

Distinctions

Kingsborough Honors Journal



Volume 14 Number 01

DISTINCTIONS

Volume 14 | Number 01

Fall 2018

Distinctions, the journal of the Honors Program at Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, welcomes submissions of scholarly work written for Kingsborough courses.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Professor Bob Blaisdell | Editor

ADVISORY BOARD

Provost Joanne Russell | Vice President for Academic Affairs

Professor Homar Barcena | Director of the Honors Program

COVER ART

Line Assignment by Dakang Chen

The work was created in Professor Valerie Sokolova's course

Copyright ©2018

Kingsborough Community College, The City University of New York

EDITOR'S NOTE

The work in this issue highlights the diversity of Kingsborough's courses and of its student body. The authors have taken on challenging topics and projects, from documenting New York State's opioid crisis to designing recreational facilities in the densest populated regions of America, from cultural responses to autism to a study of bilinguals' speech patterns, from Hilton Als to issues in education, from parenting to fairy tales, from cultural relativism to film heroes to linguistic oppression. These eleven essays are about the students' discoveries of the world and sometimes of themselves.

As always in *Distinctions*, we see projects so capably and interestingly fulfilled that they in turn inspire their professors to create and encourage other challenging projects. I thank all of those students who submitted their writing and all the professors who guided or assigned them.

Professor Homar Barcena, director of the Honors Program, has our thanks for spurring the many submissions to this issue. Provost Joanne Russell has provided the funding for *Distinctions*, and my department chair, Eileen Ferretti, has kindly granted me the time again this year to act as editor. I am indebted to the students in Professor Valerie Sokolova's art courses for their marvelous contributions. For the person or people responsible for the journal's professional formatting and design, I am immensely grateful.

Professor Robert (Bob) Blaisdell
Department of English
Robert.Blaisdell@Kingsborough.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Heroin: Problems and Solutions</i>	6
Olha Maslova	
<i>Parent Power: How Parenting Impacts a Child's Development</i>	14
Bin Chen	
<i>Floor Hockey Rink (and Other Sports Arenas) Design and Planning</i>	20
Brian McNally	
<i>What Hilton Als and Other Gay Men in White Girls Experienced</i>	26
Okwuoha Elvis Ekene	
<i>Viewing Autism from a Cultural Perspective</i>	33
Ammema Sani	
<i>The Alienation of an American-Thai Woman</i>	42
Patchaneeda Rungreang	
<i>Understanding Fairy Tales</i>	49
Esther Ishak	
<i>Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism in Our Life</i>	55
Yuliia Kohut	
<i>Because of, Not Despite: The Power of Immigrants in the Face of Linguistic Oppression</i>	59
Kourtnie Ramsay	
<i>Typographic Experimentations and Poster</i>	66
Aracely Calle	
<i>The Decline of the American Hero</i>	70
Sholom Gutleizer	
<i>Consonant Production in Bilinguals: The Relationship between Native Language, Degree of Bilingualism, and Voice Onset Time</i>	77
Vali Valizade & Laura Spinu	
<i>Contributors</i>	88
<i>Submission Guidelines</i>	92

Heroin: Problems and Solutions

Olha Maslova

Spring 2018
SOC 3200 | Urban Sociology
Professor Ryan Chaney

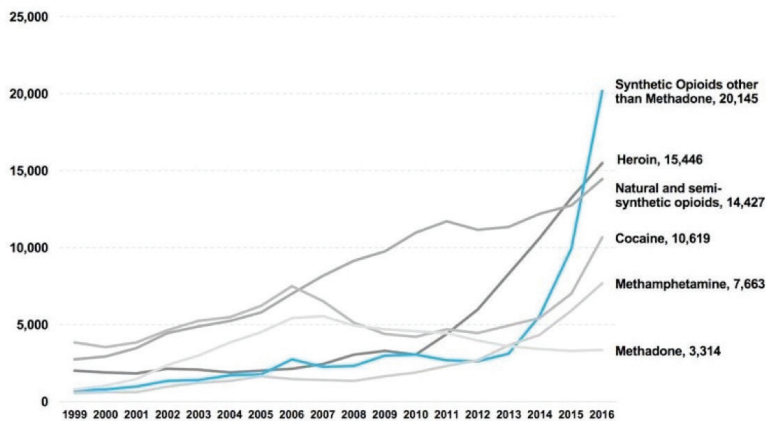
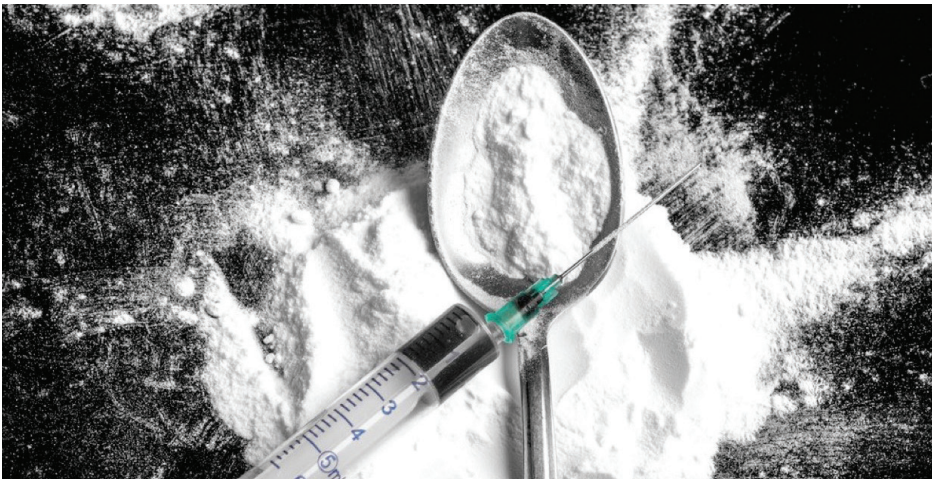


Figure 1: Drugs involved in the U.S. overdose deaths, 2000 to 2016
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse: "Overdose Death Rates" [1]

Drug abuse is a serious socio-economic problem in the world and in the United States. It affects millions of Americans. Due to some socio-economic factors, different areas are affected by different substances to different degrees. During the past decade, heroin has started to gain momentum and has become the second-leading cause of overdose deaths in America (Figure 1). According to The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, between 2015 and 2016 heroin overdose death rates increased by 20.5% for large central metropolitan areas across the United States. In New York State, the increase corresponds to the national number and makes up 20.4%. [2]

Public and private organizations are trying to solve this problem by implementing social training, giving out free overdose medication, and educating society. According to the “Opioid Poisoning, Overdose, and Prevention” report: “NYC is a leader in the implementation of public health programming to prevent death from opioid overdoses.” [3] The Center on Addiction reports that the state spends around 21.6% of its budget on addiction and substance use: 2 cents out of each dollar go to prevention programs while the remaining 98 percent pays for its consequences. [4]

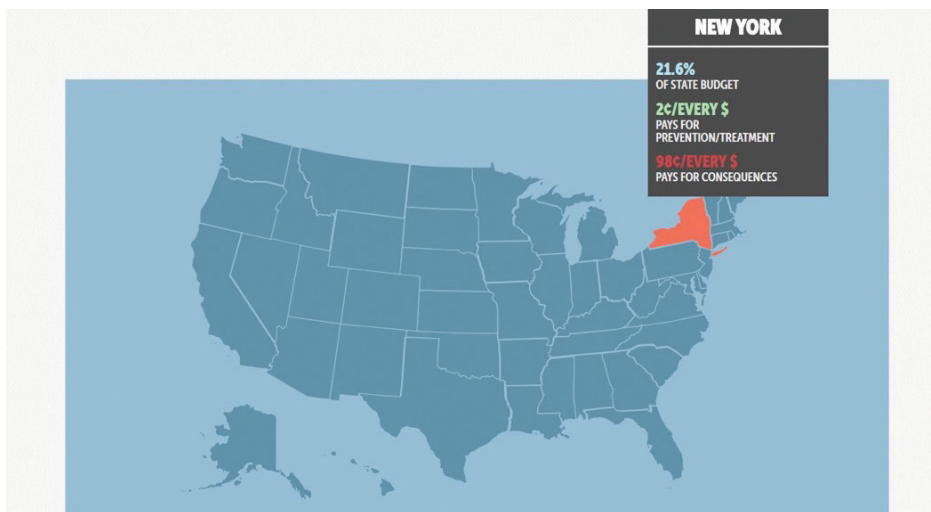


Figure 2: State Spending on Addiction and Substance Use
Source: Center on Addiction, Apr. 2017 [4]

Counties Overview: Overdose Rates per County

For this research, I collected information for eight New York State counties that have a high population and a high level of heroin overdose deaths: The Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Suffolk, Richmond, Monroe, and Nassau. In Chart 1 below we see the major demographic characteristics of each county. The table is sorted by a “Total Heroin Overdose Deaths in 2016” column from high to low. This sorting suggests that there is a correlation between overdose deaths and different social indicators.

County	Total heroin overdose deaths in 2016 per 100,000	Population	Whites	Median age	Household income	Education (high school or higher)	Employed	Unemployed
Bronx	308	1,471,160	20.60%	33.3	\$35,302	71.2%	51.9%	7.5%
Kings	279	2,648,771	56.80%	34.5	\$50,640	80.0%	57.8%	5.7%
New York	244	1,664,727	56.80%	36.7	\$75,513	87.0%	62.9%	4.6%
Queens	235	2,358,582	56.80%	37.9	\$59,758	80.7%	59.3%	5.0%
Suffolk	124	1,492,953	80.90%	40.9	\$90,128	90.0%	61.1%	3.9%
Richmond	116	479,458	56.80%	39.6	\$74,021	88.9%	55.2%	3.6%
Monroe	65	747,642	76.00%	38.6	\$53,568	90.4%	60.0%	4.7%
Nassau	56	1,369,514	73.00%	41.4	\$102,044	90.9%	61.4%	3.8%

Chart 1: Counties' Socio-Economic Overview
Source: Data for the first column is taken from New York State of Health "New York State Opioid Annual Report 2017" [7]; data for all other columns is taken from Census 2016 [6]

I would like to start my analysis by comparing heroin overdose deaths for two periods: April-June of 2016 and April-June of 2017. In figure 3 below, we can see the following pattern: counties that had highest overdose mortality rates (The Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond) experienced increase, while counties with lower rates experienced a decrease. We can make a conclusion that some factors of social well-being that affect drugs consumption changed between 2016 and 2017 which provoked the increase in overdose mortality.

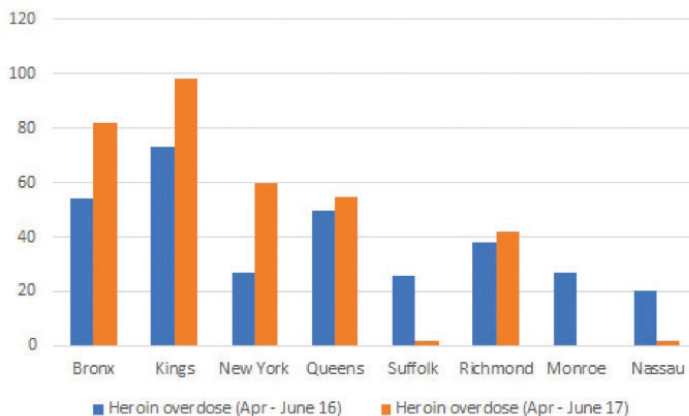


Figure 3: Increase in Heroin Overdose
Source: New York State of Health report

To get a better understanding of periodic changes of dynamics in overdose rates within a year, we can compare the total number of deaths in 2016 with projected trends of 2017 based on the data for the first quarter of the year assuming that average rate per quarter is the same. The figure 4 below suggests that the 4 biggest NY counties: Queens, New York, Kings, and The Bronx, either experience rate increase in heroin overdose deaths or the decrease is very insignificant in comparison to 2016. Fortunately, four other counties have significantly better projections, showing a good potential for improvements in 2017.

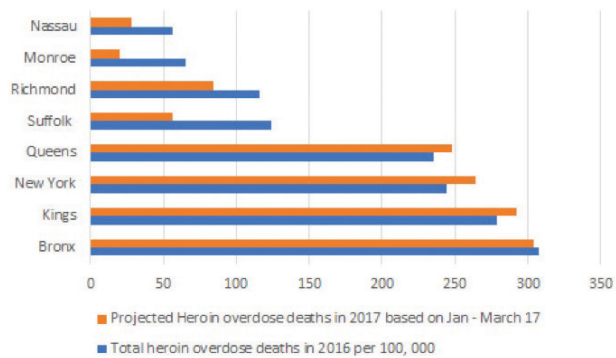


Figure 4: Projected Heroin Overdose deaths of 2017 based on the first quarter of the year in compared to 2016. **Source:** New York State of Health report

In addition, New York City Health Department states that:

- The Bronx has the highest number of deaths - 308
- Richmond has the highest rate per 100,000 people - 31.8
- Every 7 hours someone dies of a drug overdose in NYC [8]

Keeping in mind the deadly influence of drugs across different sections of society, we are constantly reminded that drugs, and the market behind them, do not discriminate. According to the NYC Opioid report, “Non-Hispanic whites had consistently higher rates of overdose deaths involving opioids than other groups during this time period [2010 - 2015].”[7] It can be seen in figure 5 below: the green line that represents Non-Hispanic whites is significantly higher than two others for Blacks and Hispanics.

Another factor that should be taken into consideration is the growth of each group during the specified time frame, which is an angle of inclination in figure 5. It is not obvious from the graph but calculations show that between 2010 and 2016, the number of heroin overdose deaths increased by 84% for Whites and by 141% for Hispanics and Blacks. This is a significant increase for a four-year period which can and will lead to more serious and dramatic problems if there would be no major changes in prevention programs.

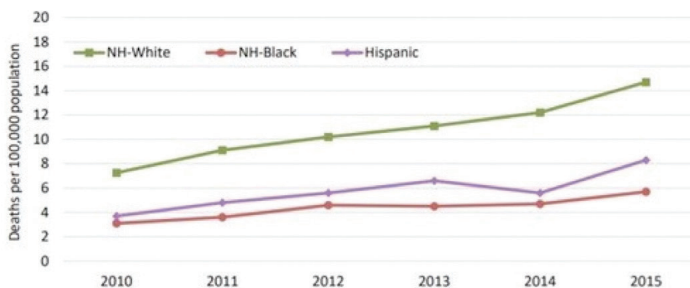


Figure 5: Age-adjusted Rates of Overdose Deaths Involving Opioids by Race/Ethnicity, New York, 2010-2015 **Source:** New York State of Health: “New York State Opioid Annual Report 2017” [7]

The figure 6 below shows us the dynamics for each racial group in the period. In the first set representing the white population, we can clearly see a steady increase over time. In the second set representing the black population, we can see a jump in 2016, which is a possible indicator of some social, economic or other changes. The third set, Hispanic, is the only group that had a decline in 2014. Nevertheless, 2015 and 2016 both show us the opposite to the 2014 dynamic where overdose death-rates increased dramatically.

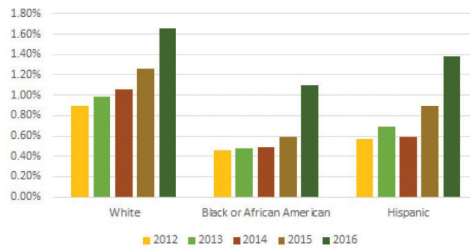


Figure 6: Heroin overdose deaths between 2012 and 2016, grouped by race
Source: New York State of Health report

I also reviewed dependency between overdose deaths and average income level of each county. In figure 7.1 below we can see data for all 8 selected counties. In general, there is a correlation between income and heroin overdose deaths, but two counties--Richmond and New York--stand alone, showing us that income itself is not a determinative factor. Taking them out of the figure (see figure 7.2) we clearly see the inversely proportional dependency: higher median household income, lower heroin overdose deaths.

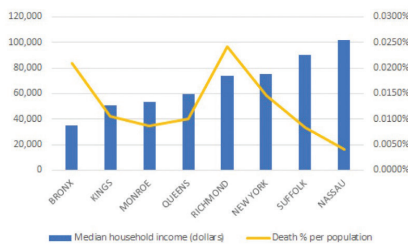


Figure 7.1: Heroin overdose deaths and median income

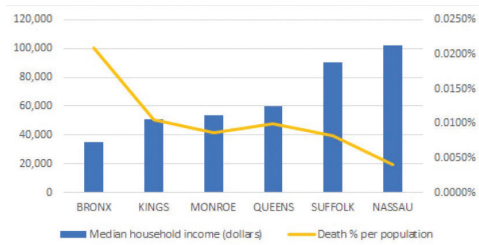


Figure 7.2: Heroin overdose deaths and median income (excluding New York and Richmond counties)

Source: Census 2016

Interestingly, according to Sober Media Group, people with “hard-core” heroin addiction pay \$150 - \$200 per day or \$4,500 - \$6,000 per month to support their habit. This amounts to more than \$54,000 per year. The median household income for the Bronx, Kings, Monroe, and Queens is less than \$60,000 per year. The question one might have is “Where does the money to spend on drugs come from?” One possible answer is crime.

In figure 8.1 we can see a relationship between median income levels and

crime rates. Similar to figure 7.1, two counties stand apart in this set, New York and Monroe, meaning that other factors such as a wide distribution of income or different types of households with a different number of family members, influence outcomes. In figure 7.2 the two counties are excluded from the set.

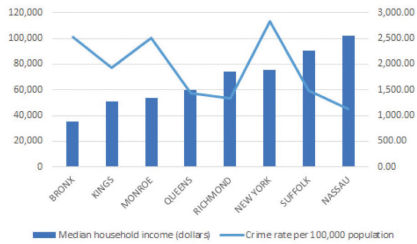


Figure 8.1: Relation between income and crime rates

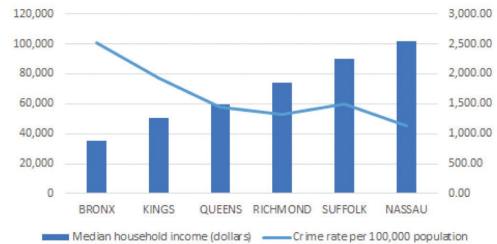


Figure 8.2: Relation between income and crime rates (excluding New York and Monroe counties)

Source: [New York State Division of Criminal Justice \[9\]](#)

Naloxone is a medication designed to rapidly reverse an opioid overdose. There are three different forms of Naloxone: injectable, auto-injectable, and nasal. The injectable form requires professional training while two others can be safely used easily by anybody.

According to the New York State of Health’s “Opioid Poisoning, Overdose and Prevention 2015” report, outcomes from the 20-month Internasal Naloxone Administration project include:

- 10,504 Emergency Medical Technicians were trained.
- 223 opioid overdose reversals were reported by trained responders.
- 10% of contacted reversals entered rehabilitation programs. [3]

In other words, trained personnel brought back to life 223 people. But in reality, only 22 people used their chance to live, and other the 200 are still at risk of drug overdose. Trying to save someone’s life with Naloxone, we do not prevent overdose deaths, we just give the person another chance on living, treating his or her outcomes of drug abuse.

Besides those 10,503 trained people, 12 regional agencies trained their fire departments. Since 2012, more than 200 presentations were given to practitioners and pharmacists statewide to address problems related to opioid abuse and misuse. NY State Department of Health also collaborated with NY State Education Department to conduct pieces of training for school nurses and personnel, CUNY and SUNY college personnel to prevent opioid overdose. Moreover, New York City trained more than 83,000 people as overdose prevention responders.

We train police and firefighters, practitioners and pharmacists, school and college nurses; we train everyone who can potentially save someone’s life. But we do not train people to save their own lives. Why not educate children about the consequences of drug use, misuse, and abuse? Why not educate parents about drug

consumption symptoms? Why not provide alternatives to people who have higher risks of taking drugs? Otherwise, these are not prevention programs, these are emergency services which save people's lives but not the nation's future. It might temporarily decrease overdose deaths rates, but it will eventually add additional work for city employees, hospitals, and emergency services. Nevertheless, numbers will keep growing.

What are some alternatives?

There are approximately 19.85 million people who live in New York State. As was mentioned above, the state spends \$33,609,600,000 per year on addiction and substance abuse. [10] Hypothetically, this money could:

1. Double the education budget, keeping children and youth out of the streets. Some countries such as Iceland proved that investment in healthy alternatives to drugs and in youth education makes substance use go down significantly. (11)
2. Cover the cost of textbooks for all K-12 students in the State where the cost is approximately \$1,300 per student for 2,640,250 students, leaving us with 9/10 of the unspent budget.
3. Build 650,000 playgrounds across the state where the average price of one is \$50,000.

These are possible and relatively easy-to-implement prevention programs. True prevention is what decreases substance abuse and makes future generations interested in life, in self-development and in exploring opportunities that this city has to offer. Our society has to look at this problem with the eyes of those who got into the net and found inner forces to overcome it.

Endnotes

- [1] National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Overdose Death Rates." NIDA, 15 Sept. 2017, www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates
- [2] "Opioid Overdose." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 26 Jan. 2017, www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/heroin.html
- [3] Opioid Poisoning, Overdose and Prevention 2015. New York State Department of Health, 2016, Opioid Poisoning, Overdose and Prevention 2015, www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/opioid_overdose_prevention/docs/annual_report2015.pdf
- [4] "State Spending on Addiction and Substance Use." Center on Addiction, 14 Apr. 2017, www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction/state-spending-addiction-risk-use.
- [5] Proimos, Alex. "Cinematic New York City." Commons Wikimedia, 3 July 2011, [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cinematic_New_York_City_\(6033969880\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cinematic_New_York_City_(6033969880).jpg)
- [6] US Census Bureau. "Census.gov." U.S. Trade with Haiti, www.census.gov/.
- [7] New York State - Opioid Annual Report. www.health.ny.gov/statistics/opioid/data/pdf/nys_opioid_annual_report_2017.pdf

- [8] Epi Data Brief. New York City Health Department, 2017, pp. 1–7, Epi Data Brief.
- [9] “Division of Criminal Justice Services.” NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, 2016, www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/countycrimestats.htm.
- [10] “Senate Passes 2016-17 NY State Budget.” NY State Senate, 4 Apr. 2016, www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/john-defrancisco/senate-passes-2016-17-new-york-state-budget.
- [11] Young, Emma. “How Iceland Got Teens to Say No to Drugs.” The Atlantic, Atlantic Media Company, 19 Jan. 2017, www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/01/teens-drugs-iceland/513668/.

Parent Power: How Parenting Impacts a Child's Development

Bin Chen

Spring 2018

PSY3000 | Child and Adolescent Development

Professor Carol Carielli

As one familiar with Chinese culture, I have often witnessed a Chinese cultural parenting style that mimics what the American psychoanalyst Diana Baumrind (Berger, 2015) would refer to as *authoritarian* clash with Baumrind's *authoritative* style of parenting. American psychologists feel the open communication level between parent and child that *authoritative* parenting exhibits is paramount to a child's healthy development. Neither style, however, is exclusive to any one group. What is common is that parents have power and it can impact a child's development. The family is the first "school" for human beings, and it is the most important place where children are educated. People are born into and live in a family. They first pass through the family, "the smallest social grass-root organization," and then enter the broader field of social life. Therefore, for most people's development, the family is the first school, and the parents are the primary teachers.

Authoritarian Parenting	Authoritative Parenting	Permissive Parenting	Uninvolved Parenting
High demandingness/ control and low acceptance / responsiveness. Engagement is strictly adult-centered. These parents often fear losing control over children, and they discourage open communication.	Moderate demanding / control, and acceptance/ responsiveness. Open communication, trust and acceptance and encouragement of psychological autonomy are typical to this pattern.	High acceptance/ responsiveness, but non-demanding. These parents lack parental control.	Neither responsive nor demanding. These parents often fail to monitor or supervise the child's behavior. They are uninvolved.

Table 1. Pattern of Parenting Styles (Ballentine 2001)

Each family has its own personalized parenting approach. As early as 1978, Baumrind proposed two dimensions of parenting styles, namely, demanding vs. responsiveness (Berger, 2015). Demanding refers to whether the parents establish appropriate standards for children's behaviors, and insist that children are required

to reach those standards. Responsiveness refers to “the degree to which the parents’ response to the child’s needs in a supportive and accepting manner” (Slater, 592). Based on these two dimensions, parenting styles can be divided into four basic types: *authoritative* parenting, *authoritarian* parenting, *permissive/indulgent* parenting, and *uninvolved* parenting. (See Table 1.)

Generally speaking, *authoritative* parenting is the most beneficial style for children. In this style, parents have reasonable requests and impose appropriate restrictions on their children’s behavior. At the same time, parents will show their love for their children, and they will listen to their children’s thoughts. There is a high level of communication between parent and child. Children who have grown up in this type of parenting have a strong sense of self-confidence and the ability of self-control, and they will be more optimistic and positive (Berger, 2015).

The *authoritarian* parents want the child to be subordinate to them. Children who have grown up with this type of parenting will show more negative feelings and behaviors such as anxiety and withdrawal. However, they may have better performances in school and are better at following demands and obeying (Berger, 2015).

The *permissive/indulgent* parents show a lot of love and have high expectations for their children, but they rarely ask their children to control their behavior. Children who have grown up with this type of parenting have shown that they are not mature enough and the ability of self-control is poor (Berger, 2015). Those *uninvolved* parents do not care very much about the children. They usually only provide the basics of food, clothing, shelter, and they don’t provide support for the spirit. Children who have grown up with this type of parenting can easily give up because of the obstacles, and their ability to cope with self-control can often be reduced.

The above four types are typical parenting. Overall, when children are young, the parents should give them more love and care, and, at the same time, more control in responding to the misbehavior of their children. As children develop, the parents should listen to their thoughts and in time, discuss the child’s own affairs, and jointly formulate a suitable solution. The economy is developing, science and technology are improving as well. Parents have higher expectations for their children. In many cases it is no longer enough for children to be healthy and happy, parents introduce a higher level of demands. They hope that children will be able to become one of the elites. With the pressure of society and the constant introduction of new technology, the stress of school, and the increasingly abnormal level of self-esteem of parents, the question of how can children’s psychosocial development process in a healthy manner is relevant.

What is parenting? For this concept, educational researchers have many different definitions. If there are some common points in their interpretation, I believe that parenting refers to the education and influence that parents (or other adults) consciously carry out on their children (or other young people) in the family.

Parents as educators are irreplaceable. In China, “left behind” children are those whose parents leave their rural home and seek jobs in urban centers, and those children spend most of their time with grandparents. This type of situation does not reflect the reality of parenting substantially. (Although intergenerational education is a significant feature of Chinese families, it cannot represent and cover the general phenomenon of parenting.) Parents’ words and deeds play a decisive role in the formation of children’s socio-emotional development and habits. As children are growing up, we find that many children become more and more similar to their parents in certain aspects, but no child will be more and more like their teacher. A well-known Chinese saying tells us, “Successful parenting makes successful children; failed parenting makes failing children.” In this sense, parenting is the foundation of all other education.

In *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (2011), Amy Chua describes her relentless determination to make her two daughters successful by raising them in a strict fashion, contrary to what she sees as modern American standards of permissiveness and mediocrity (Today.com). Chua, a native of Fujian, China, emigrated with her parents to the United States during her childhood, received her bachelor of arts and doctor of law from Harvard University and is currently a tenured professor at Yale University. In her book, Chua set ten precepts for the behaviors she never allowed for her two daughters: (1) attend a sleepover; (2) have a playdate; (3) be in a school play; (4) complain about not being in a school play; (5) watch TV or play computer games; (6) choose their extracurricular activities; (7) get any grade less than an A; (8) not be the No.1 student in every subject except gym and drama; (9) play any instrument other than the piano or violin; (10) not play the piano or violin (*Battle*, Chua).

Chua also claimed to use all sorts of high-pressure means such as curses, threats, bribery, and inducement and asked the children to follow their parents’ path for their choice. One of her daughters was forced to practice from dinnertime into the night because of a less than ideal piano performance, during which she was not allowed to drink water or go to the toilet.

This way of educating children is mirrored by some parents in China. Some Chinese mothers believe that (1) schoolwork always comes first; (2) an A-minus is a bad grade; (3) your children must be two years ahead of their classmates in math; (4) you must never compliment your children in public; (5) if your child ever disagrees with a teacher or coach, you must always take the side of the teacher or coach; (6) the only activities your children should be permitted to do are those in which they can eventually win a medal; and (7) that medal must be gold (*Battle*, Chua). In the same way, these “Tiger Moms” insist academic achievement reflects successful parenting, and that if children did not excel at school, then there was “a problem” and parents “were not doing their job.” Children receive high demands and low responsiveness from the parenting of “Tiger Moms.”

In the specific case of Chua’s parenting, her two daughters turned out

successful, in that both of them received offers from Harvard University, and that the elder sister is currently a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and working toward her graduate law degree at Yale. However, in the vast majority of Chinese families, under such high demanding pressure, it turns out children grow up with certain psychological disorders; even worse, it turns out children commit suicide (Lee, 2014).

The characteristics of American parenting could be summed up with these words: independent personality, democratic openness. Compared to Chinese style parenting, American parents generally believe that a child is an independent individual from the day of birth and has his or her own autonomous wishes and personality. Neither parents nor teachers nor relatives and friends have the privilege of dominating and limiting the child's behavior. They cannot make choices for children, but instead encourage autonomy; parents should carefully consider, respect and understand the child's feelings. They have faith that children have the ability to reflect and educate themselves. Children need to work on their own, live their own lives, attain happiness from work, get hands-on knowledge, and learn various skills. This is respect for the child.

In many American families I have observed the following: the father or mother walks in front and the children who have just learned to walk follow behind. They think it is essential to train the child to be independent. They often take positive and affirmative attitudes towards their child's various exploratory activities, encourage them to propose different ideas in life, and actively explore the answers by themselves. Even if parents think that the child's behavior does not have a positive effect, they will not interfere too much. Instead, they will let their children gradually realize the problems and correct them while guiding them to explore on their own. This mirrors Baumrind's *authoritative* parenting style. American parents pay more attention to positive psychosocial development, and therefore pay close attention to the emotional communication with their children and care about their psychological needs, believing proper psychosocial development enhances cognitive development. It is the authoritative parenting style that Baumrind describes where there is active communication between parents and child. It is the style most conducive to a child's development. Parents are flexible and guide children in their development rather than make demands (Berger, 2015). American parents view the child's happiness as essential. They often share their feelings with the children; children are also willing to discuss with their parents about things that happened to them. Psychological research shows that induction "listening, not lecturing" is crucial not only to the growth of children but also in shaping of a healthy personality (Berger, 2015).

Undoubtedly, the quality of parenting will affect the child's life to a certain extent. Parents should give the children a good family environment. This excellent family environment is not just material. The important thing is a learning and living environment that enables children to grow up healthily. The family is

the first “classroom” for children. Parents have an inescapable responsibility for children’s physical and mental health. Only by understanding the importance of appropriately guiding children and correcting toward positive behavior can we resolve to take action. It is normal for children to demonstrate bad behavior during their growth. Crude and straightforward scolding not only fails to solve the problem, it may worsen the situation. Induction, a disciplinary technique that is described as getting the child to understand why a certain behavior was wrong through conversation, may help with resolving the problem (Berger, 2015).

Personality plays a vital role in the growth of children. Early childhood is the initial stage of cultivating a person’s character, and it is a crucial period for the training of a good personality. Early parenting emphasis should be placed on the children’s personality initiation education. When parents seek suitable forms of parenting, personality cultivation is the precondition, as it provides children with opportunities for PIES (Physical, Intellectual/Cognitive, Emotional and Social) development. Parents must set a good example for their children, being the first and most influential teachers. Germination of seeds requires air, sunlight, and water; the healthy growth of children requires an atmosphere of family democracy, equality, and respect. Therefore, we must respect the child in the family and treat the child as an equal person; parents should respect the child’s ideas, and listen patiently to the child’s opinions, even if those views are immature. When children make mistakes, parents must demonstrate democracy, allow their children to make an excuse for the wrong action and explain their feelings. Insulting the child and becoming jealous and fearful of one’s own image, i.e., of the parent’s image, will be detrimental to the child’s personal and cognitive development. Only with the implementation of democracy can children’s self-reliance and consciousness be raised. They will become independent thinkers, diligent, and self-confident.

Educational goals must be consistent. Parents must share a common understanding of having their children explore various opportunities. Therefore, it is necessary to study the needs of the society, integrate their own growth experiences, and give the children a “positioning” from the unified understanding of both parents, to indeed achieve a harmonious and consistent approach. The ideological unity is particularly important. The horizontal linkages make the entire family education form a joint force, and the children will thus build tolerance and accept the goodness of others.

Last but not least, parents should be friends of their children. It is easy to be “a severe father and strict mother” in front of a child. For example, when you wrap yourself up with “dignity,” you become distant from your child. Most psychologists think that it is the highest protection for children that parents let their children express all emotions, positive and negative, by language. In fact, this is also the first requirement for parents and children to build relationship—and their thoughts and communicate with them.

In short, parenting plays a key role in a child’s psychosocial and cognitive

development during each stage of their life. Parents want their children to be happy and successful. They have the power to establish a parenting perspective. It is undoubtedly a huge responsibility to choose an approach that in many ways will define the life of the child.

Works Cited

- Berger, K. S. (2015). *Early Childhood the Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence* (10th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.
- Ballantine J. (2001) "Raising Competent Kids: The Authoritative Parenting Style." *Childhood Education*, Vol. 78.
- Chua, Amy. (2011) *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Chua, Amy. "'Tiger Mother' Explains Her Strict Parenting." Today.com, MSNBC.com contributor, 15 Jan. 2011, www.today.com/parents/tiger-mother-explains-her-strict-parenting-2D80556156
- Lee, Jun-Youb. "Crushed by Parental and Societal Pressure, Asian American Students Are Resorting to Suicide." Altnet, 5 Aug. 2014, www.altnet.org/education/crushed-parental-and-societal-pressure-asian-american-studentsare-resorting-suicide
- Slater, A.; Bremner, J. G. (2017). *An Introduction to Developmental Psychology*. Wiley. p. 592. Retrieved 21 September 2017.
- Stump, Scott. "Daughters of Demanding 'Tiger Mom' Amy Chua Open up about Their Childhood." Today.com, Msnbc.com Contributor, 29 Jan. 2016, www.today.com/parents/daughters-demanding-tiger-mom-amy-chua-open-about-their-childhood-t69881

Floor Hockey Rink (and Other Sports Arenas) Design and Planning

Brian McNally

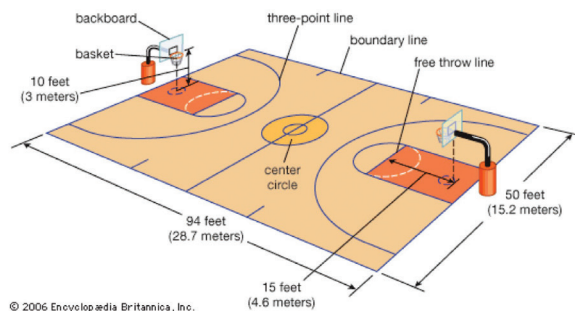
Spring 2018
RPE 4600 | Facilities Planning
Professor Nicholas Skirka

Introduction

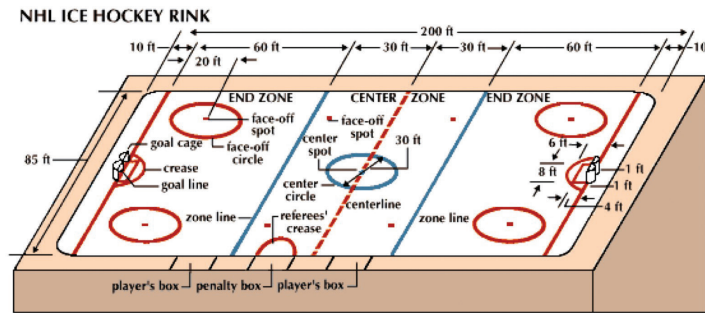
I play floor hockey for enjoyment and to get physical exercise with respect to being middle-aged, and in need for weight reduction and to fight the on-set of Type-2 Diabetes. I've been playing for many years now and have participated in games played on and in many different arenas. Some of these courts were adequate, some were not. None of them were close to "ideal" for playing floor hockey. I will discuss here, in this paper, my ideas about how an ideal floor hockey rink should be constructed. I will also discuss my ideas as to how other sports arenas should be constructed as well.

Various Playing Area Dimensions

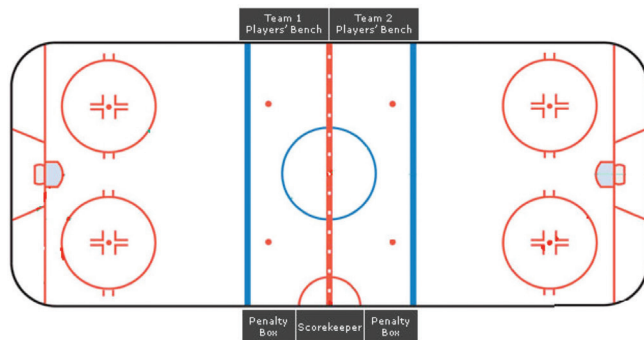
Floor hockey in the New York area is played on basketball type and size courts. The players wear sneakers (tennis shoes). A plastic ball is used in lieu of a puck. An organization hosting this activity is Zog Sports, in Midtown Manhattan. The majority of the Zog Sports floor hockey games are played on a full-court basketball court. The dimensions of a National Basketball Association basketball court are 94 feet long, 50 feet wide.



These dimensions are just barely adequate for a minimum area for floor hockey. Of course, the basketball hoops are not present during a floor hockey game. The maximum, or no larger than, court size is the National Hockey League's dimensions for an ice hockey rink: 200 feet long, 85 feet wide.



My design for a Floor Hockey Rink would be less than an NHL rink but more than an NBA court in dimensions. Here is what I would plan:



The floor hockey league is a “sports/social/charity organization.” Therefore, alcoholic beverages are sold near the facility in what is called a sponsor bar. As at Zog Sports, I would have that sponsor bar located in my facility. That brings up a whole additional category of planning and regulatory issues.

Activity and Event Planning Regarding Liquor Licensing

In New York State, alcohol sales are regulated by the New York State Liquor Authority. In my facility, I would have the bar located in my plaza separate from the playing area. This would help to encourage players to only buy alcohol when not playing in the game on-going at the time of the drink purchase. This would also agree with the Zog Sports rules concerning alcohol consumption during games. I would not discourage food consumption in any area, just as long as no food is brought on to the playing area.

Risk Management, ADA Compliance, Medical Emergency, Evacuation Plans

My facility will be designed and built with full compliance with respect to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), medical emergency response, and sound evacuation plans, along with other considerations for safety and compliance, and comfort for all spectators, players, and workers. ADA Compliance concerns stem from 28 CFR Part 36 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by covered public accommodations and requires places of public accommodation and commercial facilities to be designed, constructed, and altered in compliance with the accessibility standards established by this part.

My facility would ensure that people confined to wheel chairs, walkers and the use of canes would have full access to all seating sections, concession stands, and bathrooms. Additionally, access to all plazas, and exits, etc., would be made attractive and easy for ADA folks to use along with any companions they may have to help them with their visit to my facility.

Concerning medical emergencies, I will have many fully equipped quick response teams ready to respond to any emergency that (reasonably) would occur at my facility.

These teams would be ready to handle heart attacks (we'll have defibrillators available and all employees, not just the Quick Response Teams fully trained and qualified in their use), broken bones, cuts, etc., and many other emergencies. Evacuation plans will be fully incorporated with fire and emergency drills including local police, fire, and ambulance agencies.

Fire safety Directors (FSD), and Deputy Fire Safety Directors (DFSD) would be on hand for all events, before and after all events, and whenever local, state, and federal fire codes dictate. There would always be a FSD, or DFSD, on site, on duty in my facility. This will be to prevent any condition that might come up prior to, or after an event, that might bring on a dangerous condition. Thus, mitigating a risk or threat.

“Risk Management” would be exercised using a planning board matrix that would expose dangers and risks and the conditions that would set up these dangers, with the mission being of mitigating these dangers and risks not just real time, but especially in the planning stage. Operational tests would be carried out to ensure the Risk Management plans work.

Responsibilities of Running This Sports Facility

A sports facility has many aspects of its existence and its operation that need on-site personnel to manage and take responsibility for with respect to its physical integrity, operational success, and event presentation and function success,

in order to be profitable, and safe to attract people to continue returning for the events at that facility. Managers are the work horses of successful facilities and the events held there.

To make my facility work successfully, I would have separate managers for the various important departments, and assistants that would be the go-betweens between each manager's areas of responsibility.

First, I would have a Finance and Funding Manager, responsible for handling the private and public financing for the building and maintenance of the facility. My private financing would be spread out among many investors. They would get advertising exposure in addition to a percentage of the profits the organization brings in. This would lower the amount of responsibility and liability for me and all the investors. My manager would also handle the public funding with local/state and federal investors. I would have the arrangement of permits, tax breaks, and code allowances to be taken care of by my Finance and Funding Manager.

Secondly, I would have an Event Manager who would coordinate all the particulars for scheduling, preparing for, and carrying out the events in this facility. This manager would interact with the Chief Engineer of the arena, the Security Manager, the Concessions Manager, and the other departments and divisions operating this facility.

Finally, I would have ushers that would be the on-site ambassadors among the players, spectators, etc., to ensure all concerns are listened to and satisfied if warranted.

Other Sporting and Spectator Events

My facility would be built to allow multiple sports and events to be held with the same accommodations that the floor hockey configuration offers. For example, basketball, volleyball, tennis, and other sporting events would be possible to play and watch by just moving the seating arrangement to meet the demands of those other events. Concerts would be accommodated as well, by the adjustment of bleachers and barriers to allow for the safest, most sight line optimum experience, and comfortable experience for all involved.

Concerning indoor-outdoor weather concerns, I will have a facility capable of harnessing the rays of the sun, cool fresh low-humidity air, and freshness of outside air. I would accomplish this by having a retractable roof of sorts. It would have three layers and four positions of operation.

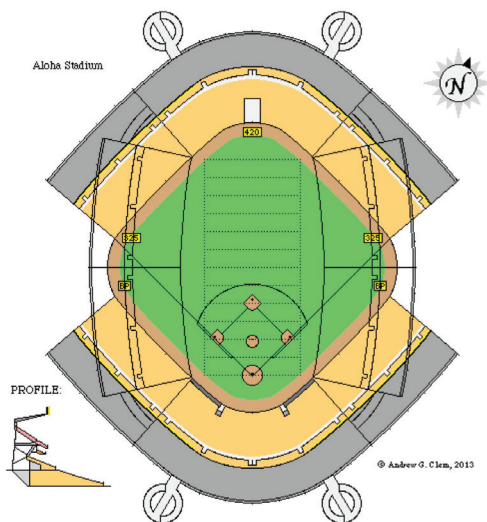
The layers would consist of a solid, opaque outermost roof, followed by a translucent roof, or layer, followed by a transparent dome, and finally, a full opening to the outside. These layers or domes would be in the style of a home's window with a shade, a glass pane, and a solid shutter. The operation of these layers would be to allow natural sunlight in during clear days, moonlight in during clear nights,

fresh air in during all conditions, and some sunlight, moonlight, during overcast conditions. Air temperature would of course, be regulated with the building's HVAC system, but also enhanced as much as possible with fresh air, for comfort and especially with the goal of being as green as possible. This will also help bring our carbon footprint down since we would be using natural green energy and resources in the climate control of the stadium.

Traditionally Outdoor Stadium Concerns

My thoughts on planning what are normally outdoor stadiums are as follows: I always thought the seating plans for baseball stadiums were missing the point. All the seats face the field on a direct line from the section of seats to whatever area of the field they happen to be pointing (looking) at. OK, that's understandable. Most baseball games however, demand that the fans look at the pitcher/batter/catcher field of vision. That demands most fans not sitting behind home plate, or in the center field bleachers, to strain their necks to one side or another. My seating arrangement would have all the seats facing a point midway between the pitcher's mound and home plate. That way, the fans will 90% of the time be looking straight away with no stretching, to where they 90 % of the time always strain to look anyway!

In keeping my "traditionally outdoor" facility multi-sport friendly, I would use the stadium concept that the Hawaii's Aloha Stadium used with its baseball/football stadium. As originally built, Aloha Stadium had various configurations for different sport venues and other purposes. Four movable 7,000-seat sections, each 3.5 million pounds, could move using air casters into a diamond configuration for baseball (also used for soccer), an oval for football, or a triangle for concerts.



The above diagram illustrates the combined seating arrangement for baseball, shown in grey and yellow colors, and that for football or soccer, shown as a black and white outline.

I think this stadium seating capability is brilliant. The optimum sight lines are provided for depending on which sport is being played by moving the stadium structure itself. All of the management and safety features, along with the dome variations I described for the floor hockey stadium facility, would be applied to my major baseball/football/soccer/concert stadium, as well.

Conclusion

I think these plans and procedures, if implemented, would enhance the spectator's experience for any event attended at my facility. The hosts of these events, the managers, and owners, and investors, along with all the workers, would enjoy working at my facility through knowing how safe and comfortable it has been planned and constructed to be.

References

2006 Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.

"Hockey Rink Dimensions." Hockey Rink Dimensions | Court & Field Dimension Diagrams in 3D, History, Rules – SportsKnowHow.com. Internet Marketing Unlimited, Corp. 17 May 2018. <http://www.sportsknowhow.com/hockey/dimensions/hockey-rink-dimensions.html>

Zog Sports, 19 West 36th Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10018

Chapter 478 of the Laws of 1934, known as the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, created the State Liquor Authority and the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control 28 CFR Part 36 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101 - 336, 104 Stat. 327, 42 U.S.C. 12101 - 12213 and 47 U.S.C. 225 and 611)

Sport Facility Management, Ammon, Southhall, Nagel. 2010.

The Honolulu Advertiser. Archived from the original 20 January 2008. Retrieved 2008-02-04.)

Photo Reference: Copyright © Andrew G. Clem.

What Hilton Als and Other Gay Men in *White Girls* Experienced

Okwuoha Elvis Ekene

Spring 2018

ENG 2400 | Freshman English II

Professor Quincy Flowers

Hilton Als is an award-winning writer of the book *White Girls*, which contains thirteen essays, some of which are biographical and autobiographical, to bring to light numerous parameters of writing such as memoirs—a historical account written from a personal knowledge. He has his unique method of writing that makes us see the importance of realities that occur around us, such as HIV/AIDS, which we are most times unaware or ignorant about, no matter how clear we think it is. His book to some people may seem vague, but by reading in between the lines and by trying to put ourselves in the position of his point of view, a whole new world brought about by his great ideas is opened to us. Als invokes other writers and personalities such as Truman Capote, Flannery O'Connor, Malcolm X, Michael Jackson, Eminem, Marlon Riggs, Andre Leon Talley, the important people who shaped him into his being, “the queers” and so on. He stands in the position of a “queer” African American (“Black”) man who has lived in Brooklyn, New York, from when he was born in 1960. The paperback edition of the book was published by McSweeney’s in 2014, and embodies numerous ideas, both implied and clear, bringing to our minds issues about true love, “twinsip,” homosexuality, gender identity, motherhood, racism, body shaming, slavery, “niggas” and some that I might not have mentioned because *White Girls* is so vast and to an extent so encompassing of things we see in our day to day lives.

Out of all his numerous ideas, what stood out to me most was his stories, names mentioned and relatable ideas pertaining to HIV/AIDS. Als shares his experiences with gay men such as “K,” “SL” and “Vincent,” who had shaped his life on what he knew about HIV/AIDS. He doesn’t fail to tell us about his twinsip—a way he used to describe an affair—with K, who died from AIDS. The narrator tells us about the gay bar he sometimes frequented in Manhattan “where AIDS loved everyone up the wrong way” (16). The narrator makes us see fear of stigmatization that resulted in secrecy as he found it difficult discussing AIDS with his partner SL (19). Vincent, his first “twin,” was also a victim of this virus because of being

involved in risky sexual behaviors (92). The narrator explains his gory discriminatory experience of his loved one “being stuffed in a black garbage bag,” a way the NYC health workers handled people that had died from AIDS in 1998 (56). Als uses his past experiences and that of other important names mentioned to give us an insight about the discourse about HIV/AIDS, the epidemic that has claimed the lives of many homosexual men who have been stereotyped and stigmatized.

The first essay in the book, “Tristes Topics,” means “sad topics” in French. It was first used in the title of the memoir that was published in France in 1955 by the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, who had carried out a study in Brazil and came up with ideas about different cultures. Sad topics. I see what is sad about Als’s first topic. His undying quest for true gay love brings up the sad story of his break up with SL. While reading through this topic, I ponder on why a person’s name is SL (Sir or Lady). This is probably a name Als formulated in order to keep the identity of the person he fell in love with secret. Unfortunately, the same year in 1992 when he broke up with SL his previous partner K died of HIV/AIDS. What a sad story. You break up and your beloved dies in the same year. Als says that as soon as K was diagnosed with this incurable virus in 1990, he spent the remaining three years with him in a lost state of mind that would not go away (19). What insight does Als bring by making this statement? He brings forth the insight of the pain of having to disrupt the relationship he has created with people, and this insight also makes us understand that when people suffer from HIV/AIDS, not only do they suffer, but people who are attached to them also suffer because their loved one is faced with a virus that if not taken care of will lead to death.

Als is an attentive observer of his environment, a characteristic which people fall short of, for many are unaware that if we have a good insight of what is happening around us, we have a better chance of understanding what is happening and making amends. On page 16, he describes noticing the bonds created between babies and mothers in Central Park in Manhattan, the bonds created between teenagers who smoked, laughed and shopped on lower Broadway in Manhattan. But he complains that he has been left out from the equation, as his beloved he created a bond with had died from HIV/AIDS. Als lived in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, and he implies by his complaints that since babies, mothers, and teenagers created bonds in Manhattan, he might as well frequent gay bars there so as to create his own bond.

He brings to light the issue of being indifferent about HIV/AIDS, just like the men in the Manhattan gay club “who were too indifferent” to be worried (16). The issue of not knowing the particulars about HIV/AIDS might hinder readers from not understanding the depth of the panic that is caused in Als’s coming age. People like the gay men in the bars are surprisingly unaware that HIV/AIDS was first transmitted into human beings from chimpanzees about a hundred years ago, according to the Center for Disease Control. Until they come in contact with this virus, they remain unaware that so many lives have been changed since the

epidemic created a bond with the world. The World Health Organization, as of 2017, discovered that 70 million people are infected with HIV, about 30 million people will die of it, and about 34 million people are living with it. Funnily, there are some people out there that do not know what the full meaning of the acronym is. The full meaning of HIV is human immunodeficiency virus and AIDS is acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

Als detects the symptoms of HIV over a prolonged period of unawareness such as tuberculosis (TB), which he mentions on page 17. He says people were too indifferent thinking about other things that mattered to them. The gay men went about their various lives, mindful of their respective well-being and forgot about the well-being of their friends who showed symptoms of HIV/AIDS such as tuberculosis. Als says it was “a part of the conversation people were not having.” Science discloses that tuberculosis, which is a contagious viral disease of the lungs, can be an indication of being positive with HIV/AIDS.



Hilton Als

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/feb/02/hilton-als-interview-pulitzer-prize-criticism-white-girls>

I can tell through his friends’ fear of “catching it” that they did not want him to contract TB from the men he invited to his bedroom in Brooklyn, those who were “coughing and wheezing.” This is because his beloved ones he created a bond with try to protect him from the dangers of the world. The gay men who already have a bond with HIV/AIDS and not with Als keep the conversation of their health status secret because they lose nothing by not discussing it with him and passing the disease across. Of course nobody wanted to contract TB or HIV/AIDS, because they do not want to fit in the shoe of bitterness the positive person’s

family will be in once they die, and they do not want their friends to compete for the bigger slice of their death pie after they die. They do not want to be the persons six feet deep, and they certainly didn't want any sad topic.

Als confesses on page 18 that as he had created a bond with SL since 1989, they have been really close to each other, but there were intricate things he was ashamed of communicating with him. Even though he never mentions these things, we can obviously tell that these important things were about his HIV/AIDS status, people he had encountered that had died with AIDS (for example, K), and how HIV/AIDS has created a bond with people in Manhattan the wrong way; that may suggest that Als is probably infected with HIV/AIDS. Because Als could not discuss these issues with him, he says that he has always been on his own, nobody had shown him genuine love, and ever since the only person he created a bond with had died, he had no control of himself and turned towards risky behaviors like having multiple sex partners, which is a huge risk of contracting this virus that kills humans like flies. HIV/AIDS surely degrades people's lives, and by Als saying that his life has been "transcended" and "degraded" may be an important sign that he is suffering from this virus.

What is Als telling us indirectly? He is telling us that homosexual men who are infected with this virus have tremendous changes in their social relationships, support provisions, coping strategies and patterns social functioning caused by the fear of stigmatization, which according to the Wordweb Dictionary "is a disapproval of a person based on socially characteristic grounds that are perceived." Als was afraid that he would be judged by his partner SL, and that was why he refused to disclose his status. He was afraid of being looked down on and belittled, he was afraid of breaking the bond he created with SL after he had broken the one he had with K. He was afraid of sad topics.

Als is not portrayed as a wealthy writer and theater critic in his book. On page 56 he tells us that he lived in a small apartment in Brooklyn, which was once used as a theater. He did not live a flamboyant life, he made gay love on the stage of the theater he shaped like a home, to at least magnify himself and make it look like his life was a movie that audiences paid to see and to feel like he was never off set. He was ashamed of hosting people he paid to make love with him. He knew that he was not able to make them lie on his bed without an incentive, probably because he was black, or not good looking or fat (people treat other people who they perceive to be fat as an afterthought). Als calls the people he paid for sex "actors for hire." They are actors, they come, they go, they create a mess and Als is left to clean up after them. Als says, "How can you host in a theater?" Of course, nobody should be having sex in a theater, nobody should show their audiences what their private parts look like. Als furnished his home with a tea cup, shower curtains, and stove, but something still tainted the image of the picture perfect home he wanted to create. He said that an isolated crud, which is a substance that is disgustingly unpleasant, was in his apartment. This same substance in his

apartment (life) that was created by the gay people he paid for sex was also said to be seen in the apartments of other gay men who were infected with HIV/AIDS and couldn't move on from it. Of course nobody can move on from HIV/AIDS, it becomes a part and parcel of anyone it creates a bond with. Indirectly, if Als told us that crud can be found in the apartment of gay men who were infected with HIV/AIDS and crud was present in his own apartment too, we have a right to conclude that Hilton Als may be HIV positive, but he refuses to reveal it to his readers as he finds it embarrassing, and belittling.

Once a person is infected with HIV/AIDS, he or she cannot move on, Als implies. But the people around them can always move on as nothing is in their way. The gay people that live around Als's apartment that could not move on from HIV/AIDS are seen ridiculously imagining that they can move on. Of course they can't move on. Once this virus is in the blood, it would not let go, it will create a bond with its victim and this bond is unbreakable. When the victim refuses to stay strong by getting the recent helpful medication like PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) that would subdue the virus but not cure it, the virus overpowers them and they eventually die. On page 56, Als tells us the sad story about his loved one that was "stuffed in a black garbage bag." This was the tragic way the New York City health workers dealt with the first cases of death caused by AIDS in 1998. The dead were treated like "imperfect pieces of couture" that needed to be bagged up, sealed up and thrown away without being properly buried so as not to contaminate others and so that the perfect ones that were hale and hearty could move on. Als significantly tagged this virus and the death caused by it in New York the "garbage-bag death" and calls the city "the disaster area" (71, 73).

I decided to research so as to know what the healthcare of New York was like back then. Takacs and other researchers provided useful information about the issue. Their peer reviewed article on the effects of stigmatization suggested that as at 1998, New York City healthcare providers had various forms of antagonism towards patients with HIV/AIDS, which included avoidance, awkward social interactions, feelings of discomfort and importantly stigmatization even after death. By this article we can prove that Als did not lie when he says his loved one that died of the virus was thrown away like mere garbage.

He confesses on page 92 that he had a twin called Vincent, a white twin that he felt he had a bond with but never returned the favor. He says Vincent was beautiful, but let us be real: Vincent probably did not like Als because he felt he was not good looking, or picture perfect. They both met in high school, where Vincent had an undying thirst to become an actor on Broadway. Vincent wanted to be on a real stage, be seen by real audiences who would appreciate his talent and not Als, who imagined that his stage-set bedroom would suffice for a real stage and real audiences watching him while he had open gay sex. We notice the fact that Als is more attracted to white guys, who he calls twins. His idea of twins is therefore ironical, as he cannot be the twin of a white person when he is black; it

is genetically unachievable. But to satisfy his mind, he calls them his twin, maybe he wants to be a white girl with a white partner, who knows? Vincent was always about Broadway musicals and such things, including the chorus dancer who he wished he could make love to. Vincent's wish came true, he had sex with the dancer, but the dancer wasn't a true lover, the dancer was deceitful and secretive, the dancer refused to tell Vincent his HIV/AIDS status, and he eventually passed it across to him. Vincent who tried to create a bond with a dancer, so as to at least climb his way up and become a Broadway star, created a bond with HIV/AIDS (HIV/AIDS will firstly create a bond with its victim and secondly, kill its victim). Vincent eventually got a kiss of death from the black evil snake, sadly.

Als's book is a book bombarded with names, both real identifiable names and nicknames. The name that drew my attention is in the seventh chapter, titled "Michael." Als mentions Marlon Riggs only once throughout his entire book. Other readers may think because this name was mentioned once throughout the entire book, thus it is unimportant and has nothing to offer towards understanding what Als is trying to do; which is bringing to awareness the issue of stereotyping HIV/AIDS positive black gay men. Of course, by researching Riggs I prove some of these readers wrong. Marlon Riggs's name is a very vital name. It clears the air on what black gay men who are positive are facing and that is why Als mentions him. He was a Black American spoken word artist, gay rights and AIDS activist. He tried during his lifetime to create films that are representations of what sexuality embodies in America. Riggs was well acknowledged during his time because of the good fight he fought for Black people living HIV/AIDS. He spearheaded the construction of houses for poor Blacks who were positive to help them have a stable environment after the bond they had with their various families were broken, due to their condition. He created his work for Black affirmation, his movies provide the history to AIDS, e.g. *No Regret*. He understood that Black people were mostly silent about their status in the 1980s during the strike of the epidemic and its havoc in the community. He fought hard for these Black gay men who were positive and received Awards such as a National Emmy Award for his selflessness. He did all of these probably because he also had a bond with HIV/AIDS too. He suffered autoimmune diseases because the virus had a strong grip of him. Despite his unhealthy state, he fought hard for other people who couldn't fight for themselves, he alleviated them and gave them reasons to live despite the fact that society spoke ill of them, especially the Blacks. Sadly, Riggs died April 5, 1994, due to HIV/AIDS related complications. He left his legacy behind and people like Hilton Als decided to use him as an example of men who fought against stereotyping.

Stereotyping in the gay community adds up to the isolation of Black gay males, which causes an increase of the HIV in the Black gay community. These stereotypes have implications on the rate of condomless receptive and insertive anal intercourse, multiple partners and substance abuse. As a result the rate of HIV infections is not balanced across the gay male community; according to the Center

for Disease Control, Black males are apportioned with a higher prevalence of the virus and incidence of new infections. Als tries to raise his voice to tell us that stereotyping drives these Black males into smaller and denser networks. He has been deeply affected by these stereotypes. Through his tone, he has experienced low self-esteem, and possibly negative mental health conditions such as depression. Blacks have become disempowered. They are stereotyped even in health care as they don't have equal access to health facilities like their White counterparts. They have been through a lot and Als is a living testimonial to this. His writing is a plea to stop stigmatization and stereotyping, to stop isolation of the minority groups, to stop high-risk behaviors and improve multiple health outcomes. Als's voice screams the importance of information exchange, education, training, involvement opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS, and the absolute need to stop stigmatization and stereotyping among the gay community. Stigmatization and stereotyping should not be the cause of the general rule that a person's sexuality be kept more secret than their HIV/AIDS status.

Works Cited

- Als, Hilton. *White Girls*. McSweeney's, 2014.
- Lewthwaite, P., and E. Wilkins. "Natural History of HIV/AIDS." *Medicine*, Vol. 33, No. 6, 2005, pp. 10–13.
- Marsden, M. D. and J. Zack. "HIV/AIDS Eradication." *Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters*, Vol. 23, No. 14, 2013, pp. 4003–4010.
- Newcomb, Michael, et al. "Race-Based Sexual Stereotypes and Their Effects on Sexual Risk Behavior in Racially Diverse Young Men Who Have Sex with Men." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, vol. 44, no. 7, 2015, pp. 1959–1968.
- Takács, J., et al. "Effects of Stigmatization on Gay Men Living with HIV/AIDS in a Central-Eastern European Context: A Qualitative Analysis from Hungary." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2013, pp. 24–34.

Viewing Autism from a Cultural Perspective

Ammema Sani

Spring 2018

PSY 3000 | Child and Adolescent Development

Professor Carol Carielli

Introduction

Autism, also known as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is characterized by social interaction difficulties, challenges with communication and repetitive behavior. It is known as a spectrum disorder because there is “wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience” (Berger, 2014). According to Berger of all the children with special-needs, the children with autism probably have the most trouble not only because of the severity but also because the symptoms and treatments for the disorder are “hotly disputed” (Berger, 2014, 342). The symptoms and treatments are debated because a child with autism can have symptoms for a variety of reasons; because the reasons for the symptoms are different, the treatment will be different as well (Berger, 2014, 343). Treatment that worked for one person, might have no effect on another person, which makes this disorder hard to deal with.

Although I don’t know anyone with autism, I became interested in the topic because I recently came across a book titled *An Anthropologist on Mars* (Sacks, 1995). It really sparked my interest, especially when I read about Stephen Wiltshire and Temple Grandin. Wiltshire is an architectural artist who gained fame and popularity due to his ability to draw a landscape after only seeing it once. He was able to do this because he was an autistic savant (Stephen Wiltshire MBE – Biography). A savant is a person influenced by a developmental disorder like autism that has “exceptional skill or brilliance in some limited field” (autistic savant).

Temple Grandin is a designer of livestock handling facilities and a professor of animal science at Colorado State University. She is also a highly functioning autistic person. She, like many others, finds it difficult to understand the emotions that others might have. Like many others with autism she finds it difficult to communicate or interact with anyone (Berger, 2014, 342-343).



Temple Grandin

Source: <https://selfadvocatenet.com/temple-grandin-american-doctor-autism-activist/>



Stephen Wiltshire

Source: <https://www.stephenwiltshire.co.uk/news.aspx>

Savants like Wiltshire and Grandin are fascinating. The whole spectrum reveals a complicated world in which people live. And then how autism is addressed in different cultures holds a further curiosity and therein rests my inquiry.

Autism Around the World

Imagine a world where you are isolated and shamed over something that you have no control over. Imagine not getting help for a problem because no one acknowledges that you have that problem. That is a reality for many people in different parts of the world who have autism.

The characteristics for autism can be seen across all cultures but the way the culture interprets those characteristics and views autism as a developmental

disorder or not strongly differs. The way autism is viewed in Western society varies greatly compared to places like Africa, South Korea, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.

Autism affects approximately one percent of the world population (Facts and Statistics, 2015). It is viewed differently depending on the country or culture.

Western Society

In Western society it is seen as a developmental disorder that only affects the individual. In the United States, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that parents get their children screened for developmental delays at as early as 9-month-old child visits or during their child's 18-, 24- or 30-month visit. It is also recommended that parents have their children specifically tested for autism during their 24 and 30-month visit (Autism Spectrum Disorder, 2018).

This demonstrates how important the medical professionals in the United States believe that early diagnosis of autistic symptoms is paramount, so that early intervention can occur. Medical experts in the United States encourage early screening, diagnosis and intervention for children with autism. This is in contrast to the approach in other countries. However, although screening children at early ages and looking for signs of autism is a good thing, the difficulty rests in that in different countries the symptoms of autism may actually be viewed as positive. An example is the symptom of avoiding eye contact.

In European and American societies, children are often encouraged to keep eye contact while talking to their peers and adults, in other places around the world like rural South Africa (Deweerd, 2012), however, keeping eye contact is a sign of disrespect (Bauer, Winegar & Waxman, 2016). So, if these American medical standards and screening are being used, judging or determining whether a child has autism based on their lack of eye contact with adults or authority figures is a "considerable concern" (Bauer, Winegar & Waxman, 2016). Different cultures have varied ways of living and different ways of associating with those around them, particularly with how children interact with adults. Also, a child that is withdrawn or seems to have a language delay might be seen as a symptom of autism in the United States and Western Europe, but in places like Goa, India, parents don't pay attention to a child's "early social and communication milestones" (Deweerd, 2012).

South Korea and China

In countries like the United States autism is seen as something that should be addressed as soon as possible, but in South Korea autism is still "highly stigmatized" and most Korean families try to do whatever is in their power to try and avoid this label being placed on their child or family member (Johnson,

2013). People try and avoid the label being placed on their child or family member because while in the United States autism is seen as a disorder that is an individual's problem, in South Korea the disorder is considered a disease to reflect on the whole family (Ecker, 2010).

South Korean people, more than in any other place in the world, seem to “measure their own self-worth, and the worth of the family, in terms of what the child is able to achieve and what the child means to the family” (Baker, 2013). If a child is diagnosed with autism, it diminishes the family name as now they are seen as people with a “sick” person in their family. Many South Koreans also might fear that this label will affect their child from making friends, from getting hired for a job, promoted at work and might affect their house values (Baker, 2013). Not only will these labels affect the child, but it also affects the rest of the family as now they are all less likely and eligible to get married, more likely to face discrimination and to be excluded from social events (Johnson, 2013).

Johnson (2013) also states that families might not be able to sell their property as people don't want to live in a house or apartment where someone with autism once lived. I found this to be very surprising to see that people didn't want to live in a house where someone with a non-contagious disorder once lived. While some fears might seem irrational or unreasonable, they are a reality for some South Korean families.

Baker states that some South Korean mothers reported that the diagnosis strained their marriages and one woman reported that it led to her divorce. Other ways it affected these women/ mothers was they also stated that this diagnosis led to them to be excluded or to exclude themselves from “social or familial encounters” (Baker, 2013).

Many people in South Korea are religious and choose to look at their cultural belief which is that someone who has autism is the “result of punishment for the family's previous sins, the mother's neglect of the child, or a wicked ghost” (Ecker, 2010). The most common belief in South Korea for the cause of autism is that the family is being punished for their or their ancestor's sins. This demonstrates that they choose to value their cultural belief over proven science. Diagnosis of autism is viewed as a stigma that impacts the entire family. The pressures are overwhelming and so ultimately children are not diagnosed or treated (Ecker, 2010).

Another common belief is that autism is caused by a mother's neglect. As in South Korea, the woman is often also blamed in China. Women who have depression or are withdrawn are more likely to be labeled as bad mothers by the psychiatrists in South Korea. Women who work and have a child with autism will also be criticized as they are neglecting the child by working. This only encourages the traditional role of women being caretakers rather than breadwinners (Ecker, 2010). Therefore, women tend to be the ones being blamed for the child's autism rather than the men.

People in South Korea and people in China deal with the diagnosis of autism in similar ways; they might choose to isolate the child and the children leave the house as little as possible. As a result of social mores, those diagnosed with autism live a life filled with sadness and loneliness. They become used to the judgment and impatient gazes of community members (Ecker, 2010). Families might also choose to move to rural areas and raise their autistic child there as people seem to have less pity and discomfort around them, compared to urban areas (Ecker, 2010). Because of the stigma, people in places like China and Korea choose to live their lives very cautiously and carefully, afraid of what people might say and what might happen if people find out about the disorder that they have in their family. Many families in Asian communities “hide the fact that a family member has a disability” regardless of what kind of disability it is, out of fear of how it might impact their family members’ future and also how it might impact the family’s reputation (Tuzon, Verma Wu and Yoon Hendricks, 2017).

In the United States autism is seen as an incurable though treatable and lifelong disorder, while in South Korea it is seen as curable. People in South Korea feel that if they can teach the autistic child to speak and act normally, they can help the child recover and help restore the family’s reputation that was ruined (Ecker, 2010).

While in South Korea, autism is still highly stigmatized, there are still many people who are working hard to try and help those with autism and make their lives an easier one. The Autism Society of Korea is “the leading private autism organization in Korea” and in December 2006 it was recognized officially by the Ministry for Health & Welfare (Autism in Korea- A Private Family Matter 2008). It is also just one of the few places dedicated in helping people with autism and those whose lives have been affected by autism. The Autism Society of Korea, also known as ASK, tries to provide a better life for those individuals affected by autism and the communities in which those individuals live (Autism in Korea- A Private Family Matter 2008). ASK is growing rapidly with more than 12,000 members and although it is still not known by all the families affected by autism in Korea, it is still helping out a lot of people. ASK wants to help and provide “effective and well directed services and appropriate information about autism education, treatment and research, building up the safeguards with equal respect for the people with autism and set up a Welfare Centre for Autistic Children/People” (Autism in Korea- A Private Family Matter 2008). The goals of the Autism Society of Korea are to educate the population about autism and as more families are becoming more aware about autism, the stigma against autism will also slowly decrease.

Pakistan and Bangladesh

In places like Pakistan and Bangladesh the views on autism are completely different, as researched by Brinda Jegatheesan (2011). The Muslims in these

countries interviewed believed that the autistic children were pure and gifts from Allah (Jegatheesan, 2011). Believing that the children given to them were gifts from Allah, rather than thinking they were negative for their family, they were able to bring themselves closer to Allah and their religion. Parents also believed that they were chosen not because of negative reasons, for example being punished for their sins of those of their ancestors like Chinese and South Korean people, but rather believed that Allah had chosen them “because of their love, hard work, dignity and ability to nurture” (Ecker, 2010). Also, unlike South Korean and Chinese families, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims illustrated the importance of including autistic children in all aspects of everyday life. Many families also end up taking the autistic child to pilgrimages to help them complete their life’s goal. Again, this illustrates how South Korean and Chinese people view autistic children as a curse as opposed to Pakistani and Bangladeshi people who view autistic children as gifts, a blessing from God (Ecker, 2010).

While there are people who see autistic children as blessings and do everything they can to make their life as normal and as perfect as they can, a majority of these populations don’t understand autism and that is due to the lack of education and awareness. The authorities such as teachers, educators, parents and medical professionals might have misconceptions and stigmas about autism that they seem to pass on to others. So, while there are those Pakistani people who choose to treat autistic people like gifts from God, a majority of the population still seem to have misconceptions and seem to isolate and judge families with autistic children in them (LaDin, 2016).

In Bangladesh as well, there are still many misconceptions as well as a lot of stigma when discussing mental health and autism. It was revealed in a study done by the National Institute of Mental Health of Bangladesh that more than fifty percent of the rural people from the study believed in traditional healers (Soron, 2015). This shows that half of the population believes in healing and those who believe or rely on healing will probably not get help from medical professionals since they think their problems can be healed. People view autism and mental illnesses as negative things because the government in which they are ruled by stigmatizes mental illness and views it as something that is negative. The beliefs of the governments or those in charge end up influencing the population and leads them to have misconceptions that there are no cures for mental illness and barriers end up being created due to the stigma (Soron, 2015). Even though the government is trying to fix the stigma associated with autism, reaching the rural population will be more difficult as they might not have ways to access to shows and “interactive popular theater,” which are put on to educate the public about autism, so if the population doesn’t have access to these things the stigmas and misconceptions will continue to persist (Soron, 2015).

Ultraorthodox Jews

Another group of people known as Ultraorthodox Jews also have their own views on autism. Shaked and Bilu decided to conduct research and contacted thirty-two Ultraorthodox families with children suspected to have autism. Even while looking at the Ultraorthodox Jews' backgrounds, they still seemed to have a relationship with Western medicine. The members of the ultraorthodox community live their life by a strict version of Halacha, also known as Jewish law, which was also followed by their ancestors (Shaked & Bilu). The Ultraorthodox Jews are similar to the South Koreans and Chinese in the sense that they all believe that the autism is caused by the ancestor's sins or bad actions and that "it is all from above" or "It is from God," which means that the autism is all God's will. God's will is not something that they can understand and that what has happened has happened for the best (Shaked & Bilu). While they are similar to the South Korean families and Chinese families in this sense, they are also like the Pakistani and Bangladeshi families in other ways. They are like the Pakistani and Bangladeshi people in the sense that they also see the autistic children as pure and innocent. The autistic children have a higher spiritual standing than most people and because of their high standing they are incapable of committing sins. Many of the mothers also believed that the children had some kind of grand mission or role to complete on earth that was too big for them to understand (Shaked & Bilu, 14). Because people are so open and unashamed of their autistic children, the stigma around them in these communities has decreased and fewer families seem to hide or isolate their children with autism.

Ultraorthodox Jews tend to seek out both Western and spiritual medicine techniques for therapy. They tend to seek out doctors first, then professors, then the Hasidic masters and finally the homeopaths (Shaked & Bilu). This illustrates that although they are very religious, they still do turn to doctors. Something that was interesting was that rabbis in their communities are put first on the "hierarchy of resort," the rabbi is the person Ultraorthodox Jews turn to with problems between the medical and religious systems (Shaked & Bilu). Responsibility and decision-making regarding Western medicine ultimately rested with the authority of the family rabbi. In a way this could be a good thing, since the rabbi is an older and wiser person who can help guide you toward the right answer. It is still sad to see that mothers don't have the right to make decisions for their own children. In places like South Korea and China women are criticized and blamed for a child with autism and accused of neglecting the child, even if women spend their whole lives taking care of their children. Like the Ultraorthodox women do, they still have to ask a man for permission on what decision they should make regarding their child.

In America it is seen as an individual's disorder, in South Korea and China it is recognized as disorder that affects the whole family. Also, in South Korea and

China autism is seen as a punishment bought upon the family caused by their or their ancestors' bad deeds or sins, a mother's neglect on her child or ghosts. People seem to rely more on explanations to problems with spiritual answers rather than relying on medical explanations like in America.

Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Ultraorthodox Jews view children with autism as pure and innocent gifts from God. Cultural attitudes regarding autism differ. However, it is also important to remember that while there are differences between cultures, there are also differences in viewing autism within cultures. Nonetheless, if the psychological community reaches out perhaps some of those barriers can be overcome so that people with autism throughout the world can receive appropriate intervention that will make their lives and those of their families more fulfilling.

Works Cited

- "Autism in Korea--A Private Family Matter" EKF (Europe Korea Foundation), May 9, 2008. <https://www.korea4expats.com/news-autism-korea.html#>
- "Autism Spectrum Disorder", The National Institute of Mental Health. March 2018 https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml#part_145440
- "autistic savant" Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/autistic%20savant>
- Baker, Al. "Working to Combat the Stigma of Autism", *The New York Times*, June 30, 2013. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/01/nyregion/in-queens-an-effort-to-combat-autisms-stigma-among-korean-americans.html>
- Bauer, Winegar & Waxman, "How Cultural Differences Affect Autism Diagnoses" originally published in *Scientific American*, April 1, 2016. <https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2016/04/opinion-scientific-american-autism/>
- Berger, Kathleen. "The Developing Person Through Childhood and Adolescence," 2014.
- Deweerd, Sarah. "Culture: Diverse diagnostic", December 6, 2012. https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:3h_v-PB9UToJ:https://www.spectrumnews.org/news/culture-diverse-diagnostics/%3Fformat%3Dpdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-b-l-ab
- Ecker, Jaclyn. "Cultural Belief Systems in Autism and the Effects on Families, Barnard College," December 13, 2010. http://ikefoundationforautism.org/e-library/Cultural_Psych_ECKER.pdf
- "Facts and Statistics", Autism Society, August 26, 2015. <http://www.autism-society.org/what-is/facts-and-statistics/>
- Jegatheesan, Brinda "Multilingual Development in Children with Autism: Perspectives of South Asian Muslim Immigrant Parents on Raising a Child with a Communicative Disorder in Multilingual Contexts, *Bilingual Research Journal*." 2011. <https://autismdll.wikispaces.com/file/view/Jegatheesan+2011+multilingual+autism.pdf> <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2011.597824>
- Johnson, Emily. "The Curious Case of South Korea, Global Autism Project," September 15, 2013. <https://www.globalautismproject.org/the-curious-case-of-south-korea/>
- LalDin, Myra. "Spreading the Word in Pakistan: Global Autism Awareness Project", May 19, 2016. <http://blog.stageslearning.com/blog/spreading-global-awareness-autism-pakistan>
- Sacks, Oliver, *An Anthropologist on Mars*, 1995, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Shaked, Michal & Bilu, Yoram. "Grappling with Affliction: Autism in the Jewish Ultraorthodox Community in Israel." <http://www.jpsych.com/library/pdfs/138.pdf>

- Soron, Tanji Rasheed 2015. "Autism, Stigma and Achievements of Bangladesh." <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/autism-stigma-and-achievements-of-bangladesh-2378-5756-1000320.pdf>
- Stephen Wiltshire official website, "Stephen Wiltshire MBE – Biography." <https://www.stephen-wiltshire.co.uk/biography.aspx>
- Tuzon. Kristine, Verma. Aparna, Wu. Lawrence and Yoon-Hendricks, Alexandra. 2017. "For Asian Americans, what does it take to confront autism?" <https://voices.aaja.org/index/2017/7/25/asian-american-struggle-autism>

The Alienation of an American-Thai Woman

Patchaneeda Rungreang

Spring 2018

ANT 3700 | Introduction to Anthropology

Professor Ryan Chaney

As the only daughter of a Thai immigrant family, I've endured the pain of trying to achieve the "perfect ideal of a woman" from both the Thai culture and the American culture. While both ideals are structured differently, with the ideal "Thai Wife" being a singular entity, and the American ideals more malleable, there are flaws within both, specifically in ways concerning ideal body shape, domestic duties, and proper hobbies a woman should have. These ideas were ingrained into their respective cultures, and thus have allowed gender stratification to settle in both societies, which continues to this very day.

The "ideal" Thai woman is composed of many aspects; however, there are three main aspects that define the perfect "Thai woman": body, domestic role, and hobbies. Within Thai culture, a woman should have these aspects, or else be considered a "farang" (a foreigner, usually meaning of European descent, sometimes interpreted as a "White foreigner"). In other words, if one did not fit this ideal, they were not considered "Thai," yours truly included.

During my summer vacations in Thailand, I'd always remember how different I was from my female cousins: They were slim, I was not. They had snow-white skin: I had tan "farmer's" skin, as they say in Thailand. The only similarity was height; and even then, I was only shorter due to my age. So, in many social settings, within my family's household and within the public domain, it was easy to spot me as a "farang." This is due to the expectation that Thai women are to be short, slim, and fair-skinned. They're meant to be weak and petite, to be taken care of and treasured, like objects; dolls to be cared for and shown, or trophies of their parents and husbands. Nearly all the women in my family, despite having highly valued jobs, such as doctor, nurse, or police officer, they're all still "earned" by their husbands with a dowry. My own grandmother was a "gift" for my grandfather. These women had a high price for marriage; however, if they weren't slim, short, and fair-skinned, they wouldn't have a dowry at all. This means that within Thai culture, if you didn't look like this ideal, you weren't "valuable" enough to

be married off.

Furthermore, there are cases of job opportunities for women in Thailand that demand photographs and medical data to confirm their height and weight. Even if women have bad eyesight, they have to hide it. Nearly every woman in my family needs some type of eye-correction; however, I'm the only woman in my family to proudly (?) wear glasses. Some of my family only wear glasses "when they need to," have contacts, or live without them (somehow). This is because in Thailand if a woman has bad eyesight, she looks "inferior." Some jobs even declare than those with eyeglasses "need not apply." So, despite 45.7% of the Thai labor force being women, and 83.1% of women enrolling in secondary school, there are still strict boundaries to limit access to wealth, power, and prestige for Thai women.

In the domestic sphere of Thai society, nearly all Thai women are expected to be "nurturing, loving mothers" that take care of children, grandchildren, and their husbands. In fact, there's an old Thai saying, "A wife wakes up before her husband and falls asleep after him," which alludes to a woman's role as the obedient housewife who takes care of her family. My elderly grandmother still cares for my super elderly grandfather, making sure he eats at the same exact time every day, while always cooking for her children and grandchildren; she's just constantly cooking or cleaning, or just doing something to keep her family afloat. She's never taken a day for herself; everything she does is literally for someone else within her family. Furthermore, I was constantly told growing up that I, a six-year-old female, had to work to become a good "mae" (mother) by giving my female baby cousin a bath, while my brother had to just financially take care of our male cousins. Of course, growing up as a younger sibling in America, I didn't know how to take care of a person smaller than myself. I failed. (Note: My baby cousin is still alive, don't worry.) This led to a whole lecture in both Thai and English on how I'm a failure as a woman, and I have to get better or I'll never be married. In hindsight, this is just an example of how much a woman's value is based on her "training" in Thai culture. In Thailand, one of the most important things, if not the most important thing, for a mother to teach her daughter is how to be a "perfect wife." This includes teaching how to cook, clean, and take care of babies. To further perpetuate this notion, in Thailand a mother's work is extremely valued; the ultimate insult to a man is calling them "yet mae" (literally, "mother-f*cker"). This fact shows that Thai culture puts a high value for mothers; but at the same time, if you are a woman without the intention of being a mother, you're not truly a woman.

Along with the domestic duties, Thai women are expected to have "feminine interests," such as sewing, clothes making, makeup and hair styling, or even just light exercise to remain slender to fit the ideal body type. So, my family surrounded me with hula-hoops, which I failed at. My mother would often buy child me things like jewelry, or hair products, or makeup, in which I had no interest. In fact, when I rejected these gifts, I was told I was a "bad daughter." These hobbies are in some way connected either to maintaining the "perfect image" or training to be a "perfect

wife.” So for me to reject such things is essentially saying, “I’m not the ideal Thai woman, and I’m not going to try to be one,” which probably gave my family lots of worries. Furthermore, the interests I did show, e.g. sword-fighting, martial arts, archery, were considered non-feminine, and so my aunts told eight-year-old me, “You can’t do that. You’re a woman.” So not only were the “perfect woman” activities encouraged, but those outside of that connotation were discouraged. Thus, as I continued to pursue these “non-feminine” activities, my family saw the farther I was falling out of place with their “perfect image” of what I should be. They saw me as an imperfection; I wasn’t a Thai woman, I was a farang.

These aspects of womanhood in Thai culture are essential; without these aspects, you aren’t a Thai woman. Interestingly, even if a woman achieves this “ideal” she is still lesser than Thai men. Thai women in general are considered “dirty” and “untouchable” to Buddhist monks. Furthermore, if a Thai woman wishes to achieve Nirvana, the goal of Buddhism, she must be reborn as a man. With Buddhism being the religion of 93.6% of the entire Thai population, this means that it’s a common, accepted fact that even women believe they can’t achieve the goal of Nirvana because they’re women. Women are just not “good” enough to achieve such status, or that they sinned in a lifetime before, so they’re predestined to be a woman. But if they’re good “Thai” women, they’ll become men and can achieve Nirvana. This means that Thai culture, for all the value it puts into a mother’s work and role, still refuses to embrace women fully as equals. This leads to gender stratification within Thai society; women are just less valued than men, are less human than men, and are merely around to take care of the domestic residence.

In America, the perfect ideal of a woman is malleable, as that ideal changes from person to person. Considering how big America is, compared to Thailand, as well as America’s valuing individuality, this is no surprise. However, even just comparing the three aspects of a “perfect” Thai woman to American ideals, the American ideals are quite hard to achieve as well. In terms of body shape, one ideal is to be slim, fair-skinned, and black hair. This is shown in the characters from popular culture: Lois Lane in Superman, Mary Jane in Spiderman, or even Sophie Cookson (Roxy in *The Kingsman: Secret Service*). Men from different eras have always been attracted to women with these features, as I discovered with my discussions within my heterosexual male friend group. The fact that these portrayals exist and still persist is evidence that these features appeal to a particular demographic in America.

Another ideal body type is to be a “BBW” (Big Beautiful Woman). According to the popular pornography website, Pornhub, the term “BBW” had a massive 1,019% increase in searches on their website in 2015. This means that in America, a good portion of the heterosexual men population enjoys these features of women. So, the ideal body of women changes, depending on the opinion of the man one is asking, not a woman. Playboy, a leading male entertainment magazine, perpetuates a different type of woman American men should be attracted to: the

slim, well-endowed model. So while the ideal woman is subjective, American ideals are still restricted; one can be attracted to whatever body type of a woman, as long as it fits within these basic standards set by the men.

Concerning domestic duties, while in 2018 America, 57% of the workforce are women, they are still expected to be the ones who care for the household, cook, and oversee the child's upbringing. This means women are expected to have children, care for their children themselves, and/or make arrangements for childcare, educational opportunities, and regulate the child's healthcare. So, growing up in America, I had my father who did these things. My father was the one to cook for the family, to care for me as a child, and to teach me necessary life skills such as walking. This was odd in America; it was against the social norm. My mother was supposed to do those things, while my father, the man, should have been working more to provide for his family financially. In American society, men are to be the "breadwinners" and be the main provider for their family, while women are still in charge of doing the domestic duties of budgeting, domestic care, and being a supplementary provider for their household. But in today's American society, both men and women work to provide for their household; otherwise, there shouldn't be a reason women make up over half of the workforce in America. However, our economy is made to systematically oppress women, making it extremely difficult for women to be the main "provider"; for every dollar a man makes in America, a woman working in America will make 20 cents less than the man for the same exact work. In other words, American society devalues women and their efforts, almost as if they are saying, "In the public-domestic dichotomy, women's role is to be in the domestic dichotomy."

My household was an abnormality. My mother had a higher education than my father, and thus, when I was born, my mother was the primary "provider." However, when my brother was young, their family structure fit in better with those norms; my mother cared for my brother, and my father worked three part-time jobs to provide for his family. So, when these roles switched, my father was looked down upon and personally felt "inferior" due to these social norms in both the Thai and American cultures. So, when women are the main providers, it's looked at as a man's "failure" rather than a woman's "success." This social perspective is how this uneven valuing of the public-domestic dichotomy is still allowed to exist, and thus, why nearly 29% of the heterosexual married couples in America are hardly mentioned. That's almost one-third of the entire American population, where women make more than men in a domestic relationship. But, we fail to see such achievements as a woman's achievement. This lack of recognition is a reflection of how unequal the access to social capital is for women. When our society realizes women's gains in economic capital, society then refuses to recognize women for their effort, and would instead turn to say it's a man's failure. However, if the roles were reversed, men would be praised and gain both economic and social capital.

Along these lines, American women are actually allowed and encouraged

to be interested in similar interests with men, such as the humanities, (most) sports, arts, and sciences. This is shown within the education system; in American schools, all my classes were co-ed, and I was held to the same standard as both my male and female classmates. In educational institutes, including college, I, a female, still have to take courses in science and the liberal arts. Perhaps I'm also lucky because in my educational institutions no authority figure told me I was naturally "inferior" compared to men. However, I did have American society condition me to attempt to be more feminine. American women are often discouraged from "manly" activities, such as weightlifting, martial arts, mechanical work, and even contact sports, such as American football and hockey. Instead, women are encouraged to learn "feminine" activities, such as dance, yoga, sewing/crochet, or figure skating. This helps build into the American idea that women are not as strong, and/or capable as men for physical contact or strength, even though there are many cases of such being proven otherwise.

So, young me, while interested in martial arts and baseball, only took ballet, tap, and jazz as a kid, since I, a female, shouldn't do those "aggressive manly" activities. However, as I practice martial arts today, most of the top ranks are female; the top rank at my dojo is a female. So, not only did they pass the same standard for men, they continued their craft to a point where they're recognized internationally as a high rank with the utmost respect. But outside my martial arts studio and the martial arts world, these women are unrecognized. They're fully capable of doing amazing above average feats, yet society is going to assume they can't. They're assuming these women are "weak" and must be "taken care of." This misperception is a result of this connotation Americans associate with women.

These ideas of the "perfect woman" in both societies contain a huge flaw: they're both ideals dictated by men. It's absurd and, frankly, a huge indicator of patriarchy. How can man know the best version of a woman, without the opinions of women themselves? And these ideas are so ingrained in both societies; in Thailand, it's still commonly accepted, and in America, 2018, it's starting to be questioned. This fact alone, in both societies, is a prime example of gender stratification; women in both societies have unequal access to defining themselves. Since they are unable to define themselves, they have limited access to social prestige, power, and wealth, in both societies; Thai women can't even achieve their ultimate religious goal due to the fact that they are women.

In America, one has to be male to be recognized for their individuality and their achievements, since if one is a woman, their definition is primarily their relationship to a man. Women aren't defined by what they do, instead, they're defined by the man whom they are with. In elementary school, all my teachers who also had my brother would continuously associate me with my brother. I'd even hear things like "She's so different than her brother, are they really siblings?" In Thailand, a woman without a husband is considered "useless" or "inferior." My aunt has a daughter, but her fiancé left her; ever since she's felt "lesser" than

her other married female siblings; they're complete women with husbands, and she isn't. So, in both Thai and American societies, women cannot be defined by themselves; the whole "definition" must be associated with a man.

Women also help perpetuate these ideas in both societies as well. Thai women don't reject their "ideal," they attempt to become it. My family tried to make me a "perfect Thai woman," and I'm certain that it's something all Thai women had to go through. But it's not the men who tried to make me "perfect," it's the women. In Thai culture, women buy into this ideal, and work to make every single one of their daughters fit this ideal. Mothers train their daughters to become "good" housewives, to use makeup to adjust their looks as necessary, and to learn how to put their husbands and children first before their own well-being. So, this stratification in Thai culture is also self-inflicted. If women didn't buy into this ideal, it wouldn't work. However, since Thai women do buy into this ideal, the cycle continues. Women in Thailand agree and accept this form of stratification, and find honor in their recognition of "perfection". So, while it may be empowering for most women in Thailand to achieve this perfection, it leaves little room for the Thai women who do not fit this ideal.

In American society, the gender stratification is so ingrained in our culture that there are double standards for women, and enforced by women, for nearly everything. Mothers constantly ask their daughters for grandchildren. "Nice guys" insist that women deserve heartbreak simply for not reciprocating their intentions. Even I, a young woman of America, have been shamed by other women for countless things: not wearing makeup, or my inability to fold laundry neatly, or even not "acting like a proper woman." All these little things are reflections of how in American women still think that women need to fulfill their duty of the domestic side within the public-domestic dichotomy, or how women are still objectified, "owned" by men, or even how it's a woman's duty to please the men of our society. American culture, as demeaning as it is to women, have only been questioned within the last few years. This is because a majority of women in America over the previous 200-plus years have accepted these norms, allowed them to become norms, and only started to question such norms slowly over the last century or so. American men alone could not have perpetrated this type of gender stratification; the women of America had to accept such norms for them to become norms.

In conclusion, Thai society and American society have flaws within their views of women, and as a result have gender-stratified societies. While both cultures are different in their ideals for the "perfect" woman, the effect is still the same. There is little value for women in general and almost no value for women who do not fit this ideal. So, while things are changing slowly in each country for women gaining the respect they deserve, there is one key thing that must be done, dismantling of the ideal of a "perfect" woman. As long as that ideal still exists, there will be no place for women who fit outside that ideal.

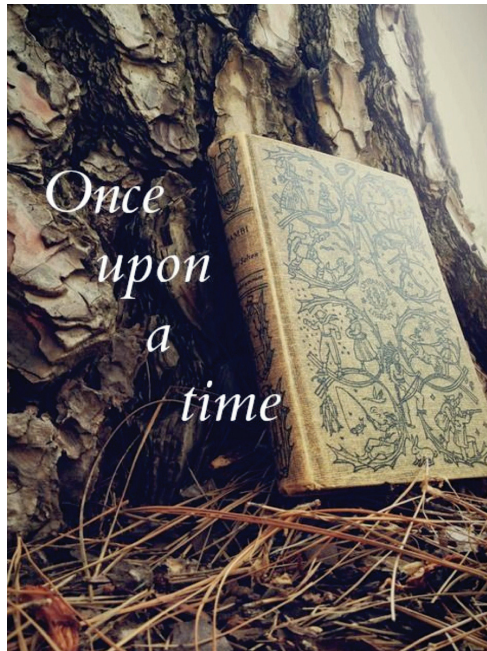
References

1. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS>
2. https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/stats_data.htm
3. <http://elmille8thailand.weebly.com/blog/gender-roles-in-thailand>
4. http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Thailand/sub5_8b/entry-3212.html
5. http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Thailand/sub5_8c/entry-3223.html
6. <http://hir.harvard.edu/article/?a=13011>
7. <http://www.konbini.com/us/lifestyle/top-porn-searches-2015-twisted/>
8. <https://moon.com/2016/04/gender-roles-thailand/>
9. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf>
10. <https://qz.com/931253/the-highest-share-of-women-in-the-workforce-globally-are-found-in-these-african-countries/>
11. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/244359/percent-of-wives-who-earn-more-than-their-husbands-in-the-us/>
12. https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/Thailand_statistics.html
13. <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology/role-of-gender-in-thailand-sociology-essay.php>

Understanding Fairy Tales

Esther Ishak

Spring 2018
ENG4000 | Short Fiction
Professor Joanna Stein



Source: <https://dumielauxepices.net/wallpaper-1151506>

A fairy tale is a story of imaginative fiction with magical occurrences and archetypal characters. These stories range from lovely to fascinating to harsh and gruesome. Most fairy tales will go beyond a reader's comprehension of realism. People may argue the benefits of reading fairy tales to children, as the archetypal characters are unrealistic and endings have mixed moral messages. In the book *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim, a child psychologist, explains the importance of reading fairy tales to children. Some of Bettelheim's analysis relates to "Hansel and Gretel" from *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales*

of the *Brothers Grimm*. Similarly, Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl" is analyzed by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, a psychologist folklorist, in her book *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. Despite the criticism of archetypal characters and questionable morals present in fairy tales, research supports the idea that fairy tales are beneficial to both children and adults given the extensive psychological meaning behind them.

The story of "Hansel and Gretel" begins realistically for a fairy tale. Hansel and Gretel are siblings who overhear their mother telling their father to abandon them because the parents are too poor to feed them (and must feed themselves instead). Hansel and Gretel are afraid after hearing their mother telling their father, "Listen to me, husband, early tomorrow morning you're to take both children and give them a piece of bread. Then lead them into the middle of the forest ... we could no longer feed them" (Grimms 44).

Bettelheim, looking at the tale through a psychological perspective, describes that when people are suffering from deprivation and poverty, it causes the person to become selfish and less sensitive to others. When first abandoned, Hansel filled his pockets with pebbles and dropped them on the ground to find the way back home after going to the forest. Luckily, he was successful, and both were able to return home.

According to Bettelheim's analysis, Hansel and Gretel's act of returning home reveals their awareness of their dependence on their parents and their understanding about why their parents abandoned them. It is an example of "regression and denial" (159). Here, Bettelheim is overanalyzing Hansel and Gretel as they are very young children and are not aware of their denial and regression. The second time the parents abandoned them, Hansel threw breadcrumbs to assist them in finding their way back home. Bettelheim states, "Bread stands here for food in general, man's 'life line'--an image which Hansel takes literally, out of his anxiety" (159). He explains that this was a result of regression and denial that caused both Hansel and Gretel to suffer from starvation anxiety. It is reasonable to suggest that Hansel's fear might have interfered with his ability to think properly and make appropriate decisions. It caused Hansel to only rely on food for safety, thinking it was the only solution that would help solve their problem (Bettelheim 160). Hansel and Gretel's second attempt at returning home was a failure, as the birds had eaten all the crumbs. Notwithstanding, returning home would not have solved their struggle to survive.

Denial and regression are further observed in an article published by Fedra Ottolini and Chiara Ruini (2014). The authors describe a case study in which the use of fairy tales in psychotherapeutic treatment, particularly in instances of denial and regression, were incorporated. Patient "S." was instructed by her therapist to visualize herself as an outsider and create a fairy tale describing her lifestyle using fictional characters. In her story, Patient S. referred to her first boyfriend as the savior and herself as the princess that is awaiting his arrival to save her from her

current relationship. The case suggests that S. is denying her current boyfriend's proposal for marriage. It seems reasonable to imply that S. has commitment issues from the beginning. In this regard, she is trying to escape marriage by regressing to the past, hoping her old boyfriend would come to save her as illustrated in her fairy tale story (Ottolini & Ruini 121-124). After multiple attempts to write her own fairy tale, Patient S. finally benefitted from this unique therapeutic approach. Patient S.'s therapist noted that in her initial story the princess appeared passive. Therefore, S. was told to recreate her fairy tale in a way that the princess had a more "active role" in the story (Ottolini & Ruini 121-124). Patient S. possibly did not have helpful coping skills, which might have contributed to the fear of marriage causing her to bring up her old boyfriend in her current scenario. Her inability to cope with stress led to her unhappiness in her relationship. This eventually contributed to her fear of committing to marriage.

With the assistance of her therapist, Patient S. was able to gain control of the situation by realizing that there was nothing wrong in her current relationship. In fact, this new therapeutic method of incorporating fairy tales taught S. many helpful coping techniques (Ottolini & Ruini 121-124). Again, similar to Hansel and Gretel's inability to think straight, Patient S.'s denial played a significant role by interfering with her ability to think properly to make appropriate decisions.

Temptation and greediness are an additional center point explored in many fairy tales. For example, Hansel and Gretel's "uncontrolled craving," is evident the minute they saw the witch's "cake and bread" house in the Grimms' tale. At that point, the siblings began to eat from it immediately without considering that a house could provide them with safety and shelter (Bettelheim 160-161). It is important to realize that the goal of this part of the fairy tale is to help children visually understand that giving into temptations can have a dangerous consequence, as it ultimately leads to greediness (Bettelheim 161). Giving into temptations can have negative effects at times, although in Hansel and Gretel's situation, Bettelheim is being too harsh. I disagree with Bettelheim's statement as Hansel and Gretel's action to eat the house is not at all associated with giving into temptations, because these children were starving.

Likewise, in the fairy tale "The Little Match Girl" by Hans Christian Andersen, the protagonist lights up all her matches just to see her grandmother instead of building a fire for warmth that would help her survive (Andersen 247-249). Similarly, Patient S. had a moment of uncontrolled craving for her first boyfriend when she referred to him as her savior in her fairy tale story. When writing about her ex-boyfriend, Patient S. put herself in a vulnerable position just as it happened in "The Little Match Girl" and "Hansel and Gretel." The girl in the "The Little Match Girl" put herself in a clear situation of danger that had a direct negative effect as she ended up dying. In *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, Clarissa Pinkola Estes states, "Being with real people who warm us, who endorse us and exalt our creativity, is essential to the flow of creative life" (Estes 348).

In other words, living in an atmosphere that is lacking support can impact one's life significantly in various ways. As with "Hansel and Gretel," the character of "The Little Match Girl" was living in an environment that was also unsupportive (347-348). Unlike Hansel and Gretel, who at least had each other, the match girl was all alone and did not have anyone who cared for her. Therefore, the little girl kept on lighting her matches (her survival source) just to see the illusion of her grandmother who was warm and loving to her (348-349). This clearly depicts the match girl's deprivation of nurture in life (348).

In this story, there is a clear distinction between the girl's grandmother, who was a strong passionate woman, and the male characters, her abusive father and others, who did not support the girl by purchasing a match. Despite having to use up all her matches, it is apparent that she had a very warm, loving, and embracing relationship with her grandmother. Estes states, "I know women who have been gifted with beautiful voices ... are natural storytellers ... They have difficulty gaining a sense that they are supported from within, or by friends, family, community" (348). This quote demonstrates the destructive effects that women are experiencing due to a lack of support just like "The Little Match Girl." Since women feel marginalized, they are not able to fully express their abilities and achieve their aspirations. Therefore, Estes says, "To avoid being the Little Match Girl, there is one major action you must take. Anyone who does not support your art, your life, is not worth your time" (348). Here, Estes is emphasizing the importance that in order for women to succeed, they should follow their own instincts in achieving their ambitions and not let anyone stop them.

Similarly, in "Hansel and Gretel," it is depicted through the story that the female character is degraded. This is revealed when it states, "God inspired Gretel" while Gretel was in the midst of saving both her brother and herself from the wicked witch (Grimms' 48). The phrase "God inspired Gretel," implies that Gretel requires the assistance of God to save herself and her brother. As a matter of fact, it devalues a female's potential growth in achieving success when comparing them to males (Stein 2017). In the same way, in Patient S.'s fairy tale, the princess appeared passive and was instructed by her therapist to recreate the tale with the princess having a more "active role" (Ottolini & Ruini 121-124). Patient S.'s initial fairy tale portrays the male character (the prince) as superior and diminishes the female character (the princess). However, despite some of the unfavorable messages that fairy tales can send out, they are also very powerful in sending valuable lessons to children. For example, the fact that Gretel was the one to save both her brother and herself from the wicked witch indicates to children that females are equally talented as males and are capable of doing anything they desire (Bettelheim 162-163).

In *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bettelheim further describes how reading the fairy tale of "Hansel and Gretel" has several advantages in helping children to overcome challenges related to anxiety. Bettelheim explains, "The fairy tale is

the primer from which a child learns to read his mind in the language of images, the only language which permits understanding before intellectual maturity has been received” (Bettelheim 161). In other words, Bettelheim is emphasizing the significance in how powerful fairy tales are in creating various kinds of pictures in a child’s mind to send out critical messages. It appears to be contradictory for Bettelheim to say that children should “read the language of images” and also to criticize the child’s need for food (as “greediness”) when hungry. If he believes that children should “read the language of images,” then Hansel and Gretel took the appropriate action while being exposed to the “cake and bread” house as they were hungry.

When children can visualize stories, they will be able to learn and comprehend the different points that each story is trying to bring out much better. For example, when telling children to avoid certain behaviors, most of the time they will not listen. However, when visualizing stories that reveal the negative consequences of specific behaviors, children learn not to repeat them. When Hansel and Gretel were in the midst of their problem with the witch wanting to eat them, Bettelheim says, “They must exchange subservience to the pressures of the id for acting in accordance with the ego” (162). When young children see how Hansel and Gretel have no choice but to only rely on their cleverness in figuring out how to overcome their problem to try to save themselves, they start to understand the negative effects of what greediness eventually leads to. Equally important, by being exposed to the story of “Hansel and Gretel” at an early age, children gain a better understanding as they learn that team work, along with a tremendous amount of effort, is essential in dealing with certain problems (166).

The obvious storyline that fairy tales share automatically captures a reader’s attention to visualize every aspect that occur within them. Fairy tales have wide psychological implications and can provide an insight to both children and adults in countless ways. Whether it is the Grimms’ Brothers “Hansel and Gretel,” Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Match Girl,” a case study, Bettelheim or Estes, research uncovers beneficial outcomes when fairy tales are incorporated with psychology. Regardless of some common archetypes that fairy tales share, the stories can be extremely influential at conveying valuable lessons to everyone from the casual reader to a client in psychoanalytic treatment.

Works Cited

- Andersen, Hans Christian. *Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales*. Translated by Nunnally Tiina. Penguin Classics, 2006.
- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment*. Thames & Hudson, 1976.
- Estes, Clarissa Pinkola. *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. Ballantine Books, 1996.
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. Translated and edited by Jack Zipes. Princeton University Press, 2016.

- Ottolini, Fedra and Ruini, Chiara. "The Use of Narrative Strategies Based on Fairytales as a Novel, Integrative Ingredient in CBT: A Case Report." *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, Vol.10(2), March-April 2014, pp.121-124.
- Stein, Joanna. English 2400: "Hansel and Gretel." April 2017, Kingsborough Community College. Class lecture.

Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism in Our Life

Yuliia Kohut

Spring 2018

ANT 3700 | Introduction to Anthropology

Professor Ryan Chaney

While living in a small town in Ukraine I could not understand the whole essence and depth of the concept that we are all different and similar. I was not in situations where I had to think about what the other person had in mind and why she did so. I did not even have reason to think about where the person was born and how he was brought up. In my small town with a population of 70,000 people, almost all were Ukrainians by nationality, Christians by religion, and white by race. All were brought up in the same traditions, following the same ideas including that you must graduate from university, you should get married at 20, and have kids around 22. The youngest of the siblings is/was expected to live with her/his parents to care for them for as long as they lived. The youngest sibling would eventually inherit her/his parents' house. In addition, everybody was extremely concerned about "What people will say?" and would do things to get praise from neighbors.

When I came to America four years ago I had a shock. In some things it was in a good sense, in some ways in a worse. On the one hand, that shock was a positive experience. For example, I liked that people lived for themselves and for their own sake, not needing or expecting the approval from others. On the other hand, many of the things that New Yorkers did seemed completely incomprehensible to me. Why? Because I judged people by my perspective and used just my point of view, which was based on the cultural norms and rules of my city and the upbringing by my parents.

A person who from childhood has been educated on the ideas and values of his/her community is usually inclined to evaluate these ideas and values as natural and correct. Values, ideas and norms of another culture may seem confusing, strange and even wild.

Mykola Machniy (Микола Махній) in his book "Ethnopsychology" and intercultural communication" (Етнопсихологія і міжкультурна комунікація), says that the term "barbarian", which was widely used in ancient Greece, had a

double meaning for the Greeks and Romans equal to “foreigner,” “savage,” and “uneducated man.” Using this term, the Greco-Romans, on the one hand, evaluated the carriers of another culture as representatives of a lower level of development, and, on the other hand, considered their cultural-historical way of development as one-minded.

People usually look at the world through the prism of their own culture. The tendency to evaluate the customs, values and norms of other cultures from the position of standards of their own culture is called ethnocentrism. According to Conrad Phillip Kottak “ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one’s own culture as superior and to apply one’s own cultural values in judging the behavior and beliefs of people raised in other cultures” (Kottak, 2014: 31).

It should be remembered that respect and love for one’s culture, history, traditions, languages, contribute to cohesion and the formation of patriotism. That is, moderate ethnocentrism is necessary for people to feel emotional unity, an integration of people and community. At the same time, ethnocentrism can lead to misunderstandings between people and sometimes to conflicts. In the article “Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism” (Етноцентризм і культурний релятивізм), N. M. Semke (Н. М. Семке) claims that ethnocentrism can take forms such as xenophobia (fear and dislike for other peoples and their customs, traditions), chauvinism (recognizing the advantages of one’s own culture and people over other cultures and peoples) (Semke, 2018). Such manifestations of ethnocentrism are harmful for a number of reasons. First of all, these behaviors negatively affect the people themselves and their interests. Wars begin because of conflicts, and those conflicts are based on non-acceptance and not merely on economic reasons. Discontent reflects a self-righteousness that was brought up by parents and a place where a person grew up. This problem has always affected us. For example, during the colonization period the colonizers imposed their rules of conduct on people. During the Crusades, religion was imposed to others. The war between Afghanistan and the USSR was also the result of non-acceptance between different groups. It all begins with the rejection of other people’s rules, rules of conduct, and the fact that people want to arrange everything around ideas of bad/good, or/and, right/wrong. Notwithstanding, in reality we are all different. The sooner we understand our differences, the better and easier it will be for us to live in the modern world.

Ethnocentrism leads to a lack of self-criticism, as it does not allow us to see positive features in others’ cultures. As a result, the culture is incapable of overcoming its own negative features, and prevented from borrowing more effective patterns of behavior from other peoples. Also, too pronounced ethnocentrism generates hostility and conflicts with other peoples associated with an attempt to impose their own, seemingly more progressive norms and values.

The position opposite to ethnocentrism is called cultural relativism. From the point of view of cultural relativism, each culture is a unique phenomenon, so

it should be considered on the basis of the standards adopted in it. According to Jeanne H. Ballantine and Keith A. Roberts: “cultural relativism requires setting aside cultural and personal beliefs and prejudices to understand another group or society through the eyes of a member of that community using its own standards” (Ballantine and Roberts, 2015; 61). However, compliance with the principle of cultural relativism sometimes causes difficulties and issues. For example, if in some cultures there is ritual cannibalism, should we treat it as a “normal manifestation of cultural diversity”? In many modern eastern societies, women still have no rights compared to men. Should we abandon the negative assessment of discrimination against women only on the basis of respect for other people’s traditions? The answer to these questions, in my opinion, will be the statement that the main thing for science is not an assessment but an understanding of the phenomenon.

Any cultural sample (custom or norm, value or ceremony), no matter how “wild” it may seem to a representative of another culture, can only be understood in the context of its own culture. Understanding the content of this or that custom does not mean its approval and acceptance. If all that seems “wrong” is rejected, understanding of another culture becomes simply impossible. Thus, polygamy cannot be assessed and understood in the traditions of Christianity, but Islam and Eastern traditions make it possible to find out the causes of the origin and essence of this phenomenon.

Cultural relativism should be applied not only in the process of scientific analysis, but also in everyday interactions of representatives of different cultures. The implantation of cultural relativism is difficult and requires understanding of unusual values and norms. However, gradually, as the inhabitants of different countries increasingly interact with each other, the importance of understanding other cultures increases significantly. In “Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism” Semke states good examples of these. He noticed that businessmen around the world are starting to realize that success in the global economy depends on the knowledge of certain cultural features. This was facilitated by a number of amusing situations, which included well-known manufacturers promoting their products and services to the world market. For example, General Motors became convinced that in Spanish-speaking countries, its “Nova” model did not sell well because in Spanish the name means “doesn’t go.” Eastern Airlines had problems with ticket sales because its employees translated the slogan: “We get wings every day” into “We go to heaven every day” (Machniy, 2015).

Every decade, we have the opportunity to observe changes in our society. Thanks to technology, tourism, and migration, people have the opportunity to see what differs from their overall vision. Usually this does not mean that they will accept or understand it at once, but maybe at least a few percent will change their biased points of view. In “Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism,” Semke says: “Consequently, thanks to the international economy, the spread of mass communication and information, and migration processes, we see the interaction

of different world cultures, and the cultural exchange happening between them” (Semke, 2018). In different parts of the globe, we can see people dressed in jeans, hear familiar pop music, eat a Snickers bar or visit McDonald’s. Despite this, there are still significant cultural differences. Semke says that “the integrity and identity of the culture is ensured by the mechanisms of socio-cultural selection and socio-cultural immunity. Each culture in the process of cultural exchange tries to select and preserve only those features that correspond to its general logic, and mentality” (Semke, 2018).

The most rational way of development and perception of culture in society is the combination of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. By employing this approach, an individual feeling pride in the culture of his/her group or people and behaving accordingly will at the same time understand other cultures, including their behavior and observing their rights to exist. In closing, there are no of primordial or secondary cultures in the world. Furthermore, cultures are not developed or retarded, progressive or regressive. All cultures of the world are equal. Each culture is a valuable and integral piece of this world puzzle created by humans many generations ago.

Works Cited

- Ballantine, Jeanne H., et al. *Our Social World*. SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015.
- Kottak, Conrad Phillip. *Window on Humanity*. Mc Graw Hill Education, 2014.
- Machniy, Mykola (Махній Микола). *Ethnopsychology and intercultural communication* (Етнопсихологія і міжнародна комунікація). 2015.
- Semke, N. M. (Н. М. Семке) “Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism” (Етноцентризм і культурний релятивізм). 05/25/2018 <http://narodna-osvita.com.ua>

Because of, Not Despite: The Power of Immigrants in the Face of Linguistic Oppression

Kourtnie Ramsay

Spring 2018
ENG 1200 | Freshman English I
Professor Jacqueline Brady



Source: <https://amytan.net>

“There’s this myth that America is a melting pot, but what happens in assimilation is that we end up deliberately choosing the American things — hot dogs and apple pie — and ignoring the [Chinese] offerings.” In making this comment in a 1989 *Newsweek* article bestselling author Amy Tan opened a discussion about insular, ethnocentric ideals and how staunchly enforcing them impacts the lives of immigrants. She further went on to explore this

and other themes in her profoundly personal essay, “Mother Tongue,” published in 1990. These themes include the use of multiple Englishes; the effects/implications of using one’s language of intimacy; the limitations faced by immigrants and their children due to association with these Englishes; and the implications carried by the classification of non-standard variants of English as “broken” rather than “simple” or “limited.”

Being that Tan’s essay was among the first official works we analyzed for this class, the Asian-American’s piece had a lot riding on it to be both impactful and entertaining in order to set the tone for the rest of this semester. “Mother Tongue” delivered all that and more; in fact, it was slightly alarming how relatable the reading proved itself to be. If ever there were doubts in my mind regarding the power of home and language, this was the essay to assuage them. Through her work, I found a shared sense of the power of immigrants who use our language(s) of intimacy in the face of linguistic oppression.

As the daughter of Chinese immigrants, Tan was able to provide accounts that detail just some instances of the continued existence of barriers faced by immigrants and their families in today’s society. Case in point: Tan is able to classify the English(es) that she needs to effectively communicate for daily life in four varieties. She outlines them as “the English I spoke to my mother, which for lack of a better term might be described as ‘simple’; the English she used with me, which for lack of a better term might be described as ‘broken’; my translation of her Chinese which could certainly be described as ‘watered down’; and what I imagine to be her translation of her Chinese if she could speak in perfect English, her internal language, and for that I sought to preserve the essence but neither an English nor Chinese structure” (3). This cut and dried classification was helpful for analysis as it indicated the context that necessitated the use of any of the above mentioned language variations as well as the degree of brokenness each had.

With the exception of the English Tan uses with her peers (not listed above), none of these variants are even remotely considered “grammatically correct” – which often times is among the easiest yardstick used to judge in today’s society. We see how because of this, her mother encountered frequent and unrelenting subpar treatment from customer service personnel who incorrectly equated the quality of her speech to her degree of education (specifically her intelligence) in order to determine the level of resources she was worthy of receiving. This process seen again and again throughout the first half of the piece (the incident with the broker, bad service at a bank or restaurant and perhaps most shockingly the callous treatment she received at a medical facility when trying to get information on the nature of her CAT scan results– having lost both her son and husband to similar brain diseases) is not only unethical in the sense that it goes against the very nature of public institutions, it is also a discriminatory practice that goes against basic human decency and pushes the ticket on what sorts of behavior should be socially acceptable. It is truly sad to say that for those of us that leave all we’ve

ever known to give chase to better life opportunities and the American Dream, it's not uncommon to be met with open hostility or denounced because of your basic (but still intelligible!) communication skills or, in cases most similar to mine, our accent. But such is the life of most immigrants.

By penning this essay, Tan was able to truly show the resilience of those living the nonnative experience and highlight, in the case of her mother Daisy (and surely many more individuals), the fact that she was able to successfully provide for her children. More importantly, Tan's depiction of her mother's ability to successfully infiltrate and flourish in the world of stock-exchange (a pastime viewed by many native and fluent speakers as complex) all while using a language other than her primary, intimate one effectively proved those judgmental workers laughably wrong.

Research has allowed me to truly understand technical terms brought forward during discussion and analysis of the text. With the aid of multiple sources, chief of which were articles by Richard Nordquist, an individual's language of home (otherwise called "home language" or "family language") can be defined as "one that is most commonly spoken by the members of a (distinct) household for everyday activities."

Mother tongue (otherwise called "first language," "native language," "father tongue" or "arterial language") can also refer to an individual's home language but it most importantly denotes the language learnt (typically from a mother) in terms of personal importance, exposure from birth and the speaker's usual comfort and ability to relate to it on a linguistic level. Nordquist's breakdown of the different types of contextual registers assisted in my ability to construct a functional, academic definition of Tan's concept of "language of intimacy." Therefore my view on one's language of intimacy, in comparison to the terms above, is it's an informal, often times considered non-standard language shared amongst tight knit social groups. From a full reading of the text (and personal experience) I was able to infer that like Tan, it is not unusual for an individual's language of home, mother tongue and language of intimacy to be one and the same (the variant of English spoken primarily with her mother and also her husband). However, there are instances wherein a home language can differ from a mother tongue, which can itself also be a separate entity from one's language of intimacy.

In order of most to least intimate, my languages of intimacy are Patois (more specifically Jamaican Creole— which is considered more of a dialect than anything else), English and to some extent Spanish. This is as a result of my living situation here in Brooklyn where I now reside and back home in Jamaica. The two experiences have culminated into a blended, multicultural affair wherein my family's Jamaican ancestry dominates while still allowing breathing space for other voices to be heard and shared. To some degree, this "melting pot effect" facilitates frequent code switching and often times we have found ourselves leading with the language or language variant that feels most natural to us, which for me is Creole.

This deep-seated comfort is because of the languages previously mentioned, I most closely associate Creole with memories of my true home; it is the language I speak with most ease with zero need for a brain-to-mouth-filter.

Generally, I feel, it is no easy feat being judged/ridiculed by people who know nothing substantial about my character. By adding the existence of my accent to the mix, stereotyping comes into play and with it come the expectations of me being: a laid-back, dreadlocked, weed smoking, jerk-chicken-eating “yaadie,” a violent lottery scammer or some unholy mix of the two. While inconvenient and honestly annoying, stereotyping pales in comparison to most examples given by Tan and I don’t think I’ve been in this particular country/setting long enough to have truly felt any comparable injustice/shame as it relates to my intimate language. But in trying to think of something memorable from my life I’m brought to an incident that took place with my maternal grandmother Claris on the day of my basic school graduation.

For as long as I’ve been able to remember, there has never been a time where I have been uneasy about accompanying my grandmother on outings. She’s always been an idol of mine for a multitude of reasons but especially because of her way of going through life: while she made efforts to be at peace with things she was unable to change, she refused to compromise her ideals by apologizing for who she was at her core. My grandmother, a woman steadfast in the Jamaican-Maroon way of life, much like Tan’s mother Daisy “has long realized the limitations of her English” (57), and often times made no effort in wrangling her speech to be more palatable for language purists. I have never had issues with this because, also like Tan’s descriptions for Daisy’s speech, I am of the belief that my grandmother’s tongue is “vivid, direct and full of observation and imagery” (48-49).

On that day I was nervous because I was tasked with being valedictorian and the minutes leading up to my speech I was agonizing over the various ways I would mess up. Knowing the nature of my fears and just recently coming to terms with the true extent of what would become my lifelong struggle with generalized anxiety, my family, seated in the wings, made sure to cheer extremely loudly to show their support; none more loudly or with more liberal use of patois than my grandmother. Hearing her light-hearted ribbing and constant affirmations did a good job in putting me at ease up until a trio of students nearest her started loudly and disrespectfully discussing how “country and vulgar” she was being. One even made attempts to directly address her in efforts to “shut her up” because they felt she should know how inappropriate she was. All around us a hush fell with adults and students alike aware of the transgression taking place but making no efforts to stop it. Interpreting their silence for compliance, I was immediately offended on my grandmother’s behalf but due to my distance on the special guest platform I was unable to engage in what undoubtedly would have been a fight for my grandmother’s honor.

A well known belief of my people is that “shame a nuh load but ee bruk

nec.”¹ In that moment, my classmates expected her to feel ashamed for celebrating the achievement of her granddaughter, a basic rite of passage that she was never able to possess being that she has never received any standard form of education. However it’s a well known fact that members of the Manning/Ramsay household were not in possession of weak necks or for that matter weak backbones. With her head held high, so as to not alter the tilt of her church hat in her most “impeccable broken English” (a quote borrowed from Tan, line 72), she began to scold the “hitey-titey, risto”² children about their ignorance and scorn and the need to take pride in their culture. From my spot among the specially invited guests and other students who had been tapped to perform an item on the program, I strained to hear my grandmother coolly rebuff their scathing criticism (in Patois might I add). Phrases like “howdy and tenky nuh bruk no square”³ and “so-wha if mi glad bag buss?”⁴ kept me entertained and far too amused to be nervous.

Of course I have no true way of knowing if her defiance had any true effect on my insolent classmates who, apart from appearing chastened, still sported haughty expressions on their faces, but it spoke to the irrepressibility of my grandmother’s pride in using her intimate language, the very same pride instilled in me. Minutes after the altercation, I was prompted to take my spot by the podium and deliver in my opinion the best speech I have ever given in my life, strengthened by and dedicated to, the spirit of my grandmother.

In life I’ve come to the realization that as an immigrant, developing a thick skin is a necessity, born from the realization of another Claris-ism: “When it’s not the button it’s the buttonhole.” Simply put, we are subjected to excessive levels of scrutiny and hostility because of the very essence of what makes us different. If it’s not the accent, pronunciation or general nonnative struggles with English, then it’s our ideals or features or some other trivial thing. There will always be something or someone trying to steal the wind from your figurative “glad bag,” but in the words of my grandmother (and fervent Christians everywhere) we are not given more than we can bear. It is with this mindsight that myself and many other immigrants attempt to approach difficulties in life. This mentality, this very same pride and undying strength is what Tan was able to exemplify for those of us facing adversity because of things we cannot control. How is it any different from judging one by their clothes, opinions on religion or, dare I say it, skin color? How does the complexity of one’s English provide truly meaningful insight into one’s character?

At the latter half of her piece, Tan brought across the point that because teachers (out of a misplaced sense of concern) steer many Asian-American students

1 The strength of shame is enough to cow an individual; in this case being publicly shamed was supposed to be strong enough to disgrace my grandmother and her non-standard English.

2 Creole terms said condescendingly to mean “snobbish, conceited or uppity.” Derived from “hoity-toity” and “aristocratic,” respectively.

3 “It does no harm to show good manners to people.”

4 “I’m extremely excited, so what?”

away from languages and instead towards mathematics and sciences, this subliminally perpetuates a stereotype of immigrant students being purely analytical beings. I was also able to infer that no substantial effort was made for students in these situations to better their aptitude. The tactic employed by teachers is counterproductive as it does more harm than good by instilling an “avoid-and-evade” mindset. Had it been for a more trivial subject that had zero bearing on these students then I could make the argument that though excessive, avoidance tactics would be fine; however with a subject matter so integral to the quality and safety of immigrant students’ daily lives, I am left to wonder how educators in good faith employ such faulty methods. If not for Tan’s backbone, perseverance and delight in “disproving assumptions made about [me] her” (122-123), she may (like many before and after her) very well have fallen victim to these ploys and ended up in an emotionally unfulfilling sector unable to utilize and share the power of (her immigrant) language with the world.

I personally believe that by allowing students to have a certain degree of leniency by conceptualizing theories in the language of home/intimacy there can be benefits like retention and class participation. This strategy (which in my opinion is far better than avoid-evade) could offer a taste of freedom that would allow them to more quickly relate to, understand and excel at foreign concepts without the fear of censure. In an ideal world, this would erase the concerning trend of immigrant underperformance statistics. Of course, the technical aspects involved in overhauling the “English only” education system of the United States are multifaceted and require intense planning to find a new normal of standardization followed by dedicated implementation.

The effort in getting consensus for this strategy seems to be yet another deterrent. I believe it would do a world of good in allowing these students to bridge the gap and better assimilate into schools and the working world, which would ultimately prove that they are highly functioning units of society. More importantly, it would strengthen their connections with both their intimate languages and the new culture they are making efforts at belonging to because of using their intimate language, not by abandoning it.

It is my hope that more immigrants facing similar or even worse circumstances receive enough inspiration to draw additional strength from their own situations and those of Tan’s and my grandmother’s in order to rise above and beyond their circumstances. If they take anything away from this essay it should be the optimistic tone on which the narrative (and my analysis) ends. Limitations notwithstanding, Tan became a better author (and arguably a better person) through perseverance, because (and not in spite) of her mother’s linguistic shortcomings. As readers, we see that for Tan, with age came perspective and the time to mull over past events in order to come to terms with her and Daisy’s tenuous relationships (in addition to her Asian-American heritage). In doing so, by overcoming years’ worth of ingrained shame and self-deprecation, she was able to find her voice as

a writer, by calling on the memory of her mother and time spent communicating with each other. She developed a muse of sorts and began to consider the true identity of her audience: (immigrant) readers like her own mother, straddling two or more languages at once, forked tongues considered too “alien,” too “other.” Perhaps the real, crowning moment of the entire reading experience for me was realizing that Tan’s choice to write her magnum opus (*The Joy Luck Club*) in the style of broken/simple English most often used by her mother was the project that ultimately earned her well deserved accolades and her longest stint on the United States bestseller list.

Language purists and other individuals who are of the opinion that English is the champion language of productivity and scholarship are of the mindset that anything other than the norm is alien and should be treated with as much vehemence as possible because it poses a threat. Although there is a certain comfort in what we know, by moving forward (as immigrants in all facets of life) it should be pointed out that true strength doesn’t come from deserting our ideals, value or in this case our languages to avoid ill-treatment. To truly succeed and make the most of what we are given, to forge unfathomable strength, we use all that we hold dear to us to cement an unyielding foundation to be used to propel us to higher heights. An individual’s language of intimacy, the one most closely tied with that of their culture— whether or not it changes over the course of their life to align itself with the status quo – is one of the most valid forms of self identification that a person possesses. For immigrants it also indicates that we have been weathering more storms than the average Joe in both English and our intimate languages. We are adapting to become more invulnerable to barriers presented by drawing strength from a shared sense of perseverance.

Works Cited

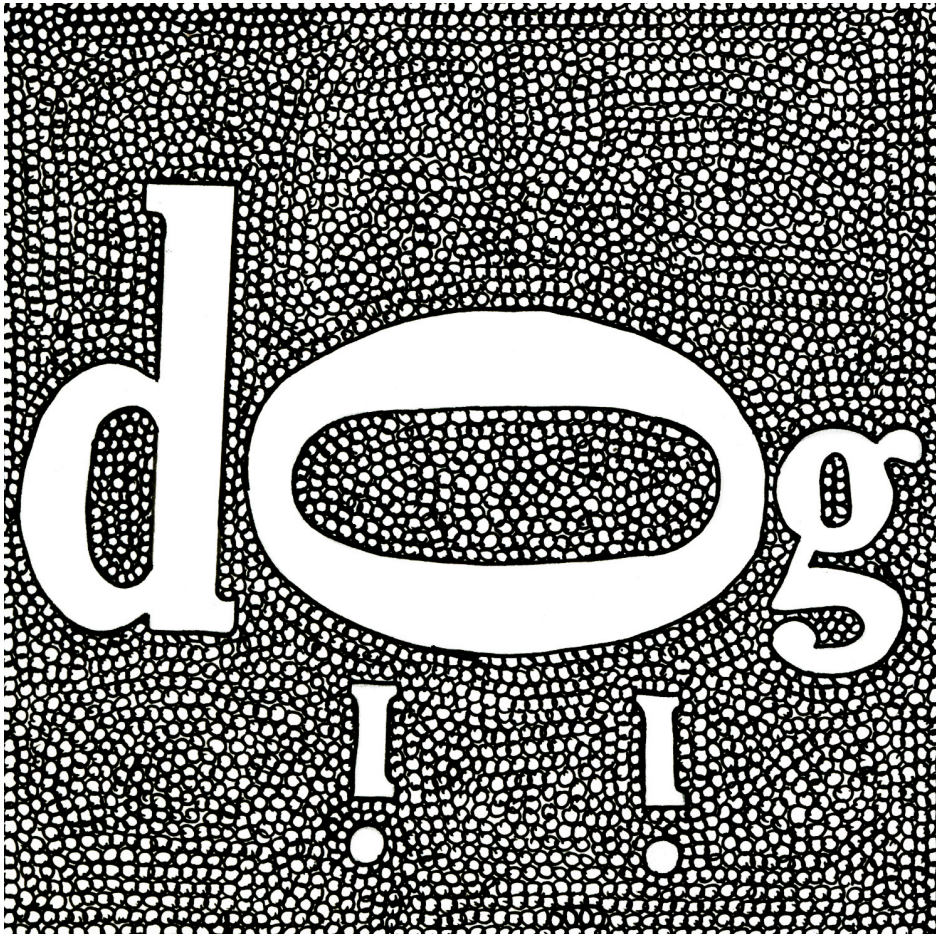
- Wang, Dorothy. Review of *The Joy Luck Club*. By Amy Tan. *Newsweek*, 17 Apr. 1989, p 69.
- Tan, Amy. “Mother Tongue.” Originally published as “Under Western Eyes” in *The Threepenny Review*, 1990, p.76-80.
- Nordquist, Richard. “What is Register in Linguistics?” ThoughtCo, [thoughtco.com/register-language-style-1692038](https://www.thoughtco.com/register-language-style-1692038). Accessed 16 March 2018.

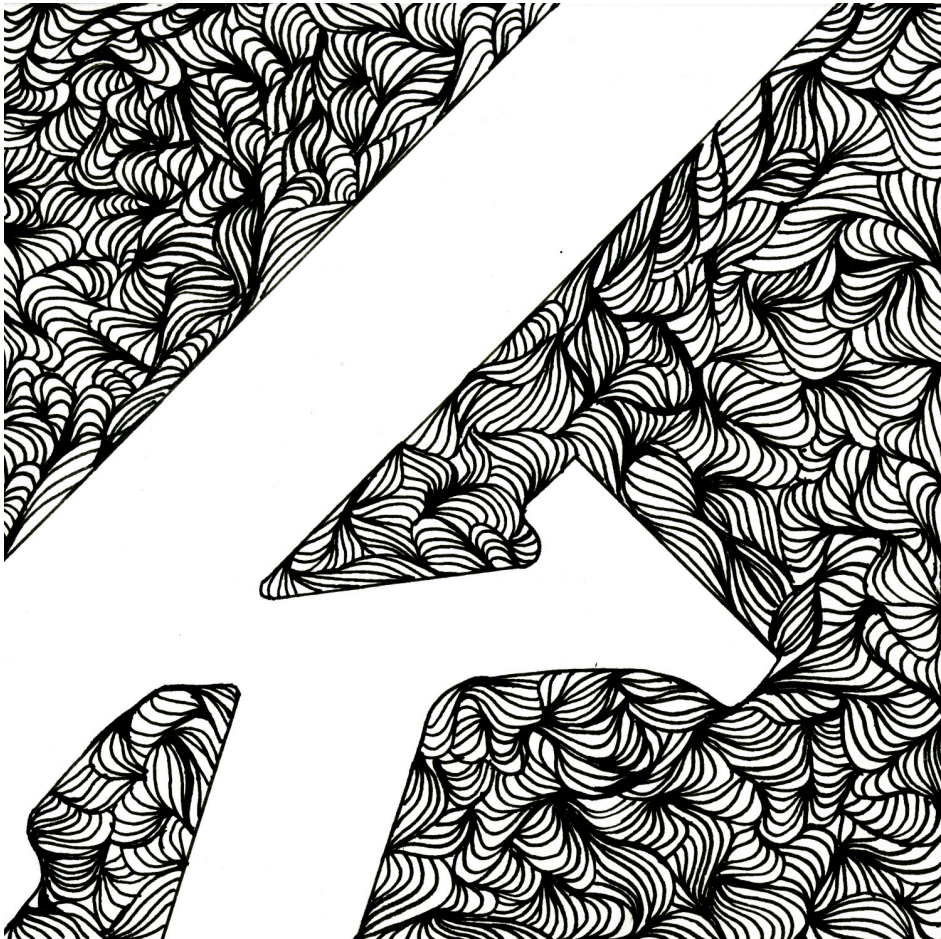
Typographic Experimentations and Poster

Aracely Calle

Spring 2018
Art 7400 | Experimental Typography
Professor Valerie Sokolova









The Decline of the American Hero

Sholom Gutleizer

Spring 2018
English 2400 | Freshman English II
Professor Brian Katz

Stories and myths are almost as old as language itself. From the epic of Gilgamesh to the biblical stories to Greek mythology, humanity has constantly been using drama to make sense of the world around us (Schanoes). These stories have been recorded and passed down for millennia. Carl Jung posits that myth is the expression of our collective unconscious, it expresses the deepest parts of human experience (Jung, et al. 5). Joseph Campbell outlined this idea at length in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. There he shows how most myths and dreams express the same underlying idea which are expressions of the collected human experience (Campbell 1-2); however, there are differences in aesthetics based on the culture. Greek heroes dressed, spoke and acted in certain ways which are extremely different from the central figures in biblical stories. Hercules, son of the god Zeus by a mortal woman, was tasked with ten tests by the goddess Hera because she was Zeus' jealous wife, exhibiting how the Greek gods were extremely human, and the narrative follows suit.

In the Bible, Abraham is just and kind and his God is transcendent and much less humanistic. However, through scrutiny, we see that both Abraham and Hercules went through almost the same underlying journey: The Hero's Journey.¹ Through this difference, we can see that although the hero's journey may be the same, the ideas surrounding the story may convey the underlying ethic. This differentiation can be applied to almost any story from any culture; therefore, in analyzing myth and stories of an era, we can extract the prevailing ethic. Looking more closely, based on a change in narrative, we can see a shift in ethics. This is extremely pertinent to analyzing the morals in America from the 1950s to the 1970s. We can do this through the lens of the media, which is essentially the portrayal of

¹ The Hero's Journey is from a theory that most myths follow the same general outline, the "monomyth." In short, the hero is called forth from his or her world and is forced to face some tasks in a chaotic world. There he goes through a "road of trials," is tempted, and then fights the dragon. He or she then returns to the normal world of order with "an elixir" which he or she shares with the rest of the world. I am not using the exact myth, rather just the general outline of it. For more on this see Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

contemporary myth.



Rebel Without a Cause
Source: Everett Collection

In 1955, a movie titled *Rebel Without a Cause* was released. The movie centers around parental issues and teenage angst exhibited by the main characters; each of the leading characters portray this in a different way. The main character, played by Dean, has an emasculated father, and his mom is overbearing, running the house and moving them from place to place to keep Dean out of trouble. Then there's Judy, with whom Dean falls in love; her dad likes her sexually and treats her harshly because of it (THR Staff). Dean's best friend Plato possibly has it the worst. His dad ran off when he was a baby and his mom is never home; therefore, he is raised by his household maid.

Towards the beginning of the film, Judy scorns Dean's advances, while Dean gets picked on by a gang of bullies for being the new kid in school. He refuses a knife fight and instead wins a game of chicken. In this thrilling scene, the main bully dies when he cannot get out of the car in time. Dean wants to come clean to the police to soothe his guilty conscience, but his mom classically proposes to move again, and his dad will not stick up for him.

Dean is not the only one having a hard time; Plato does not have it easy either. He gets harassed by the dead bully's friends and they steal his notebook. All three friends, Dean, Judy and Plato, converge on an abandoned mansion where they role-play a family. Dean and Judy are the parents and Plato is their child. They go to sleep with Plato at the foot of the bed; however, he is awoken by the bullies and kills one with a gun he took from his mom's drawer. At the end of the movie, he is fatally shot by the police because he exits the mansion with the gun still in his hand. The movie ends with Dean's father comforting him, resolving to be a better father. Finally, Dean feels comfortable enough to introduce his parents

to Judy; a happy ending. This story centers around the classic mythical blueprint and teaches us much about life.

The Hero's Journey is being followed here; not fully, yet it does in a very central way. Dean is a troubled teenager we meet in the middle of his story. We don't know about his life or what plagues him. This gives us the ability to supplant within him any of our own struggles (THR Staff). Yet, he follows the basic persona of a troubled teen. He has his issues; he does not fit in, he questions existence and he is rejected by the girl he wants. All this calls him forth into action. He works through it all, going through "the road of trials," has major character development and changes those around him for the better overall, but not without collateral damage. He becomes morally superior and teaches us about the journey that is life. We see this type of hero in the 1960s, while it follows a different ethic.

In 1969, the film *Easy Rider* was released. It is a biker film, portrayed in a way that the audience is forced to concoct much of the back-story surrounding the protagonists. They are two bikers who smuggle cocaine into the United States; seemingly they do this as a method to get out of the life of delinquency. They sell it for money and freedom. They ride eastward toward a fair, which represents their independence (Moskowitz). On the way, they pick up a hippy hitchhiker, go to a commune and witness the freedom of the counterculture. This is, for the bikers, some experimentation in living a life free from the bounds of society. Leaving the commune, our bikers are arrested for parading without a permit, and in jail they meet a lawyer who is locked up for a drunk and disorderly. He gets them out of jail and they convince him to smoke pot with them. The lawyer joins them on their journey, making these bikers more articulate and relatable to the audience (Ebert). On the way, they stop to eat at a diner. The girls there think they are exciting, but the police do not; being unwanted, they leave without incident and camp outside that night. Before they sleep, the lawyer explains that people are afraid of those who are different; almost as emphasis, they get attacked and the lawyer gets killed. Further in the film, they trip acid in a cemetery and one of them has a bad trip, again outlining some of the dangers of a life completely outside societal bounds. The movie ends with both bikers getting killed by a trucker shooting at them with a shotgun. Once again, we see elements of the Hero's Journey and Hollywood shows us the prevailing ethic and issues of the time.

In the 1960s, society was under assault; people were fed up with the status quo and were in pursuit of alternatives, e.g. the hippy movement. The movie outlines this through the lens of adventurous outlaws; they were ostracized from society, possibly even created by it. The bikers were looking for a way out of being enslaved like the middle class, selling out their integrity to the establishment (Ebert). Instead they went to the opposite extreme and led a life of crime, completely out of the confines of society. The moral of the story is that neither extreme is healthy (Ebert). Our heroes failed during their "road of trials" and taught us a deep life lesson about how to live a proper life, or at least how not to go about escaping society. This

shows a slight decline from the character development of *Rebel Without a Cause*, as there is no real reconciliation with the problems our heroes face. Yet, there is the underlying premise that we need to lead a moral life in some capacity. This ethic, so central to American life, left us almost completely in the 1970s, where our heroes are severely tormented, deal with many issues and seem to disregard a life of morals completely.

The year 1972 brought us the Francis Ford Coppola masterpiece, *The Godfather*. It is based on the crime novel of the same name by Mario Puzo. The film surrounds the Corleone crime family and it depicts the life experienced by them with all its ups and downs. The movie opens with a scene in 1945 as Don Vito Corleone celebrates his daughter's wedding. His son Michael is a World War II veteran and an upstanding hero. At the wedding he introduces his American girlfriend to the family, portraying his rejection of the family's values. In his office, during the party, the Don sits listening to the requests of many petitioners. One of the favors he is asked is to secure a Hollywood position for his godson Fontane. He sends his consigliere to secure this position; the consigliere does so by killing the director's prized horse and leaving the head in his bed for him to see when he awakens. This is classic mafia-style persuasion; quite deplorable, yet the Corleones do have some life code within which they live.

This ethic is outlined when the Don rejects an offer to get into the narcotics trade and is therefore gunned down by his opponents. Sonny, the Don's eldest son, takes charge and the other crime families attempt to convince him into the narcotics trade instead. After which, at the hospital, Michael thwarts an attempted assassination on his father; in doing so he gets his jaw broken by an NYPD captain who works for the opposing family, outlining the corruption that exists in mainstream society. This encounter seems to change Michael from the law-abiding war veteran towards something else entirely, as he then kills those responsible for his father's shooting. This catalyzes a war between the New York crime families. The dangerous climate this retaliation created forces Michael to take refuge in Sicily. There he meets a girl and marries her; however, his wife is killed by a car bomb intended for him. In New York, things are not that much better; Sonny gets gunned down and killed at a tollbooth, while on his way to murder his abusive brother-in-law. This causes the don to make peace between the families. New York is thus safe for Michael's return; when he comes back, he marries Kay, his American girlfriend, has two children and assumes charge over the family. The movie wraps up with the don having a fatal heart attack, Michael has his brother-in-law and the other New York dons killed. This he denies to his sister in front of his wife, but she sees others refer to Michael as "Don" in the closing scene. An epic film, with many ups and downs, even some sort of underlying ethical code, but it shows us a serious decline in our heroes.

The movie's hero is Michael. In the beginning, he is a war veteran who wants to part ways with his family's crime ridden ways (THR Staff). He wants to

marry a non-Italian woman, which represents this idea. He is portrayed as a willing outsider to the family; yet, as time goes on and circumstance moves him, he turns into a ruthless killer. Here we see some central elements of the Hero's Journey; Michael is called to action by injustice done to his family, he goes through trials and tribulations and prevails. He even goes so far as to change the family and the people around him; giving an underlying feeling that this deeply flawed Michael will create a better world (THR Staff). All this is in stark contrast to the movies before, where our protagonists had moral dilemmas and were searching for some way out. In *The Godfather*, however, we start with a moral hero and watch him descend into a world of crime, deception and murder. The American hero turned into the anti-hero. This ethic gets even worse later in the 70s, as shown by the movie *Taxi Driver*.

In the year 1976, we are introduced to Travis Bickle in Martin Scorsese's masterpiece *Taxi Driver*. This role is exhibited beautifully by its actor Robert De Niro. Travis is an honorably discharged marine who suffers from depression, and he takes on the job of a taxi driver to deal with his insomnia. After a failed attempt with a romantic relationship, he gets fed up with the filth of the city around him, although he himself is often found in a porn theater and hanging around street corners where he sees all the things he finds so deplorable. He surveys prostitution, the sleaze and the general dysfunction of the city; all this turns his thoughts to violence, as he tries to calm himself by finding an intense physical training program, which fails to soothe him. He ends up buying many guns and makes a sleeve holster from which he can draw a hidden gun easily; he uses it to kill a thief in a convenient store, with the clerk taking the gun and the blame. At some point, a young prostitute attempts to escape her pimp in Travis's taxi; the pimp pulls her out and throws Travis a twenty-dollar bill which he keeps as a reminder of Iris (the prostitute) and the corruption of the city. Being unable to forget this instance he hires Iris and does not engage her sexually, rather he tries to convince her to leave her pimp. This does not work well, but she agrees to meet him for breakfast the next day. She arrives at his apartment to find money for her to go back home with a note from Travis explaining that he will not be alive long.

This assumption is made because he then attempts to assassinate a political candidate; however, he is seen by a few Secret Service agents who chase him off. Running away, he goes straight to the brothel where Iris works and engages in a gun fight, killing three men. Iris watches all this and pleads with Travis to stop the killing. At the end of the fight, he tries to take his own life, but has no ammunition left; instead, he lies on the couch until the police arrive. When they do, he pantomimes shooting himself in the head.

He is finished with everything; yet, after recovering from his wounds, he goes back to work and finds that he is regarded as a local hero. He receives a letter from Iris's father, thanking him for her return home. The woman with whom he had failed with romantically gets into his taxi and seems to now admire him. The

movie ends with Travis dropping her off and getting agitated at something in his rear-view mirror. This shows how he really has not changed, a reflection of the American hero at that time: the anti-hero.

Gone are the movies where we have a moral hero. Here we do have a hero; an ex-marine. Yet, he is deeply disturbed. He suffers from depression, low self-esteem, homicidal thoughts and much more. Although this is a classic call to action characteristic of the Hero's Journey and he accomplishes something great because of this (saving an underage prostitute), this was right after a failed assassination attempt. Travis could have as easily been an evil murderer as he was a hero. Once again, we see the emergence of an anti-hero a direct reflection of the 70s ethic, or lack thereof.

During this so-called “forgettable decade,” people were done with society. No longer was it because they found a better way, nor due to high ideals; rather, people were just done with it. They threw out the morals of both the culture and the counterculture. This generation was lost and suffered greatly. They were tormented, much like Travis Bickle. As stated in the book *The Seventies*, “If Travis Bickle is a savior, then what kind of nation has America become?” (Schulman 149).

This all clearly shows an extreme decline in morals and ethics in the decades following World War II. After the war, morality hung high in the air. People had direction and knew who they were and who they should be. People consciously or unconsciously followed the Hero's Journey in their own lives; being called to action, going through struggles and passing to the other side with pearls of experiential wisdom to help those around them. This led into the 1960s with certitude falling into doubt, our heroes become flawed, yet they have a clear destination: freedom from the bondage of society. This seems to fail in the end, bringing us into the '70s. Now, this flight from society turns into a complete departure from morality and a new ethic emerges as the central figure of America becomes Travis Bickle. Here the Hero's Journey is still followed, but with a catastrophic change where the anti-hero is now emulated. This decline is one from which I think we have yet to recover; however, things may not be so bleak, as iterated by Jung, “If we are able to see our own shadow and can bear knowing about it, then a small part of the problem has already been solved” (Jung, et al. 20). Through knowing the problem, we are well on our way to finding a solution.

Works Cited

- Campbell, Joseph. “The Monomyth.” *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, New World Library, 2008, pp. 1-2.
- Ebert, Roger. “Easy Rider Movie Review & Film Summary (1969) | Roger Ebert.” Movie Reviews and Ratings by Film Critic Roger Ebert | Roger Ebert, 28 Sept. 1969, www.rogerebert.com/reviews/easy-rider-1969.
- Jung, C. G., et al. Chapter 1. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Princeton University

Press, 1969, p. 5.

---. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Princeton University Press, 1969, p. 20.

Moskowitz, Gene. "Easy Rider." *Variety*, 14 May 1969, variety.com/1969/film/reviews/easy-rider-1117790631/.

Schanoes, Veronica L. "Epilogue." *Fairy Tales, Myth, and Psychoanalytic Theory: Feminism and Retelling the Tale*, Routledge, 2016.

Schulman, Bruce J. "This Ain't No Foolin' Around." *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics*, Da Capo P, 2008, p. 149.

THR Staff. "'Rebel Without a Cause': THR's 1955 Review." *The Hollywood Reporter*, 27 Oct. 2016, www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/rebel-a-cause-1955-film-review-940868.

---. "'The Godfather': THR's 1972 Review." *The Hollywood Reporter*, 15 Mar. 2017, www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/godfather-review-1972-original-movie-986404.

Consonant Production in Bilinguals: The Relationship between Native Language, Degree of Bilingualism, and Voice Onset Time

Vali Valizade & Laura Spinu

Spring 2018

PHY 9201 | Research I (Independent Study)

Professor Laura Spinu

Abstract

Voice Onset Time (VOT) is an acoustic measure used to describe stop consonants such as [p, t, k, b, d, g], and it varies across languages (MacLeod & Stoel-Gammon, 2010a). For example, a native Spanish or French speaker typically pronounces stop sounds differently from an English speaker, which (among others) results in a foreign accent (MacLeod & Stoel-Gammon, 2010b). Bilingualism further complicates the picture in that even though balanced bilinguals may appear to have equal proficiency in both languages, studies show that subtle differences from monolinguals do exist (Antoniou et al., 2011), and it is not until 20 months that they are able to acquire similar sounding sounds, later than monolinguals (Fennell et al., 2007).

In this project, we test two hypotheses, specifically that (1) different native language backgrounds affect English VOT in different ways, and (2) early bilinguals produce more native-like VOT in English. We recorded native speakers of Russian, Spanish, and Chinese who were either early, balanced bilinguals (they reported there was no difference between their first language and English proficiency) or late, unbalanced bilinguals (they rated their knowledge of English below that of their first language) reading a passage in English containing the sounds [p, t, k, b, d, g]. We also recorded a control group of monolingual native English speakers from Brooklyn, New York. Following data collection, VOT values were measured manually using the Praat software for acoustic analysis (Boersma & Weenink, 2018). Our results support both hypotheses. Our study thus replicates earlier results with new languages and adds to the body on work on bilingual cognition.

1. Introduction

When people learn a second language as adults, they usually have an accent. This is a critical period effect (MacLeod & Stoel-Gammon, 2010b), as the window of opportunity for language learning appears to close at some point around the early teens. At birth, all humans are equipped with the ability to learn any possible human language, and they often do learn more than one language while growing up (Spinu et al., 2018). Older second-language learners are thought to experience muscle memory interference when trying to produce novel segments accurately, as long-standing habitual configurations overcome new configurations. This is not irreversible, as recent work shows that adults can be as good as children in the production and perception of at least some foreign sounds (Spinu et al., 2018). Various factors, however, contribute to the magnitude of this effect. Voice onset time is known to be affected by phonetic context, age, native language of the speaker, or presence of a communication disorder in the speaker (Bradford, 1992). The role of gender in VOT production has not been investigated (Bradford, 1992).

In this study, our goal is to examine the role played by native language and degree of bilingualism on a single aspect of English pronunciation, specifically voice onset time. Voice Onset Time (VOT) is a quantitative measure of the amount of time (in milliseconds) elapsed between the release of two articulators and the onset of laryngeal vibration, also known as voicing. These two articulatory gestures (release and voicing) are usually part of the production of consonants such as [p, t, k, b, d, g]. We have selected the VOT measure because it is relatively straightforward to measure. Furthermore, it represents a very subtle aspect of language learning not typically taught in a language classroom which, however, can lead to confusion in a language like English if not mastered with native proficiency. There are differences in the implementation of VOT from one language to another (Cho & Ladefoged, 1999). A study on the acquisition of VOT in a second language based on data from speakers of 18 languages (all of which were recorded and analyzed in the same way) shows that most, but not all, of the within language variation can be described by universally applicable phonetic rules although the physiological bases for these rules are not entirely clear (Cho & Ladefoged, 1999). To gain more insight into the mechanisms underlying the production of sounds and specifically VOT, the current study explores the role played by native language and degree of bilingualism in the realization of VOT in English consonants.

1.1. What is VOT?

VOT results from the interaction of multiple articulatory gestures necessary to enunciate the sounds of language, which are precisely timed with respect to each other. Thus, in a sound like [p] from English pet, the lips come apart after the articulation of [p], which represents the release gesture, and the vocal folds begin vibrating to form the [e] sound, which is known as voicing. These two articulatory

gestures, release and voicing, can be either simultaneous or sequential. VOT is defined as the amount of time elapsed between the two gestures, and is usually measured in milliseconds. VOT is easy to measure using software for acoustic analysis such as the freely available program Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2018). Praat's functions enable selecting, displaying, editing, filtering, and otherwise modifying sounds, quantifying acoustic features, and saving the results in text-based data files (Owren, 2008). As a result, Praat can help us understand the mechanisms underlying regional or foreign accentedness, because different languages and dialects implement the articulation of sounds (including VOT) in different ways. Basic information about acoustic analysis of both human and nonhuman sounds is available from a variety of sources (Owren, 2008). Johnson (2003) and Kent and Read (2001), for example, provide introductory-level overviews of acoustics and speech production. Applying such techniques to the measurement of VOT, we have gained the understanding that the English word *pet* uttered by a Spanish speaker might sound more like *bet* to an English listener, while the English pronunciation of the Spanish word *bella* can sound more like *pella* to a Spanish native speaker.

1.2. Why bilingualism?

In this paper, we explore VOT patterns in bilingual learners. Various cognitive advantages of bilingualism have been reported in recent years, from multitasking and language learning to age of onset and rate of decline in dementia (Bialystok et al. 2012). With respect to the learning of new sound patterns in a different accent or dialect, recent studies show that bilinguals tend to outperform monolinguals (Kondratenko & Spinu, 2014; Spinu et al. 2018). One of our goals was to determine whether bilingualism can help when it comes to sounding more native-like in a second language. In the experiment we report in the remainder of this paper, we used speakers of different native language backgrounds. We addressed the question whether being a native speaker of a language that functions very differently from English (with respect to VOT), might override the positive effects of bilingualism on the learning of new sound patterns in a foreign language.

2. Experiment

We explored the research topics identified above in a production experiment with monolingual and bilingual speakers. We selected participants whose linguistic background was relevant to our research. Then, we measured their voices using the software program called Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2018). Once we completed all the measurements, we analyzed them statistically using the SPSS software (IBM Corp. 2017). Our procedure and findings are described in detail in the following subsections.

2.1. Participants

As part of a large-scale project supported by a CUNY grant awarded to the second author in order to document the linguistic diversity on the Kingsborough campus, voice recordings were obtained from over 100 currently enrolled students. For this project, we selected a subset of the participants whose linguistic backgrounds were relevant to our research questions. Those participants fell into four groups:

- (1) 5 Chinese-English speakers
- (2) 7 Spanish-English speakers
- (3) 6 Russian-English speakers
- (4) 5 monolingual English speakers (control group)

In terms of VOT, speakers of Russian and Spanish behave differently when compared to English native speakers. Chinese speakers, by contrast, behave similarly to English speakers. The degree of bilingualism (self-reported proficiency and first age of exposure to English) varied within each group. There were two main categories within each language group, specifically early bilinguals and late bilinguals. Early bilinguals, also known as simultaneous bilinguals, are individuals who had early exposure to two languages and learned them both at the same time. Late bilinguals, also known as sequential bilinguals, are speakers who learned their second language after the first language. Separating the bilingual groups into these categories was a necessary step, as recent neuroimaging studies suggest that the brains of early and late bilinguals function differently, with higher right-hemisphere activity in the latter (Bialystok et al. 2012). Based on these observations, we expected different behaviors related to VOT in the early and late bilingual groups from our study.

2.2 Hypotheses

Two research hypotheses were formulated as follows:

1. *Native language background affects English VOT.* Specifically, native Chinese speakers will produce values similar to those of English speakers but Russian and Spanish will not.
2. *Degree of bilingualism positively correlates with native-like VOT production in English.* More precisely, early bilinguals will produce more native-like VOT in English words compared to late bilinguals.

2.3 Experimental procedure

The participants filled in questionnaires about their linguistic background

and were recorded using a Zoom H2N portable voice recorder in a quiet room on campus. They began with a short practice session first, and then they all read out loud the same English paragraph containing the sounds [p, t, k, b, d, g] (Weinberger, 2015). This paragraph, reproduced in (1) below, was originally used for collection of the Speech Accent Archive at <http://accent.gmu.edu/>. We selected it because it was short, context-neutral, and contained all consonants of interest to us:

(1) Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.

In the next phase, VOT measurements were obtained using the Praat software (Boersma & Weenink, 2018). Each recording was examined manually and the sounds [p, t, k, b, d, g] were extracted. The VOT of these sounds was measured manually based on the information available in spectrograms and waveforms (see Figure 1). The VOT fell into 3 categories generally:

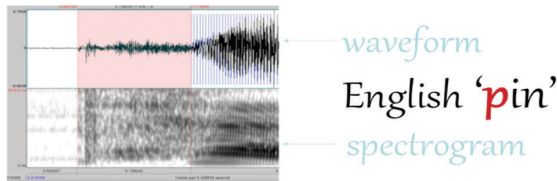
- I. Long positive, for which the release gesture occurs before the voicing gesture, the latter starting with a short delay during which friction noise (similar to a puff of air or a whispered [h] sound) is present.
- II. Short positive, referring to the voicing gesture happening immediately after the release, including the case when the two gestures are simultaneous (known as ‘zero VOT’).
- III. Negative, for which voicing is initiated at some point before the release gesture, during the period of silence that characterizes the time during which the articulators are held together.

Native English speakers typically employ long positive (I) in words like *pin* and short positive (II) in words like *spin* and *bin*. Though it appears counterintuitive, when speakers produce p, t, and k right after an s in English, these sounds are acoustically very similar to the b, d, and g sounds produced by the same speakers. For this reason, we investigate them separately. To sum up, English speakers mostly use long (I) and short (II) positive VOT, and they use negative VOT (III) less frequently. Chinese speakers behave similarly to native English speakers. By contrast, Spanish and Russian speakers do not usually employ long positive (I), using short positive (II) for words like *pin* and *spin* and negative (III) for words like *bin*. While English speakers can produce negative VOT values, these are usually very short, whereas the negative VOT of Russian and Spanish speakers are quite long by comparison. To conclude, Spanish and Russian speakers behave differently from native English speakers when it comes to VOT.

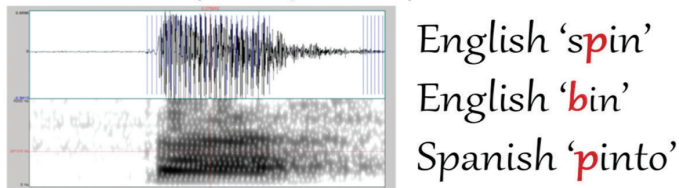
Figure 1 displays visual representations of all three cases discussed above. Each picture contains a waveform and a spectrogram. The waveform (top part of each picture) is a curve showing the shape of a sound pressure wave as it changes over time and the spectrogram (bottom part of each picture) is a visual representation of the spectrum of frequencies of a speech sound or as they vary with time. The top picture is an example of long positive VOT, where the release comes first followed by aspiration and then voicing. The longer the VOT, the stronger the aspiration. The waveform shows how air pressure varies with time. The release comes right after the silence, indicated by a flat line in the waveform, and the blue lines indicate voicing, which is a repetitive pattern of vibration of the vocal folds. The middle picture represents a case of short positive VOT where the voicing and the release happen around the same time. The movement of the waveform following the flat line represents the release and blue lines represent voicing. Lastly, the third picture represents negative VOT, where voicing starts before the release. Blue lines can be observed throughout the period of silence corresponding to the closure of the articulators. For this reason, the waveform is not flat, but displays a repetitive pattern throughout. This shows that the vocal folds are vibrating, however, this sound is not very loud because it is not let out through the mouth (since the articulators are held together) but through the speaker's flesh.

Once all measurements were completed, statistical analyses were run as described in the following subsection.

VOT = 138 ms (long positive)



VOT = 2 ms (short positive)



VOT = -268 ms (negative)

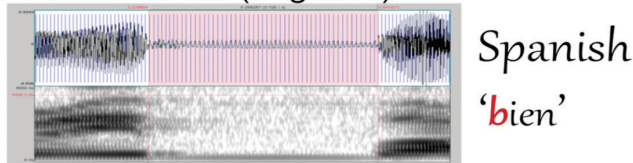


Figure 1: Measuring VOT. Top=long positive; middle=short positive; Bottom=negative VOT.

2.4 Results

A univariate ANOVA was conducted with VOT as the dependent variable and native language (English, Chinese, Russian, or Spanish), speaker type (monolingual, early bilingual, or late bilingual) and consonant category (voiced [b, d, g], voiceless [p, t, k], or after s [sp, st, sk]) as independent variables. The effect of the independent variables as well as of their interaction on the VOT values were examined. The results show a main effect of native language, $F(2, 159) = 13.549, p < .001$ and category, $F(2, 159) = 142.427, p < .001$. The interaction between native language and category was significant, $F(4, 159) = 6.716, p < .001$. The interaction between speaker type and category was near-significant, $F(2, 159) = 2.909, p = .057$. No other significant main effects or interactions were found.

A posthoc test with the Bonferroni correction showed that monolinguals differed significantly from both late and early bilinguals, whereas the late and early bilinguals did not differ significantly from each other. In terms of native language, English differed significantly from Russian and Spanish (but not Chinese), Chinese differed significantly from Russian and Spanish (but not English), and Russian and Spanish differed significantly from both English and Chinese but not from each other. Finally, all consonant categories (voiced, voiceless, and after s) differed significantly from each other.

Figure 2 shows the mean VOT values obtained for each category in the different language groups.

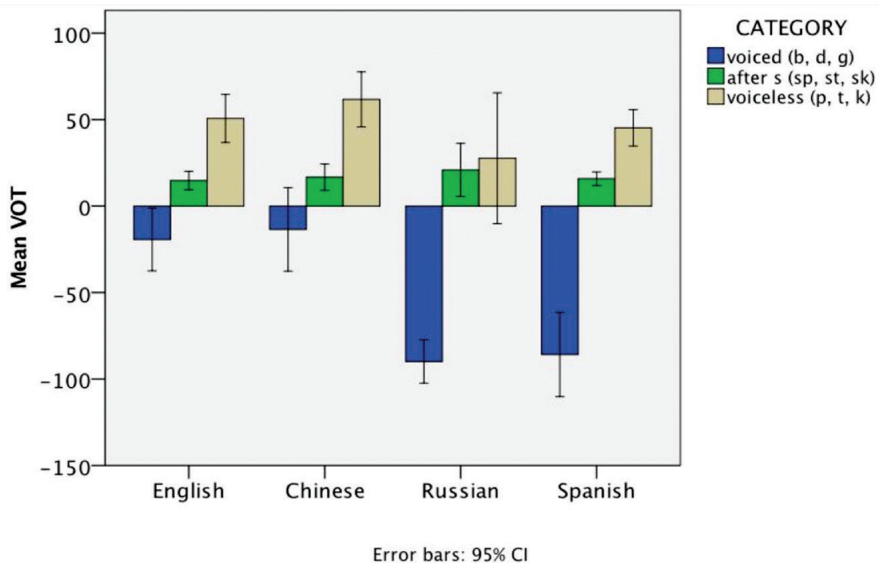


Figure 2: VOT duration in milliseconds for different English sounds produced by speakers from groups with different first languages.

We can see from Figure 2 that Chinese is the most similar to English, as expected based on Hypothesis 1, but Russian and Spanish speakers have significantly longer negative VOTs. Since native language effects were identified, Hypothesis 1 is supported by our findings.

Figure 3 displays the behavior of early and late bilinguals separately. Each row represents a single native language group, starting with the monolingual English speakers in the top row. While for the most part the patterns observed do not differ substantially, we can see that there is more variability (as indicated by the longer error bars) and less category separation (as indicated by the overlap of the error bars) in the late bilingual group. We can also see that in early bilinguals, Spanish has longer negative VOTs than Russian but in late bilinguals Spanish has shorter negative VOTs than Russian. Given the lack of a statistically significant difference, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. We may, however, consider the emerging patterns, and in particular the stronger category separation in early bilinguals, as weak support in favor of this hypothesis.

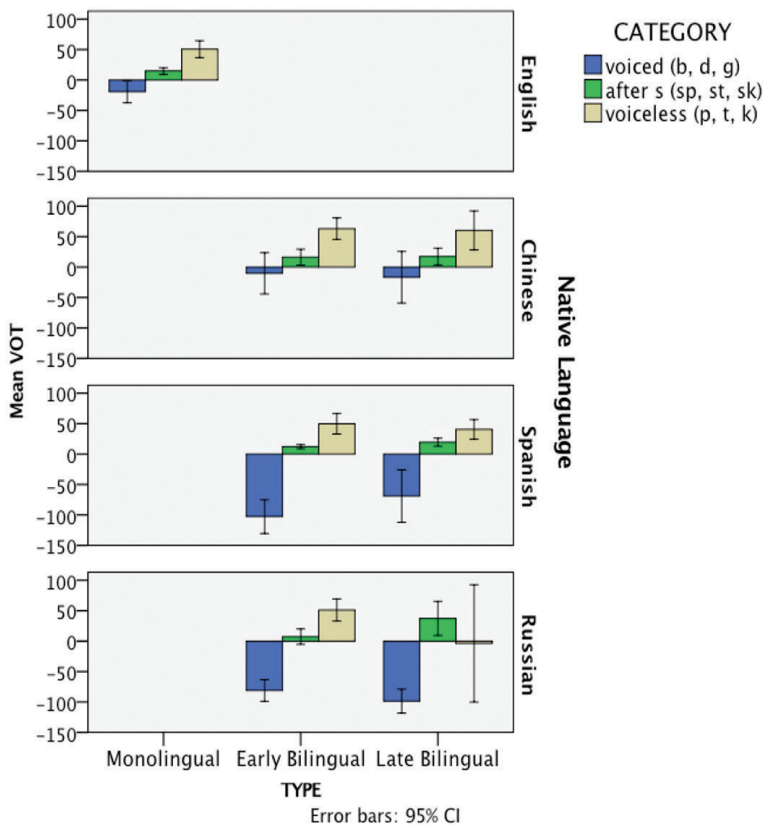


Figure 3: VOT duration in milliseconds for different English sounds produced by speakers from groups with different first languages, with the bilingual group broken down into two categories: early and late bilinguals.

3. Discussion

Our main findings were that (1) the native language of an English learner plays a part in their subsequent mastery of VOT patterns in English regardless of whether s/he has started learning English at an early or a later age, (2) that for the most part late bilinguals exhibit more variability and less category separation than early bilinguals, even though these differences were not statistically significant in a univariate ANOVA, and (3) that early Russian-English bilinguals produce more English-like VOT than late bilinguals, whereas the reverse pattern was seen in Spanish-English bilinguals. In what follows, we discuss each of these findings in more detail.

First, it is not surprising that there is a main effect of a learner's native language on their English production. This is readily apparent in the existence of different accents. For example, the three linguistic backgrounds we investigated, Chinese, English, and Russian, all result in very distinguishable accents in English even to listeners who are neither native speakers nor linguistically trained. A more surprising finding, however, was that a speaker's native language can override the positive effects of bilingualism on phonetic learning (Spinu et al., 2018, Kondratenko & Spinu, 2014), as even early bilinguals were found to be subject to this effect. Given that most of our subjects had spent a significant portion of their lives in the United States, starting from an early age in some cases, it appears that long-term immersion is not sufficient towards the mastery of English VOT. For teaching higher intelligibility and more native-like production in the language classroom, the need arises for the introduction of lessons targeting VOT realization and for specific language instruction depending on a speaker's native language.

Second, while a main effect of speaker type on VOT was not found, finer-grained analysis of the results showed that all consonant categories (voiced, voiceless, after s) are clearly separated in early bilinguals (except for Chinese speakers), while there is higher variability and a smaller degree of category separation (between consonants that are voiced, voiceless, and preceded by [s]) in the late bilingual group. This may result from the limited sample size in our experiment or the fact that the late bilinguals were very different in their behavior. In any case, these findings suggest that degree of bilingualism does play a part in language learning. For clearer results, the sample size should include a larger number of subjects and the specific linguistic background of each subject should be taken into consideration, including amount of exposure and language use for both languages.

We have also seen that early Spanish-English bilinguals produce longer negative VOTs (more different from English) while early Russian-English bilinguals produce shorter negative VOTs (more similar to English). This appears to suggest that Russian speakers may be more effective learners of English VOT patterns if they start early. It is not clear if this effect is due to differences between Russian

and Spanish or to demographic aspects (for instance, Spanish speakers could have been introduced to English later as a group, or perhaps they speak more Spanish at home compared to Russian speakers). This is a question that could be pursued in future research.

Finally, the finding that our monolingual English speakers produced significant differences between the voiced category (b, d, g) and the consonants preceded by s (sp, st, sk) was unexpected, as the two categories would be predicted to behave identically according to MacLeod & Stoel-Gammon (2010b). The difference was small, however. It would be interesting to explore in the future to what extent this is characteristic and unique to Brooklyn speakers (is it a feature of the Brooklynese accent?) or whether this separation is part of a process of language change, and native speakers of North American English implement it more generally.

Overall, our findings were limited by the small sample size used. In as much as certain patterns emerged, however, our study adds to the body of work on bilingual cognition and in particular the role played by native language and degree of bilingualism in second language learning.

4. Conclusion

We have found that the native language has a strong effect on the production of VOT in English, to some extent overriding the positive effects of bilingualism in early bilinguals (their VOT production is not native-like in English despite extensive exposure to this language from an early age). We also found that degree of bilingualism positively correlates with native-like VOT production in English, as there was more variability and less category separation in the late bilingual group. While clear patterns already emerged in our study, we cannot draw any strong conclusions due to the small sample size used. For future work, we are planning to continue to measure more subjects from the previously recorded pool. Also, we intend to explore the ways in which our findings fit in with existing theories of second language learning. Flege's Speech Learning Model (SLM), for instance, focuses on how the perception and production of sounds in a second language (L2) are influenced by the first language (L1) (Flege, 2007). This is supported by our results, as we observed that Chinese-English speakers have more similarities to monolingual English speakers but Spanish-English and Russian-English speakers behave less similarly to monolingual English speakers.

Acknowledgments

This work was partially supported by a CUNY Research in the Classroom Idea Grant (RIC 336:2018) awarded to the second author, entitled "Many countries, one language: using phonetic analysis to create a linguistic map of Kingsborough Community College."

Selected References

- [1] Andrea, A. N. M., & Carol, S. G. (2010a). Are bilinguals different? What VOT tells us about simultaneous bilinguals, *Journal of Multilingual Communication Disorders*, 3:2, 118-127.
- [2] Andrea, A. N. M., & Carol, S. G. (2010b). What is the impact of age of second language acquisition on the production of consonants and vowels among childhood bilinguals? *International Journal of Bilingualism* 14:4, pp. 400-421.
- [3] Anderson, J. A. E., Mak, L., Keyvani Chahi, A., & Bialystok, E. (2018). The Language and Social Background Questionnaire: Assessing Degree of Bilingualism in a Diverse Population. *Behavior Research Methods*, vol. 50, no. 1, Feb. 2018, pp. 250-263. EBSCOhost, doi:10.3758/s13428-017-0867-9.
- [4] Boersma, P., & Weenink, D. (2018). Praat: doing phonetics by computer [Computer program]. Version 6.0.39, retrieved April 3, 2018 from <http://www.praat.org/>
- [5] Bradford, L. S. (1992). "Gender Difference in Voice Onset Time." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2466/pms.1992.75.3.983.
- [6] Christopher, T. F., Byers-Heinlein, K., & Werker, J. F. (2007). Using Speech Sounds to Guide Word Learning: The Case of Bilingual Infants. *Child Development* 78:5, 1510-1525.
- [7] Chen, L. M., Chao, K. Y., & Peng, J. F. (2007). VOT productions of word-initial stops in Mandarin and English: A cross-language study" *ROCLING*.
- [8] Cho, T., and Peter, L. (1999). "Variation and Universals in VOT: Evidence from 18 Languages." *Journal of Phonetics*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 207-29. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1999095338&site=ehost-live.
- [9] Costa, A., and Núria, S. G. (2018). "How Does the Bilingual Experience Sculpt the Brain?" *Nature reviews. Neuroscience* 15.5 (2014): 336–345. PMC.
- [10] Flege, J. E. (2007). *Language experience in second language speech learning: In honor of James Emil Flege*. Vol. 17. John Benjamins Publishing.
- [11] Kondratenko, Y. and Spinu, L. (2014.) Being "better" with accents: evidence from bilinguals. *Proceedings of the 48th Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*, eds. Beltrama, A., Chatzikonstantinou, T., Lee, J.L., Pham, M., & Rak, D. 387–400.
- [12] Ku, Y.M. & Anderson, R.C. (2003). *Reading and* (2003) 16: 399. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024227231216>
- [13] Antoniou, M., Best, C. T., Tyler, M. D., & Kroos, C. (2011). Inter-language interference in VOT production by L2-dominant bilinguals: Asymmetries in phonetic code-switching, *Journal of Phonetics*, Volume 39, Issue 4, 558-570.
- [14] Owren, M. J. *Behavior Research Methods*. (2008). 40: 822. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.40.3.822>
- [15] Spinu, L., Hwang, J., & Lohmann, R. (2018). "Is There a Bilingual Advantage in Phonetic and Phonological Acquisition? The Initial Learning of Word-Final Coronal Stop Realization in a Novel Accent of English." *International Journal of Bilingualism*, vol. 22, no. 3, June 2018, pp. 350-370. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1177/1367006916681080.
- [16] Tobin, S. J., Nam, H., & Fowler, C. A. (2017). Phonetic drift in Spanish-English bilinguals: Experiment and a self-organizing model, *Journal of Phonetics*, Volume 65, 45-59.
- [17] Weinberger, S. (2015). *Speech Accent Archive*. George Mason University. Retrieved from <http://accent.gmu.edu>

Corresponding author:
vali.valizade11@students.kbcc.cuny.edu

CONTRIBUTORS



ARACELY CALLE

“Ever since I was a child art has been significant for me. Now I’m a Graphic Design student. I know I’m on the right track because I love what I do. What inspired me in the creation of these pieces was the simplicity of typography and the beauty of nature. Art has always helped me to express my ideas and feelings; I believe that art is a weapon with which we can change the world.”



BIN CHEN

“I am a recent immigrant from China and have a ‘Tiger Mom’ who is a teacher in China. My whole childhood and teenage years were soaked in traditional Chinese parenting. I am an advocate of Baumrind’s *authoritative*, democratic style of parenting. This style is usually preferred by American developmental professionals, as the communication imbedded in it can make a deep influence on the overall development of children. However, I would never forget how profoundly Chinese parenting affected who I am and my belief that I will be an effective teacher in the future.”

DAKANG CHEN

“”



OKWUOHA ELVIS EKENE

“True love they say is hard to find. If Als is a living testimony then I am a living witness of being a gay Black male who is struggling with his gender identity even while family is in denial of my sexuality. They say, ‘It is the devil... you will surely die of HIV/AIDS... My son, it is just a phase, you will grow out of it... America doesn’t need people like you, they can’t provide you a future.’ I can relate to Als and his style of creativity, and I strongly agree that stereotypes and stigmatization is heartbreaking. I hope people like my parents and young questioning adults stumble upon this book and feel his plight to be accepted into the love room in life.”



SHOLOM GUTLEIZER

“I am a mental health student, but my interests reach far beyond that subject. Of my interests, the moral landscape of our culture interests me tremendously. America as a nation started with specific principles, which have been largely abandoned. This was for the good as well as for the bad. I believe we have yet to find common ground as a basis for our newly found freedoms, a place where we all can meet happily and freely.”



ESTHER ISHAK

Esther Ishak is pursuing a degree in Biology/Chemistry with the goal of working in the health field. Although she has always enjoyed the sciences, she has also found the liberal arts classes at KCC, particularly her English and literature classes, to be very thought-provoking. Writing about the impact and power of fairy tales in psychology gave her the unique opportunity to actually relate fiction and science.



YULIA KOHUT

“I am Ukrainian. My passion is criminal justice. I believe that miracles are around us.”



OLHA MASLOVA

“I am not afraid of any challenges and do not hesitate to ask questions. I enjoy analyzing, developing a hypothesis, and coming up with improvements. I love New York and want it to be a better place for everyone. My goal is to make a difference.”



BRIAN J. McNALLY

“I have played floor hockey since I was a child. Like most children from the Bronx in the 1960s and ‘70s, we played the sport on tennis courts, basketball courts, and in the street, believe it or not, while pretending and dreaming to one day play for the New York Rangers. A contract to play for the Rangers never came about, but my love for and fantasy about playing for the Rangers continues, albeit just in floor hockey leagues. Thus, I have dreamed and planned for an ideal floor hockey arena and playing rink.”



KOURTNIE RAMSAY

Kourtnie Ramsay has long since been an advocate of social issues and hopes to continue channeling this passion through her studies at the tertiary level. Originally hailing from the island nation of Jamaica, she currently resides in Brooklyn, where she spends far too much time being inconvenienced by the MTA and dreaming of balmy winters. She plans to pursue a career in the field of corporate law.



PATCHANEEDA SANDY RUNGREANG

“I’m a Theatre Arts Major, with ambition and drive to learn about the world around me and to help everyone I can. I’ve always had a knack for writing. I’d also like to give an honorable mention to Professor Ryan Chaney for all of his help with my essay.”



AMMENA SANI

“I am studying to become an elementary school teacher. My dream is to become a teacher who students can rely on and trust. As a future educator, I think it is important that teachers are acutely aware of the challenges their students might face and provide them with the academic and social resources to overcome those challenges, so they can become the best versions of themselves.”



VALI VALIZADE

“I was born in Azerbaijan and came to the United States in 2015. My goal is to become a doctor, and I know that I will make a mark in medicine because I have a strong drive, great work ethic, and incredible support from my family. Life is hard but we change for the better by doing, not talking. We can only achieve our goals after hard work. Becoming a doctor takes dedication, and I am willing to put in the work to become successful.”

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Distinctions welcomes submissions year-round. The deadline for the Spring 2019 issue is February 1. Submissions that come in after that date will be considered for the Fall 2019 issue (deadline: August 15).

Students: Please submit to *Distinctions* any outstanding research-related course work, whether you wrote it for Honors credit or not. As for visual art, the present editor is most interested in depictions and projects related to New York City and its environs.

Instructors: Please encourage your students who have conducted original and compelling research to submit it to *Distinctions*.

Email the file to me, Bob Blaisdell (Robert.Blaisdell@Kingsborough.edu), with the subject line DISTINCTIONS SUBMISSION and on paper to the Honors House in M377. Include your contact information. I will acknowledge all submissions upon receipt.

