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Submission guidelines

We accept articles from every academic discipline offered by MTSU: the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Eligible contributors are all MTSU students and recent graduates, either as independent authors or with a faculty member. Articles should be 10 to 30 typed double-spaced pages and may include revisions of papers presented for classes, conferences, Scholars Week, or the Social Science Symposium. Articles adapted from Honors or M.A. theses are especially encouraged. Papers should include a brief abstract of no more than 250 words stating the purpose, methods, results, and conclusion. For submission guidelines and additional information, e-mail the editor at scientia@mtsu.edu or visit <http://libjournals.mtsu.edu/index.php/scientia/index>.

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Letter from the Editor in Chief

As Middle Tennessee State University's student research journal, *Scientia et Humanitas* publishes exemplars of the research and scholarship that MTSU students, from across the humanities and sciences, produce each year. This volume is a testament to the determination and ingenuity of graduate and undergraduate students at MTSU; despite the significant challenges of the last year, these students have produced innovative and compelling research and scholarship. The essays collected here also reflect the central values of this publication: scholarly rigor, originality in research and analysis, and a dedication to advancing our academic discourse in new and engaging ways.

This volume also reflects the remarkable range of issues and research areas with which MTSU students are engaged. Our first essay, "A Landscape of Linguistic Love," immerses us in the poetry of John Milton and poignantly reveals the link between love and language in Milton's works and personal life. While that essay evokes such timeless poetic concerns, the following essays deal with very timely issues, from policing in the United States in "Exploring the Link between Violent Crime Workload and Officer-Involved Shooting of Unarmed Individuals" to the efficacy of moral arguments in an era of extreme political partisanship in "Moral Reframing." A literature review examines Incel ideology and discourse and the connections between this often-violent movement, online forums, and the media; this essay complements "The Islamic State," which proposes a new framework for understanding the political-religious totalitarianism and ideology of an international terrorist organization. The concluding essay, "Narrative Authority," challenges dominant narratives within a postcolonial framework, with the goal of returning agency to marginalized voices via an analysis of Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*. Despite the disparate approaches and subjects of these essays, they are connected by thought-provoking analysis and original research.

At the end of this process, I must first express my gratitude to these talented contributors for sharing their work with the editorial staff and, now, the MTSU community. Secondly, this volume was not produced single-handedly. It would not have been possible without our talented editorial staff: Liam McBane, Laney Jolley Smith, Percy Verret, and Elizabeth McGhee Williams. It was an honor to work with such dedicated academics and editors. I am also grateful for the assistance of the administration and staff at MTSU's University Honors College, including the editorial advisory board: Ms. Marsha Powers, Dr. Philip Phillips, and Dean John R Vile. Their guidance throughout this process was invaluable, as was the assistance of other members of the Honors College staff, including Ms. Susan Lyons, for her work on design and layout, Ms. Sandra Camp-

bell, and Ms. Cindy Phiffer. This volume would not be possible without the contributions of this group that is dedicated to supporting MTSU's student researchers and writers.

Eric Hughes
Editor in Chief

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A Landscape of Linguistic Love: Milton's Mind as a Seat of Companionate Paradise

Percy Verret

Abstract

A survey of British poet John Milton's early and extensive initiation into the language(s) of scholarship highlights that, through his intensive immersion within it, the language of scholarship became fundamental to Milton's perception of reality, ultimately dictating and defining his notions of meritorious living. This preeminence of the language of scholarship within Milton's understanding of his world further led Milton to perceive the language of scholarship as the only truly satisfactory basis upon and means through which to pursue meaningful human relationships. Through a survey of a selection of Milton's shorter works—the Prolusions, “On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough,” “Ad Patrem,” and “Epitaphium Damonis”—as well as a detailed examination of his multilingual friendship with Charles Diodati, this paper demonstrates that Milton not only perceived a linkage between love and language, but actively employed each in the service of the other, leading to a richer understanding and experience of both.

***Winner of the Dean's Distinguished Essay Award**

While studying for his master's degree at Christ's College, Cambridge, John Milton was summoned by his college to speak before their company—to regale them on the subject that bound them together: scholarship.¹ No longer the shy prodigy who had stood before their number years earlier as an undergraduate student, the adult Milton held forth grandly and at length before his audience, demonstrating the breadth of his learning by expounding knowledge's bearing upon virtue, vocation, companionship, and civilization in a proslution upon his chosen theme: *Whether Learning Makes Men Happier Than does Ignorance*. While musing upon the offences of uncivilized conversation in the midst of his speech, Milton let slip a curious admission of an unresolved point in his thought, conceding, "I have wondered whether those who had neither human mouths nor human powers of speech, could have any human feelings inside them."² Milton did not answer this question directly in the passages that follow—although his subsequent elevation of unspeaking animals over the man who refuses to improve himself through knowledge's offerings hints at his answer—nor did he build upon its theme as he advanced towards the crux of his argument. The statement simply stands, balking, in the middle of Milton's speech.

Some critics might argue that this statement does not deserve probing, that it was simply a throwaway comment—an aside—that strayed from Milton's purpose in his proslution. To such an objection I might drily respond that Milton, not unlike Milton's God, worked all things for a purpose in accordance with his divine plan—I might indeed argue that Milton never "threw away" a word in his life. The very fact that Milton decided to include this outburst of feeling in the final draft of his speech despite its providing no essential evidence in support of his argument demonstrates that, far from being disposable, the statement must be regarded as one of supreme importance by students of Milton. Its obtrusion into the argument indicates the extent to which Milton must already have ruminated

1. Opinion varies regarding the precise period in which Milton delivered this proslution, with Gregory Chaplin dubbing it Milton's 1632 "farewell to Cambridge" and Campbell and Corns rejoining, "It is not possible to map Milton's proslutions onto the exercises required by the university." Despite this confusion, the piece is universally regarded as having figured into Milton's graduate requirements. For Chaplin's comments see Gregory Chaplin, "Education," in *Milton in Context*, ed. Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 281. For Campbell and Corns see Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*, (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36.

2. John Milton, "Proslution VII," in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 627.

upon the line of inquiry it proposes and foreshadows its ongoing importance to Milton and, therefore, necessarily, to us. Indeed, a close examination of Milton's life and canon provides evidence that, within Milton's thought, the usage of elevated language and the ability to feel and to love were curiously intertwined. To Milton, the elevated modes of expression found in the forms and language of scholarship served not merely as amusing or enjoyable activities in which to engage as a scholar, but rather formed a foundational template through which the deepest companionship might be achieved: companionship that, in its turn, might elevate the language through which it was formed.

Although Milton would later formalize his conception of the universal priority of the language of scholarship through his writings, that perspective's origins in Miltonic thought date to the period of life in which one does not form opinions but is formed by others' opinions: childhood. Indeed, an examination of this childhood reveals that it was structured in terms of the very prioritization of scholarship that Milton would later espouse, for he spent his earliest moments immersed in linguistic expression. This prioritization was initiated by Milton's father, John Milton, Sr., whose own high appreciation of art's offerings, as well as his desire to equip his son to occupy a superior social station, led to his determination to provide Milton with an education of the highest quality. This education began under the care of several private tutors, who introduced the young boy into a language-based program that not only inflamed his imagination but also rendered him proficient in the classical languages of Latin and Greek. Upon witnessing his son's prodigious aptitude for language, the elder Milton encouraged his son to widen his language studies to the artistic European tongues of Italy and France; thus, by the time he was a student at St. Paul's School, Milton already spoke five languages.³

3. Due to a scarcity of records, the timing of Milton's education—including when he began his studies at St. Paul's—is difficult to establish, as is forcibly evidenced by the fact that Milton's most revered biographers, including not only Campbell and Corns but also Barbara Lewalski, are unwilling to hazard any more definite opinion regarding his enrollment at St. Paul's than that it must have occurred between 1615 and 1621. The available evidence is sufficient, however, for Campbell and Corns to provide the following timeline of Milton's language acquisition: "Milton's education began at home. In *Ad Patrem* ('To my Father') Milton was later to express his gratitude that his father had paid for lessons in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Italian. It is likely that instruction in these languages began with private tutors; although Milton went on to study the ancient languages at school, modern languages were not taught in schools, and it seems likely that all of Milton's instruction in French and Italian (and possibly Spanish) was given in the domestic setting." (See Campbell and Corns, *John Milton*, 16.) For Bar-

At St. Paul's School, then widely considered one of the best schools in London, the young Milton plunged into a humanist curriculum that, reminiscent of his earlier education, was largely language-based.⁴ Here, Milton spent hours translating classical Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts as well as writing original compositions imitating the classical texts he had studied in each language.⁵ Among the impactful exercises he encountered during this period was a translation exercise commonly dubbed "circle" or "double" translation, which required the student first to translate a text into an alternative language or mode and then to translate the translation, either into a third language or mode, or back into the original.⁶ Each of these three exercises elevated Milton's command over and estimation of language, honing his ability to pierce through to the most essential or dynamic aspects of the texts he processed in order to separate the syntactic from the semiotic and deal in raw meaning. These exercises provided him with a meta-perspective of the mode-aspect of language, a perspective that transformed the budding language-user into a mature language-wielder.

Milton himself thrived on these exercises and, indeed, excelled at them

bara Lewalski's observations, see Barbara Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 6.

4. Gregory Chaplin identifies St. Paul's School as being not only "one of the finest grammar schools in England" but also as being "at the forefront of humanist education in England." (See Chaplin, "Education," 282.)

5. Of the purpose of these exercises, Chaplin writes, "Imitation was at the center of humanist education: Students were taught to write with the eloquence of Cicero or Virgil through the careful study and emulation of their works" while Lewalski notes that Milton himself became skillful in imitating specific models in different genres—"Cicero for letters and orations, Ovid and Propertius for elegiac verse, verse letters and brief narratives, and Virgil for other poetic styles and genres." (See Chaplin, "Education," 287 and Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, 10.)

6. The virtues of "circle" translation are eloquently expounded by linguist John Hale: "The value of the 'circle' method is that where words and ornaments are bound to be left behind, the thought is seized, ready to be expressed in whatever tongue. Paradoxically, then, so verbal an exercise trains one in skills of thought, as much as skills of words." (See John Hale, *Milton's Languages: The Impact of Multilingualism on Style* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.) More fundamentally, Estelle Haan notes of this era's emphasis on translation that "'Translations' into and out of a variety of languages formed a central part of the core educational system of the day." (See Estelle Haan, "The 'Adorning of my Native Tongue': Latin Poetry and Linguistic Metamorphosis," in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford, U. K.: Oxford University Press, 2009), 55.) For an extensive discussion of the types of translations Milton would have practiced in school and their effect on Milton's writings, see either Hale or Haan.

from an early age.⁷ His talent at language, clearly rooted in natural proclivity, exploded to genius through the facilitation of his studies. Given his intrinsic affinity for the ideals and modes of scholarship, it is unsurprising that the immersion of his mind in scholarship during its formative years served to mold Milton's mind, and thus his perception of and expressions regarding reality, wholly in terms of those ideals and modes. Any analysis of Milton's prescriptions for superior living must root itself in a recognition of the thoroughness with which scholarly motions had infiltrated his perception of day-to-day activities by prescribing to him what was normal, what was preferable, or how one might go about accomplishing anything. Indeed, both Milton's own professions and the mute testimony of his life demonstrate his overweening admiration of and delight in scholarship. Such professions abound in Milton's canon, but we need look no further than the text of the very Prolusion in which we began our study to find Milton joyously singing the praises of scholarship:

Without learning, the mind is quite sterile and unhappy, and amounts to nothing. For who can rightly observe and consider the ideas of things human and divine, about which he can know almost nothing, unless his spirit has been enriched and cultivated by learning and discipline? So the man who knows nothing of the liberal arts seems to be cut off from all access to the happy life.⁸

In succeeding decades, Milton would masterfully develop his theories of knowledge's merits through his tracts *Of Education and Areopagitica*. However, it is his early formulations on the subject with which we are concerned, and thus we turn to his prolusions' ample provisions for our study. In the same passage as that quoted, Milton removes any possible doubt of his high conception of the scholarly life's surpassing superiorities by anchoring that life squarely to divinity itself: "Contemplation is by almost universal consent the only means whereby the mind can... concentrate its powers for the unbelievable delight of participating in the life of the immortal gods."⁹ This obliquely Platonic and Boethian statement of sentiment reinforces his more Christianized, but otherwise corresponding declaration in a previous Prolusion regarding his own ongoing intent to pursue "the

7. Haan highlights the excellence of Milton's early efforts both in translation and imitation, while in her biography Lewalski describes Milton's accounts of his early study as ultimately emitting "the image of a delighted child enthralled by learning and literature." (See Haan, "The Adorning," 58 and Lewalski, *The Life of Milton*, 6.)

8. Milton, "Prolusion VII," 623.

9. *Ibid.*

scholarly leisure which is the kind of life that I believe that the souls in heaven enjoy.”¹⁰ Together these statements demonstrate that, to Milton, scholarship was next to—and possibly overlapped with—godliness. The extreme antecedence of scholarship in Milton’s mind manifests itself elsewhere in the Prolusions, in which we see Milton evaluating the merits even of non-scholarly activities through scholarship’s scrupulous lens. The most memorable of these evaluations occurs in “Prolusion VI,” where Milton proclaims, “no one can jest gracefully and handsomely unless he has first learned how to handle serious business” to his fellow schoolmates.¹¹ Even joking, Milton would have us believe, requires the reasoned pace of scholarship to be rightly performed.

Given this preeminence of the language of scholarship in his theoretical and pragmatic perception of reality, it comes as little shock to find that, as Milton began to cast about himself for a means to interact meaningfully with other humans, he once again adopted the forms of scholarship as his template. Development of one’s mind to its use of reason was the primary means by which an individual might achieve personal superiority; ergo, a bonding of minds through scholarly forms was the primary means by which to achieve the highest forms of interpersonal concourse. Milton himself confirms this, once again, in “Prolusion VII,” in which he dramatically proclaims, “what is more pleasant—what can be imagined more delightful than the talks of learned and serious men together... But stupid talk or what goes on among those who encourage one another in extravagance and debauchery, is the friendship of ignorance, or, rather, *it is ignorance of what friendship is.*”¹² His dependence upon learned language for his own sense of identity led Milton to idealize those elements of a relationship that were based upon the language of scholarship and could therefore be achieved through bonding over shared valuation of reason and knowledge.

As we have already noted, Milton completed “Prolusion VII,” with its grand theories of knowledge and human companionship, as he was nearing the completion of his master’s degree. By this juncture, Milton had earned the leisure to theorize grandly on the cardinal themes debated by classical authors; however, a closer examination of Milton’s young years reveals that these later abstractions on human feeling were forged through a rather more intense search for companionship in which Milton not only utilized but actively relied upon the scholarly

10. John Milton, “Prolusion VI,” in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 613.

11. Milton, “Prolusion VI,” 617.

12. Milton, “Prolusion VII,” 625, emphasis added.

language with which he was so familiar.

Among the earliest of Milton's extant texts is a piece that demonstrates just such a reliance—the unusual and somewhat mystifying poem, “On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough,” commonly held to have been written by Milton when he was seventeen. In this poem, Milton memorializes the recently-deceased daughter of his sister, Anne, by embedding the child in a series of classical images before ultimately offering a consolation on her loss to his sister. The language of this piece is striking in its grandeur, a grandeur that impresses the reader as being contextually discordant given the non-scholarly status of its recipient. In Milton's reimagining of the loss, the infant's illness is personified as Ovid's northeast wind, Aquilo, her death compared to Apollo's accidental slaying of his beloved Hyacinth, and her person itself addressed as a figure of ancient mythology, as in the following stanza in which Milton apostrophizes the infant directly:

Wert thou some Star which from the ruin'd roof
Of shak't Olympus by mischance didst fall;
Which careful *Jove* in nature's true behoof
Took up, and in fit place did reinstall?¹³

Given the context of this poem, its tone feels almost artificial. If Milton's purpose in penning the piece were simply to console his sister, he might easily—and more effectively—have achieved this end by writing a letter couched in simple tones that she would more readily understand. Indeed, Milton himself seems, hazily, to recognize the misdirection of his poem given its audience, and at its end he remodulates that tone to address his sister not as a fabled goddess of old, but as “the mother of so sweet a child” in a stanza that includes no classical references but only straightforward—if straitlaced—Christian consolation.¹⁴

A second text that merits examination in this survey of Milton's searching after companionship is “Ad Patrem,” a poem-letter Milton wrote to his father approximately twelve years after penning “On the Death of a Fair Infant” to his sister. Although the poem is written in the high classical tongue of Latin and contains an equal if not greater number of allusions to classical subjects as “On the Death of a Fair Infant,” its integration of those allusions into the overarching theme of the letter is much more sophisticated. Indeed, Milton utilizes these al-

13. John Milton, “On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough,” in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 36, lines 43-46.

14. Milton, “Fair Infant,” 37, line 71.

lusions not simply to decorate or even to elevate his missal, but rather to advance the theme of that missal—the consolidation of his relationship with his father. In a series of classical images, Milton reframes and reinforces their relationship by positing language itself as the binding or fundamental element in his relationship with his musician-father. He accomplishes this by homogenizing their separate languages—poetry and music—into the single, united language of *song*, parading a series of classical figures in whom these arts are united—the ministrants of the gods, the priest-bard or vates, the Muses, and, lastly, the god Phoebus—to reinforce this union not only of poetry and music, but of father and son:

Now, since it is my lot to have been born a poet, why does it seem strange to you that we, who are so closely united by blood, should pursue sister arts and kindred interests? Phoebus himself, wishing to part himself between us too, gave some gifts to me and others to my father; and, father and son, we share the possession of the divided god.¹⁵

Where Milton failed to adapt his classicism to his audience in “On the Death of a Fair Infant,” here he achieves a far more considerable degree of success.¹⁶ Although we have no extant evidence of a response from his father, the subtle attendance to the details of their relationship evident throughout the verse-letter makes it impossible that the elder Milton’s response could have been any other than one of appreciation, and possibly admiration, for the skill with which his son had plied his high artistic language to create a piece that so thoroughly reflected and celebrated their relationship.

Milton’s employment of elevated scholarly language in his correspondence was not wholly original, as classical authors had emphasized the priority of elevated discourse in the interactions between scholars long before Milton attached himself to the discussion.¹⁷ However, Milton’s personal interpretation

15. John Milton, “Ad Patrem,” in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 84.

16. M. N. K. Mander describes this verse-letter as “a brilliant *apologia pro arte sua*, in itself witness to his poetic ability.” For a full exploration of Milton’s adept conflation of poetry and music and the effect of his early exposure to music on his poetry see M. N. K. Mander “The ‘Epistola ad Patrem’: Milton’s Apology for Poetry,” *Milton Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (1989): 159.

17. Gregory Chaplin provides a fascinating overview of classical views of elevated friendships (see Gregory Chaplin, “One Flesh, One Heart, One Soul’: Renaissance Friendship and Miltonic Marriage,” *Modern Philology* 99, no. 2 (2001): 267-69) while Cedric B. Brown embarks upon an examination of specific instances of language offerings within those elevated friendships (see Cedric B. Brown, “Letters, verse letters, and gift-texts,” in *Milton in Context*, ed. Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge

of that emphasis, as manifested in the two texts just examined, feature original characteristics that sharply differentiate his version from the archetypal one. The most striking of these characteristics revolves around the question of audience. Whereas classical tradition dictated only that scholars employ their high language in interaction with their intellectual cohorts, Milton did not reserve elevated language for his fellow scholars; on the contrary, as in his offerings to his father and sister, we see him attempting to universalize this language as a means of elevating not only his scholarly relationships, but also the non-scholarly relationships he most valued.

When reexamined in light of this discovery, both of the two pieces just reviewed—but particularly “On the Death of a Fair Infant”—assume new significance within Milton’s canon and further display new features to our probing eyes. Indeed, when approached through the lens we have just been establishing, the ornamental language of “Fair Infant,” so baffling when read solely as an attempt at consolation, becomes comprehensible as an exercise in elevation. In writing this poem on the subject of his niece’s death to gift to his sister, Milton was attempting not only to console his sister but also to communicate the deep regard in which he held both his sister and his niece, an effect he believed he could only accomplish through elevated language. The discordance of the attempt fell less to Milton’s motives and more to his immaturity—to his lack of experience in modulating his pen to establish a common language with his audience. Likewise, “Ad Patrem,” already an admirable piece that is far better modulated than “Fair Infant” to the personal audience for whom it is intended, shines brighter through this lens. While Milton’s attentiveness to rhetorical positioning within this poem is admirable through any reading, the intensity of his desire to establish a common language—and the integrity of his belief that Muse-inspired song might form that language—becomes all the more compelling in light of this new interpretive position.

Thus, we begin to see that the young Milton, as he struggled toward adulthood, used language as a reaching out point, a means of feeling about for relationships and establishing rapport of mind with those he desired to engage. Moreover, by extending the language of scholarship to his personal relationships, Milton proved how unusually high his estimation of that language’s value towered. To employ this language in scholarly interactions was to involve oneself in a longstanding tradition—to play at a clever game and possibly even to engage in

University Press, 2010), 35-45.)

self-aggrandizing posturing. To employ that language in personal relationships, however, evidenced an inordinate trust in the language itself, and further a linkage of it not only to cerebral activities, but also to deep feelings and emotions. Thus, we see that the language of scholarship, holding as it did profound meaning to Milton, had become integral to Milton's attempts to establish meaning in his personal relationships; high language and deep feeling had quietly conjoined in Milton's mind.

The most dramatic instance, of course, of Milton employing heightened academic language to elevate a valued relationship may be found in his decades-long correspondence with his closest friend and fellow schoolmate, Charles Diodati. Indeed, it was likely the success of his early scholarly missives to Diodati that emboldened Milton to extend a similar offering to his sister, and it was certainly through his correspondence with Diodati that Milton cultivated the adaptive skill so boldly on display in "Ad Patrem." The friendship between Diodati and Milton commenced while both lads were students at St. Paul's School where, together, they studied the language-offerings of scholarship.¹⁸ Although several months younger than Milton, Diodati moved through the program more swiftly, and his advancement to university prior to Milton's completion at St. Paul's precipitated the intermittent correspondence that would prove the basis for and chief example of Milton's treasured conceptions of companionate love.¹⁹

While this love was undoubtedly rooted in a mutual enjoyment of the other's personality, it was equally predicated upon their possession of and delight in the language of scholarship. Although not as technically proficient as his more meticulous friend, Diodati was a polyglot of no mean ability and he, like Milton, was fluent in Latin and Greek.²⁰ Moreover, their participation in the same scholastic program at St. Paul's School ensured that their knowledge of fundamental texts, both classical and modern, would have been very similar if not almost identical. Thus, in discovering Diodati, Milton discovered a person in whom a responsive spirit was wed not only to a ready wit, but also to a love of the same language that Milton himself valued. Perhaps more than any other human that Milton would ever meet, Diodati *spoke Milton's language*, and their friendship

18. Campbell and Corns, *John Milton*, 21.

19. Chaplin, "Education," 287.

20. Campbell and Corns drily remark of Diodati's two extant letters to Milton that, "the Greek... is unambitious and not perfect, and in one of the letters there is a marginal correction in what seems to be Milton's hand." (See Campbell and Corns, *John Milton*, 31.)

bound tightly upon that shared language, expanding to heights neither could have achieved singly through an exchange of intellect that was also an encrypted language of love.

A full sense of the vivacity, the urbanity, and the jubilation at play in this exchange cannot be provided in so short a space as we have here. Cedric C. Brown, a scholar who has plunged the exchanges' depths in several lengthy analyses, summatively describes the correspondence as one in which "mastery of Ovidian elegiac style sits easily with the role-play and the manner of a familiar letter to a friend."²¹ In their affectionate missals, the men write of themselves, of each other, of meeting together and of the pleasure they anticipate those meetings will entail; equally as often, however, their writing tends towards the scholastic subjects and forms that bound them together. Their exchanges are often witty, often artistic, often dramatic, but always calculated towards the engagement of their scholastic selves. Occasionally this emphasis manifests through a discussion of their studies, as when Milton, in his last extant letter to Diodati, grandiosely describes his recent absorption of Greek and Italian history before begging Diodati to send him a history of Genoa.²² Milton even makes Cambridge itself the subject of a witty elegy in which he playfully muses upon the nature of exile and complains of the university city's inelegance.²³

The majority of their correspondence, however, concerns itself with writing, both as a subject and as a mode. Indeed, the two men seem fully to have recognized the rare advantages of their friendship as a platform for composition, and they capitalized on the opportunity it provided them to air their full linguistic capabilities before their most "fit" possible audience. As Cedric Brown further proclaims in his study of their textual exchanges, "in exercising their linguis-

21. Cedric C. Brown, "John Milton and Charles Diodati: Reading the Textual Exchanges of Friends," in *Young Milton*, ed. Edward Jones (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 115.

22. John Milton to Charles Diodati, September 23, 1637, in *Milton's Familiar Letters*, trans. John Hall (Philadelphia: E. Littell, 1829), 33-34.

23. In "Elegia Prima" Milton makes light of his temporary "exile" from Cambridge, proclaiming, "At present I feel no concern about returning to the sedgy Cam and I am troubled by no nostalgia for my forbidden quarters there. The bare fields, so niggardly of pleasant shade, have no charm for me. How wretchedly suited that place is to the worshippers of Phoebus!" After thus jibing at the city's environs, he then offers a contrasting view of his hometown and current seat, London, where he professes to derive deep pleasure from the great wealth of art, theater, and beauty that grace her streets. (See John Milton, "Elegia Prima," in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 8.)

tic skills, the two young students often wrote in verse, thus raising the level of difficulty in congenial competition.”²⁴ The mere fact that they could write to one another in this vein and be understood amplified their pleasure in the writing and inspired them to an exchange of pieces that sprawled across the vales of Latin, Greek, and Italian. The men wrote letters, verse-letters, elegies, and sonnets to one another, always expecting—and sometimes soliciting—better in return.

Perhaps the best example of this dynamic exchange may be found in “Elegia Sexta,” a Latin elegy Milton wrote to Diodati in 1630. In his letter of the previous month, Diodati had evidently sent through a number of his own poems together with a complaint regarding the mirthful occasions that had distracted his pen from its occupation and a request that Milton write a song to him in return. What he received in reply was a Latin elegy written in a tone of jocular but prolusion-like pugilism upon the question of his poetic impotence. With the assured ease characteristic of their correspondence, Milton flatly contradicts Diodati’s position that merry-making is the enemy of poetry-making, remarking, “But why do you complain that poetry is a fugitive from wine and feasting? Song loves Bacchus and Bacchus loves songs.”²⁵ He then proceeds to marshal a litany of classical evidence to controvert Diodati’s claims and, eventually, to generously praise his friend’s poetry by naming the gods as the source of his inspiration: “In your single self the favor of Bacchus, Apollo, and Ceres is united. No wonder, then, if the three gods by their combined potency should have brought forth such sweet songs through you!”²⁶ Milton’s wholesale lack of explanation of his prolusion-elegy signals that this type of extravagance was common in their friendship—was appreciated and possibly even anticipated.

Nor does the significance of “Elegia Sexta” as an example of the Diodati-Milton exchange end here. In this letter that is itself an act of poetry, poetry itself is enthroned as the regal theme. This theme manifests both in the abstract as Milton’s pen cavorts betwixt the gods of poetry, the poetic temperament, and the lifestyle of the poet with playful panache, as well as in the specific when Milton writes revealingly of the poetic endeavors on which he has been engaged—the verses he has been stocking up for Diodati’s pleasure and evaluation. Indeed, Brown proclaims of this poem that, “*Elegy 6* shows Milton’s practice of submitting poems for Diodati’s comment,” a practice he observes “became very import-

24. Brown, “John Milton and Charles Diodati,” 109.

25. John Milton, “Elegia Sexta,” in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 50-51.

26. Milton “Elegia Sexta,” 51.

ant” in their developing relationship.²⁷ In this elegy alone, Milton hints definitely at his English ode “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” and his Italian sonnet sequence, the fourth of which was explicitly addressed to Diodati. Milton clearly valued Diodati’s engagement with his work, just as Diodati sought Milton’s; this ability to act as a meaningful audience for one another was wholly rooted in their shared languages and was thus another means by which language advanced their friendship.

Among the metaphorical languages the men shared was undoubtedly numbered that disseminated by Renaissance friendship, which was, itself, based on classical conceptions of male friendships transmuted into sixteenth- and seventeenth- century forms. This ideal of friendship, Gregory Chaplin explains, held that “a friendship between two men, if practiced properly, was the perfect human relationship,” one that was characterized by an “absolute equality and [an] intellectual and spiritual intimacy.”²⁸ This description sounds very like the friendship between Diodati and Milton, a perspective Chaplin presses as not only his own but also as Milton’s, claiming, “Milton saw his intimacy with Diodati in this light: they were partners on a divinely inspired quest toward virtue and self-perfection.”²⁹ Indeed, Milton himself frames their friendship as one that is compulsive to him on this very basis of questing after perfection when he posits that his love for Diodati wells up involuntarily in him, explaining, “whenever I find any one who despises the opinions of the vulgar, in their erroneous estimation of things, and dares to judge, and speak, and be that which the highest wisdom has in every age taught to be best, impelled by some necessity, I join myself to him.”³⁰ In Diodati, Milton found a man sculpted by application to scholarship, schooled in wisdom and uprightness, in pursuit of highest beauty; their language-mediated relationship was predicated upon and involved their usage of language as a sculpting tool, deliberately deployed to improve the inner man.

In writing within the vein of this archetypal relationship, the men adhered to its ideals while improving brilliantly upon them in exchanges that the multilingual Miltonist John Hale describes as characterized, particularly on Milton’s part, by “Ovidian flourish[es].”³¹ Participation in the Renaissance friend-

27. Brown, “John Milton and Charles Diodati,” 114.

28. Chaplin, “One Flesh, One Heart,” 267, 269.

29. *Ibid.*, 276.

30. Milton to Diodati, 31-32.

31. Hale, *Milton’s Languages*, 35. In this passage, Hale embarks upon an intensive examination of Ovidian traits in Milton’s canon.

ship tradition involved a number of tropes including intellectual banter, which dominates their writing, and role playing, which appears as both Milton and Diodati cast Milton as a more restrained, disciplined scholar and Diodati as the more vivacious, spontaneous spirit.³² Indeed, portions of their communications rise to extreme levels of playfulness such that they might even be regarded as examples of Milton's toffish theory that intellectualism is an ineludible prerequisite for jest. The men posture and tease, proclaim and demur, and engage in the sorts of reversals and ironies that only a close friend could appreciate, as when Milton responds to Diodati's request for a song by complaining "but why does your Muse provoke mine, instead of permitting her to seek the obscurity that she craves?" before proceeding to catalogue the many poems that his Muse has stored up for Diodati's at the end of his letter.³³ For his part, Diodati cajoles Milton over his unwavering application to his books and playfully tempts him to a day of mirthful relaxation, which he justifies by declaring it will allow them to "feast on one another's philosophical and well-bred words."³⁴ This exchange highlights the easy intellectualism the two enjoyed through their mutual knowledge of one another, a knowledge that allows them to anticipate the thoughts of the other, divulge their plans for future writings, and *experiment with their friendship* through experiments in word-play across their many gift-texts. The men partake in the forms of friendships provided them by tradition but improve upon them by insistently elevating both the traditions and themselves while striving towards a more soulish connection through the tongue of scholarship.

Tragically, that soulish connection was snapped after nearly twenty years of careful cultivation when Diodati died in 1638 while Milton was engaged upon his first and only tour of the European continent.³⁵ Upon his return to England, Milton's grief, though inexpressible, found expression in a final gift-act to Diodati—*Epitaphium Damonis*. In this text, Milton memorializes Diodati's memory through the grief-stricken tongue of the shepherd Thyrsis, who mourns the loss

32. Brown discusses these tropes—and Milton and Diodati's participation in them—in his examination of their textual exchange, noting particularly the way in which the codes of Renaissance friendship "govern the discourse" of Milton and Diodati's correspondence. He further identifies Diodati's early letters to Milton and Milton's September 1637 letter to Diodati as significant examples of their ritual role-play. (See Brown, "John Milton and Charles Diodati," 109, 113.)

33. Milton, "Elegia Sexta," 50.

34. This translation of a line from Diodati's earliest Greek letter to Milton appears to be Brown's own. (See Brown, "John Milton and Charles Diodati," 111.)

35. Campbell and Corns, *John Milton*, 135.

of his closest companion, Damon, in a series of shattered wails. In his evaluation of *Epitaphium Damonis*, Raymond Mackenzie observes that Thyrsis—and possibly Milton himself as represented by Thyrsis—seems to have “slipped into despair that is a kind of living death,” further asserting that we see a oneness with his companion in the way that Thyrsis seems to have suffered a death blow of his own; an erasure of his will to live.³⁶ Thyrsis’s pain is so profound, so acute, that, rather than enticing its onlookers to join his lamentations in the role of mourners, instead rouses in those onlookers an astonishment that causes them to gape in wonder as Thyrsis’s voice rises to an acme of anguish over his singular loss of his singular friend:

But what at last is to become of me? What faithful companion will stay by my side as you always did when the cold was cruel and the frost thick on the ground, and when the herbs were dying of thirst under a consuming sun... Who now is to beguile my days with conversation and song? Go home unfed, for your master has no time for you, my lambs. To whom shall I confide my heart? Who will teach me to alleviate my mordant cares and shorten the long night with delightful conversation while the ripe pear simmers before the grateful fire?³⁷

This passage reveals Milton expending the fever of his grief in the full strength of his lyrical eloquence. Milton’s pain is palpable, and it pervades even the most inconsequential aspects of his life. His words are haunting in their plaintiveness—and in their simplicity. The poem is, simply, a paean of pain. A closer examination of the poem, however, reveals that pain is not the only presence channeled in its body; in its lines we see not only the visage of grief, but also the resurgence of the hallmark themes of Milton and Diodati’s singular relationship. The intellectual aspect of their relationship surfaces in Milton’s clamor for the one who would “teach” him; their easy comradeship lurks in his moan for beguiling “conversation and song.” The playful linguistic role-play that had proven such a delight in their correspondence reemerges in Milton’s almost bitter reflection on the inefficacy to his dead friend of the language-roles they had mutually prized, a reflection that is expressed through a conditional clause that is actually, elementally, a stark expression of doubt—a desperate query to the gods as to—“if there be any profit

36. Raymond N. MacKenzie, “Rethinking Rhyme, Signifying Friendship: Milton’s *Lycidas* and *Epitaphium Damonis*,” *Modern Philology* 106, no. 3 (2009): 548.

37. John Milton, “*Epitaphium Damonis*,” in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 133.

in having cultivated the ancient faith and piety and the arts of Pallas Athene, and in having possessed a comrade who was a poet.”³⁸ The pain of the poet’s loss has caused him to doubt the schema on which his identity-role is based, and Thyrsis here grapples not only with the death of his friend, but also with the assault that death has launched upon his understanding of universal justice—his belief that those who through application, deprivation, and discipline pursue the arts of Pallas Athene will receive any reward of the gods for their agonizing self-consecration. Through these grapplings with the gods, Milton engages in a role-play that is more than play and embarks on a search for meaning that yields a tortured yet clear definition of role: Thyrsis—Milton—is not simply a friend mourning a friend; he is a poet mourning a poet.

Near the conclusion of the piece, a subtler theme from their correspondence emerges when Milton embarks upon a catalogue of the subjects to which he intends to address his pen as he attempts to function in the wake of his grief.³⁹ Upon an initial reading, this section of the text jars upon the inward ear, erupting forcibly as it does from a rubble of grief and focusing perversely on Milton alone rather than on Milton’s love for or loss of Diodati. However, when the piece is read in light of the men’s previous correspondence, we recognize in this passage not a burst of ego on Milton’s part but rather a continuation of the men’s treasured habit of sharing their writing with one another. This passage, though it hardly mentions Diodati, is the deepest possible description of him, for this passage casts him finally and forever as Milton’s confidence-receiver, the perfect audience of a poet’s Muse.

The final manner in which the piece evidences the themes of Milton and Diodati’s scholarly love for one another is in its very essence—in its status as a high classic pastoral elegy written in Latin and in its transmutation of the men themselves into Greek figures within a classical landscape. As such, *Epitaphium Damonis* stands as the final offering in a lofty chain of gift-texts, an offering that is not only an eternal memorialization of the themes that had both constructed and been constructed by that relationship—an ultimate summation of the singular elements of their friendship—but also the greatest, most sophisticated

38. Milton, “Epitaphium Damonis,” 133.

39. His catalogue proceeds thus: “I, for my part, am resolved to tell the story of the Trojan ships in the Rutupian sea and of the ancient kingdom of Inogene, the daughter of Pandrasus, and of the chiefs, Brennus and Arviragus, and of old Belinus, and of the Armorican settlers who came at last under British law. Then I shall tell of Igraine pregnant with Arthur by fatal deception, the counterfeiting of Gorlois’ features and arms by Merlin’s treachery.” (See Milton, “Epitaphium Damonis,” 137.)

text that this friendship produced. As that summation of the highest elements of the highest friendship Milton ever achieved, *Epitaphium Damonis* stands as an unparalleled testimony of the many ways in which Milton imagined language as a means of elevating, commemorating, and sculpting relationships. Moreover, as that testimony, *Epitaphium Damonis* provides us with incomparable insight into Milton's conception of the relationship between scholarly language and ideal companionship, for in producing a piece that so thoroughly captured their friendship, Milton shed light on the salient themes of that friendship—themes that, when examined, reveal a startling reversal.

Heretofore in this essay, we have clearly established that Milton utilized languages to elevate and commemorate his relationships and have further demonstrated that his conception of an ideal relationship was one in which the measured languages of scholarship reigned supreme. This conception resulted in his employment of a variety of language practices to reinforce and magnify those relationships, practices that we see captured ineffably in *Epitaphium Damonis*. However, a closer examination of the hallmarks of Miltonic friendship unmasks a further dimension to its integration of elevated language and feeling. This examination reveals that, within its system, friendship was not only *elevated* by but also itself *serviced* language. The relationship between elevating scholarly language and the ideal companionate relationship was not one in which only one member benefited; just as surely as the usage of scholarly language elevated the ideal friendship, so too the ideal friendship was one whose mechanics acted as a catalyst to developing the skilled usage of that scholarly language.

A brief recapitulation of the themes of Milton's friendship with Diodati serves to reinforce this reversal. Brown's observation that "in exercising their linguistic skills, the two young students often wrote in verse, thus raising the level of difficulty in congenial competition," earlier employed to demonstrate the enthusiasm Diodati and Milton felt upon finding a fit partner who spoke the language prerequisite to appreciating those texts, now also highlights the manner in which the relationship drove each man to produce better, more finely spun instances of scholarly work.⁴⁰ Not only this, but the relationship between the students also elevated the materials they could both write and *have understood*, a phenomena whose rarity is proven by Milton's unavailing attempts to establish audience with his sister and father.

Indeed, the effect of possessing perpetual audience with Diodati cannot

40. Brown, "John Milton and Charles Diodati," 109.

be overstated when evaluating Milton's productions of this time, for the knowledge that Diodati stood and waited for his texts was clearly a source of pleasure and inspiration for Milton.⁴¹ An author can feel almost no greater spur to writing than the knowledge that an eager, intelligent reader awaits one's offering, and, just as the chief desire of friendship is to be known and valued upon the basis of intimate knowledge, the chief desire of authorship is to find an audience who will read one's work and both know and value what it is that one has read. In Diodati, these roles of friend and audience merged seamlessly, providing Milton with an impetus to write. In this sense, Diodati, as the fit reader, can have figured second only to the inspiration—or indeed have performed the role—of Milton's muse. That Diodati was that fit reader-friend for Milton is proven over and over again not only by the texts addressed to him, but also by the many texts Milton eagerly shared and spoke of sharing with him. Perhaps the most blatant example of the latter—and of Diodati's perpetual reader-presence in Milton's mind—is Milton's Italian sonnet sequence which, though ostensibly written for an Italian woman, gives textual evidence of having been written with the multilingual Diodati in view as its fittest audience.⁴²

Progressing further into the theme of multilingual exchange, we find that this shared multilingualism itself furnished significant scope to the friendship's efficacy as a sculpting tool for advancing each man's practice of language. As John Hale has explained in his inimitable work *Milton's Languages*, scholars of the seventeenth century inherited a centuries-long struggle between the various classical and modern languages, each of which carried particular cultural and classist connotations and each of which was favored within particular genres of writ-

41. Milton himself explicitly describes his delight in his audience in his earliest preserved missive to Diodati: "There is great delight, believe me, in the fact that remote regions have bred a heart that is so loving and a head so devoted to me, that I have a claim for a charming comrade upon a distant land, which is willing soon to return him to me at my bidding." See Milton, "Elegia Prima," 7.

42. In his examination of the sequence, John Hale identifies Diodati as a primary audience of these poems while Brown proposes him as their most quintessential reader: "Who better to relish the playful change than half-Italian Charles? The confession about neglecting religious reading also fits, both friends having been thought of for the ministry. So does the bold literary exploration: Diodati, friend of multiculturalism, stands out from the skeptical, more insular others. There may be self-reflexive revelation in the series, and Diodati, from the community that probably supported Milton's Italian studies when he was immersing himself in Italian sonnets, may be the supportive reader best placed to understand." (See Brown, "John Milton and Charles Diodati, 116.) For Hale's evaluation of the sequence's linguistic intricacies, see Hale, *Milton's Languages*, 49.

ing.⁴³ To write in any given language, therefore, was not simply to write in that language, but rather to participate in a complex semiotic system; one occupied a different language-role, exuded a different author-persona when one wrote in one of the several languages one could command. An author's decision regarding which language to employ in any given piece of prose, poetry, or correspondence, therefore, both reflected his sense of and determined his position within the scene of letters.⁴⁴ Language choice was as much an act of identity construction as one of textual construction.

Clearly, then, experimenting with and choosing language was a significant endeavor for the would-be author and, indeed, was linked to determining the vocational office of that author. It is at this juncture that the Diodati-Milton friendship once again emerges as inimitable, for the fact that the two men shared at least four languages (English, Greek, Latin, and Italian) meant that, in addition to engaging in role play as a means for cementing their Renaissance friendship, the men were also able to use their friendship as a scene for engaging in role-play of an *authorial* nature. With Diodati, Milton was able to explore multiple presentations of himself—to be known in many faces—and he utilized their friendship as a means to engage in self-constructionist toying with language-mediated roles. Moreover, the fact that Diodati spoke many of the languages that Milton knew meant that the friendship provided Milton with the rare opportunity of having his many-languaged offerings evaluated by a *single* ear, one that could develop familiarity with his strengths and weaknesses across languages. So successful was this role-playing that, by the time Milton wrote his last text to Diodati, it had enabled Milton to make his decision regarding his vocational future: his pipe would

43. In the introductory chapter to his scintillating examination of Milton's multilingualism, Hale provides a miniscule history of various languages' battle for dominance in the linguistic hierarchy of European scholasticism dating from the year 1300 to Milton's present. Unsurprisingly, Latin often held sway in this milieu although, Hale notes, by the seventeenth century French was favored by many cultures in the realm of poetry and England had adopted its own vernacular for legal and ecclesiastical matters. (See Hale, *Milton's Languages*, 4.)

44. Hale remarks of Milton's own participation within this milieu that, "Languages grant access for their reader to intellectual and spiritual diversity. Milton seized his chances, in an all-round way worthy of humanist aspiration. Languages in use release the speaker or writer into new roles, and a modified self. Milton relished this release, at times for its own sake, often later to play a series of humanist roles. Surveying the number of his languages and of the genres in which he wrote (and not forgetting sub-genres like satire and insult within his major work), I infer that he relished the entering by his languages into as many personae as possible. They show he shared the renaissance eagerness for versatility." (See Hale, *Milton's Languages*, 15.)

sound forth, he declared, “a British theme to [its] native Muses.”⁴⁵

Even this declaration of the future is, in itself, an example of how the relationship serviced the language. To bestow the confidence of one’s plans for future attempts at language is surely one of the highest expressions of friendship an author can bestow, but just as certainly it is a means of hammering out—of testing and trying—those plans. Declaring the nature of his writings, both real and imagined, to Diodati as he does in *Elegia Sexta* and *Epitaphium Damonis* enabled Milton to feel what it was to be the author of those texts and thus to make decisions about that authorship. The men’s divulgence of language-aspirations to one another not only ratified their sense of friendship but also, in much the same way that their playful competitiveness led them to produce better texts, inspired them to aspire to greater linguistic heights. Thus in his last extant letter to Diodati, Milton may confide, “Do you ask what I am thinking of?—so may Providence protect me—of immortality! What am I doing? ‘I am pluming,’ and meditate a flight,” and, through writing it, make it something nearer reality.⁴⁶

Although the manner in which each of these employments of their friendship served to improve Milton and Diodati’s language practices is individually evident, it is only as we collect those practices together that we begin to grasp how forcefully they demonstrate the manner in which Milton and Diodati utilized tropes within their friendship to improve their language. This discovery enables us to perceive the underlying theme of those practices—the final means by which the friendship advanced each’s language. In reading Diodati’s desire that the men might “feast on one another’s philosophical and well-bred words” and in witnessing Milton’s proclamation of his love for Diodati as proceeding compulsively from his love of truth’s beauties, we realize that not simply the practices of the friendship but also the *friendship itself—the bond of love* between the men—serviced their pursuit of elevated language.⁴⁷ The knowledge of the other—each’s simple existence as a vessel of virtue, language, and beauty—served itself as a wellspring of inspiration; the communion of their spirits fueled each man’s creative urge—their ability to conceive and construct linguistic beauty. Their love for one another was linked to a sharp hunger for intellectual, generative creativity, which they found in the other’s rejuvenating philosophical companionship. Through this simple linkage between two souls joined in worship of beauty, those

45. Milton, “Epitaphium Damonis,” 137.

46. Milton to Diodati, 33.

47. Diodati translated in Brown, “John Milton and Charles Diodati,” 111. For Milton’s professions see Milton to Diodati, 32

souls might dwell within an elevated plane of scholarship occupied only by themselves—each other the dominant figure, their muses interlinked.⁴⁸

Thus, the loss of Diodati was not simply the loss of a friend, but the wreckage of a scene of creation, an intellectual Eden. We see the effects of this blow to Milton's creative landscape in *Epitaphium Damonis*, in which he declares, "I do not know what grand song my pipe was sounding—it is now eleven nights and a day—perhaps I was setting my lips to new pipes, but their fastenings snapped and they fell asunder and could carry the grave no further."⁴⁹ These lines bespeak not merely soulish sadness but linguistic disorientation. The loss of the speaker's friend has interrupted his song; with the disappearance of his coparticipant in the creative endeavour, his tune also has vanished.⁵⁰ In this, his ideal friendship, Milton transformed that friendship into nothing less than an exalted handmaiden of his Muse.

That Milton's view of relationships represented a complex interlinkage of love and language has been amply demonstrated by the preceding pages. The degree to which Milton was cognizant of the extent of that interlinkage is, however, a matter for speculation. He was certainly conscious of and, indeed, explicit in his linkage of elevated language to love, having celebrated the elevating effect that the language of scholarship has upon relationships in the passage from "Prolusion VII" quoted earlier: "What is more pleasant—what can be imagined

48. In their respective pieces on Milton's relationship with Diodati, John Rumrich and Gregory Chaplin each separately identify this intense bond as an instance of "Platonic eroticism," a term that clangs suggestively upon our modern ears, but which both Rumrich and Chaplin take pains to establish did not necessarily entail sexual behavior in classical dialogue. Indeed, Chaplin assures us, "As Socrates describes it using several myths, *eros* stems from the soul's longing to regain sight of the realm of absolute beauty and knowledge," while Rumrich relies on both Plato and Freud in his clarification that, "although it is risky to speak synthetically and summarily of such a large, complex, long-lived, and easily misconstrued notion, Plato and Freud agree on this: *eros* is a constitutional human drive motivating creative endeavor, one that is expressed in sexual reproduction, but also in the arts of civilization." In this sense—in the sense that Milton and Diodati's relationship was characterized by an amorous passion for beauty and ardent pursuit of its creation—that relationship was erotic. (See Chaplin, "One Heart, One Flesh," 274 and John Rumrich, "The Erotic Milton," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 41, no. 2 (1999): 131.)

49. Milton, "Epitaphium Damonis," 137.

50. In her brief sketch of Milton's life, Annabel Patterson notes just such an interruption in Milton's productivity, musing immediately following her analysis of "Epitaphium Damonis" that "After [the writing of Epitaphium] there were no signs of poetic activity for several years." (See Annabel Patterson, "Biography," in *Milton in Context*, ed. Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.)

more delightful *than the talks of learned and serious men together.*"⁵¹ Indeed, as the entire weight of Milton's canon proves, Milton believed that the language of scholarship—the reasoned pursuit of knowledge—improved all it touched. But was Milton aware that the reverse was also true in his practices—that the notion of companionship he idealized was one which served to elevate his usage of language? Or was this motion the unconscious act of a man for whom language was the greatest love? We have seen that Milton used his language as a reaching out point—was it equally his language as his heart that sought a companion?

The answers to these questions may be impossible to determine. What is clear is that Milton believed and, indeed, demonstrated, that language and love where *conjoined* are both *improved*. Love and language were in a sense a two-handed engine; Milton's love found its greatest expression in his offerings of language, and, where he was able to share the language he loved, there he loved best. Where he loved he attempted to give that love higher life in language, and he best loved those friendships that best served his language. Whether ultimately either language or love rose higher than its mate in Milton's estimation may never be determined; that they resided in indissoluble union in his language-loving mind, his own eloquent testimony places beyond any shadow of dispute. As that testimony proves, love and language found truly in Milton's mind the idyllic landscape of companionate paradise that he, through them, strove to achieve throughout his long and lyrical lifetime; in this manner Milton's life elevated his ideals' strains just as surely as their presiding presences had so enriched his own.

51. Milton, "Prolusion VII," 625.

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Exploring the Link Between Violent Crime Workload and Officer-Involved Shootings of Unarmed Individuals*

Dara Zwemer

Abstract

The present author created a measure of officer workload in the U.S. and determined whether this measure predicted lethal officer-involved shootings (OISs) of unarmed individuals. Seventy-six OISs from the year 2016 were analyzed using archival data. Data were collected regarding population size, number of officers, and violent crime statistics for each city and state in which a lethal OIS of an unarmed decedent occurred. The present author hypothesized that states with more officer-involved shootings of unarmed individuals would have higher officer workloads than states with fewer shootings, and that officer workload would be higher in cities where shootings occurred, compared to those cities' state-level measures. Workload comparisons between states were not significant; however, city to state comparisons revealed meaningful workload differences. Specifically, cities with fatal OISs of unarmed decedents had higher officer workloads than the state in which the cities were located. Future research that includes data beyond 2016 could allow one to predict cities that are at risk for lethal OISs and offer evidence-based insights into methods designed to minimize the number of these events.

***Winner of the Dean's Distinguished Essay Award**

Citizens and politicians alike have directed significant attention toward officer-involved shootings and use of force incidents in the past several years. In 2016 alone, 962 individuals were fatally shot by police officers in the United States, and 76 of those killed were unarmed (“Police Shootings,” n.d.). As news coverage and awareness of these events have increased, public support of the police has become divided, often along political lines; this division makes taking unified actions to reduce the number of fatal shootings more difficult. Recent protests related to the Black Lives Matter movement and calls to defund police forces across the United States have highlighted this division, particularly in response to the deaths of unarmed individuals.

Given the polarized nature of this issue, this study aims to address officer-involved shootings from a nonpartisan standpoint by focusing on the workload of officers in the United States. Focusing on the effect of workload acknowledges officer fatigue and how this fatigue may affect an officer’s responses rather than analyzing characteristics of the officer or the subject. Acknowledging that an officer’s workload may need to be adjusted in light of officer fatigue does not vilify officers or unarmed decedents. The evidence-based insights that result from this study of lethal use of force incidents may help identify specific, practical remedies to reduce these events.

On the whole, scientific studies examining police use of force focus on the role population demographics play in actions taken by officers rather than on officer workload. In their use of force content analysis, Klahm and Tillyer (2010) found that the demographic variables researchers generally include (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender) either yield mixed results across studies or do not serve as good predictors of future use of force. For example, in the studies they analyzed, neither the race nor the gender of an officer was significantly related to overall officer use of force. Furthermore, the researchers found that the effect of the suspect’s race on use of force by officers was mixed (Klahm & Tillyer, 2010).

Aside from these demographic characteristics, some environmental variables have also been considered in relation to these use of force cases. Brook, Piquero, and Cronin (1994) found that officers working in busier precincts with more calls for service generally have more negative attitudes regarding their department and community compared to officers in slower precincts. Such negative attitudes may impact how officers characterize individuals that they encounter or arrest. If officers view these community members negatively, then officers may be less reluctant to use force against these individuals, especially if the officers fear for their own safety in encountering members of their community. Similarly, Granot, Balcetis, and Stern (2017) report a positive relationship between the crime rate in an area and negative contact with police officers.

In fact, the relationship becomes even clearer when use of force cases are analyzed on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. One study conducted by Terrill and Reisig (2003) sought to contextualize use of force cases by studying the neighborhoods in which these incidents occurred. The researchers found that individuals living in disadvantaged areas with high rates of homicide were met with higher levels of physical and verbal force (e.g., threats, restraints, and both lethal and nonlethal strikes with an object or hand) from police compared to those residing in more advantaged neighborhoods. This study and the studies formerly mentioned illustrate how workload and crime rate are associated with officers' attitudes and use of force. Unfortunately, none of these studies focus specifically on lethal use of force directed toward unarmed citizens, especially as those actions relate to a police force's capacity to respond to violent crime.

Given the same violent crime rate in a community, an officer employed in a precinct staffed with a relatively large number of officers would have a lower violent crime workload than would an officer working in a less adequately staffed precinct. Specifically, the latter would have, on average, a greater number of potentially life-threatening calls to respond to, and the volume of this type of work could potentially affect their responses to potential suspects. It is important to note that in many of the more recent, attitude-galvanizing events, the potential suspects in question were unarmed. Thus, the aim of this study was to test for a possible link between violent crime workloads (rather than precinct busyness or crime rates) and the fatal shooting of unarmed persons by police officers. To our knowledge, no prior published studies have examined this possible link.

In order to examine this link, the present author created an officer workload measure for each city and state in which an unarmed citizen was fatally shot by the police in 2016. It should be noted that in many cases the actual location was a town or smaller municipality rather than a city. However, for the sake of presentation efficiency, the term "city" is used throughout this report. Workload, in this case, was defined as the average number of violent crimes an officer would have to respond to in their respective patrol area. These violent crimes include robbery, aggravated assault, and nonnegligent manslaughter. Officer workload served as this study's predictor variable, while the dependent variable was the number of unarmed, lethal shootings that occurred in a particular city or state. Shootings in this sample were defined as those in which an unarmed, non-incarcerated citizen was fatally shot by an on-duty police officer with a firearm in 2016. Use of force cases can take up to a year to be processed and accounted for in federal data; therefore, the present study focused on less recent cases (Beck & Uchidna, 2019).

The present author hypothesized that American states with more officer-involved shootings of unarmed individuals (e.g., California) would have higher officer

workloads than states with fewer shootings (e.g., New York). These higher workloads may affect officers in ways that increase the lethality of their response to suspects. For example, responding to a large number of violent crimes in the line of duty may fatigue officers or increase their perceptions of threat, thereby affecting their ability to make decisions about how much force to use during an interaction. Secondly, the author hypothesized that officer workload would be higher in cities where shootings occurred compared to those cities' corresponding state-level workload measures. This prediction would act as a second test of the fatigue-lethal response model. By comparing cities to the states in which they are located, this approach controls for potential confounds such as between-state differences in population demographics, policing norms, officer training standards, and use of force policies.

Methods

Archival Cases

There were 76 cases from 2016 included in this research. Individuals were not included in the present analyses if they were driving a vehicle in the direction of one or more officers at the scene ($n = 8$). This exclusion criterion was adopted because police officers often consider such vehicular maneuvers as hostile, since the vehicle could be used as a weapon and harm officers on the scene. In addition, the death of one individual who died during a police training accident ($n = 1$) was omitted because such events usually involve equipment malfunctions that accidentally harm someone who was not being arrested or investigated by an officer. Finally, inmates attempting to escape from a prison facility ($n = 2$) were not included, even if they were unarmed. Though officers often need to make use of force judgments when apprehending escaped inmates, comparing individuals who are trying to escape a prison facility with those encountered by police outside of these institutions is problematic, as escaped prisoners may be characterized by the police as inherently more dangerous, among other assumptions.

The cities analyzed in this study corresponded to those in which each lethal officer-involved shooting took place in 2016. Information gathered about each of the 71 cities in which a case occurred was also collected for each of the 50 U.S. states, and 32 total states included one or more cities with a lethal OIS. In five of these 71 cities, two fatal OISs occurred in 2016; however, no city had more than two lethal OISs during the course of 2016.

Materials and Data

The 76 cases were identified and recorded from two main databases: the *Washington Post* "Police Shootings" database and a similar, independently maintained database

provided by the *Guardian* (Swaine, Laughland, Lartey, & McCarthy, n.d.). These databases were used to gather the decedents' names, the shooting locations, and the basic circumstances surrounding each shooting. After the cases were identified, population estimates for each city where a lethal shooting occurred were obtained from census data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. Population estimates from 2017-2018 were recorded for most cities; however, 2010 census values for cities were recorded when 2017-2018 population estimates were not available. In the case of Arvonion, Virginia, population data was not available in the census and was instead pulled from the website *Best Places*, which compares crime rates and cost of living across cities ("Arvonion," n.d.).

For each city, the number of officers employed in that area was derived from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data. UCR data was also utilized to collect information on both the overall number of violent crimes and the number of specific violent crimes (i.e., murders, robberies, and aggravated assaults) committed in each city and its corresponding state where one of these cases occurred. Information about the number of overall violent crimes and the number of violent crimes per citizen in each city was specifically accessed through a *Detroit Free Press* database that consisted of organized UCR data (Tanner, 2017). In the few cases where UCR data was missing regarding the number of officers employed in a city, the present author checked official police websites for each city and emailed police departments to ask how many police officers were employed in 2016. Information about the number of police officers per ten thousand residents for each city was recorded from a database compiled by Governing (2018) or hand calculated before it was converted into a measurement per one thousand residents using Microsoft Excel.

Procedure

City-level officer workload values were calculated by dividing the number of officers per thousand citizens employed in the city in 2016 by that city's violent crime rate in 2016 (i.e., the combined number of homicides, aggravated assaults, and robberies committed per 1,000 citizens). This crime rate calculation represents the number of violent crimes that each officer, on average, would have encountered in the city during that year. Thus, for cities that employed a large number of officers (per citizen population) while experiencing few violent crimes, the calculated workload rate was relatively low. Conversely, for cities that employed fewer officers while experiencing more violent crimes, the workload rate was high relative to other calculated rates in the sample. Similarly, state-level officer workload values were calculated by dividing the number of officers per 1,000 citizens employed in a state by the state's overall violent crime rate. Thus, each city's and each state's officer workload number reflected the number of violent crimes to which

a typical officer employed by that city or state had to respond to in the year 2016.

Hypothesis one proposed that states with more officer-involved shootings of unarmed decedents would have higher officer workloads than states with fewer shootings. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for state-level violent crime workload values and the number of unarmed individuals lethally shot by law enforcement in the corresponding state in 2016. A separate analysis was conducted for the second hypothesis, which predicted that officer workload would be higher in cities where shootings occurred, compared to the corresponding state-level workload value. To test the second hypothesis, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted. Violent crime-based workload served as the dependent variable, and city vs. state workload was the grouping variable. Only the 32 states where one or more unarmed shootings occurred were included in this analysis. This analysis compared overall officer workload values, which meant that these values were calculated from a combination of violent crimes; however, in a third analysis, the present author also compared individual workload indices based on specific categories of crime (i.e., nonnegligent manslaughter, robbery, and aggravated assault) on state and city levels using the same paired *t*-test.

Results

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to compare state-level officer workload to the number of unarmed, lethal OIS in a corresponding state (which ranged from 0 to 15). Contrary to the prediction reflected in the first hypothesis, state-level officer workload and the number of unarmed shootings were not significantly correlated, $r(48) = -0.22, p = 0.93$. The data are illustrated in Figure 1.

Regarding the second hypothesis, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted to compare each OIS's city-based officer workload value to its state level officer workload value. Although marginally statistically significant, city-level workload values were higher ($M =$

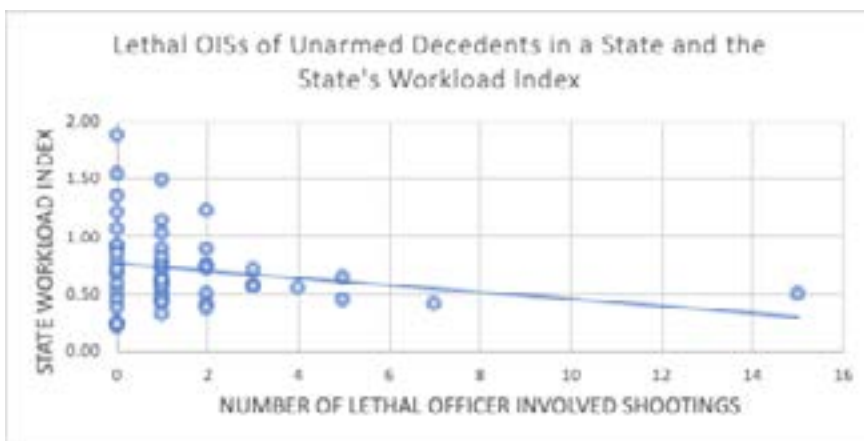


Fig. 1. The number of lethal OISs and the workload index for each state.

1.31, SD = 2.19) than corresponding state-level workload values ($M = 0.66$, $SD = 0.26$); $t(31) = 1.62$, $p = .06$, $d = .29$. For exploratory purposes, similar paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare cities to their corresponding states on each of the 3 specific violent crimes that made up the overall violent crime-based workload values (i.e., non-negligent manslaughter, robbery, and aggravated assault). None of these analyses revealed significant differences, likely due to the variability of such specific indices across cities and states.

Discussion

The first prediction, that states with more officer-involved shootings of unarmed individuals would have higher officer workloads than states with fewer shootings, was not supported. A large degree of variability between workday lengths, policing laws, and training standards likely limits the extent to which officer workload alone can predict state-to-state patterns of lethal use of force. For example, the number of hours of de-escalation and mental health awareness training police officers receive differs widely across states, with a minimum of two and a maximum of 40 hours across the 31 states that mandate such training (Plotkin & Peckerman, 2017). This large range serves to illustrate the varying nature of state laws related to policing.

In contrast, hypothesis two received support. Cities in which a fatal OIS of an unarmed decedent occurred had significantly higher officer workloads than their overall state's officer workload average. Put another way, police working in population centers that witnessed lethal OISs had violent crime workloads twice that of the average officer in their state. It should be noted that, due to the degree of variability in city-level workload values, analyses indicated this difference was marginally significant and small-to-moderate in size.

Due to the archival, non-experimental nature of the data, this study is not equipped to determine potential causal mechanisms behind this finding. As previously described, perhaps higher workloads affect one or more physiological or psychological characteristics of police in ways that increase their odds of using lethal force during citizen interactions. For example, high violent crime workloads may impact officer fatigue, morale, and/or perceptions of threat. Alternatively, one or more confounding variables (e.g., police-community relations, local revenue capacities) could potentially account for the observed difference. Even so, controlling for state-to-state differences in policing variables by comparing OIS locations to their respective region did help clarify OIS patterns. For example, cities and towns within one state, such as Arizona, are likely to have similar, state-mandated police selection and training requirements. Within this more homogeneous context, one can more clearly observe that lethal OISs of unarmed citizens in 2016 occurred in areas where officers had relatively high workloads.

The results of the present study align with past research findings showing that officer workload may influence officers' use of force and attitudes towards the citizens they serve. Recall that Terrill and Reisig (2003) found that individuals living in neighborhoods with higher crime rates were generally responded to with higher use of force by officers. The current study found that cities where an OIS occurred had both higher workloads and higher crime rates than the state in which they were located. Furthermore, though Brooks et al. (1994) focused on the effect of police attitudes rather than on the rate of lethal OISs, both their study and the present study reveal the potential effects of workloads on officer responses.

One strength of the present study is how easy it would be to replicate. The procedures could be repeated on more recent UCR data and easily compared with this study's results. Also, databases that contain archival data regarding these OIS cases, though few in number, are maintained and accessible remotely for ease of access. A second strength is that, to the best of the author's knowledge, the present study is the first to comprehensively study cases of lethal force across all 50 American states over the course of a calendar year. Most importantly, this study is the first to single out cases in which the use of lethal force was directed toward unarmed persons. Though more general research regarding use of force is certainly important, taking a closer look at cases involving unarmed decedents is also necessary to have a clear picture of use of force as a whole.

Regarding limitations of the present study, the reported findings might have been stronger if a more refined, centralized source of police data existed. Currently, the U.S. has a fragmented system of reporting violent crimes and the number of police in an area; though UCR data provides researchers with a number of important statistics, some law enforcement agencies do not provide any data to the FBI (Banks et al., 2016). As reporting to the FBI is voluntary, the issue of missing data is difficult to resolve. Unarmed shootings and other uses of police force also take time for departments to process and submit; therefore, these incidents may not be properly represented in more recent datasets (Beck & Uchidna, 2019). Even so, analyzing the data that are available does provide valuable insights to use of force behavior and knowledge about officer workloads. Further examination of these variables could provide valuable insights on improving both the U.S. system of policing and the well-being of fatigued officers.

While being mindful of the aforementioned time lag, further research should expand the present analyses beyond 2016. Taking action to expand this present study's scope could reveal trends in officer workload across cities and states and, in turn, add weight to the results observed in the present study. For example, if cities where these OISs occur maintain higher workloads over time than the state in which they are located, the present

study's conclusions could be further supported. If this pattern does persist, researchers could also attempt to predict cities in which shootings were likely to occur based on workload values. Then, policy makers and police agencies could take actions that reduced each officer's workload. These actions could come in the form of (1) hiring more officers in understaffed areas, (2) allocating resources to entities (e.g., social workers) that could respond to situations currently included in officers' workloads (e.g., non-violent mental health crises), or (3) implementing interventions that address officer fatigue, morale, or threat perceptions. Ideally, no matter what solutions are employed to lower officer workload, this alert could lower the number of lethal OISs that occur in the United States.

In closing, the present study represents a first of its kind. It examines a crucial, polarizing phenomenon in a manner tied to actual incidents and relevant to recent events. Insights from this study and future research modeled after it has the potential to generate practical, nonpartisan solutions aimed at minimizing the loss of life during policing interactions.

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Moral Reframing: A Perspective-Taking Approach to Political Arguments

Isaac Baca

Abstract

Moral foundations theory posits that there are five foundations of morality from which Americans make political decisions: 1) Care/Harm, 2) Fairness/Reciprocity, 3) Ingroup/Loyalty, 4) Authority/Respect, and 5) Purity/Sanctity. Previous research finds that liberals primarily endorse foundations 1 and 2, while conservatives primarily endorse foundations 3, 4, and 5. To examine which moral values are most persuasive to liberals and conservatives, political arguments aimed at decreasing support for an issue were reframed to appeal to foundations 1 and 2, or to foundations 3, 4, and 5. Results indicate that conservatives might be persuaded by arguments grounded in ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity values, but might not be persuaded by arguments grounded in care/harm, or fairness/reciprocity values. Liberals might be persuaded by arguments grounded in any of the five foundations. Moderates were the only group that showed no evidence of persuasion.

The political divide between liberals and conservatives in the United States stems from a deep-rooted moral divide, which underpins the way that liberals and conservatives make political judgements (Graham, Haidt, et al., 2011; Graham, Nosek, et al., 2009). Recent research has found that the divergent moral values endorsed by liberals and conservatives act as a starting point from which they formulate and analyze political arguments. When liberals are asked to make persuasive political arguments targeting conservatives, they generally ground their arguments in the values that liberals endorse, such as fairness, equality, care, and protection. Likewise, when conservatives are asked to make persuasive political arguments targeting liberals, they generally ground their arguments in the values that conservatives endorse, such as loyalty, patriotism, respect for authority, and purity. Because these arguments are grounded in moral values that are unappealing to the target, they are generally not persuasive (Feinberg & Willer, 2013, 2015). The present study seeks to examine a perspective-taking approach whereby political arguments are reframed to better align with the moral values of the target in an effort to increase the persuasive power of the arguments.

Background

Kohlberg and Haidt – A Brief Historical Survey Culminating in the Moral Foundations Theory

For much of the late 20th century, Lawrence Kohlberg was regarded as the leading theorist in the field of moral psychology. The origins of Kohlberg's theory of moral judgement largely grew from Jean Piaget's early work mapping the moral development of children. Kohlberg sought to expand and develop Piaget's work on moral development with the proposal of the cognitive developmental model of morality (Kohlberg, 1969). According to the cognitive developmental model of morality, morality is a product of reasoning. The better ability one has to reason about the world, the better one's moral judgement can be. Therefore, Kohlberg's cognitive developmental model posits that morality develops through stages, similar to Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1932). As a reasoning ability develops and improves, so too should the quality of one's moral judgements (Kohlberg, 1969). Kohlberg's cognitive developmental model prevailed as the dominant theory in moral psychology for about 30 years after its inception.

In the late 1990s, Jonathan Haidt began doing research on the origins of moral judgement by presenting hypothetical scenarios to participants and asking them to make moral judgements about the scenarios (Haidt, 2012). Haidt noticed that participants were able to quickly make moral judgments about hypothetical scenarios, but when asked to provide the reasoning that led to a particular judgement, participants often struggled to find a logical explanation that could fit the scenario (Haidt, 2012). Moreover, when

participants searched for an explanation but could not find one, their moral judgements remained just as strong. Among many participants it was observed that “even when the servant (reasoning) comes back empty-handed, the master (intuition) doesn’t change his judgement” (Haidt, 2012, p. 50).

The observation that moral judgments can occur and remain strong without justifiable reasoning led Haidt to propose four reasons to doubt that reasoning is the source of moral judgements (Haidt, 2001). First, reasoning and intuition both play a part in moral judgments. Due to the prominence of the cognitive developmental model of morality, reasoning has been overemphasized and intuition has been understudied. Second, reasoning is motivated. People are generally motivated to find evidence to support their intuitions. Third, most of what we believe to be objective reasoning is simply post-hoc rationalization. Fourth, “moral action covaries with moral emotion more than with moral reasoning” (Haidt, 2001, p. 815). For these reasons, Haidt proposes the social intuitionist model as an alternative to the cognitive developmental model to explain moral judgements (Haidt, 2001). The social intuitionist model posits that the basis for moral judgment is intuition rather than reasoning. According to the social intuitionist model, one first has an intuition, or gut feeling, about the morality of a scenario in question, then makes a judgement, followed by a post-hoc reasoning for the judgment.

Moral Foundations Theory

With the presupposition that moral judgments are a product of intuition rather than reasoning, researchers surveyed people in several countries around the world asking about issues that were morally important to them (Graham, Haidt, et al., 2011; Graham, Nosek, et al., 2009). Results indicated that there are five universal moral foundations by which people make intuitive moral judgements: 1) Care/Harm: concerns about defending, caring for, and protecting others, especially the vulnerable, 2) Fairness/Reciprocity: concerns with reducing bias, discrimination, and unfair treatment, 3) Ingroup/Loyalty: concerns about maintaining solidarity and loyalty to an ingroup, 4) Authority/Respect: concerns about maintaining control, order, obedience to authority, and respect for hierarchy, 5) Purity/Sanctity: concerns about modesty, piety, innocence, and purity, especially related to sexual behavior. Additionally, researchers found that liberals and conservatives generally tend to endorse different sets of moral foundations (Graham, Nosek, et al., 2009). Liberals tend to endorse the care/harm and fairness/reciprocity foundations to a greater degree than conservatives. However, conservatives tend to endorse the ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity foundations to a greater degree than liberals.

Support for the Moral Foundations Theory

The applicability of the moral foundations theory has been demonstrated across

many domains. In one study of moral reasoning in video game play (Krcmar et al., 2016), participants were given the moral foundations questionnaire (Graham, Haidt, et al., 2011), then asked to play video games. Participants were asked to report aloud the reasons for their video game decisions in real time. Decisions were coded as either “strategic” or “moral.” The moral decisions were then coded according to the moral foundations theory. Results indicated that participants’ scores on the moral foundations quiz were positively associated with moral reasoning during video game play. In a more realistic study, business and accounting students at a large Midwestern university were given the moral foundations questionnaire (Graham, Haidt, et al., 2011), then asked to report how they make moral judgments when presented with scenarios associated with business or accounting. Students’ scores on the moral foundations questionnaire predicted their moral judgements (Andersen et al., 2015).

Further studies highlight the differences between individuals who endorse the care/harm and fairness/reciprocity foundations and individuals who endorse the ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity foundations. In a multi-country study consisting of participants from Germany, Italy, and Spain, participants were asked to take the moral foundations questionnaire to determine the degree to which they endorse each of the five moral foundations (Milesi et al., 2019). Next, they were asked to read both sides of a rape case in which the man and the woman give conflicting information. The woman claimed that while on a date the previous night “she understood that she could not further resist without being injured; [the man] pushed her to the ground and raped her” (Milesi et al., 2019, p. 115). In contrast, the man claimed that “although at the beginning the woman was a little bit reluctant, she never gave him reason to think that she was not consenting” (Milesi et al., 2019, p. 115). Participants were then asked to make a determination as to who was to blame for the incident. Overall, higher scores on the authority/respect and purity/sanctity measure predicted higher level of victim blaming, while higher scores on the care/harm and fairness/reciprocity measures predicted lower levels of victim blaming.

For most individuals, religion plays an influential role in many scenarios involving moral judgement. To gain an understanding of the divergent moral foundations that are associated with religious and non-religious individuals, researchers in Italy examined the moral foundations that were most salient in regular religious attenders and compared them with the moral foundations that are most salient in non-religious individuals (Di Battista et al., 2018). Results found that individuals who identify as religious tend to endorse the ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity foundations to a higher degree than do non-religious individuals.

In terms of the relationship between political ideology and moral foundations, research supports the notion that right-wing and left-wing individuals fall along predictable sets of moral foundations (Hahn et al., 2018). In a study examining terrorist group motivations in the United States, extremist right-wing ideologies were associated with the ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity foundations while extremist left-wing ideologies were associated with the care/harm and fairness/reciprocity foundations.

Critiques of the Moral Foundations Theory

The moral foundations theory operates from the premise that it is intuition rather than reasoning that leads to moral judgement. However, recent research undermines the assumption that cognitive ability plays no role in moral judgements. In a Japanese study examining the relationship between moral values and cognitive ability, the care/harm, fairness/reciprocity, and purity/sanctity foundations were positively associated with cognitive ability for all participants, while the ingroup/loyalty, and authority/respect foundations were statistically significant for participants below the age of 50. Although these results do not invalidate the intuitive nature of the moral foundations, they do provide evidence for a significant interaction with cognitive ability.

Moral Foundations Theory as an Instrument of Persuasion

Given that different groups of people endorse predictable sets of moral foundations, researchers have hypothesized that messages can be more or less persuasive depending on the degree to which the message aligns with one's primary moral foundations. In one analysis, researchers examined the association of moral foundations language with monetary donations to charities (Winterich et al., 2012). Results found that when the management process and mission statement of various charities displayed the care/harm and fairness/reciprocity foundations, donations from liberals increased. Similarly, conservative donors increased their donations when a charity displayed the ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, or purity/sanctity foundations.

Further research suggests that by reframing an issue to better align with the moral foundations of the target, one can increase the persuasiveness of the message. In an archival study of *New York Times* articles, researchers discovered that more than a decade of articles used arguments that were grounded in language associated with specific moral foundations. This occurred in articles supporting stem cell research as well as articles opposing stem cell research. Further, the use of moral language proved to be an effective persuasive strategy. The authors state that "both proponent and opponent moral language had the expected effects on public opinion: increasing support for the targeted position" (Clifford & Jerit, 2013, p. 670).

Additional work suggests that political issues that have been reframed to better

align with the moral values of the opposing political party can be effective in bridging the gap between divergent opinions (Feinberg & Willer, 2013, 2015). In an analysis of newspaper op-eds and public service announcements, researchers found that concerns about the environment are generally framed using the care/harm foundation. However, when researchers reframed concerns about the environment to conform to the purity/sanctity foundation, conservatives dramatically increased their concern for the environment to such a degree that the differences between liberals' and conservatives' attitudes towards the environment were largely eliminated (Feinberg & Willer, 2013). In a parallel line of research, the reframing of political issues proved successful in increasing conservative support for same-sex marriage and universal healthcare, as well as increasing liberal support for military spending and making English the official language of the United States (Feinberg & Willer, 2015).

The Present Research

Although much research has been done to test the effects of moral reframing for increasing support for political issues, the effects of moral reframing have not been tested on attempts to *decrease* support for political issues. This study seeks to test the effectiveness of the moral reframing technique when used to decrease support for 1) gun control, an issue that liberals generally support, and 2) the death penalty, an issue that conservatives generally support. My hypothesis is that for both the gun control group and the death penalty group, arguments that are grounded in the moral foundations that align with one's political ideology will be more persuasive than arguments that are grounded in moral foundations that do not align with one's political ideology.

Method

Participants

In order to obtain participants for this study, 61 university instructors in 52 academic departments were contacted via email asking for permission to administer a survey to students during class time. Of the 61 instructors who were contacted, 17 instructors granted permission to administer the survey. Of the 17 who granted permission, ten classes within eight different academic departments at MTSU were included in the study. The remaining seven classes were not included in the study due to an unforeseen campus closure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The departments included in the study were Criminal Justice, Dance, Engineering Technology, Computer Information Systems, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Youth Education, Sociology, and Philosophy. Within these departments, 186 participants volunteered to take part in the study. Upon consenting to participate in the research, participants were randomly assigned to participate in either a "gun control" group or "death penalty" group.

Due to random assignment, half of the participants (n = 93) were in the gun control group and half (n = 92) were in the death penalty group. The average ages, gender, and race were consistent across both groups. Students' ages ranged from 18 to 44. The students' average age was 21 years old. A little more than half were female, and about three-quarters were white (see tables 1.a & 1.b).

Table 1.a

Gun Control Group Demographics

Gender	Number	Percent	Race	Number	Percent
Male	39	41.9%	White	69	74.2%
Female	52	55.9%	Black/African American	12	12.9%
Other	2	2.2%	Hispanic/Latino	9	9.7%
			Asian	3	3.2%

Table 1.b

Death Penalty Group Demographics

Gender	Number	Percent	Race	Number	Percent
Male	41	44.6%	White	64	69.6%
Female	50	54.3%	Black/African American	17	18.5%
Other	1	1.1%	Hispanic/Latino	6	6.5%
			Asian	4	4.3%
			American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	1.1%

One participant who indicated that he was a communist on both social and economic policy was removed from the study due to the inability of communist ideology to fit easily into the liberal/conservative spectrum.

Procedure

Gun Control Group

Participants were given a demographic questionnaire that included a two-item measure of political ideology (“When it comes to *social policy*, do you consider yourself liberal or conservative?” and “When it comes to *economic policy*, do you consider yourself liberal or conservative?”). Response items for both questions were scaled 1 (Very liberal) to 7 (Very conservative). Responses provided were combined to create a political ideology scale ($\alpha = .92$) ranging from 2 to 14 with higher scores indicating greater conservatism ($M = 7.63, SD = 3.13$). Participants who scored 2-6 were categorized as liberal, those who scored 7-9 were categorized as moderate, and those who scored 10-14 were categorized as conservative.

After providing demographic information, participants read a brief article and

responded to a questionnaire measuring their support for gun control measures. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of three article conditions. The first condition, liberal foundations condition, contained an article in favor of reducing gun control measures, which was framed using a combination of care/harm and fairness/reciprocity foundations (i.e., the presence of a firearm can provide vulnerable communities with reliable deterrence from harm). The second condition, conservative foundations condition, also contained an article in favor of reducing gun control measures but was framed using a combination of ingroup/loyalty, and authority/respect foundations (i.e., we should respect the authority of our founding fathers and remain loyal to the Constitution). Articles were constructed using words from the *Moral Foundations Dictionary* (Graham, Haidt, et. al., 2009) that were associated with the foundation being employed (e.g., *care/harm*: suffer, security, peace; *fairness/reciprocity*: honest, reasonable, unjust; *ingroup/loyalty*: betrayal, nation, patriotism; *authority/respect*: obey, status, leaders). A third condition, control condition, was randomly assigned to read a non-political article on the history of skiing. Each article was approximately 300 words in length.

After reading the article, participants were asked to respond to a four-item questionnaire measuring their attitudes towards gun control measures (e.g., “To what extent do you agree with raising taxes on firearms and ammunition?”, “To what extent do you agree with expanding background checks on gun sales?”). Participants responded to these questions on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). Scores obtained from this questionnaire were combined to create a *support for gun control composite* ($\alpha = .85$) ranging from 4 to 28, with higher scores indicating stronger opposition to gun control measures.

Death Penalty Group

Just as in the gun control group, participants were given a demographic questionnaire that included a two-item measure of political ideology (“When it comes to *social policy*, do you consider yourself liberal or conservative?” and “When it comes to *economic policy*, do you consider yourself liberal or conservative?”). Both questions were answered on a scale from 1 (Very liberal) to 7 (Very conservative). Answers provided were combined to create a political ideology scale ($\alpha = .8$) ranging from 2 to 14 with higher scores indicating greater conservatism ($M = 7.73$, $SD = 2.87$). Participants who scored 2-6 were categorized as liberal, those who scored 7-9 were categorized as moderate, and those who scored 10-14 were categorized as conservative.

As before, participants read a brief article and responded to a questionnaire measuring their support for the death penalty. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of three conditions. The first condition, liberal foundations condition, contained an

article in favor of reducing the death penalty, which was framed using a combination of care/harm and fairness/reciprocity foundations (i.e., the death penalty is cruel and unjust). The second condition, conservative foundations condition, also contained an article in favor of reducing the death penalty but was framed using a combination of ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity foundations (i.e., the death penalty poses a threat to the integrity of the criminal justice system and its ability to maintain order). Articles were again constructed using words from the *Moral Foundations Dictionary* (Graham, Haidt, et al., 2009). A third condition, control condition, was randomly assigned to read a non-political article on the history of skiing. Each article was approximately 300 words in length.

After reading the article, participants were asked to respond to a three-item questionnaire measuring their attitudes towards the death penalty (e.g., “How acceptable is it for the death penalty to be legal by lethal injection?”). Participants responded to these questions on a scale from 1 (perfectly acceptable) to 7 (totally unacceptable). Scores obtained from this questionnaire were combined to create a *support for the death penalty composite* ($\alpha = .87$) ranging from 3 to 21, with higher scores indicating stronger opposition to the death penalty.

Results

Gun Control Group

The data were analyzed using a 3 X 3 factorial ANOVA. The first independent variable was political ideology (categorized as liberal, moderate, or conservative based on the previously mentioned criteria). Of the 93 respondents, 35 (37.6%) were categorized as liberal, 31 (33.3%) were categorized as moderate, and 27 (29%) were categorized as conservative. The second independent variable was article condition (control condition, liberal foundations condition, or conservative foundations condition). The dependent variable was the average score on the support for gun control composite (higher scores indicating greater opposition to gun control measures).

The main effect for political ideology was significant, $F(2, 84) = 18.11$, $MS_E = 25.76$, $p = .000$. The mean for the liberal participants was the lowest at 7.75 (SD = 3.62). The mean for the moderate participants increased to 12.35 (SD = 4.5). The mean for the conservative participants was the highest at 15.67 (SD = 6.45). Overall, opposition to gun control measures among liberals, moderates, and conservatives indicated that higher conservatism is associated with more opposition to gun control measures.

The main effect for article condition was not significant, $F(2, 84) = .075$, $MS_E = 25.76$, $p = .928$. The mean for the control condition was 11.33 (SD = 6.51). Relative to the control condition, the mean for the liberal foundations condition was slightly lower at 10.93 (SD = 5.25). The conservative foundations condition indicated a slight increase

relative to the control condition with a mean of 12.21 (SD = 6.04). Overall, opposition to gun control measures among the three conditions suggested that the conservative foundations condition was the most persuasive and the liberal foundations condition was the least persuasive. However, the differences between the three were negligible.

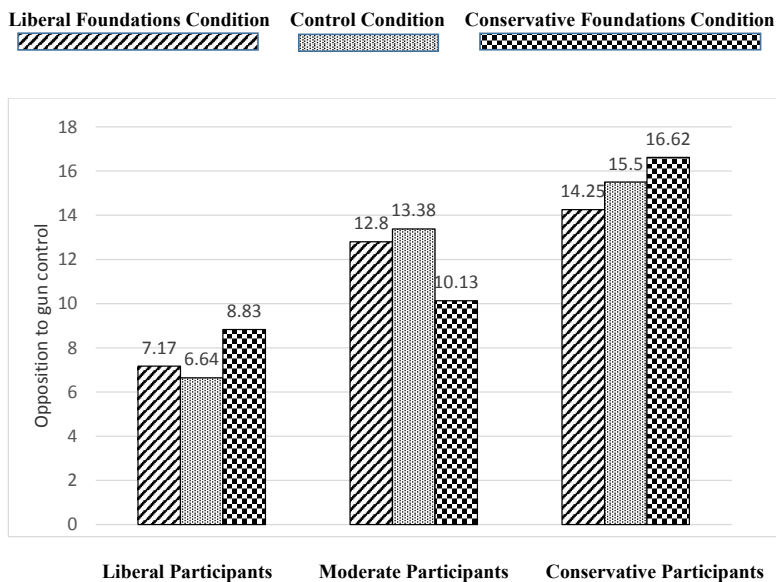
The main effect for political ideology X article condition interaction was not significant, $F(4, 84) = 1.03$, $MS_E = 25.76$, $p = .395$. Among liberal respondents in the *control condition*, the mean was 6.64 (SD = 3.17). Among liberal respondents in the *liberal foundations condition*, level of opposition showed a slight increase with a mean of 7.17 (SD = 3.21). The highest increase in opposition among liberal respondents was seen in the *conservative foundations condition* with a mean of 8.83 (SD = 4.28).

Among moderate respondents in the *control condition* the mean was 13.38 (SD = 5.5). Among moderate respondents in the *liberal foundations condition*, level of opposition showed a slight decrease with a mean of 12.8 (SD = 3.64). An even larger decrease in opposition was found among moderate respondents in the *conservative foundations condition* with a mean of 10.13 (SD = 3.64).

Among conservative respondents in the *control condition*, the mean was 15.5 (SD = 8.55). Among conservative respondents in the *liberal foundations condition*, opposition decreased slightly with a mean of 14.25 (SD = 5.85). Level of opposition was highest among conservative respondents in the *conservative foundations condition* with a mean of 16.62 (SD = 6.12). The data are illustrated in graph 1.

Graph 1

Gun Control Attitudes



Death Penalty Group

The data were analyzed using a 3 X 3 factorial ANOVA. The first independent variable was political ideology (categorized as liberal, moderate, or conservative based on the previously mentioned criteria). Of the 92 respondents, 25 (27.2%) were categorized as liberal, 46 (50%) were categorized as moderate, and 21 (22.8%) were categorized as conservative. The second independent variable was article condition (control condition, liberal foundations condition, or conservative foundations condition). The dependent variable was the average score on the support for death penalty composite (higher scores indicating greater opposition to the death penalty).

The main effect for political ideology was significant, $F(2, 83) = 5.55$, $MS_E = 24.38$, $p = .005$. The mean for the liberal participants was the highest at 16.88 (SD = 3.9). The mean for the moderate participants decreased to 15.04 (SD = 4.63). The mean for the conservative participants was the lowest at 11.81 (SD = 6.27). Overall, opposition to the death penalty among liberals, moderates, and conservatives indicated that higher conservatism is associated with less opposition to the death penalty.

The main effect for article condition was not significant, $F(2, 83) = .81$, $MS_E = 24.38$, $p = .449$. The mean for the control condition (M = 14.14, SD = 4.19) and the liberal foundations condition (M = 14.78, SD = 6.4) were similar. The mean for the conservative condition showed a slight increase at 15.41 (SD = 4.57). Overall, opposition to the death penalty between the three conditions suggested that the liberal foundations condition had little to no persuasive power, while the conservative foundations condition had slightly more persuasive power. Again, the differences between the three were negligible.

The main effect for political ideology X article condition interaction was not significant, $F(4, 83) = .83$, $MS_E = 24.38$, $p = .512$. Among liberal respondents in the *control condition*, the mean was 15.5 (SD = 3.55). Among liberal respondents in the *liberal foundations condition*, level of opposition showed an increase with a mean of 17.25 (SD = 4.65). A similar increase was found among liberal respondents in the *conservative foundations condition* with a mean of 17.78 (SD = 3.56).

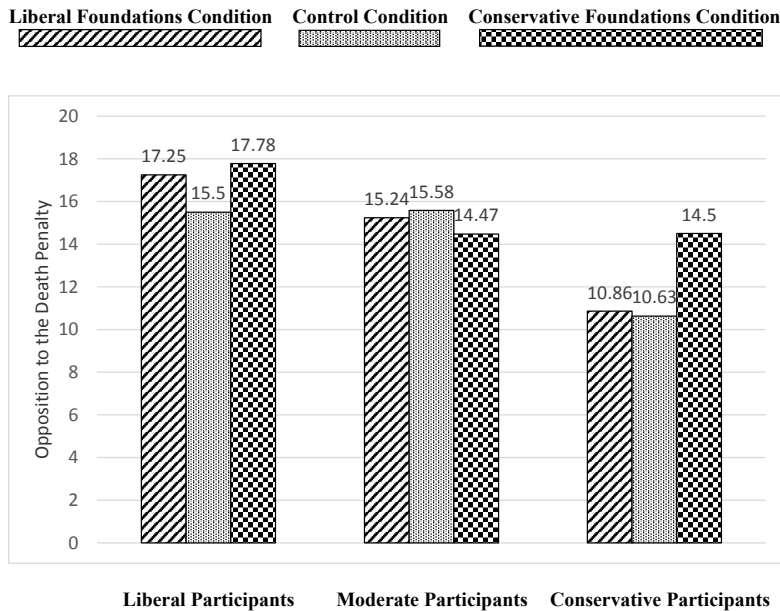
Among moderate respondents in the *control condition*, the mean was 15.58 (SD = 3.26). Among moderate respondents in the *liberal foundations condition*, level of opposition showed a slight decrease with a mean of 15.24 (SD = 6.15). A slightly larger decrease in opposition was found among moderate respondents in the *conservative foundations condition* with a mean of 14.47 (SD = 3.83).

Among conservative respondents in the *control condition*, the mean was 10.63 (SD = 4.31). Conservative respondents in the *liberal foundations condition* displayed a

similar level of opposition with a mean of 10.86 (SD = 7.69). Level of opposition was considerably higher among conservative respondents in the *conservative foundations condition* with a mean of 14.5 (SD = 6.95). The data are illustrated in graph 2.

Graph 2

Death Penalty Attitudes



Discussion

The hypothesis of this study was “arguments which are grounded in the moral foundations that align with one’s political ideology will be more persuasive than arguments that are grounded in moral foundations that do not align with one’s political ideology.” The purpose of the two political issues (gun control and death penalty) was to test the persuasiveness of reframed arguments in decreasing support for a political issue that already has a high degree of support. The underlying assumption with this design is that on average, liberals have a high degree of support for gun control measures relative to moderates and conservatives and that conservatives have a high degree of support for the death penalty relative to moderates and liberals. Although the sample size in this study was limited due to an unforeseen campus closure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the consistency of results across both groups emphasizes the reliability of the data.

Gun Control Group

The analysis of the degree of support for gun control measures by political category confirmed that all three political categories were significantly different in their support for gun control measures and that higher conservatism predicts higher opposition

to gun control. Simply put, the significant main effect for political ideology confirmed the underlying assumption that liberals support gun control measures to a greater degree than do moderates and that moderates support gun control measures to a greater degree than do conservatives.

The main effect for condition was not expected to be significant because any given condition was expected to have a different effect depending on the political ideology of the respondent. For example, the conservative foundations condition was expected to increase opposition to gun control measures for conservative respondents, but for liberal respondents, the same condition was expected to have little or no effect. Similarly, the liberal foundations condition was expected to increase opposition to gun control measures for liberal respondents, but for conservative respondents, the same condition was expected to have little or no effect. Therefore, any given condition was not expected to vary in one direction uniformly throughout all three groups.

Although the overall sample size for the gun control group was $N = 93$, participants were divided into three subgroups (liberal, moderate, and conservative). Moreover, each subgroup was again divided into three more subgroups (liberal foundations condition, control condition, and conservative foundations condition). This resulted in nine subgroups within the larger gun control group. As a result, each subgroup only consisted of, on average, 10.33 participants. This small sample size within each of the comparison groups could serve as an explanation as to why the main effect for political ideology X article condition was not significant. However, the mean comparisons between the groups strongly imply that the data is leaning towards an identifiable pattern.

For liberal participants, an argument grounded in *liberal moral foundations* was effective in increasing opposition to gun control measures. However, an argument grounded in *conservative moral foundations* was also effective in increasing opposition to gun control measures. Moreover, the argument grounded in conservative moral foundations was more persuasive than the argument that was grounded in liberal moral foundations. Therefore, results imply that, for liberals, opposition to gun control measures will increase regardless of the framing of the argument. Further, arguments that were framed in conservative moral foundations were most persuasive for liberals.

For moderate participants, an argument grounded in *liberal moral foundations* was not effective in increasing opposition to gun control measures. Interestingly, not only was the argument ineffective, but results indicate that it had a slight reverse effect. Participants who read this article slightly increased their support for gun control measures relative to the control group. For moderate participants who received the argument grounded in *conservative moral foundations*, results showed a magnified trend in the same direction. That

is, participants who read this article increased their support for gun control measures relative to the control group, and they did this to a much higher degree than the participants who read the argument grounded in liberal moral foundations. Taken together, results imply that for moderate participants neither frame is persuasive in increasing opposition to gun control. Additionally, arguments with a conservative moral frame tended to have a reverse effect for moderates, resulting in increased support for gun control.

For conservative participants, an argument grounded in *liberal moral foundations* was not effective in increasing opposition to gun control measures. Results imply that this argument had the reverse effect (i.e., increased support for gun control measures). However, an argument grounded in *conservative moral foundations* was effective in increasing opposition to gun control measures. Therefore, results imply that, for conservatives, only arguments which are grounded in conservative moral foundations will be persuasive.

Death Penalty Group

The analysis of the degree of support for the death penalty by political category confirmed that all three political categories were significantly different in their support for the death penalty and that higher liberalism predicts higher opposition to the death penalty. Simply put, the significant main effect for political ideology confirmed the underlying assumption that conservatives support the death penalty to a greater degree than do moderates and that moderates support the death penalty to a greater degree than do liberals.

As previously discussed, the main effect for condition was not expected to be significant because any given condition was expected to have a different effect depending on the political ideology of the respondent. Therefore, any given condition was not expected to vary in one direction uniformly throughout all three groups. Further, the sample size for the death penalty group was approximately the same as the gun control group ($N = 92$). Therefore, the small sample size within each of the comparison groups might again serve as an explanation as to why the main effect for political ideology X article condition was not significant. However, the mean comparisons between the respondents in the death penalty group strongly mirrored the data found in the gun control group. This provides further support for the implication that the data is leaning towards a consistent pattern.

For liberal participants in the death penalty group, results showed the same pattern as they did in the gun control group. Both liberal-framed arguments and conservative-framed arguments were effective in increasing opposition to the death penalty. Although opposition increased slightly more for participants who received the conservative foundations condition, both arguments were almost equal in their persuasive power.

Results again imply that opposition will increase regardless of the framing of the argument.

For moderate participants, results again showed the same pattern as they did in the gun control group. Neither the liberal frame nor the conservative frame was effective in persuading moderate participants to increase their opposition to the death penalty. Participants again showed a slight reverse effect for both arguments with the larger effect being attributed to the conservative foundations condition.

For conservative participants, results showed a similar but more distinct trend compared to the gun control group. An argument grounded in liberal moral foundations was not effective in increasing opposition to the death penalty. However, an argument grounded in conservative moral foundations was considerably effective in increasing opposition to the death penalty. Therefore, results are consistent with those found in the gun control group; conservatives are only persuaded by arguments that are grounded in conservative moral foundations.

Overall, the mean comparisons between the conservative respondents in both groups indicate partial support for the hypothesis. However, the mean comparisons between the liberal respondents do not support my hypothesis. These results partially conflict with Feinberg & Willer (2015), which found moral reframing to be effective for both liberals and conservatives. Furthermore, the data obtained from the moderate respondents provide an additional layer of complexity to the process of moral reframing that was previously unavailable.

Liberal participants' openness to both the liberal foundations argument and the conservative foundations argument could indicate that the liberal participants in the study consider a wider spectrum of moral foundations than was originally assumed. The social environment in which the participants have learned to make moral judgements could lead to an explanation as to why liberals seemingly consider this wider spectrum of moral foundations. Because participants in the survey were recruited from a large state university in a majority conservative state in the southern United States, there is a high likelihood that most of the participants in the study were born and raised in a majority conservative society. If the liberal participants in this study had been socialized into a society in which most members are conservative, then this would facilitate higher exposure to conservative moral foundations. In contrast, if the conservative participants in this study had been socialized into a society in which most members are conservative, then this would lead to lower exposure to liberal moral foundations. Taken together, this would lead to the findings displayed in this study.

Future research on moral reframing should examine the persuasive power of

morally reframed arguments between liberals who have been socialized in conservative majority states and liberals who have been socialized in liberal majority states. For example, future studies could examine the moral reframing technique on liberals in Vermont (one of the most liberal states) and liberals in Wyoming (one of the most conservative states). In general, liberals in the United States tend to endorse issues such as same-sex marriage and universal healthcare (Feinberg & Willer, 2015). If the social environment in which the participants have learned to make moral judgements does indeed impact their ability to consider a wider spectrum of moral foundations, then liberal participants who were born and raised in Vermont should be persuaded to decrease their support for political issues (such as same sex marriage or universal healthcare) only by arguments that are grounded in liberal moral foundations. In contrast, liberal participants who were born and raised in Wyoming should be persuaded to decrease their support for political issues (such as same sex marriage or universal healthcare) by arguments grounded in either liberal moral foundations or conservative moral foundations. This outcome would be expected because liberals in Vermont can be assumed to have a low exposure to conservative moral foundations due to the liberal social environment on both the state level and the individual level. In contrast, the outcome with the participants in Wyoming would be expected because liberals in Wyoming can be assumed to have a high exposure to both liberal moral foundations and conservative moral foundations due the combination of a conservative social environment on the state level and a liberal social environment on the individual level.

Keeping with the same theory of socialization, a similar line of research should be carried out for conservatives in liberal majority states versus conservatives in conservative majority states. For example, future studies could examine the moral reframing technique on conservatives in Vermont (one of the most liberal States) and conservatives in Wyoming (one of the most conservative states). In general, conservatives in the United States tend to endorse issues such as increasing military spending and making English the official language of the United States (Feinberg & Willer, 2015). Given these general trends, conservative participants who were born and raised in Wyoming should be persuaded to decrease their support for political issues (such as increasing military spending and making English the official language of the United States) only by arguments that are grounded in conservative moral foundations. In contrast, conservative participants who were born and raised in Vermont should be persuaded to decrease their support for political issues (such as increasing military spending and making English the official language of the United States) by arguments grounded in either conservative moral foundations or liberal moral foundations. This outcome would be expected because conservatives in Wyo-

ming can be assumed to have a low exposure to liberal moral foundations due to the conservative social environment on both the state level and the individual level. In contrast, the outcome with the participants in Vermont would be expected because conservatives in Vermont can be assumed to have a high exposure to both liberal moral foundations and conservative moral foundations due the combination of a liberal social environment on the state level and a conservative social environment on the individual level. Studies such as these could provide valuable insight into the degree to which moral foundations are a product of the social environment as opposed to a biologically innate pattern of behavior.

Although previous research on moral reframing contributes to an understanding of the divide between liberals and conservatives, this is the first study to examine moderate participants as a third category, separate from the other two. Examining moderates as a distinct category provides information that was previously imperceptible in other studies. In both the gun control group and the death penalty group, results implied that moderate participants were not persuaded by either argument. Moreover, moderates were the only group in the study for which neither argument was persuasive. The reason for the lack of susceptibility to morally-reframed arguments among moderates might have to do with the emotional nature of the arguments used in the study. According to Haidt (2012), the five moral foundations are triggered by an innate feeling or emotion that then leads to a moral judgment. Therefore, arguments that employ the moral foundations are emotional arguments. It could be the case that the more extreme one is in their political views, the more susceptible they are to arguments with emotional appeal. If this were the case, then one would expect individuals with moderate political views to be less susceptible to arguments with emotional appeal. Given that moderate participants do not appear to be persuaded by arguments with emotional appeal, future research should examine the persuasive power of fact-based arguments on politically moderate participants. This could provide further insight into the processes by which individuals make political moral judgements depending on the space that they occupy on the political spectrum.

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Literature Review Exploring Relationship Between Media Representations of Men, Masculinities, and Incels on Incel Discourse

Jayme Brunson

Abstract

In 2014, Elliot Rodger, a self-proclaimed incel (involuntary celibate), murdered six people and injured 14 in Isla Vista, California, as retribution for his experiences in romantic and sexual rejection. Incels generally believe women are at fault for men's celibacy. Misogynistic gender beliefs, such as incel ideology, often develop in adolescence under the influence of social environment and media exposure. This literature review explores the formation of gender beliefs through gender socialization and masculinity performances. It also looks into how incels internalize a distorted perspective of normative masculinities and what they expect conformance to these masculinities should bring. Readers will be presented with a brief history of incels and multiple examples of incel discourse from internet forums. Discussions surround incel discourse and how it may be shaped by representations of men, masculinities, and incels in the media.

Misogynistic violence is not a new phenomenon. Violence specifically attributed to women refusing men's sexual advances, however, has become more prevalent since Elliot Rodger's Isla Vista, California, attack in 2014 wherein Rodger murdered six people and injured 14 more (Anti-Defamation League, 2018; Saptura & Boyle, 2020). Described as his "Day of Retribution," Rodger's violence aimed to avenge "a lifetime of romantic and sexual rejection" (Saptura & Boyle, 2020, p. 279), which aligns his beliefs with the incel community. Short for "involuntary celibates," most incels believe women owe them sex, so women are to blame for men's celibacy (Ging, 2017; Romano, 2018). Incels sometimes respond to this predicament with online forum posts that document their experiences of rejection and the ways in which they lack the privileging attributes found in the "hegemonic ideal" man (Witt, 2020, p. 678). Their varying levels of whiteness, physical prowess, and class standing pull incels away from socially constructed normative masculinities (Palma, 2019; Witt, 2020). Some incels go on to express their frustrations through acts of offline violence (Wright, 2018). Rodger's attack is one of many incidences of incel-related violence (Anti-Defamation League, 2018).

Studies of incel misogyny are numerous (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Casey, 2019; Ging, 2017), but few delve into what influences incel gender beliefs in the first place (Doyle, 2018). There is evidence that gender beliefs develop throughout adolescence, influenced by one's social environment and the media (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Hanke, 1998; Kim et al., 2007; Rousseau et al., 2018), but we do not yet fully understand how these various influences shape incel ideology. Exploring the relationship between the media representations of men, masculinities, and incels and the beliefs incels publish online could fill this gap in knowledge. Thus, the purpose of this literature review is to explore the history of incels, incel discourse, and how incel discourse could be influenced by media representations of men, masculinities, and incels. This paper will also examine when and how gender beliefs are formed and attempt to identify the point at which incels both internalized and pushed back on the standards (and expected outcomes) of performing normative masculinities.

Role of Researcher

Before proceeding with the goal of this review, it is important to understand how my identity and role as the researcher influence my research. Sandra Harding (1987) suggests that feminist researchers should be visible in their work in order to recognize how one's personally held beliefs can impact the results and analyses of a study. By revealing the potential impacts of a researcher's beliefs, the study becomes more objective; it does not attempt to hide evidence of subjectivity (Harding, 1987). My interest in this topic emerged from my fascination with online radicalization. "Radicalization" has many neg-

ative connotations, so it can be easy to associate all of incel culture with acts of violence. To challenge this bias, the current literature review attempts to “study up,” which “shifts the way we see who is ‘the problem’ from those who are the victims of power to those who wield it disproportionately” (Sprague, 2016, p. 203).

It may be difficult to see incels as an oppressed group, but I chose to research this topic from the standpoint of the disadvantaged. Articles and comments written by members of incel communities indicate that they truly feel the pain associated with their victimhood, which, they argue, is one of a lower power position. While acknowledging there are other issues of power inequality at play in gender relations, romantic rejection and loneliness caused by one’s inability to live up to some standard of masculinity can be distressing (Scaptura & Boyle, 2020). Entitlement to women’s bodies is prescribed in normative masculinity (Hanke, 1998). Incels feel, however, a sense of aggrieved entitlement; a system of hypergamous women and successful “alpha” males oppresses them (Kimmel, 2017). This is likely a result of gender beliefs that, at some point in development, skewed their perception of normative masculinities (as well as the expected outcomes of performing them). Understanding their perceived plight has the potential to help boys and men who may be susceptible to incel ideology, which is ostensibly self-harming, and the potential to prevent gender-based violence.

I cannot, however, purport to understand everything incels say or do. As a white, cisgender, heterosexual, serially monogamous woman who usually avoids social media, I cannot relate to incels’ predicament in any way. This could have influenced the articles I chose to reference or the discussions I chose to read online, as well as how I interpreted their relationship to the research question. This furthers the necessity to continue research in this area, though. As related academic literature increases and improves, future researchers will be able to lessen the impact of their personal biases. Technology will also influence the current literature review.

The incel community is largely online (Ging, 2017), which allows for review of their publicized gender beliefs. Online discourse can be very difficult to study as it is rarely permanent or static. Some forums are removed by their platform for violating codes of conduct (Hauser, 2017), concealing data and impacting the replicability of any study. For the sake of consistency, I have chosen to pull most incel quotes from Incels, a forum website dedicated to incel topics.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Framing

The expression “boys will be boys” conjures an image of the inevitable, and therefore acceptable, behavioral conduct of boys and men (Roberts, 2012). Speaking this

phrase potentially normalizes the actions or attitudes it is referencing (Hlavka, 2014). A patriarchal and dichotomous culture organizes the world in absolutes, so, for every dominant concept, there is a subordinate, binary opposite (Popan, 2020; Scott, 1988). Thus, there are more meanings to “boys will be boys,” such as “boys will not be girls” and “girls will not be boys.” These utterances are a form of discourse, or “a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs” (Scott, 1988, p. 34).

Feminist poststructuralist theory is concerned with how descriptions of gendered behavior reveal how “gender is being performed in that particular text and context” (Gannon & Davies, 2005, p. 312). The words we use can shape reality, and reality can then influence our words (Gannon & Davies, 2005; Popan, 2020; Scott, 1988). Grounding the current literature review in poststructuralism affords the opportunity for future researchers to deconstruct language to reveal how incel discourse might be influencing and *influenced by* incel reality (Gannon & Davies, 2005; Popan, 2020; Scott, 1988). For the purposes of this literature review, discourse refers to communication among incels on the internet via forums, websites, and social media, as well as how masculinities are conveyed in other media representations (e.g., movies, television, and magazines).

Gender Socialization and Performing Masculinities

Masculinities can be thought of as identity performances traditionally attributed to men and the male body, “but not women” (Milani, 2015, p. 23) or the female body (Butler, 1993). Gender studies scholars tend to pluralize masculinities to indicate that there is no universally normative masculinity and to highlight how gender performances vary among individuals (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Jandt & Hundley, 2007; Milani, 2015). However, hegemonic masculinities are the commonly accepted and rarely questioned beliefs surrounding the social expectations of men, and in a patriarchal society, that men are expected to socially dominate women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Groff, 2020; Hanke, 1998).

In Western cultures, hegemonic masculinities afford white, heterosexual, cisgender men institutional privileges via social dominance over women (Groff, 2020; Hanke, 1998). American culture tends to conflate and dichotomize gender and sexuality, meaning that when individuals do not follow the societal rules for their gender, they could be perceived as homosexual (McCormack & Anderson, 2014). Hegemonic masculinity can lead to homophobia, whereby men fear being perceived as homosexual if they fail to conform to the dominant masculine norms, because being mis-identified as gay threatens their masculinity (and all its privileges) (McCormack & Anderson, 2014). Homophobia can limit the range of possibilities for men’s gender performances (McCormack &

Anderson, 2014), making normative masculinities more restrictive. However, according to McCormack and Anderson (2014), homophobia, and thus homophobia, have declined in the United States, allowing men to include characteristics once thought to be “gay” or “feminine” in their performance of masculinities.

McCormack and Anderson’s (2014) inclusive masculinity theory is criticized for glossing over sexual politics (power dynamics in gender relations) (O’Neill, 2015). By eradicating hegemonic masculinities, inclusive masculinity theory can ignore the ways that masculinities are defined in relation to women, thus negating the need for (and previous work of) feminism (O’Neill, 2015). Technological advances have brought about hybrid masculinities, which allow one to choose which masculine characteristics to embody without losing social dominance (Ging, 2017). Incels are thought to embody hybrid masculinities because they act as victims of feminism in order to “strategically distance themselves from hegemonic masculinity” while they reinforce “existing hierarchies of power and inequality online” (Ging, 2017, p. 651). For example, they can establish homosociality in online spaces, even if they do not meet hegemonic standards of masculinity offline (Ging, 2017).

Poststructuralist theory allows one to consider that masculinities may be constructed via discourse (and vice versa) (Butler, 2006; Hanke, 1998; Jandt & Hundley, 2007; Kimmel, 2017). Men and boys use discourse to police each other’s behaviors via an intra-masculine stratification of men (Morris & Anderson, 2015). For example, a YouTube video of a man dressing like a woman could elicit public commentary from other men about how that man is “misperforming” masculinities. The question is, when and where does that discourse originate? Adolescents likely learn normative gender behaviors through gender socialization, a process in which gendered behaviors are observed and internalized (Epstein & Ward, 2011; Kim et al., 2007; Rousseau et al., 2018). Behaviors modeled by media and one’s social environment serve as a script by which one is to perform one’s identity (Kim et al., 2007; Milani, 2015; Rousseau et al., 2018). Sex role theory purports that men are to play a specific role and women are to play the complementary role (Ging, 2017; Messner, 1998).

As evidenced by the long history of women’s and men’s liberation movements, some people internalize the script differently (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Casey, 2019). One such group of people are men’s rights activists (MRAs), who not only believe they are as equally, if not more, oppressed than women, but they also blame women and feminism for their plight (Anti-Defamation League, 2018; Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Ging, 2017; Messner, 1998; Palma, 2019; Phillips & Milner, 2017). Like any loose-knit online community, the MRA subscriber base is ideologically diverse and frequently

splinters into smaller, niche communities such as incels (Anti-Defamation League, 2018; Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Caffrey, 2020).

Incels

The term “incel” was first published online in 1993 on a website for a Canadian student, Alana, to document her struggles to have sexual experiences (Caffrey, 2020). Sexism on the website became more prominent with an influx of male users, so Alana gave up her administrator role in 2000 (Caffrey, 2020). Incels continued to converse in forum-style websites like 4chan and Reddit where the blame for incel status shifted to women and feminism (Caffrey, 2020) and the tone shifted from supportive to self-loathing (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Romano, 2018). Many incels believe in genetic predispositions and place themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy as “beta” males (Ging, 2017). These incels contend that women are genetically inferior and prefer men of superior genes (alpha males) (Ging, 2017; Hines, 2019; Scaptura & Boyle, 2020), “and thus deny lesser males sexual access to their bodies” (Palma, 2019, p. 320). This aggrieved entitlement, or sense of having something deserved (e.g., sex from women) taken away by an “other” (e.g., women and alpha males), is often expressed through anger and violence (Kimmel, 2005; Romano, 2018).

Aggrieved entitlement to sex may have its roots in the tenets of hegemonic masculinity. As Witt (2020) explains, “the ideal hegemonic masculine subject embodies sexual ability and prowess,” which results in the commodification of women’s bodies in a way that builds “social and masculine capital for men” (p. 4). In other words, having sex with women is a defining feature of hegemonic masculinity; men who have sex with more women are more masculine and men who have less sex (or no sex) with women are perceived as less masculine (Witt, 2020). Aggrieved entitlement is likely the result of acceptance threat, or the feeling that one is not meeting hegemonically masculine standards (Scaptura & Boyle, 2020). This can lead to felt powerlessness from believing that one’s sexuality and masculinity are controlled by women (Bordo, 1994). Somewhere along the way, incels internalized a script where their role is to achieve masculinity (Bordo, 1994) through sexual encounters with women, but the women in the story are not performing their role correctly (Palma, 2019). If most people are exposed to similar messages about gender socialization, then one would expect most boys to latch onto the same beliefs. Indeed, the pressure on a man to perform hegemonic masculinities is high (Witt, 2020), but it does not always lead to the extremely polarized views on gender found in incel forums. This points to an additional influence in the process of gender socialization that leads a segment of boys to feel entitled to women’s bodies, to the point of explosive rage and violence when it is denied.

Incel Discourse

Subjects are thought to become gendered through the repetition of behaviors categorized as gendered (Butler, 2006). For example, many attribute muscularity to masculinity because discourse has repeatedly made that connection. Incel discourse tends to frame masculinity in terms of what physical characteristics incels *lack* and why that makes them unsuccessful (Ging, 2017; Hines, 2019). Incel communities are often isolated from the rest of the internet, sometimes due to social media restrictions and bans (Hauser, 2017). This isolation lends itself to tribalism, or the “growth of insulated communities” that share common beliefs (Kte’pi, 2019, para. 8), which can foster an echo chamber effect. In an echo chamber, one’s “beliefs, views, and assumptions are reinforced as the result of the stimuli to which the reader/viewer is exposed” (Kte’pi, 2019, para. 1). Incel discourse can become increasingly polarized (Kuhn et al., 2019) as the echo chamber reverberates and reinforces the beliefs of the community (Kte’pi, 2019).

The cyber location of incel discourse plays a significant role in its perpetuation as well. Many online platforms use algorithms to filter content based on what a user has shown interest in, creating the sense of a larger community sharing the same beliefs (Ging, 2017). In addition, memes—easily shareable ideas associated with images (Cooper, 2019)—provide a rapid delivery system to present new, and reify old, incel beliefs (Ging, 2017). Given that the primary location of incel discourse is online, media culture likely informs its development.

Masculinity and Media

As Michael Kimmel (2017) aptly explains, “American films are among the most gendered in the world” (p. 59). Whether it be an action movie with explosions and a muscular male hero, a mob movie glorifying guns, drugs, and sex, or a romantic “chick flick” with a scrawny male fawning for the attention of a pretty woman, the cinema can instruct consumers on how (and how not) to be a man (Consalvo, 2003; Hanke, 1998). Magazines are often categorized as men’s or women’s subjects (e.g., *Popular Mechanics* is a men’s magazine, and *Bon Appetit* is a women’s magazine), implying that men should be interested in mechanical work and not cooking (Milani, 2015). Television themes follow a heterosexual script in which men are consumed by fantasies and urges and are posited as sexual initiators (Kim et al., 2007).

Outrage media (e.g., *Infowars*) takes input from its majority white, male audiences and puts out content that affirms or exacerbates their beliefs (Kimmel, 2017). For instance, a consumer might call the host of a show to complain about how feminism has ruined his life. The host might respond with how angry it makes him, then present an antifeminist diatribe to his listeners, solidifying the audience’s antifeminist sentiments

(Kimmel, 2017). When one observes incel discourse, there is evidence that these media representations influence incel definitions of masculinity.

While media consumption may be a passive experience of discourse, incels engage in active forms of discourse as well. Online incel communities facilitate public discussions about various aspects of performing masculinities. The following are responses on a forum post (from the “Bluepill forum” where non-incels can engage in “constructive” discourse with incels) asking if any incels had tried to improve their physical appearance: “You’d be surprise [sic] how many of us actually have good haircuts and a good weight. How many of us actually care more about our hygiene than most Chads. Of course, I guess your little brain can’t process that” (TheUnworthy, 2019); “I cut my long hippie hair that I loved and took me over 3 years to grow. I’ve been going to the gym for 4 months and I’m actually starting to get jacked. Hasn’t helped me with women at all” (kaumak, 2019); “I’ve gotten a car and gotten promoted at my job and tried to BE POSITIVE AND CONFIDENT MAAAAAN [sic] but none of those things have helped me in any meaningful way” (Kolibri, 2019, emphasis original). These users are describing how they have tried and failed to meet the specific standards of masculinity (i.e., physical attractiveness and financial status) that they believe should lead to sexual experiences with women.

Incels are represented in the media in a limited capacity. For example, television shows portray them as oafs (Wilkinson, 2018), and the news media often calls them sad, sexless, pathetic, insular cult members (CBC News, 2018; Wright, 2018). It should be noted that “black pill” incels (the terms “red pill,” “blue pill,” and “black pill” are references to a paradox in the film *The Matrix*) (Ging, 2017) would likely agree with some of these sentiments. Black pill incels believe that, as beta males, they are physically unattractive and unworthy of love (Palma, 2019; Romano, 2018). One can find examples of incel responses to their media presence. Some are frustrated with the lack of incel representation in the media (humacentipede, 2020) and Hollywood’s refusal to use “normies and ugly dudes” in action or romance movies (Wasteman, 2020). Other incels claim that some movies are about incels (e.g., *Joker*, *Falling Down*, and *Taxi Driver*) (ElephantMan12, 2020), even though the characters in these films are never explicitly named as incels. These points establish that incels do pay attention to how the media portrays them, to the point that it enters their discourse. The following is an example of how media representations can enter discourse and shape (or be shaped by) reality.

In 2014, a self-identified incel named Elliot Rodger killed six people, largely because, as his manifesto purported, he had been rejected by women (Caffrey, 2020). The *New York Times* published his 141-page manifesto detailing his life as an incel as well as his YouTube video announcing his “day of retribution” (Lovett & Nagourney, 2014).

Following all this infamy, Rodger was canonized by the incel community as “Saint Elliot” (Witt, 2020). His initials are still used to describe violence (e.g., “Going ER” or “Doing an ER”) (Wright, 2018). His initials also appear in words on incel forums to establish a relationship between incel violence and something else (e.g., *Taxi Driver*, a movie about an insane, lonely, violent taxi driver, is stylized as “*Taxi DrivER*”) (vanSavage, 2020). The widespread glorification of Rodger’s violence likely inspired Alek Minassian’s 2018 Toronto van attack (killing ten), which was preceded by a social media post hailing the “Supreme Gentleman Elliott Rodger!” (CBC News, 2018). This may be evidence of reality (Rodger’s attack) shaping discourse (“Going ER” and “Supreme Gentleman”) and discourse (“Supreme Gentleman”) influencing reality (Minassian’s attack).

Conclusion

Although many online communities celebrate violence, the act and glorification of violence is rampant in the incel community (Anti-Defamation League, 2018). While there is an ongoing debate among scholars as to whether one’s internet persona reflects one’s true beliefs or offline intentions (Aricak et al., 2011; Phillips & Milner, 2017), the prevalence of incel violence is indicative of some connection between discourse and reality. As Palma (2019) explains, “understanding the narrative underpinnings of entitled beliefs may yield insight into gender-based violence” (p. 325). The gender identity incels perform is likely based on a script they internalized in adolescence (Kim et al., 2007; Milani, 2015; Rousseau et al., 2018). Incel culture and its potential for violence has received ample attention (Bratich & Banet-Weiser, 2019; Casey, 2019; Ging, 2017), but there is a lack of research identifying if, or how media representations of men, masculinities, and incels are affecting incel discourse. According to poststructuralist theory, it is possible for discourse and reality to influence each other (Gannon & Davies, 2005; Popan, 2020; Scott, 1988). When that reality is destruction of one’s self or others, then the discourse and all its influences should be examined.

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The Islamic State: A Political-Religious Totalitarian Regime

Allison Haslett

Abstract

This paper explores the Islamic State's form of government as a political-religious totalitarian regime. This new classification is derived from an in-depth analysis of the State's revolutionary transformation from a group of radicalized Sunni Muslims into an entirely unique, organized, and global terrorist organization with a totalitarian foundation. The State utilizes common totalitarian tropes in its agenda and ideology, practice of total control, recruitment, destruction of history, and symbolism. Furthermore, analysis and translation of the ideological view of the writings by political theorists Dostoevsky, Hoffer, and Arendt expand on these tropes, providing additional support for the State's classification as a political-religious totalitarian regime. Because of the Islamic State's status as a global threat, both defining and understanding this new classification are essential; however, in order to know how to address this threat, it must first be understood.

Over the past ten years, the media has been dominated by discussion surrounding the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as a revolutionary radical Islamic force that presents a global threat to democracy. While not completely incorrect, this depiction fails to present a comprehensive perspective by excluding the mass movement, religious indoctrination, and political ideology of ISIS or, as it is now known, the Islamic State. The State is unique in its ability to unify religion and politics to establish a strong totalitarian state, making clear the emergence of a new type of government—the political-religious totalitarian regime.

In order to evaluate the current practices and predict the future movements of any political regime, one must first look to the foundation from which it emerged. For the Islamic State, this involves a centuries old conflict between Shia and Sunni Muslims. The Shia-Sunni divide occurred after the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632 A.D. when dispute arose over who should be his successor (Salamah, 1991). The Sunnis held that Muhammad did not have a rightful heir, so the next leader should be elected. The Sunnis chose Abu Bakr to succeed Muhammad (Salamah, 1991). The Shia differed, believing that only Allah can choose the leader so all successors must be descendants of Muhammad's family (Salamah, 1991). This religious, ideological divide was the primary reason for hostility towards the leaders put forth by each group, and with the instilment of a Shia leader in Iraq, the disenfranchised Sunnis felt "denied any role in the new Iraq" (Griffin, 2016, p. 1). As a result of being systematically "dismissed from their jobs in the armed forces, intelligence agencies and broad sectors of the civilian administration," nearly half a million Sunnis were left with nothing (Griffin, 2016, p. 1). Many of the rejected Sunnis were trained for combat and began to seek retribution, aiming to restore the balance of power all while unknowingly creating the foundation for a future, radicalized mass movement (Gerges, 2018).

The formation of the Islamic State was marked by constant evolution through the divergence from various terrorist cells. The pivotal separation that directly led to the creation of the Islamic State was guided by Jordanian-born radical Islamist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi when he decided to leave the Osama bin Laden directed al-Qaeda terrorist group (Auerbach, n.d.). Zarqawi fled to Iraq from Afghanistan, where he intended to create a new organization that followed the lines of radicalized Sunni Islam primarily opposed to Shia Muslims (Auerbach, n.d.). The group unified themselves under the name, AQI or al-Qaeda in Iraq (Auerbach, n.d.) Soon after, Zarqawi was killed in a United States directed airstrike in 2006, yet his group lived on, rebranded as The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). The ISI continued to primarily target Shia Muslims until the "anti-government demonstrations and uprisings" known as Arab Spring began in the 2010s

(Arab Spring, 2020, p. 1). These uprisings were in response to “economic stresses, societal changes, and entrenched[,] corrupt[,] and repressive rule” (Arab Spring, 2020, p. 1). In 2011, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad resorted to violent measures in order to suppress the citizen uprising; however, the ISI joined the uprising, supporting the revolutionaries and declaring a new name change, identifying themselves as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Auerbach, n.d.; Gerges, 2016). In 2014, the new ISIS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared the regions of northern Iraq and eastern Syria to be a caliphate, a state based upon Islamic law, abbreviating the name to Islamic State (IS) (Auerbach, n.d.). Naming himself caliph—the leader of the state—Baghdadi asserted that all Muslim communities should recognize the regime as the “one true Islamic State,” using violence to demonstrate what would happen to those who directly opposed or failed to conform to the ideologies of the caliphate (Auerbach, n.d., p. 3).

The Islamic State as a Totalitarian Regime

Agenda and Ideology

All government operations, regardless of whether they are totalitarian, authoritarian, tyrannical, or democratic in nature, have agendas and specific ideologies. The roots of the Islamic State lay in Islam and the concept of Jihadi-Salafism. This 21st-century branch of Sunni Islamic political thought emphasizes the activism of the Muslim Brotherhood, which stresses the “development of an Islamic social order” in the form of a caliphate (Brookings Institution, 2015, 6:50-7:30; *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, 2003, p. 306). Today, the Islamic State embraces the most violent, extreme traits of Jihadi-Salafism (Brookings Institution, 2015).

Throughout history, some regimes have held nationalist ideals, while other have taken on a more globalist perspective. Mussolini’s Italy displayed an extremist view of nationalism with a fascist government and an exaggerated importance on nationalist symbols (Warnes, 2019). Under this form of government, absolute submission to the state is demanded, and individuals are prohibited from questioning their leader (Warnes, 2019). Therefore, the focus is on the individuals within the state and not on invasion of Ethiopia. On the other hand, Nazi Germany took a globalist approach. Likewise, the state demanded absolute loyalty, but expansion was the ultimate goal. While nationalism and globalism are fundamentally different, they are not entirely independent of one another.

The Islamic State embodied a unique combination of both a nationalist and globalist approach. Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden believed in the “far enemy” of the United States and the Western world, but Islamic State founder Zarqawi believed in the “near enemy” of Arab regimes. Ultimately, the idea of the “real enemy” resulted in the main reason why Zarqawi split from al-Qaeda (Griffin, 2016, p. 9). According to Griffin

(2016), the US invasion of Iraq was theoretically:

an opportunity to engage the near and the far enemy simultaneously, so ending any doctrinal dispute between the two leaders, but al-Zarqawi's campaign of assassinations, kidnappings and bomb attacks against civilians conflicted with Al Qaeda's strict non-aggression pact with non-Sunni actors. . . (13)

Zarqawi wanted first to conquer the Arab World, displaying a form of religious nationalism, and then shift focus towards establishing a global caliphate, maintaining an international "total war" (Marsico, 2016, p. 30; Gerges, 2018, p. 91).

Total War

In order for Zarqawi to accomplish establishing a worldwide caliphate, there first needed to be "religious and ethnic cleansings" primarily of the Yazidis, Kurds, and Shia in the Arab region because of their devout opposition to the radical Sunni Islam embodied in the Islamic State (Gerges, 2018, p. 91). The quest to establish a "pure Islamic State" was not home to a single, designated enemy; rather, everyone and anyone could be ruled an enemy (Griffin, 2016, p. 16). From the perspective of the caliph, the State came first, and the "fifth column" needed to be eliminated (Marsico, 2016, p. 17). In *The Plot Against America*, Roth (2014) delves into the idea of a "fifth column," which is a group of people who align with the beliefs of an enemy, undermining the objectives of their nation, meaning anyone who opposed the state, either publicly or privately, is a threat to the nation, an idea that the Islamic State transformed from the world of theory into reality. Therefore, the State would not hesitate to remove those who stood in its way. Often, extremists did not simply target oppositional military personnel; they "threatened, persecuted, and killed ordinary civilians" as part of their "total war" (Gerges, 2018; Marsico, 2016, p. 36).

Maintaining Control

The Islamic State utilized various methods to maintain control. First, the State met the basic needs of its followers, creating false feelings of safety and security, which is further explained by Dostoevsky's (1879-1880/1994) Theory of Miracle, Mystery, and Authority. Second, the State maintained recruitment by appealing to outcasts of society (Hoffer, 1951). Finally, the use of intimidation practices such as public humiliation and/or execution allowed the State to ensure compliance (Mello, 2018).

Theory of Miracle, Mystery, and Authority

According to Dostoevsky (1879-1880/1994), successful control by a regime extends beyond military force and simple fear. Following Dostoevsky's (1879-1880/1994) Theory of Miracle, Mystery, and Authority from "The Grand Inquisitor," the state must oversee the well-being of its loyalists in order to maintain control. In this theory, Dostoevsky (1879-1880/1994) holds that, if a state provides miracles (food) and mystery

(entertainment), people are more likely to be willing subjects to absolute authority; people would rather be amused and satisfied subjects of the state than be free and starving. This is further upheld by Hoffer (1951) who explains that humankind is drawn to mass movements because of the solidarity held among combatants.

In *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, Hoffer (1951) delves into the psychology of the appeal of mass movement politics. He claims that it is the “undesirables” of society who are likely to be recruited by a mass movement (Hoffer, 1951). These individuals are searching for something beyond themselves. Mass movement leaders target those who believe that there is something wrong in their life due to the status quo of society, who are poor and see this as an opportunity for advancement, who desire a new avenue of self-expression, and who are selfish or unselfish (Hoffer, 1951). In whole, these people groups view a mass movement as a way to disassociate from personal responsibility (Hoffer, 1951). While vastly different groups with varying circumstances, they are all in search of something, and the mass movement provides an answer, as seen in the Theory of Miracle, Mystery, and Authority (Dostoevsky, 1879-1880/1994; Hoffer, 1951).

Like Dostoevsky and Hoffer, Arendt (1994) agrees that mass movements often target lonely, isolated people. In *Origins of Totalitarianism*, she presents her explanation of how control is achieved and maintained, arguing that the primary goal of a totalitarian leader is to control the thinking of their citizens and subjects. Under this form of government, absolute unity is essential, and the state will brag about crimes and grotesque accomplishments to maintain order and loyalty, essentially scaring its subjects into submission (Arendt, 1994). Furthermore, a totalitarian regime will always find new opposition, even if it is innocent people, as this ensures preservation through continual conflict and conquering (Arendt, 1994). While Dostoevsky and Arendt have some slightly different perspectives on how a totalitarian regime is created and maintained, they both maintain the idea of complete control through blatant manipulation, a concept mastered by the Islamic State.

Turning the theoretical ponderings of Dostoevsky, Hoffer, and Arendt into real-world application, the Islamic State has displayed miracles through the artificial image of being a provider by offering “internal security” and “food and medical treatment” (Naji, 2003, p. 42). The State’s idea of “educational outreach” aimed to reinforce the idea that by “complying with the Islamic State, individuals will be liberated” because “following [the State’s] rules provides residents...with security stability, and financial resources” unavailable otherwise (Mello, 2018, p. 149). Additionally, the Islamic State provided entertainment through broadcasted violent propaganda, satisfying humankind’s craving

for mystery and spectacle (Dostoevsky, 1879-1880/1994). Finally, the Islamic State recognized and exploited a need for unity in their recruitment by advertising the State as a unified home for the disenfranchised individuals of the world (Arendt, 1994; Dostoevsky, 1879-1880/1994; Hoffer, 1951). This application of the Miracle, Mystery, and Authority theory is further emphasized by the radicalized religious ideology of the State.

Religious Extremism and Policing

The Islamic State achieved and maintained absolute authority in the same basic pattern as regimes past; however, at the core of the State is radicalized religion. Under a system of Islamic extremism, the caliph exercises “total religious and political authority over his subjects’ lives,” and his power supersedes even basic human rights (Marsico, 2016, p. 9). Utilizing both the establishment of an institution and implementing “strategies of survival,” the Islamic State strove to transform the Middle East into its “ideological image” through the formation of a caliphate (Mello, 2018, p. 147; Auerbach, n.d., p. 2).

While the Islamic State does not utilize secret police, a common practice among totalitarian regimes, it does utilize religious ideological indoctrination levied by a religious police force that enforces “everyday social practices that reflect the Islamic State’s version of Salafism” (Mello, 2018, p. 149). Under Stalin’s Russia, there was systematic surveillance, arrest, and interrogation of political enemies of the state as seen in the infamous Show Trials (Koestler, 1941). The Islamic State mirrors this method in its public “trial and execution” of military prisoners (Mello, 2018).

Recruitment

At the core of any thriving organization is a successful recruiting process. The State’s recruitment methods reveal three additional aspects of the Islamic State that took it beyond a mere radical Islamic movement and aligned it with the typical attributes of a totalitarian regime. Specifically, the State’s use of social media, sectarianism and the Takfiri Doctrine, and impatience has set it apart.

Social Media

The Islamic State was innovative regarding the use of media to record, propagate, and broadcast violence (Mello, 2018). The video productions are “designed to attract viewers” while simultaneously instilling fear (Mello, 2018, p. 141). Just as Hitler revolutionized film and news-based propaganda in World War II, the Islamic State utilized social media to broadcast propaganda based upon the idea that crude violence creates a “shock and awe” factor that reinforces “an image of power and invincibility” of the State (Mello, 2018, p. 143). The exploitation of public executions was about “restoring, in the eyes of those who witness the punishment of the body of the condemned, the awesome power of the state” and reinforcing the ever present “power of political authority” (Mello, 2018, p. 144).

The violent propaganda, delivered unilaterally through the expansive reach of social media, served to terrorize enemies while simultaneously impressing potential recruits on a global scale by presenting the organization as a “powerful vanguard movement capable of delivering victory and salvation” to its faithful ones (Gerges, 2018, pp. 91, 93). The disenfranchised individuals who joined did not abhor its brutality; rather, it is what attracted them. Both Muslims and non-Muslims living in Western countries join extremist groups like the State because it provides them with a sense of “tight-knit community with a potent identity” (Gerges, 2018, p. 93). Additionally, the goal of erecting a global caliphate provides recruits with a “sense of serving a sacred mission” providing the idea that they are a part of something much bigger than themselves (Gerges, 2018, p. 93).

Sectarianism and the Takfiri Doctrine

In addition to broadcasted violent propaganda, the Islamic State resurrected the concept of sectarianism, which is civil war among two or more factions of the Islamic faith that actively seek “to remake borders (and by extension the state system) throughout the entire Middle East and beyond” (Mello, 2018, p. 139; *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, 2003, pp. 282). The State justified their actions through a broad application of the Takfiri Doctrine which rationalized the “sanctioning [of] violence against leaders of Islamic States who [were] deemed insufficiently religious” (*The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, 2003, p. 312). Thus, the sectarian war was systematically aimed to target other non-Muslim religious groups and force conversion or death more than any other Islamic extremist organization (Mello, 2018). The idea of a sectarian war was linked to impatience. The State leaders were discontent with the current historical timeline and wanted to quicken the “return of Islamic greatness” or Salafist jihadism through more “open and widespread action” in the form of warfare (Mello, 2018, p. 141).

Religion and Global Mobilization

The State utilized the age of the internet and employed a strategy, similar to that described by Hoffer, of selling a better future through belittling the present by villainizing the status quo to recruit foreign militants (Hoffer, 1951). The combination of a broadcasted sectarian war and the desire to fast forward time to a fully established global caliphate accelerated this need for combatants. Followers of the Islamic State displayed “value-related rationality more than goal-oriented,” showing that the ideology of the State was “steeped in a messianic, end-of-days version of Sunni Islam that manifested itself without parallel in Middle East history” (Mello, 2018, p. 40). They held a futuristic ideology believing that they could accelerate the “final confrontation that [would] restore Islamic greatness” (Mello, 2018, p. 140). This shows how the Islamic state was able to convert religious appeal into a tangible, politically-based recruitment strategy.

Although the State recruited from across the globe, the majority came from the countries of Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey, and Jordan (Auerbach, n.d.). At the most powerful point in its history, the Islamic State maintained approximately 40,000 combatants in Syria and Iraq, 25,000 of which were foreign militants (Auerbach, n.d.). It was the State's violence that allowed it to "forge a new collective identity premised on the power of Sunni Muslims to remake the Middle East, to rid the region of Western and heretical influences, and to restore the Islamic Middle East to its once great heights" (Mello, 2018, p. 153). This further explains why their recruitment was unprecedented and why their methods vary widely in comparison to former, radical Islamic movements (Mello, 2018). The promise of political greatness, tied with religious fervor, is irresistible to disenfranchised youth across the globe. The Islamic State's use of religion enhanced the potency of its ideology, allowing unrivaled mobilization of its masses.

Destruction of History

Along with intense, global propaganda, the Islamic State followed other trademark totalitarian moves throughout its operation. The State attempted to destroy history, and it was successful on occasion. They targeted historical sites of non-Sunni heritage, destroying anything resembling idol worship no matter if it be Christian, Jewish, Shia, etc. in nature (Gerges, 2018). It can be argued that this advanced the ideological war; by eliminating monuments of the past, the State focused attention to its vision of the future—a global caliphate.

Symbols

The Islamic State utilized symbols, which are a key element of fascism used to promote unity. One of these symbols is the State's flag. The writing on the upper portion of the black banner stated the shahada, or the declaration of faith, saying, "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God" (Marsico, 2016, p. 31)—a fundamentally religious phrase was thus transformed into a political weapon. The shahada is found on multiple flags throughout Islamic nations, and many Muslims have objected to the idea that this phrase represents radical jihadist movement (Marsico, 2016). However, the symbolism has been so effective that even opponents of the State recognize the transformation of the shahada into a symbol for their enemies, much as the swastika was transformed from a Hindu symbol of peace into a Nazi symbol of hatred (Goldmeier, 2018).

Another symbol of the Islamic State is the orange jumpsuit, which symbolizes the State's resistance of Western intervention in the Islamic lands (Richey & Edwards, 2019). In Western culture, the orange jumpsuit is a common representation of incarceration, but to the State, it symbolizes the "humiliation and dehumanization. . . [which is] forced on [their] prisoners to visually display the group's control over them" (Richey &

Edwards, 2019, p. 168). The uniform is most notably featured in the propaganda videos produced by the State (Richey & Edwards, 2019). Therefore, to the Western world, the once forgettable orange jumpsuit has now become synonymous with the idea of religious extremism and executions.

The Islamic State as a Political-Religious Totalitarian Regime

How did one man from Al-Qaeda begin a movement that was 40,000 strong in barely 10 years (Marsico, 2016)? The answer lies in the creation of a political-religious totalitarian regime. Traditional totalitarian motifs such as propaganda and sectarianism appeared, but the incorporation of religion into political symbolism, police control, and core ideology established an unprecedented power base for the Islamic State. The Islamic State's evolution into a dominant force was so effective that the world deemed a military response was necessary to stem the tide of the growing regime. The Islamic State continued to increase its territorial domain until 2016 when international opponents were able to stall the growth and even reclaim large sections of land (Gerges, 2018). By 2018, the group had "lost control of virtually all its former holding," leading the United States to claim that the State had been vanquished, "but most experts warned that it remains a dangerous force capable of significant terrorist violence" (Gerges, 2018, pp. 3-4; Browne, 2018). In all, this claim of victory was idealistic and inherently flawed.

Rationally speaking, a movement based in religious ideology can never truly be extinguished because the "leader" of the faction is believed by followers to be all powerful and therefore cannot be defeated. In fact, former leader al-Baghdadi asserted that the State will "remain, as long as [they] have a vein pumping or an eye blinking. . . It remains, and [they] will not compromise nor give up. . . until [they] die" (Marsico, 2016, p. 28). As explained by the Pentagon, Islamic State fighters still remain, and the State "is well positioned to rebuild and work on enabling its physical caliphate to re-emerge" (Browne, 2018). Furthermore, recent events confirm the idea that the State will not be stopped (Arraf & Hassan, 2021).

As of January 2021, the United States is still combating Islamic State insurgents despite the fact that the State now has no physical territory (Arraf & Hassan, 2021). With the help of Iraqi intelligence and military support, the American forces conducted an airstrike, killing a prominent Islamic State leader and nine other combatants, in retaliation for the ISIS attack on a market in Baghdad in 2019 that resulted in 32 casualties and injured over 100 people (Arraf & Hassan, 2021; Diaz & Fordham, 2021). After claiming responsibility for the attack, the State reemphasized their target—Shiite Muslims and the Iraqi forces that stood in their way—confirming, yet again, that the Islamic State's religious political totalitarian ideals have and will remain (Arraf & Hassan, 2021).

Conclusion

The Islamic State was a revolutionary form of totalitarianism. It maintained the basic totalitarian foundation by mobilizing a disenfranchised population, establishing a supreme ideology, disseminating violent propaganda, controlling citizens through fear, creating unifying symbols, and destroying history. However, ISIS was unique in the incorporation of religion at a state level. The State did not ideologically align with a known totalitarian regime such as Communist Stalinist Russia or Fascist Nazi Germany. Instead, the State merged religious dogma and state control together to create a *political-religious totalitarian regime* that was not bound by physical borders. It held the same demands as a traditional totalitarian state, but it did so through a political-religious lens, shifting the focus of loyalty from a limited, mortal leader to loyalty to an omniscient, immortal higher power. Bullets can kill a man, bombs can kill a government, but religious zeal does not fall quite so easily.

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Narrative Authority: The Intersection of Mass Media, White Saviors, Corporate Interests, and the Subaltern Voice

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Abstract

The narratives that are disseminated by various parties who are members and tools of the dominant culture serve to conceal not only the voices of the marginalized but also the treachery of those who take advantage of them while inflating the conscience of those who hope to satisfy a moral obligation to help the poor. This essay will explore the different voices in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*. This novel utilizes the narrative voice in a unique manner, allowing a disabled, impoverished young boy named Animal to tell the story of his life of oppression, suffering, and marginalization through a series of tapes addressed to what he refers to as "the Eyes." Sinha allows Animal to speak for himself, but, in doing so, Animal highlights other dominant narrative trends, including the visual and auditory power of the mass media in communicating the position of the poor, the white saviors' interpretation of and response to what they see and hear of the poor, and how these contribute to the corporate interests' ability to remain invisible and thus avoid responsibility for their actions. Sinha uses characters such as Elli, a white American doctor, who comes to Khaufpur to open a clinic, Jarnalis, an Australian journalist, who leaves a set of tapes for Animal to record his story on his own time, and the big Kampani lawyers, who hide the parties actually responsible for the disaster the novel describes. I will postulate that the connections between mass media representations, white savior responses, and the resulting benefits to corporate interests are the narratives that should be scrutinized so that the narrative authority can be given back to those with lived experience.

The problems that arise when attempting to convey the stories that describe the experiences of the marginalized, particularly those marginalized by their extreme poverty due to limits placed upon their access to resources, are complicated problems that are often dispelled with far too simple solutions. The poor are typically viewed and expressed as helpless, hopeless, and in need of intervention whether by institutions or individual persons who occupy positions of privilege. This directed attitude is particularly prevalent in areas occupied by people who possess a wealth of natural resources, yet practice lax safety and labor laws, making them easily exploited by dominant systems.

An exploration into the various narrative tactics employed by those in positions of privilege is a topic that has been addressed by various schools of literary criticism, yet very little scholarship connects the various voices together to create a complete picture of how the stories of the subaltern are told by the institutionalized systems that subdue them. Throughout this essay, the marginalized will be referred to frequently as the “subaltern” or the “subaltern voice,” the definition of which is drawn from the arguments postulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in which she defines subaltern as follows: “Where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognizable basis of action” (Spivak 476). Essentially, Spivak defines the subaltern as those whose identity is consumed only by their status as “less than.” The narratives that are created and disseminated by various parties who are members and tools of the dominant culture serve to conceal the voices and humanity of the subaltern and also the treachery of those who take advantage of the subaltern while inflating the consciences of those who hope to satisfy a moral obligation to help the poor that they have, at some point, adopted.

I find that the dominant narrative voice that speaks for the wider culture consists of three prongs: the mass media, which claims to give accurate depictions of the conditions of the marginalized; the white saviors, who respond to the atrocities they witness through mass media consumption by going to marginalized areas and offering the assistance they believe to be best for the people there; and the corporate interests, who fuel the media representations, prop up the white saviors as distractions from actual conditions, and utilize the muddled narrative to create for themselves a level of invisibility that allows them to exploit in anonymity. This three-pronged approach is highlighted and challenged by *Animal's People* as Indra Sinha not only demonstrates these narrative tendencies through his novel's character representations of each prong, but also takes the narrative authority away from these characters, instead giving it to the most subaltern character in the story. This narrative technique seeks to illuminate the flaws in the mass representations of subaltern people and to shift the authority of the story back to those who have

actually experienced the suffering rather than those who seek to exploit it.

Animal's People by Indra Sinha contains characters who represent each prong of the dominant narrative, but what makes the novel unique is that Sinha does not allow any of these actors to speak for themselves; he instead gives the narrative authority to one of the lowest members of the society, a young boy named Animal. This boy, as a result of a poison gas disaster, is left with a twisted back, orphaned, and forced to walk on all fours, earning him the name and assumed identity of Animal. Animal is crass and unrefined, and fully owns his status as more animal than man. He agrees to tell his story to an Australian journalist, called Jarnalis, via a series of tapes, but insists that the stories be told how he wants with no rules from the journalist.

Chunaram, who brokers the deal between Jarnalis and Animal, tells Animal how Jarnalis responded to hearing the first of Animal's tapes: "Last night he had your tape translated. Today he comes saying he has never found such honesty as that filth of yours... I told him you are an orphan of that night, you grew up in a crazy franci situation, you used to live on the streets like a dog, you are a unique case" (Sinha 7). Animal is wary of the journalist and wary of those who will hear the tapes, but he attempts to speak directly to those who would usually not only consume the dominant narratives but also have historically controlled the narrative and, therefore, the responses and treatment of the subaltern. With this understanding of his listeners, he states: "You are reading my words, you are that person (encouraged by Jarnalis). I've no name for you so I will call you Eyes. My job is to talk, yours is to listen. So now listen" (14). Animal is reluctant to work with Jarnalis and speak to these Eyes as he finds that most who come to write about his city, and then those who read about his city, do nothing to actually help the people there. Yet, Animal eventually decides that working with Jarnalis is important not because it might change his situation, but because by taking the narrator position, he can at least hold some authority over his own story: "This story has been locked up in me, it's struggling to be free, I can feel it coming, words want to fly out from between my teeth like a flock of birds making a break for it... There are many versions going round, every newspaper has a different story, not one knows the truth" (11, 12). Animal recognizes the role that Jarnalis and other members of the media such as himself play in taking ownership of Animal's story. He has no illusion of being able to change the way in which they respond to him, but he craves the freedom of allowing his voice to become a part of the narrative, in an attempt to convey a different truth.

The Bhopal Disaster of 1984, which is the backdrop for *Animal's People*, was a tremendous gas explosion that occurred between December 2 and December 3 in the early morning hours, while most of the plant's management and safety officers were at home

asleep. The plant, which was an American owned pesticide plant, was located in Bhopal Madhya Pradesh India, and was operated by Union Carbide, which was eventually bought out by Dow Jones Industrial (“Bhopal Disaster”). This gas leak exposed over 500,000 people to methyl isocyanate, a chemical used in World War I for chemical warfare commonly known as MIC (“Bhopal Disaster”). This particular chemical was not as stable as the chemicals generally used in common pesticide plants, but a recent drought had caused farming in the area to suffer, thus impacting pesticide sales. Taking advantage of low regulatory power in the Indian government, and more lax safety laws, the company decided to use the less stable chemical and, thus, put the surrounding areas at risk to the highly unstable compound of chemicals (“Bhopal Disaster”). Though not intentional, the disaster was also no accident, but rather was the result of negligence on the part of the corporation that had located itself in a particular area merely for access to cheap land and materials with a lack of adequate oversight from local government. The aftermath of the disaster was devastating; the immediate death toll was counted as 2,259, though that number is somewhat disputed and difficult to prove. Within two weeks, the death toll rose from the reported over 2,000 to over 8,000, with the chronic effects of the gas on those who survived being largely immeasurable (“Bhopal Disaster”). Union Carbide was largely believed responsible, but they faced few repercussions. In 1989, Union Carbide paid \$470 million to settle litigation, but the site itself was not cleaned until 1998, following a merger with McLeod Russel LTD (razorfoundation). The CEO of Union Carbide, Warren Anderson suffered no consequences for his leadership role, and in 2010 seven Indian officials were sentenced to two years in prison as well as \$2,000 fines for their negligence in enforcing regulatory oversight (razorfoundation).

Such a mass event led to swift coverage from the media; not only was the explosion one of the worst industrial disasters in history, but it also occurred during the month of December, which is, generally, a particularly “slow” month for news (Wilkins 18). Much of the resulting coverage highlights Animal’s indication that the media tells these stories from positions of power and, in their telling, dis-empower those who are the actual victims.

The first prong of the dominant narrative moved swiftly in response to the disaster. It was heavily covered by the media in places like the United States and was predominantly propped up as a cautionary tale about the dangers of industrialization, chemicals, and corporate neglect, and an emotive tale about the plight of the poor, the helplessness of the “third world,” and the overall sense of hopelessness in any attempt to modernize the worlds of the marginalized without the intervention of large, often irresponsible, corporate interests from the West. In his article, “Media Coverage of the Bhopal Disaster:

a Cultural Myth in the Making,” Lee Wilkins explores the ways in which this disaster was covered by the mass media as a case study for the way in which mass media rarely succeeds in telling the stories of the subaltern in an ethical manner. Wilkins highlights, particularly, the way in which the media coverage so heavily covered the presence of gas rather than people, as if gas is an autonomous evil separate of the corporations, which are run by individuals, who failed in containing the gas and protecting the people within its path: “Of the forty-one stories analyzed, only thirteen did not include some sort of visual image of gas, either as an actual gas cloud or something like a smoke stack which the average person would probably associate with gas. In the remaining stories, there were 115 separate images of gas” (22).

Wilkins’s extensive research on the media portrayals of the Bhopal disaster focused heavily on what the media actually portrayed and how it not only impacted responses, but also allowed the actual players to conceal themselves. His algorithm filtered through the stories and generated the following statistics:

Union Carbide as a corporation (11%) and American business executives, including Union Carbide corporate officials (11%) were the two entities that were most frequently portrayed as powerful actors in media reports. In 44% of the stories, Americans, either as lawyers, corporate executives or corporations, were portrayed as the single most powerful actors on the scene. Indians were portrayed as powerful actors only 28% of the time and the bulk of that coverage was provided to Indian government officials... Individuals, particularly Indians, who were not officials of their own government were not portrayed as capable of influencing events. Instead they became masses of victims. (18)

The trend of the media coverage was to depict frightening images of uncontrollable gas and smoke as well as to conceal the individuals profiting from the plant by referring to them merely as executives or officials, by referencing their lawyers, and by constantly resorting back to the idea of corporate rather than individual power—all while portraying the victims as merely helpless bystanders worthy only of pity. Wilkins ultimately concludes:

The message of theory seems to be that we might better regard media content as a unique cultural form, a ‘media culture’ fashioned according to its own conventions and codes and forming a more or less independent element in the social reality rather than a message about that social security. Thus, even where media acts as a carrier for other institutions, they tend to alter substance, to conform to the demands of ‘media culture’. (4)

Essentially, Wilkins finds that the mass media crafts and delivers its own ver-

sions of reality that ultimately benefit the corporate interests that it claims to be illuminating. Media representations of the Bhopal disaster certainly depicted the corporations as being at fault, but they refused to engage with the humanity of the situation instead allowing the corporations to hide behind the gas. Again, Animal recognizes this in Jarnalis, and it is what motivates him to seize control of the narrative. When he learns that Jarnalis has already decided what sort of book he will write before even hearing Animal's actual story, he raves:

Jarnalis should not be allowed to tell my story. Comes here struttintouchg like some sisterfuck movie star. What? Does he think he's the first outsider ever to visit this fucking city? People bend to touch his feet, sir, please sir, your help sir, sir my son, sir my wife, sir my wretched life. Oh how the prick loves this! Sultan among slaves he's, listens with what lofty pity, pretends to give a fuck but the truth is he'll go away and forget them, every last one. For his sort we are not really people. We don't have names. We flit in crowds at the corner of his eye. Extras we're, in his movie. (Sinha 9)

Jarnalis represents the media tendency to craft the stories of the subaltern in ways that benefit themselves or their viewers. These journalists, creators of the media, believe themselves to be above the victims of tragedy, benevolent sympathizers who ultimately profit off the sensational stories of suffering. Though the journalists tell their stories with feigned pity, Animal understands and highlights the ineffectiveness of pity by demanding the Eyes listen to him, rather than Jarnalis and his proposed book.

The mass media is often the primary transmitter of subaltern stories in terms of great events that impact them. There is, however, a closer representation. The second prong of the three-prong narrative belongs to the white saviors who respond to such media representations and then disseminate the emotive version of events. White saviors can be driven by a variety of intentions, some of which are seemingly pure, others of which are blatantly for their own benefit. In his article "Humanitarianism, Testimony, and the White Savior Industrial Complex: *What is the What* versus *Kony 2012*," Sean Bex explores the idea of narrative authority in reference to subaltern stories through the voice of a white savior who communicates through a video, *Kony 2012*, that claims to seek justice for the subaltern in Uganda. Bex cautions both authors and readers creating and consuming media that depicts narratives of the subaltern to ensure that they understand the narrative voice and the effects that it has upon the reading and understanding of any representation. *Kony 2012* is highly criticized by Bex, as it is the story of child soldiers in Uganda and their fight to escape the warlord Kony as he wages a devastating civil war by utilizing the poor children of Uganda. This video tells the story of an American activist,

Jason Russell, who visits and forms a relationship with recovering child soldier, Jacob Acaye. The purpose of the video is to mobilize activists in an effort to bring Joseph Kony to justice. However, though the intentions may be pure, Bex is wary of Russell's telling as it is focused predominantly on his own reactions to the atrocities that he sees, rather than allowing those who have actually experienced them firsthand to speak for themselves. Russell frequently compares himself to Acaye and weeps as he tries to imagine his own children experiencing what Acaye has experienced. Though a powerful narrative technique, Bex argues such depictions do not actually serve the subaltern but rather inflate the consciences of those who want to be helpers:

Kony 2012 portrays a Western activist who not only over identifies with the traumatic situation of a recovering child soldier but appropriates his victimhood in the portrayal of his plight in Invisible Children's humanitarian campaign. As a result, the video leads the viewer to establish an empathetic relationship with the Western humanitarian agent rather than the African victim, consigning the latter to the position of a silenced and ultimately unknown object of patronizing sympathy. (Bex 33)

The work, though potentially pure in intention, does not allow the subaltern to speak from a position of authority, but rather subjugates them to a position of helplessness, fortunate to be pitied by characters such as Russell.

Sinha created a character much like Russell in Elli, the American doctor who comes to Khaufpur to open a clinic with the intention of providing much needed, proper medical care to the people there, but who has little understanding of the actual people of Khaufpur. Elli, though pure in intention, is used by Sinha as an example of Western activists similar to Russell who respond to media representations of marginalized suffering and believe that they can offer some level of solution. However, unlike Russell in *Kony 2012*, Elli is not offered any platform to tell her own story, give her own motivations, or explain her true intentions for coming to Khaufpur. In fact, a large narrative arc throughout the novel centers on Animal and his friends merely trying to decide if they believe she works for the Kampani or not.

Elli possesses a deep sense of moral obligation and a need to make a difference in the world. She is uncomfortable with living a life that does not make some sort of impact, and she believes her skills as a doctor perfectly position her to be the most helpful in places like Khaufpur. The boycott of Elli's clinic is not merely confusing to her, but also infuriating. She grows increasingly angry through the text as the boycott continues and as she is prevented from offering the help she so desperately wants to give. She believes that because she can offer a service, she speaks the language, and she owns some traditional

dress that she should be accepted:

‘Well you can tell me’ Elli suddenly says in Hindi. Such a silence there’s. Even old Hanif turns and sends his sightless eyes searching for her... ‘I’m the doctor you were talking about,’ says Elli. ‘I’m the one who opened the clinic that everyone’s afraid of. I’m not a monster, I’m not from the moon and I hate the Kampa-ni as much as you do’. (Sinha 181)

In this exchange she is pleading with locals to accept her, to welcome her, and to utilize her services. The Eyes, or the unnamed and unknown readers to whom Animal dictates his story, are, no doubt, confused as to why the people will not accept her help and grow frustrated with the suspicion that Animal and his friends have of her. However, as the story continues, Animal begins to explain why Elli and those like her are not helpful, why they are of little, if any, benefit to the subaltern, and why they cannot be effective in their missions:

‘What really disgusts me is that we people seem so wretched to you outsiders that you look at us with that so-soft expression, speak to us with that so-pious tone in your voice.’ She asks very seriously, ‘Don’t people here deserve respect?’ ‘It is not respect, is it? I can read feelings. People like you are fascinated by places like this.’ (184)

Animal and his people do not want the pity and soft, pious looks from the white saviors of privileged positions. They desire understanding and tangible change. Animal and Elli argue about what it will take for her to be effective in Khaufpur and what it will take for the people to accept and trust her. Elli states in comparing herself to local activist Zafar, “I too am there for them, they will get to know me” (185) which launches Animal into a rage:

‘You haven’t a hope. You are a good-hearted doctress but nothing do you fucking understand. Tell me please what is that?’ I’ve pointed at her wrist. ‘My watch?’ ‘Yes, your watch what do you need it for?’ ‘To tell the time of course’... Elli, I don’t need a watch because I know what time it is. It’s now o’clock... In the Kingdom of the Poor, time doesn’t exist. Elli, if you had no watch, your stomach will churn and growl and say, hey Elli, it’s food time, hey it’s still food time, hey don’t you hear me, it’s food time. What happens if you can’t afford food? When you can’t remember the last time you ate something?... Hope dies in places like this, because hope lives in the future and there’s no future here, how can you think about tomorrow when all your strength is used up trying to get through today?’ (185)

For Elli, the people of Khaufpur are people just like her; they just need help, they need

resources. Elli fails to understand the universal differences between them. Even a concept as seemingly universal as time is not the same between the poor and the privileged. She is hopelessly confused by the way in which the subaltern think and exist.

Sinha uses Elli so aggressively to highlight this white savior trope, that it must play some role in the purpose of his allowing Animal to tell the story. Elli does not exist in the novel simply as just another character in the cast of interesting characters. She is Sinha's commentary on white savior figures. Animal exposes her directly for exactly what she is and how miserably she fails in her mission. The white saviors respond to media representations of these poor, helpless people and believe themselves capable of making some sort of difference in their stories, without ever considering the differences in their principles, concepts, and ideologies. White saviors such as Russell in *Kony 2012* and Elli both believe themselves above the subaltern and cannot understand how their intervention in their lives would not immediately be welcomed and applauded. Bandyopadhyay in the essay "Volunteer Tourism and 'White Man's Burden': Globalization of Suffering, the White Savior Complex, Religion and Modernity" describes such characters in terms of "volunteer tourism," which is closely married to the idea of the white savior. Bandyopadhyay says "volunteer tourism" as:

... a development strategy leading to sustainable development and centering the convergence of natural resource qualities, locals and the visitor that all benefit from tourism activity. Every year thousands of young adults from the Global North flock to the Global South in the name of "helping" the less fortunate by teaching in schools, building orphanages, saving turtles or nurturing street children... Charitable work helps young people assert their identity in a world of fragmenting meanings and semiotic confusion. (330)

The actions of such white saviors and activists may seem to cause minimal harm; many might argue that no harm is caused, merely no good is actually accomplished. But the implication from Bandyopadhyay is that these white saviors, humanitarian missions do in fact cause a subtle harm in that they allow the industries of the West to operate and create profit, largely unnoticed.

Elli does not necessarily bring any specific harm in the novel; however, I find it is critical to examine how Elli serves as a distraction and how the people of Khaufpur zero in on her as a potential enemy, not because she is, but because she has provided a visible, tangible face onto which they can direct their anger. The Kampani is unknown. The big bosses are never named, but are instead represented only by their lawyers. Elli, and white saviors like herself, detract from the visibility of the Kampani or corporate interests as they become the faces and voices of the privileged, rather than those who are

doing the most serious harm. They do this by allowing the focus to be removed from the exploitation and instead placed on the supposed good being done by the white saviors intervening. White saviors take the mass media's hazy representations of atrocities that cause helplessness and hopelessness and turn them into stories of hope and redemption. They twist the narrative to no longer focus on the suffering, but to instead focus on the good that they believe they can do. Again, the subalterns being helped are kept from any position of power as they passively accept the help forced upon them, and again, the individuals responsible for the suffering of the subalterns are removed from the narrative, as the white saviors fight no-name corporations, ideas like greed and negligence, rather than directly addressing the individuals responsible for the decisions that lead to the creation and maintaining of the subaltern groups. For Elli, the goal is to fix Animal's back, not to understand Animal, his place in his community, or his needs as a full person. She is focused only on the potential narrative of redeeming him from his position as Animal.

The third prong is somewhat unique compared to the first two. The narrative of the corporate interests is set apart from those of the white saviors and the mass media in that instead of operating out of a potentially well-intentioned but highly misguided desire to offer their own understanding of the subaltern as if they are speaking for them, corporate interests seek only to dis-empower, disenfranchise, and create for themselves a level of invisibility by which they can conceal their exploitation and continue to increase their profits. The metaphor of the Eyes comes most clearly into focus when discussing the Kampani bosses at which point the themes of invisibility that Sinha is addressing moves from a hint to a roar. When the lawyers finally arrive in Khaufpur to discuss the litigation, they arrive in secret:

The Kampani lawyers arrive in Khaufpur with no warning. Timecheck sees them first. Four Amrikans, leaving the Collector's office, getting into a car. 'They met senior persons,' Timecheck tells us, 'Their leader is a big fellow dressed peculiar.' Well, no one knows what this might mean but alarming information is soon flying in thick and fast. This afternoon the Amrikans will meet Zahreel Khan, tomorrow the Cm... 'What kind of deal?' someone asks. 'What kind? With politicians there's only one kind. Out of court, into pocket. What else?'
(Sinha 260)

While the lawyers are in Khaufpur, they stay in a hotel that does not allow access to the poor, they are seen only when entering and exiting buildings, and the people of the disaster are never granted access to their meetings. They are present, but they are not visible. The lack of transparency allows them to make deals in secret, shirk their responsibility, and continue their dis-empowerment of the people by making deals that appease officials

but ultimately benefit them and not the people of Khaufpur. They still control the events. Though Animal is still narrating the story, these particular events highlight his position of dis-empowerment by reminding the Eyes that despite his position as narrative authority, his authority does not extend to this realm. He cannot say what happens behind those closed doors because he is not allowed behind them. His authority as narrator is severely limited by the invisibility of the Kampani.

By allowing Animal to narrate the story, it would appear as if Sinha has given the subaltern back their power, but the invisibility of the Kampani reminds the Eyes that merely giving Animal narrative authority in no way creates for him a position of true power. Animal's telling of the story is simply an attempt to bring attention to the invisibility that the privileged enjoy, but it offers no actual solution; his position as narrator does not grant him access to the Kampani.

Most literary scholarship on Sinha's novel focuses heavily on the narrative technique of allowing Animal to speak for himself and his people. Some, though, disagree on whether or not Sinha is effective. For example, in his article "Animal's Eyes: Spectacular Invisibility and the Terms of Recognition in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*," Andrew Mahlstedt argues in favor of Sinha's narrative techniques that "Dominant narratives of poverty in the global south exacerbate the invisibility of the marginalized poor, blinding observers to all but a spectacle of abject destitution. Paying attention to narrative and the question of visibility in the context of recent globalization, *Animal's People* represents dis-empowerment without dis-empowering" (Mahlstedt 60). By contrast, Brigitte Rath in her essay "His Words Only? Indra Sinha's Pseudotranslation *Animal's People* as Hallucinations of a Subaltern Voice" argues that Sinha's techniques are completely ineffective because she is unable to filter out the privileged author's words from Animal's own words. She postulates that Sinha's character, Animal, cannot speak for the subaltern because he is a creation of Sinha and Sinha is not a subaltern. She references interviews that Sinha gave when explaining his narrative techniques, in which he states: "Animal came to life in my mind and immediately began talking to me. He insisted on taking over the narrative, and rather rudely told me to get out of the way. It took me a long time to learn to trust him, but gradually I came to love that beastly boy" (Sinha, "Interview"). Rath points out that Animal's voice is in no way consistent and therefore more reflective of Sinha's attempt at speaking in a genuine subaltern voice, rather than a true subaltern voice. She cites numerous examples of praise for Sinha's creation of Animal that serves as evidence for the heavy emphasis most scholarship has placed on the importance of giving the subaltern their own voice. But to what purpose? Neither Rath in her criticism nor Mahlstedt in his praise offer a concrete purpose to either the effective or ineffective use of Animal's

voice or the interpretation of the Eyes. What tangible purpose is served by ensuring that Animal's voice is true and unadulterated? Animal's voice as a narrative technique is not Sinha's primary concern, but rather he uses his voice to let the Eyes see the more complicated institutionalized restrictions placed upon the subaltern that prevent them from ever gaining any sense of empowerment. Animal is only given the opportunity to tell his story because a journalist is interested. He creates for himself some position of respect within his own community by being the one to get to know the American white savior doctor whom they mistake for a face of the corporation responsible for their suffering.

Yet, despite his narrative authority, Animal never receives justice, and the Kampani bosses are never actually visible or held fully responsible, just as Union Carbide never faced the full weight of the law. Animal's final note to the Eyes makes it clear that his telling of his story is not a solution for suffering: "Eyes, I'm done. Khuda hafez. Go well. Remember me. All things pass, but the poor remain. We are the people of the Apokalis. Tomorrow there will be more of us" (Sinha 366). The purpose of Animal's control of the narrative is not to facilitate a resolution to the suffering, nor to reverse the damage done by the dominant narratives, but rather to draw attention to them. The purpose of allowing Animal, the subaltern narrator, to maintain his position of authority throughout the text is to make this invisible narrative of oppression visible and to allow the Eyes to see and understand the voices of the Subaltern.

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