gnovis

a journal of communication, culture & technology

Volume 19 • Issue 1
Fall 2018

gnovis (nō vĭs)

derived from *gnosis*, Greek for "knowledge." The 'v' indicates vision and our commitment to exploring new pathways of scholarship.

gnovis

a journal of communication, culture & technology

gnovis staff

Class of 2018
Alexa DeJesus, *Editor-in-Chief*
Kathryn Hartzell, *Managing Editor*
Zachary Omer, *Director of Blog & Web Services*
Fred Ji, *Director of Outreach & Social Media*
Remel Hoskins, *Director of Multimedia*

Class of 2019
Kimberly Duron, *Editor-in-Chief*
Susannah Green, *Managing Editor*
Kevin Ackermann, *Director of Blog & Web Services*
Jenny Lee, *Director of Outreach & Social Media*
Kristi Pelzel, *Director of Multimedia*

Faculty
Leticia Bode, PhD, gnovis *Advisor*
David W. Lightfoot, PhD, *Director of Communication, Culture & Technology Program*

Contents

Letter from the Editor

It is my pleasure to present you with the seventh print edition and 21st digital edition of CCT's *gnovis* Journal. Since its inception in the Fall of 2007, *gnovis* Journal has served as a critical forum for graduate-level scholars to grapple with the complex and ever-expanding intersection of communication, culture, and technology. In this edition of *gnovis*, you will read several provocative works, each of which interrogates established societal narratives and examines how they continue to evolve.

In "Preferences of Mobile Dating App Users: A Semantic Network Analysis Approach," Jessica Welch of Purdue University explores the romantic partner preferences of cisgender male and female Midwestern college students and how these preferences are expressed through mobile dating apps. Tyler M. Michaud of Georgetown University's English M.A. program uses the television programs *Grace and Frankie* and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* to unpack the ways in which fictional representations of "chosen families" can serve to expand societal awareness of non-heteronormative relationships in "Queering the Family Sitcom." In "The "Good Girls": Exploring Features of Female Characters in Children's Animated Television," Sarah Pila of Northwestern University and Julie Dobrow, Calvin Gidney, and Jennifer Burton of Tufts University present their findings on representations of gender in a sample of contemporary animated television shows to uncover how often children are consuming, and potentially being influenced by media that features stereotypical portrayals of gender roles. Purdue University's Jessica Welch returns to dissect the quality of the arguments and debates that frequently occur on Facebook in "Argument Quality and Deliberation on Facebook: An Exploratory Study." Lastly, in "Presenting an Innocent Nation: Critique of *Gojira* (1954)'s Reflections on Japan's WWII Responsibility," Fanglin Wang of Georgetown University's Communication, Culture, and Technology program presents a close reading of the iconic post-WWII Japanese film *Gojira*, and uses this analysis to demonstrate how and why Japan's political and cultural leaders used post-war mass media to rewrite the narrative of their role in WWII.

In addition to the publication of *gnovis* Journal, the *gnovis* Team welcomed a wonderful staff of first-year students this fall. Each has already contributed to the Journal in several impactful ways. Our *gnovis* Blog continues to grow, featuring original article submissions that tackle cutting-edge social and technological issues. It also hosts episodes of our newly launched podcast, *CCTea*, led by the directors of *gnovis*' Web and Blog, Zachary Omer and Kevin Ackermann. The Team has also organized several community events with the goal of providing a space for CCT students to network and discuss their academic interests. In September, we held a Journal Cover Design Competition and are proud to feature the work of *gnovis*' Director of Outreach, Fred Ji, on this edition's cover. Looking ahead, we are planning our eighth annual academic conference, gnoviCon, which Assistant Director of Outreach, Jenny Lee, has been instrumental in developing.

This Journal and the success of all *gnovis*' projects could not have been achieved without the efforts of our entire *gnovis* Team. In particular, I would like to highlight the work of Managing Editor, Kathryn Hartzell, whose ability to locate and strengthen the pulse of each submission never ceases to amaze me. This Journal would not be what it is without her hard work and dedication. I also extend my gratitude to Remel Hoskins, Multimedia Director, whose attention to detail and graphic design creates a truly immersive experience that brings to light *gnovis*' purpose across multiple mediums. This semester we have also welcomed Assistant Editor-in-Chief Kimberly Marcela Duron and Assistant Managing Editor Susannah Green; their teamwork and seasoned editorial skills will enable *gnovis* Journal to continue to grow in the years ahead. I would also like to thank the CCT faculty and staff, in particular *gnovis* faculty advisor Dr. Leticia Bode, who continues to provide invaluable support and advice - thank you for your continued encouragement. Lastly, thank you, dearest reader of *gnovis*, we hope the works in this Journal will inspire your own scholarship and interest in communication, culture, and technology.

Alexa DeJesus '19
Editor-in-Chief

Preferences of Mobile Dating App Users: A Semantic Network Analysis Approach

Jessica Welch

Historically, differences have existed between heterosexual men and women regarding the traits they value most in a potential romantic partner. For example, men have typically prioritized their partner's physical attractiveness, while women have typically valued job stability and income. These differences in partner selection between men and women have persisted in multiple studies of both traditional dating and online dating, even though other dating norms have changed in the past few decades. The most recent trend in dating is the use of mobile dating apps, but researchers have yet to examine whether these gender differences persist on this new platform. My study attempts to address this information gap by using a semantic network analysis approach combined with frequency distributions to investigate whether gender differences in partner selection are still present when interactions occur via mobile dating apps. Results indicate that men and women value similar attributes when assessing someone's mobile dating app profile; both groups highly valued potential partners' physical attractiveness, although women participants using mobile dating apps also prioritized partners' intelligence and college major. Future research is required to determine whether gender differences in partner preference are disappearing across all forms of dating or if these results are specific to the platform (i.e., the use of a mobile dating app). Because this sample was limited to cisgender college students from a single Midwestern university, future research should also target a more diverse group of participants across age, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity to determine whether these results are generalizable.

Jessica Welch is a Ph.D. candidate at Purdue University. She studies communication technology, focusing specifically on social media interactions.

Throughout history, dating traditions in the United States have evolved through several distinct eras, each with their own set of social norms (Bogle 2008, 12-23). As dating norms have changed, technology has also evolved to meet the public's demands regarding what type of partner and relationship they desire (Baxter and Cashmore 2013; Bleyer 2014; Naziri 2013; Stampler 2014; Wilson 2014). Many scholars claim that we are currently in the midst of "The Hookup Era," which is characterized by an increase in casual sexual encounters (Freitas 2013, 19-23; Murstein 1980; Strouse 1987, 75). Dating norms and technologies have changed drastically in the past few decades, but research has found that partner preferences—or what characteristics individuals look for in a potential romantic partner—have remained the same. In both traditional and online dating, men in heterosexual relationships tend to prioritize physical attractiveness while most women value job stability and income (Ahuvia and Adelman 1992, 455; Goetz 2013, 384-85; Jagger 2001, 39; Langlois et. al. 2000, 393; Lechtenberg 2014; Singh 1993, 293). Many scholars have studied these partner preferences in both face-to-face dating and on websites, but no research has examined whether these preferences remain on mobile dating apps.

Beginning with the release of Grindr in 2009 (Bessette 2014), multiple mobile dating apps have been created to meet the needs of on-the-go millennials, who are often more interested in casual and convenient relationships than in serious dating (Baxter and Cashmore 2013; Dredge 2014; Wilson 2014). This mediated dating differs from traditional dating norms by allowing users to "shop" for romantic partners based on specific characteristics, as well as "sell" themselves by promoting their desirable traits, while simultaneously downplaying or omitting their flaws (Heino, Ellison, and Gibbs 2010, 428-29). Additionally, unlike traditional online dating websites with extensive personal profiles, mobile app dating profiles are simple—generally including only a few pictures and a brief biography. This study examines college students' partner preferences (expressed via mobile dating apps) to determine if today's heterosexual men and women continue to prioritize different traits when searching for a desirable romantic partner.

Literature Review

A Changing Dating Landscape

Bogle (2008) theorizes three distinct eras in dating culture. The first of these, taking place in the early twentieth century, is referred to as "The Calling Era" because it was typical for a man to "call on" a woman of interest and her family. Although love and attraction were important factors during this period, romantic partners were also chosen based on locational convenience and the ability to fulfill traditional gender roles (Bossard 1932, 221-22). Women sought men with stable and well-paying jobs since supporting a family was typically a man's duty (Bogle 2008, 12-13). On the other hand, men sought women who could produce and raise children, which often translated into women with higher degrees of physical attractiveness. Evolutionary theories indicate that physical attractiveness is a strong predictor of reproductive fitness (Singh, 1993, 293-95; Toma and Hancock 2010, 337-38) and social theories indicate that men often prioritize physical attractiveness due to differences in societal expectations between sexes (Eagly and Wood 1999, 409). Specifically, Social Structural Theory suggests that men and women prefer different partner characteristics because they occupy different roles in society (Eagly

and Wood 1999, 412). "The Dating Era," which took place from the 1920s to the 1960s, was characterized by heterosexual couples going out on dates, generally to restaurants or theaters (Bogle 2008, 13-18). Although leaving the house unaccompanied provided couples with more privacy than that experienced during "The Calling Era," premarital sex remained uncommon (Bogle 2008). Following "The Dating Era" came "The Partying Era" which began in the 1960s and featured "hanging out" with large groups of friends rather than engaging in the one-on-one dates of the previous era (Bogle 2008, 20-21; Strouse 1987, 375). Although many dating norms changed throughout these eras, men's preference for attractive partners and women's preference for financially stable partners remained constant.

Many scholars argue that, in recent years, society has entered a fourth dating era, commonly referred to as "The Hookup Era" (Bogle 2008, 21-23; Freitas 2013, 17-34; Glenn and Marquardt 2001; Murstein 1980). Although there is some disagreement on the exact definition of a "hookup," most scholars agree that, to be considered a hookup, the behavior must be casual, commitment-free, and involve some type of sexual activity (Aubrey and Smith 2013, 435; Bogle 2008, 25-29; Freitas 2013, 25). Hookup culture stems from a combination of liberalized views of sex and increased instances of partying and alcohol consumption among young people, particularly on college campuses (Bogle 2008, 72-95). Today, casual sex has become more normalized with a 2011 study reporting that 69.9% of participants claimed to have engaged in a hookup (Aubrey and Smith 2013, 439). This differs from previous dating eras in that individuals tend to spend time one-on-one engaging in hookups rather than going on dates or hanging

out in groups. One explanation for the replacement of serious dating with casual hangouts and hookups is that the average age for a first marriage is at an all-time high of 27 for women and 29 for men, while the average age of first sexual intercourse is only 17 (Abadi 2018; Gaudette 2017). These more liberalized views of sex particularly impact women, who were stigmatized in the past for engaging in casual and pre-marital sex (Bogle, 2008, 21-22; Gagnon & Simon, 1987, 6-9).

Past Gender Differences

Although dating norms have changed drastically, the differences between what men and women prioritize in potential romantic partners has generally remained consistent. For example, although physical attractiveness is an important factor in the mate-selection process for both genders (Gangestad et. al. 2005, 524-25; Riggio et. al. 1991, 423-24; Singh 2004, 43), men still tend to place more value on it than women (Ahuvia and Adelman 1992, 455; Jagger 2001, 39; Langlois et. al. 2000, 393; Singh 1993, 293; Toma and Hancock 2010, 337-38). This trend has been true throughout history and is still observable today in online dating (Toma and Hancock 2010, 344-47). For example, women who use a full-body photograph as their profile picture on a dating website receive up to 203% more messages (DatingSiteReviews.com 2015). On the other hand, women—particularly those looking for long-term relationships—tend to place more importance on the careers of their potential partners (Goetz 2013, 384-85). Women tend to especially value men who have jobs that society considers "high status" (like lawyers and doctors) or jobs that society typically codes as masculine (like soldiers or firefighters) (Lechtenberg 2014). Women also typically care more than men about how much money

a romantic partner makes (Lechtenberg 2014). Although we know that these gender differences have persisted from traditional dating to online dating, mobile dating apps have yet to be studied from this perspective.

Mobile Dating Apps

In recent years, mobile dating apps have become increasingly popular, especially with the fast-paced millennial generation (Baxter and Cashmore 2013; Dredge 2014; Naziri 2013; Stampler 2014; Wilson 2014). Mobile dating apps differ from online dating in that individuals who use online dating use either a desktop or laptop computer to navigate to a dating website, while mobile dating app users download an app to their phone, making this method more portable. These mobile phone apps utilize GPS to connect individuals to other nearby users and feature a profile with a few pictures and basic demographic information. The first proximity-based dating app was called Grindr and was released in 2009 for homosexual men (Bessette 2014). After the creation of Grindr, the popularity of dating apps grew, encouraging some of the most famous dating sites (such as OKCupid) to create accompanying apps. Currently, the most popular dating apps include: Tinder, Bumble, OKCupid, and PlentyOfFish (Laken 2018; Luskinski 2018). When presented with a profile on a dating app, users have the option to indicate interest in that individual in a variety of ways depending on the type of app. For example, Tinder and Bumble feature an interface modeled after a deck of cards where users can "swipe left" (to indicate disinterest) or "swipe right" (to indicate interest) on profiles (Crook 2015).

Additionally, the process for "matching" potential partners differs greatly between mobile app dating and online dating. When creating an account on many subscription-based websites, users are required to complete an extensive survey on their interests, personality characteristics, and partner preferences. This information is then used to "match" users who exhibit complementary characteristics; users are typically shown a set number of possible matches per day. On the other hand, potential matches on mobile dating apps are based primarily on proximity. When creating an account, mobile dating app users are not prompted to complete an extensive survey; instead, they are given the option to indicate what gender, age range, and geographical location they are looking for in a romantic partner. Therefore, potential dating app matches are based only on minimal information. Dating apps also generally do not limit the number of matches a user can view per day, which may lead to quicker and more superficial decision-making (Ellison et. al. 2012, 46). Furthermore, because of the limited information available on dating app profiles, users are forced to decide whether they are interested in someone based on only a few attributes. This may encourage an "over-attribution" process wherein subtle cues carry more value because additional cues are not available (Heino, Ellison, and Gibbs 2010, 434-35; Manning 2014, 310; Walther 1996, 17-21).

In combination with new dating platforms like Tinder or Bumble, societal norms regarding casual sex and women's financial independence have also changed in recent years. A 2012 study found that 29% of women earn a higher income than their husbands (United States Department of Labor 2012) and women currently make up 47% of the United States' work force (DeWolf 2017). Because professional and financial independence has become normalized for women, they may be less focused on finding a partner who can financially support them than they were

in the past. Furthermore, as casual sex has become destigmatized for women, they may be seeking different types of relationships and prioritizing potential partners' physical attractiveness more than in past decades.

In light of these changes in technology and societal norms, I aim to examine if and how partner preferences on mobile dating apps potentially reflect a shift from the partner preferences expressed in traditional and online dating. Specifically, this study investigates what characteristics mobile dating app users find most important in their decision to indicate interest in the profile of a potential romantic partner.

> RQ1: Are gender differences in partner selection still present when interactions occur via mobile dating apps?

Semantic Network Analysis

One approach that sheds light on this topic is semantic network analysis. This method allows researchers to analyze large datasets and determine patterns in participant responses (Schnegg and Bernard 1996, 7-8). Semantic network analysis creates networks of words that are connected based on their co-occurrence, so words that were used in a single participant's response will be connected in the network. I chose this method over more traditional methods like content analysis because it allows for easier identification of patterns in participants' responses. In this study specifically, semantic network analyses were conducted on participant responses to the open-ended questions "What makes you indicate interest in a dating app profile?" and "What makes you indicate disinterest in a dating app profile?" to determine if there are patterns in responses. Semantic network analysis indicates which words co-occur most frequently and if there are clusters of

words that tend to occur together. Results of this analysis demonstrate whether there are typical reasons that participants indicate interest or disinterest on individuals' mobile dating app profiles. Additionally, semantic network analysis shows whether participants tend to mention certain reasons for indicating interest or disinterest together. For example, participants who mention evidence of alcohol consumption as a reason for indicating disinterest on a profile typically also mention drug use as a deal-breaker. I also use semantic network analysis visualization tools to create visual networks of participant responses, which makes it easier to determine the relationship between individuals' reasons for indicating interest and disinterest.

Methods

Data Collection

Data was collected in the form of responses to two open-ended questions which were collected via an online Qualtrics survey as part of a larger study on mobile dating app use. Respondents were found using a study participant recruitment system at a large Midwestern university. In order to participate in the study, individuals had to be at least 18 years old, currently attend college, and have had a profile on a mobile dating app at some point. Upon completion of the survey, participants were awarded course credit.

College students were chosen as participants in this study because individuals aged 18–24 make up the greatest portion of mobile dating app users (Labelle 2018). It is worth noting that college students and non-college students in that age range may use mobile dating apps differently.

Participant Demographics

The survey was completed by 982 participants. Of those 982, 38.4% identified as male, 61.3% as female, and 0.3% as other. Because only three participants identified their gender as other, their responses were removed from further analysis. Therefore, non-binary mobile dating app users are not represented in this sample. One limitation of this study is the homogeneity of the sample. Because participants included only cisgender college students from one Midwestern university, the results may not be generalizable to other populations. The sample was primarily Caucasian with 70.9% of participants identifying as White, 17.9% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.9% as Hispanic or Latino, 3.9% as Black or African American, and 2.4% as other. According to the Almanac of Higher Education, the national averages for college students in 4-year, public institutions are: 53.8% Caucasian, 6.9% Asian or Pacific Islander, 15.3% Hispanic, and 10.5% Black (Almanac 2018). Therefore, Caucasian and Asian individuals were overrepresented in this sample and individuals identifying as Hispanic and Black were underrepresented. The majority of participants indicated an age range of 18–24 (99.1%), with seven participants in the 25–30 range and two participants in the 31–36 categories. Participants identified primarily as heterosexual (94.3%), with 4.1% identifying as bisexual and 1.6% identifying as homosexual. A 2016 study found that 75.9% of women and 88.6% of men aged 18–24 identify as straight, so this sample also underrepresents individuals who self-identify as LGBTQ (Copen 2016, 3).

Formatting Data

The dataset includes 982 responses to the questions "What makes you indicate interest in a dating app profile?" and "What makes you indicate disinterest in a dating app profile?" Data for each question was divided by identified sex, creating four files: "women indicate disinterest," "women indicate interest," "men indicate disinterest," and "men indicate interest." This was done so that responses from men and women could be analyzed separately to find differences in the responses.

Data Analysis

Each of the four files were uploaded to the network analysis tool AutoMap to undergo preprocessing, including spelling corrections and the deletion of noise words like "the," "a," and "an." Co-reference lists and concept lists were generated and uploaded to a visualization tool called NodeXL. Concept lists included words that occurred most frequently (more than 10 times) and co-reference lists included words that were mentioned together by participants two or more times. In the visualization the frequency with which pairs of words co-occurred was represented by edge width and how often individual words were mentioned is illustrated by node size. The Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale algorithm (Harel and Koren 2002, 187-90) was used to lay out the graphs and nodes were grouped by cluster using the Clauset-Newman-Moore (2004, 1-4) algorithm (see Figures 1-4). Nodes represent the words participants used in their responses to the two questions. Edges indicate that a pair of words was mentioned by a single participant. Loops in the graph indicate that a word was mentioned in the same response twice. Finally, words that were grouped in the same cluster often occurred together, indicating that participants who mentioned one of those words typically mentioned the others.

A variety of node-level metrics were calculated to answer the research question. The node-level metrics included: degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and Eigenvector centrality. See Table 1 for an explanation of these metrics and their implications in this context.

TABLE 1. *Key of Terms*

Term	Explanation	Significance in this Study	Example from "Women Indicate Disinterest" Dataset
Degree Centrality	How central a word is based on how many other words it is connected to	A word that tends to be mentioned with many other words	"Picture" has high degree centrality because participants mentioned many other words with it, typically descriptions of the picture like "mirror picture" or "blurry picture"
Betweenness Centrality	How many words must be used in conjunction with a certain word for another word to be used	A word that acts as a bridge between two clusters or two words	"Picture" also has high betweenness because it links many words together. A participant typically mentioned the words "profile," "shirtless," and "weird" together *only* if they also mentioned the word "picture."
Eigenvector Centrality	The extent to which a word is connected with other well-connected words.	A word that is connected to many words that have high degree centrality	"Picture" has high Eigenvector centrality because it is mentioned with words that are also mentioned with multiple words. "Picture" is mentioned with "mirror" which is also mentioned with "pic" and "selfie."

In general, a word with high degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and Eigenvector centrality is a word that is important to the network, indicating that it is a significant reason participants gave for indicating interest or disinterest on a mobile dating app profile.

Results

Women Indicate Disinterest

Degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and Eigenvector centrality metrics were calculated for the "women indicate disinterest" dataset. "Picture" had the highest metrics for each with a degree centrality of 13, a betweenness centrality of 100, and an Eigenvector centrality of 0.24. "Picture" was also the most frequently-occurring word, with 214 mentions by participants. (See Figure 5 for the "picture" ego network).

Men Indicate Disinterest

The most important word in the "men indicate disinterest" dataset was more difficult to determine with "grammar," "picture," and "tattoo" all having the same metrics (degree centrality=2; betweenness centrality=1; eigenvector centrality=0.11). Because this network was less dense (less connected) than the others, frequency of word occurrence was also considered. The individual word that appeared most frequently was "picture," with 75 mentions. "Not physically" and "attractive" were the pair that occurred the most, with 124 mentions. Therefore, it was concluded that "picture" and "not physically attractive" were the most important aspects of this network. See Figures 6 and 7 for their ego networks.

The most common reasons for indicating disinterest on dating app profiles are the same for men and women, but some of the more minor reasons differ. "Picture" was one of the primary reasons that both genders claim to indicate disinterest on a profile, with men mentioning profile pictures in general and women discussing specific negative aspects of pictures, like low-quality and shirtless pictures. Both genders also agree on some of the more minor reasons for indicating disinterest, such as age, bad spelling and grammar, and smoking or drug use. Women particularly mention being uninterested in individuals involved in Greek life or who seem like "party animals" (See Figures 1 and 2).

Low physical attractiveness seems to be more of a deal-breaker for men, with "not physically attractive" being mentioned many times, along with "hair color" and "duck face." Women also cite low physical attractiveness as a reason for indicating disinterest, but to a lesser degree, with women mentioning "not physically attractive" approximately one tenth as many times as men. Political affiliation seems to play a role in both

genders' decision to indicate disinterest, with men saying that they express disinterest in "liberal" individuals while women claim to express disinterest in profiles that include confederate flags.

Women Indicate Interest

The word "attractive" played a significant role in this network with the highest score in each metric. (degree centrality=16; betweenness centrality=244.58; Eigenvector centrality=0.16). "Attractive" also occurred most frequently in these responses, being mentioned by participants 174 times. (See Figure 8 for the "attractive" ego network).

Men Indicate Interest

"Attractive" also had the highest scores in each of the three metrics run for the "men indicate interest" network (degree centrality=8; betweenness centrality=19; Eigenvector centrality=0.30). "Attractive" was the most frequently mentioned word in this dataset, with 122 mentions. (See Figure 9 for the "attractive" ego network).

Both genders agree on their primary reasons for expressing interest in dating profiles but differ in some of the more minor reasons. For both men and women, physical attractiveness was the main reason for indicating interest. While both genders mentioned the importance of attractiveness, men emphasized their desire for physically fit partners, while women expressed their preference for tall individuals. Both genders also value partners who are funny and share their interests and hobbies (See Figures 3 and 4).

One difference between genders is that men mentioned expressing interest in

individuals who seemed to have a "good personality" while women expressed interest in intelligent partners. Women also claimed to indicate interest in individuals expressing a desire for a serious relationship. Finally, women mentioned individuals' major or occupation as a reason to indicate interest, while men did not.

Discussion

This study makes several contributions to the topics of modern dating preferences and technology use. Most significantly, it offers a way to explicate a new understanding of the use of mobile dating apps through users' tendencies to indicate interest or disinterest in certain attributes.

Deal-makers

Results indicate that both men and women focus primarily on physical attractiveness when deciding whether they are interested in an individual's dating profile. While both genders value attractiveness, women tend to prefer tall partners while men seem partial to individuals who are physically fit (See Figures 3 and 4). This emphasis on physical attractiveness for both genders may be explained by the nature of mobile dating apps. Because the profiles contain so little information about each user, pictures are the major cue individuals use to determine whether they are interested in someone. Individuals' motivation for using a dating app likely also plays a role. For example, men and women primarily interested in casual sexual experiences may prioritize physical attractiveness above all other attributes.

On the other hand, women mentioned that an individual's college major and intelligence level plays a role in their decision to indicate interest, while men did not mention either of these factors. Past research found

that women tend to value a potential partner's current job stability and income. Although they are still in college, female participants did mention "occupation" as a factor for expressing interest almost seven times as often as men, indicating that the college women in this sample place more importance on their partner's future income and profession than their male counterparts do.

There are a few possible explanations for this result. One possibility is that, because of cultural gender norms, men tend to include information related to their current job or major in their profile while women do not. If this is the case, men do not mention women's jobs or majors as a factor in their romantic decision-making simply because this information is less likely to be available. Another explanation could be related to women's tendency to express interest in men who appear to offer the potential for a longer-term relationship. Previous research (Goetz 2013, 384-85) found that women interested in long-term relationships place greater value on potential partners' job stability and ability to acquire resources. Therefore, if women sometimes use dating apps to find serious relationships but men do not, that might explain why women tend to place a higher value on their partners' intended or current occupation.

Deal-Breakers

When asked what qualities make them lose interest in a dating app profile, men and women had many similar responses. Both genders said that any smoking or drug use was a deal breaker, as is grammar or spelling errors (See Figures 1 and 2). This emphasis on grammar and spelling may be a symptom of the sample. Because participants all attend an elite university, they may be more

concerned with these elements than an average mobile dating app user.

Several elements of the dating profile itself can also be deal-breakers. First, both men and women lose interest in profiles with "group pictures" (pictures of multiple people). Upon closer inspection of the original text, it became clear that many individuals dislike group pictures because they make it difficult to determine to whom the profile belongs. Women appear to be more particular than men about which pictures are included in dating profiles, mentioning mirror pictures (pictures taken in a mirror's reflection) and low-quality pictures as additional reasons to lose interest.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite this study's contributions to the understanding of dating app preferences, it still presents several limitations that future research could address. The first limitation relates to the study participants. Although I conducted this study at a large and moderately diverse school, the sample included only cisgender college students at a single Midwestern university. It is possible that the gender differences in partner preference from previous eras may be more present among older mobile dating app users, as they are more likely to be looking for long-term partners. Furthermore, the majority of participants identified as Caucasian and heterosexual, leaving individuals of different ethnicities and sexualities underrepresented. Individuals of varying races and sexual orientations may use other dating apps and behave differently on those apps. Future research should examine a more diverse group of individuals to determine if and how they differ.

Another limitation is that it is impossible to determine if both genders value

attractiveness equally because of the nature of dating apps and their simplistic profiles, and/or because changes are occurring in the dating landscape itself, and/or because individuals use these apps to find sexual partners rather than romantic partners. The increasing acceptance of casual sex and the prevalence of hookups on college campuses may encourage mobile dating app users to seek sexual relationships rather than long-term relationships. If that is the case, it makes sense for physical attractiveness to be a top priority for both men and women users because they do not plan to be with that partner for the long-term. Additional research is needed to determine whether the mobile dating app platform itself encourages users to prioritize physical attractiveness or if a shift in men and women's current values have led to the emphasis on evaluating physical attractiveness regardless of the dating method involved.

Furthermore, although mobile dating apps were designed to help individuals find romantic partners, people also use them in other ways. A 2017 study on individuals' motivations for using Tinder found that Tinder users do not exclusively use the app to find relational or sexual partners (Timmermans and De Caluwe 2017, 341). Another study developed a scale measuring why individuals use mobile dating apps and found that some mobile dating app users are looking for validation or entertainment in addition to seeking sexual and romantic partners (Welch and Morgan 2018, 112). Because individuals use dating apps for a variety of reasons, it may be that an individual's motivation for using the app affects what attributes they prioritize. For example, a user looking for a serious relationship may be interested in different profiles than an individual using the app for casual sex. Future research should

investigate how users' motivations impact their preferences.

Conclusion

Although past research indicates that men and women differ significantly in their preference of romantic partners' characteristics, the results of the current study indicate that—on mobile dating apps—these preferences are more similar than they are different. While women seem to value intelligence and college major more than men, both genders strongly consider physical attractiveness in their decision to express interest or disinterest in a potential romantic partner. This finding may be explained by the cultural shift to The Hookup Era in which a partner's physical attractiveness is most important because of the nature of the relationship. The age at which people get married is also increasing, so college students likely do not feel pressure to find "the one" and may use dating apps to explore other types of relationships (in contrast to older generations that got married much younger). On the other hand, the results may be purely because of the design of mobile dating apps, which tend to highlight physical attractiveness, above all other attributes. Past research (Timmermans and De Caluwe 2017, 341; Welch and Morgan 2018, 112) has found that individuals vary in their motivations for using mobile dating apps, so that may play a role in their preferences as well. Future research should aim to determine whether partner preferences across all forms of dating are changing, or if new technologies like mobile apps are changing our partner preferences only when we use them.

This research contributes to the literature by examining heterosexual men and women's partner preferences in the midst of changing dating social norms while using a relatively

new dating technology. To improve the generalizability of results, future studies should include a sample that is more diverse in terms of participants' age, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Nonetheless, results of this study pave the way for future researchers to examine how cultural norms, mobile dating app interfaces, and user motivations impact individuals' partner preferences.

Figure 1. Women Indicate Disinterest Semantic Network

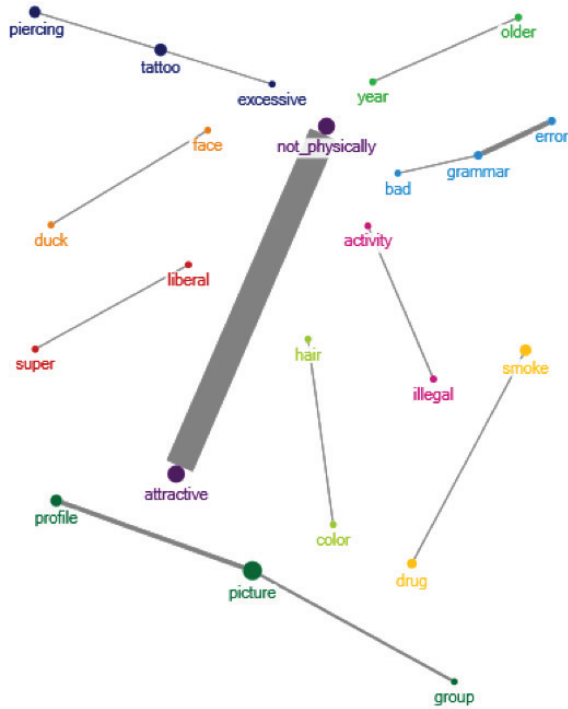Figure 2. Women Indicate Interest Semantic Network

Figure 3. Men Indicate Disinterest Semantic Network

Figure 4. Men Indicate Interest Semantic Network

Figure 5. Ego Network for "Picture" from the Women Indicate Disinterest Network.
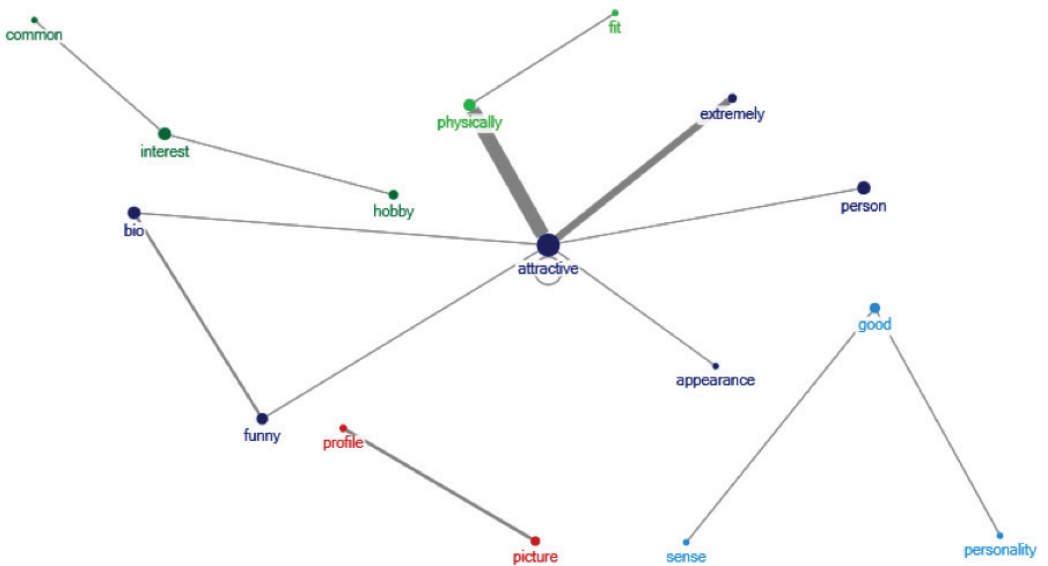

Figure 6. Ego Network for "Picture" from the Men Indicate Disinterest Network.

Figure 7. Ego Network for "Not Physically Attractive" from the Men Indicate Disinterest Network.
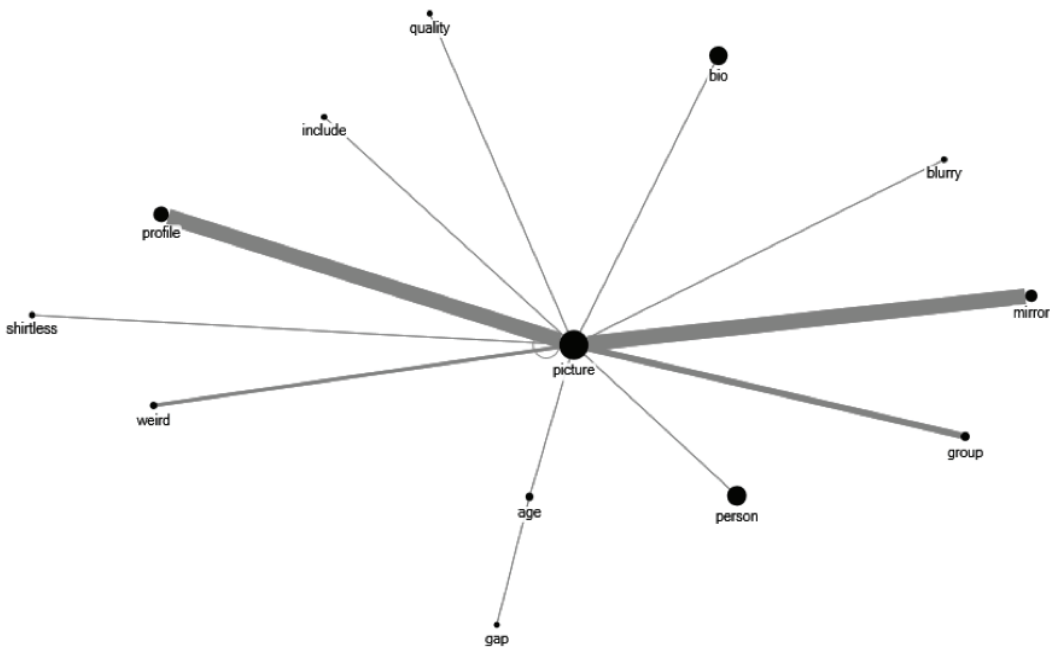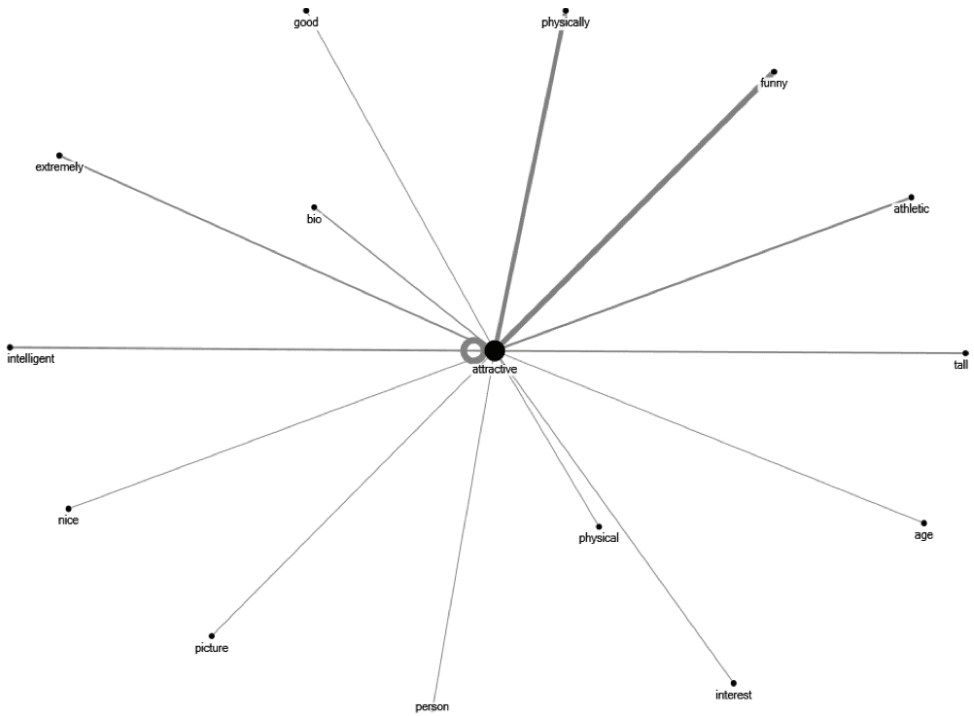
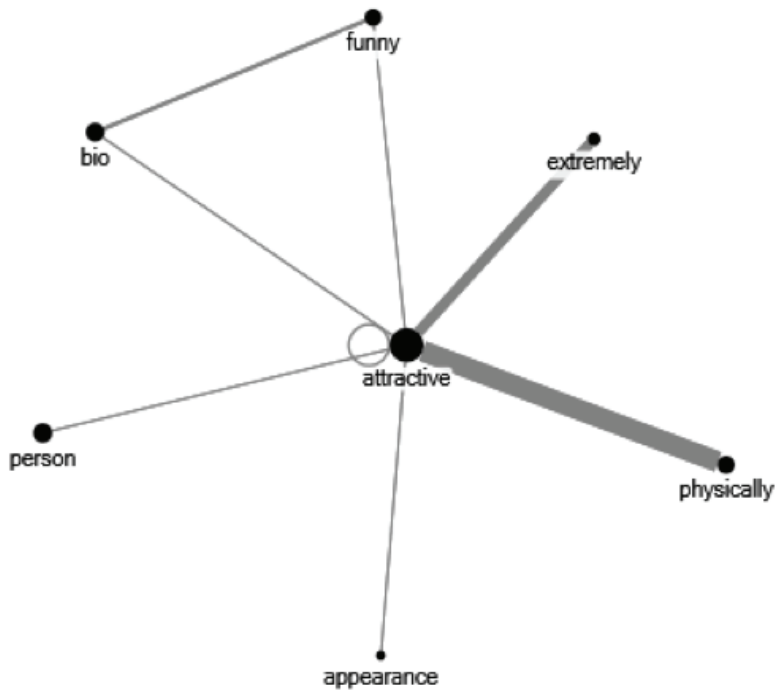Figure 8. Ego Network for "Attractive" from the Women Indicate Interest Network.

Figure 9. Ego Network for "Attractive" from the Men Indicate Interest Network.

Bibliography

Abadi, Mark. 2018. "7 Things the Average American has Accomplished by Age 35." *Business Insider*, June 7, 2018. https://www.businessinsider.com/average-age-married-home-job-35-2018-6.

Ahuvia, Aaron C., and Mara B. Adelman. 1992. "Formal Intermediaries in the Marriage Market: A Typology and Review." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54(2): 452-63.

Aubrey, Jennifer Stevens, and Siobhan E. Smith. 2013. "Development and Validation of the Endorsement of the Hookup Culture Index." *Journal of Sex Research* 50(5): 435-48.

Baxter, Holly, and Pete Cashmore. 2013. "Tinder: The Shallowest Dating App Ever?" *The Guardian*, November 23, 2013. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/nov/23/tinder-shallowest-dating-app-ever.

Bessette, Chanelle. 2014. "10 Questions: Joel Simkhai, Founder and CEO, Grindr." *Fortune*, August 12, 2014. http://fortune.com/2014/08/12/10-questions-joel-simkhai-founder-and-ceo-grindr/.

Bleyer, Jennifer. 2014. "Dating: Love the One You're Near." *Psychology Today*, July 1, 2014. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/201407/dating-love-the-one-youre-near.

Bogle, Kathleen A. 2008. *Hooking Up: Sex, Dating, and Relationships on Campus*. New York, New York: New York University Press.

Bossard, James H.S. 1932. "Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Marriage Selection." *American Journal of Sociology* 38 (2): 219-24.

Clauset, Aaron, and Mark E.J. Newman, and Cristopher Moore. 2004. "Finding Community Structure in Very Large Networks." *Physical Review* 70 (6): 1-6.

Copen, Casey. 2016. "Health National Statistics Report." *Health Statistics,* 88:1–14, https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr088.pdf.

Crook, Jordan. 2015. "Hate It or Love It, Tinder's Right Swipe Limit is Working." *TechCrunch.com* (blog). March 2, 2015 https://techcrunch.com/2015/03/12/hate-it-or-love-it-tinders-right-swipe-limit-is-working/#.mxw5lv:jC0w.

DeWolf, Mark. 2107. "12 Stats about Working Women." U.S. Department of Labor (website). https://blog.dol.gov/2017/03/01/12-stats-about-working-women.

Dredge, Stuart. 2014. "Tinder: The 'Painfully Honest' Dating App with Wider Social Ambitions." *The Guardian*, February 23, 2014. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/feb/24/tinder-dating-app-social-networks.

Eagly, Alice H., and Wendy Wood. 1999. "The Origins of Sex Differences in Human Behavior: Evolved Dispositions versus Social Roles." *American Psychologist* 54 (6): 408-23.

Ellison, Nicole B., Jeffrey T. Hancock, and Catalina L. Toma. 2012. "Profile as Promise: A Framework for Conceptualizing Veracity in Online Dating Self-Presentations." *New Media & Society* 14(1): 45-62.

Freitas, Donna. 2013. *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled and Confused about Intimacy*. New York, New York: Basic Books.

Gagnon, John H. and William Simon. 1987. "The Sexual Scripting of Oral Genital Contacts." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 16 (1): 1-25.

Gangestad, Steven W., and Glenn J. Scheyd. 2005. "The Evolution of Human Physical Attractiveness." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (1): 523-48.

Gaudette, Emily. 2017. "When and How do Most Americans Lose their Virginity?" *Inverse*. https://www.inverse.com/article/32446-sex-first-time-virginity-age.

Goetz, Cari D. 2013. "What Do Women's Advertised Mate Preferences Reveal? An Analysis of Video Dating Profiles." *Evolutionary Psychology* 11 (2): 383-91.

Harel, David, and Yehuda Koren. 2000. "A Fast Multi-Scale Method for Drawing Large Graphs." In *International Symposium on Graph Drawing*, 183-196. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

Heino, Rebecca D., Nicole B. Ellison, and Jennifer L. Gibbs. 2010. "Relationshopping: Investigating the Market Metaphor in Online Dating." *Journal of Social and Personal relationships* 27 (4): 427-47.

Jagger, Elizabeth. 2001. "Marketing Molly and Melville: Dating in a Postmodern, Consumer Society." *Sociology* 35 (1): 39-57.

Labelle, Brandon. 2018. "Another Tech Gender Gap: A Dating App Breakdown." *Apptopia* (blog), February 9, 2018. http://blog.apptopia.com/dating-apps-male-dominated.

"Labor Force Participation." 2012. United States Department of Labor (website). https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/mother_families.htm.

Laken, Howard. 2018. "6 Most Popular Dating Apps for Millennials in 2018." *Bustle.com* (blog) June 6, 2018. https://www.bustle.com/p/6-most-popular-dating-apps-for-millennials-in-2018-9301722.

Langlois, Judith H., Lisa Kalakanis, Adam J. Rubenstein, Andrea Larson, Monica Hallam, and Monica Smoot. 2000. "Maxims or Myths of Beauty? A Meta-Analytic and Theoretical Review." *Psychological Bulletin* 126 (3): 390-423.

Lechtenberg, Suzie. 2014. "What You Don't Know About Online Dating." *Freakonomics* (podcast) February 6, 2014. http://freakonomics.com/podcast/what-you-dont-know-about-online-dating-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/.

Lusinski, Natalia. 2018. "The Most Popular Dating Apps in 2018 Among Singles in America." *Bustle.com* (blog) February 2, 2018. https://www.bustle.com/p/the-most-popular-dating-apps-in-2018-among-singles-in-america-8105619.

Manning, Jimmie. 2014. "Construction of Values in Online and Offline Dating Discourses: Comparing Presentational and Articulated Rhetoric of Relationship Seeking." *Journal of Computer–Mediated Communication* 19 (3): 309-324.

Naziri, Jessica. 2013. "Start-up Sunday: Tinder Aims to Make Dating Easier." *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 2013. http://articles.latimes.com/2013/mar/10/business/la-fi-tn-tinder-dating-app-startup-20130306.

Riggio, Ronald E., Keith F. Widaman, Joan S. Tucker, and Charles Salinas. 1991. "Beauty is More than Skin Deep: Components of Attractiveness." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 12 (4): 423-439.

Schnegg, Michael, and H. Russell Bernard. 1996. "Words as actors: A Method for Doing Semantic Network Analysis." *CAM Journal* 8(2): 7-10.

Singh, Devendra. 1993. "Adaptive Significance of Female Physical Attractiveness: Role of Waist-to-Hip Ratio." J*ournal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65(2): 293-307.

Singh, Devendra. 2004. "Mating Strategies of Young Women: Role of Physical Attractiveness." *Journal of Sex Research* 41 (1): 43-54.

Stampler, Laura. 2014. "Inside Tinder: Meet the Guys Who Turned Dating Into an Addiction." *Time* (magazine) February 6, 2014. http://time.com/4837/tinder-meet-the-guys-who-turned-dating-into-an-addiction/.

Strouse, Jeremiah S. 1987. "College Bars as Social Settings for Heterosexual Contacts." *The Journal of Sex Research* 23(3): 374-82.

"Students by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity, by Sector, Fall 2010 and Fall 2016." 2018. *Almanac*. https://www-chronicle-com.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/article/Students-by-Gender-Race-and/244003?cid=cp216.

Timmermans, Elisabeth, and Elien De Caluwé. 2017. "Development and Validation of the Tinder Motives Scale (TMS)." *Computers in Human Behavior* 70: 341-50.

Toma, Catalina L., and Jeffrey T. Hancock. 2010. "Looks and Lies: The Role of Physical Attractiveness in Online Dating Self-Presentation and Deception." *Communication Research* 37 (3): 335-51.

Walther, Joseph B. 1996. "Computer-Mediated Communication: Impersonal, Interpersonal, and Hyperpersonal Interaction." *Communication Research* 23 (1): 3-43.

Welch, Jessica R., and Melanie Morgan. 2018. "Development and Validation of the Mobile Dating App Gratification Scale: Effects of Sought Gratifications on User Behavior and Outcomes." *Communication, Society, and Media* 1 (2): 108-24.

Wilson, Rebecca. 2014. "Sexperts: Tinder App Women Dating Power." *The Sandspur,* March 27, 2014. http://www.thesandspur.org/sexperts-tinder-app-affords-women-dating-power/.

Queering the Family Sitcom

Tyler M. Michaud

Almost two decades into the 21st century, television depictions of the chosen family are challenging the more traditional concept of the nuclear family. This essay explores how the pilot episodes of both *Grace and Frankie* and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* introduce female friendships that eventually blossom into inspirational portrayals of chosen family. In this essay, I will consider the methods that both shows use to disillusion viewers of the notion that heteronormative romantic entanglements are superior to other types of relationships. In traditional television shows, women see other women as competition because they have been trained to correlate their self-worth with how desirable men find them. In *Grace and Frankie* and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, women are portrayed as benefiting from genuine female friendship and chosen family rather than compulsory heterosexuality and its signifiers.

Tyler M. Michaud is a Master's candidate in English at Georgetown University. His academic interests intersect with representations of masculinity, same-sex attraction, and the body in literature since the Stonewall riots. Website: www.michaudtyler.com

"...Love for the woman is a total abdication for the benefit of a master."
(de Beauvoir 2011, 683)

"Perhaps the strength of chosen family or community caregiving is the empathy that flows from the fellowship of shared experiences, values, and goals."
(Knauer 2016, 163)

Today, American television continues to explore and promulgate ideologies of the family, including both nuclear families and chosen families. Television shows such as *Grace and Frankie* (Netflix 2015-) and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* (CW 2015-) have flourished despite challenging the importance of the nuclear family, a widely socialized structure defined by a pair of parents and their socially recognized children (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2015). Writer Brett Hertel observes that "since the dawn of the 30-minute sitcom, the prototypical cast has revolved around a family lifestyle… a 'normal' life," as is apparent in *Everybody Loves Raymond* (CBS 1996-2005) or *The Brady Bunch* (ABC 1969-1974) (Hertel 2010, 2). In recent years, television narratives have steadily shifted their focus from family-oriented narratives to friend-based narratives often following close-knit groups of friends as they supplement or substitute spousal, parental, and/or sibling bonds with the bonds of close friendship.

The appointment of friends as proxy-family is widely known as chosen family, but more formally as "fictive kin"—defined by sociologists as persons unrelated by marriage or blood but still emotionally close or significant (Ciabattari 2016). Lawyer and civil rights advocate Nancy Knauer writes that an important distinction between friends and friends-as-chosen-family is that in regular friendships "caregiving may not be typical," but for friends-as-chosen-family,

caregiving is what "binds" them together (Knauer 2016, 161-2). Michel Foucault, French theorist and literary critic, notes that heterosexuality "reproduc[es] labor power and the form of the family" (1990, 47). By creating familial networks between friends, these friendships become queer spaces where people in non-normative relationships live separately from heteronormative traditions such as marriage and reproduction (Halberstam 2005, 3). Thus, positive fictional representations of nontraditional families effectively introduce viewers to—and help reify the value of—disruptive and non-conforming institutions. This essay explores the pilots of *Grace and Frankie* and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*—two currently airing television shows that introduce a central female friendship in the first episode that eventually blossoms into a chosen family. Specifically, I consider the methods these shows use to both challenge the emotional productivity of heteronormative romantic entanglements and reinforce the benefits of genuine female friendship and chosen family.

Crazy Ex-Girlfriend is a musical comedy on the CW that follows Rebecca Bunch (Rachel Bloom), a successful lawyer. Despite her professional success, Rebecca is unhappy and cannot hold down a romantic or platonic relationship. After receiving an impressive promotion at work she experiences a panic attack, during which she encounters Josh (Vincent Rodriguez III), her first boyfriend and sexual partner. Rebecca thinks that the last time she was happy was at summer camp with Josh when they were both adolescents. Motivated by Josh's enthusiasm about moving back to his hometown of West Covina, CA, Rebecca quits her job and moves to West Covina to rekindle their relationship and get a fresh start. Once there, Rebecca meets Paula (Donna Lynne Champlin), a middle-aged

paralegal who quickly becomes her first friend.

The Netflix show *Grace and Frankie* is a dramatic comedy that follows Grace (Jane Fonda) and Frankie (Lily Tomlin) as they discover that their husbands, Robert (Martin Sheen) and Sol (Sam Waterston), have been having an affair for the last two decades and are divorcing them so that they can marry each other. The central characters are Grace, an uptight, retired entrepreneur who uses alcohol to avoid addressing her problems, and Frankie, a sex-positive socialist with a proclivity for artistic expression and profanity. The show explores the fallout of these forty-year marriages and, in particular, how the show's namesake characters rely on each other to cope with their domestic lives being suddenly upended.

Heteronormativity is Flawed

Grace and Frankie and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* both follow heterosexual characters, but neither pilot shines a flattering light on heteronormative romance; in doing so, both shows effectively introduce an argument for queer configurations of family. Adrienne Rich, feminist and literary critic, defines compulsory heterosexuality as a system in which men and women are convinced they are innately and unavoidably attracted to the opposite sex (Rich 1996). Flashing back ten years prior to Rebecca at summer camp, *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* shows us a defining moment in her life. Josh, her first boyfriend, breaks up with her for being "weird" and "dramatic," but only after "awaken[ing] her sexual being." To borrow language from *The Second Sex* by the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, the "extreme importance" of Rebecca's first sexual encounter proves to have had lasting "repercussions" on her life, because the passageway into womanhood is "definitive and irreversible" (2011, 391). Her

traumatic transition into womanhood—in addition to her conflicted relationships with her divorced mother and largely absent father—affects her long-term mental health. We learn later in the series that a large part of Rebecca's unhappiness comes from the mishandling of her mental illness and ascribing too much value to her time at camp with Josh. Thus, a decade after their relationship, she is still unhappy and unfulfilled when she encounters Josh.

In the pilot, we perceive that Rebecca's unhappiness stems from the fact that her professional success and wealth do not make her feel the way she thought they would. No amount of material gain can make her feel as happy as she felt back at summer camp. Before receiving a job promotion, Rebecca is largely able to live according to Halberstam's definition of time; she is able to "ignore, repress, or erase the demands made on [her]... by an unjust system" by privileging "capital accumulation" (Halberstam 2005, 7). However, the promotion triggers a panic attack during which she sees Josh standing beneath a sign that reads, "When was the last time you were happy?" with an arrow pointing down at him. Within what appears to be days, Rebecca quits her job and moves across the country to find Josh, who symbolizes the happiness she seeks and makes her feel like "glitter [is] exploding" inside of her. In order to keep people from becoming suspicious of her sudden move, Rebeca accepts a job at a small, local law firm in West Covina.

As the title of the show suggests, it is easy to read Rebecca's actions as those of a stereotypical "crazy ex-girlfriend," but the show is quick to challenge this understanding. Rebecca is not chasing Josh per se; she is chasing the fantasy that Josh represents. Specifically, the happiness she felt and wants to feel again. Josh

represents a fantasy of love, or in the words of queer theorist Lee Edelman, a "fantasy of totalization" (2004, 73). And a fantasy should never be interpreted as inherently connected to the object it is projected upon "because fantasies are created and cherished as fantasies" (de Beauvoir 2011, 412). The theory that Rebecca is chasing a fantasy rather than reality is reinforced throughout the pilot because not only are happy heteronormative relationships completely missing from the episode, but the character of Josh remains undeveloped and superficial. The real Josh, the Josh outside of Rebecca's imagination, is still solely defined by Rebecca's early suffering and the fact that he ignored her texts once she arrived in West Covina. As such, the pilot of *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* refuses to embrace the traditional and picturesque version of heterosexuality often presented in popular culture.

Appropriately titled "The End," the pilot of *Grace and Frankie* also begins by deconstructing the fantasy of compulsory heterosexuality. In just twenty seconds, the theme song reduces the impressive forty-year heterosexual relationships in question to their seemingly ordinary, compulsory milestones (i.e., marriage and procreation). Following this, we see the pain that Sol and Robert's happiness causes their wives. In addition, we see caricatures of the characters upon a wedding cake, and it concludes with the cake crumbling beneath Grace and Frankie's feet—which seemingly echoes Simone de Beauvoir's remark that women are nothing without their families (2011, 584). Effectively, the opening sequence positions compulsory heterosexuality as both ordinary and painful, especially for women.

After learning about the affair, both couples return home and the conversations that ensue expose the deeply discontented nature of both relationships. Frankie appears blindsided by Sol's revelation; she thought they were happy since their marriage sustained an intimate friendliness. However, when Sol apologizes, he asks, "How do I tell the woman I've loved for forty years that I can't be with her if I want to be happy?" In response Frankie snaps, "You don't. Stay miserable." In this moment, Frankie's world is shattered because she feels like the last forty years have been a lie; she feels like she has sacrificed her own ambitions and happiness in exchange for nothing. Grace and Robert's conversation, likewise, appears to be a jab at compulsory heterosexuality as an "imposed order" as defined by feminist scholars Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott (2010, 76).

> Robert: ...I'm sorry. I just never thought you'd be this upset.
>
> Grace: What did you think I'd be?
>
> Robert: I honestly thought you'd be relieved.
>
> [...]
>
> Robert: Let's be honest, were you ever really happy with me?"
>
> Grace: ...I was happy enough. So we didn't have the romance of the century, but I thought we were normal. I thought we were like everybody else. I thought this was life.
>
> Robert: And I thought there was more. (Kauffman and Morris 2015)

This conversation captures the disconnect with which both Grace and Robert survived their relationship. Ostensibly, had the structures of heteronormativity not been forced upon Robert and Sol, neither they nor their ex-wives would be in this unfortunate situation. However, now that Robert and Sol are out and together, Grace and Frankie

no longer have to live their lives according to their husbands; their lives are now open to the potential of a life unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing (Halberstam 2005, 2). Without the obligations of wifedom, Grace and Frankie can pursue their own endeavors.

While both *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* and *Grace and Frankie* begin with a strong focus on their failed heteronormative relationships, these shows are not about women seeking romantic love. Instead, the focus is primarily on female friendship. When romantic companions are introduced in either show, these instances are fleeting, and the main focus always returns to the unconventional female relationships.

The Concept of Desirability and Female Rivalries

According to the sociological study, "When Beauty Brings Out the Beast: Female Comparisons and the Feminine Rivalry," female friendships are not easily established. Women are taught to see other women as competitors, and female rivalries are fueled by the impulse to prove one's superiority and desirability (Anthony et al. 2016, 312). In the book, "We Should All Be Feminists," adapted from a talk of the same name, writer and activist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie states:

> We spend too much time teaching girls to worry about what boys think of them… All over the world, there are so many magazine articles and books telling women what to do, how to be and not to be, in order to attract or please men… Because I am female, I'm expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important… We raise girls to see each other as competitor—not for jobs or accomplishments, which in my opinion can

> be a good thing—but for the attention of men. (2014)

Adichie is not saying that women cannot get along; she is underscoring that women as young girls are conditioned to see each other as competitors. De Beauvoir echoes this claim when she remarks that women can affirm one another's common universe, yet "it is nonetheless rare for feminine complicity to reach true friendship" (2011, 584-7).

Regardless of whether women are longtime acquaintances (as in *Grace and Frankie*) or strangers (as in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*), they must first overcome the impulse to compare themselves to one another if friendship is to be possible. Female rivalry is so ingrained in society that "even when women attempt to distance [themselves] from these pressures," they still use its rhetoric (Anthony et al. 2016, 319). De Beauvoir insists that women understand one another on a level that even their own husbands cannot (2011, 584). Despite this, she corroborates that female rivalry, as we know it, is mainly fueled by the concept of desirability because "[women] cannot bear to perceive the slightest halo around someone else's head" (de Beauvoir 2011, 588). The halo functions dialectically. For the woman without the halo, it symbolizes all that the wearer is as well as what she is not. In other words, the halo is a way of assessing one's perceived value. In turn, the most obvious hindrance to female friendship involves insecurity; one's perception of how well she and the women around her are performing traditional femininity (Anthony et al. 2016, 321). Problematically, this results in women often feeling that their authority—wherever it happens to reside—is challenged regardless of the other party's intentions, a phenomenon also known as Queen Bee Syndrome (Anthony et al. 2016, 312).

In the *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* pilot, the prevalence of Queen Bee Syndrome fuels almost every interaction between Rebecca and Paula, the paralegal at Rebecca's new job in West Covina. Paula, who is underappreciated at the law firm despite her hard work, is suspicious of Rebecca for being overqualified for her new position. Paula does not understand why a successful New York lawyer and Ivy League graduate would accept a position at this undistinguished firm. Further exacerbating these circumstances, Rebecca initially mistakes Paula for her assistant, which Paula interprets as an insult undermining her hard work and seniority. Paula remarks, "Two years of training, six months of night school, and fifteen years of experience, but… never mind." Later in the pilot, Paula outright admits her reason for disliking Rebecca: "You think you're so much better than me." However, there is no evidence that this is the case. As we learn throughout the series, Rebecca projects an aura of confidence to hide her deep insecurities about herself.

Although the show *Grace and Frankie* adopts the "odd couple" trope to establish the animosity between the namesake characters early on, what could have been a cheap and childish premise for a rivalry turns out to be much more complicated. In the opening scene, Grace and Frankie wait for their husbands to arrive at a restaurant for what both women assume is going to be the announcement of their retirements. Despite the presumed significance of this announcement, both Grace and Frankie arrange to escape the meal as quickly as possible to avoid one another. However, the show overturns our basic assumptions about the relationship between these characters. For instance, although Robert and Sol knew that their wives did not like one another, they convinced them to invest in a beach house that secretly functioned as a place for the two men to carry out their affair. And now that neither woman wants to live in the house she shared with her husband, Grace and Frankie decide to move into the beach house together. The beach house serves as a liminal space for Robert and Sol as well as Grace and Frankie. It functioned for Robert and Sol as a transitory space between their homosexual desire and their heteronormative marriages. It provides a similar service, somewhat ironically, for Grace and Frankie: it is a space beyond their family homes (and the memories preserved there) but not completely outside of their previous lives—a sort of purgatory where they can process the dissolution of their marriages.

We also learn in later episodes that Robert (Grace's husband) and Frankie were close friends before the reveal of the affair. We can surmise that Grace, knowing that her husband was unhappy, developed a case of Queen Bee Syndrome and perceived Frankie to be a threat to her marriage—keeping in mind de Beauvoir's acknowledgment that "the shadow of the male…always weighs [on female acquaintances]" (2011, 588). In fact, when Robert tells Grace he is leaving her, she interjects, "Who is she?" Grace, who is often incapable of accepting fault, assumes their marital problems must mean that another female is trespassing on their marriage.

In both pilot episodes, one female character strongly believes that they have been wronged by another female character, despite a lack of evidence. Both shows overcome female rivalry in part by interrogating the heterosexual drive of the relevant characters. Once these women are able to overcome the impediments of compulsory heterosexuality—i.e., the drive

to find their happiness in men—they are free to disassociate their self-worth from how desirable men find them, and instead pursue female friendship and reap the benefits that accrue.

The Earnest Confessional and Truth in Female Friendships

Sociologist Elisabeth Morgan Thompson maintains that "emotion[s] and [affection]… are often present and integral to girls' friendships" (2006, 52). Because female rivalry is widely reinforced by society, the only way for women to overcome this impulse is to be honest with one another. De Beauvoir argues that female friendships are truthful because they do not have to appease one another by feigning contentedness, like they must for their husbands and boyfriends (as Grace did for Robert). Truthfulness is what makes female relationships "very different from [the] relations men have," and it is actually the most valuable aspect of female friendships (de Beauvoir 2011, 584). In an article on male friendships for *The Telegraph*, writer Chris Moss notes that male-based friendships manifest different attributes than their female counterparts. For instance, Moss says that one of the unofficial "rules" of male friendships is never talking about the value of the relationship; unlike female friendships, truthfulness is likely to be received negatively, especially if the expressed truth is emotional. Men are expected to be stoic (Moss 2017). The central female friendships in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* and *Grace and Frankie* are bolstered and equalized by confessionals in which characters admit their mistakes by exposing their respective imperfections. Friendship can ensue when the façade of superiority or perfection dissolves. Once the façade recedes, these characters can affirm each other's common universe.

At the end of the pilot of *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, Rebecca and Paula become friends. Paula shows up at a party that Rebecca is attending while on a date with Greg, Josh's best friend. Rebecca agrees to attend the party with Greg because she thinks she will encounter Josh. At the party, Rebecca suffers another panic attack because Paula confronts her about the real reason she moved to West Covina. Moments into the panic attack, however, Paula defends Rebecca from herself. Rebecca panics, "I'm stupid and emotional and irrational. I'm every rotten thing my mother says I am." Paula interjects, "Stop it. Stop it right now. Don't you ever talk like that about my friend again—you hear me?" Rebecca, feeling insecure and without any apparent friends, asks, "We're… friends?" To which Paula says, "I'd be proud to be your friend. Now that I know the truth… What you did for love… The sacrifices? You're brave." Paula, happy that Rebecca is no longer lying to her, admits her own insecurities: "I wish I'd been that brave at your age." Paula's ambiguous confession of her own regrets—we later learn that she also never got over her first boyfriend, is unhappily married with kids, and was unable to pursue her dream of earning a law degree—represents her desire to bond with Rebecca and make her feel better. Having bonded over their mutual insecurities, they sing a duet. As they harmonize, Paula sings, "All our cares will disappear," referring to Rebecca and herself scheming together. As the scene cuts to black, Paula says, "This is going to be so much fun…You're not alone anymore. We are going to win this, you hear me?" In just two sentences, Paula and Rebecca become a pair—become we. With their needs being met in a more genuine way, there is little need for male affection. Both characters must learn this lesson multiple times in the first two seasons before embracing the strength and resulting fulfillment of their

relationship. We last see Rebecca and Paula leaving the party without even bothering to tell Greg.

Grace and Frankie become friends after spending the night on the beach high on Frankie's muscle relaxers and "peyo-tea," a peyote-infused tea she had intended to consume with Sol. Halberstam might suggest that the duo, now single, are abandoning family time, the "[hetero] normative scheduling of daily life" (2005, 3). Waking up from their peyote-driven "journey," which Frankie believes will birth her anew, Grace and Frankie leverage what fault is their own in the divorce. Grace says, "I walked into Robert's study yesterday for the first-time in... I don't know how many years. It was right there in front of my face. I missed it. Where was I?" For the first time, Grace puts her anger to the side and admits that she was a negligent wife; she gives up playing the role of the blindsided victim. Even though there was nothing she could have done to keep her husband happy, she still admits that she could have been more present in their relationship. Frankie responds, "Sol once asked me to wear a dildo." To which Grace says, "That's worse," and both laugh heartily. Soon thereafter, they help each other stand up, and stumble home side by side. In the last moment of the show, Grace and Frankie, back in their beach house, place two chairs next to one another and both sit facing the camera and sharing a laugh. In an almost identical fashion to Paula, Grace says, "Now what?" as the scene cuts to black. Together, they ready themselves for whatever life throws at them.

Having overcome their rivalries and established truthfulness with one another, these women can begin their respective friendships. Moreover, before the end of each episode, both sets of friends find

solidarity in a mutual endeavor: Rebecca and Paula will work together to achieve the happiness that Josh stands in for, and Grace and Frankie will help each other recover from their divorces. As the shows progress, they continue to champion the belief that once female rivalry is circumvented and trust is established, female friendship reaches a level of authenticity that supersedes heteronormative relationships. Notably, in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend,* Rebecca and Valencia—Josh's girlfriend in the first season—also eventually develop a friendship that outweighs what either have (or ever had) with Josh. With all of these female characters fulfilling their emotional needs through their relationships with each other, the signifiers of compulsory heterosexuality continue to appear disingenuous and unsatisfying.

Lessons Learned: The Formula of These Pilots

Despite these two television shows' many differences (i.e., subscription streaming vs. a broadcast network, young adult vs. older adult struggles), not only are the pilots of both shows similar, but the series are similar in how they talk about compulsory heterosexuality and female friendships. Women must not rely on men to make them happy and should in fact look to other women for authentic companionship. However, before women can become friends they have to overcome the learned behaviors that shackle them to compulsory heterosexuality and its signifiers. In these pilots, this occurs in three main ways:

1. Female characters must challenge the fantasy of heteronormative romance. By doing so, they are able to look beyond the drive to find happiness through a male partner.

2. Before female characters can become friends, they have to overcome the impulse to see other women as competitors for male attention (enforced by compulsory heterosexuality).

3. In order to get to the level of empathy and trust that de Beauvoir spoke of, women must both confess their flaws to each other so that their respective insecurities become something that can bond them together rather than wrenching them apart.

As the pilots conclude, we understand that both shows, *Grace and Frankie* and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, are more interested in exploring the development of these female relationships than heterosexual romance. Consequently, we are prepared to see these characters grow and evolve into chosen family, an establishment in which both parties benefit, and one that is perhaps more genuine than traditional family (Knauer 2016, 125). The chosen family offers these characters a fresh start: neither party—unlike the dominant-passive binary of heterosexual formations—has to feign happiness, sacrifice, or submit to the other, because their relationship is queer and thus outside of the limitations placed upon heteronormative relationships.

Between *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* and *Grace and Frankie*, the latter is the more obvious critique of the nuclear family. Not only does *Grace and Frankie* begin with the dissolution of two nuclear families, only to yield less conventional yet more rewarding models of family and friendship in their places, it also takes place within the homes of these respective families, which is formulaic of the typical family sitcom. Of equal importance, the dissolution of nuclear families is central to Grace and Frankie's individual and shared narrative journeys in more obvious ways

than in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*. This is partly because Grace and Frankie have decades of history together, therefore making their growth more obvious. However, both of these shows ultimately challenge de Beauvoir's assertion that women help one another but men inevitably liberate them (2011, 588). Both shows are obviously built upon heteronormative institutions, but it is women who do the liberating for one another. Grace was rejected by Robert, Frankie was rejected by Sol, Rebecca was rejected by Josh, and Paula's marriage is in a rut; "in the face of rejecting families and a hostile society" (Knauer 2016, 153) each character turns to their chosen family (i.e., their closest female friend) for rehabilitation. Grace, Frankie, Rebecca, and Paula each assume the "supportive functions of a family by providing a sense of belonging, strength, and solidarity" to their respective female partners (Knauer 2016, 159).

The Family Sitcom: An Ongoing Discussion

Unlike more traditional types of media, television has become increasingly accessible to a broad range of people regardless of race, education, age, socioeconomic status, or disability. Television shows can be accessed traditionally or through streaming services, paid or unpaid, and watching them does not hinge upon the ability to read. A potential result of this is that queer portrayals of friendship and family on television can foster greater societal acceptance for non-heteronormative family structures. Beyond the worlds of these shows, "it is nonetheless rare for feminine complicity to reach true friendship," because women have been, up to and including this point, restricted by the demands of compulsory heterosexuality (de Beauvoir 2011, 584-7). That is, female friendships have historically been constrained by their relationships to

men via desirability and competition. These shows expose viewers to the many rewards that female friendships—in all their queer complexity—have to offer. To borrow the language of Halberstam, it is a "queer [use] of time and space develop[ed], at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction" (2005, 1). With this in mind, it is important to support *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, *Grace and Frankie*, and other shows of this nature because they are exposing audiences to nontraditional families and thus queering the sitcom, which creates much needed representation for queer individuals.

There is more work to be done. This essay has only explored a specific subset of chosen family: two friendships between white, educated, middle-class, cisgender, heterosexual females. No doubt, with each change to these variables, the structure of chosen family changes. In order to do the establishment of chosen family justice, it is important to understand it as a complex and fluid response to "traditional family values," and to further explore the many ways that the American family unit—whether biological, chosen, or legal—is evolving to become more dynamic and inclusive of differences. Further research should also consider family shows that feature divorce, same-sex couples, and other minor deviations from the nuclear family such as *Parenthood* (NBC 2010-15) and *Modern Family* (ABC 2009-); these shows and others like them portray traditional family values as desirable and capable of progressive inclusivity—and therefore serve to potentially undermine the queer, chosen family as an emerging alternative.

Bibliography

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 2014. *We Should All Be Feminists*. New York, New York: Vintage Books.

Anthony, Amanda Koontz, Sarah Okorie, and Lauren Norman. 2016. "When Beauty Brings Out the Beast: Female Comparisons and the Feminine Rivalry." *Gender Issues* 33(4): 311–34.

Beauvoir, Simone de, Constance Borde, Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, and Judith Thurman. 2011. *The Second Sex*. New York, New York: Vintage.

Bloom, Rachel, and Aline Brosh Mckenna. 2015. "Josh Just Happens to Live Here!" Episode. *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*. The CW.

"Nuclear Family." 2015. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. https://www.britannica.com/topic/nuclear-family.

Ciabattari, Teresa. 2016. "Defining the Family" In *Sociology of Families: Change, Continuity, and Diversity*, 21-36. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Edelman, Lee. 2004. *No Future Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage.

Halberstam, Judith. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Hertel, Brett. 2010. "Planting the Seeds: Weeds, Cable's Influence and the Evolution of the Family Sitcom." Thesis, Long Island University.

Jackson, Stevi, and Sue Scott. 2010. "Is Heterosexuality Still Compulsory" In *Theorizing Sexuality*, 74-100. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill.

Kauffman, Marta, and Howard J. Morris. 2015. "The End." Episode. *Grace and Frankie*. Netflix.

Knauer, Nancy J. 2016. "LGBT Older Adults, Chosen Family, and Caregiving." *Journal of Law and Religion* 31(2). 150-169.

Moss, Chris. 2017. "A Fine Bromance: the 12 Rules of Male Friendship." *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group. February 1. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/relationships/a-fine-bromance-the-12-rules-of-male-friendship/.

Rich, Adrienne. 1996. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." In *Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader*, edited by Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott, 130–43. New York, New York: Columbia University Press.

Thompson, Elisabeth Morgan. 2006. "Girl Friend or Girlfriend?" *Journal of Bisexuality* 6(3): 47–67.

The "Good Girls": Exploring Features of Female Characters in Children's Animated Television

Sarah Pila, Julie Dobrow, Calvin Gidney, and Jennifer Burton

This study was designed to identify the frequency and portrayals of female characters in a sample of animated television shows consumed by U.S.-based children aged six to twelve. We conducted a content analysis of thirty episodes from ten animated cartoons by coding characters for demographic information, physical attributes, and personality traits. We found that male characters continue to outnumber female characters in children's animated television by a factor of nearly two to one. Female characters were also rated as skinnier and more beautiful by coders, and were more likely to be rated as good, kind, and peaceful than were male characters. Several significant associations between character sex, age, and species were also found. These results—and the literature discussed throughout this paper—should inform parents, educators, and caregivers about the content of children's animated media as well as encourage scholars to continue research that can demonstrate the implications of regularly viewing such content.

Sarah Pila is a fourth year doctoral student in the Media, Technology, and Society program at Northwestern University. Her research interests focus on the benefits of prosocial and educational media for young children, particularly in early childhood education. You can reach her at sarah.c.pila@u.northwestern.edu.

Dr. Julie Dobrow is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Child Study and Human Development and a Senior Fellow in Media and Civic Engagement at Tisch College, Tufts University. Her research interests focus broadly on children and media. You can reach her at julie.dobrow@tufts.edu.

Dr. Calvin "Chip" Gidney is an Associate Professor in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University. His research focuses on the sociolinguistics of children's animated television. You can reach him at Calvin.Gidney@tufts.edu.

Dr. Jennifer Burton is a Professor of the Practice in Film at Tufts University. She is a filmmaker and helms the independent film company Five Sisters Productions. You can reach her at Jennifer.Burton@tufts.edu.

In an interview with other female animators, Emily Dean, a story artist at Warner Bros./Warner Animation Group, was quoted as saying:

> We are seeing more diverse protagonists in feature animated films. This is happening because of a shift toward diversity and inclusivity in the audience, the filmmakers themselves, and the studio politics… As for animated TV shows, they've been ahead of feature animation for some years. (Tang 2016)

Dean's comment, echoed by other television/film creators and developers in the popular press (e.g. Setoodeh 2015, Solomon 2015), comes at a pivotal time—one where diversity in media representation is a much-debated topic. Indeed, American consumers are rewarding studios and creators that actively seek and embrace diversity with increased viewership and public praise (Castillo 2015). Diverse shows are also garnering industry media awards. For example, Cartoon Network's *Steven Universe*, lauded for its diverse representations (e.g. Lor 2017, Ikaiddi 2017) was nominated for two Primetime Emmy Awards and won eight other awards in the last two years ("*Steven Universe* Awards" 2017).

However, this claim of increased diversity stands in contrast to decades of content analyses that have documented the consistently homogenous portrayal of sex/gender and race/ethnicity in children's television (e.g. Barner 1999, Hentges and Case 2013, Gerding and Signorielli 2014, Klein and Shiffman 2006, Baker and Raney 2004). Scholarship in this area has found that since the 1950s, children's television content has overrepresented male characters with nearly three males for every one female character; additionally, these shows have often portrayed both sexes in stereotypical

ways (e.g. Thompson and Zerbinos 1995). More recent scholarship finds that the gender ratio for contemporary shows may be closer to two males for every one female and that depictions of female characters are less obviously stereotyped. The research suggests that these findings potentially mirror larger societal shifts in gender norms (Hentges and Case 2013, Gerding and Signorielli 2014). However, none of these more recent content analyses have focused exclusively on animated television consumed by children.

One of the most common forms of children's television—that is, programs explicitly designed for and marketed towards children—has always been cartoons or animation (Kirsch 2010). There is little evidence that children prefer animated programs to live action ones, but the media industry favors them because they are relatively cheap to produce and are extremely profitable abroad since they are not necessarily bound to any one culture or environment like live action (Von Feilitzen 2012). This freedom from the constraints of live action people and props potentially allows for an endless amount of creativity—an animator can literally draw anything. For those committed to diversity, this freedom creates an opportunity to move beyond stereotypes and present a more equitable universe. But has such potential been realized?

To address some of these issues, our study aims to update and extend previous content analyses by focusing exclusively on the presentations of characters' sex and gender in a modern sampling of animated television presented to an audience aged six to twelve. This approach is useful for several reasons. First, diversity is increasingly becoming the new buzzword in children's animated television according to Tang (2016) and others, so this research is highly relevant

to those in the television field. Second, the most recently published content analyses on gender in children's television are almost four years old (e.g. Gerding and Signorielli 2014), so there is a gap in the literature that our research could address. Third, animators have potentially greater creative freedom than live action developers when it comes to creating or adjusting characters to be more diverse, so we aim to update and extend previous content analyses by focusing exclusively on animated television. In the current content analysis, we report the distribution and depiction of female characters from a sample of animated programs which aired on broadcast or cable between 2013-2014. Considered through the lens of cultivation theory and social cognitive theory, we postulate that these representations of character sex and gender on children's animated television do not reflect the diverse portrayal that the industry has described. Further, these representations may lay the foundation for children who consume more television to develop a worldview on gender that is in line with these homogenous fictional depictions.

Television Consumption & Terminology

First, it is important to quantify the amount of live action and animated television that children view, on average. According to Rideout (2015), children aged eight to twelve spend an average of four and a half hours with screen media per day. Of this time, youth report spending an average of two hours and twenty minutes watching television. As they age, youth may be more likely to look to different screen media, but television (i.e. moving picture content) remains the primary source of media for children under ten (Comstock and Scharrer 2012, Rideout 2015, 2017). While digital technology may have changed the ways

in which people access moving picture programming (e.g., broadcast, cable, and streaming services), moving picture content, in general, remains a large part of the media landscape for today's children (Rideout 2013, 2017).

Next, it is important to discuss the terminology we will use throughout this manuscript. For the purposes of this study and its possible implications, sex and gender are defined below. According to the American Psychological Association (2012), sex is referred to as "a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex." According to the APA, biological sex can be determined based on "external genitalia, sex chromosomes, and/or internal reproductive organs" (American Psychological Association 2012). Throughout the body of this work, even though coders could not see these biological markers, they used other external, physical features (i.e. secondary sex characteristics like breasts and facial hair) to categorize characters as male and female. Discussion and results will include references to character sex.

In terms of gender, the American Psychological Association (2012) defines gender as "the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex." Due to the recent shifts in gender studies, the World Health Organization offers a definition of gender that is not necessarily linked to a particular person's biological sex (which may or may not be the sex they identify with), but rather defines it as the "socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women." This definition embraces individuals who identify with and externally appear to be a member of a sex that differs from their biological

sex characteristics. Gender is categorized as masculine, feminine, and androgynous (or having features of both sexes) (Beere 1990). However, because all characters in the shows were cisgender and we did not find trans or non-binary characters in our sample, we use sex and gender interchangeably throughout.

Prior Research about Gender Portrayals on Children's Television

Since prior research has demonstrated that television remains a major source of entertainment in children's lives, it is important to look at the types of characters children may see on these shows. Numerous articles throughout the years have addressed the stereotypical ways that males and females are featured in children's television (e.g. Barner 1999, Hentges and Case 2013, Long et al. 2010, Levinson 1975, Gerding and Signorielli 2014). With respect to children's animated television specifically, Signorielli (2008) addressed the history of children's cartoon characters and noted that historically, studies found that male characters consistently outnumber female characters by four or five to one. Signorielli (2008) cited Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) who reported this finding in their work, but also suggested that there had been some change in male and female character depictions pre-1980 and post-1980. The researchers found that female characters in the latter part of their sample were rated as more assertive, intelligent, and independent than earlier cartoon females. However, they were still likely to be portrayed in stereotypically feminine ways (e.g. emotional, domestic, and romantic). Moreover, unlike male characters, female characters did not have recognizable occupations—thereby reinforcing the stereotype of females as caregivers or domesticated women (Thompson and Zerbinos 1995). In a later set of studies,

male characters outnumbered females only two to one (Baker and Raney 2004, Baker and Raney 2007). Despite this improvement in numerical representation, males were still more likely to be represented as the heroic leaders in the cartoons while females were more likely to be minor characters (Baker and Raney 2007). This difference continued to reflect the more emotional and less physically aggressive stereotypes of women.

Research that considered genre types adds complexity to these findings. Specifically, these findings seem to hold true for the traditional action-adventure cartoons, but not for the nontraditional animated genres such as family-oriented or educational cartoons (Kirsch 2010). When controlling for genre type, Leaper et al. (2002) found that male to female representation was virtually equal in "nontraditional adventure" and "educational/family" animated television series. While the authors noted that this change in quantitative representation for these genres seemed promising, overall, male characters were still more likely to demonstrate physical aggression. Women, by contrast, were still depicted as more fearful, nurturing, polite, and romantic compared to male characters. Thus, even when representation is more equitable, portrayals continue to be stereotypical.

Although media producers like Warner Bros. story artist Emily Dean seem optimistic about the increasing diversity in animation, the findings from this literature suggest that the animated world, as a whole, is far from equitable. While there is movement toward equitable depictions of gender in terms of quantity and quality, previous research findings generally point towards a male-dominated and gender-stereotyped children's animated television landscape. The present study seeks to update these findings with a more current sample.

Theoretical Frameworks

One way to conceptualize why sex/gender portrayals in the media are important to study is through the lens of cultivation theory. According to Gerbner et al. (1986) research, the cultivation hypothesis suggests that television slowly indoctrinates viewers with its viewpoints, making the heaviest consumers of television most susceptible to indoctrination of television portrayals. That is, high-frequency viewers are most likely to hold beliefs and attitudes consistent with television depictions. Considering the history of stereotyped representations on children's television, this theory becomes especially troublesome when we imagine a television viewer for whom most of their impressions of the opposite sex come from on-screen depictions. Cultivation theory has since diminished in prominence as a media effects theory due to its exclusion of developmental, environmental, and other factors that can surround television viewing (Kirsch 2010). However, it is still important to consider this theory with respect to television exposure and the portrayals that may be associated with animated television. If children's animation continues the trends of earlier content analyses with fewer female characters than male characters and more stereotyped depictions when they are shown such misrepresentation could indoctrinate the heavy television viewer over time, leading them to believe the depictions they see on television are their "reality." This indoctrination might be especially true given what we know of the repetitive way in which young children tend to view and re-view televisual content (Mares 1998).

Another framework used for considering the impact of sex/gender portrayals is Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). According to Bandura (1986) and SCT, children acquire and maintain behaviors through the process of observation in their environment. When children act out and imitate the behaviors they see, they are either rewarded or punished, further reinforcing or diminishing those behaviors. This theory also assumes that there is triarchic reciprocity in interactions between individual factors (such as cognition, affect, and biological happenings), environment, and behavior. According to Bandura (2001), media portrayals can provide models to reenact or "play out" and/or can contribute to the motivation to enact already learned models. Unlike cultivation theory, however, SCT postulates that children might learn from any model they see on television—even if they are not regular television viewers. From this standpoint, both heavy and light media consumers are susceptible to television's effects.

Taken together, these frameworks help us understand why the sex/gender portrayals on children's television may be consequential for viewers. Indeed, meta-analyses have shown a small but significant connection between television viewing and holding more stereotypical beliefs about gender roles. Examining predominately non-experimental studies, Oppliger (2007) found a positive relation between exposure to stereotyped gender roles on television and increasing sex/gender stereotyped behaviors and attitudes among youth (and adults). For example, Thompson and Zerbinos (1997) study of 89 children aged four to nine demonstrated that children do notice the different sex role stereotypes in the cartoons they watch. More specifically, the researchers concluded that noticing the stereotypical gender role differences in cartoons does appear to relate to indicating increased gender stereotypical job expectations for the children in this sample (Thompson and Zerbinos 1997).

Given that (a) television is an important part of a child's media landscape, (b) there is a history of uneven representations of sex and gender on children's animated television, and (c) there is a small, but demonstrable effect of television viewing on gender stereotyping, it is important to evaluate the current demographics and portrayals in children's animated television. While this study cannot make claims about the extent to which children play out these gender stereotypes, the current content analysis can demonstrate if these stereotypes continue to exist. It was hypothesized that the content analysis of the present study would yield similar results to previous research on demographics in children's animated television, namely that:

> H1: The sample would feature more male characters overall.

The researchers also predicted that:

> H2: Male and female characters would differ in ratings on four physical traits.

Females would be more likely shown as skinny, beautiful, light-skinned, and well-dressed. Male characters would be more likely shown as fat, ugly, darker skinned, and sloppily dressed. These hypotheses are in line with results found by Dobrow and Gidney (1998) using a very similar coding scheme.

> H3: Male and female characters would differ in ratings on four personality traits.

Females would be more likely shown as good, honest, kind, and peaceful characters while males would be more likely shown as bad, dishonest, cruel, and violent.

Method

To understand how children's animated television presents female characters—and if these representations are similar to previous research findings—we performed a content analysis identifying the frequency and portrayal of female characters. According to Rudy, Popova, and Linz (2010), content analysis as a methodology is particularly important in gender role research because it lends itself to theorizing about the effects of viewing such content as well as considering the motivations behind those who create it.

Sample

A sample of ten animated television shows was selected by cross-referencing several online "top ten" lists for children's animated television shows in 2013-2014. See Appendix B for sample selection. Inclusion in this sample required that a show be featured on at least two "top ten" animated television lists and consumed by children aged six to twelve. We ultimately chose shows that were originally broadcast "over the air" either on terrestrial television or through cable delivery services in the United States, meaning that we excluded television shows that were unique to streaming platforms. We also included two adult-themed animated television series—*American Dad* and *Bob's Burgers*—because they met the initial criteria by being on at least two of these lists of "top ten" animated television shows. Although these two shows are not geared towards viewers aged six to twelve, older children in this age range have been shown to watch adult content on television (i.e. Delgado et al. 2009, Thielman 2014) and this inclusion is in line with similar content analyses of animated cartoons that include cartoons aimed at an adult audience (e.g. Klein and Shiffman 2006). Indeed, Thielman (2014) specifically

mentioned that in 2014, the six to twelve age group made up a sizable audience of primetime network television (often adult-directed)—watching shows like NBC's *The Voice* and even Univision's telenovela *Mi Corazón es Tuyo*. Additionally, we included one children's program that was originally created in Japan rather than the U.S., having been dubbed in English when it aired on Nickelodeon. Our coders treated this series as they would any other considering that it met our inclusion criteria.

The first three episodes of each television show were chosen from the latest DVD for purchase and then made available for check out from a university library in the northeastern part of the United States. This selection yielded a total sample of 30 episodes of the ten shows on six channels: Disney, Cartoon Network, Fox, Nickelodeon, PBS, and The Hub. See Appendix B, Sample Information, for a complete list. One episode consisted of two 11-minute shorts or one longer 22-minute episode.

Coding, Training, and Final Dataset

The coding manual was minimally edited from a previously developed coding scheme (Dobrow and Gidney 1998) for clarity and content. This scheme was useful because it allowed us to build specifically on Dobrow and Gidney's (1998) previous research and it included many of the characteristics from other published content analyses of children's television (e.g. Baker and Raney 2007, Thompson and Zerbinos 1995, Gerding and Signorielli 2014).

Thirty undergraduate and graduate students were trained in the 2013 coding scheme and given access to the Character Coding form, made available to the students through Google Documents. Coders received training over four different three-hour sessions. During these sessions, we described the coding manual in detail using examples from older animated television shows (those that did not meet the sampling criteria). We instructed coders to refer to these examples when coding. Coding was completed in three rounds over the course of a semester. For each round of coding, pairs were randomly assigned to code one episode of one television program at a time.

After all coding was complete, four undergraduates and one graduate student met in randomly assigned pairs to resolve discrepancies in coding. The smaller group resolved discrepancies in categorical variables by re-watching the episode together and referring to any of the comments made in the comments box. This group also resolved discrepancies in continuous variables by averaging scores.

Unit of analysis

Following previous work (e.g. Hentges and Case 2013, Smith et al. 2010), our unit of analysis was the individual speaking character. Since the researchers were also interested in sociolinguistic analysis (Gidney, 2016), only speaking characters were analyzed. That is, characters who spoke at least one word were included. This distinction excluded characters that made any animal or other non-word noises.

Demographic information

Character sex was identified as Male, Female, or Uncertain. Race/ethnicity of the character was identified as African-American/Black, American Indian, Anglo-Saxon/Nordic, Arab/Middle Eastern, East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), South Asian (Indian, Pakistani), Jewish/Jewish American, Latino(a)/Hispanic, French/Franco-American, Slavic, Other, Uncertain.

These categories were collapsed into White, non-Hispanic (includes Anglo-Saxon/ Nordic, Jewish/Jewish-American, French/ Franco-American, Slavic), Asian (both East and South Asian), African-American/ Black, Latino(a)/Hispanic, and Arab / Middle Eastern for the purposes of analysis. Age was coded as Baby or Infant, Child (4-12), Teenager (13-18), Young Adult, Middle Aged, Elderly, or Uncertain. Nationality was coded as U.S., Foreign/Non-U.S., or Uncertain. Coders identified characters' species by selecting Human/Humanoid, Animal/Animal-like, Machine/Robotic, Other, or Uncertain. See Appendix A for complete coding manual choices.

Physical character attributes

The following analyses include all physical characteristics for characters which were: skinny-fat, beautiful/handsome-ugly, light skin tone-dark skin tone, and well dressed-sloppily dressed. For each physical attribute, coders rated the characters on a scale of one to five (1 was denoted as one extreme end of the trait, 3 was average or neutral, and 5 was the other extreme of the trait). Zero was used when the coder could not see the character and/or was uncertain about some aspect of the physical trait for the character. For these variables, higher scores represent the second feature of the pair (i.e. higher scores on skinny-fat indicate a fatter character).

Personality character attributes

The personality traits of interest were chosen based on gender roles of masculinity and femininity from the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem 1974). This measure is one of the most widely used measures in gender research and has demonstrated strong reliability and validity (Beere 1990). The BSRI lists several feminine traits that relate to the hypotheses in this study. These

characteristics were: good-bad, peaceful-violent, kind-cruel, honest-dishonest and were rated on the same scale as discussed earlier. According to the BSRI, females are compassionate and sympathetic (these traits are related to kind), eager to soothe hurt feelings and are understanding (peaceful), and sensitive to the needs of others and are gentle (good). On the other hand, males are forceful and aggressive (violent) and can be dominant and competitive (bad). Again, for these variables, higher scores represent the second of the personality pair (i.e. higher scores on good-bad indicate a character who is "bad").

Results

Frequencies

First, we report frequency information for character sex, race, age, nationality, and species. Of the 554 characters in the sample, 179 (32%) were female, 369 (67%) were male, and 6 (1%) were "uncertain. Most the characters appeared to be middle aged (N = 190, 34%), teenagers aged 13-18 (22%), or children under 12 (18%). The rest were young adults (12%), elderly (6%), or uncertain (8%). The majority of characters were White, Non-Hispanic (N = 249, 45%) or uncertain (N = 243, 44%). 'Uncertain' classifications were most often given to non-human characters whose race was usually impossible to determine, but also occasionally coded for voiceover characters that coders never saw. Of the characters with identified race, 8% were Asian (N = 45), 2% were Black (N = 12), and 1% were Latino(a) / Hispanic (N = 4) or Arab /Middle Eastern (N = 1). Nearly half of the characters were of U.S. nationality (N = 264, 48%). The rest were Foreign/Non-U.S. (N = 160, 29%) or uncertain (N = 130, 24%). The majority of characters were human or humanoid (N = 350, 63%), followed closely by animal or

animal-like (N = 177, 32%). The rest were other or machine/robotic (N = 22, 4%) and 5 were uncertain (1%). The uncertain categories were subsequently removed from further analyses.

Demographic information

In order to assess possible associations between the above demographics by character sex, we conducted cross tabulations with chi-square analyses (see Table 1). Character's sex and age were significantly related, such that males were more likely than female characters to be middle aged, while females were more likely than male characters to be teenagers than would be expected by chance; $\chi2(4, n = 508) = 37.98$, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.27, a moderate effect size. Character race/ethnicity was not significantly related to character sex ($\chi2 (1, n = 311) = 0.69$, $p > 0.10$) or to character nationality ($\chi2(3, n = 424) = 2.29$, $p > 0.10$). Since multiple cells had expected counts less than five for character sex and species, we used Fisher's exact test to test the association between these two variables. Character sex was significantly related to species; (FE = 8.4, $p = 0.03$); Cramer's V = 0.07, a very small effect size.

Physical attributes

We conducted t-tests to check our hypotheses about physical traits that are attributed to males and females (see Table 2). On average, females were rated as significantly skinnier than male characters; $t(367) = 5.88$, $p ≤ 0.001$, Cohen's d = 0.53, a medium effect size. Female characters were also rated as significantly more beautiful/handsome than were male characters, on average; $t(283) = 7.20$, $p ≤ 0.001$, Cohen's d = 0.57, a medium effect size. However, there were no significant differences in character sex and their dress rating (well-dressed to sloppily-dressed) or character sex and their skin color rating ($p > 0.05$ for both).

Personality traits

We tested our hypotheses about personality traits that coders attribute to male and female characters by conducting t-tests. See Table 3 for results on these t-tests. On average, females were more likely to be rated as "good" than were male characters and this difference was significant; $t(268) = 2.91$, $p = 0.004$, Cohen's d = 0.37, a small effect size. Female characters were rated as significantly more "peaceful" than were male characters, on average; $t(315) = 4.57$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's d = 0.55, a medium effect size. Females were also rated as kinder than male characters, on average and this difference was significant; $t(315) = 3.36$, $p = 0.001$, Cohen's d = 0.44, a small to medium effect size. Finally, we found that female characters were rated significantly more honest than male characters; $t(315) = 2.55$, $p = 0.011$, Cohen's d = 0.31, a small effect size.

Discussion

We sought to update and extend previous content analyses of gender in children's television by providing a more current sample exclusively focused on animated television. Our contribution to the extant literature is two-fold. First, we provide a contemporary assessment of characters in the children's animated television landscape. Secondly, we interpret these findings through cultivation and SCT frameworks in order to propose how these theories might drive future research examining the effects of such representations on viewers.

Our results highlighted a disappointing lack of progress, both in terms of gender and other demographic characteristics. Indeed, male characters continued to outnumber females

nearly two to one. Although our proportions do favor a more narrow ratio than earlier analyses (Thompson and Zerbinos 1995, Signorielli 2008), this sample does not appear to reflect creators' and developers' claims that animation is now significantly more diverse or equitable than in the past.

Because diversity on animated television is not limited to just characters' sex and gender—but also to a range of other character demographics like age or race/ethnicity—truly diverse portrayals of characters should reflect this variety. Consistent with prior research on television's obsession with youthfulness for female characters (Signorielli 2012), we found that female characters in our sample were less likely to be middle-aged, although they were more likely to be teenagers than children. Given the nature of this sample, it was not surprising that female characters were more likely to be teenagers and less likely to be middle-aged. Children's television often includes both characters of a similar age range as the target group (Harwood 1999, 2009) and slightly older characters. Children prefer to watch same age characters, but they tend to idealize characters that are slightly older than them (Hoffner and Buchanan 2005). In our sample, however, these findings differed for male characters, who were most frequently middle-aged compared to other age categories (with relatively equal numbers in the other age brackets). More research on typical ages of characters in children's television would be needed to explain this finding further.

Male and female differences in physical attributes somewhat supported H2. On average, females were more likely to be rated by coders as skinnier and more beautiful than male characters. There were no significant differences in character sex, skin color, or dress. The significant results support the notion that at least some of the physical attributes of male and female characters are different. For example, the findings on the skinny/fat and beautiful/handsome/ugly continuums mirror past findings in published research that attractive females dominate children's television (Baker and Raney 2004, Gerding and Signorielli 2014, Fouts and Burggraf 1999). In light of SCT and cultivation theory, children watching these characters may notice that it is perfectly acceptable for male characters to be fat or unattractive, but the same is not true for female characters. Although the mechanisms merit additional investigation, these repeated images could eventually lead children to believe that all females should be thin and attractive.

In terms of personality traits, female characters were more likely to be rated as "good," "peaceful," "kind," and "honest," however this honesty rating was only slightly, but not significantly, different for male and female characters. These findings support H3, that the personality traits attributed to males and females are different and unequal. These findings also follow the research literature around gender stereotypes in children's television, animation and otherwise (Hentges and Case 2013, Gerding and Signorielli 2014, Thompson and Zerbinos 1995). SCT and cultivation theory support the idea that child viewers may see these depictions of female characters as "sugar, [but no] spice, and everything nice," eventually coming to believe that females are only supposed to act in pro-social ways.

Altogether, SCT suggests that these representations of character gender on television have the potential to teach women about "being a woman" and "doing woman behaviors." Furthermore, cultivation theory reminds us that any child who watches more

television could develop a worldview on gender that is in line with these depictions. To this end, female children who see female characters who are depicted as more beautiful, skinny, and concerned with being good, kind, and peaceful might begin to believe that they must also value these traits. As a result, female children may both learn to value the traits of females on television and also use the idealized characters as models for performing femininity. Such socialization is not all dangerous, but it could become problematic for children, especially girls, who become overly concerned with their looks and personality as a result of consuming these depictions.

Limitations

This study is not without its limitations. First, although we believe our coding scheme has strong face validity, some operational definitions may differ from other, similar content analyses (e.g. Thompson and Zerbinos 1995, Hentges and Case 2013, Gerding and Signorielli 2014). As a result, our findings may reflect slightly different constructs. Second, for practical purposes, we consider only a subset of personality traits and character demographics in these analyses. By limiting the variables, we are unable to account for all differences in male and female characters in this sample as assessed by the coding scheme.

The sample is also limited by its criteria. Although television shows in the sample had to appear on multiple lists of popular children's animated television, we did not consult Nielsen viewership data, so it is possible that they are not necessarily the most widely viewed animated television programs for children aged six to twelve. Additionally, the shows had to be available on DVD to be included in the sample. Because of DVD release dates, many of

the episodes that students coded aired in 2011-2013, were already outdated in terms of initial premiere date. While the coded episodes might currently be in reruns (as was the case for *Digimon* at the time of sample selection), they are certainly not new to television. For these reasons and more, it is entirely possible that this sample is not representative of cartoon animation that children regularly view and as such, results should be considered only within this particular sample.

Implications and Future Research

The first step toward any major change is awareness. Several groups, such as MEDIAGIRLS and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, are already heavily invested in this work, creating research and workshops to demonstrate inappropriate and unequal representation of females in children's media while also empowering young girls to create less biased media themselves (MEDIAGIRLS n.d., Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media n.d.). Given that the results of this study show the perpetuation of gender inequities in children's media in the 21st century, it is no wonder such groups exist. We hope that our findings can support their work by providing current statistics around a popular medium: animated television.

Our results also raise several important media effects questions. Do youth who are not involved in these organizations (and who may not have strong media literacy skills) notice differences in age, physical features, and personality traits between male and female characters in these animated shows? If they do, are they then more inclined to perform in ways that mirror these differences in real life? If yes again, are female viewers more likely to reinforce negative stereotypes about the female

gender because the few women they see on television are portrayed in stereotypical ways? And what about the effects of cartoon viewing on male viewers? Do boys notice that it's a "man's world" on children's animated television? If yes, how might acknowledging males' overrepresentation on children's animation translate to young boys' perceptions of gender? Although these questions are outside the scope of this work, our results highlight the need for future researchers to pose and answer these types of questions.

Indeed, one of the primary limitations of this study is that it is not a media effects study. Content analyses describe what exists in the television world, but do not measure how much someone learns from it. Future research should analyze how female viewers and other minority individuals (in terms of race, nationality, etc.) are affected by the media they consume, particularly female viewers of color.

Conclusion

Overall, this research updates the literature on television's sex/gender stereotypes and postulates how children might be affected by them. This content analysis found that there is somewhat more diversity in children's animated television than was found in content analyses of 1990s' programming (Thompson and Zerbinos 1995, Dobrow and Gidney 1998), but echoed similar findings of more recent content analyses (Baker and Raney 2004, Gerding and Signorielli 2014, Klein and Shiffman 2006). Males and Caucasians continue to be consistently overrepresented in children's animated television, contrary to some television creators' claims about the growing diversity and equity in animation.

Results of this study should ideally urge content creators and production companies to push for more appropriate, egalitarian, and less stereotyped representations in children's television—especially because the representation is so skewed towards white male characters. However, the more likely pattern is that by making academics, parents, and educators aware of these inequities, individuals will begin to take notice and better monitor children's television patterns. In a similar vein, our results also offer greater support for the work of media literacy groups, and hopefully encourage them to incorporate these more recent findings into their media literacy programs for children (in particular young girls and women). Although this research might not effect change from media creators, it could certainly prompt and support media literacy efforts that will impact the way girls consume media and consequently view themselves. More research and evaluation is necessary, but this work supports the rationale for continuing this line of academic inquiry.

Table 1 Chi-square tests and descriptive statistics for character sex

Variables		Character Sex	
		Male	Female
Age			
	Child Under 12	59 (18%)	38 (22%)
	Teenager (13-18)	<u>**57**</u> (17%)	<u>**66**</u> (38%)
	Young Adult	44 (13%)	19 (11%)
	Middle Aged	<u>**151**</u> (45%)	<u>**39**</u> (22%)
	Elderly	23 (7%)	12 (7%)
Race			
	African-American / Black	9 (4%)	3 (3%)
	White, Non-Hispanic	177 (81%)	72 (79%)
	Asian	30 (14%)	15 (17%)
	Latino(a), Middle Eastern, & Other	4 (2%)	1 (1%)
Nat'l			
	U.S.	178 (60%)	86 (68%)
	Foreign/ Non-US	119 (40%)	41 (32%)
Species			
	Human / Humanoid	247 (68%)	103 (58%)
	Animal / Animal-like	103 (28%)	70 (39%)
	Machine / Robotic	5 (1%)	0 (0%)
	Other	11(3%)	5 (3%)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate column percentages.

Bold and Underlined numbers = Standardized Residual $\geq$ │1.97│

Table 2 Ratings on physical traits by character sex

Variables	Male (SD)	Female (SD)	Mean Difference
Skinny/Fat	2.90 (0.95)	2.40 (0.88)	0.50*** [0.33, 0.66]
Beauty/Ugly	3.13 (0.79)	2.52 (0.91)	0.61*** [0.44, 0.78]
Light/Dark	2.05 (0.88)	2.10 (1.0)	-0.05 [-0.24, 0.12]
Well/Sloppy	2.53 (0.90)	2.43 (0.79)	0.10 [-0.07, 0.27]

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Notes. Light/Dark = skin color. Well/Sloppy = dress.

BCa 95% CI for Mean Difference in brackets.

Table 3 Ratings on personality traits by character sex

Variables	Male (SD)	Female (SD)	Mean Difference
Good/Bad	2.57 (1.16)	2.22 (0.94)	0.35** [0.12, 0.57]
Peace/Viol	2.94 (0.98)	2.42 (0.94)	0.52*** [0.32, 0.74]
Kind/Cruel	2.72 (1.06)	2.32 (0.91)	0.40*** [0.19, 0.62]
Honest/Dis	2.61(0.94)	2.32 (0.93)	0.29* [0.07, 0.52]

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Notes. $N = 317$. Peace/Viol = peaceful/violent. Honest/Dis = honest/dishonest.

BCa 95% CI for Mean Difference in brackets.

Bibliography

American Psychological Association. 2012. "Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients." *American Psychologist* 67 (1):10-42.

Baker, Kaysee, and Arthur A. Raney. 2007. "Equally Super?: Gender-Role Stereotyping of Superheroes in Children's Animated Programs." *Mass Communication & Society* 10 (1):25-41.

Baker, Kaysee, and Arthur A. Raney. 2004. "Toons, They're Not A-Changin': Sex-Role Stereotyping on Saturday Morning Animated Programs." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New Orleans, LA, May 27.

Bandura, Albert. 1986. *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, Albert. 2001. "Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication." *Media Psychology* 3 (3):265-99.

Barner, Mark R. 1999. "Gender Stereotyping and Intended Audience Age: An Analysis of Children's Educational/Informational TV Programming." *Communication Research Reports* 16 (2):193-202.

Beere, Carole. 1990. *Gender Roles: A Handbook of Tests and Measures*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Bem, Sandra L. 1974. "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 42 (2):155-62.

Castillo, Michelle. 2015. "Orange Is the New Black, and Diversity Is the New TV." *CNBC*, October 9, 2015, sec. Media. https://www.cnbc.com/2015/10/08/orange-is-the-new-black-and-diversity-is-the-new-tv.html.

Comstock, George, and Erica Scharrer. 2012. "The Use of Television and Other Screen Media." In *Handbook of Children and the Media*, 2nd edition, edited by D.G. Singer and J.L. Singer, 13-39. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Delgado, Hernan, Sydney B. Austin, Michael Rich, and David S. Bickham. 2009. "Exposure to Adult-Targeted Television and Movies During Childhood Increases Initiation of Early Intercourse." Paper presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies meeting, Baltimore, MD, May 4.

Dobrow, Julie R., and Calvin L. Gidney. 1998. "The Good, the Bad, and the Foreign: The Use of Dialect in Children's Animated Television." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 557:105-19.

Fouts, Gregory, and Kimberley Burggraf. 1999. "Television Situation Comedies: Female Body Images and Verbal Reinforcements." *Sex Roles* 40 (5/6):473-81.

Gidney, Calvin. 2016. "Codes and Cartoons: Using Sociolinguistic Methods to Uncover Implicit Language Ideologies in Children's Animated Television." Poster presented at the 2016 Society for Research in Child Development Special Topic Meeting, Irvine, CA, October 29.

Gerbner, George, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli. 1986. "Living with Television: The Dynamics of the Cultivation Process." In *Perspectives on Media Effects*, edited by J. Bryant and D. Zillman, 17-40. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gerding, Ashton, and Nancy Signorielli. 2014. "Gender Roles in Tween Television Programming: A content Analysis of Two Genres." *Sex Roles* 70 (1-2):43-56.

Harwood, Jake. 1999. "Age Identity and Television Viewing Preferences." *Communication Reports* 12 (2):85-90.

Harwood, Jake. 2009. "Viewing Age: Lifespan Identity and Television Viewing Choices." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 41 (2):203-13.

Hentges, Beth, and Kim Case. 2013. "Gender Representations on Disney Channel, Cartoon Network, and Nickelodeon Broadcasts in the United States." *Journal of Children and Media* 7 (3):319-33.

Hoffner, Cynthia, and Martha Buchanan. 2005. "Young Adults' Wishful Identification with Television Characters: The Role of Perceived Similarity and Character Attributes." *Media Psychology* 7 (4):325-51.

"Homepage." n.d. Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. https://seejane.org/.

Ikaiddi, Uwana. 2017. "How Cartoon Network's '*Steven Universe*' Gets Diversity Right." *Study Breaks* (blog). May 19, 2017. https://studybreaks.com/culture/steven-universe/.

Kirsch, Steven. 2010. Media and Youth: *A Developmental Perspective*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Klein, Hugh, and Kenneth S. Shiffman. 2006. "Race-related Content of Animated Cartoons." *Howard Journal of Communications* 17 (3):163-82.

Leaper, Campbell, Lisa Breed, Laurie Hoffman, and Carly Ann Perlman. 2002. "Variations in the Gender-Stereotyped Content of Children's Television Cartoons Across Genres." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 32 (8):1653-62.

Levinson, Richard M. 1975. "From Olive Oyl to Sweet Polly Purebread: Sex Role Stereotypes and Televised Cartoons." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 9 (3):561-72.

Long, Marilee, Jocelyn Steinke, Brooks Applegate, Maria Knight Lapinski, Marne J. Johnson, and Sayani Ghosh. 2010. "Portrayals of Male and Female Scientists in Television Programs Popular Among Middle School-age Children." *Science Communication* 32 (3):356-82.

Lor, Aniya. 2017. "Steven Universe is the Most Diverse Cartoon In The 21st Century." *Affinity Magazine*, April 18, 2017, http://affinitymagazine.us/2017/04/18/steven-universe-is-the-most-diverse-cartoon-in-the-21st-century/.

Mares, Marie-Louise. 1998. "Children's Use of VCRs." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 557 (1):120-31.

"MEDIAGIRLS: Making Over the Media." n.d. MEDIAGIRLS. http://www.mediagirls.org/.

Oppliger, Patricia A. 2007. "Effects of Gender Stereotyping on Socialization." In *Mass Media Effects Research: Advances through Meta-analysis*, edited by R. W. Preiss, B. M. Gayle, N. Burrell, M. Allen and J. Bryant, 199-214. Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rideout, Vicky J. 2013. "Zero to Eight: Children's Media Use in America 2013." San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media.

Rideout, Vicky J. 2015. "The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens." San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media.

Rideout, Vicky J. 2017. "The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Kids Age Zero to Eight." San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media.

Rudy, Rena M., Lucy Popova, and Daniel G. Linz. 2010. "The Context of Current Content Analysis of Gender Roles: An Introduction to a Special Issue." *Sex Roles* 62 (11-12):705-20.

Setoodeh, Ramin. 2015. "John Lasseter Says Disney/Pixar Wants More Diverse Characters." Variety, May 28, 2017. http://variety.com/2015/film/markets-festivals/john-lasseter-disney-pixar-more-diverse-characters-1201499414/.

Signorielli, Nancy. 2008. "Children's Programs 2007: Basic Demography and Violence." Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, San Diego, CA, November 21.

Signorielli, Nancy. 2012. "Television's Gender Role Images and Contributions to Stereotyping." In *Handbook of Children and the Media*, 2nd edition, edited by Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer, 321-39. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Smith, Stacy L., Katherine M. Pieper, Amy Granados, and Marc Choueiti. 2010. "Assessing Gender-Related Portrayals in Top-Grossing G-rated Films." *Sex Roles* 62 (11-12):774-86.

Solomon, Charles. 2015. "Diversity Can be Seen and Heard in Animated Films." *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 2018, sec. Entertainment. http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-et-mn-animation-diversity-20150215-story.html.

"*Steven Universe* Awards." 2017. IMDb. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3061046/awards.

Tang, Estelle. 2016. "We Asked 4 Female Animators About Diversity and Women in the Industry." *Elle*, December 19, 2016. http://www.elle.com/culture/movies-tv/news/a41509/female-animators-diversity-industry/.

Thielman, Sam. 2014. "Kids Are Watching the Weirdest Stuff on TV—and It's Not Always From Kids' Networks." *adweek*, September 8, 2014. https://www.adweek.com/tv-video/kids-are-watching-weirdest-stuff-tv-and-its-not-always-kids-networks-159934/

Thompson, Teresa L., and Eugenia Zerbinos. 1995. "Gender roles in Animated Cartoons: Has the Picture Changed in 20 years?" *Sex Roles* 32 (9-10):651-73.

Thompson, Teresa L, and Eugenia Zerbinos. 1997. "Television Cartoons: Do Children Notice it's a Boy's World?" *Sex Roles* 37 (5):415-32.

Von Feilitzen, Cecilia. 2012. "Children's Media Use in a Global Perspective." In *Handbook of Children and the Media* edited by D. G Singer and J. L Singer, 379-394. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

World Health Organization. n.d. "What Do We Mean by 'Sex' and 'Gender'?" http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/

Appendix A

CTV_13 Character Coding Sheet

* Required

Coder Name *
Coder Name

* Required

Coder Name *
Coder Name

Show Title *

Write the show's title

Episode title *

Write the episode's title

Character Name *

Write the character's name

Age group * (choose one):

Baby or infant, Child (4-12), Teenager (13-18), Young Adult, Middle Aged,

Elderly, Uncertain

What is the character's sex? * (choose one):

Female, Male, Uncertain

Race / Ethnicity / Ethnic Origin *

What is the character's ethnicity? (Choose one):

African-American/Black, American Indian, Anglo-Saxon/Nordic, Arab/Middle

Eastern, East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), South Asian (Indian, Pakistani), Jewish / Jewish American, Latino(a) / Hispanic, French / Franco-American, Slavic, Other, Uncertain

If race/ethnicity is OTHER, please specify...

What is the character's social class? * (choose one):

Underclass / Criminal, Poor / Working class, Middle Class, Upper Class / Wealthy, Elite (kings, queens, princes, princess), Uncertain

Citizenship / Nationality *

What is the character's citizenship/nationality? (Choose one):

U.S., Foreign / Non-US, Uncertain

Dramatic Role *

What is the character's dramatic role? (Choose one):

Major hero / Major heroine, Major villain, Heroic sidekick, Villainous sidekick, Minor character, Walk-on character

Species *

What species is the character? (Choose one):

Human / Humanoid, Animal / Animal-like, Machine / Robotic, Other, Uncertain

If species is other, please specify

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: Skinny (1) ... Fat (5) *

Can't Tell   Fat

   0   1   2   3   4   5

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: Beautiful/Handsome (1) ... Ugly (5) *

Can't Tell   Ugly

   0   1   2   3   4   5

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: Skin tone: Light Skin (1) ... Dark Skin (5) *

Can't Tell   Dark Skin

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: Dress: Well-dressed (1) ... Sloppily Dressed (5)

Can't Tell   Sloppily Dressed

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Serious (1) ... Comic (5) *

Can't Tell   Comic

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Strong (1) ... Weak (5) *

Can't Tell   Weak

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Good (1) ... Bad (5) *

Can't Tell   Bad

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Peaceful (1) ... Violent (5) *

Can't Tell   Violent

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Kind (1) ... Cruel (5) *

Can't Tell   Cruel

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Smart (1) ... Stupid (5) *

Can't Tell   Stupid

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Independent (1) ... Dependent (5) *

Can't Tell   Dependent

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Warm (1) ... Cold/Stand-offish (5) *

Can't Tell   Cold/Stand-offish

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Honest (1) ... Dishonest (5) *

Can't Tell   Dishonest

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Active (1) ... Passive (5) *

Can't Tell   Passive

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Agile (1) ... Clumsy (5) *

Can't Tell   Clumsy

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Childlike (1) ... Adult-like (5) *

Can't Tell   Adult-like

  0   1   2   3   4   5

PERSONALITY: Competent (1) ... Incompetent (5) *

Can't Tell   Incompetent

   0   1   2   3   4   5

Other comments?

Please use this textbox to note anything else you found important that was not previously listed or to defend a particular rating.

_____

_____

Appendix B

Sample Selection Lists

"Best Modern Adult's and Children's Cartoons for Big Kids." 2013. IMDb, September 11, 2013, https://www.imdb.com/list/ls056966166/

"Children's TV Programs." 2012. IMDb, October 23, 2012, https://www.imdb.com/list/ls050747133/

Houston, Shannon. 2014. "The 10 Best Animated Shows Of 2014." *Paste Magazine*, December 26, 2014, https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2014/12/the-10-best-animated-shows-of-2014.html?p=2

"My Top 100 Animated Series." 2014. IMDb, April 9, 2014, https://www.imdb.com/list/ls058332973/

Rowles, Dustin. 2014. "7 Best Kids' Show on Netflix, According to a Six-Year-Old." *Pajiba*, January 27, 2014, http://www.pajiba.com/seriously_random_lists/7-best-kids-show-on-netflix-according-to-a-six-year-old.php

"The Best Children's Shows." 2014. Ranker. https://www.ranker.com/list/best-children_s-television-series-tv-shows/reference.

"The Best Kids Shows of 2013." 2013. Ranker. https://www.ranker.com/list/best-kids-shows-2013/ranker-tv.

Sample Information

***Adventure Time*. Season 2, episode 1, "It Came from the Nightosphere." Directed by Bong Hee Han and Larry Leichliter. Aired October 11, 2010, on Cartoon Network.

***Adventure Time*. Season 2, episode 2, "The Eyes." Directed by Bong Hee Han and Larry Leichliter. Aired October 18, 2010, on Cartoon Network.

***Adventure Time*. Season 2, episode 3, "Loyalty to the King." Directed by Bong Hee Han and Larry Leichliter. Aired October 25, 2010, on Cartoon Network.

***Adventure Time*. Season 2, episode 4, "Blood Under the Skin." Directed by Bong Hee Han and Larry Leichliter. Aired November 1, 2010, on Cartoon Network.

***Adventure Time*. Season 2, episode 5, "Storytelling." Directed by Bong Hee Han and Larry Leichliter. Aired November 8, 2010, on Cartoon Network.

****Adventure Time.* Season 2, episode 5, "Slow Love." Directed by Bong Hee Han and Larry Leichliter. Aired November 15, 2010, on Cartoon Network.

**American Dad.* Season 7, episode 1, "Hot Water." Directed by Chris Bennett, Ron Hughart, and Brent Woods. Aired September 25, 2011, on Fox.

**American Dad.* Season 7, episode 2, "Hurricane!" Directed by Tim Parsons, Ron Hughart, and Brent Woods. Aired October 2, 2011, on Fox.

**American Dad.* Season 7, episode 3, "A Ward Show." Directed by Josue Cervantes, Ron Hughart, and Brent Woods. Aired November 6, 2011, on Fox.

***Arthur.* Season 11, episode 1, "Swept Away/Germophobia." Directed by Greg Bailey. Aired on June 25, 2007, on PBS.

***Arthur.* Season 11, episode 2, "Arthur Sells Out/Mind Your Manners." Directed by Greg Bailey. Aired on June 26, 2007, on PBS.

***Arthur.* Season 11, episode 9, "DW on Ice/Spoiled Rotten." Directed by Greg Bailey. Aired on September 6, 2007, on PBS.

**Bob's Burgers*. Season 2, episode 2, "Bob Day Afternoon." Directed by Wes Archer. Aired on March 18, 2012 on Fox.

**Bob's Burgers*. Season 2, episode 3, "Synchronized Swimming." Directed by Anthony Chun. Aired on March 25, 2012 on Fox.

**Bob's Burgers*. Season 2, episode 4, "Burgerboss." Directed by Jennifer Coyle. Aired on April 1, 2012 on Fox.

****Digimon: Digital Monsters.* Season 2, episode 1, "Enter Flamedramon." Directed by Hiroyuki Kakudo. Aired on August 19, 2000, on Nickelodeon.

****Digimon: Digital Monsters.* Season 2, episode 2, "The Digiteam Complete." Directed by Hiroyuki Kakudo. Aired on August 19, 2000, on Nickelodeon.

****Digimon: Digital Monsters.* Season 2, episode 3, "A New Digitude" Directed by Hiroyuki Kakudo. Aired on August 26, 2000, on Nickelodeon.

****Dragons: Riders of Berk*. Season 1, episode 12, "Thawfest." Directed by John Eng and Anthony Bell. Aired on November 28, 2012, on Cartoon Network.

****Dragons: Riders of Berk.* Season 1, episode 13, "When Lightning Strikes." Directed by John Sanford and Anthony Bell. Aired on December 5, 2012, on Cartoon Network.

****Dragons: Riders of Berk.* Season 1, episode 14, "What Flies Beneath." Directed by Louie del Carmen and Anthony Bell. Aired on December 6, 2013, on Cartoon Network.

***Legend of Korra. Season 1, episode 1, "Welcome to Republic City." Directed by Joaquim Dos Santos and Ki Hyun Ryu. Aired on April 14, 2012, on Nickelodeon.

****Legend of Korra.* Season 1, episode 2, "A Leaf in the Wind." Directed by Joaquim Dos Santos and Ki Hyun Ryu. Aired on April 14, 2012, on Nickelodeon.

***Legend of Korra. Season 1, episode 3, "The Revelation." Directed by Joaquim Dos Santos and Ki Hyun Ryu. Aired on April 21, 2012, on Nickelodeon.

****My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic.* Season 1, episode 1, "Friendship is Magic, Part 1 (Mare in the Moon)." Directed by Jayson Thiessen and James Wootton. Aired October 10, 2010 on The Hub.

****My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic.* Season 1, episode 2, "Friendship is Magic, Part 2 (Elements of Harmony)." Directed by Jayson Thiessen and James Wootton. Aired October 22, 2010, on The Hub.

***My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic. Season 1, episode 3, "The Ticketmaster." Directed by Jayson Thiessen and James Wootton. Aired October 29, 2010, on The Hub.

***Phineas and Ferb. Season 1, episode 8, "Jerk De Soleil/Toy to the World." Directed by Jeff "Swampy" Marsh and Dan Povenmire. Aired on February 10, 2008, on Nickelodeon.

***Phineas and Ferb. Season 1, episode 10, "A Hard Day's Knight/I, Brobot." Directed by Dan Povenmire. Aired on February 6, 2008, on Nickelodeon.

***Phineas and Ferb. Season 1, episode 13, "It's a Mud, Mud, Mud, Mud World/The Ballad of Badbeard." Directed by Zac Moncrief and Dan Povenmire. Aired on February 24, 2008, on Nickelodeon.

***SpongeBob SquarePants. Season 8, episode 1, "Accidents Will Happen/The Other Patty." Directed by Vincent Waller. Aired on June 25, 2011, on Nickelodeon.

***SpongeBob SquarePants. Season 8, episode 2, "Drive Thru/The Hot Shot." Directed by Vincent Waller. Aired on June 18, 2011, on Nickelodeon.

***SpongeBob SquarePants. Season 8, episode 3, "A Friendly Game/Sentimental Sponge." Directed by Vincent Waller. Aired on April 2, 2011, on Nickelodeon.

Broadcast Network*

Public Broadcasting**

Cable***

Argument Quality and Deliberation on Facebook: An Exploratory Study

Jessica Welch

In the past, scholars have argued that deliberation is important for a variety of reasons, including aiding in the development of political sophistication and decreasing attitudinal uncertainty (Gastil and Dillard 1999, 4-5). Engaging in deliberation allows individuals to become more informed about topics, which helps them to make informed decisions. This paper argues that if high argument quality is one requisite for deliberation, then deliberation is not occurring on Facebook due to its users' low-quality arguments. In order to test this claim, 71 Facebook conversations related to President Trump's immigration policies were analyzed. Results showed that users' arguments were generally low quality and confirmed previous research that states that effective deliberation does not occur on social media sites. Potential consequences of these results and avenues for future research are subsequently discussed within this paper.

Jessica Welch is a Ph.D. candidate at Purdue University. She studies communication technology, focusing specifically on social media interactions.

Literature Review

Deliberation is defined as a communicative process in which groups engage in rigorous analysis of an issue and participants are attentive and carefully weigh the reasons for and against arguments (Black, Burkhalter, Gastil, and Stromer-Galley 2013, 3; Halpern and Gibbs 2013, 1160). Deliberation has many benefits at both the individual and societal level. On an individual level, deliberation can increase political sophistication and decrease attitudinal uncertainty (Gastil and Dillard 1999, 4-5). At the societal level, it results in the formation of better ideas and subsequently, better decision making by citizens (Cappella, Price, and Nir 2002, 75-77).

Unfortunately, recent research (Stroud, Scacco, Muddiman, and Curry 2015, 188) has found that, particularly on social media, conversations are not living up to the ideals of deliberation. These ideals include civility, relevant comments, asking genuine questions, and providing evidence to support your position (Stroud et. al. 2015, 190). Individuals engaging in ideal deliberation are also attentive and carefully weigh the reasons for and against arguments (Black et. al. 2013, 3). One explanation for the lack of deliberation on social media platforms is the low quality of arguments. Therefore, this study analyzes conversations on two political pages in order to determine the quality of arguments in Facebook comments, whether deliberation is occurring on social media, and the extent to which argument quality impacts deliberation.

Quality Arguments as a Requisite for Deliberation

As previously stated, deliberation is a communicative process in which groups of people engage in the rigorous analysis of an issue and attentive participants carefully weigh the reasons for and against arguments (Black et. al. 2013, 3). The process should include building an information base, prioritizing key values, identifying and weighing solutions, and coming to the best possible conclusion (Black et. al. 2013, 4). According to Cohen (2003, 347), another element of ideal deliberation is that all arguments must be supported with evidence. He writes that individuals should commit to solving problems through reasoning and that deliberation only occurs if the outcome results from free and reasoned arguments. Arguments are "reasoned" if the individual can provide a logical explanation for why they support or criticize the idea (Cohen 2003, 349). The best explanations are objectively verifiable, meaning that they have truth values that can be proved or disproved (Park and Cardie 2014, 31).

The problem is that conversations taking place on social media sites do not always live up to these ideals (Stroud, et al. 2015, 188). Because quality arguments are a necessary element of deliberation, the use of low-quality arguments on social media may be one reason that deliberation is not taking place. An argument is defined as a sequence of relevant and true premises that support a conclusion (Walton 1990, 400). Therefore, a low-quality argument would be one that includes irrelevant, false, or misleading premises, or statements that do not clearly support the conclusion.

Importance of Deliberation

Democratic theory assumes that voters will learn about their leaders' policy positions before electing them, but previous research shows this may not be the case (Cappella et. al. 2002, 74). One cause of this issue may be a lack of effective deliberation about

politics. Research shows that engagement in deliberation benefits society in a variety of ways. One benefit of deliberation is that it increases political sophistication (Gastil and Dillard 1999, 4-5). According to Fiske and Taylor (1984) political sophistication can be defined as a "cognitive structure that represents one's general knowledge about a given concept" (13). Deliberation improves this cognitive structure by increasing individuals' schematic integration and differentiation, while decreasing their attitudinal uncertainty (Gastil and Dillard 1999, 4-5). Individuals' beliefs demonstrate integration and differentiation if they are ideologically consistent; low attitudinal uncertainty is apparent if they are able to confidently and clearly state their opinion on an issue. Another benefit of deliberation is that it encourages people to reflect on issues and engage in critical thinking—which then results in the formation of well-reasoned opinions. (Cappella et. al. 2002, 74).

Measuring Argument Quality

In order to demonstrate that the comments posted on Facebook are low-quality, a conceptualization of argument quality must be developed. Many past attempts have made significant contributions to the field but—due to a lack of clarity and consistency (Boller et. al. 1990, 321)—researchers have yet to reach a general consensus on the best way to measure and define argument quality (O'Keefe and Jackson 1995, 88). According to O'Keefe and Jackson, there are three primary approaches to the operationalization of argument quality: pre-test procedure, argument quality ratings, and unsystematic message variations (1995, 88). In the pre-test procedure, study participants rate potential arguments for persuasiveness. The issue with this method is that participants are rating persuasiveness

rather than quality. Fallacious and irrelevant statements may be persuasive in some instances, but still do not represent high-quality arguments. In the argument quality rating approach, participants rate the overall quality (rather than just the persuasiveness) of arguments. A limitation of this approach is that ratings are based on participants' perceptions of what makes a good argument. People likely interpret argument quality in various ways, so ratings would be inconsistent across participants. Finally, during unsystematic message variation, the researcher manipulates messages based on characteristics that they believe influence the quality of arguments to determine which characteristics participants perceive as more effective. Again, this system is based on the researchers' and participants' perceptions of argument quality and will vary based on who is rating the message. Therefore, a more objective measure of argument quality must be developed.

In order to create a new conceptualization of argument quality, this study adopts and combines two conceptualizations developed by past research. Primarily, this new operationalization will be based on Boller et. al.'s (1990, 322-23) four crucial elements of an argument. These four elements include: claim assertions, evidence, authority, and probability. The first element—claim assertion—refers to the extent that an individual can effectively and clearly state their argument (322). For example, an individual who comments, "I agree with the travel ban" or "I think the travel ban is unconstitutional," is using good claim assertion because you can clearly tell what their position is. The second element of argument quality—evidence—refers to the reasons and support that the individual provides to back up their argument. Based on a study conducted by Cappella et. al. (2002, 77), this means that the supporting

reasons must be relevant. For example, the comment "I disagree with the travel ban because it would cost the U.S. money" uses the potential for economic loss as the evidence for their argument.

The third element of argument quality—authority—refers to "warrants and backing," which is when the speaker connects the evidence to the claim and demonstrates how they are related (Boller et. al. 1990, 323). For example, a comment that uses authority could read, "I disagree with the travel ban because it would cost the U.S. money. If we limit the people that can visit the United States, we will lose money from tourism." In this statement, the potential for losing money is backed by the likelihood of decreased tourism under a travel ban.

Finally, the fourth element—probability—represents qualifiers and rebuttals. It refers both to the extent that individuals are willing to admit their claims are not absolute and to their ability to refute opposing arguments. For example, an individual could qualify their position by saying "I disagree with the travel ban unless we have documented proof that it will make our country safer." Someone may also write, "You say that the travel ban would cost our country money in tourism, but very few people from the countries on the banned list come to the U.S. for vacation." In both instances, the comments demonstrate probability because they either qualify or refute a claim.

The last study incorporated into the current conceptualization of argument quality is Hornikx and Hahn's research on the frequent use of fallacious arguments in discourse. They claim that fallacies—specifically argument ad hominem—occur often and are generally not noticed (2012, 233). Fallacies are statements that violate a procedural norm of a rational argument (236). For example,

in the ad hominem fallacy, an individual violates the rules of argumentation by dismantling their opponent rather than their opponent's argument. Specifically, they use personal attacks to make their opponent seem less credible, rather than finding fault in the opposing argument itself. Walton claims that the use of fallacies indicates an erroneous argument (1990, 399). Therefore, in the present study, the presence of fallacies in any Facebook comment will negatively affect the rating of that argument's quality.

Measuring Deliberation

Previous research indicates that, in order for a discussion to be considered deliberation, all comments must be civil, relevant, and not misleading (Coe et. al. 2014, 658-59; Stroud et al. 2015, 190). Unfortunately, several scholars have discovered that conversations occurring on social media rarely fit the requirements of ideal deliberation (Coe et. al. 2014, 658-59; Diakopoulos and Naaman 2011, 4-9). Therefore, effective deliberation in this study will be measured based on whether comments in each conversation are civil, relevant, and not misleading. Civil comments are those that do not contain profanity, threats, or name-calling. Comments are relevant if they contain only information about the post or introduce additional information that is pertinent to the post. For example, if an individual comments on a post about President Trump's travel ban and claims that the Obama administration created the list of banned countries, that is a relevant comment. However, a comment that discusses the improvements that President Trump has made to the economy is irrelevant. Finally, a misleading comment includes information that is false or tries to pass an opinion off as fact.

Based on the previously reviewed literature, the following hypotheses and research questions are posed (see Model 1):

RQ1: What is the overall quality of the arguments used in these Facebook conversations?

RQ2: How often does deliberation occur in these Facebook conversations?

H1: Conversations including higher-quality arguments are more likely to be deliberative than conversations including low-quality arguments.
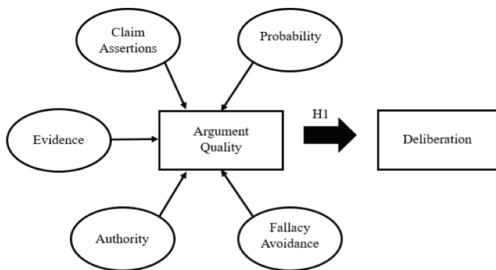
Model 1. Visualization of Argument Quality Measurements and Hypothesis 1

Methods

Conversations were collected from both the official Democratic and Republican party Facebook pages to avoid bias based on party affiliation. The dataset includes four posts (two from each page) related to President Trump's immigration policy with comments and replies to those comments. Only posts regarding President Trump's travel ban (often referred to as the "Muslim ban") were collected to prevent variance that may occur between topics. Posts and comments were collected in spring 2017. Data collection began in January, less than two weeks after President Trump signed the executive order banning individuals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from visiting the U.S. for 90 days. This topic was chosen because of its timeliness and controversy. As previously stated, I wanted to limit conversations to one topic and a timely topic guaranteed sufficient posts and comments for coding. Second, controversial issues typically encourage individuals who disagree to discuss their views on Facebook in conversations that range from deliberation to virtual shouting matches. I wanted conversations wherein people discussed their disagreements in a variety of ways. In total, 71 conversations, including 328 individual comments, were collected and coded for argument quality and deliberation. Comments were evenly distributed across political parties.

Individual comments were coded based on argument quality using Boller et. al.'s (1990, 322-23) four crucial elements of an argument (claim assertion, evidence, authority, and probability) and Hornikx and Hahn's (2012, 233) research on the frequent use of fallacies in arguments. Specifically, each comment was coded for whether the individual: 1) clearly stated their opinion, 2) provided evidence, 3) explained how that evidence support their opinion, 4) qualified their opinion or refuted another opinion, and 5) avoided fallacious reasoning (specifically, avoided use of argument ad hominem). Argument ad hominem was the type of fallacy I coded for because Hornikx and Hahn (2012, 235) found that it is the most common fallacy in social media conversations. Each variable was coded dichotomously (0=not present; 1=present). In this way, each comment received a score ranging from zero to five with a higher number representing a better argument.

For example, the comments in Images 1 and 2 both received a score of zero for argument quality. Neither comment includes a clear claim assertion, evidence, authority, or probability. In other words, the authors of

both comments fail to clearly and effectively articulate their position on the issue, they do not provide evidence or indicate how that evidence supports their opinion, and they do not include a qualifier or rebuttal. Furthermore, both comments include an ad hominem fallacy (personal attack). It can be implied that the writer of comment one supports the travel ban, while the individual who wrote the second comment is against it, but points for claim assertion were only awarded when the opinion was clearly stated.
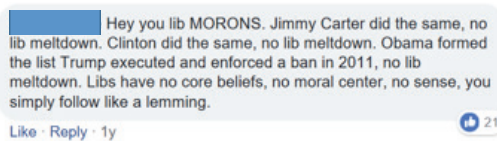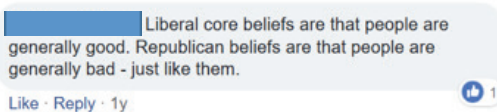

Image 1. Low-Quality Argument

Image 2. Low-Quality Argument

Although far from perfect, Image 3 represents a better argument. The comment gets one point for claim assertion because you can clearly identify the individual's opinion (President Trump is on solid legal ground). The author also provides evidence in the form of an excerpt from the Immigration and Nationality Act (one point). Finally, the author avoids the use of fallacies (one point).
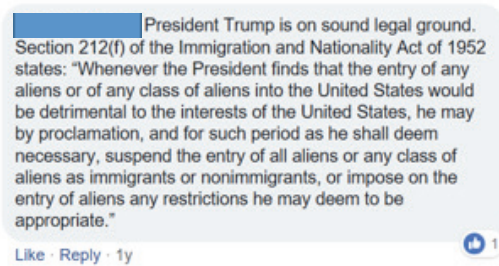
Image 3. Better Quality Argument

In order to determine the level of deliberation that occurred, each comment in a conversation was coded based on whether it was: 1) irrelevant, 2) uncivil, and 3) misleading. These variables were coded dichotomously (0=not present; 1=present). Comments that received zeros for items 1-3 were considered most deliberative. Conversations consisted of a comment on a post and the replies to that comment. It was not necessary for any individual to comment more than once for it to be considered a conversation. The more comments in a conversation that were coded as irrelevant, uncivil, or misleading, the less deliberative it was.

For example, Image 4 is an example of a conversation that was coded as not deliberative. The first comment was irrelevant because it mentioned homelessness, veterans, foster children, and abortion. It was also misleading by implying that preventing Muslims from coming to America would stop terrorism. The second and third comments were uncivil because they included personal attacks.

No, they are NOT welcome here. We have too many homeless people. Our veterans need help. We also need to help our foster kids so we can stop abortion aka the senseless murder of the unborn babies. Stomp out terrorism. Stop bringing muslims to America!!!

Like · Reply · 1y   👍 11

Such a nasty woman !!   ···

Like · Reply · 1y

Really Farooq Baluch? Not wanting to kill babies but wanting the veterans and homeless cared for is nasty,! Says a lot about you.

Like · Reply · 1y   👍 1

Image 4. Low Deliberation Conversation

Image 5 is a conversation that is closer to deliberation but was still coded as not deliberative due to the dichotomous nature of the coding (each conversation is either coded as 1, indicating that deliberation occurred, or coded as 0, indicating that deliberation did not occur). It includes some comments regarding the nature of the media and the travel ban that could be considered misleading, but the conversation remained civil and all comments were relevant.

Ok, he didn't ban muslims, he banned people from 7 countries. Yes, those countries have a majority Muslim population, but that's because they persecute any body who isnt Muslim. Also, these nations weren't chosen by random, in his first week in office, the list came from the Obama administration when they were having discussions with homeland security about this very issue.

Like · Reply · 1y   👍 8

Most Relevant is selected, so some replies may have been filtered out.

https://www.dhs.gov/.../dhs-announces-further-travel...

DHS.GOV
DHS Announces Further Travel Restrictions for the Visa Waiver Program | Homeland...

Like · Reply · 1y   👍 3

yours is probably the most important post here. The media seems to want to cling to this "Muslim ban," but that's an incorrect characterization and a outright lie. They are purposely gas-lighting this issue, and evidently some people are stupid enough to parrot that idiocy.

Like · Reply · 1y   👍 4

If it's not a muslim ban, why are christians given exceptions?

Like · Reply · 1y

Christian aren't getting exemptions, but they will get preferential treatment when the ban is lifted. This is because being christians is a crime in some of the nation's under the travel restrictions. Also, the people who tend to have radical Islamic tendencies in the region, aren't christians.

Like · Reply · 1y   👍 2

Image 5. Moderate Deliberation

Results

To answer RQ1: "What is the overall quality of the arguments used?" frequencies were calculated to determine how many conversations included comments with each of the four crucial elements of argument quality (Boller et. al. 1990, 322-23). Of the 71 conversations analyzed, 58 (77.3%) included claim assertions (the individual clearly stated their argument), 32 (42.7%) included evidence (the argument was backed up with reasoning and evidence), 3 (4%) included authority (the individual clearly demonstrated how the evidence supports their argument) and only 1 (1.3%) included probability (the comment included a qualifier or rebuttal). Regarding fallacy use, 42 conversations (56%) included at least one fallacy. Therefore, in response to

RQ1, results indicate that the overall quality of arguments in this dataset was low. In fact, only one conversation (1.3% of the sample) met all the requirements for a high-quality argument and included a claim assertion, evidence, authority, and probability. These low percentages demonstrate that a major reason that effective deliberation is not happening on social media is because of low-quality arguments. Even when conversations remain civil, individuals often fail to support their claims with evidence, demonstrate how that evidence supports their position, qualify their arguments, or refute opposing views. These low-quality arguments indicate that, on Facebook at least, public discourse is not making individuals more informed.

To investigate how often deliberation occurred in the dataset (RQ2), frequencies were calculated to determine how many conversations included uncivil, irrelevant, or misleading comments (Coe et. al. 2014, 660-61; Diakopoulos and Naaman 2011, 4-9; Stroud et. al. 2015, 190). Of the conversations analyzed, 32 (42.7%) included irrelevant comments, 34 (45.3%) included uncivil comments, and 15 (20%) included misleading comments. If the conversation included any of these elements, it was not considered deliberative. Therefore, in response to RQ2, deliberation occurred in less than a quarter (22.7%) of the conversations.

To answer Hypothesis 1, which predicted that higher-quality arguments would lead to more deliberation, deliberation was operationalized as a dichotomous variable, with deliberation either occurring or not. Deliberation was coded at the conversation level, with a conversation considered deliberative if its comments were civil, relevant, and not misleading. Argument quality was measured using a combination of variables (claim assertion, evidence,

authority, probability, and fallacy-free) and was coded at the comment level. For example, arguments that included several pieces of evidence were considered higher quality than an argument with only one piece of evidence. Similarly, arguments with multiple fallacies were considered lower quality than arguments including only one fallacy. Results indicate that in every instance in which deliberation occurred, arguments were fallacy-free and included at least a claim assertion, with the majority also including evidence. On the other hand, conversations in which deliberation did not take place generally included multiple fallacies and were missing the four crucial elements of argument quality (Boller et. al. 1990, 322-23). In some cases, the "evidence" element was present, but in others the element was missing. In other words, the individual provided support for an argument that they did not clearly articulate. Overall, the conversations that were considered deliberation included higher-quality arguments than those that were not. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

One interesting result that was not predicted by the hypotheses or research questions was that the use of inflammatory language in the original post did not impact the argument quality or deliberation of conversations. For example, comments on the Democrat's post calling the travel ban "morally bankrupt" were no less civil or relevant than comments on their less provocative post. Additionally, the Republican post that mentioned 9/11 as an excuse for the travel ban did not elicit more incivility or lower quality arguments. In other words, comments were consistently low quality and conversations lacked deliberation regardless of the original post.

Discussion and Conclusions

This exploratory study supports the claim that higher-quality arguments lead to more deliberative conversations. Results also confirm previous research on deliberation which found that it rarely occurs on social media sites. This analysis indicated that—as Hornikx and Hahn (2012, 235) found—argument ad hominem (name calling) is all too common in online discussions. This name calling is one example of the lack of civility on social media, which leads to a lack of deliberation. Deliberation, defined as a communicative process in which groups engage in rigorous analysis of an issue (Black et. al. 2013, 3), helps individuals to become more informed about topics by learning from others' opinions and experiences. The fact that individuals have so many opportunities to exchange information and engage in civil dialogue with others, and yet rarely do so, may be a symptom of a larger societal problem.

One theory that may shed light on individuals' lack of ability or desire to engage in productive deliberation is Motivated Reasoning. Motivated Reasoning is a goal-directed strategy for cognitive processing in which individuals seek out information that confirms their prior views, consider evidence consistent with their opinions as stronger, and spend time arguing against evidence inconsistent with their opinions (Druckman 2012, 200; Nir 2011, 505-6). According to this theory, when individuals are faced with new information, their analysis of it is biased based on their previous beliefs. This is an obstacle to deliberation because—when faced with information that contradicts their position—individuals may ignore or discount it rather than updating their views (Nir 2011, 505-6). Motivated Reasoning is particularly common with highly partisan topics (like the travel ban) when individuals

feel pressure to agree with the dominant position of their political group. In these cases, party allegiance may be stronger than an individual's opinion on the topic, leading them to maintain their position even when faced with contradictory evidence (Gaines et. al. 2007, 963). In this way, discussion about a political issue may lead to more polarization between groups rather than compromise (Hart and Nisbet 2011, 702-5). Therefore, the low-quality arguments and lack of deliberation found in this research may be partially explained by the political topics studied. Future research should examine argument quality and deliberation surrounding a variety of topics to determine how results might differ.

In addition to studying comments on varying topics, there are some other limitations that future research could address. Future research should examine dialogue on both a variety of topics and on a variety of Facebook pages. The Facebook users who visit the pages examined in this study likely hold stronger political views and may therefore be more close-minded when it comes to discussing controversial issues. Conversations taking place on different pages may be less extreme, include higher-quality arguments, and be more comparable to ideal deliberation. Another issue that previous research has encountered, and that this study also experienced, is the operationalization of argument quality. Research still lacks a general characterization of argument quality and agreement on what elements are necessary to high-quality arguments (O'Keefe and Jackson 1995, 88). This study attempts to improve previous measures by combining two of the most parsimonious characterizations (Boller et. al. 1990, 322-23; Hornikx and Hahn 2012, 232-38), but the problem—lack of consensus on argument quality measures—remains. In this study, the argument quality

of each comment was determined by a single coder, so reliability could not be calculated. To validate the arguement quality measurements I proposed, a future study could include a sample of the low, medium, and high-quality arguments from this study and ask participants to rate their quality without introducing them to the elements identified by Boller et. al. (1990, 322-23). Future research should also duplicate this study with several coders, rather than a single coder, in order to achieve reliability and produce more rigorous results. Despite these limitations, this study provides important contributions in the areas of argument quality, deliberation, and online engagement.

Bibliography

Black, Laura W., Stephanie Burkhalter, John Gastil, and Jennifer Stromer-Galley. 2013. "Methods for Measuring and Analyzing Group Deliberation." In *Sourcebook of Political Communication Research: Methods, Measures, and Analytical Techniques*, edited by Eric P. Bucy and R. Lance Holbert, 323-45. New York, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Boller, George W., John L. Swasy, and James M. Munch. 1990. "Conceptualizing Argument Quality Via Argument Structure." In *Advances in Consumer Research*, edited by Marvin E. Goldberg, Gerald Gorn, and Richard W. Pollay, 17:321–28. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Cappella, Joseph N., Vincent Price, and Lilach Nir. 2002. "Argument Repertoire as a Reliable and Valid Measure of Opinion Quality: Electronic Dialogue During Campaign 2000." *Political Communication* 19 (1): 73-93.

Coe, Kevin, Kate Kenski, and Stephen A. Rains. 2014. "Online and Uncivil? Patterns and Determinants of Incivility in Newspaper Website Comments." *Journal of Communication* 64 (4): 658-79.

Cohen, Joshua. 2003. "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy." In *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, edited by Derek Matravers and Jon Pike, 342-60. New York, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Democratic Party's Facebook page. Accessed March 2017. https://www.facebook.com/democrats/.

Diakopoulos, Nicholas, and Mor Naaman. 2011. "Towards Quality Discourse in Online News Comments." Paper presented at the Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, Hangzhou, China, March 19-23.

Druckman, James N. 2012. "The Politics of Motivation." *Critical Review* 24 (2): 199-216.

Fiske, Susan T., and Shelley E. Taylor. 1984. *Social Cognition: From Brains to Culture*. New York City: Random House.

Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton, and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. "Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq." *The Journal of Politics* 69 (4): 957-74.

Gastil, John, and James P. Dillard. 1999. "Increasing Political Sophistication through Public Deliberation." *Political Communication* 16 (1): 3-23.

GOP's Facebook page. Accessed March 2017. https://www.facebook.com/GOP/?ref=br_rs.

Halpern, Daniel, and Jennifer Gibbs. 2013. "Social Media as a Catalyst for Online Deliberation? Exploring the Affordances of Facebook and YouTube for Political Expression." *Computers in Human Behavior* 29 (3): 1159-68.

Hart, P. Sol, and Erik C. Nisbet. 2011. "Boomerang Effects in Science Communication: How Motivated Reasoning and Identity Cues Amplify Opinion Polarization about Climate Mitigation Politics." *Communication Research* 39 (6): 701-23.

Hornikx, Jos, and Ulrike Hahn. 2012. "Reasoning and Argumentation: Towards an Integrated Psychology of Argumentation." *Thinking & Reasoning* 18 (3): 225-43.

Nir, Lilach. 2011. "Motivated Reasoning and Public Opinion Perception." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 75 (3): 504-32.

O'Keefe, Daniel J., and Sally Jackson. 1995. "Argument Quality and Persuasive Effects: A Review of Current Approaches." In Argumentation and Values: *Proceedings of the Ninth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, 88-92. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association.

Park, Joonsuk, and Claire Cardie. 2014. "Identifying Appropriate Support for Propositions in Online User Comments." In *Proceedings of the First Workshop on Argumentation Mining*, 29-38. Baltimore, MD: Association for Computational Linguistics.

Stroud, Natalie Jomini, Joshua M. Scacco, Ashley Muddiman, and Alexander L. Curry. 2015. "Changing Deliberative Norms on News Organizations' Facebook Sites." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 20 (2): 188-203.

Walton, Douglas N. 1990. "What is Reasoning? What is an Argument?" *Journal of Philosophy* 87 (8): 399-419.

Presenting an Innocent Nation: Critique of *Gojira* (1954)'s Reflections on Japan's WWII Responsibility

Fanglin Wang

The Japanese film *Gojira* (known as Godzilla to Western audiences) is a *kaiju* or monster movie, and the first installment in the *Gojira* series. *Gojira* films are allegorical, and typically comment on the contemporary political and moral issues of their time. Released soon after Japan's defeat in WWII, *Gojira* offers timely insights into Japan's reluctance to admit wrongdoing in initiating and entering the Second World War. Created shortly after the U.S. Occupation Period (1945-1952), *Gojira* (1954) sheds light on who is to blame and who is not to blame when dealing with Japan's war responsibility. *Gojira* attributes blame to the pro-American Japanese government officials and the American nuclear-bomb program while presenting an innocent Japan through the film's focus on common Japanese people who are victimized by both nuclear bombs and the invasion of the monster Gojira. This contrast in representation presents ways of remembering and ways of forgetting, thus depicting an imagined history that allows Japan to escape from confronting its war responsibility.

Fanglin Wang is an M.A. student in Communication, Culture, and Technology at Georgetown University. Her research focuses on Japanese films' reflections on war trauma in post–WWII, and national cinema at large. She can be reached at fw181@georgetown.edu.

Part I. Historical Background

At one point in the 20th century, Japan walked the path of war. Then, on December 8, 1941, Japan initiated hostilities against the U.S., Great Britain and others, plunging into what came to be known as the Pacific War. This war was largely fought elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region, but when the tide turned against Japan, American warplanes began bombing the homeland, and Okinawa became a bloody battlefield. Within this context of war, on August 6, 1945, the world's first atomic weapon, a bomb of unprecedented destructive power, was dropped on the city of Hiroshima. (Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall)

This is the epitaph on the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for nuclear bomb victims in Hiroshima, Japan. Serving as a message to contextualize WWII history, it is missing the correct timeline for the initiation of hostilities in East Asia. The epitaph is controversial—particularly for Chinese and Korean citizens—because it neglects to mention Japan's own responsibility in initiating the war and the numerous atrocities they committed during that period. WWII actually started on September 18, 1931, when the Japanese army used an "explosion on the South Manchurian railway" as an excuse to invade Manchuria (Tanaka 2006, 1). That "Japan was defeated…by Asians" was also not acknowledged on the memorial shrine and "naturally hinders full recognition of the responsibility of Japan's abhorrent military acts and the war losses that its Asian neighbors suffered as a result of war and colonialism" (Tanaka, 2). Another controversial aspect of this message is the presentation of Japan's victimhood. The deaths of hundreds of thousands of Japanese citizens in Hiroshima and Nagasaki is framed as a "sacred

sacrifice," while "removing any reference to [Japan] kill[ing] so many people or why and for what these people had to be 'sacrificed'" (2). This message positions the Japanese as "victims of war rather than as assailants" (2).

In the post-WWII period, Japan's reconstruction of its cultural and national identity included a reluctance to admit its war crimes; this has become one of the most debated issues among its neighbors— namely China and South Korea—who suffered from Japan's invasion. At least 14 million Chinese people were killed during Japan's invasion of China (Mitter 2013). The most notorious war atrocity in China was the Nanjing Massacre, in which Japan brutally slaughtered 300,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians from December 1937 to January 1938 (Merkel-Hess and Wasserstrom 2010). Similarly, between 1932 and 1945, Japan forced approximately 80,000-plus women from the Korean Peninsula, China, and other Southeast Asian countries to work as military prostitutes—known today as "comfort women"—for Japanese soldiers (Sala 2017; Blakemore 2018). The lack of acknowledgement of these and other atrocities was made explicit in Japan's revision of its high school history textbooks, which excluded these and other war crimes the Japanese committed during WWII (Oi 2013; Hayashi 2015).

According to the current Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Japan dealt collectively with the issue of reparations, property, and claims with the countries concerned. That was the method that was generally accepted by the international community at the time" ("History Issue Q&A" 2018). In 1993, Japan issued its first official apology for "recruiting" Asian and European women to work as comfort women (Sterngold 1993). However, Japan refused to admit that they literally forced these women to

work as military prostitutes (Sterngold). In addition, Japan apologized specifically to South Korea in 2015 and offered $8.3 million to "provide care" for former comfort women (Sang-Hun 2015). These apologies did not satisfy the victims. In response to Japan's apology to South Korea in 2015, survivors and their advocates criticized the apology as not "complete and meaningful" enough, since "[it] did not recognize Japan's role in establishing and maintaining the system of sexual slavery…It fails to meet criteria set out in international human rights norms that a public apology must be an 'acknowledgement of the facts…'" (Tolbert 2017).

Furthermore, it is telling that it took until the 1990s for Japan to even approach a meaningful acknowledgment of wartime atrocities. To understand how this situation arose, it is useful to examine the U.S. Occupation in Japan from 1945 to 1952, in which the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of General Headquarters of the Allied Occupation Forces (GHQ) was responsible for "teaching Japanese citizens 'the truth' about the war by revealing Japanese war crimes and highlighting the devastating consequences of the war including Japan's destruction and defeat" (Tanaka 2006, 3). However, despite these duties, much of the information on Japan's war atrocities—such as Japan's colonization of Korea and Taiwan, and China's resistance to Japan's invasion—were not taught to the Japanese public (Tanaka 2006, 4).

In the early 1950s, the United States' top priority was to exploit and bolster the democratic ideological frontier of Japan against neighboring communist powers such as China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea (Tanaka, 6). Thus, the United States government was lenient in forgiving Japan for its war crimes, both during the

1946 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and the establishment of the San Francisco Treaty in 1951 (6). To make the U.S. occupation of Japan as seamless as possible, General MacArthur and the U.S. government protected Emperor Hirohito in order to get his testimony in the Tokyo Trial (5). They depicted Emperor Hirohito as a victim who suffered from the deception of Japanese military leaders during the war; in the public's mind, the Emperor "emerged… as the peacemaker who saved Japan from annihilation" (5).

Part II. Literature Review

(a) Movies' Reflections on Social Change and Politics

As a media form that reflects social change, movies reimagine and reinterpret history. They also play an important role in the formation of identity. Analysis of Japanese films has shown strong links between the films messages and viewers' contemporary ideological concerns—such as their views on democratization, victimhood, masculinity, and war responsibility.

In the 1920s, films were used as a tool to reinforce Japan's social education policy. The Japanese bureaucrats viewed the general public as less intelligent than elites; thus, their education and social values needed to be strengthened through government-approved films (Hideaki 2013, 79-82).

During the U.S. occupation period, film critic Kyoko Hirano (1992) states that popular Japanese media channels such as film, radio, and theater were used by U.S. forces to spread occupation propaganda and democratic ideals (Hirano, 5). To reconstruct Japan's democracy and comply with the Potsdam Declaration (the terms of Japan's surrender), censorship was widely

enforced in the film industry; as the Cold War approached, the U.S. censors paid more attention to banning films that were leftist and communist (Hirano, 6).

In the 1950s and 60s, popular movies in Japan were mostly state-promoted war propaganda (Gerow 2006, 2). Yale Japanese film studies professor Aaron Gerow (2016) argues that there were only a few types of Japanese war films being produced in this post-war period. In many of these movies, Japan is depicted as "a normal nation" with "healthy nationalism" (Gerow 2016, 196). Soldiers in these films willingly die for their country, such as Japanese WWII heroes like Yamamoto Isoroku, or "young kamikaze pilots" (Gerow 2006, 2). These movies depict "individualized melodramas of victimization and sacrifice" and helped in the formation of Japanese neo-nationalism in their "reinforcement of Japanese masculinity [and] the veneration of the sacrificial war dead" (2). In the 1990s, movies became bolder in their attempt to revise history; they would "fantasize Japanese victories, free…of the 'taboos' of postwar Japanese democracy that so many on the pop culture right complain of" (2).

In interpreting the fantasy presented in Japanese war films, Gerow states that viewers should not just look for "signs of an independent Japanese nationalism," but also discover:

> the reasons why the nationalism in these works is so warped and tortured, confronted with a myriad of obstacles it takes convoluted paths to avoid…reminding us of what nationalism has to erase in order to appear compelling and unproblematic. (11)

It is within this context that it is important to look at Japanese post-war films' fictional presentation of victimization and war responsibility, as they have a strong link to Japanese citizens' present and past ideologies in real life. Previous researchers have studied political and social responses to the traumatic events of WWII. However, few have focused on the controversial issue of Japan's war responsibility through the lens of Japanese film production in the 1950s.

(b) Gojira (1954)

> Produced in 1954, Gojira reflects immediate and agonizing memories of man-made destruction. This is because Japan in the mid-1950s still bore the scars–both physical and emotional–of total war and defeat. Long after Japan's surrender in 1945, even long after the departure of General MacArthur and the American occupation forces in 1952, the shadows of the WWII tenaciously haunted the Japanese people. Despite the guarded return of economic prosperity in the 1950s and steady progress on physical rebuilding, the dark memories of war — so compellingly evoked in Gojira — remained fresh and traumatic. (Tsutsui 2004, 16-18)

Made soon after Japan's defeat in WWII, *Gojira* offers a timely insight into Japan's reluctance to admit its wrongdoing in initiating and entering the war. *Gojira* is a *kaiju* (monster) movie and the first in the *Gojira* series. Major themes include anti-American sentiments and anti-nuclear messages. *Gojira* films are allegorical, commenting on political and moral issues of their historical time. Instead of presenting the war atrocities Japan committed in WWII, *Gojira* presents an innocent Japan that is traumatized by nuclear bombs and strives to protect itself from the invasion of the monster Gojira (referred to in the West as Godzilla). There is a notable absence of military soldiers in the film, which presents

an image of innocence instead of reminding viewers of the aggression of Japanese soldiers during the war.

Part III. Movie Analysis of *Gojira* (1954)

Gojira sheds light on who is to blame and who is not to blame when dealing with Japan's war responsibility. The innocent and blameless common Japanese people are presented as victims of the nuclear bombs and it criticizes the privileged pro-American Japanese government officials' inability to deal with an external threat. The movie also condemns American science, in particular the invention and use of nuclear bombs, which destroyed the peaceful life of the common Japanese people. In this way, *Gojira* reframes Japan's role in WWII as that of a powerless victim and not an aggressor, and therefore denies its own responsibility while erasing its war crimes.

The movie *Gojira* opens with the sinking of two Japanese ships, Eiko-maru and Bingo-maru, near Odo Island. The ancient sea creature Gojira is blamed for this incident by local elders. Professor Yamane and his colleagues go to Odo Island to investigate and find that Gojira's footprints are radioactive. In Professor Yamane's presentation to the Diet (i.e. Japan's national legislature), he demonstrates that Gojira is a creature that is produced by nuclear bombs. Hearing this, conservative politicians and journalists have a heated debate on whether to reveal the presence of Gojira to the public. Under pressure from the government, the news about Gojira is censured. However, Gojira's continuous attacks on Tokyo make destroying Gojira an urgent matter. Professor Yamane's daughter Emiko confesses to her lover Ogata that her fiancé Dr. Serizawa's

has created a weapon, called the Oxygen Destroyer, that can kill Gojira. Emiko and Ogata visit Dr. Serizawa's research lab and try to persuade him to use the Oxygen Destroyer to destroy Gojira. Dr. Serizawa hesitates at first, but after he sees the people of Japan suffering and praying for peace, he decides he must use it. In the end, Dr. Serizawa releases the Oxygen Destroyer into Tokyo Bay, sacrificing his life in the process.

Sequence 1: Professor Yamane's Testimony to the Diet

Gojira's first scene is an effective demonstration of Japanese power dynamics in the 1950s. The scene features four groups: politicians, scientists, journalists, and common people. The scene opens with Professor Yamane explaining his investigation of Gojira's presence on Odo Island. As the presenter, Professor Yamane is supposed to be given the most attention in this scene. However, more light is given to the Japanese politicians sitting to the right of the frame. The contrast of light indicates the importance of the Japanese politicians and the relatively unimportant presence of Professor Yamane. Moreover, Professor Yamane's voice is calm, soft and slow. As a pragmatic and elderly pacifist, Professor Yamane provides the film with a voice of reason. However, his soft voice denotes a lack of forcefulness, which indicates his powerlessness in deciding whether to publicize Gojira's existence to the general public. In comparison, the voices of the politicians and journalists in the room are fast and loud.

As Professor Yamane explains why the ancient creature Gojira appeared in Japan, the film uses medium shots on both the scientist group (led by Professor Yamane) and the politician group (led by Representative Oyama). The focus on Professor Yamane and

Representative Oyama is also a reflection of the hierarchal male-dominated Japanese society, where men are generally given more respect and influence than women, and older people are generally more respected than younger people. Professor Yamane and Representative Oyama are the oldest males in their respective groups and are centered as the focal point of their groups by both dressing in black suits while the other men around them wear lighter colored suits. When Professor Yamane ends his presentation, the curtains in the room are opened and sunlight streams into the room to illuminate the side of the room where the scientists sit—indicating the professor's transparency and credibility.

Following Professor Yamane's presentation, a debate begins between members of the Diet and a contingent of journalists on whether the general public should know the truth (i.e. Gojira's presence). Representative Oyama stands up and argues against making Gojira's presence known to the public. His colleagues look up to him and nod several times in agreement when Representative Oyama insists that releasing news on Gojira will make "Japan's fragile diplomatic relations become further strained…Our political life, economy, and foreign relations will be plunged into chaos" (*Gojira* 1954). Although the window curtain is still open, strangely, no sunlight is shining into their side of the room—indicating that the arguments made by Representative Oyama (i.e. the leader of the politicians' group) are not transparent or trustworthy. The historical and ideological subtext of this scene is clear. In the Occupation Period of the 1950s, the Diet (Japan's national legislature) was under U.S. control. By refusing to publicize Gojira's presence after learning that Gojira is radioactive and presents an imminent threat to the Japanese people, the film's untrustworthy politicians represent the pro-

American Japanese politicians who were protecting American interests at this time.

In the same scene, Representative Oyama's argument is quickly interrupted by a group of journalists. The male journalists all sit in the first row, but the camera tilts to ensure the modern-dressed female journalists are the dominant figures in the camera frame. The female journalist who dresses in black is again the oldest and the most experienced, however, she is not the focus of the journalist group that is confronting Representative Oyama. Instead, a woman dressed in a light-colored western-style blouse and hat is the first journalist that speaks up to argue with Representative Oyama. Her voice is loud and quick; she waves her arm upward as she defends the responsibility of telling the truth to the public. In the context of 1950s Japanese society, her assertive actions present as masculine, and her new ideas and comparative youth are at odds with traditional social norms—as represented by a silent middle-aged woman in a kimono near the politicians.

The woman in the kimono is depicted through a long shot, which seems to signify her unimportance, in the middle of Representative Oyama's arguments. However, including this woman among the politicians is not a coincidence. Since the kimono is symbolic of traditional Japanese culture, this middle-aged woman seems to represent the preservation of Japanese tradition in the society. She looks serious, quiet, and seems not to wear any make-up, which reminds the audience of the war-time Japanese women who wholeheartedly devoted themselves to support the country. The Diet preserves traditional Japanese culture, which is represented in this scene by the kimono-wearing woman. Thus, the journalist's dress code and language

represents a challenge to the Diet and their traditional values.

As the politicians and journalists argue with each other, we see a high angle that captures the messiness of the presentation room, in which the group of journalists and the group of politicians stand up and point fingers at each other. As the arguing continues in the background, the camera shifts to capture Professor Yamane and his associates who look too terrified to get involved in this argument. This further illustrates the powerlessness of the scientists and the strength of the politicians. We also see the common people who came to listen to the Gojira presentation. They are only included in the far right of the camera frame, indicating their vulnerability and lack of influence.

In the next shot, we are shown the newspaper that is published the next morning. Instead of publishing articles on Gojira, articles include topics such as "Disaster Response Center established" and "Heavy losses at sea: 17 ships sunk to date." In this scene, Gojira is Japan's unsolved problems. This symbolization can be further analyzed through Gerow's statement, in which he argues the importance of discovering "the reasons why the nationalism in [fantasy war films are] so warped and tortured, confronted with a myriad of obstacles it takes convoluted paths to avoid…reminding us of what nationalism has to erase in order to appear compelling and unproblematic" (Gerow 2006, 11). The court scene in which Professor Yamane gives his presentation on Gojira resembles the court of the Tokyo Trial, during which the countries who won WWII gathered together to examine Japan's war crimes. Similar to the actual events— in which the United States helped Japan cover up crimes committed by the Emperor Hirohito and his senior advisors in exchange

for setting up a military base to spread democracy and confront communism— conservative politicians in the film also try to disguise Japan's vulnerability. By not dealing with Gojira properly and hiding the truth from the public, the film's politician characters (who care only about Japan's international reputation rather than its people) become metaphorical stand-ins for pro-American politicians in post-war Japan. Killing Gojira therefore allows Japan's history to be metaphorically rewritten, so that Japan can be as innocent as it is before the war.

Sequence 2: Dr. Serizawa's Decision

In confronting the threat from Gojira's invasion, there is no alternative but to use Dr. Serizawa's Oxygen Destroyer in order to save Japan. Though this could be compared to the United States using an atomic bomb during World War II, the film depicts Dr. Serizawa as Japan's savior. He has no intention of letting his invention be used to hurt people and thus represents the altruism of Japanese science. American science— represented in the film by atomic bombs that injured and killed Japanese people— is implicitly criticized. Furthermore, the absence of Japanese government officials in figuring out how to destroy Gojira represents a critique of the Japanese government. Thus, the film argues that in the post-war period, the future hope of Japan relies on altruistic scientists like Dr. Serizawa rather than untrustworthy (i.e. pro-American) politicians like the ones in the movie.

When Dr. Serizawa explains to Ogata why he has never published his research on the Oxygen Destroyer, he confesses that once his research gets published, politicians around the world will inevitably turn it into a weapon. Thus, as long as he lives, there is a chance that he will be forced to

use the destructive Oxygen Destroyer. As he speaks, nostalgic and sad music plays in the background, which seems to justify the credibility of Dr. Serizawa's comments. A close-up of Dr. Serizawa's face highlights the eye mask worn on his right eye, which was injured during the war. As the viewers hypothesize what would happen if Dr. Serizawa publishes his research, Dr. Serizawa's eyepatch acts as a living reminder of the war and evokes audiences' sympathy towards him. He embodies the decency and the benevolence of Japanese science.

In the next shot, a group of middle-aged people—the majority of whom are women dressed in kimonos and men dressed in Western and soldiers' clothes—surround a television set to watch the same program as Dr. Serizawa. Their clothes are made from simple materials and the fact that everyone stands around one television indicates that they do not come from high-income households. As the camera zooms out, viewers can see that the middle-aged people are praying for peace, which also signifies their vulnerability and lack of control in the situation. Their praying hands further emphasize the film's depiction of a harmless and innocent Japanese nation traumatized by war.

This illusion is further strengthened in the next shot in which young school girls are singing in a gymnasium. At first, a long shot captures the school girls in both the first and second floor of the gymnasium, followed by a close-up of these young girls' faces row by row. The tears in their eyes are clearly visible as they sing. Seeing this scene on television ultimately persuades Dr. Serizawa to kill Gojira. After turning off the television, Dr. Serizawa stands up and burns all his notes, as he decides to use his invention to kill both Gojira and himself, to ensure that the Oxygen Destroyer will never again be used

as a weapon. The film frames this decision as the ultimate sacrifice.

In Gerow's terms, Japan is depicted in *Gojira* as "a normal nation" with a "healthy nationalism," for which soldiers willingly die (2016, 196). Although Dr. Serizawa is not a soldier in the movie, his sacrifice to save Japan functions in the same way. Without stating explicitly who is to blame, this scene focuses on the victims. With the implication that Gojira is radioactive, Dr. Serizawa's sacrifice resembles the "sacred sacrifice" of Japanese victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings (Gerow 2006, 2). In this vein, Dr. Serizawa's death at the end serves to "remov[e] any reference to [Japan] kill[ing] so many people [during the war], or why and for what these people had to be 'sacrificed.'" The film positions the Japanese people as "victims of war rather than as assailants" (2006, 2).

Sequence 3: The Death of Gojira and Dr. Serizawa

The third sequence focuses on the heroic actions of Dr. Serizawa and Ogata as they go underwater to kill Gojira with the Oxygen Destroyer at the end of the film. The destruction of Gojira is a victory for a more innocent and purified Japan and the death of Dr. Serizawa is presented as a sacred sacrifice.

As Dr. Serizawa and Ogata go down to the bottom of the ocean in search of Gojira, the nostalgic and sad music is once again used to indicate praise for their effort to save the nation. Gojira, who sleeps at the bottom of the sea, has no idea that he will soon be killed by the Oxygen Destroyer. Interestingly, the music signifies a mournful feeling for the death of the king of monsters. The music is also slow, sad, and nostalgic as Dr. Serizawa opens the Oxygen Destroyer

and kills Gojira. As Dr. Serizawa cuts the rope that was intended to pull him back to the surface, a piano's bass notes are added to the score, and Professor Yamane takes off his hat in mourning for Dr. Serizawa's death. According to Japan Times (2014):

> Serizawa's words and final act pose a serious moral challenge to mankind, especially to political leaders, military planners and scientists who have already accumulated the knowledge of producing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and who even may endeavor to make more powerful and cruel weapons. (Gojira 1954)

As Professor Yamane sits down, he states that as long as nuclear testing continues, another Gojira may appear someday. The film ends with a medium to long shot of the sky and sea, in which the sun shines onto the peaceful water. However, melancholy music reminds the viewers that the price of peace (killing Gojira) shall forever be remembered. Next time, there may not be an Oxygen Destroyer that can save Japan from being invaded by a nuclear monster.

Akira Takarada, the actor who played Ogata, talked about his understanding of Gojira from an insider's point of view. To Takarada, Gojira is more than just a cold-blooded cruel monster. He was touched by the film's closing scene, in which Gojira is killed by the Oxygen Destroyer. He commented:

> I shed tears. [Gojira] was killed by the oxygen destroyer, but [Gojira] himself wasn't evil and he didn't have to be destroyed. Why did they have to punish [Gojira]? Why? He was a warning to mankind. I was angry at mankind and felt sympathy for Gojira, even if he did destroy Tokyo. (Tsutsui 2004, 88)

Takarada's comment is evidence of the way people in Japan simultaneously identified as and sympathized with the monster, seeing Gojira as a victim.

Gojira represents a wounded Japan and its people as they struggle to figure out a way to move forward from both their crimes and their losses during the war; Gojira's skin resembles the skins of people who have been affected by the radiation from nuclear bombs. The film implies that Gojira, and hence Japan, was an undeserving victim of the United States' nuclear program. Thus, destroying Gojira is symbolic of destroying the pain the United States inflicted on Japan by dropping the nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As Tsutsui argues, *Gojira's* ending is iconic, and its "welcome and therapeutic implications" of victimhood are the foundation for Japanese society today (2004, 37). Gojira—like the physical and emotional suffering of war—was "an uncontrollable, unfathomable curse visited upon a helpless, blameless Japan" (37). Moreover, it is also a silent protest of the United States' censorship of Japan's cultural productions during the Occupation Period. If Gojira is destroyed, then Japan will have the power to reshape its nation, and its WWII narrative, on its own.

Ultimately, the destruction of Gojira is a destruction of Japan's past. As shown by the ending shot of the peaceful waves and clear sky, the truth of history disappears, and everything seems to have a fresh start. However, the sad music in the background reminds people not to forget the trauma and suffering Japan has gone through.

Part IV. General Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, I conduct three sequence analyses to uncover how *Gojira* (1954)

sheds light on Japanese attitudes towards power structures, victimhood, and sacrifice in relation to both their war crimes and traumatic losses during WWII. This movie presents a nation whose innocent and peaceful people were unfairly attacked by a nuclear monster. It also criticizes privileged, pro-American government officials and their inability to deal with an external threat. There is great potential for future research on this topic. One possible site of further research would be an assessment of the *Gojira* series over time; researchers could compare and contrast the themes and allegorical representations of Gojira in each movie. This approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Japan's attitudes towards its war responsibility, and whether these attitudes evolved over time. Another potential approach would be to examine other geners of Japanese films made in the 1950s in order to further explore to what extent sentimentality was used to propagate a national consciousness of victimhood in post-war Japan.

Bibliography

Blakemore, Erin. 2018. "The Brutal History of Japan's 'Comfort Women'." History. https://www.history.com/news/comfort-women-japan-military-brothels-korea

Gerow, Aaron. 2006. "Fantasies of War and Nation in Recent Japanese Cinema." *The Asia- Pacific Journal*| Japan Focus, Volume 4, Issue 2. 1-12. https://apjjf.org/-Aaron-Gerow/1707/article.html

Gerow, Aaron. 2016."War and Nationalism in Recent Japanese Cinema: Yamato, Kamikaze, Trauma, and Forgetting the Postwar." In *Divided Lenses: Screen Memories of War in East Asia*, edited by Michael Berry and Chiho Sawada. 196-219. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

"Godzilla's message still relevant." *Japan Times*. 2014. Accessed March 2. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2014/07/20/editorials/godzillas-message-still-relevant/#.WtZRPdPwZ-U

Gojira. 1954. Kaltura Mediaspace: University of Wisconsin-Madison. Directed by Ishiro Honda. Toho Co. Ltd. https://mediaspace.wisc.edu/media/Gojira+%28195 4%29 /0_77dat3bv

Hayashi, Yuka. 2015. "Japan's Textbook Changes Get Failing Grade From Neighbors." *The Wall Street Journal.* https://www.wsj.com/articles/japanese-middle-school-textbook-changes-raise-irk-china-south-korea-1428402976

Hideaki, Fujiki. 2013. "Creating the Audience: Cinema as Popular Recreation and Social Education in Modern Japan." *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema.* 79-100. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hirano, Kyoko. 1992. *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation*, 1945-1952. Washington, DC and London, UK: Smithsonian Institution Press.

"History Issue Q&A." 2018. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. http://www/mofa.go.jp/policy/q_a/faq16.html

Merkel-Hess, Kate, and Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N. 2010. "Nanjing by the Numbers." *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/02/09/nanjing-by-the-numbers

Mitter, Rana. 2013. "The World's Wartime Debt to China." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/18/opinion/the-worlds-wartime-debt-to-china.html

Oi, Mariko. 2013. "What Japanese history lessons leave out." *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21226068

Sala, Ilaria Maria. 2017. "Why Is the Plight of 'Comfort Women' Still So Controversial?" *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/opinion/comfort-women-japan-south-korea.html

Sang-Hun, Choe. 2015. "Japan and South Korea Settle Dispute Over Wartime 'Comfort Women'." *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com /2015/12/29/world/asia/comfort-women-south-korea-japan.html?module=inline

Sterngold, James. 1993. "Japan Admits Army Forced Women into War Brothels." *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/05/world/japan-admits-army-forced-women-into-war-brothels.html

Tanaka, Yuki. 2006. "Crime and Responsibility: War, the state, and Japanese society." *The Asia-Pacific Journal*| Japan Focus 4(8): 1-12. https://apjjf.org/-Yuki-Tanaka/2200/article.html

Tolbert, David. 2017. "Japan's Apology to South Korea Shows What Public Apologies Should (Not) Do." *Huffington Post*. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-tolbert/japans-apology-to-south-k_b_9111566.html

Tsutsui, William. 2004. *Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of Monsters.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

About *gnovis*

gnovis is a scholarly journal and academic blog run by graduate students in the Communication, Culture, and Technology Program (CCT) at Georgetown University. As an organization, we are a platform for interdisciplinary discussion within the CCT Program and broader Georgetown community.

JOURNAL

gnovis is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that employs a double-blind review process. Peer-Reviewers are selected from CCT students who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement and forward-thinking scholarly work in their own studies, are able to recognize and discriminate exceptional scholarship produced by their peers, and show a commitment to furthering the values of interdisciplinary scholarship.

Beginning with the 2007–2008 academic year, the Journal has been published bi-annually, during the Fall and Spring semesters. Prior issues of *gnovis* were published on a rolling basis.

The front cover of this edition of *gnovis* Journal was designed by CCT's Fred Ji.

BLOG

Updated regularly throughout the academic year, the *gnovis* Blog includes both ongoing commentary from our staff, as well as contributed posts from students and academics at all levels. Topics vary, but are drawn together by their relevance to the *gnovis* mission.

MULTIMEDIA

Interdisciplinary thought and research does not occur in a vacuum, nor is it strictly articulated through academic papers. Through our online channel, we have the opportunity to explore the dialogue between disciplines in new and creative ways. *gnovis* seeks to move scholarship off the page, to explore CCT-related themes as they occur in other academic and professional settings, molding cutting-edge scholarship with multimedia journalism.

EVENTS

gnovis is committed to providing students with new venues to explore key themes in communication, culture, and technology. Events, such as gnoviCon, bring together leading thinkers, students, academics, and practitioners from across disciplines to discuss topics and emerging issues that shape our lives now and in the future.