC</b>	12/19/2013	-1.0185045	<b>-0.23841956</b>
<b>39LC</b>	12/19/2013	-1.6757518	<b>-0.89566682</b>
<b>40LC</b>	12/19/2013	-1.4728102	<b>-0.69272519</b>
<b>41RL</b>	12/19/2013	-0.1462	<b>0.633884978</b>
<b>41LL</b>	12/19/2013	-3.2190248	<b>-2.43893983</b>
<b>42RH</b>	12/19/2013	37.1008851	<b>37.88097006</b>
<b>42LH</b>	12/19/2013	95.5283264	<b>96.30841135</b>
<b>Blank6</b>	12/19/2013	0.54024176	
<b>43RM</b>	12/19/2013	1.37883974	<b>0.838597971</b>
<b>43LM</b>	12/19/2013	14.1794528	<b>13.63921103</b>
<b>44RH</b>	12/19/2013	68.2937502	<b>67.75350844</b>
<b>44LH</b>	12/19/2013	100.763095	<b>100.2228531</b>
<b>45LL</b>	12/19/2013	-4.6968935	<b>-5.23713531</b>
<b>45RL</b>	12/19/2013	-2.6612613	<b>-3.20150306</b>
<b>46RC</b>	12/19/2013	-4.6226691	<b>-5.1629109</b>
<b>46LC</b>	12/19/2013	-5.6896751	<b>-6.22991686</b>
<b>47RM</b>	12/19/2013	7.18910799	<b>6.648866222</b>
<b>47LM</b>	12/19/2013	18.4750518	<b>17.93481</b>
<b>48RM</b>	12/19/2013	2.32112681	<b>1.780885047</b>
<b>48LM</b>	12/19/2013	7.56160287	<b>7.021361104</b>
<b>49RC</b>	12/19/2013	-5.1071442	<b>-5.64738593</b>
<b>49LC</b>	12/19/2013	-4.7379955	<b>-5.27823731</b>
<b>Blank7</b>	12/19/2013	-0.5140463	
<b>50RL</b>	12/19/2013	-0.4994334	<b>0.014612854</b>
<b>50LL</b>	12/19/2013	-3.4259793	<b>-2.91193305</b>
<b>51RL</b>	12/19/2013	-3.1992014	<b>-2.68515515</b>
<b>51LL</b>	12/19/2013	-0.7004225	<b>-0.18637624</b>

Table 3: Sample Masses and Calculated Concentrations of Arsenic in Samples (All negative concentrations converted to 0 ppm for statistical analysis):

Sample ID	Sample Mass (g)	Conc (ppm) w/o mass	Corrected Conc. (ppm)
<b>3LL</b>	1.1838	0.086578368	<b>3.656798788</b>
<b>4RM</b>	0.5122	0.001904205	<b>0.185884919</b>
<b>4LM</b>	2.471	0.328861756	<b>6.654426461</b>
<b>5RH</b>	0.478	0.166892716	<b>17.45739707</b>
<b>5LH</b>	1.9395	0.620542275	<b>15.99748067</b>
<b>6RM</b>	0.6394	0.119531115	<b>9.347131313</b>
<b>6LM</b>	1.9464	0.176804727	<b>4.541839473</b>
<b>7RM</b>	0.8602	0.101582837	<b>5.904605729</b>
<b>7LM</b>	5.1435	0.263373103	<b>2.560251802</b>
<b>8RM</b>	0.6674	0.126003549	<b>9.439882321</b>
<b>8LM</b>	3.2579	0.218042265	<b>3.346362146</b>
<b>9RL</b>	0.8432	-0.15791424	<b>-9.363984837</b>
<b>9LL</b>	1.6492	-0.196914348	<b>-5.969995995</b>
<b>10RL</b>	0.6065	-0.234116203	<b>-19.30059385</b>
<b>10LL</b>	3.1843	-0.140042978	<b>-2.198960174</b>
<b>11RC</b>	1.0381	-0.158289521	<b>-7.624001578</b>
<b>11LC</b>	3.0333	-0.124964679	<b>-2.059879977</b>
<b>12RH</b>	0.9447	2.324485229	<b>123.0276928</b>
<b>12LH</b>	3.3928	2.612816803	<b>38.50531718</b>
<b>14RL</b>	1.0142	-0.222955664	<b>-10.99170107</b>
<b>14LL</b>	3.2339	-0.162096848	<b>-2.506213048</b>
<b>16RH</b>	0.5273	0.69276697	<b>65.69002182</b>
<b>16LH</b>	3.361	2.336531526	<b>34.75946929</b>
<b>17LC</b>	2.791	-0.118905803	<b>-2.130164871</b>
<b>18LH</b>	1.8486	0.971477323	<b>26.27602843</b>
<b>19RH</b>	0.4834	0.638744139	<b>66.06786704</b>
<b>19LH</b>	4.3081	1.779855059	<b>20.65707689</b>
<b>20RC</b>	0.5	-0.109015627	<b>-10.90156272</b>

20LC	3.6141	-0.007693952	<b>-0.106443535</b>
21RM	0.4585	-0.081373821	<b>-8.873917238</b>
21LM	2.8588	0.106193759	<b>1.857313543</b>
22RM	0.527	0.007964806	<b>0.755674238</b>
22LM	3.3247	0.208778006	<b>3.139802173</b>
23RC	0.5974	-0.14476379	<b>-12.11615251</b>
25RC	0.5708	-0.050637817	<b>-4.435688254</b>
25LC	2.025	-0.130817186	<b>-3.230053973</b>
26LC	2.7707	-0.104029804	<b>-1.877319876</b>
27RC	1.3496	-0.134932531	<b>-4.998982321</b>
27LC	3.7916	-0.239677055	<b>-3.160632123</b>
28RL	1.0391	-0.196006788	<b>-9.431565202</b>
28LL	2.7997	-0.034854068	<b>-0.622460768</b>
29RC	0.5138	-0.177981174	<b>-17.32008314</b>
29LC	3.0527	-0.193201218	<b>-3.164431782</b>
30RL	0.7952	-0.122253598	<b>-7.686971683</b>
30LL	3.29	-0.09277297	<b>-1.40992355</b>
31RH	0.8823	1.257535686	<b>71.2646314</b>
31LH	1.1424	0.957624703	<b>41.91284589</b>
32RH	0.7905	2.244980132	<b>141.9974783</b>
32LH	2.3995	2.083039665	<b>43.40570255</b>
33RC	0.8298	-0.225820491	<b>-13.60692282</b>
33LC	3.2346	-0.110799753	<b>-1.712727281</b>
34RM	0.8855	-0.073782033	<b>-4.166122696</b>
34LM	2.3009	0.132919496	<b>2.888424017</b>
36RL	0.6439	-0.035780363	<b>-2.778409952</b>
36LL	4.7971	-0.271672335	<b>-2.831630937</b>
37LH	4.5693	2.10622007	<b>23.04751351</b>
38RM	0.5396	0.132487987	<b>12.27649988</b>
38LM	3.2526	0.365437415	<b>5.617619983</b>
39RC	0.8136	-0.0337136	<b>-2.071878078</b>
39LC	3.492	-0.051331336	<b>-0.734984765</b>
40LC	2.2028	-0.045891417	<b>-1.041660992</b>

41RL	0.9449	-0.010331181	<b>-0.54668116</b>
41LL	4.6165	-0.092699293	<b>-1.00399971</b>
42RH	0.6171	0.988089585	<b>80.059114</b>
42LH	3.6446	2.554256992	<b>35.04166427</b>
43RM	0.6455	-0.004843779	<b>-0.375195915</b>
43LM	3.2762	0.338281001	<b>5.162703758</b>
44RH	0.6018	1.788833122	<b>148.6235561</b>
44LH	4.5408	2.659184934	<b>29.28101803</b>
45LL	4.9368	-0.167705873	<b>-1.698528129</b>
45RL	1.3591	-0.113140059	<b>-4.162315482</b>
46RC	1.0198	-0.165716263	<b>-8.124939338</b>
46LC	3.3777	-0.19431772	<b>-2.876479852</b>
47RM	1.0245	0.150902435	<b>7.364686896</b>
47LM	3.1303	0.45342599	<b>7.24253251</b>
48RM	0.5225	0.020414546	<b>1.953545055</b>
48LM	3.0105	0.160887286	<b>2.672102414</b>
49RC	0.7408	-0.178702781	<b>-12.06147277</b>
49LC	2.2636	-0.168807626	<b>-3.72874241</b>
50RL	0.7284	-0.02693098	<b>-1.848639495</b>
50LL	2.3867	-0.105378037	<b>-2.207609606</b>
51RL	1.0253	-0.099299178	<b>-4.842445059</b>
51LL	3.2525	-0.032318561	<b>-0.496826459</b>



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### **Acknowledgements**

Dr. Stephen Cartier

Robert Hastings

Alisa Hove

Dr. John Brock

Dr. Mark Brenner

Warren Wilson College Chemistry Department

Natasha Shipman

Rebecca Vann

Marc Williams



*Wolf* by Carsyn McGregor-Short, 2014. Scrap metal.

## Reading “Gangnam Style”: Psy as Diplomat, Social Networker, and Harbinger of Global Transformations in Media Consumption

### Abstract:

This paper discusses the soft power potential of the Korean Wave, as well as the possible global shift away from American-dominated popular media that the Korean Wave might foreshadow. While the Korean Wave as an East Asian phenomenon has been studied in depth, relatively little research addresses the Korean Wave as a truly global phenomenon. Recent data, however, shows that the majority of Korean popular music (K-pop) consumers now reside outside of the Asia-Pacific region. The Korean Wave must be re-imagined in scholarship as a global phenomenon, and it is in this context that awareness of and regard for South Korea are increasing as a result of its widespread popular culture. South Korea’s appealing popular culture is augmenting its soft power capacity, albeit imperfectly and not without some resistance. Consumers of Korean media are more likely to learn the Korean language, travel to South Korea, consume Korean products, and hold the country in high esteem because of their exposure to this media. The Korean Wave highlights a desire for alternatives to the dominant popular cultures, and has shown that media from a previously colonized nation can be viable on the international market. The success of Korean media could foreshadow a global shift away from Western-dominated popular culture.

### Addie Burton-Walsh | Global Studies



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## INTRODUCTION

The Korean Wave has come to the United States, and many of us don't know it. Most have seen or at least heard of "Gangnam Style," the South Korean horse-dance video that went viral in August of 2012. Pop artist Psy and his engaging dance moves dominated the internet, and "Gangnam Style" retains its title as the most viewed Youtube video of all time.<sup>1</sup>

Psy is part of a larger trend in global cultural exchange. He is part of the Korean Wave, a term coined to refer to the massive exportation of South Korean popular culture that is spreading across Asia and gaining traction across the rest of the world. For a few months in 2012, "Gangnam Style" was everywhere in America. People would absentmindedly sing a line, and more than once I witnessed someone playfully attempt to replicate the horse-dance move. News anchors would reference Psy, "Gangnam Style," or "Gangnam Style" parodies that were becoming popular. Psy himself made many appearances in the U.S. He was a surprise guest on Betty White's "Off Their Rockers," appeared on late night television shows, and was featured in a Super Bowl commercial, dancing and riding a giant pistachio. For most Americans, Psy is the only contact they have had with Korean pop music (K-pop). He came, he danced, he faded, and new videos like "What does the Fox Say?" captured America's attention. But this is not the real story of Korean popular culture in the U.S. and across the globe. "Gangnam Style" is merely a glimpse of a larger global trend.

The "Korean Wave" and "Hallyu" are terms used interchangeably to refer to the massive exportation of Korean media across the globe. The primary products of the Korean Wave are films, television dramas, and Korean pop music. The Korean Wave is not only gaining international popularity, but international influence. In this paper I argue that the popularity of the Korean media is increasing South Korea's soft power by creating an appealing and attractive image of the nation through a large base of engaged fans. In addition, Korean Wave could foreshadow a global shift

<sup>1</sup>"PSY - GANGNAM STYLE (강남스타일) M/V - YouTube," Accessed October 30, 2014.

away from American and Western-dominated popular media by highlighting demand for alternative media and demonstrating the viability of such products.

During the process of this research I have relied heavily on a compilation of scholarly works regarding the Korean Wave published as *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*.<sup>2</sup> A variety of additional works have influenced this article. I have spent time as a participatory observer on Allkpop.com, a website dedicated to news, discussions, and forums regarding Korean pop music and Korean television dramas. To better understand the influence of the Korean Wave on its fan base, I have conducted a survey of Allkpop users that compliments theoretical research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Several theorists offer useful perspectives on the Korean Wave. The work of political scientist Joseph Nye is essential to understanding the concept of soft power. As Nye explains, military and economic power are not enough for a nation to achieve its desired outcomes. The abilities to attract and persuade comprise soft power, a necessary tool in global politics. While soft power can be enhanced or diminished in a variety of fashions, the attractiveness of a nation's culture is an important soft power resource.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the popularity of South Korean media should be understood as a resource, with the potential to influence policy and favorable political outcomes for the nation.<sup>4</sup>

The consideration of the soft power potential of Korean popular media requires an examination of the ways in which this media is consumed. Edward Said's theory of Orientalism is important when considering the consumption of South Korean media in the West. Said argues that for centuries, Westerners have viewed

<sup>2</sup> Youna Kim, *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* (Routledge Chapman & Hall, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (PublicAffairs, 2004), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid; Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (PublicAffairs, 2011).

those from the East as primitive and exotic peoples, an imperialist view that has helped to justify cultural and political incursions.<sup>1</sup> Sun Jung reinterprets Said's concept of Orientalism, and argues that Western audiences consume "extreme Asian" genre cinema like the South Korean film *Oldboy* in a "neo-Orientalist" fashion.<sup>2</sup> Eun-Young Jung writes that the Western consumption of female K-pop idols may reinforce Western stereotypes of Asians and South Koreans.<sup>3</sup> South Korean media may not have an appreciable impact on the nation's soft power when consumed in these manners, as both positive and negative images of the nation may be absorbed simultaneously.

Although Korean media can serve to reinforce stereotypes and exoticize South Koreans, this is not its primary function or effect. According to the research of Youna Kim, some audiences use South Korean television dramas to reflect upon their daily lives and their societal structures by comparing their own lives to those of the television characters. This manner of consumption engages fans on deep emotional levels and perhaps has the ability to alter personal views and ideals.<sup>4</sup> Henry Jenkins explores the world of fandom and participatory consumption, illustrating that popular media and fandom can be used to negotiate identity and build community.<sup>5</sup> I argue that it is within these audiences that the soft power potential of the Korean Wave is greatest. When consumers become

engaged with popular media, both the product and the audience become more powerful.

Soft power, however, is not the only significant aspect of the Korean Wave. In a later section of this article, I suggest that the success of Korean popular media could foreshadow a global shift away from American-dominated media. Authors Henry Jenkins, Youna Kim, and Mark Ravina help illustrate various factors behind the popularity of Korean media, factors that highlight a general desire for alternatives to Western media. Hallyu media may be the harbinger of a multipolar world system within the realm of popular culture.

### SOFT POWER AND THE KOREAN WAVE

The Korean Wave first began in the late 1990s when a few South Korean television dramas became popular in China. It was not until 2004, however, that the Korean Wave began to gain real traction with success of the television drama *Winter Sonata* in Japan. Since then, the Korean Wave has continued to grow. It expanded from relying primarily on the export of television dramas, and has taken on new life with the popularity of K-pop. Korean pop music has crossed new borders and is growing in popularity internationally, especially among young audiences. In August of 2012, the K-pop video "Gangnam Style" became a viral YouTube sensation. "Gangnam Style" remains the most viewed YouTube video of all time, with over 2.1 billion views as of October 30, 2014.<sup>6</sup> People across the globe, from Sri Lanka to the United States, are becoming fans of this media. This spread of Korean media is increasing South Korea's soft power.

As the globe becomes increasingly interconnected through trade, politics, shared culture, and ease of travel, it becomes increasingly evident that military might alone cannot accomplish a nation's desired outcomes. As Joseph Nye explains, there are two forms of power: hard power which consists of coercion and payment, and soft power which relies on persuasion and attraction.<sup>7</sup> "If you can

<sup>1</sup>Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Random House LLC, 1979), 1-12. Said focuses on the "near East" but his work also applies to the East and West binary more generally.

<sup>2</sup>Sun Jung, *Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption: Yonsama, Rain, Oldboy, K-Pop Idols* (Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 122.

<sup>3</sup>Eun-Young Jung, "K-pop Female Idols in the West," in *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* ed. Youna Kim (Routledge Chapman and Hall, 2013), 109.

<sup>4</sup>Youna Kim, "Korean Wave Pop Culture in the Global Internet Age," in *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*, ed. Youna Kim (Routledge Chapman and Hall, 2013), 79-81.

<sup>5</sup>Henry Jenkins, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (NYU Press, 2006), 40-41, 156. Jenkins does not expressly use the term "identity negotiation" in these sections, however, the functions of fandom he describes do show that media and fandom are used to negotiate identity.

<sup>6</sup>"PSY - GANGNAM STYLE ( ) M/V - YouTube."

<sup>7</sup>Nye, *The Future of Power*, xxi.

get others to want the same outcomes that you want,” writes Nye, “it will not be necessary to override their initial desires.”<sup>1</sup> Through attraction, agenda setting, and appeal, it is possible to shape others’ preferences in a favorable manner without resorting to hard power coercion. As Nye writes, a country has three main sources of soft power: its culture, its foreign policies, and its political values. These resources generate soft power when they are seen as appealing, attractive, and legitimate in the eyes of others.<sup>2</sup> When popular media succeeds in portraying the host culture as appealing and attractive, it can be a significant soft power source.

A nation’s image can ultimately affect political policy and political power through a complex web of loyalties, diplomatic dependencies, and public opinion that can weave throughout and influence greater policy. Imagine for a moment that you are an avid fan of South Korean popular culture. You are learning the Korean language and hope to travel to South Korea. Now imagine fighting erupted between North and South Korea. Would your reaction to this event be different than others, considering your investment and interest in South Korea? Would you be more likely to support foreign policy that would aid South Korea? Would you be more likely to care what takes place on the Korean peninsula? Might you be pleased when South Korea obtains positive outcomes, and troubled when it does not? These are a few of the many ways in which soft power can and does function in this global age.

Behind the “Gangnam Style” phenomenon lies a mass of engaged consumers of Korean media. The worldwide spread of the Korean Wave is such a recent phenomenon that many scholars of Korean media still frame the Hallyu as an East Asian event. According to Youtube analysis, in 2011 the majority of K-pop viewers resided in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2013 that audience changed significantly, with the majority of watching occurring outside the region.<sup>3</sup> It is necessary to understand the Korean Wave as a global

event whose success is not specific to Asia, but is also apparent in parts of Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Korean media is becoming popular in regions one might not expect. In 2012 it was reported that there were 843 Hallyu fan clubs worldwide located in 73 different nations, with accelerated success in parts of Latin America.<sup>5</sup> As part of this research, I conducted a survey of this fan base through Allkpop forums. In this survey, 102 responses represented 32 distinct nations.<sup>6</sup> These far flung respondents further demonstrate the global nature of this media, yet they are a modest sample considering the website’s popularity. Allkpop.com is only one of many news and discussion sites serving fans of Korean media, yet it receives over 100 million page views per month and has roughly 6 million monthly readers.<sup>7</sup>

Korean media can do more than entertain—it can spark greater interest in South Korea and South Korean culture. Fans of Korean media are more likely to travel to South Korea, learn the Korean language, and consume Korean products. For example, the number of students learning Korean at the Singaporean Inlingua School of Language rose by 60 percent between 2001 and 2003 reportedly due to new interest generated by Korean dramas.<sup>8</sup> A broad survey conducted by the Korea Tourism Organization in 2011 concluded that 41% of American Hallyu fans are learning the Korean

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Nye, *Soft Power*, 11.

<sup>3</sup>Youtube Trends Team, “YouTube Trends: A Year since Gangnam Style, K-Pop Keeps Getting Bigger,” YouTube, July 15, 2013. Accessed March 20, 2014.

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<sup>4</sup>“Korean Wave White Paper,” Korea Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2013, 25.

<sup>5</sup>Ji-soo Kim, “Hallyu Expands Sphere to Public Diplomacy,” *Korea Times*, September 25, 2013, Accessed May 4, 2014; “(Yonhap Feature) K-Pop Fever Takes Hold in Latin America,” *Yonhap News Agency*, December 16, 2012, Accessed February 24, 2014; “S. Korea Opens First Cultural Center in Mexico,” *Yonhap News Agency*, March 13, 2012, Accessed February 24, 2014.

<sup>6</sup>Personal survey of Allkpop forum users, Data collected between January 29 and March 6, 2014.

<sup>7</sup>“Allkpop.com/about,” Allkpop.com, Accessed May 4, 2014.

<sup>8</sup>Doobo Shim, “Hybridity and the Rise of Korean Popular Culture in Asia,” *Media, Culture & Society* 28, no. 1 (2006): 29-30.

language.<sup>1</sup> Eager to seize upon this opportunity, the South Korean government is opening more cultural centers and Korean language institutes worldwide in response to growing international interest in South Korean culture.<sup>2</sup> It has even reduced the difficulty of its Korean language proficiency exam due to the increasing number of applicants.<sup>3</sup> South Korea's growing presence in foreign nations in the form of cultural centers and language institutes can help the nation to strengthen and forge friendly diplomatic relationships.<sup>4</sup>

Many consumers of Korean media hope to travel to South Korea, and many have realized this aspiration. In my survey of Allkpop users, I asked respondents to rank their desire to travel to South Korea on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 indicating the highest possible desire. Over 77% of respondents ranked their desire to travel to South Korea as 8 or above.<sup>5</sup> South Korea's increasing tourism numbers imply that many consumers of Korean media do in fact visit the peninsula. Before the success of Winter Sonata, visitation to Korea had never reached 6 million in a single year. Between 1991 and 2004, the number of visitors ranged from 3 to 5 million per year. Visitation has steadily increased since 2004, reaching over 12 million in 2013. These numbers demonstrate that tourism to South Korea has more than doubled since the beginning of the Korean Wave.<sup>6</sup>

Not all fans of Korean media will travel to South Korea, but for some it seems the most logical way to further explore their interests. In a personal interview with Chris Rogers, an American

fan of Korean media, I explored his motivations to study in Daejeon, South Korea. "Once you get into Korean media there's this natural progression. You're interested in the language or the food and you see it there in the movies and culture. And you start to see references and want to know what's behind them," said Rogers.<sup>7</sup> He is currently studying the Korean language and cementing his study-abroad plans. The natural progression he noticed seems to exist for many consumers of South Korean media. An 18 year-old Spanish survey respondent wrote:

Before I discovered K-pop, I didn't even know where SK [South Korea] was or anything about its culture. I used to thin[k] Asians w[e]re practically the same and found them to be really we[i]rd. Now that I discovered the Korean culture, my entire lif[e] revolves around SK. I've started learning the language... I watch only Korean TV, listen to Korean mus[ic] exclusively...One of my biggest wish[es] is to travel to Korea. (Personal Survey, 2014)

Fans of Korean media are not only more apt to learn the Korean language and travel to South Korea, but are also more likely to purchase South Korean products. In a 2012 poll conducted by the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 51.9 % of the 300 companies surveyed reported experiencing greater sales abroad as a result of the Korean Wave.<sup>8</sup> Korean media can make fans yearn for Korean products such as electronics, cosmetics, and cuisine. For example, the overseas sales of traditional Korean condiments like red pepper paste and soy sauce have recently skyrocketed. "The rising overseas demand for the country's traditional pastes appears to stem from the spread of Korean culture across the globe and the accompanying interests in Korean food," an official of the Korean

<sup>1</sup>"Survey Shows 41 Pct of Hallyu Fans in U.S. Learning Korean Language," *Yonhap News Agency*, October 15, 2012, Accessed February 24, 2014.

<sup>2</sup>"Number of Overseas Korean Language Institutes to Rise to 200 by 2016," *Yonhap News Agency*, February 22, 2013, Accessed February 24, 2014; "S. Korea to Open Cultural Center in Hungary," *Yonhap News Agency*, February 9, 2012, Accessed February 24, 2014.

<sup>3</sup>"Korean Language Proficiency Test to Get Easier," *Yonhap News Agency*, September 4, 2013, Accessed March 2, 2014.

<sup>4</sup>Ji-soo Kim. "Hallyu Expands Sphere to Public Diplomacy."

<sup>5</sup>Personal Survey. 104 responded to this question.

<sup>6</sup>"Visitor Arrivals, Korean Departures, Int'l Tourism Receipts & Expenditures / Tourism Statistics," Korea Tourism Organization, Accessed March 4, 2014.

<sup>7</sup>Chris Rogers, personal interview, March 15, 2014.

<sup>8</sup>Korean Pop Culture Beneficial to Business: Poll," *Yonhap News Agency*, March 7, 2012, accessed February 24, 2014.

Customs Service told Yonhap News Agency.<sup>1</sup> This increased interest in South Korea has proven beneficial to the nation's economy. In 2012, the Korea Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism estimated that the economic value of the Korean Wave had reached \$10 billion.<sup>2</sup>

The Korean Wave has not only increased economic activity, but has had other important consequences. Many people around the world are beginning to have an interest in South Korea due to exposure to its popular media, and consumers are becoming invested in the K-pop nation. On April 16, 2014, a South Korean ferry capsized with 475 passengers and crew members on board. This accident proved fatal for most of the vessel's passengers.<sup>3</sup> During the days following the event, Allkpop forum users showed solidarity with and support for South Korea, expressing their sadness and remorse, and sending prayers for the victims and their families.<sup>4</sup> One Allkpop user even wrote and recorded a song in response to the tragedy that she dedicated to South Korea.<sup>5</sup> When events come to pass in South Korea, these foreign consumers are not unaffected or apathetic—they care, they act, and that is soft power.

Although “Gangnam Style” was silly and comical, it disseminated images of an advanced nation with luxury cars, tall skyscrapers, and a fresh and goofy sense of humor. Through popular media, South Korea is able to positively influence the way it's seen by other nations. *In Korean Masculinities and Transcultural*

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<sup>1</sup>“Exports of Traditional Korean Condiments on the Rise,” *Yonhap News Agency*, June 25, 2013, Accessed March 2, 2014.

<sup>2</sup>Kim, *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*, 6.

<sup>3</sup>Sang-hun Choe and Jiha Ham, “Koreans Bid Farewell to Victims of a Disaster, and Even the North Speaks Up,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2014, Accessed March 2, 2014.

<sup>4</sup>Many posts related to the South Korean ferry disaster including: “How Many People Are Still Missing? | Allkpop.com.” April 16, 2014. Accessed April 18, 2014.;

“Heartbreaking .. | Allkpop.com.” April 17, 2014. Accessed April 18, 2014.;

“PRAY | Allkpop.com.” April 17, 2014. Accessed April 18, 2014.

<sup>5</sup>“When Words Fail, Music Speaks | Allkpop.com,” April 17, 2014, Accessed April 24, 2014.

*Consumption*, Sun Jung explores the popularity of *Winter Sonata* in Japan, and examines its effects on Japanese perceptions of South Korea and Korean masculinity. According to Jung, the popularity of Bae Yong-joon, the male star of *Winter Sonata*, has bettered South Korea's image in Japan and inspired many Japanese to learn more about South Korean culture.<sup>6</sup> Jung highlights the radical way in which Korean masculinity has been re-imagined in Japan as a result of this media. “In particular, it is evident from the responses to my research questionnaires that Japanese women's perceptions have changed from viewing South Korean men as overly macho and uncivilized to viewing them as possessing highly idealized attributes,” writes Jung.<sup>7</sup> Most of the Japanese women involved in Jung's study used words such as “dark, scary, sly, aggressive, and violent” to describe their impressions of Korean men before *Winter Sonata*.<sup>8</sup> The lead actor of *Winter Sonata* is now one of the most idolized actors among Japanese women. According to Eun Shil Kim, a South Korean professor of Women's Studies, Bae Yong-joon's fans no longer see South Korea as “dark, noisy, smelly,” but now associate it with “beautiful things” and view Bae Yong-joon as the idealized man.<sup>9</sup> The success of *Winter Sonata* has even affected the lives of Koreans residing in Japan. A Korean-Japanese woman living in Japan stated, “Japanese people used to treat us [Korean-Japanese] as if we were not human beings, but after *Yonsama* [the Japanese name for Bae Yong-joon], their attitudes have been changed completely.”<sup>10</sup> The Korean Wave is changing the way people view South Korea. The country is becoming known by its culture, and not solely for its turbulent political history. The changing image of South Korea in Japan has intriguing potential considering tense history and ongoing political conflicts between the two nations.

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<sup>6</sup>Sun Jung, *Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption: Yonsama, Rain, Oldboy, K-Pop Idols* (Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 36.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 45.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 45.

<sup>9</sup>Norimitsu Onishi, “What's Korean for ‘Real Man?’ Ask a Japanese Woman,” *The New York Times*, December 23, 2004, Accessed March 4, 2014.

<sup>10</sup>Jung, *Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption*, 37.



In a section of my survey of Allkpop users, I asked respondents to describe South Korea. Over 75% of respondents used positive imagery exclusively to describe South Korea. There were, however, 13 responses that did include a negative view of South Korea and 11 responses that were neutral in their imagery. Most of the responses classified as negative did include both negative and positive imagery. Only 4 of these 13 responses did not include some positive language.<sup>1</sup> A 21 year-old Spanish survey respondent wrote:

Regardless of the TV shows, movies, music and food, I don't like Korea. It's a developed country only [o]n the surface. I can respect too many things from too many countries but racism, xenophobia or homophobia are just beyond me, I don't care who it is. Korea, as a country, has a really long way to go.  
(Personal survey, 2014)

Yet despite critical views of South Korea, these respondents still wish to travel to the country. Of these 13 critical respondents, 9 showed a high desire to travel to South Korea. Of the remaining 4 respondents, 3 showed a moderate desire to travel to South Korea, and only 1 respondent showed a low desire to travel to South Korea.<sup>2</sup>

The great majority of respondents (77.9%) revealed a high desire to travel to South Korea. These results indicate that the consumption of this media is increasing South Korea's soft power by presenting the country as generally alluring and appealing.<sup>3</sup> While some fans may have negative impressions of South Korea, they appear to be outliers. Words like "advanced" and "beautiful" were far more popular ways of describing South Korea, suggesting the majority of these fans have a highly positive image of South Korea. "It's a really beautiful and developed country. The people are hardworking, humble and respectful," wrote a 17 year-old survey

respondent from Hungary.<sup>4</sup>

Until now, the image of South Korea has been limited. According to Joseph Nye and Youna Kim, Europeans still mainly associate South Korea with North Korea or the Korean War, and not with its culture.<sup>5</sup> This is rapidly changing as South Korean media continues to spread. "Before I knew anything about kpop/kdramas/anything I didn't care about South Korea at all (honestly I probably didn't even know where it was) but now I think that the South Korean culture is really interesting and different than I even imagined," wrote a 15 year-old survey respondent from Finland.<sup>6</sup> South Korea may be seen as a very different nation to those that consume Korean media than those who do not.

### NOT ALL CONSUMPTION IS EQUAL

In order to better understand the soft power potential of the Korean Wave, the consumptive practices of its consumers becomes a relevant area of inquiry. Not all consumptive practices are equal—different manners of consumption produce differing levels of investment and interest in South Korea. The soft power potential of Korean media depends in part on how it is consumed.

Some manners of consuming Korean media can be damaging to the nation's image. In *Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption*, Sun Jung examines the Euro-American consumption of the Korean film *Oldboy*, the first South Korean film to gain online fandom among Western viewers.<sup>7</sup> According to Jung's research, many Westerners consume these "extreme Asian" genre films in a "neo-Orientalist" fashion. This concept is a reworking of Edward Said's original theory of Orientalism. While Orientalism has many implications as a concept, it suggests that the East is perceived as backward, mysterious, primitive, exotic, and ultimately inferior;

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Nye and Youna Kim, "Soft Power and the Korean Wave." in *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*, ed. Youna Kim (Routledge Chapman and Hall, 2013), 35.

<sup>6</sup>Personal Survey.

<sup>7</sup>Jung, *Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption*, 127.

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<sup>1</sup>Personal Survey. Percentages are based on a total of 98 responses.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. On a scale of 1-10, High is classified as 8-10, Moderate 5-7, and Low 1-4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. 77.9% High, 15.4% Moderate, 6.7% Low desire to travel to South Korea.

views that have justified imperialist actions.<sup>1</sup> As Jung explains, neo-Orientalism is a Western perception of the East not as primitive, but as a strange and transgressive entity, desirable for this exotic transgression.<sup>2</sup>

This manner of consumption could complicate the soft power potential of Korean media if widespread and prevalent. A film such as *Oldboy*, like many media products, can have contradictory messages and effects. It can serve to broaden general awareness of South Korea, but can foster problematic perceptions. For viewers of *Oldboy* who have never been exposed to Korean media, South Korea likely just went from being a totally unfamiliar nation to a “cool Other,” coveted for this strange and exotic image.<sup>3</sup> The soft power potential of such viewing is limited.

This is not the only problematic manner of consumption that scholars of Korean media have observed. In the article “K-pop Female Idols in the West,” Eun-Young Jung argues that the consumption of female K-pop idols in the West may reinforce racial stereotypes about Asians and Koreans. In her work, Eun-Young Jung studies mainstream American consumption of K-pop idols—she examines the responses of consumers as they view female K-pop idols on late night television shows and other venues that can reach the general public. According to this research, the consumption of female K-pop idols can reinforce existing stereotypes about Asians, especially Asian women.<sup>4</sup> Korean media can strengthen and reiterate such stereotypes.

Both Eun-Young Jung and Sun Jung have noted problematic consumption in the West; however, the groups studied are quite similar. These passive consumers do not generally employ this media for purposes beyond entertainment. The Western fandom of *Oldboy* is largely comprised of cult movie fans, or fans of “extreme Asian” film, and not necessarily aficionados of Korean cinema or

other Hallyu products. Eun-Young Jung has studied the reaction of mainstream American audiences to Korean media—consumers who do not likely hold affection for Korean media and have had little exposure to Korean Wave products. Media is constantly filtered through societal ideas of race and sexuality. Through prolonged exposure, however, media can begin to challenge and alter these ideas. It is within spaces of engaged and persistent consumption that South Korean media therefore has the greatest soft power potential.

Not all consumers are alike, which is not surprising considering Korean media’s global reach. The Korean Wave’s success is not built upon passive viewers, but largely upon a growing online fan base of engaged and participatory consumers. According to the Korea Tourism Organization, 65% of Hallyu fans are in their teens or their twenties, an age group known for its online activity and technology-based lifestyles.<sup>5</sup> Many of these fans interact online with this media. Fans have enabled the spread of the Korean Wave through word-of-mouth (or tweet), by creating and publishing cover videos, and by translating and subtitling songs and dramas so that other foreign consumers might be able to understand Korean-language content. There are many manners of engagement, some with intriguing potential.

In the article “Korean Wave Pop Culture in the Global Internet Age,” Youna Kim writes that Korean media, especially Korean dramas, can be used in a quasi-therapeutic fashion. They can trigger reflexive reflection upon daily life and become a way for viewers to make sense of their social and political conditions. She further argues that this reflexive consideration of social structure could cause viewers to question the legitimacy and merit of their own societal structure and social conditions. Accordingly, this manner of engagement possesses the potential to alter consumers’

<sup>1</sup>Said, *Orientalism*, 1-12.

<sup>2</sup>Jung, *Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption*, 122.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 122.

<sup>4</sup>Eun-Young Jung, “K-pop Female Idols in the West,” in *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*, ed. Youna Kim (Routledge Chapman and Hall, 2013), 109.

<sup>5</sup>Charm Lee, “Hallyu Wave and Tourism,” Personal correspondence, April 15, 2014.

perceptions, values, and ideals.<sup>1</sup>

In *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers*, Henry Jenkins explores the nature of contemporary fandom. Jenkins argues that fans, by definition, utilize their chosen media to build community.<sup>2</sup> Fandom is a way of defining and negotiating identity and can provide a liberating space where these consumers can express themselves in ways they might not otherwise feel free to do.<sup>3</sup> This consumption observed by Henry Jenkins and Youna Kim could greatly influence South Korea's soft power.

On Allkpop.com, Korean media as a tool for community building and identity negotiation can be witnessed first-hand. Some users that feel they are minorities reach out to community for validation and solidarity as can be seen in the post "Is anyone here muslim(a)?"<sup>4</sup> Others use forum posts to negotiate ideas of sexuality, body image, and social anxieties. Vulnerabilities are revealed and discussed, community is formed, and sense of self may become interlaced with Korean media fandom. "K-pop has certainly affected the type of person I've become today. It's given me a niche to belong to and a lot of friends," wrote a 22 year-old Vietnamese-American survey respondent.<sup>5</sup> When fandom becomes so entwined with community and support, it becomes a part of identity. This intersection of fandom and identity seems to signify that these fans consume Korean media in very different fashions than those that Sun Jung and Eun-Young Jung observed. The conjunction of these fans' strong personal connection with Korean media and their high desire to travel to South Korea (as evidenced by the survey and increasing tourism numbers) implies the Korean Wave has a significant soft power impact within this and other similar fan groups.

Not all consumptive practices will increase South Korea's

soft power. Some may be neutral, and others could be potentially damaging. Participatory consumption seems to have the greatest soft power potential. When fans employ this media to play a central role in their personal lives, it has the largest prospect of creating interest and investment in South Korea and can possibly influence perceptions, values, and ideals.

#### Limitations of the Korean Wave's Soft Power Potential

The Korean Wave represents a new and exciting form of media. It is not, however, without limitations. Some manners of consumption might not positively affect soft power, while others might produce problematic perceptions of Korea. Additionally, South Korean media is not always well received in the nations to which it is exported.

Despite the potentials of participatory consumption, not all aspects of fandom problem-free. In a personal interview with Chris Rogers, an American fan of Korean media, he pointed out that there can be aspects of fetishization and idealization within some of these Hallyu fan communities. In our conversation he noted:

There's a lot of girls who only want to date Korean men. I guess it's more fetishization than anything else. There's this idea that K-pop is somehow more pure so people will 'slut-shame' artists... There's this whole shrinking of Korean culture... this whole huge dynamic thing people want it to fit in this box... There's a lot of that though, the idea that one single thing is absolutely representative of one-hundred percent of Korean culture and that it's this flat, easily laid out [thing]. And there's not a lot of consciousness in the K-pop fandom about the harm that that does. (Rogers, 2014).

Rogers has witnessed other fans of Korean media trying to simplify Korean culture to fit within their own predetermined parameters. The term "fetishization" is used here to denote an irrational or excessive devotion to something, in this case Korean media. With an irrational devotion, lines between the reality and fantasy of the

<sup>1</sup>Youna Kim, "Korean Wave Pop Culture in the Global Internet Age," in *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* ed. Youna Kim (Routledge Chapman and Hall, 2013), 179.

<sup>2</sup>Jenkins, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers*, 41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 85, 156.

<sup>4</sup>"Is Anyone Here Muslim(a)? | Allkpop.com," Accessed March 2, 2014.

<sup>5</sup>Personal Survey.

fetishized object could become blurred, resulting in misguided perceptions of South Korea.

Joseph Nye and Youna Kim note a similar problem on a larger scale. "A country's image, as a source of soft power, can be both very powerful and very constraining," write Nye and Kim. "The global audiences may expect certain conformity with the very partial, or extremely polished, image in the popular cultural forms of K-pop music, dramas, and films, without further developing an ability to understand the country's actual conditions and socio-political issues."<sup>1</sup> Despite these problems, an interest in and familiarity with a country, even if only through its popular culture, can be an important first step toward in-depth understanding. The consumption of Korean media can lead to misconceptions about the actual nature of South Korean culture and society, however the interest generated by this media may also lead to a greater understanding of the nation and its culture by inciting research, travel, and language-learning. Here lies a contradiction. We can neither expect Korean media to be an all-powerful educational and enlightening tool, nor can we view it as an essentially misleading or harmful introduction to South Korea. Instead, we must view Hallyu media as a complex product that can have contradictory effects upon its audience.

Several survey respondents confessed that they did not know that South Korea existed, or did not know where it was on a map, before their exposure to Korean media. Others had only heard about South Korea in the context of North Korean tensions. An 18 year-old survey respondent from Austria wrote:

Before listening to K-pop I only knew [South] Korea because of North Korea. Now I see South Korea as an economically fast growing country with lots of interesting cultural aspects. I also like Samsung a lot more since I know that it's a Korean brand. (Personal survey, 2014)

<sup>1</sup>Nye and Kim, *The Korean Wave*, 47.

The consumption of Korean media may not lead to an entirely accurate image of South Korea, however, even an imperfect image can increase South Korea's soft power. At the level of the individual consumer, interest in South Korea is the first, most important step toward developing a greater understanding of the nation.

Although in many nations the Korean Wave has been well-received, it has encountered resistance, especially in neighboring Asian countries. Anti-Korean Wave movements have arisen in Japan, Singapore, China, Thailand, and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Some view the onslaught of Korean media as a new form of cultural imperialism, and others feel political and historical tensions provide latent anti-Korean sentiments. These anti-Korean Wave movements do not appear large enough to negate the positive influence of the Korean Wave, but their presence should be taken as a warning to South Korean policy-makers. Joseph Nye and Youna Kim point out this limitation in their article "Soft Power and the Korean Wave":

The Korean Wave popular culture, as resources for soft power for the postcolonial periphery, can ironically generate a new version of cultural imperialism that is deeply embedded in cultural nationalism and its ideological position going against cultural diversity and soft power of attraction. (41)

The success of the Korean Wave is a source of pride for many Koreans, and scholar Jeong-suk Joo has observed an increase in nationalistic sentiments as a result.<sup>3</sup> A nation seen as overly nationalistic could lose its power of appeal. Joseph Nye and Youna Kim highlight the various ways the Korean Wave can increase soft power, but end their article on this cautionary note: soft power comes not from coercion, but attraction. If people feel that they are being forced to consume Korean media, this media will lose its power of attraction

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 40.

<sup>3</sup>Jeongsuk Joo, "Transnationalization of Korean Popular Culture and the Rise of 'Pop Nationalism' in Korea," *Journal of Popular Culture* 44, no. 3 (2011): 489-90.

along with its soft power potential.<sup>1</sup> Up to this point, South Korean government policy has fostered and supported the Korean Wave without much discussion or hesitation.<sup>2</sup> Government policy has treated the Korean Wave as a source of power and revenue whose primary objective is growth. Perhaps this approach is too simplistic in the global age.

Near the beginning of this paper, I asked you to imagine that you were a fan of South Korean media. You were learning the Korean language and hoped to travel to the country one day. This persona you were asked to imagine is not fictitious, but represents a growing global subculture. With the help of this global subculture, the Korean Wave is augmenting South Korea's soft power. This increase is imperfect, it is not without resistance, yet it may prove to have tangible effects on international policy and the political sway of the South Korean nation. Soft power, however elusive and intriguing, is not the only area affected by the Korean Wave. The success of the Hallyu could indicate a global transformation in transnational media consumption.

The Korean Wave: Shifting Power in Global Popular Culture

As I analyzed the data I had collected from Allkpop forum users, I was struck by an unexpected trend. The majority of these survey respondents state that they consume less American media now than they did before beginning consume Korean media. As the Korean Wave continues to grow, the landscape of transnational media consumption may evolve. The success of Korean media is demonstrating that cultural products from a semi-peripheral, formerly colonized nation can be viable on the international market. Indeed, the popularity of the Korean Wave seems to reveal a broad desire for alternatives to the dominant Western media, a demand that new supplies may rise to meet.

As previously discussed, the Korean Wave is becoming popular in Asia and parts of Europe, Latin America, the Middle

East, Africa, and North America. The exact number of Hallyu fans is unknown. In 2011, it was estimated that there were 3.3 million members of Hallyu fan clubs around the world.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, the Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade estimated that this number had risen to 6.7 million, a number that requires adjustment to account for more recent growth.<sup>4</sup>

This media is not only spreading, but it appears to displace American media in some of its fan base. In my survey of Allkpop forum users, I asked respondents if they consume less American media now than they did before they began to consume Korean media. Of the 78 respondents to this question, 68 answered yes, that they do consume less American media now than they did before. Only 7 responded that they consume the same amount of American media as before, and an additional 3 responded that they did not like American media to begin with.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps interest in Korean media is not a fleeting trend, but a reflection of a deep desire for an alternative to Western media.

The popularity of the Korean Wave is surprising to some, with diverse speculations surrounding its success. When discussed in the context of Asia, it is said that the Confucian values found in Korean media increase its appeal to this audience.<sup>6</sup> It is noted that in the Middle East, Korean media is often compatible with certain social norms as it portrays emotional and romantic passions without the explicit sexuality found in Western media.<sup>7</sup> Youna Kim writes that the initial growth of the Korean Wave in Europe might be due to familiarity with Japanese popular culture, making Korean media less foreign and more accessible.<sup>8</sup> Henry Jenkins argues that

<sup>1</sup>Nye and Kim, *The Korean Wave*, 41.

<sup>2</sup>Hye-Kyung Lee, "Cultural Policy and the Korean Wave," in *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* ed. Youna Kim (Routledge Chapman and Hall, 2013), 197.

<sup>3</sup>Edwina Mukasa, "Bored by Cowell Pop? Try K-Pop," *The Guardian*, December 15, 2011, Accessed May 4, 2014.

<sup>4</sup>Ji-soo Kim, "Hallyu Expands Sphere to Public Diplomacy."

<sup>5</sup>Personal Survey.

<sup>6</sup>Kim, *The Korean Wave*, 84.

<sup>7</sup>Mark Ravina, "Introduction: Conceptualizing the Korean Wave," *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* Volume 31 (2009), Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian studies, 2009, 7.

<sup>8</sup>Kim, *The Korean Wave*, 9.

American youth may use foreign media as a means of distinguishing themselves from their parents' generation.<sup>1</sup>

Additional factors might include tense historical, political, and social relationships with the West. As Youna Kim suggests, Korean media might be perceived as a less threatening foreign cultural product than its Western counterparts.<sup>2</sup> South Korea has an uncomfortable history as a formerly colonized nation, and remains a strategic area of importance to dominant nations. This is a relatable history, one that many countries have experienced. South Korea's non-threatening history might also contribute to the success of its media.

Although there is not a single factor that explains the popularity of the Korean Wave, there does seem to be a broad desire for alternatives to Western media. This desire is evidenced by the diverse nationalities drawn to Korean media, the failure of Western media to meet the varied needs of the global audience, and consumers' willingness to forsake American media when presented with a viable alternative. The Korean Wave has illustrated that media from a semi-peripheral, formerly colonized nation can be successful on the global market. Alternative forms of media can fill those desires that are unsatisfied by Western media, and can appear to displace dominant media forms among consumers. Further study will reveal definitively if the rise of alternative media continues, but it seems distinct possibility, even a probable one.

### CONCLUSION

In the United States, Psy came, he danced, and he appeared to fade away. But the story of Korean media is a far deeper and more complex saga than it first might appear. Psy is more than a pop star: he is a diplomat, a social networker, and a harbinger of global transformations in transnational media consumption.

In the years since "Gangnam Style," the Korean Wave, and especially the export of K-pop, has grown significantly. It was my own contact with Korean media that led me to further

study the phenomenon. I became intrigued and fascinated by "Gangnam Style," eagerly following its success and proliferation. I then watched the South Korean film called *Joint Security Area* and became fascinated by the relationship between North and South Korea. The interest in South Korea generated by this media inspired me to travel to the peninsula, where I discovered that my experience was not unique. Many of the American students I met in South Korea had also become interested in the nation through Korean media. This observation inspired me to conduct further research—to attempt to understand the global trend I had unwittingly become a part of.

The Korean Wave is increasing South Korea's soft power. This media is generating a more positive image of the nation as well as general interest in South Korea and South Korean culture, all of which can influence the nation's political sway. The Korean Wave has demonstrated that media from a semi-peripheral, formerly colonized nation can be viable on the international market. It has revealed a widespread desire for alternatives to Western media, a desire that could foreshadow a global shift away from American dominated cultural products. Without Psy in America's media spotlight, it is easy to forget about Korean media. But consider this: the most viewed Youtube video of 2013 was not Miley Cyrus, Justin Bieber, or Katy Perry. They all ranked below another South Korean pop song.<sup>3</sup> Psy's newer song "Gentlemen" was not only the most viewed Youtube video of 2013, but broke a world record of its own. "Gentlemen" received the greatest number of views in a single day that any Youtube video has ever garnered, with more than 38 million views in one day alone.<sup>4</sup>

"Gangnam Style" can be used as a portal through which to view and consider the growth of Korean media, its possible effects, and the multitude of unforeseen consequences that are beginning to emerge. South Korean media is changing the nature of a global

<sup>1</sup>Jenkins, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers*, 156.

<sup>2</sup>Kim, *The Korean Wave*, 85.

<sup>3</sup>Lily Rothman, "Psy Tops Miley for Most-Watched Music Video of 2013," *Time*, December 11, 2013, Accessed May 4, 2014.

<sup>4</sup>Dan Barrett, "PSY Secures New YouTube World Record with 'Gentleman,'" *Guinness World Records*, April 25, 2013, Accessed May 4, 2014.

industry and gaining South Korea a more favorable position within international politics. Psy, with his comedic dances and eccentric style, warrants further consideration as the face of a significant global phenomenon.

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## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Brittany McClure and Maggie Slocumb for their creative and unwavering support throughout the process of this research. Professors Ben Feinberg and David Abernathy have provided invaluable insight and instruction, and without them this project would not have been possible. I would like to thank the users of Allkpop.com that so willingly let me into their world, helpful at every turn. Finally, Professor Jeff Keith encouraged my interest in this topic, helped me to find relevant research, and has provided edits, insights, and suggestions throughout the writing process. His input and encouragement lead to the creation of this article, and I am extraordinarily grateful.



*Mom and Me* by Ghensiri Rosson, 2013. Oil.

## Monkey-Wrenching the Anthropological Machine

### Abstract:

In *The Open: Man and Animal*, Giorgio Agamben demonstrated how western philosophy has constructed the concept of humanity (what is human) in direct opposition to animality (what is animal), through a process called the Anthropological Machine. The anthropocentric logic of the Anthropological Machine has privileged human qualities and has manipulated the totality of animal identity. Here, Agamben was mainly concerned in how this process affected human animals. Critiquing Agamben's lack of an animal experience in his theorization of the harms of the Anthropological Machine, this paper explores the violence towards animals inherent in the historical manipulation of the concept of Animality produced by the Anthropological Machine. This violence is expressed in how the very ontology of animality is manufactured through the manipulation of the animal's environment, biology and purpose. In order to do so, I will revise Agamben's political framework to include an animal experience, while relying on philosophers like Jacques Derrida to critique the Anthropocentrism present in philosophy and in addition animal activist and scholar Karen Davis to explore how animal identities are being manufactured.

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*"Philosophy exists in order to redeem what you see in the gaze of an animal." - Theodore Adorno*

In *The Open: Man and Animal*, Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben describes the historical underlying logic in philosophy addressing the ontological relationship between humans and animals. In this book he coins the term "anthropological machine" to describe the premises and logical mechanisms of distinguishing the human subject in relation to Animals.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the anthropological machine is a metaphor for a form of thought where the concept of humanity is constructed in opposition to the Animal by, as Agamben notes, "animalizing the human and isolating the nonhuman within the human."<sup>2</sup>

In *The Open*, Agamben traces the political implications present in the use of the anthropological machine throughout the centuries. This logic has been employed by disciplines including ancient political philosophy and modern paleontology. According to Agamben, this logic consequently alienates and harms individuals who fall outside the category of a proper human being. Agamben's underlying project is to find ways to jam and stop the internal mechanism of the anthropological machine in order to articulate a new concept of Humanism.

Several critiques of Agamben have stressed that his analysis focuses only on the effect of the anthropological machine on human beings.<sup>3</sup> His work excludes any analysis of how this anthropological logic affects and harms non-human animals.

In this paper I will elaborate on the ways the anthropological machine harms a variety of animal species in order to represent

and speak against the violence targeted towards animals. To support this thesis I will first explore the concept of citizenship as it relates to the power of the Stat explained in Agamben's book *Homo Sacer: Sovereignty and Bare Life*. This description will demonstrate how beings excluded from the political domain are harmed. Second, I will present the dangerous logic that the Anthropological Machine employs by separating the categories of humans and nonhumans, as described in *The Open: Man and Animal*. Third, I will use Jacques Derrida's critique of anthropocentrism found in his book *The Animal That Therefore I Am* to describe some of the flaws present in the tradition of Western philosophy when addressing the ontological relationship between humans and animal. Through Derrida, I will expose the fundamental mistake of not recognizing the variety and multiplicity of the animal experience that results in violent consequences towards non-human animals. Fourth, I will focus on how the anthropological machine's harm towards humans differs from the harm towards non-human animals by exposing the unfortunate position that some animals hold in society. Finally, I will rely on Karen Davis' investigation of animal identity to further analyze the underlying logic of the anthropological machine and how it *violently appropriates* the concept of "Animality" by manipulating, stretching, and commodifying the "Animal," both physically and conceptually, for the convenience of human-beings. As a conclusion, I will argue the importance of philosophy recognizing its own theoretical and practical limitations when addressing the ontological, environmental, social, and political position of non-human animals. This argument aims to further *monkey-wrench* the harmful mechanism of the anthropological machine and produce a body of knowledge that is philosophically concerned with non-human life forms.

The implications of jamming the internal mechanisms of an anthropocentric logic will benefit the entire community of living beings. Through the jamming of this machine we will understand more about what it means to be human, respect the plural experience of animals, save the millions of animals that are killed every day, and most importantly, redefine the relationship between human beings and their environment.

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<sup>1</sup>Animals with a capital A refers to the totalizing concept of all animals in general. (Throughout this paper I will use the words: Animals, animals, and Animality, which refers to the context of how each philosopher talks about a variety of animal species. In other other cases, I will specify what animal species I am discussing.)

<sup>2</sup>Giorgio Agamben, *The Open Man and Animal* (California: Stanford University Press, 2002).

<sup>3</sup>Matthew Calarco and Kelly Oliver have briefly mentioned in their writing this downside of Agamben's thought.

## HOMO SACER AND THE SOVEREIGN

Agamben is interested in the ontological meaning of “citizenship” and his work provides clues to answering questions such as: *what does it mean to be a citizen? How does one become a part of the political domain?* Through philosophical examination, Agamben uncovers the limits of the political realm in order to point out its internal contradiction and to also expose how the constitution of citizenship oppresses some groups of human beings.

In one of his most critical books, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben is primarily concerned with the boundaries of the political domain as a way to understand the limits of citizenship. He begins by expanding on Michel Foucault’s notion of “biopolitics.” In his analysis of power Foucault points out that in the 17th century, sovereign power, in the form of the State, became preoccupied with biological factors that influence the population. For the state to efficiently manage the population, it needed to understand the mechanism of the body and the conditions that caused these to vary such as births rates, mortality, health, life expectancy, and longevity. In this sense, power becomes invested in the “administration of bodies and the calculated management of life.”<sup>1</sup>

Biopolitics, specifically, is the form of political control that targets and manages life itself as a biological entity through the subtle manipulation of population through institutions like law and medicine. For Agamben, this form of biopolitical control is at the very foundation of Western society.<sup>2</sup> In order to explore how biopolitics has operated historically, he investigates two opposite figures: the *Homo Sacer* and the Sovereign.

The *Homo Sacer* is a criminal figure in ancient Roman law who, after committing a certain crime, is banned from the State and becomes an entity that “may be killed but not sacrificed.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, the *Homo Sacer* may be killed by anybody and the

killing will not be recognized as a homicide. In addition, the *Homo Sacer* may also not be sacrificed to the gods, therefore, this figure is “sacred” in the sense that they are “already possessed by the gods and is originally and in a special way possessed by the gods of the underworld, and so there is no need for it to become sacrificed through a new action.”<sup>4</sup> This double exclusion from both law and divinity leaves this figure in a state of limbo both outside and inside of the political sphere, and thus the *Homo Sacer* is included into the political realm only by form of its exclusion.

The opposite figure of *Homo Sacer* is the Sovereign. The Sovereign, like the *Homo Sacer*, is outside the law. As Agamben explains, “the sovereign, having the legal power to suspend the validity of law, legally places himself outside the law.”<sup>5</sup> The Sovereign has the power to exclude himself from the sphere of law and politics, and through this exclusion the Sovereign holds the privileged position to designate who and what can and cannot be a part of the State. As a result, these opposite figures, *Homo Sacer* and the Sovereign, constitute the boundaries of citizenship; both of these figures are at opposite sides of the spectrum demarcating the metaphysical territory of the State in which all other proper citizens fit.

This demarcated spectrum by which Western politics defines the notion of citizenship qualifies such politics as, according to Agamben, biopolitical. Specifically, this is done through violent exclusion of the individuals who are labelled as *Homo Sacer*. To support this conclusion, Agamben uses Aristotle’s distinction between *zoe* and *bios* to represent the difference between who is and who is not a citizen. To explain the difference between *zoe* and *bios*, Agamben, following Aristotle writes “*zoe*, which expressed the simple fact of all living beings (animals, men, or gods), and *bios*, which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or group.”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, according to Aristotle, *zoe* (matter that is basically alive) can be transformed through the State into *bio* (matter that lives a through the acquisition of language, culture, politics,

<sup>1</sup>Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 140.

<sup>2</sup>Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereignty, Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (California: Stanford University Press, 1998).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 1.

and rationality). These qualities count as the “good life” in contrast to the “bare life” or the simple fact of being alive. Agamben sees State law as constructed by the Sovereign, and as the constituting institution that decides and defines what counts as *bios* or “qualified life.” This mechanism by which State law can control and manage the population is biopolitical, because the State has the power to constitute and create bare life by defining who can be excluded and who can be included into the political domain.

As mentioned previously, Agamben continues his ontological project in his later work *The Open: Man and Animal*. In this book, he inspects the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion by analyzing the ways in which human beings have constituted their humanity by excluding what is “foreign” inside of them. Agamben is interested in the position of Animals and how they have functioned in opposition to what constitutes the human being. He names the historical project of constructing and defining humanity as the opposite of Animality: the anthropological machine.

### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL MACHINE

For centuries, and very much in the present day, defining what it means to be human has been one of the most important concerns for the academic disciplines of the humanities. Therefore, the logic behind how we define humanity is extremely important.

For Agamben, the anthropological machine is the mechanism that empties what is human of its animal characteristics. As a result, the machine constructs the human through the exclusion of the animal. Through this mechanism philosophy can present and articulate what is proper to humanity. Primarily this logical machine is, as Agamben notes, “a machine or device for producing the recognition of the human.”<sup>1</sup>

Agamben presents two distinct variations of the anthropological machine: the ancient and the modern. He exposes the two ways in which the anthropological machine harms human beings by denying them the label of the proper human.

The modern variation is the logic adopted by several academic disciplines and political regimes in defining humanity by “animalizing the human by isolating the non-human within the human.”<sup>2</sup> This mechanism consists of isolating and determining the animal aspects of the human animal and excluding them from what is proper to humanity.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, humanity is what Animality is not. For example, humans and animals share a lot of common ground biologically, but disciplines like science, philosophy, and psychology have privileged human “difference” or a human uniqueness that supposedly separates the human and the Animal. These disciplines emphasize elements like symbolic language, culture, politics, and theoretical rationality, which are not found in Animals, therefore, these elements constitute what is proper to humanity. To illustrate this point, Agamben sets the comatose of an example of a figure that has been denied its humanity because it constitutes pure “bare life” because of the lack of proper human characteristics. In addition, a more concrete example for Agamben is the Jew under Nazi Germany. Through the logic of the modern variation of the anthropological machine, the Jew is set as an “animalized human” who embodies the “non-man,” which further justified the Nazi xenophobic political agenda.

The ancient variation of the anthropological machine is the opposite of the modern. Instead of determining and excluding the animal within the human or “animalizing the human,” disciplines have “humanized the animal.” As philosopher Matthew Calarco states, “human beings that take an essentially animal form are used to mark the constitutive outside of humanity proper.”<sup>4</sup> Figures like “the slave” and “the barbarian” are basically animals in form, and therefore suffer the same consequences of not being granted what is proper to humanity.

To summarize the logical mechanism of the anthropological machine Agamben states, “Insofar as the production of man

<sup>1</sup>Giorgio Agamben, *The Open Man and Animal* (California: Stanford University Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>3</sup>Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 49.

through the opposition of man/animal, human/inhuman, is at stake here, the machine necessarily functions by means of exclusion (which is also always already capturing) and an inclusion (which is also always already an exclusion).<sup>1</sup> The theme of the mechanism behind the power to designate what can be included and excluded from either humanity or citizenship becomes a deep ethico-political project, since this power, as Agamben has demonstrated, is violently harming human beings who fall outside the theoretical boundaries.

In order to describe the danger of being excluded from politics, Agamben analyzes the phenomenon of the concentration camp. For Agamben, the creation of the concentration camp is a clear example of authoritarian biopolitics where life itself is manipulated, controlled, and organized. Concentration camps become “the space that is open when the state of exception becomes the rule.” He continues, “in the camp, the state of exception, which was essentially a temporary suspension of rule of law on the basis of factual state of danger, is now given a permanent spatial arrangement.”<sup>2</sup> The concentration camp is the “state of exception” in the sense that it is a territory outside of the boundaries of the state where the conceptions of law and citizenship do not operate in the same way as in the state. For example, inside the concentration camp, the killing of prisoners was not counted as murder. As the mechanism of the anthropological machine demonstrates, Jewish prisoners were stripped of their humanity because the ruling disciplines labeled them as non-human, hence they fell outside of the boundaries of humanity proper. Through the example of the concentration camp as the space of the excluded, Agamben demonstrates the dangers of a State that sets the boundaries between insiders and outsiders. Western biopolitics becomes the greatest danger to humanity.

Despite Agamben’s groundbreaking work in biopolitics and citizenship, one of the greatest limitations of his thought is the anthropocentric framework. In both *Homo Sacer* and *The Open*,

Agamben is only interested in the perspective of the *homo*—the human. Despite Agamben’s exploration of animal issues in both books, he does not push his theories far enough. Evidence is found in the current social and political situation of Animals that expands Agamben’s notions of *Homo Sacer*, concentration camps, and the anthropological machine to its further implications regarding the organization and definition of citizenship and life. Calarco is one of the first to point to this critical limitation indicating that despite Agamben’s work regarding the definition of humanity, “[Agamben] does not manifest the same vigilance towards anthropocentric determinations of animal life.”<sup>3</sup>

### DERRIDA AND ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Derrida is mainly concerned with the philosophical foundations of canonical texts that have propped up Western civilization. His overall project calls for a radical rereading of key primary sources as a way to reexamine and investigate the text’s internal logic. In order to do this, Derrida developed the deconstructive method. This method involves the close examination and deconstruction of the foundations of philosophy in order to demonstrate how seemingly stable concepts, once critically explored, can be expanded to the extent that they can even contradict the original canonical interpretation. More specifically, the deconstructive method systematically questions the foundations of philosophical thought through the careful reading of texts in order to understand its internal mechanisms as a way to expose its theoretical and practical limits.

One of the philosophical foundations that Derrida ventures to investigate is “humanism,” which is also part of Agamben’s philosophical project. Humanism explores questions like: *what constitutes a human being? Are there exceptional unique characteristics that define humanity?* In order to answer these questions, Derrida refers to the works of Aristotle, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Lacan and investigates the ways in which these philosophers have ex-

<sup>1</sup>Agamben, *The Open Man and Animal*, 37.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>3</sup>Calarco, *Zoographies*, 87.

plored and constructed the notion of humanity. Curiously, through this investigative project, Derrida uncovers the dominant position regarding the position of animals in philosophy. In the arguments of all of these philosophers, Animals have appeared—as Agamben also demonstrated—as a way to prop up the concept of humanity. Derrida encapsulates his investigations in a series of seminars that resulted in the book titled *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. In this book, he first notes that the notion of Animals has only appeared in philosophy as a “theorem, something seen and not seeing.”<sup>1</sup> Whenever a philosopher, Descartes for example, investigates the position of animals, Animals appear as a disembodied general entity, which lack any physical/metaphysical recognition. In regards to Descartes, this is an aspect that Agamben also notes in *The Open*. Descartes, an obvious operator of the anthropological machine, claims that Animals are automatons (self operating machines) that lack souls. Agamben invokes a critical figure against Descartes, Carolus Linnaeus, founder of modern scientific taxonomy, who exclaims “Surely Descartes never saw an ape.” Linnaeus was deeply troubled by Descartes’ *Theory of Animality*, which Linnaeus completely rejected, supporting the fact that it is “quite difficult to identify the specific differences between anthropoid apes and man from the point of view of natural science.”<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that some of the biological scientists who work directly with Animals recognize them not just as a theory, but instead a complex variety of organisms that need to be carefully studied. Noting a split between science and philosophy regarding the position of Animals, Derrida, throughout his work, points out that only a few philosophers have integrated Animality as something other than just a theoretical framework.

Through the deconstruction of several texts by key foundational philosophers, Derrida elaborates on a common logic which all the mentioned philosophers share: when thinking about the distinction between Animal and Human, Western philosophy *has*

*reduced Animality into a singular general concept*, which is meant to encapsulate and objectify the variety and diversity of the animal experience. Derrida notes this fundamental flaw and exclaims:

Beyond the edge of the so-called human, beyond it but by no means on a single opposing side, rather than “The Animal” or “Animal Life” there is already a heterogeneous multiplicity of the living, or more precisely (since to say “the living” is already to say too much or not enough), a multiplicity of organizations of relations between living and dead, relations of organization and lack of organization among realms that are more and more difficult to dissociate by means of the figures of the organic and inorganic, of life and/or death. These relations are at once intertwined and abyssal, and they can never be totally objectified.<sup>3</sup>

Derrida eloquently exposes through his deconstructive method that the critical concept of “Animality,” which as Agamben demonstrates (and Derrida supports) has been historically used in Western philosophy to construct the notion of humanity as an ungrounded concept. Furthermore, this concept fails to encapsulate the plurality and diversity of the animal experience. Therefore, Derrida points out that any attempt to use the concept of “Animal” as a singular general concept, will be flawed and erroneous, and even goes as far as calling it a “crime” and a “act of violence,” and that “one will never have the right to take animals to be the species of a kind that would be named ‘The Animal,’ or animal in general.”<sup>4</sup> Derrida succeeds in using a classical deconstructive move, which exposes the flawed dichotomy between “Animals” and Humanity, by demonstrating the underlying lack of foundation behind the concept of “Animality” and how it has been used to privilege of its opposite—Humanity.

<sup>1</sup>Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. Davis Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 14.

<sup>2</sup>Agamben, *The Open*, 23.

<sup>3</sup>Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 31.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 31.

The prioritization of Humanity is the main drive of Anthropocentrism. As Derrida demonstrated behind the logic of turning “Animals” into an “undifferentiated mass,” there is a privileging of what constitutes human beings. Therefore, the extent of anthropocentrism in philosophy is such that whenever philosophy is investigating the position of animals, it is only doing so as it relates back to human beings. Anthropocentrism has reduced animals to something that is below the importance of human beings. For example, as philosopher Aaron Bell a PhD candidate at SUNY Binghamton, describes, “(Immanuel Kant) claims in his *Lecture on Ethics* that violence towards animals is only a problem because it can lead to the violence and immorality in humans.”<sup>1</sup> Here again, an analysis of “Animality” is only important as long as it refers back to the dominant position of human beings.

Unfortunately, Agamben has also only been interested in animals as they relate back to humans. When referring to the anthropological machine, Agamben has only elaborated in how the exclusive constitution of humanity has harmed other human beings by animalizing them. And in *Homo Sacer*, Agamben again only elaborates on the implications for the human figure of *Homo Sacer* and how the lack of citizenship violently displaces the one outside of the political domain.

Agamben does not explore how the anthropological machine harms non-human animals. This lack of recognition of the role animals play in society leaves a wide gap in the analysis of the anthropological machine, since it has, thus far, only been theorized as a mechanism that harms human beings. In contrast, Derrida was one of the first philosophers to critically explore and recognize the importance of animals for philosophy, ethics, politics, humanity, and animals themselves. Derrida stressed that abyssal differences exist between all species, and these differences need to be “reconceptualized” and, most importantly, respected.

The remaining of this paper will introduce an analysis of

where animals fit within the current political sphere stemming from Agamben’s concerns elaborated in *Homo Sacer*. Following the footsteps of Agamben’s philosophical work, I will more specifically investigate how exactly Agamben’s recent notion of the anthropological machine harms a variety of animal species.

### ZOE SACER

Referring back to Agamben and Aristotle, animals are *zoe* or “bare life.” Bare life means the simple and naked matter that lives. *Zoe* becomes *bio*, or a proper living citizen through politics, culture, art, and society, which leads the citizen to live a “good life.” As mentioned previously, Agamben analyses how the western biopolitical project reduces human beings to a figure that he calls “*Homo Sacer*” who is basically treated as bare life. Agamben’s philosophical project explores how the reduction of humans to “bare life,” matter that is alive—through the exclusion of their human citizenship—violently harms their human identity.

According to both Agamben and Aristotle, Animals operate as “bare life.” Animals cannot live a “good life” because they cannot be integrated or granted citizenship into the political realm because animals lack everything that is proper to human beings, and are therefore unable to engage in a cultured society. And as Agamben notes, the State prioritizes its citizens and community members over its non-citizens or “outsiders.” The State justifies the violent harm directed towards Animals because they (animals) do not belong to the community, and therefore do not receive any ethical considerations that respect their specific needs.

Every year more than 150 billion animals are killed worldwide just for food.<sup>2</sup> This eye opening statistic clearly demonstrates that it is not a murder to kill some animals. Because of the fact that animals are not citizens and are therefore not included into the political sphere, they are located outside of the law. In this sense, animals are “sacred” or “set apart” and can be compared to the Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, the figure who was once banned, exclud-

<sup>1</sup>Aaron Bell, “Dialectics of Anthropocentrism,” in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2011), 174.

<sup>2</sup>“The Animal Kill Counter” last modified December 25, 2013, <http://www.adaptt.org/>



ed and abandoned to die. Because of this exclusion from the law *Homo Sacer* experienced, killing the figure will not be counted as a homicide. In contrast with *Homo Sacer*, sacred animals, what I am calling *Zoe Sacer*, are lower in the priorities of the anthropocentric State and are killed at exponentially higher rates.

Following Carl Schmitt's definition of Sovereignty, Agamben notes that the sovereign is "he who decides on the state of the exception"<sup>1</sup> and through this power the sovereign "creates and guarantees the situation."<sup>2</sup> Despite Agamben's concluding arguments that because the state of exception is slowly becoming the norm, human beings act as the Sovereign, where "we are all virtually *hominess sacri*"<sup>3</sup> regarding the fate of animals. To expand, as Agamben notes, "Every society—even the most modern—decides who the sacred men will be."<sup>4</sup> Society has decided who the sacred *animal* will be. Unfortunately, it has been decided to exempt animals from the rule of law, and therefore we can see that it is not crime to kill a variety of non-human animals. Human beings have created and guaranteed the position of animals for the sole purpose of benefiting human beings.

Behind this logic of exception lies the anthropological machine and as it posits: animals will never qualify as what is proper to humanity since as a theory they constitute the exact opposite of humanity. Humanity can only exist by reflecting upon its opposite: Animality. The animality articulated by the Anthropological machine will only be recognized as a lack of humanity. Unfortunately, Agamben demonstrates Western anthropocentric definition of law and of State privileges those who are full citizens. This logic sets the ground for the justification of the violent exclusion of its non-citizens, in this case non-humans animals who have been historically defined as lacking what is proper to humanity and therefore also lack citizenship. Therefore, the anthropocentric machine generates the hierarchy in which Humanity is *greater* than Animality. More

specifically, as Silver Rattasepp, a graduate student from the University of Tartu, claims: "When an animal has something that humans do not, then the animal is different; when the humans have something that animals do not, then the humans are unique, or better yet: superior."<sup>5</sup>

As described above, the anthropological machine *harms* animal species by not recognizing the vibrant plurality of the animal identity. This harm occurs by prioritizing a "humanity proper" and disregards the very ontology of Animality. The privileging of what is proper for humanity has reduced animals to bare life, which in turn has justified violently obliterating the ontology of the animal by killing, torturing, and manipulating it. To further elaborate, Raphael Lemkin, a Polish juror, discusses the manipulation of identity as an aspect of genocide by stating:

[Genocide] is not only to deliberate physical annihilation of a group by direct killings, but also to the destruction of the *identity* [emphasis original] of the targeted group or groups, as in their "extinction" by incarceration and/or genetic manipulation, an extinction reflected in and reinforced by rhetorical formulation misrepresenting the targeted groups.<sup>6</sup>

Following this definition of genocide, Karen Davis, an activist and scholar in the Animal Liberation movement, investigates how society has violently misrepresented animal identity.

The following section of this essay will rely on Davis' analysis of a "procrustean" logic present in industrial animal farming that physically and metaphysically reconfigures animal identity. Davis investigates the ways in which industrial animal farming, supported by the scientific community, specifically contort chickens to fit into

<sup>1</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>5</sup>Silver Rattasepp, "The Anthropological Machine and the Absence of Animal" (University of Tartu, 2013), [https://www.academia.edu/2048878/The\\_Anthropological\\_Machine\\_and\\_the\\_Absence\\_of\\_Animals](https://www.academia.edu/2048878/The_Anthropological_Machine_and_the_Absence_of_Animals)

<sup>6</sup>Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe; Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944).

the industrial farming paradigm. By doing so, I am updating the analysis of the anthropological machine to recognize and include the experience and identity of certain animals. Through this analysis, I am providing what I consider the “missing tool” to further Monkey-Wrench the Anthropological Machine.

### ANIMAL IDENTITY

Davis begins her argument in “Procrustean Solutions to Animal Identity and Welfare Problems,” found in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, by introducing the Greek myth of Procrustes. Davis states, “Procrustes (the stretcher) is a bandit who keeps an iron bed to which he forces people to conform. Watching his victims approach from his stronghold, Procrustes stretches or shrinks the bed in advance to predetermine their failure to fit into it so that he may torturously reshape them to suit his will.”<sup>1</sup> For Davis this is a great symbol of the “false anthropomorphism” that humans use to force non-human animals to conform to constructions and paradigms that are “fundamentally alien and inimical to their very being.”<sup>2</sup> This myth coincides with the aspect of the anthropological machine as it defines and *articulates* an animal identity as lacking. Curiously, the word *articulate* originates from the latin *articulare*, which means to “divide into joints, utter distinctly,”<sup>3</sup> According to linguistics professor Sam Scoville, *articulare* was “initially a butcher’s term for flaying the beast at the joints with a minimum of blood and gristle.”<sup>4</sup> In this context, it is applicable to state that the anthropological machine operates by *articulating* animal identity. Therefore, the Anthropological Machine *violently appropriates the concept of Animality by manipulating, stretching, and commodifying both physically and ontologically the Animal for the convenience of*

*human-beings*. A word that I have chosen to describe this process is the action of *Procrusterating*, which encapsulates the symbolology and actions behind the myth of Procrustes, and stands for the *appropriation of a concept by violently manipulating it in order to fit the convenience of humanity*.

Davis elaborates on a variety of situations where animal identity is forcefully manipulated. I have identified and outlined three ways in which the industrial farming complex *procrusterates* animal identity. The first is by manipulating the surroundings of the animal. The second is by manipulating the physical body of the animal, and the third is by assigning a role to animals in society. Underlying these three aspects is the exclusionary logic of the anthropological machine in which animals are targeted and injured physically and metaphysically.

First, some animals are *procrusterated* of their identity when humans manipulate their physical surroundings and environment. Human beings have alienated animals from their natural surroundings by limiting and assigning animals a territory. For example, Davis notes how animal zoos embody artificial representations of a natural environment. Animals in the zoo are supplied with food, provided shelter and occasionally assigned a mate. A variety of animals in the zoo live under artificially controlled conditions. For example, in aquarium sections of the zoo, fish live in water that is carefully heated, colored, chlorinated, and designed to resemble the wild. Within the perimeter of the zoo, animals are conditioned to express a certain behavior, in which, as Davis quotes from John Berger’s *Why Look At Animals*, “Animals who break out of their phony images are punished.”<sup>5</sup> Animal behavior within the zoo is conditioned as a spectacle for human observers.

Another more obvious example of how human beings manipulate the surroundings of animals can be located in industrial-scale animal farms. Within the limits of the farm, cows raised for milk, for example, are clustered into confined spaces and their immediate environment becomes a labyrinth of tunnels and doorways that lead to pumping facilities. These territorial restrictions

<sup>1</sup>Karen Davis, “Procrustean Solutions to Animal Identity and Welfare Problems,” in *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation*, ed. John Sanbonmatsu (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2011), 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Douglas Harper, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/articulate> (accessed: April 15, 2014), s.v. “articulate.”

<sup>4</sup>Sam Scoville, in conversation, April 2013.

<sup>5</sup>Davis, “Procrustean Solutions,” 3.

impede animals like chickens, pigs, and cows, and all the animals in the zoo or industrial farm, from fully developing their own animal potential, hence violently harming their identity.

These restrictions of space and territory echo Agamben's analysis of the concentration camp. The concentration camp, just like the factory farm, is the space of the excluded. The logic behind the factory farm reflects the same logic behind the concentration camp. Critical theorist Theodor Adorno eloquently links this logic by stating "Auschwitz begins wherever someone looks at a slaughterhouse and thinks: they're only animals."<sup>1</sup>

Second, animal identity is *procrusterated* by the direct altering of their physical body. This section will talk specifically about the particular experience of the chicken, as described by Davis, in order, as Derrida warns, to not the make general statements about animals as a whole.

The manipulation of the physical environment of the animal will already have embodied implications. For example, chickens grown for eggs are confined into small clustered segments causing their "industrialized" bodies to be physically harmed by this environment. As Davis states, "the "industrialized" body is a wracking construction of pains and pathologies, including "cardiovascular disease, crippled skeletons, and necrosis of the skin, leg joints, and intestines." This physical reaction is not beneficial for industrial farmers since it is not economically sustainable to take care of all the ill chickens. But farmers collaborating with scientists have "succeeded" in fixing this issue. As Davis quotes the *Commercial Chicken Meat and Egg Production*, "technology built into buildings and equipment is embodied genetically into the chicken itself." In this case the chicken itself is altered in order to become better adapted to the industrial farming paradigm. Interestingly enough, this physical alteration of the chicken's body is also done for ethical reasons. Davis explores the "blind chicken solution" originally argued by Paul Thompson, a professor of food and community ethics at Michigan State University. Thompson argues that it is "more humane" to

<sup>1</sup>John Sanbonmatsu, *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation* (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2011).

breed blind chickens because it limits their capacity to suffer; therefore, the chickens will experience less stress, which in turn will lead to an increase in the production of eggs.<sup>2</sup> Davis exposes the logic of how to *procrusterate* the chicken's natural embodiment into an "industrialized body" because, as geneticist Bill Muir from Purdue University explains, "adapting the bird to the system makes more sense."<sup>3</sup>

The underlying ethical logic behind this industry relies on *negating* animals the capacity to suffer. Surprisingly, utilitarian and pro-animal rights philosopher, Peter Singer supports this view. Davis mentions how Singer supports the idea of engineering "brainless birds, grown strictly for meat" and how this would be "an ethical improvement on the present system because it would eliminate the suffering that these birds are feeling."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, all of these "solutions" involve the physical manipulation of the animal itself, which harms the direct identity of the animal. As Davis concludes:

These animals are thus totally separated from the natural world in which they evolve. They are imprisoned in alien, dysfunctional, and disease-prone bodies genetically manipulated for food traits alone, bodies that in many cases have been surgically altered, creating a disfigured appearance—they are debeaked, de-toed, dehorned, ear-cropped, tail-docked, castrated, and (in the case of piglets), dentally mutilated—and always without painkillers. In the procrustean universe of animal agriculture, their brutal amputations can be made to sound sensible and even benignant.<sup>5</sup>

The third way in which animal identity is *procrusterated* is by assigning animals a role in which they act as "collaborators"

<sup>2</sup>Davis, "Procrustean Solutions," 38.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 38.

with humans, for the greater good of humanity. Davis specifically notes the constructed discourse that science and religion uses and has used that assigns a so called “collaborative” relationship between animal and humans, in which “our use becomes their ontology.” Therefore, we describe what animals are and what they are made for.<sup>1</sup> She notes how when referring to animals, the scientific community has constructed an apparent consensual relationship between scientist and animal. In this case, Animals are described as “partners” and “collaborators” that aid scientist in the quest for knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Davis also notes this similar language in several religious sacrificial practices. For example, in animal sacrifice for the Hindu, “the sacrifice of the animal is not really the killing of an animal,” instead animals that are sacrificed are “a symbol of those powers for which the sacrificial ritual stands.”<sup>3</sup> In this case, the animal is not even considered an animal at all. In addition, Davis describes how in Greek Mythology the ox “runs from the fields to the city and stands in the altar to be sacrificed, and the bird flies to the altar and delivers itself into the hands of the highest priest.”<sup>4</sup> In both these cases the very ontology of animals is altered to serve anthropocentric ends, in which animals are willingly sacrificing their life to serve the greater human good.

The discourse of the sacrifice is something essential to the *Homo Sacer*. This banned figure that can be killed but not sacrificed, remains unsacrificeable because, as mentioned earlier, they “already belong to the gods,” hence no secondary sacrificial action is required. In contrast, the case of *Zoe Sacer* (the animal that is stripped to bare life) appears to exist for the sole purpose of being sacrificed to the “greater god”<sup>5</sup> of humanity.

These three analyses accurately describe the violent appro-

priation of the concept of Animality by manipulating and commodifying both the physical and the ontological position of the Animal for the convenience of human-beings. To some extent, civilization depends on this animal suffering in order to operate. Animals are the crucial element that are sacrificed in order for society to continue. Therefore, humanity depends on the lack of recognition of other notions of animal identity. For example, let us say that we could understand animal communication. What would animals say to us if we could speak their language? What would all the animals in the zoo and slaughterhouses say? Would they ask us to humiliate and kill them? Unable to take into account the experience of animals in society, the oppressive logic produced by the anthropological machine silences the very *identity* of a variety of animals producing the greatest source of violence that human beings have directed towards non-human animals.

## CONCLUSION

In light of the anthropocentric limits of Agamben’s thought, it was my intent to elaborate an analysis of animal oppression in order to update the systematic harm produced by the ontological-discursive categories that support and provide a logic that leads to animal oppression. Through this, a more complete “jamming” or “monkey wrenching” project of the anthropological machine can begin.

Nevertheless, Agamben’s philosophical project sets a very important course of thinking about the boundaries and limits of citizenship and the definition of humanity. By exposing the oppressive logic behind how we constitute the law, the State, and what is properly human, we are able to present how these forms of violence target not only humans, but as I have demonstrated, non-humans too.

In addition, Derrida is one of the few philosophers from the poststructuralist Continental tradition to have explored the philosophical meaning and experience of Animals, from other than a “rights-based” perspective. Stemming from his concerns regarding the underlying system of violence present in philosophy and humanism, he is able to uncover the extent of an anthropocentric

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Deliberate misspelling of the word “good” to suggest that humans are the gods of animals.

mindset in the places that are least expected. Through a deconstructive account, we can shake and question the apparent stable foundations of western metaphysics and humanism. When applied to Agamben's political framework, we are able to strengthen and complement the arguments that will lead to the collapse of the exclusionary and oppressive logic underlying the concept of humanism, as it has been defined by the anthropological machine.

To further elaborate on the how exactly the anthropological machine is a violent force of intertwined mechanism of thought present in religion, science, philosophy and politics, Davis integrates an eloquent account of how this form of logic radically dismembers and occupies the ontology of non-human animals, to serve the sinister ends of mankind.

In conclusion, humanity must recognize that its current ways of thinking towards animals are both violent and dangerous. Agamben concludes his work on *Homo Sacer* stating that it is becoming obvious that the "state of exclusion" is slowly manifesting as the norm. For Agamben, it is of critical importance to understand and stop the logic that produces *hominess sacri* in order to avoid an "unprecedented biopolitical catastrophe."<sup>1</sup> In the case of a variety of Animals, this "biopolitical catastrophe" is already happening, and has been happening for centuries. This realization only adds to the urgency to stop perpetuating the operations of the anthropological machine.

The following remarks are a creative speculation of what a post-anthropological machine philosophy would look like. What would the definitions of "Animality" and "humanity" look after the procrustean logic is monkey-wrenched? First, we must explore the ways in which we can respect and define the vibrantly diverse concept of Animality *on their own terms*. This first premise would ensure that philosophy recognizes that every animal species has its own unique experience, which involves a unique form of relating to other species and the environment. It is important to note that humans cannot speak on behalf of the non-human animal experience. For example, in the scientific community the notion of *critical*

*anthropomorphism* is a form of describing animal behavior in a way that detaches any human emotion or anthropomorphic discourse that would misrepresent the observed behavior.<sup>2</sup> This is a very productive stance because it seeks to eliminate a humanistic bias in describing animal behavior.

Second, a world beyond anthropocentrism would abolish any hierarchy that is constructed around "human exceptionality." For example, concepts and institutional structures framed around the notion of "humanity" would be stripped from their position of privilege granted by the anthropological machine. Meaning that a new logic would move beyond any legal and rights-based framework that tries to fit "Animality" inside the present anthropocentric framework. Instead it would restructure the framework all together in a way in which all life forms are represented and taken into account. In addition, a fundamental part of this new way of thinking about life would involve a level of nonjudgmental acknowledgment of difference where human beings are no longer the reference point to which all animals are compared to. A bio-centric logic would embrace the plurality of animal life, recognizing the logical absurdity of comparing different life-forms.

Stemming from these two premises the animal world opens up and becomes a decentralized and complex network of abundant organisms that share the common energy of being alive. From this conclusion, the human species needs to begin to restructure and revolutionize all aspects of culture and civilization. After the dismantling of the anthropological machine, the appropriate role of philosophy is to critically investigate the meaning, the importance, and the operations of life without favoring one life-form to another.

<sup>1</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 188.

<sup>2</sup>G.M. Burghardt, "Cognitive ethology and critical anthropomorphism: A snake with two heads and hognose snakes that play dead," in *Cognitive ethology: The minds of other animals*, ed. C.A. Ristau (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., 1991), 53–90.

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The Animal Kill Counter, last modified December 25, 2013, <http://www.adaptt.org/>.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Sally Fisher for all her encouragement and energy. Without her insights I would not have enjoyed writing this paper. I would also like to thank my Philosophy thesis writing friends Camilla, Marie, Evan and George for all the constructive feedback and the late night wine sessions. In addition it is impossible not to acknowledge everybody in the Writing Center. Lastly I would like to give my gratitude to Jordan Stratford for her warm support and friendship.

### Artist Statement: Carsyn McGregor-Short

I create figurative metal sculptures that arise from my interest in the mythological and the dark crevices of the imagination. In my current project, I am attempting to draw out the hidden creatures that prowl in the back of our minds. I am intrigued by these characters, half-formed beings arising from imaginative fears of the dark. I choose to depict them in this in-between state, because they are and always will be stuck in the halfway plane between fantasy and reality. These characters become 3D beings standing in our plane of existence, but they are simultaneously submerging and dissolving back into the tendrils of thought that they originated from. Part human and part beast, these sculptures are hybrids that strain for some sense of concrete existence. Their outer forms are merely suggested by see-through layers of skin, the metal bent and twisted to imply soft flesh shapes. Their gaping holes and spiraled surfaces reveal inner, empty vortexes of rust and bandaged-together skeletons. Bones poke through their gridded surfaces as they shiver when the wind rattles their cages. Although they appear fragile, like cracked shells that could crumble at any moment, one solid touch is assurance that they are not easily budged or broken. I'm making art for imagination's sake, a realm typically reserved for children and fairy tales that I have chosen to twist into the physical plane. Together, the figures struggle silently to assert themselves in the corporeal world. I want the viewer to immerse themselves in the scene; to become another figure slipping without notice through the mythical allegory. I want the sinister denizens of the imagination to walk in the light and inspire or terrify some wanderer on a forgotten path.

## Arist Statement: Ghensiri Rosson

Faces and bodies are what make us tangible beings in this world. Every person has their own scale, features, and style. The combination of these characteristics is what attracts me to creating two-dimensional representations through portraiture. Currently, I'm working on a series of personal family portraits from old photographs. The subject of family is universal. My own mother's absence for a number of years has enabled me to become more aware of the challenges family members face during times of loss. By making this work I am opening up a dialogue that centers around family, and the role it plays in a young person's life.

The paint itself is dense, the mark making bold, and colors vibrant. As a medium, oil paint is flexible, making the process physically cathartic. It can also be easily altered. This supports the natural development and changing of an idea that occurs during the creative process. To document all the changes that happen artistically is unbearable at times. Intentions, desires, and everything in between are hard to capture in any amount of time, if not in that exact moment.

I am creating this body of work because I simply must make it. To be involved with a subject is to have a relationship with it. Approaching the subject from an artistic angle cultivates new perspectives and meaning. Experiencing the subject in your own way and on your own time gives a sense of control. There is a push and pull that happens between a maker and their work. At times the work is louder than the artist. This evokes response.

## Artist Statement: Jessica Self

My felting journey began by sewing together sheets of felt and stuffing forms with cotton batting. Two years ago I was taught to make my own sheets through wet felting and later discovered needle felting. It was the process of needle felting that made me realize the sculptural possibilities wool has. The repetitiveness of the process brought me comfort and I fell in love.

Using wool allows me to create a strong, soft structure and a warm, neutral surface onto which a viewer can project a narrative or emotional response. I think of wool as being similar to clay in that you can add and subtract freely as well as bend and mold with the felting needle. Wool's ability to appear hard can lead the viewer to question the medium. A piece may first appear to be carved out of stone and then upon closer examination the viewer realizes it's not.

During this past year I have been striving to discover new ways to narrate ideas. My past craftwork included diorama-like shadowboxes with figures acting out scenes, but I have taken a more abstract approach to cultivate concepts in transition to a sculptural practice. For example the repetitive craters in two of the works illustrate the impact of trauma that compromises the integrity of a "thick skin."

My current body of work combines the traditional craft of needle felting and figurative sculpture. The organic forms have proportions based on my own measurements and also function as self-portraits. Craters and folded patterns in the surface of the works illustrate the chaos caused by traumatic experiences that influence self-image.

My creating process tends to begin intuitively; like many artists I am influenced by observing the world and humanity as well as reflections of my own life, however, the subject or voice tends to come to me after I have started a process. The act of creating persuades my subconscious thoughts and ideas to come out and into the art. It is a necessity for me to approach art playfully and enthusiastically and enjoy including play on words and puns in my work. From here the wheels begin to turn and the ideas flowing.



## Submit to Auspex!

We are now taking submissions of senior thesis work for next year's volume of Auspex. E-mail your submission in .doc format to [auspex@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:auspex@warren-wilson.edu). Please include your advisor's name, your major, graduation date, citation style, and contact information for after graduation. We also require a recommendation e-mail from your thesis advisor. A committee including faculty from across the disciplines will review the submissions for entry into the journal. If your piece is selected, the committee will contact you and work with you during the fall to prepare your piece for publication.

The submission deadline is May 31<sup>st</sup>. Please note that there is an 8000-word limit for each piece in the journal and a 250-word limit for abstract.

## Journal Crew

Interested in working on design or editing for Auspex next year? Contact Julie Wilson at the Writing Center for more information.